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 Office Hours: M/W 1-2:30 and by appointment

English 151: Critical Thinking and Writing
Fighting Words: Narrating American Wars
 M/W/F: 10am-10:50am (100 Clough)

A Brief Course Description

In this course, we will examine the ways in which American wars have been narrated in the 20th and 21st Centuries. You will be asked to critically engage with not only literary representations of war, but also with pieces of journalism, historical accounts, films, documentaries, photographic images, and memorials. As a class we will ask how an understanding of war is shaped through these mediums and how, in turn, cultural consciousness is shaped through our understanding of a particular war. In other words, what “work” do these representations do? Do they re-write certain wars as part of a nation-building exercise or, conversely, do they work as a piece of protest? How do these texts work to complicate and dismantle previous assumptions regarding a particular war? By addressing these questions and many more, we will begin to form an understanding of how and why wars are scripted and remembered in very particular ways.

This class is designed to develop your ability to write clear and effective argumentative prose. We will approach writing not as a product, but as a process that involves recognizing, developing, and effectively expressing our most interesting questions as compelling arguments. Requiring the analysis of not only assigned readings, but also each other's writing, this class emphasizes revision as an indispensable part of the critical-thinking process.

Required Texts

Hemingway, Ernest. *The Sun Also Rises* (1926)
 O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried* (1990)
 Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse – Five: or the Children's Crusade, A Duty Dance with Death* (1969)
 Rosenwasser, David and Jill Stephen. *Writing Analytically* (Fifth Edition)

Grading

10% - Participation
 10% - Workshop
 5% - Mini Paper
 10% - Paper 1
 20% - Paper 2
 45% - Final Research Project

Be **RESPECTFUL** of each student and his or her work. This is a time for you to offer each other helpful criticism, as well as learn more about the writing and revision process.

Paper 1 Workshop: Introduction and Thesis Statement (2/3)

Each student will come to class with 6 copies of an introduction and a working thesis statement. The class will then break up into 3 groups of 5 and discusses their writing.

Other than drafting your introduction and thesis statement and providing copies, you will not need to hand in any other written work on this day. However, you need to be prepared to discuss your introduction and your thesis statement. In other words, be prepared to both ask and answer questions regarding your work.

Paper 2 Workshops: Rough Draft (2/22, 2/26, and 3/1)

You will sign up for one of three workshop groups, which will determine the due date of your draft. As a class, we will discuss the strengths and weakness of a rough draft of your second paper, and offer detailed revision suggestions. Drafts should be a minimum of 3 pages in length.

Final Paper Workshop: Rough Draft (4/14, 4/19, and 4/23)

You will remain in the same groups as the previous workshop, which again will determine the due date of your draft. Drafts should be a minimum of 6 pages in length.

Groups: I will post a group sign-up sheet outside my office door the second week of classes.

Group 1

- Paper 2 Workshop on 2/22; Draft due on 2/19
- Final Paper Workshop on 4/23; Draft due on 4/21

Group 2

- Paper 2 Workshop on 2/26; Draft due on 2/24
- Final Paper Workshop on 4/19; Draft due on 4/16

Group 3

- Paper 2 Workshop on 3/1; Draft due on 2/26
- Final Paper Workshop on 4/14; Draft due on 4/12

Letters: Along with your drafts, you will also be required to submit a number of letters during the workshops for your second and final paper.

Along with your workshop draft, you will also submit a self-review letter of no less than 200 words. This letter is a chance for you to explain to your reader what your primary goals are for this paper and how well you think you have been able to reach those goals thus far. You will also need to include any concerns or questions you have that you would like the readers to address as they review your work.

You are also required to comment on the drafts of your peers. You will type a letter of no less than 100 words to the author of each of the drafts we are workshopping in class. In this letter, you should address that draft's strengths and weaknesses and offer suggestions

Presentation (5%): April 26-30

Each of you will present your research project to the class during the final week of the semester. Each student will have roughly 10 minutes to present his/her research to the class. You will be graded on your ability to synthesize your extensive writing and research into a brief, easily digestible presentation. Remember too that creativity counts. When designing this presentation think of interesting and inventive ways to hold the class's attention. A sign-up sheet for presentation dates will be posted two weeks before presentations begin.

Research Paper (25%): Due 5/4 or 5/5 by 12pm (noon)

This paper should be an extended analysis of the topic of your choosing, related to the subject matter of this course and employing a significant amount of outside research. Paper should be 10-12 (3000 – 3600 words) pages in length.

Individual Conferences

You are required to attend an individual conference session sometime during the week of April 5th. This conference is a time for us to discuss your progress in the class and your upcoming research paper. A sign-up sheet for these conferences will be posted outside of my office door several weeks prior to April 5th. We will not be meeting as a class on Wednesday or Friday of this week; as such, the penalty for missing your scheduled conference is quite severe. Failure to attend a scheduled conference will have the same result as failing to attend two classes.

Plagiarism Policy

You must complete all stages of the work yourself: taking the words of others, or presenting the ideas of others as your own not only prohibits you from learning the skills of academic research and writing, it is a violation of the Honor Code. Furthermore, all assignments completed for this course should be original work written specifically for this class.

Schedule of Assignments

The following schedule is subject to change; however, sufficient notice will be given before any changes are made. Always bring the appropriate books and/or handouts to class.

1/13: Introduction

1/14: *Writing Analytically*, Chapters 1-2

1/18: **MLK Holiday**

1/20: **Mini Paper due**; *Color Me Khaki* (handout)

1/22: *Writing Analytically*, Chapters 3-4

1/25: *Writing Analytically*, Chapters 9 and 11

1/27: *The Sun Also Rises*, Chapters I-VII

1/29: *The Sun Also Rises*, Chapters VIII-XV

2/1: *The Sun Also Rises*, Chapters XVI-End

2/3: *Writing Analytically*, Chapter 12

2/5: **Paper 1 Workshop: Introduction and Thesis Statement**

2/8: **Paper 1 Due**; Propaganda handout

2/10: *The Best Years of Our Lives* (film)

2/12: *Heroes and Misfits: The Troubled Social Reintegration of Disabled Veterans of World War II in The Best Years of Our Lives* (handout)

2/15: *Writing Analytically*, Chapters 7-8

2/17: *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Chapters 1-3

2/19: *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Chapters 4-5

2/22: **Workshop Group 1; Paper 2**

2/24: *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Chapters 6-end

2/26: **Workshop Group 2; Paper 2**

3/1: **Workshop Group 3; Paper 2**

3/3: *Saving Private Ryan* (film)

3/5: **Paper 2 Due**

3/8: *Tangled Memories* (handout)

3/10: *Tangled Memories* (handout)

3/12: **Final Paper Proposal Due**; *Platoon* (film)

3/15: **Spring Break**

3/17: **Spring Break**

3/19: **Spring Break**