This syllabus is designed to engage students in written inquiry through a sustained engagement with the rhetoric of “the post-truth era.” Named the Oxford Dictionary’s 2016 Word of the Year, “post-truth” is an adjective defined as “relating or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.” Engaging with this contemporary talking point in the first-year writing classroom has its benefits: the content of the course closely aligns with the disciplinary discourse of rhetoric and composition; the topic is organically unfolding, in real time and on social media, as you teach; and students are eager to research, write about, and reflect on current events.

While usage of the term “post-truth” is often paired with contemporary political discussion, such as the recent presidential election, its rhetorical concerns are nothing new. This syllabus is designed, broadly, to examine the ways in which authoritative genres rely on emotion, personal belief, facts, and logic to construct arguments. During the course of the semester, students will consider how academic writing, documentary film, encyclopedias, institutional and popular archives, dictionaries, and style guides approach the question of “truth.” This inquiry is designed to: reflect on the work of academic writing and the university; deconstruct and re-imagine the dictionary definition of “post-truth”; and approach a new topic (“the post-truth era”) through long-standing conversations about logos, ethos, and pathos.

While the assignments in this course approach “truth” and “post-truth” generally, political discourse and contemporary events play a role in the day-to-day activities and the ongoing conversation of the course. Teaching a version of this course in Spring 2017, the following events occurred: President Trump and Sean Spicer made claims about the attendance of the presidential inauguration that were false; Kellyanne Conway used the term “alternative facts” to describe these claims; political resistance and protest broke out across the nation in response to the election, police brutality, immigration policy, and climate change; and President Trump revised the definition of the term “fake news” in a number of tweets. These events shaped the work of our class, students’ research inquiries, and our course vocabulary. Along with contemporary politics, I encourage instructors to consider historical events, as well (perhaps in line with your own research interests!). Early Cold War propaganda, neoliberalism, and liberalism are also productive sites of inquiry when coming to terms with the rhetoric of post-truth politics.
Assignments

The assignments in this baseline syllabus each consider an authoritative genre that purports to tell the truth. The first three major writing assignments are sequenced with at least one pre-writing assignment, and the four assignments were designed with FYW’s “Assignment Architecture” in mind. I encourage you to utilize or modify these assignments in your own classroom.

The first assignment in this course relies on a series of “guides” that my former FYW students have composed in groups. These guides are included in the appendix of this document, and could easily be switched out for another article on “post-truth.” In the second assignment, I have designed the archive to include easily accessible documentaries with which I am familiar; if you pick up this assignment, you may curate your own archive of documentaries for student selection, choose one documentary that all students write about, or ask students to select a documentary of their choosing.

The Academic Writer

This syllabus makes use of Lisa Ede’s The Academic Writer, and each writing assignment is written with this textbook in mind. In the first Unit, we use Ede to create a lingua franca of rhetorical terms to refer to both class readings and student writings. In the second unit, I have assigned readings from Ede alongside the students’ writing process (i.e., planning, drafting, revising, workshopping, etc.).

Digital Appendix

This link to the digital appendix includes links to some of the readings for this syllabus, examples of student writing, and some sample class activities.

I have found this class to be a lot of fun, for both my students and myself. My students have made heated defenses of the politics of emotion alongside #blacklivesmatter; they have actively watched C-SPAN; they have worriedly explained the post-truth era and political rhetoric to their grandmother over Thanksgiving dinner; they have proposed alternative uses for alternative facts; they have used George Orwell to criticize speeches by Barack Obama, during which he defended the use of war drones; and they have spotted fake news on their Facebook. While the post-truth era is a pretty terrifying time, I have found reading what my students have written about post-truth allows me to remain optimistic.

- Amy Fehr, Summer 2017
English 1010: Seminar in Academic Writing,  
“The Rhetoric of Post-Truth”

Instructor Amy Fehr  
amy.fehr@uconn.edu  
Office Location: Austin 235 / Office Hours TBD  
She/Her/Hers

Course Description  
The University of Connecticut’s First-Year Writing (FYW) seminars are characterized by collaborative, student-driven inquiry. As a general education course, FYW prepares students for future academic work by asking them to use writing to enter into and contribute to active academic conversations. The instructor in an FYW seminar provides a site and offers contexts with readings, central questions, and directed discussion for the development of this ongoing work. Through cycles of writing, feedback, and reflection, students pursue writing projects in which they select and define places where they might advance the class conversation. Writing projects in this course will be grounded in a semester-long inquiry of a fairly specific topic.

