

DAVID V. MASON
Office: 133 McCoy, Phone: 3936
Email: masond@rhodes.edu
Office Hours: TR, 2:00PM – 3:30PM

FYWS 151.09: Writing Seminar
TR 9:30, Spring 2013

Between a production of *As You Like It*, the Presidential inauguration, rush week, and the new design of the Rat, performance imposes itself on us from every direction. This seminar revolves around the study of theatrical performance as a premise for learning fundamental principles and practices of academic writing. The course involves three major writing assignments, including a study of what constitutes theatrical performance, an analysis of dramatic literature, and a research paper related to the college's Spring production of *As You Like It*.

During the course of the semester you will get a considerable amount of practice with writing and with all the little things which go into writing well (including the heartbreaking stuff like throwing away a draft and starting over from scratch).

The three major writing assignments mark out unequal "sections" of the course. The first section is a consideration of what *theatre* is. You will ultimately formulate your own definition and submit a shorter (not *short*, but *shorter*) essay defending your definition. The second section will have to do with the analysis of dramatic literature. The essay for this section will be longer (not *long*, but *longer*). Finally, you will submit at the end of the final section of the course a moderately long (not *really* long, just *moderately* long) research paper having to do with a topic (as settled with me) having to do with Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. There will be other, smaller (not *small*, but... oh, forget it), writing assignments throughout the semester.

This final section of this course will be thematic. Just as your research papers will somehow deal with theatre and *As You Like It*, so too our class discussions about research, argument, and writing at this point in the semester will revolve around specific ideas related to this play/production.

UNIT 1: Personal Essay

Submit a 4-5 page final draft which defines the word *theatre* according to your own experience. Due February 5th.

UNIT 2: Literary Analysis

6-8 page final draft due February 28th. Analyze *Oleanna*. David Mamet's play is not only *theatre* by itself, but deals with the theatrical performance of gender, social class, teacher/student roles, education, academic writing, the English language, and a bunch of other things.

UNIT 3: Performance Research

8 page final draft due April 25th. Identify a problem or area of ignorance with regard to Shakespeare's play *As You Like It*. Develop your hypothesis, research relevant sources, see the production, compose a convincing argument.

Required Material

Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*. 7th edition.
Mamet, David. *Oleanna*.
Shakespeare, W. *As You Like It*.
Mason, David, ed. *Writing and Performance Reader* (online: www.yavanika.org/classes).

groups. Your performance in this class will ultimately depend on your own work, but along the way you will be working in groups, and your participation in these groups *will affect your grade* (and grades are the most important thing, after all). The class will divide into groups of three. You will work with your group members

on generating writing ideas, organizing ideas, and revising written work. You will also make a few class presentations in groups.

grammar, etc. Each group will make a grammar presentation in class, explaining for the rest of the class certain sections assigned (by me) from Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference*. The topics will mostly be grammatical. Your task as groups will be to make these grammatical points clear to such a degree that none of you will ever again in your lives (and may they be long) write a run-on sentence; misuse a semicolon, you will not comma-splice a sentence, disrupt the number agreement of an antecedent and their pronoun, etc., etc., etc.

attendance. I am of two minds about this. On the one hand I want you to be in class, and on the other hand I don't care if you don't care. You do have to get the course work done. If you can figure out a way to do the course work without being in class, then you understand the course better than I. You cannot 'make up' an in-class quiz you miss by not being in-class. You do not get an extension on work due in-class for not being in-class. If you do miss a class, **it is up to you to find out what you missed.** Don't come around later to tell me you aren't prepared for class because you were absent on an earlier occasion.

late work. No late work. See how simple that is?

reading. As I mentioned, we'll do quite a lot of reading. You really need to read the assignments, too. I'll check on your reading periodically with pop quizzes. These will not be difficult quizzes, but you can bet that if you haven't read the assignment, you won't do well.

drafts. You will write at least two drafts of each of your three major writing assignments. The last of these drafts will get a grade (both a letter and a number). In the end, your three final drafts will make up 75% of your final grade. If you would like to write a fourth, fifth, sixth, or tenth draft to improve the grade of a paper, you may do so. However, there are two requirements for drafts beyond three: 1) You must meet with me to discuss your third draft. 2) No writing at all may be submitted for grading after the final day of class.

grades (this is all you really want to know, right?). Your grades will be based on your final drafts and your in-class participation, in that order. I'll give you percentages because students seem to like them, but I'll not guarantee that these percentages are fixed in stone.

