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Welcome to FYWS 151 Spring 2013! SECTION 014

MWF 12-12.50am

Classroom: Barrett 214

Text us . . .

In daily conversation, the word “text” usually refers to a message sent from a mobile phone. However, the word, from the Latin *textus*, derives from a root that means “to make,” and it has a long history; in the form *texere*, it first meant “to weave.” Texts, from textiles to textbooks and text messages, are, and always have been, created or constructed.

In education, texts are the fabric of our lives—books, films, music, paintings, plans, reports, and records that others have “made” are indispensable. College students are expected to respond to these by “texting,” carefully constructing their own written responses that are in keeping with academic convention. For that reason, this class is designed to develop students’ abilities to read texts and contexts, and to become skilled critics and crafters of writing themselves.

During this course, students will experience, analyze, and respond not only to texts *about* texts, but also to verbal, visual, and sound material drawn from a variety of genres, including literature and pop culture. This is a forum in which you may read an essay by Zadie Smith and cheer Z-Bo, read a column by Geoff Calkins and laugh at Gaylord Focker, or read a story by Mark Behr even as you think about Sugar Bear. In this class, you will be prepared (in the many senses of that word) for “Here Comes Honey Boo Boo!” and you will surely text about it.

I. Course materials

- Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *“They Say, I Say”: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: Norton 2010. (This will be abbreviated as *TMTM* in the course description and schedule.) This is the central text of the course.
- The Rhodes College handbook *A Guide to Effective Paper Writing* (2010). This works both as an invaluable resource for writing as well as a guide to your relationship with the professor in the context of the course.

- White, E.B. *Charlotte's Web*. Any edition of the *full* novel, new, second hand, from the public library, electronic edition, or even your childhood copy.
- You will be given a number of course handouts. Most I will give to you in hard copy. Others will be online and you may print them at your discretion. Films that you are required to watch will be made available to you through moodle.com.
- You will also need to have a good dictionary and the MLA 7th edition handbook at hand. These are available online through the library. You will use these to enhance your writing and to cite correctly.

II. Course structure

As the Rhodes College description of FYWS 151 explains, this is:

[a] course that develops the ability to read and think critically, to employ discussion and writing as a means of exploring and refining ideas, and to express those ideas in effective prose . . . Topics are selected by individual professors and are designed to help students develop transferable skills of analysis and argumentation, applicable to the various disciplines of the liberal arts and sciences. Several papers will be required, at least one of which will involve use of the library and proper documentation. The seminar will emphasize successive stages of the writing process, including prewriting, drafting, and revision, and will provide feedback from classmates and the instructor.

(<http://www.rhodes.edu/English/20887.asp>)

The class, a seminar, meets three times a week. In the first part of the semester, we will generally use one class a week to discuss and apply “the moves that matter in academic writing” (Graff and Birkenstein) and issues related to writing. The others will

be used to review and discuss texts, to visit the library, and to workshop writing assignments. The second part of the semester will be similar, but we will spend more time on refining and reworking your writing and in the library.

Your work for this semester includes:

1. Many readings (usually about fifty pages a week) and several TV shows and films. These are drawn from various genres. Three main ideas governed my selection of these texts: First and most important, they well exemplify the issues in writing that we will be exploring at the time. Second, they will often relate to cultural events (for example, Martin Luther King Day, the Academy Awards, and March Madness). Third, in my experience, their eclecticism offers something for everyone, enhancing engagement with the material.
2. A number of short written responses to questions that I pose to you (usually between 250–600 words).
3. A group presentation.
4. Four papers. While you will reconsider and rewrite each of the first three papers, the fourth will undergo major revision to become the long paper due at the end of the semester.
5. A poem that you will write to send as a text message.
6. Attending the lecture by South African Justice Edwin Cameron on April 3 on the Rhodes Campus (Clough). If this is impossible for you, you should let me know and I will suggest an alternative event. Attendance will count towards your participation grade.

A handout detailing the *exact* requirements will be given to you on the day that the work is assigned. Much of the work will be graded on a rubric to which you will have access before the assignment is due.

