

WR153: Writing, Research & Inquiry with Digital/Multimedia Expression
“I is for Ireland: Irish Children’s Picture Books In and Outside of Ireland”

Instructor Name: Dr. Anna Panszczyk

Course Dates: June 11th-July 26th

Office Hours: by appointment and after class

Course Time: see schedule

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Course Credits: 4 credits + 3 BU Hub Units (Writing; Research and Information Literacy; Creativity and Innovation)

Course Description

Although we are often encouraged to write what we know, the best research writing is motivated by our interest in the unknown: What do we want to discover, how can we discover it, and what are the most effective ways to communicate our discoveries? These questions will drive our work in WR 153. Building on WR 120 or its equivalent, this class will help you cultivate your writing and research skills through a range of assignments, including significant research-based writing in which you will be responsible for identifying and refining a topic, devising research questions, and answering those questions by finding and using a range of scholarly and non-scholarly sources. As a course that earns a Hub Unit in Creativity and Innovation, WR 153 will give you an opportunity to design, research, and execute a sustained project or series of projects with an emphasis on the stages of design thinking. Through generating ideas, imagining an audience’s needs, developing strategies for implementation, offering feedback to your peers, redesigning in response to feedback and reflection, and risking productive failure, you will develop the skills and persistence to bring your project to fruition. You will also come to understand creativity as a learnable, iterative process that can be applied in any area of study. The specific topic of this section is deception.

The specific topic of this section is Irish children’s picture books. Focusing on critical and scholarly readings of modern Irish children’s picture books, we will explore the ways in which such literature functions as both visual and literary art. We will also examine how the genre of the picture book captures and constructs the experience of being a child. In addition, through the study of picture books, writing about picture books and the creation of our own picture books, we will discuss what it means to be Irish to a child both within and outside of Ireland.

Finally, in this class, 60% of your grade is guaranteed if you complete the majority of your assignments, hand them in on time, and if you are a present and prepared student for our class. This type of grading, as explained at the conclusion of this syllabus, encourages students to feel more free in exploring a range of research methods as well as the writing styles of different fields.

Course Objectives

You will receive three Hub units for this class: Writing, Research and Information Literacy, and Creativity and Innovation.

You will develop your abilities to:

- Generate ideas and create strategies for implementing those ideas

- Strategically search for and select both scholarly and non-scholarly sources and read them with understanding, appreciation, and critical judgment
- Express yourself orally and converse thoughtfully about complex ideas
- Engage a range of sources in order to address research questions and to communicate findings in the form of responsible, considered, and well-structured arguments
- Produce clear, coherent work in a range of genres and styles, using different media and modes of expression as appropriate
- Plan, draft, and revise efficiently and effectively, and help your peers do the same by responding productively to their work
- Reflect on how research, reading, writing, and revision practices differ for varied audiences, genres, and purposes
- Identify approaches that promote creativity and innovation

Instructional Format, Course Pedagogy, and Approach to Learning

Although they differ in their subject content, all WR seminars share common goals and lead you through a sequence of assignments that emphasize a process of planning, drafting, and revising informed by feedback from your classmates and instructor. Seminar activities also give you opportunities to engage in focused scholarly inquiry and discussion.

In WR 153, you will learn about and practice design thinking as you undertake a sustained project or series of projects related to our course topic. Design thinking is a non-linear creative process that will help you develop the skills and persistence to bring your project to fruition and can be applied to practical and conceptual problems in other areas of study and life. The process involves the following steps:

Understand

Students will develop a foundation for their work by exploring issues and approaches relevant to the course topic, as well as previous work in the field.

Empathize

Students will practice empathy by demonstrating their awareness and understanding of the audience for whom they write or create.

Define

Based on their observations and insights, students will articulate a problem or question that will motivate their work over the course of the semester.

Ideate

Students will generate new ideas and possible solutions by challenging assumptions and engaging in a variety of creative activities.

Prototype

Students will start to create solutions and implement their ideas into written, digital or other forms in order to capture ideas, but also redefine choices.

Test

Students will share drafts with others in order to gain feedback and insight into improving final versions.

Assess/Reflect

Students will regularly reflect on and evaluate their peers' and their own processes and final outcomes.

In this course, you will also conduct individual and/or group research for your project, exploring new ways to find, evaluate, and engage with information from different sources and in different formats. You will become better able to select and use information sources strategically to formulate and respond to research questions and to participate in scholarly and non-scholarly conversations about your topic. You will become a more flexible writer by adapting your inquiry to address different audiences and integrating research into your writing in various ways to create new knowledge. Reflecting on your approaches to creativity, research, and writing will prepare you to adapt these to future occasions.

