

WRT 105: PRACTICES OF ACADEMIC WRITING

Fall 2006
days: MWF time: 11:40 – 12:35 location: Hoople 108
section #67

Instructor: John Holliday
Office: 017 HBC
Office Hours: MW 10:30 – 11:30
F 10:30 – 11:30 by appointment

Did you know that probing the seamy underbelly of U.S. lexicography reveals ideological strife and controversy and intrigue and nastiness and fervor on a nearly hanging-chad scale? Did you know that U.S. lexicography even *had* a seamy underbelly?

David Foster Wallace, "Tense Present," *Harper's*, April 2001, 40.

Course Description and Rationale

WRT 105 is an introduction to academic writing that focuses on the practices of analysis and argument, practices that carry across disciplinary lines and into professional and civic writing. These interdependent practices of critical inquiry are fundamental to the work you will do at Syracuse University and later in your careers and civic engagements.

As Rosenwasser and Stephen claim in *Writing Analytically* 4th edition, "Analysis is a form of detective work that begins not with the views you already have, but with something you are seeking to understand...[A]nalysis typically pursues something puzzling; it finds questions where there seem not to be any; and it makes connections that might not have been evident at first" (41). You analyze when you think carefully enough to recommend a course to a friend, or prepare an acquisitions memo for the local library, or decide who you will vote for in the Presidential election, or come to understand better the geopolitical situation produced by the US presence in Iraq.

Argument involves analysis and moves into making claims to a specific audience about how the world is or should be. Argument here goes beyond pro/con debates on abortion or gun control and extends into situated social practices such as when you are persuading your parents that body piercing makes social statements, taking a stand in an education class on the value of anti-racist pedagogy, or claiming that homosexuality is a threat to the US military. Evidence for your arguments comes from analysis, from discussion with others, from your personal experience, and from research in the library and on the web.

Course Goals for WRT 105

- Students will compose a variety of texts as a process (inventing, drafting, revising, editing) that takes place over time, that requires thinking and rethinking ideas, and that addresses diverse audiences and rhetorical contexts.
- Students will develop a working knowledge of strategies and genres of critical analysis and argument.
- Students will learn critical techniques of reading through engagement with texts that raise issues of diversity and community and encourage students to make connections across difference.
- Students will include critical research in their composing processes.

Specifics

The course is divided into three units: Mind the Gap, Re-imagining the Normal, and Language & Identity, which address inquiry, analysis, and argument, respectively. So we'll begin by asking challenging questions, and end by making rigorous statements. In other words, we'll examine what it means to think and how this thinking is placed on paper. In other words, this course is getting at the primary things of living the examined life, or what it means to be a sentient and conscious human being.

Work of the Course

You will devote time, thought, and energy to a variety of informal and formal reading and writing practices. During the course you might be asked to annotate readings, keep a record of ideas and responses, jot down observations, take notes on class discussions, experiment with different styles and organizational choices, and engage in a variety of drafting and revision activities. All these activities are important and will have an impact on your development and success as academic writers (and your final grade).

Writing well depends upon reading well. The course texts will provide you with ideas and arguments, facts and statistics. They will prompt thought as you agree or disagree or qualify those ideas. They enlarge the context for our class discussion. And they illustrate choices other writers have made as they composed. Writing and reading are interdependent practices, and you will move between the two regularly throughout the course.

Course Texts and Materials

(available at both the University Bookstore and Follett's Orange Bookstore)

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| Glenn, Cheryl, et al. | <i>The Writer's Harbrace Handbook Brief</i> , 2 nd ed. |
| Himley, Margaret & Anne Fitzsimmons. | <i>Critical Encounters with Texts</i> , 2 nd ed. |
| Hosseini, Khaled | <i>The Kite Runner</i> |
| Rosenwasser, David and Jill Stephen. | <i>Writing Analytically</i> , 4 th ed. |
| A collection of student writing | <i>Intertext</i> |

Please purchase the two bundles of texts—the Glenn and Rosenwasser, and *Critical Encounters* and *Intertext*—at either the SUB or Follett's Orange Bookstore.

You should also be prepared to provide copies of your work for everyone in the class (or in your peer response group) at various times during the semester. These can be xerox copies (CNY Printing and Copy Services in Marshall Square Mall, Alteracts, and the library offer low cost, self-service copying) or additional copies printed out from your computer. Plan on spending as much as \$10 over the course of the semester.

