Writing 105G: Grammar and Stylistics

Prerequisites: Writing 2 or 2E or 2LK; upper-division standing.

Catalog Description: Focuses on grammar and stylistics for professional writers and editors. The emphasis is practical and analytical, attending to issues of sentence structure and diction, and to the diversity of styles, formats, and audiences.

Course Description: Writing 105G addresses the advanced study of English grammar and style, particularly as it relates to written composition. This is a language-intensive course, where students focus on the power and placement of words, developing a set of skills relevant to their professional and civic life. The course focuses on the form and function of sentence components, sentence combining, and rhetorical strategies and figures employed by writers. It moreover emphasizes how the mechanisms of expression provide writers with rhetorical choices. Much of the time in class, as well as the majority of the reading, focus on identifying and comprehending grammatical forms, which this course presents as a crucial step toward understanding the rhetoric of writing.

The course also addresses style, especially a writer's options to choose among those grammatical forms with the most rhetorical weight. Students study rhetorical figures, such as anastrophe, anaphora, and parallelism, to learn how to better craft effective sentences. By the end of the course, students should be able to compare two passages—both with approximately the same length and purpose—and explain when and why an author would elect to deploy both of them. Students also analyze passages of "effective" writing and explain what makes them effective. Questions of how and when to make appropriate stylistic choices also play a significant role in Writing 105G, including comparing different stylistic models from professional, academic, civic, literary, and technical contexts.

Curricular Premises: Writing 105G fulfills several curricular needs within the Writing Program and beyond. The seminar format allows plenty of opportunities to discuss relevant grammatical and rhetorical concepts, work collaboratively on in-class exercises, and review one another's work. Students leave the class with a set of skills relevant to their academic, professional, and civic life. Writing 105G focuses on the development of advanced writing skills, including accessing, evaluating, and incorporating stylistic choices. The course serves students from a broad array of disciplinary backgrounds and professional goals, as the attention to style and rhetoric is as relevant to the college essay as it is to the intra-office email. Professional Writing Minor students in the Professional Editing Track are especially encouraged to take this class, although the course has considerable relevance for students in all tracks of the minor.

Course Requirements:

Texts: This course frequently uses a textbook to supplement classroom discussions. The textbook more commonly used by instructors of the course (as of 2016) is C. Beth Burch's *A Writer's Grammar.* Other common recommended reference texts include H.W. Fowler, *A Dictionary of Modern English*; Bryan Garner, *Modern American Usage*; Max Morenberg, *Doing Grammar*, Margaret Shertzer, *The Elements of Grammar*; Virginia Tufte, *Artful Sentences*, Joseph Williams, *Style.*

Assignments: Writing 105G typically utilizes a series of exams and/or quizzes to gauge student learning. Writing projects often make up the remainder of coursework, including assignments prompting students to devise a hypothetical language, study the history and use of a slang term or vernacular, as well as grammatical, rhetorical, and stylistic analysis essays.

Outcomes:

- identify sentence parts and apply specialized terminology in the fields of grammar and rhetoric
- understand how evidence is used to support theories or arguments related to grammar and stylistics
- produce analytical papers that evaluate the rhetorical effectiveness of a range of professional texts, or that analyze slang in order to introduce a phrase to the professional grammatical community
- develop an understanding of how grammar contributes to rhetorical effectiveness across a range of documents
- use primary and secondary source materials to support hypotheses and claims
- attribute sources correctly, in a manner appropriate to the genre and context
- develop a more mature style of writing by applying rhetorical structures and strategies
- translate needlessly complex writing into clear, concise language