Course Inquiry  
In 2016, the Oxford Dictionary announced that their annual Word of the Year was “post-truth.” It defines “post-truth” as an adjective “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.” Recently, “post-truth” has achieved heightened relevance after the United States presidential election, the “Brexit” vote, and the usage of terms such as “alternative facts” and “fake news.” In this course, we will examine iterations of “truthiness” in political language and current events through the study of a variety of texts that purport to examine or tell the “truth,” including: political campaign texts, documentary film, journalism, dictionaries, and academic writing. Through this critical inquiry, this course will consider: What is the relationship between logos and pathos in the post-truth era? How does rhetoric work to shape “public opinion”? What are the politics of “appeals to emotion and personal belief”? What role does technology play in the post-truth era? How does a critical examination of post-truth help us come to terms with the genre of academic writing?

Course Outcomes  
By the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

- Practice composing and writing as acts of inquiry and discovery through written, aural, visual, and video texts.
- Identify yourself as a writer who can contribute to others’ knowledge and understanding.
- Analyze the context you are writing in along with other textual forms like video, infographics, respond to the situation with productive choices in approach and execution to deliver meaningful texts.
- Discover, analyze, and engage with others’ ideas in productive ways through readings of complex texts.
- Use others’ work responsibly and in a variety of ways, including as motivation for writing, as context to your own ideas, as a frame or method for analysis, as a way of moving your ideas forward, and as exhibits for analysis and interpretation.
- Extend your ideas to new ground in the context of others’ work.
- Develop methods and strategies for the conceptual, practical, and reflective work of writing.
- Determine and analyze conventions of the discipline; decide how to address the genre expectations of a discipline’s work, including how knowledge is created and how evidence is used to forward work in the discipline; includes the functional components of format, organization, document design, and citation.
- Use the principles of universal design to make your work accessible to the widest possible audience.

**Texts**

**Disability and Accessibility**
The First-Year Writing program is committed to making educational opportunities available to all students. If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (Wilbur Cross 204, 860-486-2020). They will work with you to accommodate your needs and provide me with a letter describing those accommodations. All information and documentation is confidential. Please contact me as soon as possible in the semester so that I can also make the necessary arrangements for your comfort in our classroom.

**The Writing Center**
The Writing Center employs tutors who work with students on their papers at any stage of the writing process—from brainstorming to reviewing final drafts to helping with specific difficulties you may have. This service is free and highly recommended for all students. You can sign up for an appointment on the [Writing Center website](#).  

**Integrity and Respect**
In this class, you may come into contact, and perhaps conflict, with communities whose ideals and perspectives may differ radically from your own. This will be a topic of discussion and interest, but it may also be uncomfortable, and we will seek to find meaning in those uncomfortable moments. As a class, we will maintain a sympathetic and compassionate outlook and keep an open mind throughout the course.

Additionally, in accordance with UConn policies and Title IX, this course will be a designated safe space for all students, regardless of background, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, socioeconomic status, race, or ethnicity. If you feel you have experienced discrimination or harassment at UConn, you can find support and resources at the Office of Institutional Equity. You may also contact Health Services, Counseling & Mental Health Services, and/or the Women’s Center. Please note that I am a mandatory reporter to the Office of Institutional Equity if I become aware of issues that may pose a danger to a student’s health or safety.

**Academic Integrity**
While studying and making use of the ideas and texts of others is central to the writing we will be doing in this course, this must be done in an ethical and appropriate way. Please review and abide by the University’s code on academic misconduct (plagiarism and misuse of sources), which will be distributed in class and can also be found on the [UConn Community Standards website](#); you will be held responsible for understanding these materials. Plagiarizing the work of others—passing off someone else’s work as your own—is a very serious offense, and anyone found plagiarizing will fail the project or the course. Please let me know if you have questions about what constitutes appropriate use and citation of other people’s work.
Multilingual Scholarship
This classroom is a multilingual and translingual space, and we speak and write across languages. I encourage you to speak to me about any concerns you have with language use (reading, speaking, and/or writing) in this course, and I encourage you to be respectful of your colleagues in this multilingual space.

Course Components

Participation
This is a seminar rather than a lecture course. Most of the learning in a seminar comes from the experience of making and doing rather than from “lessons provided by an expert.” Thoughtful discourse is an essential part of this class, and you will frequently work in groups of various sizes, which means you will need to be considerate of and attentive to others. It is your responsibility to keep up with the reading, to contribute to class conversation in the form of analytical comments or questions, and to attend class regularly and on time. See attendance policy below.