Books and Other Course Materials

Scans of required readings from following text will be posted on Blackboard:

Turabian, Kate L., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *Student's Guide to Writing College Papers*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2010.

Critical Texts:

Bang, Molly. *Picture This: How Pictures Work*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2000. (available digitally)

Picture books:

Colton, Nicola. *A Dublin Fairytale*. Dublin, Ireland: The O'Brien Press, 2015.

Waddell, Martin *Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?* Illustrated by Barbara Firth. New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1988. (copies will be provided)

Jeffers, Oliver. *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*. New York, NY: Philomel Books, 2007.

Courseware

Our class has a Blackboard site that contains the syllabus, assignments, and other course-related materials. You can log in to our Blackboard page at: <http://learn.bu.edu/>.

During the semester you will post, on occasion, to a class Padlet (link on our blackboard)

All Boston University students have free access to Microsoft Office (a suite of basic personal and professional computing software) and to Adobe Creative Cloud (a suite of design and multimedia communication software). Most BU courses require Microsoft Office or the equivalent. Many sections of WR 153 require one or more Adobe applications.

Download your free Microsoft Office suite here:

<https://www.bu.edu/tech/services/cccs/desktop/distribution/microsoft/studentoffice/>.

Request your free Adobe Creative Cloud license here:

<http://www.bu.edu/tech/services/teaching/digital-multimedia-production/adobe-creative-cloud/request/>.

Course Requirements and Assignments

- Assigned readings
- Frequent low-stakes writing exercises, including homework, in-class writing, and reflective writing
- Contribution to and completion of WR cumulative portfolio
- Frequent and varied activities engaging in innovative and creative practices and design thinking
- A semester-long research project
- Regular peer review
- Two (or more) instructor conferences
- Regular class attendance and active participation

The scope of the major assignments include an initial self-assessment, a shorter analytical paper, scaffolding assignments for larger capstone assignment, a picture book, a capstone, a presentation, and a final self assessment

Grading and Evaluation

I am using a method of evaluation known as contract grading. This method will keep you accountable for completing and handing in assignments on time, while lowering stress, encouraging risk-taking, and fostering a caring and collaborative class community.

You are guaranteed a B+ for 60% of your grade under the grading contract if you:

- Complete the tasks described on major assignments sheets by the due dates
- Attend class and arrive on time, including for required conferences with your instructor (see attendance policies below)
- Complete informal, low-stakes assignments (e.g., reading, homework exercises)
- Give thoughtful written and spoken peer feedback and work faithfully with your group on other collaborative tasks
- Sustain effort and investment on each draft of all major assignments.
- Make substantive revisions when the assignment is to revise—not just editing or touching up
- Copyedit all minor and major assignments (spell-check, check for grammatical errors and consistency, etc.)

The remainder of your grade will be determined by your Final Capstone Project (30%) and Participation (10%).

For more details, see the Grading Contract at the end of this syllabus.

Instructor Feedback

I am committed to providing you with timely written or oral feedback on one draft of each major assignment and written feedback on the final version of each major assignment. You can generally expect my responses to your drafts within one week of your punctual submission of them; I will do my best to return final versions within two weeks.

In addition to giving you feedback on your work, at the end of each major assignment, I will let you know if you are meeting the expectations of the contract.

Participation and Attendance

Since this course is a seminar, your regular attendance and active participation are essential both to your own learning and to your classmates' learning. Under ordinary circumstances, missing more than one week of class will lower your final grade. Missing more than two weeks of class may lead to a failing grade for the course. If you have a special obligation that will require you to miss several classes (e.g., religious observances, varsity athletics), please talk with me at the beginning of the semester. Missed conference appointments will be counted as absences.

Late and Missed Assignments

Unless you make other arrangements with me in advance, graded assignments will be penalized by one-third of a letter grade for each day they are late. Please note too that we will regularly work with our exercises and drafts in class. If you are habitually late with your assignments, you will be unable to participate fully in the class.

I am committed to providing you with timely written or verbal feedback on one draft of each major assignment and written feedback and a grade on the final version of each major assignment. *You can generally expect my responses to your drafts within one week of your punctual submission of them; graded final versions will be returned to you within two weeks.*

Resources

CAS Writing Center

The CAS Writing Center offers free, one-on-one appointments with well-trained peer writing consultants for students to discuss their work for WR courses. These writing consultations are collaborative conversations in which you can expect to be actively involved. Our consultants will not edit or correct your work for you, but they will ask you questions and offer suggestions to help you do your own best work.

