

EXPOS 20: THE SCIENCE OF EMOTION

Syllabus –Presemester Version | Spring 2018

Course Information

Course Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10am (20.259)

Course Location: CGIS 107

Course Website: TBA

Preceptor Information

Preceptor: Dr. Adrienne Tierney

Office: 1 Bow St. Suite 250, Rm. 233 (directions to my office are listed on the course website)

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Office hours: TBA

Course Overview and Purpose

Reason has been routinely championed as the epitome of human achievement and profoundly at odds with emotion. For much of the 20th century, scientists had even characterized emotion as unimportant. However, after the past 30 years of research, we now understand emotion to be a crucial factor in human behavior, including reasoning. This class will focus on the science of emotion. In Unit 1, we'll explore what emotion is as we read several scientists' divergent theories, including Joseph LeDoux and Antonio Damasio, who disagree on whether love is an emotion. To help us evaluate their conclusions, we will consider a crucial theory offered by Paul Ekman, whose research on facial expressions of emotion was largely responsible for the modern field of emotion science. In unit 2, we'll explore the conundrum that emotions are at the heart of individual—and thus seemingly subjective—experience and yet have so many elements that seem to be universal among humans of all cultures. We'll read sources that outline the “laws of emotion” that differentiate between emotion and feelings, and that present interesting data on emotion in children living in poverty. Our final unit will take up the matter of how cognition and emotion interact and give students an opportunity to research one of many perplexing questions in this subfield of emotion science: What, for example, is the role of emotion in decision-making? How does emotion interact with learning or moral judgments? How does emotion operate in adolescence or in various pathologies?

Expos 20 is a place for you to build your understanding of academic writing. As you proceed through your undergraduate years, writing will be a central part of your work. Becoming a scholar means learning to think in a discipline and participating in the discourse of that discipline; this often occurs through writing in a particular discipline. In this course, you will learn the elements of a scholarly argument that form the basis of an analytic essay. You will write three essays, each of which will focus on a different set of writing skills and will address different aspects about the psychology and neuroscience of emotion. The content of this course is the vehicle through which we will explore and build your writing skills.

Course Goals

- Develop your ability to write analytically, which involves crafting a thesis, using evidence to build an argument, learning to use sources as evidence, critically examine sources and integrating those critical ideas to make a logical and coherent argument
- Develop a sense of your own writing process
- Develop your ability to critique your own and others' writing
- Develop your academic discussion skills
- Develop an awareness of how analytical writing varies across disciplines

Course Organization and Draft Due Dates

This course is structured around three units:

Unit 1. This primary question for this unit is what is emotion. To generate an answer for this, we don't consider our own personal definitions, rather we look to the scientific literature and ask how it is defined by people who study it. We'll look at two examples of emotion—fear and love. Two contemporary researchers come to somewhat different conclusion about their classification. Joseph LeDoux presents them as two classic examples of emotion. In contrast, Antonio Damasio and Gil Carvalho agree that fear is an emotion, but they are less clear about how they classify love. The essay will focus on figuring out what Damasio and Carvalho mean and whether or not it is consistent with LeDoux' models of emotion. In doing so, you will arrive at a clearer and more explanatory definition of emotion.

Unit 2. One of the key distinctions in the field is the difference between emotion and feeling. They are both important aspects of human psychology, but they play different roles in regulating behavior. It is the distinction between the two where we start to see what accounts for aspects of emotionality that are universal and individual. The question for this unit is about that duality—how can emotion systems allow for the universality that many scientists argue for, but also the individuality in emotional experience that they all acknowledge. To start the conversation, we will read a New Yorker article by David Brooks that reports on the modern advances in emotion research. We'll then read three scientific sources—an article by Nico Frijda where he presents his 'laws of emotion', a chapter by Antonio Damasio (which is different from the reading in unit 1) and an empirical article from the Bucharest Early Intervention Project on the development of emotion in institutionalized children. This essay requires that you treat sources differently and it requires that you synthesize ideas across the four readings. In doing so, you will start to generate hypotheses related to the universality/individuality conundrum.

Unit 3. Are emotion and cognition really separate and independent things? Is it fair to juxtapose emotion and reason? The general theme of the unit is about the interaction between emotion and cognition and you will write a mini literature review on a subtopic of your choosing. We'll start by reading work on the role of emotion in decision-making, then you'll have the option to broaden the scope to things like emotion and moral judgment, emotion and learning, psychopathology related to emotion, emotion and social cognition. You have the option to choose to research more deeply something that has come up in class previously or pursue something of your own interest, provided it's connected to the class content in a meaningful way.