Reading
Although ENGL 1010 is described as a writing course, the writing you do here has a very close relationship to reading. Lisa Ede says that like writing, reading “is an act of composing, of constructing meaning through language and images” (16). The process of writing begins with careful reading of a situation, written text, or various media. You will be reading to find ways into the conversation in which an author or text is participating. Many of these texts are multi-layered and complex, and you should expect to read most texts more than once.

Writing
You will compose four major projects totaling the equivalent of 30 pages of revised, polished prose in this course. In order to accomplish this, you will be doing ample writing along the way, including in-class writing, homework assignments, and drafts of these major projects.

Revision
Each major writing project will go through a drafting process in which you shape your ideas and experiment with ways to best communicate this work. You should expect to put significant time and effort into the revision process and for projects to shift, change, and develop as you revise. Only the final projects will be assigned a grade, but all of your work may contribute to your final grade in the course.

Conferences and Peer Review
Conferences and peer review are integral to the goals of this course. Through the drafting process of each major project, we will use small group or individual conferences during, in addition to, or in place of regular class meetings. The quality of your involvement in these processes is a crucial factor in your participation grade in this course.

Information Literacy
ENGL 1010 provides the first stage of the University’s Information Literacy competency, including attention to university research and digital literacy. You should expect to use outside sources and
scholarly research to inform your work throughout the semester. While all assignments will provide opportunities for developing Information Literacy skills, we will have at least one assignment that will be built with this specific purpose in mind.

**Reflective Component**
The reflective portion of the course includes any time spent on characterizing, reconsidering, or qualifying one’s work. Reflection happens throughout the semester, usually in ways that complement writing projects by providing opportunities for a writer to imagine alternatives or trace lines of thought or activity.

**Course Concerns**
If you have any questions about the course or your final course grade, please see your instructor as soon as possible. If that conversation is not productive, please see or contact an Assistant Director of First-Year Writing to further discuss the issues at firstyearwriting@uconn.edu or 860-486-2859.

**Grading Scale & Policy**
All grades are entered as letter grades A-F. While pre-writing drafts will receive a letter grade, only second drafts of major projects will receive a letter grade. Participation grades will be posted every two weeks on Husky CT.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Projects (total)</th>
<th>70%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project 1</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 3</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Writing Assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COURSE POLICIES

Submitting Projects
Unless otherwise stated, all projects will be submitted via Husky CT in the form of a Word Document. Microsoft Word is available for you to download for free as UConn Students, and most campus computers are equipped with this program.

Attendance
The success of this seminar relies on your attendance. As such, you are expected to attend every class unless illness or emergency keeps you away. Your participation grade is calculated based on in-class work; as such, multiple absences will result in a decreased participation grade. If you need to miss class – due to illness, the observance of a religious holiday, an emergency, or as a UConn athlete -- please contact me in advance.

Late Projects
You are expected to turn in assignments on time as a matter of respect and professionalism. Assignments will be deducted ½ letter grade for each 12 hours that it is late. I understand that there may be circumstances that require you to turn in a project late; as such, I will consider an extension if you email me a written request 48 hours in advance of the deadline.

Incomplete Assignments
Projects will be deducted up to one full letter grade if they fall short of the page requirement/word count. Projects that fall over one-page below the required page count will not pass, will be returned to you as an incomplete, and will face the possibility of a grade deduction for lateness.

Electronics in Class
You are encouraged to bring electronic devices to class. These devices will allow you to research and write during class time. On some occasions, I may ask that you bring laptops to class for workshopping. If you do not own a laptop, the library has laptops that you may rent. Speak to me if you have any questions.

I expect that you will use technology in the classroom respectfully. Any abuse of technology (texting, messaging, browsing, etc.) may result in a lower participation grade.

Email Policy
Please allow me 24 hours (M-F) to respond to your email. I expect all online correspondence to be composed professionally, with a clear title and succinct message or question. I am happy to respond to questions via email or during office hours. Feel free to reach out.

