English 115: Approaches to University Writing

STEWEN WEXLER’S SAMPLE SYLLABUS

The CSUN Stretch

English 115:
Approaches to
University Writing

Fall 2010

Introduction
Welcome to Approaches to University Writing! This course helps you acquire writing and critical thinking skills so that you might do well in the intellectual environment of the university and beyond. To that end, we will read and think deeply about a range of texts from across the disciplines. We will workshop essays and other kinds of writing that employ various academic conventions. These activities along with student-instructor conferences, peer work, and roundtable discussions will demonstrate the social nature of writing and signal our entry into scholarly discourse.

English is a workshop of peers. Our success depends on our willingness to share ideas and review each other’s work

Course Description
Prerequisites: EPT score of 151 or higher. Expository prose writing with a focus on both content and form. Specific emphases shall include the exercise of logical thought and clear expression, the development of effective organizational strategies, and the appropriate gathering and utilization of evidence. Includes instruction on diction, syntax,
and grammar, as well as the elements of prose style. Students receive credit for only one course chosen from AAS, CAS, CHS, ENGL, PAS, and QS 115.

**Course Objectives**

- Demonstrate competence in university writing
- Demonstrate the ability to use rhetorical strategies that include the appeal to audience, logic, and emotion
- Understand writing as a recursive process and demonstrate its use through invention, drafting, and revision (creating, shaping, and completing)
- Demonstrate the ability to use conventions of format, structure, style, and language appropriate to the purpose of a written text
- Demonstrate the ability to use library and online resources effectively and to document their sources

**Student Learning Outcomes**

*You will gain the ability to read critically*

You’ll read extensively from a variety of academic and non-academic texts, including anthology essays, academic journal articles, autobiography, fiction, and news media. You will demonstrate the capacity to read critically by responding to these texts during class discussions as well as writing projects that include exercises, essays, and thematic projects.

*You will gain the ability to write effectively*

You will produce a range of writing that demonstrates proficiency with rhetorical strategies and expository writing concepts. This writing will include autobiography, dialogues, epistles, descriptive and argumentative essays, interactive Web reflections, thematic projects, and blogs.

*You will gain knowledge of the cultural diversity of literatures*

You will read an assorted body of literature produced by writers from across the globe. You will discuss and write about these diverse experiences.

**Our Method: The Progressions**

A progression is a series of interconnected reading, writing, and thinking exercises that link to class work. As each progression is completed, the combined drafting builds the foundation and process of an essay. This movement grows out of the specific assignments and collaborative nature of the progression and leads to essays that bear marks of distinction, direction, and development.

There are three progressions, each requiring three exercises and one essay. There is also a fourth, informal, reflective essay. This fourth essay serves as your portfolio’s introduction. The portfolio is a compendium of the semester’s work.

Your *Progressions* handout (*see below*) explains each assignment in detail, but here they are in brief:
A. Progression I: Reading and Responding to Texts
Exercise 1: Summary and Reconstruction
Exercise 2: Letter to Author
Exercise 3: Letter to Friend or Family Member
**Essay 1 (two drafts)**

B. Progression II: Seeing and Hearing Texts
Exercise 1: The “Word-Picture”
Exercise 2: The Scene
Exercise 3: The Ethnography
**Essay 2 (two drafts)**

C. Progression III: Arguing through Texts
Exercise 1: Argument and Analysis
Exercise 2: The Dialogue
Exercise 3: Argumentative Proposal
**Essay 3 (two drafts)**

D. Informal Reflective Essay

E. Final Project: Project Web, Space, or Text

*The Projects* include Project Web, Project Space, and Project Text, and each entails critical reading, writing, and class presentations.

**PROJECT WEB:** Project Web asks that you design a blog devoted to a theme suggested by our readings. Your blog will explore multi-media composition and include images, video, and animation that illustrate the content and themes of your particular blog posts. Each blog post will be academic in content. The blog provides you with an alternative space in which to practice writing and revision.