I cannot overstate that writing well is VERY hard work and requires spending much time thinking about your topic/argument, researching what others say about it, deciding what you want to say about, and only then putting all this to paper in an elegant way. To succeed on these assignments, make sure you give yourself sufficient time for all the steps in the process.

Further, it is important to follow all instructions that I give you when I assign work. Unless I advise otherwise, all written assignments must be in hard copy, stapled, and comply with MLA format (no cover sheet). However, in the interests of the environment, I encourage you to print on both sides of the paper.

III. Grades (for a total of 1000 points)

- First paper (1200–1300 words): 50 points
- Second paper (1200–1300 words): 100 points
- Third paper (1900–2100 words): 200 points
- Fourth paper: (3000–3200 words): 250 points
- Eight short written responses: 150 points
- Presentation: 50 points
- Text poem: 50 points
- Engagement 150 points: This substantial portion of your grade takes into account your preparation for and participation in class and your enthusiasm for class discussion and assignments. A good grade in this portion necessitates a demeanor of respect for your classmates and their opinions, and for the course itself. The seminar/workshop structure of the course means that your classmates are dependent on your presence and participation in class.

IV. Absence, Tardiness, and Late Work Policy

Your presence in class is a vital part of your learning experience. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to catch up on the class from a classmate.

You may be absent without penalty three times during the semester. You do not have to provide a reason for these first three absences. If you are absent more than three times, your final grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade per subsequent absence; for example, a B would become a B-, and a B- a C+.

Our classes are only fifty minutes long, so punctuality is especially important. Please be at your seats ready to begin class at the time specified. Excessive tardiness will lead to your being counted as absent.

Work must be submitted complete and on time. Papers turned in late will be graded down 1/3 of a letter grade for each day after the deadline (for example, a B would become a B- after one day, and a C+ after two days, etc.); further, late work may be graded and returned later than the work of other students that is submitted on time. Papers not submitted will receive a zero grade.

Obviously, there are sometimes extenuating circumstances surrounding absences, tardiness, and late work. Please communicate with me about these.

V. Communication

The best way of communicating with me is by email at reefa@rhodes.edu. I will get back to you as soon as I am able to do so. The Rhodes College *A Guide to Effective Paper Writing* well describes my own policies with regard to communication with me—please see especially pp53–54.

To contact you, I will use your Rhodes email addresses. You should check your Rhodes email at least once a day to keep up with information about the class.

Of course, I am always happy to meet with you in person during the semester. My office hours are listed above, but you may also make an appointment.

VI. Resources

You have many resources to help you with questions about aspects of the class. These include:

- Me (Professor Reef)
- The Writing Center (more details in class and online)
- The Rhodes College *A Guide to Effective Paper Writing* (2010).
- Reference Librarians
- Occasionally, other professors may be helpful (especially if your questions relate to a discipline in which they are more expert than I, like Biology.)

VII. Honor Code

I support and expect adherence to the Rhodes College Honor Code.

VIII. Special Accommodations

If you need special accommodations in this class, please see me privately as soon as possible.

IX. Class Schedule

This schedule is subject to modification if necessary. If there are changes I will advise you by email and/or information in class.

Week 1

Wed 9 January: Introductory class

Fri 11: Introduction to the concept of “texts” and “textuality.” Lowengard handout to be distributed. Presentations (group) on *TMTM* to be assigned.

Week 2

Mon 14 January: Lowengard’s “Supple as Voile, Sturdy as Canvas”; discussion of this handout. First short writing to be assigned.

Wed 16: Read *TMTM* pp xvi–xxvi.

Fri 18: First short writing assignment due. Discussion of *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo!*

First paper to be assigned.

Week 3–Martin Luther King Weekend and Presidential Inauguration

Mon 21 January: **MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY–NO CLASSES**

Wed 23: Group 1 presentation on *TMTM* (pp1–29). Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” Concept of the rhetorical triangle. Second short writing to be assigned.

Fri 25: Introduction (pp3–19) to Howard Finestone’s *The Thirteen Principles That Define America* (handout) and Deborah Tannen’s “Agonism in the Academy: Surviving the Argument Culture” on pp214–220 *TMTM*. Discussion on concepts of argument and criticism/critique.