Food and Drink
As our class covers many people’s traditional dining hours, I encourage you to eat beforehand. You may bring snacks and drinks as you need to class.
# ENGL 1010 Fall Schedule

[Instructors: I have included [optional] and [suggested] plans for some days; review and modify this document as needed!]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, August 28</td>
<td>First Day of Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, August 30</td>
<td>&gt; Read <em>TAW</em>, “Reading Rhetorically,” pp. 16-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, September 4</td>
<td>LABOR DAY, NO CLASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 6</td>
<td>&gt; Read <em>TAW</em>, “Writing and Rhetoric” pp. 6-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Read <em>TAW</em>, “Analyzing Rhetorical Situations,” pp. 51-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Read “Introduction to Post-Truth”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, September 11</td>
<td>&gt; Read <em>TAW</em>, “Reading Visual Texts,” pp. 41-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Read <em>TAW</em>, “Understanding how Analysis Works,” pp. 111-116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Prewriting Assignment Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 13</td>
<td>&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, September 18</td>
<td>&gt; PROJECT #1, VERSION #1 Due Today @ Time via Husky CT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; [In-Class] Read <em>TAW</em>, “Responses from Classmates,” pp. 302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; [Suggested: In-Class Workshopping]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 20</td>
<td>&gt; Read <em>TAW</em>, “Strategies for Revision,” pp. 288-301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, September 25</td>
<td>&gt; Read “How to Tell Stories with Evidence and Argument,” from <em>Representing Reality</em>, pp. 107-118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; PROJECT #1, VERSION #2 Due Today @ Time via Husky CT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, September 27</td>
<td>&gt; Read “How to Tell Stories with Evidence and Argument,” from <em>Representing Reality</em>, pp. 118-133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Read <em>TAW</em>, “Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing,” pp. 213-220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, October 2</td>
<td>&gt; Prewriting Assignment #2 Due TODAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, October 4</td>
<td>&gt; Read <em>TAW</em>, “Understanding how Synthesis Works,” pp. 135-142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Read <em>TAW</em>, Strategies for Planning, Drafting, Organizing, and Developing, pp. 273-285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, October 9</td>
<td>&gt; Read <em>TAW</em> “Making and Supporting Claims,” pp. 144-162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Read <em>Taw</em> “Understanding how Synthesis Works,” pp. 135-142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, October 11</td>
<td>&gt; PROJECT #2, VERSION #1 Due Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, October 16</td>
<td>&gt; Read <em>TAW</em> “Strategies for Revising, Editing, and Proofreading,” pp. 287-301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, October 18</td>
<td>&gt; [Optional] Read: “Archives in Formation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Complete “Wikipedia Training for Students”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, October 23</td>
<td>&gt; PROJECT #2, VERSION #2 Due Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, October 25</td>
<td>&gt; Read Wikipedia Article by Today  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; <em>Previews TAW</em>, “Doing Research: Joining the Scholarly Conversation,” pp. 183-211.  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; Prewriting Assignment #3 due today  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; Information Literacy / Library Research Day [Optional: Another day during this Unit]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, November 1</td>
<td>&gt; [Suggested] Class Redirected for Conferences with Instructor  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; PROJECT #3, VERSION #1 Due Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, November 6</td>
<td>&gt; PROJECT #3, VERSION #1 Due Today  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; PROJECT #3, VERSION #2 Due Today  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; PROJECT #4, VERSION #1 Due Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, November 8</td>
<td>&gt; [Suggested] “Fake News” Day (Videos/Apps/Articles)  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; Read Orwell, “Politics and the English Language”  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; PROJECT #3, VERSION #2 Due Today  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; PROJECT #4, VERSION #1 Due Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, November 13</td>
<td>&gt; PROJECT #3, VERSION #2 Due Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, November 15</td>
<td>&gt; PROJECT #3, VERSION #2 Due Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, November 20</td>
<td>&gt; THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASS  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; Read, David Foster Wallace “Present Tense”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, November 22</td>
<td>&gt; Read, David Foster Wallace “Present Tense”  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; PROJECT #4, VERSION #1 Due Today  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; Presentation of Final Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, November 27</td>
<td>&gt; PROJECT #4, VERSION #1 Due Today  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; Presentation of Final Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, November 29</td>
<td>&gt; PROJECT #4, VERSION #1 Due Today  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; Presentation of Final Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, December 4</td>
<td>&gt; Presentation of Final Project  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; Presentation of Final Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, December 6</td>
<td>&gt; Presentation of Final Project  &lt;br&gt;   &gt; Presentation of Final Project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prewriting Assignment #1: Visual Archive

Due: Date, Time, via Husky CT

For this assignment, you will determine one topic, question, or problem that has interested you since reading “Facts or Feelings: An Introduction to Post-Truth.” Consider drawing from your in-class writing reflections and written annotations for ideas. With this topic, question, or problem in mind, you will collect or produce 6-10 images that represent the discussion at hand. Each image should be accompanied by a 50-200 word explanation of the content and context of that image. What is the image showing? Is there anything visually interesting or important about this image? When was the image produced? Who produced this image, and why? How does this image fit within your visual archive?

