

Intermediate Writing

Ayn Rand University 2024-25

Quarters 1 and 2 (October - March)

INSTRUCTOR

Keith Lockitch (klockitch@aynrand.org)

COURSE WEBSITE

Logistical details about the course are available at the course website, including:

- Live class schedule and Zoom link for attending live classes
- Recordings of past classes
- Office hour details
- Teaching assistant information
- How to join the ARU Discord server

The course website is accessible through your dashboard after logging into the ARU website. The direct link to the site is [Intermediate Writing | 2025](#).

Please contact university@aynrand.org if you have any issues accessing the site.

GENERAL POLICIES

Familiarize yourself with the [ARU Handbook](#) if you have not already done so. Unless specified otherwise in this syllabus, all policies in the Handbook are in effect for this course.

COMMUNICATION

- Course announcements are posted in the Announcements tab of the course website and automatically emailed to all participants. Please make sure you are receiving these emails and that they are not going to your spam folder. If you join after the start of class, be sure to check the Announcements tab for anything you may have missed.
- For questions about course content, structure, or schedule, please ask during the live class or in the course channel on the ARU Discord server (see the Discord tab of the course website).
- Questions about your assignments and grades should be directed to the course instructor.
- For personal administrative issues (e.g., website problems), email university@aynrand.org.
- If you have a technical issue preventing submission of an assignment, email your assignment to the TA and cc university@aynrand.org to troubleshoot the matter.

LIVE CLASSES AND RECORDINGS

See below for the schedule of live classes and see the course website for the Zoom link to attend. Participants are strongly encouraged to attend classes live for the best experience. However, we are aware this is not always possible, and recordings of live classes are posted on the course website and on the ARU App/ARI Campus website, usually within an hour or two after the conclusion of each live class. Contact university@aynrand.org if you have any issue accessing a recording.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Rand, Ayn. *The Art of Nonfiction*, Ed. Robert Mayhew. New York: Plume, 2001.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course is a continuation of Introduction to Writing, which teaches the basic principles and methods of objective communication. It is designed so that it can be taken concurrently with Introduction to Writing; the first quarter of this course overlaps with the second quarter of Introduction to Writing and both courses can be taken at the same time. However, it can also be taken separately from Introduction to Writing for students who've already taken Introduction to Writing.

The course focuses on the writing process—on how to break the process of writing up into separate stages involving different cognitive tasks.

Quarter 1: There are no live classes in the first quarter (students who are taking Introduction to Writing concurrently will have live classes in that course.) The work in the first quarter consists of weekly homework assignments in which students develop an op-ed length article by going step by step through the various stages of the writing process. This will be a new article, independent of the one written for the Introduction to Writing course.

Quarter 2: The second quarter will consist of live classes in which we'll discuss the student papers and writing process assignments. We'll create schedule for the paper discussions by polling students on their availability to attend class live. To reduce the overall time burden of the course, you will only be required to attend 2 of the paper discussion classes in person—though you are certainly welcome to attend (or listen to the recordings of) all the classes if your schedule permits.

CLASS TIMES:

Q2: To accommodate people in different times zones, classes will begin either at 10am PT or at 12pm PT. There will be a weekly schedule indicating the start time for each class.

- Classes will meet either: **Wednesday, 10:00am–12:00pm PT**, or
- **Wednesdays 12:00–2:00pm PT**.

Depending on the number of students, we may also add classes on other days of the week, likely Fridays, at similar times as above.

CLASS DATES, GRADES AND ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES:

The following table gives a week-by-week breakdown of the course topics and the dates of each live class. It also lists the assignments, their due dates, and the percentage weighting they contribute to your grade for the course. Information on each assignment will be provided in class and/or on the course website. The grade scale used in this course is given below.

Interm W Week	Week of:	Topic / Assignment	Percentage of Final Grade	Dates of Wednesday Classes:	Dates of Friday Classes (if needed):	Homework Due Date (11:59 pm your local time)
Q1 - Part 1						
Week 0	Oct. 27-Nov. 2	<start thinking about a paper topic>				
Week 1	Nov. 3-9	Writing Process 1: Thinking notes	5%			Sunday, Nov. 10
Week 2	Nov. 10-16	Writing Process 2: Outlines	5%			Sunday, Nov. 17
Week 3	Nov. 17-23	Writing Process 3: Paper - first draft	5%			Sunday, Nov. 24
<i>U.S. Thanksgiving</i>	Nov. 24-30	<no homework>				
Week 4	Dec. 1-7	Writing Process 4: Self-assessment	20%			Sunday, Dec. 8
Week 5	Dec. 8-14	Word choice	5%			Sunday, Dec. 15
Week 6	Dec. 15-21	Writing Process 5: Paper - final draft	40%			Sunday, Dec. 22
<i>Holiday break</i>	Dec. 22-Jan. 4	<break>				
Q2 - Part 2						
Week 7	Jan. 5-11	Lead student evaluation	12%			Sunday, Jan. 12
Week 8	Jan. 12-18	<prepare for class discussion >		Jan. 15		
Week 9	Jan. 19-25	<prepare for class discussion >		Jan.22	Jan.24	
Week 10	Jan. 26-Feb. 1	<prepare for class discussion >		Jan. 29	Jan. 31	
Week 11	Feb. 2-8	<prepare for class discussion >		Feb. 5	Feb. 7	
Week 12	Feb. 9-15	<prepare for class discussion >		Feb. 12	Feb. 12	
Week 13	Feb. 16-22	<prepare for class discussion >		Feb. 19	Feb. 21	
Week 14	Feb. 22-Mar. 1	<prepare for class discussion >		Feb. 26	Feb. 28	
Week 15	Mar. 2-8	<prepare for class discussion >		Mar. 5		
		Paper discussion take-aways	8%			Sunday, after the discussion of your paper
Students must attend live 2 of the paper discussion classes, but may attend more of them (or listen to the recordings) as their schedule permits.						

