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## Welcome to Rhodes and FYWS 151 Fall 2014!

Tuesday and Thursday: 11-12.15

Classroom: Barrett 216

### 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.)
- The Rhodes College *A Guide to Effective Paper Writing* (2010), given to you at orientation. 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.

- You will be given a number of course handouts. I will give you some in hard copy, while others will be online and you will need to print them. Any films that you are required to watch will be made available to you on Moodle.
- You will also need to have a good dictionary and the MLA 7<sup>th</sup> Edition Handbook at hand. These may be online or in hard copy; both kinds are available through the library. You will use these to enhance your writing, to cite and quote correctly, and to prepare Works Cited pages.

## **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>)

This class, a seminar, meets twice a week and is intense, fast paced, and extremely rigorous. It requires you to be organized. In some classes, we will discuss “the moves that matter in academic writing” (Graff and Birkenstein) and issues related to writing. Others will be used to review and discuss different kinds of texts (many of which are

complex and challenging), to visit the library, and to workshop/review writing assignments. The second part of the semester will be similar, but we will spend more time on weighty research, and on refining and reworking your writing.

Your work for this semester includes:

1. Many readings (usually about fifty pages a week) and possibly several TV shows and films. These are drawn from various genres and cover a range of topics.

Three main ideas governed my selection of these texts: First and most important, they will exemplify the issues in writing that we will be exploring at the time. Second, they will often relate to cultural and news events (September 11, Halloween, and Veterans' Day, for example). Third, in my experience, the texts' eclecticism offers something for everyone, enhancing student engagement.

Please note that there may be some readings that we do not discuss in class, or perhaps not in great depth. However, I have chosen each reading very carefully in order to make this course worthwhile and rich—as such all assigned readings are mandatory. Occasionally, short readings may be added if I think that they will supplement your learning at that point in the semester.

2. A number of short writing assignments (usually between 250-600 words). Some of these will be related to the papers on which you are working, especially as we get further into the semester.
3. A pair/group presentation, during which you will “teach the class.”
4. Four long papers. You will reconsider and revise all papers based on feedback from the Fellow, from me, and from your peers.
5. A poem that you will write in text-message form.
6. Occasional homework assignments.

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

There are no exams in this class, but there are occasional quizzes in various forms. These are usually about the mechanics of writing and the readings.

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 it, and only then putting all this to paper in an elegant way (this requires multiple drafts). *Make sure that 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. Grades may be deducted if you fail to follow instructions. 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. The Writing Fellow**

To maximize your learning and skills acquisition in this class, the College has given us the privilege of a dedicated Writing Fellow. These Fellows have been identified as some of the finest writers in the College. However, the Fellows are students themselves, and are, as such, still responsible for their own course workloads; for this reason, the College insists that no Fellow works on FYWS tasks for more than a certain number of hours per semester. This course schedule has been carefully planned so that no Fellow is overtaxed by their work for our class. Here's how our Fellow will likely work with us:

- Fellows will review drafts of every student's papers during the semester. These will be returned to you with constructive feedback, and you will then revise your papers in accordance with the suggestions of the Fellow. Time for review of papers by the Fellow and for your revisions is built into the course schedule for each assignment. The Fellow is not required to look at late work.
- The Fellow will hold office hours (times TBA). You may consult the Fellow during their office hours at any point during the writing process.
- The Fellow will hold a group office hour session when any substantial assignment is in process.
- The Fellow may on occasion attend our class, lead discussions, give a presentation, or teach part or all of a class.
- The Fellow will **never** change a grade that I assign to your paper, nor should he or she be held responsible for aspects of your papers that I think might still need work or attention. Also, it is not within the scope of the Fellow's duties to help you to catch up on work that you miss when you are absent from class.

The Fellow will notify me when you do meet with him/her, and your positive engagement with the Fellow will count in your favor when I assign your engagement grade.

#### **IV. Grades (for a total of 1000 points)**

- **Engagement 150 points:** This substantial portion of your grade takes into account the thoroughness of your preparation for this class and your enthusiasm for class discussion and assignments. A good grade in this category necessitates excellent attendance and punctuality (see also Section V of this course outline too), a demeanor of respect for your classmates and their opinions, for the Writing Fellow and the Professor, and for the course and

course materials. The seminar/workshop structure of the course means that your classmates are dependent on your presence and participation in class.

