

Course Syllabus
First Year Writing Seminar, 151
Fall Term, AY 2012-2013
MWF 10:10:50: Barret Library, 216 (CRN: 13647)
MWF 12-12:50: Clough, 417 (CRN: 13556)

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Course Description:

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. Individual sections of the course will explore different topics in reading, discussion, and writing. 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. Students may not take both English 151 and English 155.

Course Introduction:

We are what we eat. True or false? This semester, we will focus on food—who grows it, who sells it, what does it do to our bodies, how much does it cost, what is it really made of. Some of the questions we'll explore include: Who is the small farmer? What are GMO's, and are they bad for us? Why choose organic when one prefers Pizza Hut? We will spend the semester analyzing arguments about the science, culture, and politics of food through various media. And we will work to establish our own narratives by dismantling cultural assumptions and political jargon about food and by understanding the complexities of food production and commerce. Expect this course to challenge—sometimes graphically—your own perceptions of what you eat and where it comes from.

Course Outcomes/Goals:

By the end of the semester, each student enrolled in the Writing Seminar should know how to do the following:

1. Determine important questions about a topic or a text on their own.

2. Analyze a writing task and develop a strategy to fulfill it, considering the rhetorical situation and the audience.
3. Assess fairly the arguments of others and develop a critical/analytical response to a written text.
4. Plan and organize a coherent, well-supported argument with a clear thesis.
5. Support the thesis with unified paragraphs that are clearly related and substantially developed. Develop a polished, rational, evidenced argument.
6. Distinguish between kinds of evidence and select evidence that is relevant, sufficiently detailed, and substantial.
7. Summarize, extrapolate, and synthesize material from a variety of sources, giving adequate and accurate documentation.
8. Demonstrate sensitivity to tone, diction, syntax, and figurative language.
9. Express complex ideas in clear and effective prose that has been carefully edited and proofread. Assess their own drafts (drawing on audience feedback when appropriate) and reconceive, restructure, or significantly modify their own arguments.

Course Materials:

Rottenberg, Annette. *Elements of Argument*. 10th. Boston: Bedford/ St Martin's, 2012.

Schlosser, Eric. *Fast Food Nation*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005.

MLA Handbook. 7th. Modern Language Association of America, 2009.

Grading Information:

Distribution:

10%	Editorial (500 words)
15%	Critique Essay (1200-1500 words)
15%	Persuasive Essay (1800-2000 words)
20%	Rogerian Argument (2500-3000 words)
10%	In Class Writings
10%	Peer Editing Sessions (5, total)
5%	Final Presentation
15%	Attendance/Participation/Involvement (41 class meetings, total)
100%	TOTAL

Scale:

The grading scale, based on 100 points, is:

A= 90-100 points

B= 80-89 points

C= 70-79 points

D= 60-69 points

F= 50-59 points

An **A paper** is characterized by outstanding informative writing marked by superior readability and competent handling of content. These traits are demonstrated in the following ways:

The substance and organization follow a clear, logical sequence that makes the information easily accessible to the reader. The purpose is clearly expressed, and the selected details of the assignment reflect this purpose. The audience is accommodated throughout the assignment as reflected in effective communication and style. Words are chosen and sentences are constructed to make the information understandable. The grammar, mechanics, and format are flawless.

A **B paper** is characterized by distinguished writing that successfully fulfills the requirements but contains one of the following weaknesses:

Although the writing is essentially well organized, the audience analysis, the statement of purpose, or the handling of the content is flawed. Although sentences are grammatically correct, their structure or length or both sometimes cause readers to work unnecessarily hard. Ambiguous or vague wording hinders precise communication. A small lapse in audience accommodation causes reader distraction. Grammar, mechanics, and format flaws interfere with reading and comprehension.

A **C paper** is characterized by satisfactory writing that is generally effective but contains any one of the following weaknesses:

Although satisfactorily written, the body of the assignment is not clearly organized, or some material is not clearly explained; the audience and purpose are not clear. Sentences, although they are grammatically correct, often make information difficult to extract; editing key words or converting nouns to verbs could solve such problems. Wording interferes with readability, but the reader can still glean the meaning; rereading is often required. Repeated grammar, mechanics, or format errors mar the paper.