Then, you will write a 1-2 page process note for your choice of visual archive. Why did you choose these images? How do these images represent, trouble, or help you think through your topic, question or problem? Does your topic, question, or problem change after assembling these images? What is the relationship between the text and images, here?

**Checklist**
- 6-10 images, accompanied by a 50-200 word description of the content and context of the image
- 1-2 Page Process Note

**Evaluation**
- You will receive a grade based on the completion of this assignment and your process note.
Project #1: Post-Truth Juxtaposition Project

First Version and Process Note Due: Month, Date, Time via Husky CT
Second Version and Revised Process Note Due: Month, Date, Time via Husky CT

Archive
- “Feelings or Facts? An Introduction to Post-Truth”
- The visual archive from your pre-writing assignment
- The Academic Writer, “Reading Visual Texts,” pp. 41-50

In “Feelings or Facts?” last year’s ENGL 1010 students defined the term “post-truth,” examined some problems and questions associated with usage of the term, and contextualized themselves as agents within the post-truth era. Now, at the beginning of a new semester with questions of reliability, evidence, facts, and truth still being contested, your role is to come-to-terms with “post-truth” through a juxtaposition of the essay “Facts or Feelings?” and your visual archive.

For this project, you will use juxtaposition as a rhetorical technique by positioning text in relation to images, which, through their mashing-up, create conversational space or a reaction from your viewers. Using “Feelings or Facts?” to frame an argument about a text, topic, or idea of your choosing, you will juxtapose excerpts from this text against a collection of images. How you choose to present the words and images together is up to you, and you will have to consider the rhetorical implication of certain designs and choices.

Unlike print media where a writer is concerned with clarification and order, you will deploy a juxtapositional approach when composing this mashup. Such an approach embraces disorientation, employs experiential sampling, and provides opportunities for viewers to find unrealized connections among disparate events and material things.

Both versions of your project should be accompanied by a 4-5 page process note describing the design choices you made and why you made them. Your process note should make use of Lisa Ede’s terminology concerning rhetoric and reading visual texts.

Procedure
This project will require two main steps. These steps can be taken in any order.

> Write about a text, topic, or idea using “Feelings or Facts?” as a frame (800-1200 words).
  > Condense into groups of short sentences (aim for segments of 3 or fewer sentences of less than 8 words)
> Assemble/Make a series of images that represent the text/topic/idea you’ve chosen to discuss
  > Organize and juxtapose these images with your text.

Some of you will find that it makes more sense to write your way into this assignment, while others may prefer to work primarily visually at first. Wherever you decide to start, both the visual and the linguistic modes will depend on each other, and you’ll want to think of both as you compose each element.

As you compose this mashup, consider:
• The first draft should be **manipulable** – that is, it should still be easy to change. This is easier to accomplish when working digitally, but it is probably worth practicing good file management and making sure you save separate files for each of the elements you produce. If you’re doing analog (non-digital) work, it’s best if you don’t “glue your pieces down” in a way that will make it difficult to revise. Consider penciling in your work or keeping text and image pieces separate so that you can move them around.

**Evaluation**

In evaluating your project, I will consider:

• Do you critically and creatively engage with your materials?
• Do you create and transform materials through juxtaposition and sequencing of image and text? Do you explain this transformation in your process note?
• Is your selection, organization, and commentary on the materials strategic? Do you explain this strategy in your process note?
• Do you consider, in your process note and your composition, the rhetorical situation (Ede 51-67).
Prewriting Assignment #2: Film Review

Due: Date, Time, via Husky CT

I have curated a short list of documentary films readily available online. Your task is to choose one of these films and write a short (3-4 page) film review. Like other examples from the genre, which we have read in class, your review should function as a **summary** of the film, an **analysis** of the filmic text, and an **evaluation** of these two parts. Essentially, in your evaluation, you will be making a **claim** concerning the film's ethical, stylistic, and narrative merits.

> **Summary**: As you write your summary, consider your reader. Knowing that you cannot summarize the entire film in detail, what information does your reader – a potential viewer – need to know? Given the work of your analysis, what summary provides the appropriate background information?