How the Course Works

Course Materials

Assignment packets: Assignment packets for each unit will be handed out in class at the start of the unit. These packets will include assignment descriptions, a unit calendar with homework descriptions, and the writing elements in focus for that unit, as well as much, much more. These packets give you an overview of the unit, but the schedule is subject to change, so pay attention to announcements made in class. Additional handouts will be provided along the way as appropriate. All documents will also be available on the course website. If ever you look for something and cannot find it, *please let me know.*

Readings: The reading materials for this course will be available on the course website or accessible via Harvard's digital resources. You will need to bring the readings to class, which will require that you print them out. You do not need to purchase any books or a course pack for this class.

Elements of Academic Writing. The focus of this course will be on learning to master the essential elements of argumentation. The document describing these elements is called *The Elements of an Academic Essay* by Karen Heath and will be included in the Unit 1 assignment packet. For many of the elements, I will provide a specific document discussing what it is, how it's used, etc. These documents will be part of the individual assignment packets (e.g. unit 1 focuses on thesis, evidence, and analysis), although our discussion of these elements will span the semester.

Harvard Guide to Using Sources. A key skill that you will learn in Expos is how to use sources. As part of that process, you will be required to read *The Harvard Guide to Using Sources*. I will assign sections of HGUS as they are relevant to each assignment. HGUS is available on the web at <http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu> and will be a resource for you throughout your undergraduate education.

Writing Notebook. You are required to have a notebook for this dedicated to work in this class. It should be a full-size, single-subject notebook that is used for this class only. The purpose of this notebook is multifaceted. Some of the things you'll use it for are: Taking class notes; taking notes from readings; taking notes in conference; brainstorming and organizing ideas for essays; completing in class work; completing certain homework.

Assignments and the Writing Process

The semester is broken down into 3 units. For each unit, we will follow the same sequence of written work from you and feedback from me and your classmates.

1. Response papers. Before you compose an initial draft of each essay, you'll complete one or more response papers that focus on particular writing skills that are important for the relevant essay type. Check the unit assignment packet for specific instructions and due dates. Response papers are not graded, but they are required, formal assignments.

2a. Essay drafts. You will submit a draft of each of the three essays. I will comment extensively on each draft and return feedback. Drafts are not graded, but they are required, formal assignments. Late drafts are not accepted; if you hand them in late, you forfeit your opportunity to get feedback.

2b. Cover letters of essay draft. Every time you hand in a draft, you'll include a cover letter in which you reflect on the writing in that draft. This letter provides guidance to your reader about the aspects of the essay you are struggling with and helps you develop a better sense of what is working well about your writing and what needs work. It is a chance also for you to raise any concerns or questions you have. I'll give you more specific instructions about writing draft cover letters in each unit's assignment packet.

3. Draft workshops. In the class draft deadline, we'll have an in-class workshop in which we work through student papers analyze what works well and what needs adjustment. The goal is to develop a sense of what makes good argumentation and what a piece of writing needs to achieve in order to become good argumentation. For each unit, I'll hand out instructions for the workshop.

4. Conferences. After I've read your draft, we'll meet for a 20-minute conference in which we'll work together to a plan for revising the essay. You should come prepared to the conference having reread your draft. For the first two units, your conference will be one-on-one. For the third unit, we will have group conferences of three students per group. This will be a workshop/conference hybrid in which each student will comment on the other group members' drafts. In all cases, missed conferences may not be rescheduled. Past students have found that the conferences are where they consolidate what they are learning in that unit and across the semester. So make sure you come prepared and with a positive attitude.

5a. Essay revisions. Revisions are usually due one week from the first day of conferences (this is typically the Tuesday following conference week). You should expect to revise each of your drafts *extensively* before submitting it for a grade. In many cases, revision will mean rewriting. I will provide brief comments and a grade on essay revisions.

5b. Cover letters of essay revision. As with the essay draft, you'll include a cover letter with your revision in which you describe how your essay has changed since the draft, what things you are still uncertain of, and an analysis of what you think is working well/less well. Again, more specific instructions will be provided for each unit. The instructions for the revision cover letters are different from the draft cover letters, so make sure you look at the instructions before you write.

Communication

This course is really a semester-long conversation about your writing. Here are the different capacities in which we will either meet or I will be in touch with you about your work.