Final Drafts: 400 pts (100, 100, and 200), 72.727272% of total
Group Participation: 50 pts, 9.090909% of total
Misc. Assignments: 100 pts, 18.181818% of total

Final note on grades: Showing up for class and turning in all the assignments is average work and B's are average grades. A's are extraordinary grades reserved for extraordinary work.

note on group participation. This includes my evaluation of group presentations and in-class group discussions. Because I expect you to help each other with your writing, I expect you to use well the time given to groups in class. I also expect you to *read your fellow group members' drafts*. If it appears to me that you are coming to class without having read the drafts your group members gave you during the prior class period, you will suffer greatly. If it appears to me that your group spends group work time looking at the ceiling, you will also suffer great suffering.

as you like it. The McCoy Theatre's production of *As You Like It* runs April 12-13, 18-21. You are *required* to see this production. Tickets are laughably cheap, and you can see the production for free by volunteering to usher, anyway. If you fail to see this production, you will receive none of the 50 points available as "Miscellaneous Assignments".

final exam. No final exam. But "Misc. Assignments" means that throughout the semester I will be trying to determine whether or not you are reading. So beware. In addition, if you fail to visit the Writing Center by the 15th session of class, you will by default receive **none** of the 18.181818% from "Misc Assignments".

SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading	Due
1/10	First day of class. All the gory details. Theatre as a concept and as an academic discipline.		
1/15	The Personal Essay. Group assignments. Generating ideas for writing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keillor - "How the Crab Apple Grew" • Tan - "Mother Tongue", • Mamet - "True Stories of Bitches" 	
1/17	Defining Theatre: topics for writing. Group brainstorming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goffman - "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life" 	
1/22	Writing a draft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vonnegut - "How to Write with Style" • Roberts - "How to Say Nothing" • Morton - "L'Isle d'Gilligan" 	
1/24	Drawing theatre lines: what is <i>your</i> definition in fifteen words or less?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turner - "Acting in Everyday Life" • <i>The Onion</i> - "Energetic" 	Personal Essay First Draft (bring copies only for your group)
1/29	Theatre: justifying your definition. Group responses to drafts: focus and evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Members' Drafts 	
1/31	Your argument: just what's new? how far does your definition reach? Hacker Presentation - S5, Mixed Constructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George - "On Ambiguity" 	
2/5	Group responses to second drafts: what don't you already know?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McCorkle - "The Simpsons" 	Personal Essay Second Draft (copy only for me)
2/7	Intro to Mamet and <i>Oleanna</i> . Academic arguments. Which character is a jerk?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Oleanna</i> 	
2/12	More <i>Oleanna</i> : how does power move? Hacker Presentation - W2, Wordy Sentences:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryan - "<i>Oleanna</i>: David Mamet's Power Play" • Badenhausen - "The Modern Academy Raging in the Dark" 	
2/14	More <i>Oleanna</i> : concocted defenses of John and Carol. Group Journal Assignments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goggans - "Laying Blame" 	<i>Oleanna</i> Analysis First Draft (copies for your group)

Date	Topic	Reading	Due
2/19	WE DO NOT MEET IN CLASS TODAY <i>Oleanna</i> Screening: Barret 034, 7pm		
2/21	Group responses to first drafts: focus and evidence. Hacker Presentation - W3, Active Verbs:		<i>Oleanna</i> Analysis Second Draft (copies for me and for your group)
2/26	<i>Oleanna</i> Never Dies: differences between the movie and the play. Group responses to second drafts: counter-arguing. Hacker Presentation - G1, Subject-Verb Agreement:		
2/28	Intro to Performance Analyses. Finding Topics. What Does a Research Argument Look Like?	• Hatch - "Here Comes Everybody"	<i>Oleanna</i> Analysis Third Draft (copy only for me)
3/1	Pretending to Understand the Bard: Intro to <i>As You Like It</i>	• Marshall - "Introduction to <i>As You Like It</i> "	Research Topics
3/5	<i>As You Like It</i> (or don't like it, as the case may be)	• <i>As You Like It</i>	Proposals with 10 bibliographical entries
3/7	Assessing Authority	• Bennett - "The Reform of a Malcontent"	
3/12-14	SPRING BREAK		
3/19	Adding style and shape to your argument	• West - "What's the Matter with Shakespeare?"	
3/21	Data, claims and warrants. Group Work on Drafts.		
3/26	Citing sources. Avoiding plagiarism. MLA format. Hacker Presentation - G5, Sentence Fragments:	• Levin - "Protesting Too Much in Shakespeare and Elsewhere"	
3/28	EASTER BREAK		
4/2	Guest		Research Paper First Draft (copies only for your group)
4/9	Logical fallacies: John and Carol come back to haunt us.		

Date	Topic	Reading	Due
4/11	<p>Thesis statements: remember your theatre definitions? Group responses to drafts: thesis statements, paragraph topics</p> <p>Hacker Presentation - G6, Run-On Sentences:</p>		<p>Research Paper Second Drafts (copies for me and for your group)</p>
4/16	Guest		
4/18	Group responses to drafts: counter-arguments and rebuttals.		
4/23	Discussion of the college's <i>As You Like It</i> . Final Draft Checklist.		
4/25	Last Class		<p>Final-Final Drafts</p>