A **D paper** struggles to communicate information and contains weak writing. In a professional working environment, such writing would be considered incompetent because it suffers from any one of the following problems:

Any two of the problems listed under a C paper. Minimal evidence of audience accommodation. Serious wording problems, such as garbled wording, gives the reader repeated and serious difficulties in understanding. Serious sentence problems, such as run-on sentences and comma splices, damage the readability. Grammar, spelling, or format problems create frequent obstacles to understanding.

A failing grade on a writing assignment usually means that your paper contains any two problems from the list for a D paper.

Plagiarism:

To submit material discovered to have been plagiarized means that you fail the course.

As you know, plagiarism is defined as passing off others' ideas and/or words as your own. It is an extremely serious offense. Careers of known plagiarists are ruined. Do not even think about plagiarizing. See Academic Policies/Intellectual Honesty in the Rhodes catalog.

Project Descriptions and Assignments:

Academic Policies:

- Attendance in FYWS 151 is mandatory. Please do not miss class. Your grade will suffer if you miss class. **15% of your course grade is based on attendance and participation.** (Plus an additional 20% for various in class writings/peer editing sessions. You **cannot** make those up.)
- Tardiness will count against your attendance grade. If you arrive in class after I have taken roll, you will be counted as absent. **Do NOT arrive late.**
- Any and all absences will count against your grade. More than 6 absences will result in an F in this course.
- It is solely up to you to find out what you missed—if you had to miss class. Please keep a list of classmates' names and contact information. It is up to you to contact a classmate to find out about missed work. I am not your go to contact if you have to miss class.
- Participation in every aspect of the course is required.
- Silence and put your phones **away** before entering the classroom.
- No food in class.
- No sleeping.
- Proper medical (or other) documentation must accompany late assignments in order to be accepted, if at all.
- Generally, I do not accept late work. Late work = significantly reduced grade.
- Respect of both your instructor and your classmates is expected. Disrespect will not be tolerated in any way, shape, or form.

Department of English Expectations and Policies

A college course is more than simply a set of assignments; it is an intellectual process, one which requires active engagement from beginning to end in order to achieve its intended results. With this in mind, the Department of English has formulated a number of expectations and the policies that support them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to the syllabus for a particular course, you should address them to the instructor.

Attendance: The success of a course depends to a significant extent upon the presence of students alert and prepared to address the subject under discussion. Unavoidable absences should be discussed with the instructor, ideally before they occur. Excessive absences will result in a lowering of grade, in some cases to an F.

Deadlines: Writing assignments, tests, etc., are carefully scheduled as stages toward the fulfillment of the course's goals and cannot be indefinitely deferred without frustrating those goals. Brief extensions for good reasons may be permissible with the instructor's prior approval; otherwise, late assignments will be penalized and may result in their not being accepted for credit.

Submission of all work: All major assignments are integral to the goals of the course. Failure to complete any major assignment will result in a grade of F for the course.

Intellectual honesty: All work is assumed to be the student's own and produced exclusively for the course in which it is submitted. Papers written for one course, even if revised, are not to be submitted in another without the instructor's prior approval. Borrowing of ideas or language from other sources (including published material, other

student papers, the internet or other electronic resources, etc.) must be carefully documented. Students are advised against posting their work on the internet since doing so may lead to suspicion of plagiarism. Students are advised to maintain drafts of their work to verify its originality. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, and the student if convicted will receive a grade of F in the course in addition to sanctions assigned by the Council. Clear evidence of plagiarism (failure to use quotation marks around verbatim or copied language, failure to adequately paraphrase, and failure to cite the source of quoted, paraphrased, or borrowed text and ideas), regardless of the Council hearing outcome, may likewise result in failure of the course. Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be penalized as the instructor deems appropriate. If you are uncertain about how or whether to document sources, consult your teacher.