- **Paper I:** 900-1100 words, including Works Cited, 80 points
- **Paper II:** 1200-1400 words, including Works Cited, 120 points
- **Paper III:** 1400-1600 words, including Works Cited, 200 points
- **Paper IV:** 2900-3100 words, including Works Cited, 240 points
- **Five short writing responses:** 130 points
- **Quizzes and homeworks** (scheduled and pop): 25 points
- **Presentation:** 30 points
- **Text poem:** 25 points

Numerical grade to letter grade scale:

94-100 A  
90-93.9 A-  
87-89.9 B+  
84-86.9 B  
80-83.9 B-  
77-79.9 C+  
74-76.9 C  
70-73.9 C-  
67-69.9 D+  
64-66.9 D  
60-63.9 D-  
1-59.9 F  
0 NO WORK

**Please note that points will be deducted on all writing assignments for incorrect grammar and spelling.**

Once I have graded your work, I will enter the grades on Moodle. If a grade on Moodle does not correspond to the grade given on a paper, please contact me immediately.

## V. Absence, tardiness, late, and incomplete 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. I do note and record students' absences from class.

You may be absent without penalty twice during the semester. You do not have to provide a reason for these first two absences, but it would be a courtesy to let me know if you will not be in class on a certain date. If you are absent more than twice, 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+. Please note that informing me of an absence rarely means that the absence is then excused. *Budget your absences carefully!*

Punctuality is important because it disturbs other students when you are late. Please be at your seats ready to begin class at the time specified. Excessive tardiness or departure from the classroom will lead to your being counted as absent. On the days that work is due to be turned in, please come to class on time with your work printed and stapled in order to avoid being marked tardy.

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 on a paper would become a B- after one day, and a C+ after two days, etc.). No work turned in a week or more past the deadline will be graded. Late work will likely be graded and returned later than the work of other students that is submitted on time.

Incomplete work will be returned to the student for completion and graded as late work (in accordance with how many days late the fully completed version is handed to me). Papers not submitted will receive a zero grade.

Make sure that all your electronic drafts of written work are saved in several places, not just on your computer desktop; for example, email copies of every draft to yourself and save them on a flashdrive too.

Obviously, there are sometimes extenuating circumstances surrounding absences, tardiness, and late work. Please stay in communication with me.

***Remember, you are responsible for your own learning and grades.***

## VI. Communication

The best way of communicating with me is by email at [reefa@rhodes.edu](mailto:reefa@rhodes.edu); I much prefer email contact to office phone calls. 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 pp. 53-54.

To contact you, I will use your Rhodes email address. Be prepared for frequent emails from me. 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 during office hours or by appointment.

**Important:** Sometimes, I will write on a student's paper or email them to ask them to come and see me soon—this is usually because there are important aspects of their writing of which I want to make sure that they are aware. *When this is the case, please note that I will not grade any more work until the student has been to see me.*



## VII. Resources

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

- Me (Professor Reef)
- The Writing Fellow
- The Writing Center (more details in class and online)
- The Rhodes College *A Guide to Effective Paper Writing* (2010). Bring to class.
- Reference Librarians
- Occasionally, you may consult with other professors.
- Zotero is free software that helps you to create and maintain an electronic bibliography; during a scheduled library class, the librarians will help you to sign up for this and teach you to use. I strongly urge you to use Zotero for all your Works Cited pages on work that is submitted to the Fellow and to me.

## VIII. Honor Code, English Department Policies and Academic Honesty

I support and expect adherence to the Rhodes College Honor Code, to which you have pledged. Further, you must also be familiar and compliant with all the English Department policies, a copy of which you will find on the back of this course outline. Please read both carefully and be aware of the rules related to academic honesty. Plagiarism of any kind is a form of stealing, and is neither acceptable nor tolerated. A plagiarist is subject to very severe penalties.

## IX. Special Accommodations

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

## **X. Class Schedule**

This schedule is subject to modification if necessary, and will likely be tweaked a few times during the semester, especially after Fall Break. When there are changes, I will advise you by email and/or information in class.

### **Week 1**

**Thursday 28 August:** Introductory class. Wiens, Shellenbarger, and Griswold readings (one handout) to be assigned; First Written Response to be assigned.

### **Week 2**

**Tuesday 2 September:** Texts and Textiles. Gillow and Sentance reading on textiles to be assigned. Meskell reading to be assigned.

**Thursday 4 September:** Class on texts and textiles, including discussion of Gillow and Sentance reading. First Written Response due for Fellow. Sturken reading to be assigned.

### **Week 3**

**Tuesday 9 September:** Guest lecture: Prof. Chrystal Goudsouzian on Ancient Egyptian texts: "Sext Like an Egyptian: Gender, Sex, and the Erotic in Egyptian Word and Image"; Prof. Goudsouzian will discuss Meskell reading. First Written Response to be returned by Fellow for revision.

