

Fall 2021  
ENWR 1510-44, -48, and -59  
MWF 12/1/3

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Office hours: TBD

# Rethinking Domesticity

## Course description

The goal of this course is to improve your ability to write in academic contexts. While there is no single approach to writing that can prepare you for the wide range of courses you'll encounter in college, this course can help you begin to cultivate habits of mind and writing practices that are applicable to various disciplines and situations. We will be learning primarily how to initiate and sustain a *critical inquiry* in this course. Critical inquiry can take a variety of forms, but the form we're interested in is *writing*. Engaging in written critical inquiry means posing good questions and entertaining various answers or solutions; it means responding to the inquiry that other scholars have already begun, dealing with uncertainty, and imagining alternative arguments and ways of thinking about a subject. Throughout this writing-intensive semester, you'll have plenty of opportunities to expand your writing capacities and to strengthen your habits of inquiry.

We will focus our inquiry on the complex questions, problems, and possibilities that arise from our relationship to domestic life. We will be reading and writing about such questions as: Is domestic space political, and, if so, in what way? How does domestic life relate to social experience? What is the relationship between the home and broader gender norms? What is new or different about domestic life in a global pandemic? We will spend much of the course examining the *rhetoric* of writing about home and weighing it against our own words and ideas about the same subject.

## What you'll learn along the way

This course is designed to prepare you to write in a variety of disciplines during your time at UVa, but the theme and content ("rethinking domesticity") mean that you will learn to evaluate specific kinds of evidence and reasons this semester. By the end, you will have improved your ability to do the following:

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- define an intellectual problem, question, or project
- engage sources in a critical dialogue
- plan the steps of a writing project
- approach writing papers as a recursive process that involves drafting, revising, and getting feedback
- substantiate and develop ideas through analysis of evidence
- use UVa libraries and other research tools

## How you'll learn

The following activities and assignments will help to guide you through the learning process and will allow you to measure your progress as you become a better writer. How many of these activities and assignments you complete will depend on your grading contract (see below).

**Engagement.** Meaningful learning is hard. You will sometimes struggle to make sense of complex ideas, to reconcile contradictory claims, and to take intellectual risks. The more you engage in discussion and workshops, the more you will learn.

ENWR depends for its vitality on every student's thoughtful, engaged participation. At a minimum, engagement in the course means that you read assigned work before the related class session; and prepare for and contribute actively to every discussion and workshop.

To translate engagement into a grade is difficult, but it's something we must do to fulfill our responsibility to the University. The following are criteria that I will use in determining your holistic engagement grade:

- **Excellent:** Consistent, thoughtful, and thought-provoking in all discussions and workshops; applies and/or challenges assigned texts; brings specific ideas and questions about texts to class discussion; responds to and/or motivates peers
- **Competent:** Actively listens in class and occasionally comments; good collaboration with classmates; prepared and participates actively in individual and group work; occasionally late to class; merely reiterates others' points

**Papers.** You will write at least three papers in this course (indicated with a single asterisk below); depending on your grading contract, you may write more. Prompts will be available on our WordPress site and in the Assignments section of Collab, where the papers should be submitted, about two weeks before the paper is due, and papers will come due about every other week.

**Paper 1.\*** Write about the role of domestic space in your upbringing and development. 2-3 pp.

**Paper 2.** Write about Poe’s essay “Philosophy of Furniture.” 2-3 pp.

**Paper 3.** Write about an object or category of object from home. 3 pp.

**Paper 4.\*** Compare and contrast two different views of domesticity. 3-4 pp.

**Paper 5.** Public education essay. 3-4 pp.

**Paper 6.\*** Thought map essay. 6-7 pp.

Each paper will be graded Pass/Revise; “Revise” means that a paper needs more work before it can earn credit. You may revise up to two papers in order to earn a Pass. Each paper will be graded using a rubric that we will have generated as a class. See below for further details about grading.

**Weekly reading responses.** Beginning in the second week I will open up a weekly discussion board for short responses (about 200 words). Depending on your group, you will post either by Sunday night (group A) or Tuesday night (group B). Responses are graded Pass/No credit and should usually take the following form: begin by quoting one or two sentences you find especially important in the reading, then write a paragraph explaining why they are significant. Analyze (break down) the ideas that are brought together and say how they illuminate the reading as a whole. Describe what these sentences lead you to think about, understand, or question beyond what they are saying or doing in the reading itself.

**Writing labs.** Most weeks I will hold an in-class writing lab that focuses on a particular aspect of composition. You’ll need to bring your laptop or other device to class and submit whatever work you complete by 10 pm the same day. This writing is not graded, but it will often serve as the basis for our group critique.