Comments on written work. On both the draft and revision of each essay, I will give you substantive feedback, which will come in two forms: 1. I will comment along the essay text using Track Changes and Comment bubbles in the margin of the document and 2. I will write a summary letter responding to your essay at the top of the document. In order to receive the full benefit of my feedback, you need to review ALL of my feedback. To do this, you must download the documents with my comments and open them in Word. Do not open them using Google Drive because you might not be able to see my margin comments properly. Previous students in this class have identified the feedback on the essays to be one of the most important sources of their writing improvement so it's important to have full access to it.

Conferences. We will have three conferences throughout the semester in between the first draft and the final version of each essay. Each conference is our chance to work closely on your writing and focus your work in the revision. They are most worthwhile when you are the one to guide them. Please come prepared to each conference. This means that you have reviewed your essay, considered questions about my feedback, and begun to think about the revision possibilities and strategies. I take notes during your conference and so should you; not only is it a helpful documentation of our conversation but it also advances our conversation and our collective brainstorming. *Missed conferences will not be rescheduled.*

Office Hours. I am available outside of class to meet with you--typically for 10-15 minute appointments. I will have weekly drop in office hours and can meet at other times by appointment. We can discuss the readings, ideas for your essays, confusion you might have about any part of an assignment, etc. Coming to office hours is a great way to get your own mind in order. Sometimes a 5-minute conversation can save you hours of frustration! Come prepared to ask questions or with a specific idea, reading, or issue you want to discuss. Please note three things: First, if you need to meet outside of the drop-in hours, please email me as early as you can so that I can fit you into my schedule. If you email last minute, I may not be able to

accommodate you. Second, I don't hold office hours during conference weeks. Third, office hours cannot be used as a replacement for class. So if you are unprepared for class or have unexcused absences, I cannot use office hours to hold a make-up class. Office hours are a supplement to class, not a substitute.

Internet access and computer functionality. If you go out of town during the semester, please make sure you have access to the internet so that you can complete any assignments. Lack of internet or email access is not an acceptable excuse for not being prepared for class or for not completing assignments. Computer problems are also not an acceptable excuse for being prepared or for not completing assignments. For your own sanity and assurance, always back up your work—either on an external hard drive, Dropbox, or your email account. For this class, you MUST use Microsoft Word. Canvas will only accept .docx files and to see my complete feedback, you will need to open the file in Word. You may not use Pages or Google Docs.

Email. I will rely primarily on email to be in touch with you and it is the best way for you to communicate with me outside of class. (Do not use comments on Canvas because I don't receive them.) Check your email daily for updates, assignment info, and feedback on your written work. I check my email regularly between 8am and 8pm each day and will respond to your messages within 24 hours, with the exception of messages received during the weekend.

Course website. The course website is an important resource that you should check regularly. You can easily access it through <http://my.harvard.edu>. We will use the website in a variety of ways, so check it daily. Because Canvas can be used in a variety of ways and the way I use it for this class likely differs from how it might be used in your other classes, I will provide a handout explaining how I use Canvas for this course. For now, you should plan to use the website to: access class announcements, submit your work, find course readings and handouts, and sign up for conferences.

Zoom. Throughout the semester, we will have the opportunity to meet via online web-conference. The program we use is called Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>). In terms of equipment, you need a webcam and a headset with microphone. The earbuds you use with your phone work okay, as will your laptop webcam.

Course Policies and Information

Consider this course an opportunity build your skills as an emerging scholar. You'll end the course with skills that you will use in your undergraduate education and beyond. The information listed in this section is meant to give you a clear sense of what is expected of you this semester. The goal is that, by adhering to these policies, you will have a meaningful and rewarding semester and that you will contribute positively to the experience of your classmates.

RESOURCES

Academic accommodations. If you need academic adjustments or accommodations, please come speak with me by Friday, February 9, 2018. You will need to show me your letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO). If you don't let me know, I might not be able to respond in a timely manner to accommodations you might need. All discussions will remain confidential, although I may consult with the folks at AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.

The Writing Center Tutors. At any stage of the writing process—brainstorming ideas, reviewing drafts, approaching revisions—you may want some extra attention on your essays. The Writing Center (located on the garden level of the Barker Center) offers appointments with trained tutors. These sessions are often VERY helpful and I encourage you to make use of them. Regardless of the “strength” or “weakness” of the writing, any piece of writing benefits from another pair of eyes and a fresh perspective. Visit the Writing Center’s website at writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu to make an appointment. Tutors also hold drop-in hours at other campus locations. See the Writing Center website for more details. If ever you have questions about the advice you get from the Writing Center, feel free to check in with me about it.

