

FYWS 151: Accent on Writing: Language, Culture, & Communication

Section 04 (MWF 11-11:50am) & Section 05 (MWF 12-12:50am)

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Office hours: Mon. 1:30-2:30pm & Wed. 9:30-10:30am (& by appointment)

Course Description

In this section, we will study how our daily experiences with language—written, spoken, and unspoken—work in relation to identity, culture, and rhetoric. By critically reflecting on our own choices as writers, we will investigate our roles as native and non-native practitioners as we consider the multitude of groups, experiences, and spaces (including the American college-level classroom) that we occupy on a daily basis. Not only will we ask, “How is our culture reflected in our writing?” but also, “how are our expectations of effective writing shaped by cultural preferences?”

As a writing community, we will develop our own language-identity narratives, analyze how others construct argument in a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts, and investigate your own scholarly questions related to language, culture, and communication that emerge throughout the semester. Be prepared to consider and reconsider how language works in your life and how we, individually and collectively, use language to negotiate cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Course Approach

The guiding principle in this seminar is that writing is a skill that is best enhanced through practice and feedback rather than lecture and examination. Your ideas and expression of those ideas will be at the heart of every activity and product. Our classes, readings, and assignments will introduce you to a variety of writing styles and approaches that you will attempt to master using all stages of the recursive writing process: invention, drafting, critiquing, researching, revising, editing, and proofreading.

This is a process-oriented seminar: the expectation is that students explore writing as a process of discovery. During workshops and conferences, you will be offered both written and verbal feedback to guide the process of revision. The formal texts you write during the semester will not be considered final until you hand in your portfolio at the end of the semester. Every class session will be participatory and collaborative. I may lecture to explain concepts related to effective writing practices, but more typically my role will be to provide you with methods to practice, to coordinate exploratory discussions, and to guide the interactions among you and your peers. Most classes will involve reading and discussing your own work, the work of fellow students, and the work of professional writers who can provide inspiration.

Course Texts

>>Required: Bring to class each day

MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 7th ed. New York: MLA, 2009. Print.

O’Conner, Patricia T. *Woe Is I: The Grammarphobe’s Guide to English in Plain English*. 3rd ed. New York: Riverhead Books, 2009. Print.

Rhodes College, *A Guide to Effective Paper Writing*, 2011. Print (or Web).

>>Optional: The readings from this book will also be posted on Moodle.

Eschholz, Paul, Alfred Rosa, and Virginia Clark, Eds. *Language Awareness: Readings for College Writers*. 10th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2009. Print.

>>Moodle postings: Many readings for the course will only be available on Moodle (viewable/printable in Adobe PDF). Print and bring readings to class.

>>I will provide additional materials in class as needed.

Course Requirements

I respect each of you as an adult and developing academic, and as such I will hold you to a high standard of behavior and performance during this class. Respect other people’s time and effort by attending class, by meeting your participation requirements, and by minimizing distractions. (Silence/turn-off cell phones during class, use laptops for coursework only, and limit food/drink.) Any student needing special accommodations in this class should make an appointment to meet with me privately as soon as possible.

Attendance

Your physical and mental presence is critical to the work we do. Plan to attend class regularly and to participate actively in all course happenings, including meetings/events away from the regularly scheduled classes. Come to class prepared and on time. If you are routinely late to class or more than 10 min. late, then you will be considered absent.

You are permitted 3 absences with no explanation needed. Use these permitted absences to plan for travel, inevitable sick days, and other obligations that may keep you from class. I will deduct 1/3 of a letter grade per additional absence (e.g., 4 absences lower a B- to a C+).

If you miss 6 or more classes, you will fail the course. (Missing a required conference = no credit for any related process work and at least 1 absence.) I will consider and deal with extraordinary circumstances on an individual basis, so please talk to or email me when you anticipate missing class or deadlines.

- The grade equivalences for this course are: A = 4.00; A- = 3.67; B+ = 3.33; B = 3.00; B- = 2.67; C+ = 2.33; C = 2.00; C- = 1.67; D+ = 1.33; D = 1.0; F/no work = 0.0
- Process work: assessed for each unit; averaged in final grade calculation
 - Either you contribute to each class/activity in a meaningful way, or you do not. Strong to satisfactory (A-B range) participation means that you are actively involved in whole-class, small group, and individual activities. I expect you to speak, write, and share quality ideas/work in every class.
 - When you arrive late to class, do not adequately prepare (readings, assignments) for class activities, or are not invested fully in the day's work, your process work will be assessed as weak to unsatisfactory (C-F range).
 - In-class (or conference) activities that occur when you are not present or late CANNOT be made-up for credit.
- Draft credit: Each draft = 1/3 letter in the final calc.
 - There is no gray area with draft credit—either your draft is complete (meets length & assignment criteria) and on time (+), or it is not (-). You do not earn any draft credit for partially completing a draft (in length or content) or turning it in late (without a prearranged extension).
 - EX: If you get credit for all 12 drafts, you will earn an A for this portion of your final grade; if you get credit for only 8 of 12 drafts, you will earn a B-. (Credit for only 1 or 2 drafts=F.)
- Product evaluation: I provide rubrics for portfolio assignments and will always respond to your portfolios with holistic comments. Revision is integral to this course; you will have opportunities to revise every draft sequence prior to submitting a final version for graded evaluation.
- Grades/credit/absences are recorded regularly and are available to you throughout the semester. You may schedule an appointment with me at any point in the semester to inquire about your grade/credit status and/or to discuss (but not *negotiate about*) my comments and evaluation of your work.