**How I’ll determine your grade.** Since most work is graded Pass/Revise or /No credit, earning an A in this course is quite simply a matter of writing more responses and papers, though the rubrics for papers will become more complex as the course advances.<sup>1</sup> In the second week of class I will ask you to sign a grading contract. In this document you will agree to complete a certain amount of work for a certain grade; if you’re not meeting the terms of your contract, I’ll help you to renegotiate it. Below are the basic terms for each of the three possible contracts.

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<sup>1</sup> Put another way, the work you complete has to meet the criteria for each assignment to receive credit, but as long as you satisfy this requirement, you can choose the grade you want to try to earn. This approach to evaluation is called “specifications grading” or sometimes “labor-based grading.”

	<i>Earn at least C</i>	<i>Earn at least B</i>	<i>Earn A</i>
ENGAGEMENT	None	Competent	Excellent
UNEXCUSED ABSENCES	5	3	2
WEEKLY RESPONSES	4	6	10
PAPERS	3	4	6

I will raise a grade one step, e.g. from B to B+, if the writing is notably excellent. I reserve the right to lower a grade by one step if the writing and argument are consistently poor; I will always let you know if you are trending in this direction.

### Required materials

All of the course readings will be available either on Collab or in the course packet, available at NK Printing, which is located on the Corner.

### A few things to help you along the way

I've designed this course to be welcoming, accessible, and useful to everyone, including students who have disabilities or particular learning needs. I understand that personal circumstances or unforeseen events can sometimes interfere with your academic responsibilities, and I will work with you to ensure your best possible performance in the course.

**Academic support.** You are invited to schedule individual sessions with me to discuss drafts, ideas, my comments on your work, and so forth. Here are a couple other ways to get help:

- The Writing Center (<http://writingrhetoric.as.virginia.edu/welcome-writing-center>) offers appointments and drop-in service online this semester. Use the Writing Center's excellent, trained tutors to get another pair of eyes on your work.
- The Student Disability Access Center (<https://www.studenthealth.virginia.edu/sdac>) offers a range of services including assessments, consultations, and support with accommodations.

**Personal support and confidentiality.** Personal circumstances can change one's ability to learn. If you are comfortable doing so, please notify me of any life events or circumstances that may affect your engagement in this class. You might also consult the Office of the Dean of Students (<https://odos.virginia.edu>),

which provides a list of resources that can help if you are experiencing mental health, housing, safety and food insecurity issues.

For concerns involving interpersonal violence, please consider that as an adjunct faculty member, I am classified as a "responsible employee," which means that I am required to report issues or incidents of violence to the University. Remember the following resources:

- Confidential employees (<https://eocr.virginia.edu/confidential-employees-and-confidential-resources>) are available if you want to discuss an issue related to violence in depth but want it to remain confidential.
- Just Report It (<https://justreportit.virginia.edu>) is the University's online incident reporting system.

**A few course policies.** Due dates are firm, but extensions requested ahead of time are normally granted. Late work is of course preferable to plagiarism, which is a violation of UVa's storied honor code. Moreover, given the idiosyncratic nature of this course; and given how much of your writing I'll be reading over the next 14 weeks, plagiarism is probably harder than simply completing the work anyway and will almost always yield less interesting results. What is plagiarism? In short, it's quoting or paraphrasing the words or ideas of another in any writing assignment without proper, responsible citation. We will discuss quotation, paraphrase, and citation in detail this semester, but I will be glad to answer questions as they arise. For further guidance, consult the Honor Committee's statement: <http://www.virginia.edu/honor/what-is-academic-fraud-2/>.<sup>2</sup>

The number of unexcused absences you are allowed depends on your grading contract. In keeping with the rules of the UVa Faculty Senate, serious illnesses and absences related to certain University events will not be penalized, however, they will be counted against your allotment of absences and will require documentation from a UVa staff member or physician.

Arriving more than 10 minutes late to a required discussion will count as 1/2 of an absence.

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<sup>2</sup> This is a good place to acknowledge my debt to Devin Donovan, Steph Ceraso, and colleagues from around the University whose syllabi I have drawn on to produce this one.

## What you'll be doing

Due to the precarity of the public health situation in Charlottesville and across the country, the following schedule is necessarily tentative and may shift to foster a better learning environment. Nothing will be made due earlier than indicated but some things may be pushed back or eliminated altogether, depending on time. **For the most up-to-date version of the syllabus, and for more information about each class, visit our course site: <https://wordpress.its.virginia.edu/WP0-QRV09Fcontent-25859/>.**

NB: The instructions for each day of class indicate what you should do before that class meeting.