EGL Tutor. The Writing Program has an English Grammar and Language (EGL) tutor to help with more sentence level issues. You should feel free to make an appointment with the EGL tutor if you need help with any of the following: writing clear sentences, grammar, syntax, or vocabulary. The EGL tutor can also help with the expectations and conventions of the American academic essay. The EGL tutor can help you with any of these issues while also helping with the broader issues of argument, structure, and clarity. Drop-in hours are scheduled each semester or can be scheduled by appointment. Just email egltutor@fas.harvard.edu

WRITING PROGRAM POLICIES

Harvard College Writing Program policy on attendance. Because Expos has a shorter semester and fewer class hours than other courses, and because instruction in Expos proceeds by sequential writing activities, your consistent attendance is essential. *If you are absent without medical excuse **more than twice**, you are eligible to be officially excluded from the course and given a failing grade.* On the occasion of your second unexcused absence, you will receive a letter warning you of your situation. This letter will also be sent to your Resident Dean, so the College can give you whatever supervision and support you need to complete the course.

Apart from religious holidays, only medical absences can be excused. In the case of a medical problem, you should contact your preceptor before the class to explain, but in any event within 24 hours: otherwise you will be required to provide a note from UHS or another medical official, or your Resident Dean. *Absences because of special events such as athletic meets, debates, conferences, and concerts are not excusable absences.* If such an event is very important to you, you may decide to take one of your two allowable unexcused absences; but again, you are expected to contact your preceptor beforehand if you will miss a class, or at least within 24 hours. If you wish to attend an event that will put you over the two-absence limit, you should contact your Resident Dean and you must directly petition the Expository Writing Senior Preceptor, who will grant such petitions only in extraordinary circumstances and only when your work in the class has been exemplary.

Harvard College Writing Program policy on completion of work. Because your Expos course is a planned sequence of writing, you must write all of the assigned essays to pass the course, and you must write them within the schedule of the course—not in the last few days of the semester after you have fallen behind. You will receive a letter reminding you of these requirements, therefore, if you fail to submit at least a substantial draft of an essay by the final due date in that essay unit. The letter will also specify the new date by which you

must submit the late work, and be copied to your Resident Dean. *If you fail to submit at least a substantial draft of the essay by this new date, and you have not documented a medical problem, you are eligible to be officially excluded from the course and given a failing grade.*

Academic honesty--plagiarism. Throughout the semester we'll work on the proper use of sources, including how to cite and how to avoid plagiarism. You should always feel free to ask me questions about this material. **All the work that you submit for this course must be your own, and that work should not make use of outside sources unless that is explicitly part of the assignment.** Any student submitting plagiarized work is eligible to fail the course. All suspected cases of plagiarism will go to the Administrative Board and disciplinary action is subject to their judgment. Remember, plagiarism can be intentional or unintentional. We will discuss both types so that you can be sure to avoid them.

Academic honesty--collaboration. Expos is a workshop-based class that is inherently collaborative. The following kinds of collaboration are permitted in this course: developing or refining ideas in conversation with other students, and through peer review of written work (including feedback from Writing Center tutors). If you would like to acknowledge the impact someone had on your essay, it is customary to do this in a footnote at the beginning of the paper in a section called "Acknowledgments". As stated in the *Student Handbook*, "Students need not acknowledge discussion with others of general approaches to the assignment or assistance with proofreading." However, all work submitted for this course must be your own: in other words, writing any portion of response papers, drafts or revisions with other students is expressly forbidden. The thesis and analysis in your essay must also be your own—it cannot be taken from any other student material that we examine in class.

SECTION SPECIFIC POLICIES

Late policies. Successful operation of this course requires that we adhere to a tight schedule. For most class meetings, you will have an assignment that helps prepare your thinking and writing for that unit. Our work together in class will often be based on those assignments. Consequently, it is imperative that you arrive at class punctually and turn your work in on time.

Tardiness to class: Class begins promptly at seven minutes past the hour. If you are more than 20 minutes late, it will be considered an **unexcused absence**.

Late work: Even in the most carefully organized semesters, unexpected circumstances arise. Therefore, each student is allowed ONE 24-hour extension. To avoid being penalized for your late work, you must:

1. Let me know ahead of time (at least 24 hrs before the assignment is due) that you are taking your "wild card" extension. You cannot retroactively apply an extension.
2. Submit the work to me via the course website within 24 hrs of the original due date and time.
3. Be on time with any other work due on that same day.