> **Analysis**: As you write, consider what you know about reading images from Lisa Ede. Using our dictionary of film terms, include textual analysis in your film review. Remember, Ede writes that analysis “involves separating something into parts and determining how these parts function to create a whole” (111). The purpose of your analysis should be to support your evaluation. How can you use an analysis of language, image, and sound as evidence to make a statement about the film?

> **Evaluation**: Unlike the work of a typical academic essay, film reviews require you to make a value judgement. Using the work of your summary and analysis, make a strong claim about why someone should or should not view this film. What are its merits? What aspects of the film are troubling or problematic?

**Evaluation**

In evaluating your project, I will consider:

- Do you thoughtfully, succinctly summarize the film?
- Do you make use of the image, sound, and language in a film to perform analysis?
- Do you provide a clear evaluation of the film that is supported within your review?
Project #2: Telling Stories with Evidence and Argument

First Version Due: Month, Date, Time via Husky CT
Second Version Due: Month, Date, Time via Husky CT

Archive
- “Telling Stories with Evidence and Arguments” from Representing Reality by Bill Nichols
- A documentary film of your choice (see “Documentary Archive”)

In “Telling Stories with Evidence and Arguments,” Bill Nichols suggests that, “At the heart of a documentary is less a story and its imaginary world than an argument about the historical world” (111). In this essay, you will continue Nichols’ work of negotiating the complicated relationship between “essayist” and fictional characteristics of documentary film. What does it mean, we may ask, to “tell a story with evidence and argument?”

For this 5-7 page essay, you will explore a documentary film from the class archive to engage with Nichols’ claim about the relationship between documentary and reality. Your task will be to analyze the ways in which the film makes use of evidence and argument for an ethical or ideological end. Ultimately, you should make a claim about how this film complicates, compliments, and/or confuses one of Nichols’ key arguments.

Nichols’ essay is intricate, and he makes numerous claims throughout the chapter; he also troubles the binary between fiction and reality, and so too should you. As you enter into conversation with Nichols, aim to:

- Enter into conversation with Nichols in a purposeful, non-binary way beyond “I agree” or “I disagree”
- Determine which moments or terms from Nichols’ text will be useful to consider alongside the documentary; it would be difficult to focus on every nuance of Nichols’ argument. Choose, instead, a key word or section consider
- Account for the larger aims of Nichols’ text while also focusing on specific moments or terms

The purpose of this essay is not to “apply” Nichols’ argument to your documentary; rather, you should make moves to extend or trouble Nichols’ work through your exploration of a new text (“forward the conversation”).

Evaluation

A successful essay in this class must be at least five full pages in length. In evaluating your essay, I will also consider:

> Do you summarize Nichols and the documentary film responsibly, concisely, and with attention to your reader?
> Do you read the filmic text and provide evidence for that reading? Do you enter into the conversation by using terms common to writing-about-film?
> Do you provide evidence for your claims, using carefully-selected moments from Nichols or the film?
> Do you engage with Nichols in a non-binary way? Do you use the space of your essay to extend and/or trouble one of Nichols’ claims?
> Do you engage with a specific moment or claim from Nichols while giving attention to his chapter as a whole?
> Do you engage with specific moments or claims from the documentary film while giving attention to the film as a whole?

Presentation

All essays should be cited and formatted in MLA Style; Times New Roman 12-point font, 1” margins, appropriate headers; Works Cited Page.
Prewriting Assignment #3: Research, Wikipedia, and Credibility

Due: Date, Time, via Husky CT

You have completed “Wikipedia Training for Students.” During this tutorial, Wikipedia defines its encyclopedic and archival work in opposition to “original research.” They write that: “Typical academic writing requires students to do original research, have a point of view, and argue it. Wikipedia, however is a tertiary source of information – based on a collection of secondary sources writing about a primary source. Simply put, Wikipedia is not a place to publish original research, but rather is a summary of what has been written in reliable sources about the original topic of research.”

Your work for this assignment is to find a Wikipedia page that that both interests you and connects to the conversation on “post-truth,” even loosely. After choosing a page that interests you, write a short (3-4 page) summary and evaluation of that page using Wikipedia’s guidelines as a guide. Consider the following: How is information presented and organized? Does this article follow the Wikipedia guidelines concerning neutrality? Why or why not? Are statements that require attribution cited? What kinds of statements are cited? Are these citations “reliable?” How do you know? What sorts of sources are cited? How has “consensus” been reached on this page? What is missing from this page? How might any gaps or exclusions change the focus of this encyclopedia entry?