Week 4

Mon 28 January: Second short writing assignment due. Group 2 presentation on *TMTM* pp30–55. Identifying and writing a thesis.

Wed 30: The structure of an academic text. “Dissection” of academic articles. Third short writing assignment to be assigned.

Fri 1 February: Draft of first paper due. Introduction to editing. Class workshop of first paper.

Week 5–Superbowl Weekend

Mon 4 February: **First paper due.** Group 3 presentation on *TMTM* pp55–77. Text TBA (likely by Dave Zirin).

Wed 6: Library day (to be confirmed)

Fri 8: Library day (to be confirmed)

Week 6

Mon 11: Third short writing assignment due. Zadie Smith’s essay “Joy.” Group 4 presentation on *TMTM* pp78–104. Feedback on first paper. **Second paper to be assigned.**

Wed 13: Fourth short writing assignment to be assigned. Discussion about intellectual property and plagiarism. Zakaria/Lepore text(s).

Fri 15: Fourth short writing assignment due. Library day (to be confirmed).

Week 7

Mon 18: Group 5 presentation on *TMTM* pp105–128. Citing and quoting.

Wed 20: Identifying issues in a text. Fifth short writing assignment to be assigned.

Fri 22: Academy Awards Weekend: Begin watching and discussing parts of *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* in class.

Week 8

Mon 25 February: Group 6 presentation on *TMTM* pp129–145. Make sure that you have finished watching *Meet the Parents* by today. Excerpts from *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. Discussion of the films.

Wed 27: Draft of paper 2 due. Workshop paper 2.

Fri 1 March: Fifth short writing assignment due.

Week 9

Mon 4 March: Group 7 presentation on *TMTM* pp146–17. Assign sixth short writing assignment.

Wed 6: **Second paper due. Paper 3 to be assigned.**

Fri 8: Sixth short writing assignment due. Begin work on theses for Paper 3.

Week 10 NO CLASSES–SPRING BREAK

Over the break, read *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White.

Week 11–March Madness begins

Mon 18 March: *Charlotte's Web*. Feedback on second papers. Assign seventh short writing assignment (due over Easter Break—see below). **Final paper to be assigned.**

Wed 20: Read Calkins text. Handouts of draft of thesis and supporting argument of paper 3 to be distributed to class.

Fri 22: Read your classmates' handouts. Workshop on thesis and supporting argument of paper 3.

Week 12—No regular office hours this week; meet by appointment.

Mon 25 March: Workshop of full paper 3.

Wed 27: Library day (to be confirmed). **Paper 3 due in the bin on my office door by 5pm today.**

Fri 29: NO CLASSES—EASTER RECESS

Seventh short writing assignment due: By Saturday 30 March at 8pm, email me the topic you would like to address for your final paper and a first draft of your thesis so that I can approve these or recommend changes to these to you.

Week 13

Mon 1 April: Feedback on paper 3. Discussion of topics and workshop of thesis for Paper 4.

Wed 3: Revised theses for Paper 4 due. Assign 8th short writing assignment (annotated bibliography). Begin research.

EVENING EVENT: South African Constitutional Court Justice Edward Cameron will be talking at Rhodes (Clough 7pm) on Gay Rights and Civil Rights—plan to attend.

Fri 5: Short story "Boy" by Mark Behr. Discuss any links to the Cameron lecture. Discuss the general work of literature.

Week 14

Mon 8 April: David Crystal's *Txting: The gr8 db8* (pp3–33). Eighth short writing assignment (annotated bibliography) due.

Wed 10: Outline of Paper 4 due. Workshop paper outlines and begin developing supporting paragraphs.

Fri 12: Crystal (*Txting*) pp 37–62.

Week 15

Mon 15 April: Workshop of final papers

Wed 17: Workshop of final papers

Fri 19: Crystal (*Txting*) pp151–176. Course evaluations.

Week 16

Mon 22 April: Text poems due. Presentation and discussion of text poems.

Wed 24: Last class! End of course discussion.

Fri 26: No classes. **Paper 4 due in the bin of my office door by 1pm today.**