Writing Center:

The Rhodes College Writing Center is located in Barret Library, room 122.
<http://www.rhodes.edu/writingcenter/>. Use your writing center. It's a free and most helpful resource for *all* students.

This syllabus is tentative and subject to change, if necessary. Changes will be announced with as much notice as possible.

Course Schedule (TENTATIVE)

Week 1:

22 Aug W: Intros, syllabus review. Read “Cheap Food: Workers Pay...” *Elements*. Write: “My Relationship With Food.”

24 Aug F: Intros, cont’d. Receive assignment sheet: Editorial. Read “Food Fight” and “The Fight Over Food...” and chapter 1, *Elements*. Begin work on editorial idea.

Week 2:

27 Aug: Bring and Editorial to class. Editorial audience, purpose, thesis due. Read, “The Organic Myth” *Elements* and Ch 2, *Elements*

29 Aug: Editorial draft due. Peer editing. Read, “Climate Crisis...” and “The Rich Get Richer...” *Elements* and *Elements*, ch 3

31 Aug: Final Editorial due.

Last day to drop: 28 August

Week 3:

5 Sept: Receive assignment sheet: Critique. Read, “Putting Customers...” and “Put Profits...” *Elements*.

7 Sept: Discuss which essay you’ll critique. Read, “Safer? Tastier?...” *Elements*

Week 4:

10 Sept: Discussion Read, “Food for Thought...” *Elements*

12 Sept: thesis, audience, purpose due. Read, “Competitive Foods and the...” *Elements*

14 Sept: draft 1 due. peer editing. Read, “Live Longer and Healthier...” and “Why Stewardship...” *Elements*

Week 5:

17 Sept: final critique due. SPEAKER/TRIP. Read, “Body Image...” *Elements*

19 Sept: SPEAKER/TRIP. Read, “Do Thin Models...”

21 Sept: Receive assignment sheet: Persuasive. Read *Elements*, ch 4

Week 6:

24 Sept: thinking about persuasion. Read *Elements*, ch 5

26 Sept: library and research. Read *Elements*, ch 6

28 Sept: thesis, audience, and purpose. Read *Elements*, ch 7

Week 7:

1 Oct: draft 1 due. Read *Elements*, ch 8

3 Oct: Draft 2 due. Read *Elements*, ch 9

5 Oct: final Persuasive paper due.

Week 8:

8 Oct: meetings

10 Oct: meetings

12 Oct: mid term wrap up/in class writing.

Fall Break October 13-16

Mid Term Grades Due: October 15

Week 9:

17 Oct: Rogerian Argument Assignment sheet. Read *Fast Food Nation* to pg 49

19 Oct Looking at one side. Read *Fast Food Nation* to pg 91.

Week 10:

22 Oct: Looking at other side. Read *Fast Food Nation* to pg 149.

24 Oct: brainstorming. Read *Fast Food Nation* to pg 183.

26 Oct: idea sheet/thesis, audience, purpose due. Read *Fast Food Nation* to pg 225.

Week 11:

Oct 29: research day. Read *Fast Food Nation* to end.

Oct 31: research day/in class discussion. Read *Elements*, ch 10

Nov 2: thesis revision. Read *Elements*, ch 11

Week 12:

Nov 5: submit writing plan in class. Read *Elements*, ch 12

Nov 7: TBA

Nov 9: complete outline and Rogerian Argument Worksheet

Week 13:

Nov 12: draft 1 due. peer editing

Nov 14: writing center/revising

Nov 16: writing center/revising

Week 14:

Nov 19: Let's EAT

Thanksgiving Nov 20-25

Week 15:

Nov 26: draft 2 due. peer editing.

Nov 28: Q and A re: drafts w/Prof Warren

Nov 30: Final Rogerian Argument due. Begin oral presentations/writing

Week 16:

Dec 3: oral presentations/writing/evals

Dec 5: oral presentations/writing/evals

Exams begin on 7 December

Final Grades Due December 14