Evaluation

In evaluating your project, I will consider:

- Do you provide readers with a concise, succinct summary of the Wikipedia page?
- Do you evaluate the page according to Wikipedia’s guidelines?
- Do you consider the sources and their reliability?
Project #3: “Original Research” in and on the Post-Truth Era

First Version Due: Month, Date, Time via Husky 10T
Second Version Due: Month, Date, Time via Husky CT

Archive

- At least four sources, including one retrieved from a Wikipedia bibliography
- A scholarly source found via the library website

Recently, we have been comparing the work of Wikipedia – a collaborative encyclopedia – with the work of an academic essay. While both genres (often) strive for authority and objectivity, the use of original research in the academic essay allows for synthesis, analysis, and inquiry-driven projects.¹

For this 8-10 page research essay, you will contribute to an ongoing conversation concerning the idea of “post-truth” through the synthesis of at least four sources of your choosing. While the Wikipedia page you visit may not make explicit connections to post-truth, your work as a writer is to forge those connections; as such, you will find that almost any topic you can think of is relevant to the conversation (though some may work better than others). After assembling and synthesizing your bibliography, you will utilize these texts – and your own ideas – to form an argument about an issue within the post-truth era. Due to the limitations of this project (time and page length), you should strive for an archive, project, and inquiry that is focused, specific, and considerate of your strengths and interests.

Research Procedure

> **Wikipedia Source:** Determine which source(s) you will use from Wikipedia. You may use the “References” or “Further Reading” section to search for sources. Some of these sources may be linked to webpages, and some of these sources may be found via the library. Wikipedia, itself, should not be used as a source for this essay.

> **Other Sources:** Using Wikipedia, Google Scholar, Google, the library website, or another method, choose an additional three sources, minimum.

> **Library Source:** Research an additional source via the library website. After composing your archive, you will find another source – one not included in the Wikipedia bibliography – to add to your archive. This source must be found via the library website.

* These five sources will compose your bibliographic archive. How will you determine what to include? What to leave out? How is your choice of archive a rhetorical move, and how will this choice affect your argument? *

Evaluation

In evaluating your project, I will consider:

> Do you choose six sources that work together in your essay?

> Do you synthesize your sources in a meaningful way? Do your organizational/design choices make sense for your archive?

¹ In moving our attention from Wikipedia to the academic essay, we might ask: How is ethos negotiated differently in these two genres? What is gained and what is lost when we discard the presumption of total "unbiased objectivity" in favor of original research? How does "original research" involve bias or subjectivity? What do we, as individual authors, add to the conversation through the genre of the essay?
> Does your “outside research” add to the conversation?
> Do you come to a conclusion using the work of your project? Is your conclusion supported by the text within your essay?
Project #4: A Guide for the Post-Truth Era

First Version Due: Month, Date, Time via Husky CT
Second Version Due: Month, Date, Time via Husky CT

“Our regular citizens tend to go to The Dictionary for authoritative guidance. Rarely, however, do we ask ourselves who exactly decides what gets in The Dictionary or what words or spellings” (Wallace 75).

George Orwell and David Foster Wallace argue that language is inherently political. Orwell, for example, takes issue with certain stylistic choices that are used for political effect. Wallace, on the other hand, considers the role of personal and “authoritative” approaches to lexicography in his article “Authority and American Usage.” Both essays are products of their current social and political environment. What would a dictionary or style guide look like for the “Post-Truth Era”? How does our current social and political environment pose particular problems concerning language?

For your final project in this class, you will create either a DICTIONARY or a STYLE GUIDE for the “Post-Truth Era.” You will compose at least five “entries” for your dictionary or style guide. This work will be supported by a 4-6 page essay and a 2-3 page process note. This process note should explain your design choices, your choice of entries, and the rhetorical moves you make in this essay. This note should also reflect on the process of composing this project in the context of the post-truth era and this class.

We have spent this semester discussing, engaging with, and writing about issues surrounding “truthiness.” This project is asking you to reflect on our ongoing conversation around rhetoric in genres that purport to tell the “truth.” Here are some ideas to get you thinking:

- In Unit One, we considered the ways in which images and text work together to make meaning. How does the presentation of images and text in your project contribute to your rhetorical effect?
- In Unit Two, we thought about the role of the personal in representing reality. How will your project – like Wallace’s or Vonnegut’s – make use of the personal? Or not?
- In Unit Three, we considered the authority of the archive. What sort of archive does your dictionary or style guide represent? What is included and what is missing in your entries? What are the effects of these gaps and inclusions?
- What are the limitations of this project? How might you organize this dictionary or style guide thematically around an issue, problem, or question that interests you?