POLICIES:

All policies from the ARU Handbook apply to this course, including policies on late work and extensions. Extensions must be requested at least 48 hours before the deadline. If you'd like to request an extension, please email me directly.

Let me stress that I would greatly prefer for you to request an extension in advance than to simply fail to hand an assignment in on time with no prior communication. Generally, I would much rather hear from you if you're at risk of falling behind than for you to go radio silent until it's too late to catch up.

Another policy I want to mention explicitly is the policy about seeking help or input from others on your writing. It's completely understandable that you might want to get feedback from trusted friends or family before handing in writing assignments for this class, but doing so will actually impede your development of the skill of doing your own thinking about writing and editing.

It's similarly understandable that you might be interested in using AI tools as part of your writing process. These new technologies are valuable and will likely be part of everyone's workflow in the future—but again, the use of them in this setting will be an obstacle to your developing the knowledge and skills that we are covering in this course.

The goal of this course is for *you* to develop your thinking abilities as both a writer and an editor. While there is a time and a place for outside assistance with writing (whether human or robotic), a classroom setting in which thinking about how to write and edit are the very skills that you are learning is not the right time or place for it.

Here is the relevant section from the ARU Student Handbook:

Your Work Must Be Your Own

The primary purposes of ARU assignments are 1) to help you to develop your ability to think about and communicate philosophical issues; and 2) to help instructors to understand where you are in your development of these abilities. To accomplish these aims, your work must be entirely your own and should not have input from others or—unless explicitly allowed by the instructor and cited in your assignment—from outside sources. This means that you should not be collaborating with others or asking others to review your work before submitting it. This includes collaboration between spouses and in other close relationships.

GRADE SCALE:

Homework assignments will be graded on a scale from 0 to 5. Papers will be graded on a scale from 0 to 20. Be sure to re-read the “Performance, Assignment, and Grading Policies” section in the ARU Handbook. To convert a numerical grade to a letter grade via percentages, use the following grade scale:

Grade	Score (%)	Grade	Score (%)
A	94–100	C-	45–51
A-	87–93	D+	38–44
B+	80–86	D	31–37
B	73–79	D-	24–30
B-	66–72	F+	14–23
C+	59–65	F	0–13
C	52–58		

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY:

These are supplementary works you might find helpful for particular topics.

- Davenport, Phyllis. (2004). *Rex barks*. Kerhonkson, NY: Paper Tiger.
- Foerster, Norman & Steadman, John Jr. (2000) *Writing and thinking*. Kerhonkson, NY: Paper Tiger.
- Hacker, Diana. (2002). *A writer's reference*, 5th ed., Boston: St. Martin's.
- Mitchell, Richard. (2004). *Less than words can say*, Whitefish, MT: Kessinger.
- Peikoff, Leonard. (2020). *Principles of Grammar*, Michael Berliner (editor), Curtis Brown
- Rand, Ayn. (2000). *The art of fiction*. ed. Tore Boeckmann. New York: Plume.
- Trimbur, John. (2004). *The call to write*, 3rd ed., New York: Longman.
- Williams, Joseph. (1995). *Style: Toward clarity and grace*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Web Resources and Audio Courses:

- Grammar Revolution. Introductory grammar materials:
 - <https://www.english-grammar-revolution.com>
- Easy Grammar. Full series of grade school grammar books:
 - <https://www.easygrammar.com>
- Full text of Richard Mitchell's "Less than words can say" plus other writings, available at
 - <http://www.sourcetext.com/grammarian>
- Peikoff, Leonard. "The Principles of Grammar" 1982, lectures available at
 - <https://courses.aynrand.org/campus-courses/principles-of-grammar/>
- Peikoff, Leonard. "Writing: A Mini-Course," 1994, audio lectures available at
 - <https://estore.aynrand.org/products/writing-a-mini-course-mp3-download>
- Schwartz, Peter. "The Writing Process," 1999, audio lectures available at
 - <https://estore.aynrand.org/products/the-writing-process-mp3-download>