If your work is late and you have not used your 24-hour extension, it will be penalized as follows: **Late response papers** will not receive credit and may not receive feedback. If **drafts** are submitted late without a valid medical or family emergency excuse, you will forfeit your opportunity to receive feedback on the draft. If **revisions** are submitted late without a valid medical or family emergency excuse, you will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for every 24-hour period that the revision is late. Please note that in Canvas, a deadline of 11:59pm is interpreted as 11:59:00pm, so even at 11:59:01, it will mark an assignment late.

Electronic submissions. You will submit most of your work electronically this semester. As you send or upload each document, it is your responsibility to ensure that you have saved the document in .doc or .docx format. Files in .pdf and other formats will not be accepted. It is also your responsibility to ensure that the file you are sending is not corrupted or damaged. If I cannot open or read the file you have sent, the essay will be subject to a late penalty.

Preparation and participation. Your presence in class is necessary but not sufficient to receive a good grade in participation. You will be expected to come to class having completed any assigned reading and assignments. The members of the class will expect you to come prepared and join the discussion each week. As a class, we will work to create a comfortable atmosphere for everyone to participate in which we encourage questions at any level of understanding. Your constructive and respectful participation will be essential in doing so.

Just as the Expos will be a place to foster your analytical writing skills, it will also be a place to develop your public speaking skills. You may feel anxious about speaking in class, but we will work together to make the discussion group a respectful and comfortable one so that you can overcome your anxiety. Make this class your own! The more you participate, the more you will get out of it and the more you will enjoy it. Because it is so important, part of your grade reflects your preparation, participation, and contribution to class (see grading breakdown for more information).

What to Do Now. When you get to this point, **please email me to say that you have read the syllabus.** Take this opportunity to ask any questions that you may have about what's in the syllabus, this particular class, or Expos in general.

Grading Information

Course grades will be determined as follows:

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| Revision of Essay 1 | 25% |
| Revision of Essay 2 | 30% |
| Revision of Essay 3 | 35% |
| Class Citizenship and Ungraded Work | 10% |

For the essays, I will assign a grade to the revisions only. The other assignments, while essential, are not graded. Grading on the essays will become more stringent as the semester progresses since you are building on fundamental skills and techniques with each essay. Please be advised that grades on revised essays are final. I will not read or grade a further version of a revised essay. *Keep in mind that a grade is an index of the quality of your work at a specific moment in time. It does not reflect on you personally, nor does it indicate the quality of your work for the rest of the semester.*

While many assignments are not themselves graded, they still contribute to your final grade. The class citizenship makes up 10% of your grade and represents a serious measure of the quality of your ungraded written work (in-class exercises, response papers, drafts) AND your constructive participation in class discussion, conferences, and responses to your classmates' work. This part of your grade is calculated based on a number of items: completion of assignments and attendance to conferences, active and engaged class participation, effort on assignments. Points will be lost for not completing assignments on time, missing meetings or being late for them, lack of effort on assignments (e.g. cover letters, response papers, workshop letters, etc.), dozing off or not paying attention in class, coming to class unprepared, or lack of engagement in class. The participation grade is an opportunity for you to get credit for all the otherwise non-graded components of the class, so make the best of this opportunity. Not only will it be good for your grade, but more importantly, it will ensure that you learn as much as you can from this class.

GRADING CRITERIA AND RUBRIC

The following criteria and rubric serve two purposes: First, they are meant to give you a means of self-evaluation as you draft and revise your essays; second, they are meant to translate the single-character grades you receive on your revised drafts into more useful terms. Ideally, a grade is more than the end of discussion about your work—it can serve the practical purpose of helping you begin to understand the strengths and weaknesses of your own writing and help you focus on how to improve it in the future. For each unit, there will be a more detailed list of grading criteria that I use in evaluating that unit's essay.

General Grading Criteria

Thesis and Argument: Is there one main argument in the essay? Is it clear and focused? Does it fulfill the assignment? Does it address a clearly defined problem, issue, or controversy of consequence? Is the thesis clearly stated at the beginning of the essay? Does each paragraph advance the thesis? Is the argument built in logical stages? Is it interesting, complex? Is it argued throughout?

Evidence and Analysis: Does the argument build on evidence for each of its points? Is the evidence sufficient and appropriate? Is the analysis of the evidence insightful and convincing, extending beyond content summary to consider details, patterns, and implications? Is there clear differentiation between evidence and analysis?

Structure: Is the argument clearly organized? Is it easy to understand the main points? Does it develop its claims and implications in a clear, thoughtful way? Is it unified? Is the logic easy to follow? Does the essay signal its transitions? Does it orient its reader?

Sources: Are all the appropriate or assigned sources being used? Are they introduced in an understandable way? Is their purpose in the argument clear? Do they do more than merely affirm the writer's viewpoint or merely present a "straw man" for the writer to knock down? Are responsible inferences drawn from them? Are they properly attributed? Is the bibliographical information correct?

Style: Is the style appropriate for its audience and subject matter? Overall, is the writing clear, cohesive, and to the point? Is the language precise, concise, and grammatical? Are the sentences clear and grammatically correct? Are there spelling, proofreading, and formatting errors? Does the writer engage his or her readers respectfully?

Assignment Completion: Were all aspects of the assignment completed with a good faith effort (i.e. cover letter, essay text, references section)? Did the student follow the instructions for formatting and submitting the essay (these instructions are listed at the end of each unit's assignment packet)?

Grading Rubric

Grades are assigned on the evidence of the essay submitted, not on effort, improvement or time spent. Pluses and minuses represent shades of difference. Essay grades are based on the descriptions below. Plusses and minuses represent gradations too difficult to explain. Mixed grades (e.g., C+/C) represent nuances, rather than two different standards; in other words, I'll record it as a little less than a C+, a little higher than a C.

A-level: A-level writing is **excellent** work (this is not the same as perfect). This is an ambitious, perceptive essay that grapples with interesting, complex ideas; delineates the bounds of the argument well thereby anticipating any potential counterargument or counterevidence; and explores well-chosen evidence revealingly. It argues an insightful thesis claim that controls the entire essay. The discussion enhances, rather than underscores, the reader's and writer's knowledge (i.e. it doesn't simply repeat what has been taught). There is a context for all the ideas; someone outside the class would be enriched, not confused, by reading the essay. Its beginning provides context for and logically leads into the thesis. Its end is something more than a summary indicating implications, relevance, or future directions. The writer's stake in the material is obvious. The language is clean, precise, often elegant. As a reader I feel engaged and enriched. There's something new here for me, something only the essay's writer could have written and explored, in this particular way.

B-level: B-level writing is **good**, sometimes very good. There is a thesis present, although it might not be as clear or connected to the body of the essay as it could be. The ideas are solid and progressively explored but some thin patches require more analysis and/or some stray thoughts don't fit in. The language is generally clear and precise but occasionally not. The evidence is relevant, but there may be too little; the

context for the evidence may not be sufficiently explored, so that I have to make some of the connections that the writer should have made clear for me. There may be some ambiguity between what is evidence and what is analysis. The beginning of the essay might not provide very good context and/or it might make logical jumps between the scope of the context and the scope of the thesis.

OR a piece of writing that reaches less high than an A essay but thoroughly achieves its aims. This is a solid essay whose reasoning and argument may nonetheless be rather routine. In this case, the discussion mostly repeats what has been taught but doesn't go much beyond that. (In this case the limitation is conceptual.)

C-level: C-level writing is **adequate and satisfactory**. A piece of writing that has real problems in one of these areas: conception (there's at least one main idea but it's fuzzy and hard to get to); structure (confusing); use of evidence (weak or non-existent--the connections among the ideas and the evidence are not made and/or are presented without context, or add up to platitudes or generalizations); language (the sentences are often awkward, dependent on unexplained abstractions, sometimes contradict each other). The essay may not move forward but rather may repeat its main points, or it may touch upon many (and apparently unrelated) ideas without exploring any of them in sufficient depth. Punctuation, spelling, grammar, paragraphing, and transitions may be a problem.

OR an essay that is largely plot summary or “true summary” of the text, but is written without major problems.

OR an essay that is chiefly a personal reaction to something. Well-written, but scant intellectual content—mostly opinion or conjecture.

D-level: Earned by work that is **unsatisfactory** but that indicates some minimal command of the course materials and some minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit. Essays of this type are often shorter than they are required to be meaning that they don't engage meaningfully with the ideas.

OR those that are extremely problematic in many of the areas mentioned above: aims, structure, use of evidence, language, etc.

E-level: Earned by work that is **unsatisfactory and unworthy** of course credit. Essays of this type do not address expectations of the assignment.