Checklist

- A Dictionary or a Style Guide with at least five entries
- An 4-6 page introductory essay
- A 2-3 page process note
PART I: Dictionary or Style Guide

Choice One: Style Guide

This Style Guide should argue for an approach to writing with style in the Post Truth Era. These suggestions should involve examples, descriptions, and advice for your audience. You should have, at least, five entries included in your guide. Be prepared to theorize and support your choices in your process note. *If you choose the style guide, you must cite George Orwell.*

Choice Two: Dictionary

This Dictionary should provide at least five words, along with definitions, that seem appropriate to discuss in the Post-Truth Era. I am not asking you to reproduce an already established dictionary definition; rather, I am asking you to compose an original definition for a word. This dictionary entry must include: a definition and an example. You may also choose to include other formal elements of a dictionary, such as: etymology, pronunciation, synonyms, antonyms, etc. Be prepared to theorize and support your choices in the essay portion of this assignment. *If you choose the dictionary, you must cite David Foster Wallace.*

Format and Design

Design is a rhetorical choice. Design is part of the writing process. This project will require you to make some important design decisions. How will your dictionary or style guide be situated on the page? What font will you use? Will you have a numbered list? An essay? Will you include pictures? Will you cite other words within your dictionary/style guide?

During the drafting process, we will consider the rhetorical effects of design.
PART II: Introductory Essay

Your dictionary or style guide may be serious, professional, satiric, descriptivist, SNOOT-y, or anything in between. You could model the *Oxford English Dictionary*; a Buzzfeed style list; *The Devil’s Dictionary; Urban Dictionary*; and on and on. The approach is entirely up to you.

The essay portion of this assignment, however, should follow academic conventions. The required length is 4-6 pages. The rhetorical purpose of this essay is to:

(a) **Introduce your dictionary or style guide**
   This essay will act as an introduction to the work of your dictionary or style guide. What do readers need to know before jumping in? What context is important? How will you establish your *ethos* in this section?

(b) **Consider the conversation and context**
   Using what you have learned this semester, you should establish the context of the “Post-Truth Era.” You should also demonstrate an understanding of the genre (dictionary or style guide) in which you are participating, using Orwell and/or Wallace.

(c) **Establish a problem or question that your entries and essay considers,**
   This semester, we have outlined a number of issues concerning rhetoric and post-truth. How does your dictionary or style-guide complicate or reinforce some of these problems or questions? How do you negotiate “facts” and “emotion”? How do you make use of *ethos* as a rhetorical device?

(d) **Argue why the entries you chose are relevant to the Post-Truth Era**
   You should defend and explain your choice of entries. Why are these five words/guide/rules the ones that you chose? What do these words reveal?

Note: The essay portion of this assignment should rely on MLA style citations.

**Evaluation**

This project will be graded as a single entity. I image that your entries and essay will work alongside one another. I will focus on the following for evaluation:

- Are you entries meaningful and substantial?
- Do you consider design as a rhetorical choice?
- Is your *context* well-researched and defined?
- Do you consider the broader conversation surrounding language and politics?
- Do you present a claim that explains the interventions and stakes of your project?
PART III: Reflection

This semester, we have critiqued academic writing, documentary film, encyclopedias, archives, news media, social media, and political language. We have critiqued these genres by examining their rhetorical choices and efficacy, their transparency, their biases, their use of facts and emotion, and on and on.

Now, you have constructed your own original work for the post-truth era. For this 2-3 page reflection, which will be a completion grade only, I want you to consider some of the following questions:

- In your essay and dictionary/style guide, how do you negotiate the issue of ethos?
- Does your essay and/or dictionary/style guide make any appeals to emotion or ideological belief?
- Does your essay and/or dictionary/style guide make use of any facts?
- How does your dictionary and/or style guide compare to Wallace’s or Orwell’s? What has changed?
- How has your study of “the post-truth era” and academic writing affected the way that you have approached this assignment?
- After reading Orwell and Wallace, how has your understanding of “authority” impacted your writing process for this assignment? What was it like to write within an authoritative genre? How does it compare to the work of an academic essay?
- Does your dictionary, style guide, or essay contribute to the post-truth era? Does it complicate it? Why?
Bibliography

Project One:

- FYW students. “Introduction to Post-Truth” (optional) [See “Appendix”]

Project Two:


Project Three:


Project Four: