

ENG151: CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING

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Writing Fellow: Joel Iwaskiewicz

Spring 2010 Class: Tu/Th 9:30-10:45 am; Palmer 206

Office hours: M 12-2; T 11-12 and 1-2 PM; Th 2-3

The New Yorker

Course Description. The goal of this course is to develop your ability to read, think, and write critically, to employ discussion and writing as a means of exploring and refining ideas, and to express those ideas in effective prose. 151 will emphasize successive stages of the writing process, including pre-writing, drafting, and revision. At least one of your papers will involve the use of the library and research material and proper documentation.

- Week 1 **Th, Jan 14:** **Information class.**
- Week 2 **Tu, Jan 19:** ***The New Yorker*. Argumentation.**
WHW: Read both assigned articles for today and generally examine your first copy of the magazine, paying particular attention to the visual design and the article topics. Write/type a 1-page assessment of *The New Yorker* based on your experience with this issue (and not based on assumptions you might have about the magazine). Make some sort of argument regarding who the intended audience of the *New Yorker* is and what kind of general message the magazine's editor seems to be projecting. Avoid generalizations. Instead, use specific examples (detailed descriptions) of aspects such as the cover image, the table of contents, the categories, the writing styles (please avoid discussion of the advertisements). You should address at least three separate categories (in other words, don't spend your entire time critiquing the cover). ~300 words
- Th, Jan 21:** ***The New Yorker*. <http://www.malcolmgladwell.com/pdf/suv.pdf>.**
WHW: In your own words, state both the topic and the thesis of this article (they are different). You can do this assignment in 2 sentences. ~ 50 words
- Week 3 **Tu, Jan 26:** ***The New Yorker*. The Rhetorical Triangle.**
WHW: Restate the thesis in your own words and identify one strategy the writer uses to develop it. You can do this assignment in 2 sentences. ~ 50 words
- Th, Jan 28:** ***The New Yorker*. The Rhetorical Triangle.**
WHW: Write one paragraph describing your reaction to the article. Does it seem aggressively argumentative? Simply exploratory? Informative? Creative? ~ 150 words.
- Week 4 **Tu, Feb 2:** **Speed editing for Paper 1.**
Read "Rhetorical Essay" handout and RC Handbook 12-14
WHW: Bring to class 2 proposed thesis statements on separate sheets of paper (i.e., for two potential, different papers). ~ 50 words
- Th, Feb 4:** **Workshop for Group A.** Read RC Handbook 20-24
WHW: Draft ~ 1000 words. Group A will have an in-class workshop; everyone else will have their drafts read and returned by Sunday night.
- Week 5 **Tu, Feb 9:** **The Reader & Experience**
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Paper 1 due ~1000 words. Include with your final paper your HW from Speed Editing day, your draft with reader comments, and your “track changes” printout.

- Th, Feb 11:** *The New Yorker. The Reader & Values*
WHW: What values or emotions or experiences of yours does the writer appeal to? ~150 words.
- Week 6 **Tu, Feb 16:** *The New Yorker. The Writer & Authority*
WHW: Pay attention to the “sources” the writer uses, whom s/he quotes or describes in order to provide evidence. How does the “character” or ethos of those sources affect the writer’s argument. ~ 150 words.
- Th, Feb 18:** *The New Yorker. The Writer & Style*
WHW: What about this writer is different that other writers we’ve read? Does this writer have a special voice? Use unique language? Employ a particular tone? ~150 words.
- Week 7 **Tu, Feb 23:** *The New Yorker. The Text & Logic*
WHW: Locate three places where the writer “reasons” with us by using logic or evidence. ~150 words
- Th, Feb 25:** *The New Yorker. The Text & Structure*
WHW: Retype three argument statements from the article, then identify the claim, reason, and warrant for each. ~100 words
- Week 8 **Tu, Mar 2:** **Group editing for Paper 2.**
WHW: Bring to class 2 copies of your proposed thesis (you should create this thesis with the claim/reason/warrant in mind) and 3 main supporting points. ~150 words
- Th, Mar 4:** **Workshop for Group B.** Read RC Handbook 14-20
WHW: Draft for Group B. ~ 1300 words
WHW: Introduction/thesis and paper plan for everyone else.
- Week 9 **Tu, Mar 9:** **The Text & Evidence**
Paper 2 due ~ 1300 words. Read RC Handbook 20-26 as you revise Paper 2. Include with your final paper your HW from Group Editing day, your intro/thesis/plan if you were not in workshop, and your draft/track changes printout, if you were in workshop.
- Th, Mar 11:** *The New Yorker. TBA*
- Week 10 **Tu, Mar 16:** No class. SPRING BREAK
- Th, Mar 18:** No class. SPRING BREAK
- Week 11 **Tu, Mar 23:** *The New Yorker. The Text & Language*
- Th, Mar 25:** *The New Yorker. The Text & Expression*
- Week 12 **Tu, Mar 30:** **In-class Paper 3 process writing.**
- Th, Apr 1:** No class. EASTER BREAK
- Week 13 **Tu, Apr 6:** **Workshop for Group C.**

WHW: Draft for Group C. ~ 1500 words.
WHW: Draft for everyone else (bring hard copy to class).