Consultants will work with you at any stage in the drafting or revision process, and on any type of assignment for your WR course, including non-academic and creative writing assignments, presentations, and multimedia projects. The Writing Center strives to be

an inclusive space for students of all identities and all linguistic and cultural backgrounds. We are particularly eager to support multilingual students, first-generation college students, and anyone else who is hoping to build their confidence and skill as a writer.

To ensure that we can offer support to as many students as possible, students can typically book one 45-minute consultation each week. You can schedule an appointment by visiting our website: <http://www.bu.edu/writingprogram/the-writing-center/>

Academic Integrity

In this class, we will discuss conventions for using and citing sources in academic papers and in other genres we study. Cases of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the disciplinary procedures described in Boston University's Academic Conduct Code. All WR students are subject to the CAS code, which can be read online: <http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>

Writing Program AI Use Guidelines

At orientation, you learned that it is only allowable to use generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) to “generate ideas, words, designs, or any other type of work product” when the use of AI has been authorized.

Please note that the following AI uses are authorized across all WR classes:

- Using AI tools to learn about or translate terms or vocabulary words (*not* translate entire papers)
- Using AI tools to offer you feedback on whether your grammar and usage conform with standard academic English. (Note: There may be times when the choice not to use standard academic English in your writing is appropriate and/or effective.)

It is not necessary to cite the AI tool for these two Writing Program-authorized uses.

If I authorize additional uses of AI tools for particular assignments, I will do so in writing, and I will offer guidance on if and how to cite the AI tool.

Remember that ultimately you are responsible for any work you submit, including any language, ideas, or information that is introduced through your use of AI tools.

Additional Resources

Additional student resources can be found [here](http://www.bu.edu/wpnet/resources-1-2/) (<http://www.bu.edu/wpnet/resources-1-2/>).

Inclusion in Our Community

Classroom Climate

In this class, we are committed to treating each other equitably and inclusively. We respect one another's dignity and privacy; treat one another fairly; and honor one another's experiences, beliefs, perspectives, abilities, and backgrounds, regardless of race, religion, language, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identification,

disability status, socio-economic status, national identity, or any other identity markers. We appreciate the language variation within our community, and as we develop strategies to communicate effectively in college and beyond, we recognize that the norms of academic writing, and of writing in general, are constantly evolving. We value open-minded inquiry, and we critically engage with ideas in diverse texts to learn about perspectives diverging from our own. We acknowledge that doing so may be uncomfortable at times, although it should not make anyone feel unsafe. We seek to challenge ourselves and help one another learn.

This commitment reflects values shared across the [Writing Program](#) and the [University](#). If you ever have any concerns about the classroom climate, you are welcome to reach out to me or, if it is more comfortable for you, to the [CAS D&I office](#) and its [Community Values & Resources Team](#).

Name and Pronouns

I will ask that all students share their names and pronouns at the beginning of the semester. Please feel free to use any name, given name, nickname, etc. that you wish: your name is not “too hard,” and I will work to pronounce it correctly. If you have questions or concerns, or if you need to make a change in your name and/or pronouns mid-semester, please do not hesitate to contact me at any point.

For further information on how to change your name at BU (and for additional support related to gender diversity), please click [here](#). You can also change your name on Blackboard by editing your profile.

Office of Disability and Access Services

I recognize that all of us learn in different ways. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please talk to me as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for accommodations that will meet your learning needs and the requirements of the course. Whether or not you have a documented disability, BU provides many support services that are available to all students.

Disability & Access Services (<https://www.bu.edu/disability/>) is the office responsible for assisting students with disabilities. If you have a disability that interferes with your learning (whether visible or invisible, physical or mental), you are encouraged to register with this office. Disability & Access Services will work with you to determine appropriate accommodations for your courses, such as additional time on tests, staggered homework assignments, or note-taking assistance. This office will give you a letter outlining the accommodations you need that you can share with your teachers; specific information about your disability will remain private. If you have any questions about accommodations or what constitutes a disability, I invite you to speak with me or to Disability & Access Services.

Course Schedule

This schedule is intended as a blueprint* and is subject to change based on the needs of the class. Any changes will be announced in class and will be posted on Blackboard.

Week 1 **Orientation**

Unit 1: Course Foundations

In this module, you will learn how research in this discipline works, including what is studied, how relevant sources might be located, how to approach sources rhetorically, and how to analyze and appreciate work in this genre. You will be introduced to design thinking's concepts of understanding, empathizing, defining, ideating, prototyping, testing, and reflecting/assessing and you will consider how theory sources might help you identify meaningful questions or problems about specific exhibits to address in course projects. You will demonstrate an awareness of the rhetorical situation of scholarly writing and be able to locate scholarly conversations in a disciplinary context, and you will learn to use sources in a variety of ways, including as background, exhibit, argument, and theory sources.

Week 2

1st class

First Day of Class

Discussion: defining the literature, syllabus, genre, audience, reading understanding and reading for engagement

Reading due: Turabian's *Student Guide* (scan of chapter 1) and "[What is Design Thinking and Why Is It So Popular?](#)"

In-class Reading: Waddell's *Can't You Sleep, Little Bear?*

In-class Writing: a summary of *Bear*, self-assessment

Learning Goals: introduce topics, goals, and terminology

2nd class

"The Scope of Research Questions and Conversations" (complete activity on blackboard BEFORE class)

Discussion: Assignment 1, final self-assessment, the picture as image, reading for understanding vs. reading for engagement, summary vs.

analysis, prereading, notetaking, Portfolio check-in (**Literacy narrative due for any student who has not started a portfolio**)

Reading due: Colton's *A Dublin Fairytale* and Bang's *Picture This: How Pictures Work*

In-class Writing: reflective

Learning Goals: practice rigorous analysis

3rd class

Self-Assessment due (on blackboard)

Guest Speaker (details to come)

II. Research as Exploration and Inspiration

In this module, you will conduct open-ended research to develop and shape a research question that will drive your project or projects. You will design and propose an executable research project, communicate research plans clearly in an audience-appropriate genre and style, respond productively to peer work and feedback as you

* Note there is another possible guest speaker and field trip that may shift our schedule. I will let you know when and if that happens.

revise writing and other types of work, and reflect on research questions, writing, and practices in your own work and in work from assigned research genres. You will simultaneously create original work in the genre you have chosen and develop patience and persistence in your practices.

Week 3

4th class

Deadline for all students in their first semester of WR to set up their Digication portfolio

Creativity Workshop

Reading due: “Children’s Literature and the Child Flaneur” by Eric L. Tribunella

5th class

Self-Assessment remediation due (in class)

Have access to selected picture book in class

Draft of Assignment 1 Introduction due (for class)

Padlet postings due (for class)

Discussion: scholarly claims, refresher on introductions, draft workshop and draft workshop forms (DWFs)

Reading due: Turabian’s *Student Guide*: read chapters 7 and 8

In-class Writing: introduction to Assignment 1, DWFs for Assignment 1 draft workshop

Learning Goals: reviews patterns of writing

Week 4

6th class

Plagiarism activities in blackboard (Academic Integrity: Avoiding Plagiarism and Academic Integrity AND Part 2: Quoting, Paraphrasing, Summarizing)

Draft of Assignment 1 due (for class)

Discussion: draft workshop

Reading due: Turabian’s *Student Guide*: read chapters 9 and 10

In-class Writing: filling out DWFs

Learning Goals: review conventions for using and citing sources; plan and draft efficiently and effectively

7th class

field trip: “Experience Gaelic Games”

III. Focusing and Shaping Research

In this module, you will apply the best practices of writing and research—planning, drafting, integrating feedback, and revising—to communicate your research to a specific audience with authority and precision in a genre-specific structure. In addition to continued practice with the skills introduced in Module I, you will evaluate and responsibly draw on different kinds of sources, consider the significance of your argument and how you might best motivate readers, apply principles of style to improve prose clarity, and reflect on how you can apply the lessons of this module to future writing assignments. You will also consider instructor/peer feedback and principles of design thinking as you work to improve an original creative or innovative project and bring it to completion.

Week 5

8th class

Final version of Assignment 1 due (on blackboard by end of Thursday)

Library Research activities on blackboard (due BEFORE class):

“Research and Information Literacy”
“The Early Stages of Research”

Library Research

Discussion: BEAM/BEAT, researching credible sources, Wikipedia, transitions, conclusions

Assignment 2, alternative genres, presentations

Reading due: Turabian’s *Student Guide*: read chapters 4 and 5, *The Incredible Book Eating Boy* by Oliver Jeffers

In-class Writing: free writing

Learning Goals: identify the distinguishing features, audience, purpose of new genres

IV. Closing Reflection

In this module, you will reflect on learning in different genres and modes for different audiences and purposes and you’ll consider how you can transfer your new knowledge to other areas of your studies and your life.