Feedback

You will receive many different kinds of feedback during this course. Some will come from fellow students and some will come from me. Both are important; they tell you in various ways how your readers are responding to your writing. This feedback will also help you learn how to assess your own work.

Grading

The breakdown is as follows:

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| Unit 1: mind the gap essay | 10% |
| Unit 2: analysis essay | 30% |
| Unit 3: argument essay | 30% |
| Course invention work | 30% |

Attendance and Participation

Writing studios are courses in language learning, and language is learned in communities; therefore, it is essential that you attend class and participate. Absences and lack of preparation for class will affect your classmates' work as well as your own. The work you do in class, the work you do to prepare for each class, is as important as any polished assignment you turn in for a grade. In addition, our syllabus is only a projection and may be subject to occasional changes and revisions as it seems appropriate, necessary, or just interesting. That is another reason why your attendance is vital.

If you must miss a class, you are responsible for work assigned. Please realize, however, that class time cannot be reconstructed or made up, and that your performance, your work, and your final course grade will be affected by absences. If you miss the equivalent of three weeks of classes or more without any official documented excuse you will not be able to pass the course. I don't anticipate any of you will be in that position, however, so let's all agree to do the work, come to class, learn a lot, and make the course a meaningful experience.

Blackboard

Our course is loaded on Blackboard, a University on-line teaching support system. I will teach you how to access our section of WRT 105 on Blackboard, and will then expect you to be able to locate, download, and link to a range of course materials with some regularity throughout the semester. I will also contact you regularly via the Blackboard course listserv, which has already been created using each student's "syr" email address. Please check your syr account at least once daily throughout the fall. The url for Blackboard is:

<http://blackboard.syr.edu>

Once you access the main page you will be asked for your user ID and password. The following is from the student help page of Blackboard:

Once a student registers for a course that is using Blackboard, a student account is set up for them and they are automatically enrolled in the appropriate course(s). Users login to Blackboard using their NetID and password. Your NetID is the portion of your SU email that appears before the @syr.edu. Your NetID password is also your Blackboard password. **If you do not know what your NetID and password are, visit the ITS website at <http://its.syr.edu/netid/> to obtain this information.** You can also obtain this information by calling 443-2677, or by going to the Student Computing Support Center in your dormitory.

Special Needs and Situations

Students who need special consideration because of any sort of disability or situation should make an appointment to see me right away.

Use of Student Writing

It is understood that registration for and continued enrollment in this course constitutes permission by the student for the instructor to use any student work constructed as a result of said enrollment in the course.

Computer Use

Most of the work you do for this class will be handed in word processed. Use Times New Roman, 12 point font, and double space. Include one inch margins and follow the page layout used by the MLA format described in your handbook.

We will also be using email for contact outside class. Use email to set up an appointment to meet with me outside class or to ask a question. The syllabus and other logistical materials can be found on Blackboard.

Finally, we will be looking at a variety of sites on the Internet at times during the course. Please let me know if you have not had any experience using a browser such as Netscape or Explorer.

While computers save us great amounts of time over typewriters and make corrections much simpler, they are also susceptible to crashing and freezing. Save your work frequently, always make backup copies, and plan your projects with extra time allowed for those inevitable glitches.

The Writing Center

Surprising Fact: According to a recent survey, most S.U. students who use the Writing Center have GPAs higher than 3.0; moreover, one in four have GPAs higher than 3.6. At the Writing Center (101 HBC; 443-5289), experienced, professional writing consultants will teach you how to succeed on individual assignments and ultimately become a better writer. Consultants work one-on-one to help you understand the assignment, discuss your response, revise your draft, develop proofreading strategies, and more. Appointments are available in 25- or 50-minute sessions, Monday through Friday, and can be reserved up to seven days in advance via an online scheduling program: <http://tutortrac.syr.edu>. Drop-in appointments are available Monday through Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Writing Center is a free resource to all students and highly recommended for those taking WRT 105 courses this fall.

Academic Honesty

All writing submitted for this course is understood to be your original work. In cases where academic dishonesty is detected (the fraudulent submission of another's work, in whole or part, as your own), you may be subject to a failing grade for the project or the course, and in the worst case, to academic probation or expulsion. For a more detailed description of the guidelines for adhering to academic honesty in the College of Arts and Sciences, go to:

<http://www-hl.syr.edu/cas-pages/PromAcademicHonesty.htm>