Th, Apr 8: **Research Paper Instructions.**
Paper 3 due ~ 1500 words.
Include your draft and your track changes printout.

Week 14 **Tu, Apr 13:** **Researching (Online Databases).** RC Handbook 3-9
WHW: Answer questions, wherever appropriate, on these pages in preparation for your research paper. ~200 words

Th, Apr 15: **Using & Documenting Sources.** RC Handbook 35-40
WHW: Research questions, sources, bibliography.~ 200 words

Week 15 **Tu, Apr 20:** **Intellectual Property**
WHW: Paraphrasing worksheet.

Th, Apr 22: **Presentations(this will be part of your Research project)**

Week 16 **Tu, Apr 27:** **Presentations (this will be part of your Research project)**

Th, Apr 29: **Paper 4 due** ~2700 words. Include with your final paper your research prep.

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 fulfilment 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.

TEXTS

The text for this class is *The New Yorker* magazine, which I will distribute on Thursdays for the following week's reading. If the *NY* does not arrive in time, I will leave them outside my office for you to pick up asap (check your email). Periodically, I will assign an article from a previous issue, and you will receive this as an email attachment or in class. You will read two essays per week, usually two for Tuesday and one for Thursday, and we typically will decide as a class which essays we'll read. *The New Yorker* is an intellectual magazine, known for its accomplished writing. As such, it is sometimes challenging to read. You'll want to set aside at least 6 hours each week outside of class for reading and responding. Your magazine pages should be marked with your notes and questions because you'll be expected to contribute your comments in class (and you will need these notes when you later write your paper).

Because of the nature of the weekly text, I often make spontaneous announcements in class or via email (for example, which essays or chapters to read for the following week). Make sure that you get this information and write it down as it may differ from the original syllabus. If you miss class, ask a classmate (not me) to fill you in. You are responsible for knowing what we are reading and what your written homework assignments are (they are subject to change from the syllabus). **Please check your email daily.**

PAPERS—70%

There are 4 formal papers for this class. They should be typed with approximately 330 words per page (i.e. Times Roman 12; 1" margins), double-spaced, pledged in full, and **must include a word count, your name, my name, and an analytical title**. Proofread your papers for typos and grammar errors. For every error, your paper grade will suffer 0.1 point on a 4.0 scale. (A=4.0, A-=3.7, B+=3.3, etc.) For the most part, your first three papers will not include any outside sources, excepting your class text where appropriate. Only your final research paper will include outside sources, which should be documented in MLA format. All other paper formatting, including spacing, quoting, etc, also should also follow MLA style, which can be found in your copy of the *Rhodes College Guide to Effective Writing*. Submit *only* hard copies of final drafts and *always* keep a spare hard copy of your paper. Please also submit a "track changes" printout of your draft/paper and your Writer's Review.

The Writer's Review functions as a cover letter of sorts and will be submitted along with every final draft. This brief write-up is a required element of each formal paper assignment but will not be graded for style, mechanics, etc. The WR is unique in that it invites you to reflect carefully and honestly on the actual process of writing that led up to your paper rather than simply dwelling on the state of your final product. The format of the WR is entirely up to you and should address issues such as challenges faced during the writing process, questions regarding any element of the paper, writing strengths/strategies evident in the piece, etc.

The WR is useful to you as the writer because it promotes a greater awareness of the rhetorical situation of each paper. Additionally, the WR helps your readers (Professor and Writing Fellow) better understand and address the individual moments of growth and struggle each of you experiences throughout the semester.

Please plan ahead; if your computer is known to crash or if you need to go to the lab for printing, give yourself plenty of time to accommodate potential last minute crises. *Late papers:* All papers are due *in class* on the day stipulated on the syllabus. Any unexcused late paper will be penalized a full letter grade for every day late (A becomes B, B+ becomes C+ and weekends count as two days). I will grant extensions in special circumstances. If you need an extension, you must contact me at least one class period before the paper is due. Failure to complete any of the four major papers for this class may result in failure of the class per the English Department's Policies (attached).