9th class Field Trip **10:30-1**
Museum of Literature, Dublin (details to be finalized)

Week 6

10th class **Pitch presentations due** (in class)
Annotated Bibliography due (on blackboard by the end of day – we will work on this in class)
Discussion: research genres, preparing for final presentations
Reading due: Turabian’s *Student Guide*: read 13.4 (on preparing for oral presentations)
In-class Writing: free writing
Learning Goals: reflect on research questions and practices

11th class **Draft of Proposal due** (for class)
Final Proposal due (on blackboard by the end of Saturday)
Bring in class a list of 10 of words, phrases, descriptions
Discussion: Assignment 3, rethinking organization, Digication
In-class Writing: “Wordless Project”
Learning Goals: apply principles of style to improve prose clarity

Unit 5: Remediation: Translating Your Research into a New Genre and Mode

In this unit, we will continue to practice composition and research while working in different genres and modes, exploring the affordances and challenges of digital/multimedia communication.

Week 7

12th class **1st Draft of Assignment 3 (essay) due**
Discussion: draft workshop
In-class Writing: filling out DWFs
Learning Goals: plan and draft efficiently and effectively

13th class **2nd Draft of Assignment 3 (essay AND picture book) due**
Discussion: draft workshop
In-class Writing: filling out DWFs

Learning Goals: plan and draft efficiently and effectively

Unit 6: Closing Reflection

In this unit, you will reflect on what you have learned in this course and consider how you can transfer your new knowledge to other areas of your studies and your life.

Week 8

14th class

Last Day of Class; Course Evaluations

Final version of Assignment 3 (essay) due (on blackboard)

Oral Presentations due

Discussion: draft workshop

In-class Writing: filling out DWFs

Learning Goals: connect the semester's learning to other contexts

Final Self-Assessment due (on blackboard) by end of exam period

15th class

Final exams (plan TK)

Grading Contract

Because worry over grades can often keep students from taking risks in their research and writing, this course will use a method of evaluation known as “contract grading.” This method will keep students accountable for completing and handing in assignments on time, and will also provide an atmosphere conducive to growing as a writer especially as you learn and explore new ways of writing in different disciplines.

Therefore, you are guaranteed a grade of a B+ for 60% of the work you do in this class (this includes everything aside from the final version of the Final Capstone Project and participation) if you meet all of the following conditions:

1. You are prepared for each class. This means you are prepared to participate in group work activities, class discussions, conferences, library sessions, and draft workshops. This includes preparing and submitting requested exercises and drafts, and having completed all reading assignments in order to be able to discuss them.
2. All assignments are complete and completed on time. You are encouraged to be innovative and experiment, but sloppy or incomplete work constitutes a breach of contract. If you are unsure if you are addressing the assignment fully – please talk to me. In addition, a number of the projects will be asking you to prepare a group assignment. For these assignments each group will need to hand in a “record of responsibility” which indicates what each group member planned to do in the assignment and what each group member actually completed. The “record of responsibility” needs to reflect that you contributed to a group project.
3. If you plagiarize then you are in breach of contract (and in violation of the College of Arts and Sciences Academic Conduct Code). We will cover how to avoid accidentally plagiarizing, but you know how to avoid doing it intentionally: do not have someone else write your assignment; do not take someone else’s ideas, language, or observations and claim them as your own; do not assume that you will not get caught. This class is structured so you can feel the freedom to push your writing and research styles without putting your grade at risk. Take advantage of this structure to see what **you** can do.
4. The assignments that fall under this contract must meet the requirements indicated on the prompts themselves. I will provide feedback on all major assignments in the form of comments that will be useful in helping you improve your writing as well as writing the next assignment. In addition, if your assignment meets all of the requirements, you will receive a ✓ (check) that confirms that you have **not** violated the contract. However, if you receive a ✓- (check minus) then you are at risk of lowering your contract grade. I will allow you to rewrite one ✓- assignment, but after that -- you will be required to meet with me in order to discuss your work.
5. Maintain a constructive and positive attitude to the semester’s work and remain respectful to peers and to the instructor at all times.

Again, this contract accounts for 60% of your grade including your self-assessments, all exercises, presentations, pictuebook, drafts for the Final Capstone Project, and your

final Reflective Essay. Only the Final Capstone Project (30%) and your participation grade (10%) will determine the remaining 40% of your grade and this final 40% can maintain, raise, or lower your final grade.

I fully believe that if you meet all of the above requirements, you will have improved significantly as a writer, and you will deserve a B+ or higher in our class.