Project Web Requirements: Blog with posts, outside links to course-related Websites, use of new visual rhetoric, and essay @1,200 words.

**PROJECT SPACE:** This project considers the socioeconomics and politics of space. While space can be defined as urban, community, and personal, it may also be *institutional* (e.g., the university and hospital). We’re interested in how space shapes our conception of world, self, and other.

Project Space requires that you do fieldwork (go beyond the classroom) and report on the physical and cultural geographies of a particular area or structure, the virtual or material representation of that area or structure; and/or the effects of a particular area or structure on our understanding of race, class, and gender (e.g., how your building reflects racialized or classist attitudes)
Project Space requirements: reading, fieldwork, presentation, and individual essay @ 1,200 words (hardcopy for review and Web version posted on blog).

PROJECT TEXT: You are asked to interpret a major text through close reading and research. Our “text” is *The Elephant Man: A Play* by Bernard Pomerance. We’ll approach this text through a number of critical sources, classroom discussions and activities, individual student essays, and group projects.

Project Text Requirements: critical reading, discussion, group project, annotated bibliography, and individual essay @ 1,200 words (hardcopy for review and Web version posted on blog)

F. Portfolio

Materials
Pomerance. *The Elephant Man: A Play*
Supplementary readings distributed throughout the semester
Course Portfolio Binder
Moodle (http://moodle.csun.edu)

Course Requirements
Completion of Approaches to University Writing entails the following six items:

- Regular attendance
- Weekly Moodle reflection
- *The Progressions*, including peer review, drafting, and final drafts
- *Seagull Reader* essay presentation
- Final Project
- Comprehensive portfolio

Participation
Class participation includes discussions, weekly Moodle posts, student-instructor conferences, and workshop activities. Everyone has something to contribute to our class, and there is always an opportunity to learn from one another. If you do not feel comfortable speaking in class you may participate in other ways. Although participation grades will not be distributed, I will be happy to discuss any questions you have about your progress.

Papers
The bulk of your grade (see below) will be based upon finished essays and exercises that you will submit over the course of the term. Each item will be assigned a specific due date as well as instructions regarding drafting, conferences, peer group work, and use of the Writing Center. Out-of-class papers must be composed and revised at the computer. Please print a copy of each draft before you revise it.
Note: late papers will not be accepted unless you have obtained an extension from me ahead of time. You must submit your essay even if you miss class on its due date.

Moodle
Each week, post an informal yet thoughtful response to our readings and/or class discussion on Moodle. This reflection is a very important part of our coursework and a great opportunity for you to establish a meaningful dialogue with your classmates since they will post there, too. I don’t count words, but I do look for clear, convincing reflections in a conversational tone. Make connections to texts and things outside the class; go beyond summarizing.

Essay Discussion Leaders
Early in the semester, find a partner and select a Seagull Reader essay that you find particularly interesting. Your pair will facilitate a discussion (not lecture) through interesting and creative ways that engage the class. Discussion leaders should

- Help the class draw important connections between the text and contemporary issues
- Help the class recognize the essay’s intended audience
- Help the class recognize the essay’s rhetorical strategies
- Help the class recognize the essay’s thesis and the larger implications suggested by that thesis

Possible strategies include asking meaningful questions, group activities, textual connections, and film clips.

Portfolio
Your portfolio is a compendium of every piece of work you have prepared in 196UW. The portfolio includes quick prompts written in class, peer- and instructor-reviewed drafts, and other material you develop as part of your reading and writing in the course. All work, including formal papers, will be kept in your portfolio for final assessment. Papers have not been completed until you receive a passing grade. It is impossible to pass this course if any work is missing from your final portfolio.

Policies
This is a participatory workshop class and attendance is essential to our success. Grades are therefore dropped a letter after three absences. Six absences result in an F. You are responsible for completing any work due for a day that you miss, and you must come prepared with any work required for the following class. Please feel free to contact me via email or office phone, and/or see me during my office hours to learn what you missed and how to prepare for our next class.

Grades
I grade holistically. A final grade will be given after your portfolio is assessed in its entirety, at the semester’s end. Until then, I’ll write comments and suggestions on your papers and
discuss your progress in person. Feel free to come by my office, email, or phone me if you have questions and/or concerns. To pass this course, you must complete all work in a timely fashion and receive a passing grade on your portfolio.

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**English 115 Fall 2010 Syllabus**

*Please note that work is due on the date listed below and assignments are subject to change. Not all readings and written assignments are represented. A Moodle reflection is due by the first class of each week, beginning with our second week.*

8/24
Introductions and course overview

8/26
Kelly. “Introduction: What are Essays?” 3-21
Choose partners and essays for presentations
Peer Review Strategies #1

**Progression I: Reading and Responding to Texts**

8/31
Ex. 1, Prog. I: Summary and Reconstruction
Kelly. Amy Tan’s “Mother Tongue,” 308-14

9/2
Ex. 2, Prog. I: Letter to Author
Kelly. Deborah Tannen’s “Conversational Styles,” 314-20

9/7
Ex. 3, Prog. I: Letter to Friend or Family Member

9/9
Writing Workshop:
Voice, Audience, and Genre
Peer Review Strategies #2

9/14
Draft 1, Essay I, Prog. I
Peer Review

9/16
Draft 2, Essay I, Prog. I
Progression II: Seeing and Hearing Texts

9/28
Ex. 1, Prog. II: The “Word Picture”
Kelly. Maxine Hong Kingston’s “No Name Woman,” 173-85

9/30
Ex. 2, Prog. II: The Scene
Kelly. Richard Rodriguez’s “Blaxicans’ and Other Reinvented Americans,” 269-76

10/5
Film: Babel

10/7
Ex. 3, Prog. II: The Ethnography
Kelly. George Orwell’s “Shooing an Elephant,” 242-50

10/12
Draft 1, Essay II, Prog. II
Peer Review

10/14
Draft 2, Essay II, Prog. II

Progression III: Arguing through Texts

10/19
“I was always told not to argue. Why do I have to argue now?”
Lessons from Antiquity 1: Plato’s Dialogue and Dialectic

10/21
Lessons from Antiquity 2: Aristotelian Ethos, Logos, and Pathos; Enthymeme and Syllogism

10/26
Debate Planning:
Form Teams
Prepare Debate Guide Sheet
10/28
Debate!

11/2
Kelly. Michael Berube’s “Paying for Freedom,” 53-56

11/4
Kelly. Richard Rorty’s “The Unpatriotic Academy,” 276-79
Ex. 1, Prog. III: Argument and Analysis

11/9
Ex. 2, Prog. III: The Dialogue

11/11
Kelly. William Zinsser’s “College Pressures,” 396-404
Ex. 3, Prog. III: Argumentative Proposal

11/16
Draft 1, Essay III, Prog. III
Peer Review
Final Project Discussion

11/18
Draft 2, Essay III, Prog. III
Final Project Workshop

11/23
Thanksgiving Break

11/25
Thanksgiving Break

11/30
Pomerance. The Elephant Man: A Play

12/2
Pomerance. The Elephant Man: A Play
Film: The Elephant Man

12/7
Reflective Essays Due
Project Presentations

12/9
Project Presentations
Discussion pairs facilitate discussions (*not lectures*) through interesting and creative ways that engage the class. Discussion pairs should:

- Help the class draw important connections between the text and contemporary issues
- Help the class recognize the essay’s intended audience
- Help the class recognize the essay’s rhetorical strategies
- Help the class recognize the essay’s thesis and larger implications

Possible discussion strategies include asking meaningful questions, group activities, textual connections, and film clips.

**Essays and dates:**

8/31
Amy Tan’s “Mother Tongue,” 308-14

9/2
Deborah Tannen’s “Conversational Styles,” 314-20

9/7
David Sedaris’s “Me Talk Pretty One Day,” 285-90

9/28
Maxine Hong Kingston’s “No Name Woman,” 173-85

9/30
Richard Rodriguez’s “‘Blaxicans’ and Other Reinvented Americans,” 269-76

10/7
George Orwell’s “Shooting an Elephant,” 242-50

11/2
Michael Berube’s “Paying for Freedom,” 53-56

11/4
Richard Rorty’s “The Unpatriotic Academy,” 276-79
English 115: Approaches to University Writing

The Progressions

A progression is a series of interconnected reading, writing, and thinking exercises that help you write essays. There is a complex structure below the surface of these progressions that connects the work in the classroom with the work of the progression that you do out of class as homework.

As you complete the various exercises specified in each progression and begin to combine the results in the drafts of the essays, you move more and more into areas of inquiry that interest you, building upon the foundation that the exercises establish. The progressions provide direction, but there is much room for individual expression.

I. Reading and Responding to Texts

This progression’s essay requirement asks you to borrow an idea from one of the assigned essays written by professionals and to analyze that idea in light of these questions:

- What are the larger implications of this idea?
- How does another text that you have read or viewed in this course or elsewhere affect the way you think about the idea?
- What do you have to say about this idea?
- How has your own experience influenced your thinking?

Your essay should use these questions to help deepen your own – and your reader’s – understanding of the borrowed idea.

*By the end of this progression, you should understand the following key terms: idea, summary, reconstruction, and evidence. You should also understand the basic concepts of connecting and larger implications. You will be expected to follow MLA documentation and to perform basic surface editing.*

◆ Exercise #1: Summary and Reconstruction

This exercise involves reading, which, if done actively, can help you learn about writing itself. Read the assigned essays and select the one that most interests you. You will be working with that essay
during this progression.

Keep up with the way you respond to the essay as you read and study it. Mark phrases or images that strike you as interesting or important in some way. Think about the way the essayist uses language to convey ideas. But most important, record your thoughts about what you are reading. Make marginal notes or keep a reading journal. You are trying to find out what the essay means.

► Your first task in this progression is to summarize or reconstruct the essay. A summary (reader-based) or reconstruction (writer-based) presents the essence of the original essay, and the essence obviously includes the essay’s controlling idea.

Manuscript Notes: Your summary should be about 100 words (no more than one double-spaced typed page). This summary calls for MLA documentation; at a minimum, you must include a “Works Cited” list. If you quote key phrases or clauses from the essay, parenthetical documentation is also required. During this progression, documentation will be discussed in class, but you should dig out the essential information on your own. There is nothing mysterious or complicated about it. Consistency is the key. Consult your handbook.

◆ Exercise #2: Letter to Author

This exercise requires that you shift your attention from what the essay means to how it means. You want to begin to understand how the writer led you to understand the essay’s idea — the one you highlighted in your summary.

As an active reader of your selected essay, you jotted down your initial reactions to various aspects of the essay. Read the essay again now, and go beyond those initial jottings — respond in a more detailed fashion to what the essayist says and does. Pay particular attention to passages that provoke or trouble you and to passages that seem central to the essay’s meaning.

As you read this time, try to read two ways at once, paying attention to what the essayist is saying and to how he or she conveys the idea.

► Finally, write a letter to the essayist. As a way of generating that letter, think about features of the essay that still puzzle you; think too of how the essay’s most striking features helped you come to terms with the idea. Bring your concerns together in a letter, seeking not to praise the writer but to earn the writer’s praise through your engaging, thoughtful analysis of the striking features of the essay. Try to elicit a response (without asking for one) by saying something about the idea.
Manuscript Notes: Your letter should be two to three double-spaced pages long. A letter will not usually include either parenthetical documentation or a bibliography. You must make clear in the text of your letter what essay you are writing about, what phrases, images, or ideas you are discussing. Remember that the essayist is not expecting this letter; telling him or her that you are writing to satisfy a class requirement will not do the trick.

◆ Exercise #3: Letter to Friend or Family Member

For this writing exercise, select one other essay that you have read during this progression that has something to do with the ideas you are uncovering in your chosen essay.

► In a letter to someone not in this class, explain the connection between the two essays. As you compose that letter, think about ways to use evidence to interest your reader in the connection: you might, for instance, tell a story that will ground the idea in a common understanding. Think about what evidence the reader will need to be told so that the connection will make sense. Establish sufficient context for understanding.

Manuscript Notes: Your letter (or epistolary essay) should be two to three double-spaced pages long. A letter will not usually include either parenthetical documentation or a bibliography. Consequently, you must make clear in the text of your letter what you are doing, what essays you are writing about, what phrases, images, or ideas you borrowed. The recipient is not expecting this letter and will have no idea why you are writing unless you somehow make it clear. Again, don’t tell your reader that you are satisfying a course requirement. Get into the letter some other way.

◆ ESSAY I

Examine what you have written thus far:

► Step back from that early work and consider how you might write a more thoughtful essay. Take that idea from the essay and analyze it in light of these questions: What are the larger implications of the idea? How does another text that you have read or viewed in this course or elsewhere shape the way you think about the idea? How does your own experience influence your thinking? What do you have to say about this idea?

You want to deepen your understanding of the idea by playing out its larger implications against the backdrop of the selected essay that set this whole process in motion. That essay provides the foundation for your work, but the deepening will come through your thinking, aided by the connections you make between the idea
you borrowed from the initial essay and the evidence you will draw from some other text(s) that you have read.

**Manuscript Notes:** This essay should be five double-spaced pages and calls for **MLA documentation**; you must include a “Works Cited” list at the end of your essay. When you quote key phrases or clauses from the essay, you must provide parenthetical documentation. Follow the guidelines in your handbook.

### II. Seeing and Hearing Texts

This progression’s essay requirement asks you to create an idea of your own with the aid of a visual object, an image of experience, and a written text. In the essay itself you will develop your idea in light of these questions:

- What are the larger implications of your idea?
- What do the various pieces of evidence you have collected tell us about your idea?
- Why should a general reader care about your idea?

*By the end of this progression, you should understand the following key terms: word-picture and scene. You should also understand some basic concepts of structure. You will be expected to follow MLA documentation and to perform both surface editing and deep editing.*

◆ **Exercise #1: The “Word-Picture”**

Your recent work in reading essays should have demonstrated to you the importance of a reading process that is *active*, and it should have reaffirmed the rigorous demands of good, clean writing. In this next writing sequence, you will extend the active reading process to a different kind of text: a visual object such as a painting, a sculpture, or a photograph.

Create a *word-picture* of a visual object so that readers can see the object through your words. Select a visual object such as a painting, a sculpture, or a photograph that interests you or triggers a strong response within you. (Choose carefully – you will be working with this art object for the next month.) Describe only what you perceive so that others who do not have access to the object can see it too; that is, do not mention names and historical dates.

**Manuscript Notes:** Try to keep your *word-picture* as short as possible (about 100 words) without sacrificing precision; produce something more evocative than a laundry list of features.
◆ Exercise #2: The Scene
Your second exercise in this progression is to make use of your visual object in a scene, a scene that puts you and the object in relationship with one another. The scene may shed light on your attitude toward the object.

► Write a scene that will help your readers begin to understand what idea your visual object has sparked in you. Remember that a scene is dramatic and constructed so that readers experience the action. Readers may be drawn into the scene by a dramatic action, an interesting conversation, or by the sheer force of your creative language. Your scene need not focus on your visual object as long as the object plays some part in the scene.

Manuscript Notes: Your scene should be no more than three double-spaced pages.

◆ Exercise #3: The Ethnography
Your third exercise asks that you produce ethnography. Ethnography is a genre of writing that uses fieldwork to provide a descriptive study of human societies. In this instance, your ethnography will help you see your idea in a real-world setting.