- Paper 1: 10% (1000 words ~ 3 pages)
- Paper 2: 15% (1300 words ~ 4 pages)
- Paper 3: 20% (1500 words ~ 5 pages)
- Paper 4: 25% (2700 words ~ 8 pages)

Your first two papers will examine/critique and/or expand on an essay we've read for class from *The New Yorker*. The last two papers will produce original arguments using the rhetorical strategies of the essays. Each class period will be devoted to discussing these essays, so I encourage you to take notes that you may later use for writing your paper. When grading your papers, I will focus primarily on your ability to construct a viable and supported thesis from the text or issue you are analyzing. This means that I'll want to see a thesis that is, in fact, arguable, followed by a good deal of evidence (i.e. quotations) that proves your position. I'll also be looking for stylistic things like helpful transitions (connections made between ideas), word choice, use of

metaphor and tone, etc. I deduct 0.1 points from your final paper grade for each grammatical error (including typos); in other words, *proofread carefully*.

WORKSHOPS AND DRAFTS

At some point in the semester, everyone is required to participate in a full class “draft” workshop and to work on at least one draft with the Writing Fellow. Failure to meet either of these requirements will result in a full-grade deduction from your participation grade. You will be assigned to a “group” for the workshop but will need to schedule independently your conference with your Writing Fellow.

We will workshop approximately 5 drafts in the class period before a final paper is due (this should not be the draft that you work on with the Writing Fellow). If your paper is to be in workshop, you will need to submit an electronic copy of your paper draft to me via email no later than 5 PM on the day preceding the workshop. If your draft is not in at that time, your final paper grade for that draft will suffer a full letter grade. There are no formal “extensions” for drafts due to the nature of the assignment/workshop; however, you may switch with someone if you are unable to write your draft for the workshop for which you have signed up. Just keep me informed about any changes. On the day of workshop, the drafts will be read aloud by a random student in the class (not the writer of the draft) and we will discuss their strengths and weaknesses of the writing. After our discussion, the writers will identify themselves and have the opportunity to ask questions. After workshop, the writers must revise and turn in both the draft and final paper the following class period. Failure to revise the draft will dramatically affect the final paper grade. For Paper 3, I may email a draft packet the evening before the workshop to give you more time to read (ahead).

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS —20%

For most class days in addition to your reading, you will have a brief writing assignment, identified “WHW” or written homework, of 50-300 words. All of these assignments should be **typed** and brought to class on the day stipulated on the syllabus. For example, Thursday, January 21 notes the WHW as “In your own words, state both the topic and the thesis of this article (they are different). ~ 50 words,” and so that assignment is due in class on Jan 21. Because of the spontaneous nature of our class text and the unpredictability of the *New Yorker* readings, I or your fellow periodically may assign outside reading or change the topic of the writing assignment for a particular class. Please check your email daily.

The purpose of these assignments is to hone your analytical reading skills, develop your rhetorical objectivity, and prepare you for writing your own papers. Grades on these assignments will vary, depending on their subject. Some will be Pass/Fail, others will be check +/-, and still others A/B/C and so forth. I may collect the assignment on its due date or may ask that you retain it for a later due date as part of a collection of WHW (so bring your folder of work to each class). Your final 20% grade will be an average of your semester total.

PARTICIPATION—10%

Class participation is an integral part of ENG 151, and it is formally included as a part of your final grade. Actively participating means the following: completing thoughtful written homework assignments, engaging in in-class writing (group or individual), joining frequently in class or group discussions with provocative and articulate comments and questions. Anyone not prepared to participate will be counted as absent. Furthermore, if you sleep, text, work on non-class tasks or entertainment, fail to bring your text, or distract other members of the class from participating, you will be counted absent. I encourage you to take this aspect of the course seriously because your grade will reflect it.

ABSENCES

You are expected to be at every class. I will excuse up to two absences. Beyond those two, *each* additional absence will cost your final course average one grade tier (or .33 points). If you would like to appeal for additional excused absences beyond the two I’m willing to grant, you will need to go through the Dean of Students office and file a formal request, which may or may not be granted, depending on the circumstances. If you physically miss more than six classes, you will fail the course. If you miss class on the day a paper is due, please leave it outside my office door no later than 2pm that day, otherwise it will be considered late. Note: ***you are responsible for finding out from a classmate*** what happened in class the day you were absent or late. Chronic tardiness will affect your final grade. Do not bother coming at all if you are more than 10 minutes late.

Each day it will be your responsibility to sign the attendance notebook. If your signature is not there for a particular day, you will be counted absent. If you are late, you will need to find the notebook, sign it, and document your tardiness. If you have perfect attendance, you will receive bonus points at the end of term.