- WEEK 1      *Wednesday, August 25*  
**Read** the syllabus  
**Write** a self-introduction and post it to our Collab site (in Discussions)
- Friday, August 27*  
**Read** Sousanis, “Frames of Thought”
- WEEK 2      *Monday, August 30*  
**Read** Dr. D’s Dos and Don’ts  
**Read** Browning, *Around the House and In the Garden*, chapters 1-3
- Wednesday, September 1*  
**Read** Rafoth, “Why Visit Your Campus Writing Center?”  
**Read** Prose, “Details”
- Friday, September 3*  
**Submit** a draft of Paper 1 by 5 pm on Thursday, 9/2  
**Read** Straub, “Responding – Really Responding – To Other Students’ Writing”
- WEEK 3      *Monday, September 6*  
**Read** Cather, “148 Charles Street”
- Wednesday, September 8*  
**Read** Poe, “The Philosophy of Furniture”
- Friday, September 10*  
**Read** a short UVA Today article on Poe’s room on the Range  
**Submit** required Paper 1 by 5 pm on Sunday, 9/12
- WEEK 4      *Monday, September 13*  
**Read** Miller, *The Comfort of Things*, Prologue and Portrait 4  
**Read** McDermott, “Things”

*Wednesday, September 15*

**Read** Miller, *The Comfort of Things*, Portrait 7

**Read** Hayot, "Uneven U"

**Watch** a short YouTube lecture on the Uneven U

*Friday, September 17*

**Read** Miller, *The Comfort of Things*, Portrait 1

WEEK 5

*Monday, September 20*

**Read** Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, "The House"

**Submit** optional Paper 2 by 5 pm on Tuesday, 9/21

*Wednesday, September 22*

**Read** Cioffi, "Audience: Your Projected Reader(s)"

*Friday, September 24*

NO CLASS – INSTRUCTOR TRAVELING

WEEK 6

*Monday, September 27*

VIRTUAL (Zoom) CLASS

**Read** Fraiman, *Extreme Domesticity*, "Introduction"

*Wednesday, September 29*

**Read** "Five Ways of Looking at a Thesis"

*Friday, October 1*

NO CLASS – SMALL-GROUP CONFERENCES

WEEK 7

*Monday, October 4*

**Read** Feidelson, "No Shelter"

**Submit** optional Paper 3 by 5 pm on Tuesday, 10/5

*Wednesday, October 6*

**Read** Eighner, "Dumpster Diving"

**Read** Harris, "Forwarding"

*Friday, October 8*

NO CLASS – SMALL-GROUP CONFERENCES

WEEK 8

*Monday, October 11*

NO CLASS – READING DAY

*Wednesday, October 13*

**Watch** Singer (director), *Dark Days*, available on Virgo

*Friday, October 15*

NO CLASS – SMALL-GROUP CONFERENCES

- WEEK 9 *Monday, October 18*  
**Skim** Hubbard, *American Refugees*  
**Read** “Visual Rhetoric / Visual Literacy: Writing about Photography”  
**Watch** a short YouTube video on “Visual Rhetoric”  
*Wednesday, October 20*  
**Read** bell hooks, “Homeplace: A Site of Resistance”  
*Friday, October 22*  
**Read** Warner, “A Mother’s Tale”
- WEEK 10 *Monday, October 25*  
**Read** Kozol, *Fire in the Ashes*, Chapter 7  
**Submit** required Paper 4 by 5 pm on Tuesday, 10/26  
*Wednesday, October 27*  
**Read** Turabian, “Engaging Sources”  
 Introduction to research  
*Friday, October 29*  
 Presentation on housing scarcity in Charlottesville (or LIBRARY DAY)
- WEEK 11 *Monday, November 1*  
 LIBRARY DAY (or Presentation on housing scarcity)  
*Wednesday, November 3*  
**Read** Turabian, “Citations”  
*Friday, November 5*  
**Read** [peer-reviewed journal article suggested by the class]
- WEEK 12 *Monday, November 8*  
**Read** [peer-reviewed journal article suggested by the class]  
*Wednesday, November 10*  
 Mind-mapping in Coggle  
*Friday, November 12*  
**Read** two other mind maps from your section  
**Read** Graff and Birkenstein, *They Say, I Say*, chapter 1  
**Submit** optional Paper 5 by 5 pm on Sunday, 11/14
- WEEK 13 *Monday, November 15*  
**Read** Castle, “Home Alone”  
*Wednesday, November 17*

**Review** readings and YouTube video on visual rhetoric from WEEK 9

**Watch** *Queer Eye*, Episode TBD

*Friday, November 19*

**Watch** *Love It Or List It*, Episode TBD

WEEK 14 *Monday, November 22*

**Watch** [film/TV suggested by the class]

*Wednesday, November 24 and Friday, November 26*

NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

WEEK 15 *Monday, November 29*

**Read** Pinsker, “Welcome to the Post-pandemic Dream Home”

**Read** Aridi, “How the Pandemic Has Transformed the Idea of Home”

**Submit** draft of Coggle thought map by 5 pm on Tuesday, 11/30

*Wednesday, December 1*

**Read** TBD

*Friday, December 3*

**Read** TBD

WEEK 16 *Monday, December 6*

Course wrap-up

**Submit** required Paper 6 by 5 pm today