► Choose a setting where people go and where you can sit and observe uninterrupted for at least an hour, e.g., Starbucks, library, park, mall, restaurant, bowling alley, and so on. Write down your observations. Try to be objective as you look for manifestations of the idea with which you’ve been working. Under your objective observation, write an analysis informed by the texts we've read thus far. Be sure to bring a notepad and take notes.

Manuscript Notes: Your ethnography should be no more than three double-spaced pages. Follow MLA documentation for the analysis section including a Works Cited list of texts.

◆ ESSAY II
Imagine a more general audience and widen your focus to suit it. Your evidence for this essay may consist of your scene and ethnography, but you need not confine yourself to this early work: there may be other visual objects, images of experience, or written texts that now seem more helpful to you in terms of developing your idea. Feel free to use them.

► After considering the best way to use your evidence to present your idea, inform your reader of the larger implications of your idea. What do the various pieces of
evidence you have gathered tell us about your idea? Why should s/he care about your idea?

As in your previous essay, keep in mind that though your evidence provides the foundation for your work, the purpose of your essay is to explore the meaning of your idea. Keep your voice and your thinking front-and-center.

**Manuscript Notes:** This essay should be four to six double-spaced pages and calls for *MLA documentation*; you must include a “Works Cited” list at the end of your essay. When you quote key phrases or clauses from your written text(s), you must provide parenthetical documentation.

### III. Arguing through Texts

One thing we all come to understand over time is that influential ideas are rarely formed in the mind of a single individual; rather, they are formed by thinkers playing off of each other’s thoughts, theories, and discoveries. Sometimes scholars create ideas by engaging each other directly (through verbal exchanges, email messages, or memos), but they often exchange ideas in more indirect ways. A scholar can respond to a published text that has been in circulation in an academic community for years, perhaps even decades or centuries. Because written texts can span miles and millennia, a philosopher of this decade can, for example, “listen to” (read) and “speak to” (write about) Plato in the form of an essay or an article. Of course, Plato will not be able to listen to the modern thinker’s reply, but other living scholars can, and they too can begin to make contributions to ongoing conversations about topics, ideas, and questions that remain matters for investigation or debate.

This progression’s essay requirement asks you to enter into conversation with published scholars. In your essay you must reproduce and respond to a scholarly conversation in light of these questions:

- What are the larger implications of this conversation?
- What are some of the different positions in this conversation?
- What is your response to these viewpoints?
- What is your contribution to the conversation?

Your instructor may require you to do some outside research for this essay, or s/he may provide you with texts that represent some of the key positions within a particular discussion or debate. You will want to use these texts to initiate and inform your argument. In other words, your purpose should not be to cram as many sources as you can into your essay; you do not want other writers’ voices to drown out your own.
By the end of this progression, you should understand the following key terms: conversation, claim, and argument. You should also understand the basic concepts of formal academic structure. You will be expected to follow MLA documentation, to perform surface editing and deep editing, and to write a planning document.

◆ Exercise #1: Argument and Analysis

The purpose of this first exercise is to encourage you to practice an open-minded but cautious way of engaging with the claims of other scholars.

► For this exercise you will turn a curious yet skeptical gaze onto one of the essays that you have read for this progression. First, even if you have reservations about the author’s ideas, make sense of her/his argument by explaining it in your own words. What is the writer’s position? What are the essential claims here? What evidence does the author offer for these claims? Next play devil’s advocate: which aspects of the essay sound wrong to you? Does the evidence persuade you? Which assumptions or conclusions strike you as problematic or unreasonable?

Manuscript Notes: Your response should be two to three double-spaced pages and calls for MLA documentation. Avoid large block quotations and use this exercise as an opportunity to refine your ability to weave together short quotations, paraphrases, and your own prose.

◆ Exercise #2: The Dialogue

The purpose of this exercise is to remind you that you are forming an argument within the context of an ongoing conversation about a given topic. Within this conversation, participants will inevitably touch upon certain common ideas, and very possibly they will develop claims that directly contrast with those of other participants.