**Thursday 11 September:** 9-11 Class: Sturken reading. First Written Response due to me. Second Written Response to be assigned (this one will not go to the Fellow, but will come directly to me). Perlin reading to be assigned.

### **Week 4**

**Tuesday 16 September:** Group 1 “Teach the Class” *TMTM* pp. xiii-15 and 141-144. Assign Paper I. Critical thinking; discussion of Perlin reading. Fineman and Peters readings (one handout) to be assigned.

**Thursday 18 September:** Group 2 “Teach the Class” *TMTM* pp19-51. Presenting your thinking as text: Writing a Thesis. Second Written Response due to me.

#### **Week 5**

**Tuesday 22 September:** Paper 1 due for Fellow. Group 3 “Teach the Class” *TMTM* pp. 55-91. Assign Third Written Response. Discuss Fineman and Peters reading.

**Thursday 24 September: Library class. Meet in Barrett 128.** Third Written Response due for the Fellow. Paper 1 to be returned by Fellow.

#### **Week 6 (3 HEAVY writing weeks coming up with some overlap of assignments)**

**Tuesday 30 September:** Guest lecture: Prof. Keith Corson on “Film as Text.” Paper 1 due to me. Paper 2 to be assigned. Third Written Response to be returned by Fellow for revision.

**Thursday 2 October: Library class: Meet in Barrett 128.** Flowers reading to be assigned. Third Written Response due to me.

#### **Week 7**

**Tuesday 7 October:** Group 4 “Teach the Class” *TMTM* pp. 92-120. The Rhetorical Triangle. Flowers reading to be discussed. MacNealy readings, as well as Rockenbach and Ritzenberg reading (one handout) to be assigned. Assign Fourth Written Response.

**Thursday 9 October:** Thinking about the Rhetorical Triangle. Paper II due for Fellow. Fellow to return Paper II by 8pm Sunday 12 October.

**Week 8**

**Tuesday 14 October:** Group 5 “Teach the Class” *TMTM* pp. 121-138; 145-155.

Rhetorical appeals. Fourth Written Response due to Fellow.

**Thursday 16 October:** Paper II due to me. Thinking about the rhetorical appeals.

Fourth Written Response to be returned by Fellow for revision. Assign text poem.

**Week 9**

**Tuesday 21 October: FALL BREAK—NO CLASS**

**Thursday 23 October:** Fourth Written Response due to me. Assign Paper III. Why and how we research: Discuss MacNealy, and Rockenbach and Ritzenberg. Halloween reading (Garber and/or Dean) to be assigned.

**Week 10**

**Tuesday 28 October: LIBRARY CLASS—Meet in Barrett 128.**

**Thursday 30 October:** Halloween class: Garber and/or Dean articles. Group 6 “Teach the Class” *TMTM* pp. 156-192. Assign Paper IV (final paper) and Fifth Written Response.

**Week 11**

**Tuesday 4 November:** Group 7 “Teach the Class”: *TMTM* revisited. Academic honesty.

Paper III due for Fellow. Assign Trout reading.

**Thursday 6 November:** Academic honesty: Citing and quoting.

**Week 12**

**Tuesday 11 November:** Veterans’ Day class: First World War 100 years later. Discuss

Trout reading. Lepore-Zakaria reading to be assigned. Paper III to be returned by Fellow for revision.

**Thursday 13 November:** Paper III due to me. Begin work on Paper IV. Group 8 “Teach the Class” *TMTM* if necessary.

### **Week 13**

**Tuesday 18 November:** Discuss Lepore-Zakaria reading. Fifth Written Response due for Fellow. Final paper commitment to me.

**Thursday 20 November:** Work on Paper IV (including Fifth Written Response from Fellow) in class.

### **Week 14**

**Tuesday 25 November:** Fifth Written Response due to me. **Library class—meet in Barrett 128.**

**Thursday 27 November: THANKSGIVING DAY--NO CLASS.**

### **Week 15**

**Tuesday 2 December:** Paper IV to Fellow. Peer review.

**Thursday 4 December:** Peer review and revision. Fellow to try to return Paper IV by Friday 5 December at 4pm.

### **Week 16**

**Tuesday 9 December:** Presentation of text poems and wrap-up class.

**FINAL PAPERS DUE IN THE BIN ON MY OFFICE DOOR TODAY BY 3.45 SHARP.**

**Good luck on all your exams, and happy holidays!**