You are expected to follow the Rhodes Honor Code for all work that you do for this course. Everything that you submit for the course (including formal *and* informal assignments), must be your original work created for this course only. I reserve the right to employ any available resources, including plagiarism software tools, to check for academic integrity violations.

All suspected violations of the Rhodes Honor Code, including cases of plagiarism, will be handled in accordance with this code. Plagiarism and other Code violations carry severe penalties; if you are found in violation by the Honor Council, you may fail the course in addition to any sanctions issued by the council.

You should feel confident that I am most interested in your ideas and your unique expression of them.

The schedule (on Moodle/distributed by unit) is subject to change to accommodate our learning pace and needs. Expect short additional readings at times and daily process work assignments. I will announce additions/changes in class & on Moodle. Bring your readings (with annotations and/or additional writing) to class on the day they will be used.

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. 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.

Process Work (=20%)

- Consistent and attentive reading, writing, and discussion practices are essential to passing (and certainly *excelling in*) this course.
 - **Oral:** Your thoughtful participation in class discussions, activities, and group/partner work is expected and will be assessed for daily credit. Comments and questions should reflect application/critical thinking with regard to course materials, methods, and themes.
 - **Written:** Purchase a notebook for use in this class only; everything you write in and for this course will become part of this notebook. Always write the date at the top of new entries. **DO NOT THROW AWAY OR DELETE ANYTHING YOU WRITE FOR THIS CLASS.** Entries may be assigned for or during class and reviewed for credit.
 - **Conferences:** You are required to attend several 15min.-1hr. conferences with me and/or your peers throughout the semester to talk about specific drafts and revision, your experiences with unit texts/topics, and any upcoming drafts/events of note. You will sign-up for a day/time on Moodle several days before conferences happen. You cannot opt out of a conference or make-up a missed conference. The week of conferences, we will not meet during one or more of our regular class times (see tentative course schedule/Moodle).

Draft Credit (=20%)

- **Drafts/Papers:** You will compose four original papers in this class; you will write multiple versions of those papers (i.e., drafts) throughout the semester. You will choose several to polish and submit in your portfolio.
 - Unit A: Language-Identity Narrative (4-5 pgs; 1200 wds) sequence
 - Unit B: Rhetorical Analysis/Argument (5-6 pgs; 1500 wds) sequence
 - Unit C: Research Project (8-10 pgs; 2400 wds) sequence
 - Learning Letter/ Portfolio Cover Letter (3-5 pgs; 1000 wds) sequence
- Unless otherwise specified on the assignment:
- All drafts must be typed: 12-pt Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1-inch margins. Type the word count at the top of the draft; I reserve the right to assess minimum req. length using electronic copies of drafts.
 - Drafts are due at the beginning of class—printed. (Bring one printed copy to class on the day it is due; I may ask you to bring more than one copy of certain drafts and/or submit a copy on Moodle.)

YOU CAN ONLY EARN DRAFT CREDIT BY COMPLETING YOUR ASSIGNMENTS ON TIME. I will not give credit for papers that do not meet the minimum page/ word requirement, do not fulfill all components of the assignment, or are late. (I will read them, however, and respond as time permits.)

Product (=60%)

A portfolio is composed of writing that you select and present in order to demonstrate to me your best composition skills. The midterm and final portfolios are not optional. These are the products of the process work you do throughout the semester. I will provide you with more details on the portfolios throughout the semester, including a formal assignment/ instructions on what must be included and examples of how to compile your materials.

- **The midterm portfolio** (=20%) will be evaluated on the quality of revision shown in the work you submit. I will provide you with a rubric ahead of time that will indicate how the midterm portfolio will be evaluated.
- **The final portfolio** (=40%) will be evaluated on the quality of the final drafts you choose to submit. These final drafts are evaluated comprehensively against a rubric that will be provided ahead of time—I will consider all aspects of the writing, from your organizing ideas and forms to your use of grammar and documentation standards. Except under extraordinary conditions, **IF YOU DO NOT TURN IN A COMPLETE FINAL PORTFOLIO BY THE DATE/TIME IT IS DUE OR AT ALL, YOU WILL FAIL THE COURSE.**

The Writing Center The Writing Center (Barret 122) is an excellent resource for all writers at Rhodes. A trained staff member will work with you one-on-one and provide assistance with style, organization, content, voice, grammar, and documentation standards. In addition to your draft and/or any pre-writing notes, bring your assignment to your session. For more information, visit www.rhodes.edu/writingcenter or call 843-3393.