► For this exercise, animate some of the opposing claims that you have encountered in your reading. Create a fictional dialogue between two or more authors (you pick the setting that is most appropriate). Since these “characters” will most likely be academics, they will have a habit of quoting texts, especially their own. Be sure to give each claim equal development, and avoid oversimplifying (even when discussing an idea with which you do not agree).

Manuscript Notes: This dialogue should be three double-spaced pages. Ordinarily a dialogue format does not call for MLA documentation, but you should supply it anyway. Remember to include a “Works Cited” list.

◆ Exercise #3: Argumentative Proposal

How do you plan to construct your own argument. Since your audience will be an academic one, your planning document should follow an accepted academic structure for presenting your claims and your evidence.

► Simply put, you will need to teach your instructor the following:
Here is one important claim in this ongoing conversation.

Here is an opposing claim in this ongoing conversation.

Here is what I think is questionable or problematic with some of these claims.

Here is my claim in this conversation.

Here is what other scholars might say about my claim.

For each item, you will need to provide brief summaries of the evidence you will be weaving into your essay. You will, of course, want your summary of what other scholars think to emphasize the passages most relevant to your own argument.

Manuscript Notes: Your planning document should be detailed and not simply a list of points; three double-spaced pages should suffice. When you quote, use MLA documentation; remember to include a “Works Cited” list.

◆ ESSAY III

Your primary objective for this paper will be to make a well-informed, carefully considered contribution to an on-going conversation or debate about an important topic (one that your professor may have chosen for you). Your audience for this essay is comprised of scholars who are interested in your topic and who may be aware of the important texts, thinkers, and arguments frequently cited within your chosen conversation. However, while your readers may be familiar with some of the more influential voices that you will cite, they will expect you to remind them of key words and statements. These academic readers like texts, and they respect well-read participants of the conversation, so you should use textual support as a way of establishing credibility as well.

Your academic readers, though, will not be reading your essay simply to “re-hear” authoritative voices; they want you to bring those voices into your argument — and they want you to prove that you have understood them — but they still expect your voice to predominate. So you must have something definite to contribute, even if it is only a revision, qualification, or correction of an existing belief or idea.

Using your planning document as a guide, take a few minutes to reread your previous exercises and review some of the “moves” your academic audience will expect you to make as you write your essay. For example, what are the larger implications of this conversation? Your readers will expect you to discuss established claims already in circulation within the conversation, and they will expect you to give these ideas a full and fair trial. But most of all your readers are interested in what your response is, and what your contribution to the conversation will be.

Remember that academic readers like a calm and methodical consideration of ideas; making an argument is not the same thing as being argumentative. Even though you may criticize another scholar’s position, your readers will not respond favorably to a
strident or sarcastic tone. Also, as before, keep in mind that while your evidence provides the foundation for your work, you need to keep your voice and your thinking front-and-center.

**Manuscript Notes:** This essay should be four to six double-spaced pages and calls for *MLA documentation*; you must include a “Works Cited” list at the end of your essay. When you quote key phrases or clauses from your text(s), you must provide parenthetical documentation. Follow the guidelines in your handbook.

**Epilogue: The Reflection**

Now that you’ve completed your progressions, *reflect* on the work you have done and to complete your *writing portfolio* for final assessment. In the reflective essay you should address your work in light of these questions:

- **What does your portfolio tell you about what you have learned in this term?**
- **How might you apply what you have learned to your work in other courses?**
- **What do you need to work on next in your writing?**

The most important aspect of a reflective essay is that you must *be honest!* Your goal here is, in part, to record the progress you have made, but you must also engage in a frank assessment of what you need to do next in order to continue developing as a writer.

During this term you have written a great deal; this is your opportunity to evaluate your progress, assess your accomplishments, and plan for the future.

► Write a carefully structured reflection on your progress as writer and thinker through your work in this class.

**Manuscript Notes:** This essay should be two to three double-spaced pages. When citing your own work, use *MLA parenthetical documentation.*