

English 151
Spring 2005
Prof. J. Haas

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Or by appt.

ADVERTISING AND CONSUMER CULTURE

THE COURSE

The purpose of this course is to develop the skills needed to produce college-level writing. However, this course takes as a given that in order to be a good writer, you need to be a good reader, both of conventional texts (e.g. literature, history, philosophy) as well as the texts that surround us all the time and that we constantly “read” without even being aware that we’re doing so. We will read and discuss a series of essays by cultural critics who present arguments about the meanings of commodities (the stuff we buy that surrounds us) and advertising (the messages that bombard us). In your writing you will be engaging with these critics—agreeing, disagreeing, or modifying their arguments—and you will also be learning from them how to read and write about popular culture.

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at Rhodes College bookstore)

Maasik and Solomon, *Signs of Life in the USA*, Fourth edition
Lunsford and Ruskiewicz, *Everything’s an Argument* (Third edition)
Diana Hacker, *A Writer’s Reference* (Fifth Edition)

The primary text for this course is *Signs of Life in the USA*. You will be reading, analyzing, agreeing, and disagreeing with the different essays in this volume. The secondary text for this course is the rhetoric guide *Everything’s an Argument*. This will be one of your guides to formulating and developing arguments and essays. Diana Hacker’s *A Writer’s Reference* is your resource for correcting and polishing the grammar and mechanics of your sentences. If your papers contain sentence-level problems, you will be expected to consult this handbook and figure out how to correct them.

POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Formal Writing: All formal papers must be in standard college format: typed (11 or 12 point), double-spaced, with standard (1”) margins. I prefer a standard font like Times or Arial. You will write four papers for this course. Three of them will be related to the course readings, and one will be a research paper. For each of these papers you will be required to hand in a first draft which you will then revise. Only your final draft will be graded, but it will not be considered complete without a first draft. **You must hand in your rough draft along with all final drafts.** Late final revisions will be marked down one third of a grade for each day past due. If I need to return a paper to you for proof-reading, it will be considered late until I get it back. Papers more than a few days late will not be accepted at all. If you fail to turn in any paper entirely, you will not be able to pass the class.

Submit *only* hard copies of final drafts and *always* keep a spare hard copy of your paper in case your computer crashes. You are responsible for making sure your work is adequately backed up. Make sure you give yourself adequate time to accommodate last-minute technical difficulties.

Informal Writing: In addition to the formal papers, I will, on occasion, assign some short (1 page) informal writing exercises and/or written responses to a particular reading. These assignments will be graded as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory.

You should also expect the occasional quiz on reading from *Everything's an Argument*.

Presentations: During the week that your research paper is due, you will also give a brief (10-minute) presentation on your research. You will be graded on the quality of your delivery as well as on the content and depth of your material.

Participation: You will be expected to share your ideas and questions in the discussion of readings and to work collaboratively with other members of the class on your own writing and theirs. Your participation in class should show that you have done the reading and thought about it. Make sure you come to class prepared with the day's reading in hand (as well as in your brain) in addition to a pen and notebook. If you show up for class without the necessary materials, I will mark you absent.

At times I may need to make announcements about assignments over email. Make sure you **check your email daily**.

In-Class Workshops: In addition to discussing readings, we will spend time talking about papers written by members of the class. You can expect to have one of your papers discussed at least once during the semester. The writer will remain anonymous.

- The procedure for submitting drafts is as follows: at the beginning of the semester, everyone will sign up to choose a paper (either 1,2,3,or 4) to be workshopped (we'll have time for about four per class period). If your paper is being workshopped, you will submit to me an **email attachment of your draft in Microsoft Word**. Due to the nature of the assignment, there are no extensions for these drafts. If you are unable to complete the draft for the assigned workshop, you may find someone to switch with as long as you keep me informed. I will *not* make the switch for you. **Failure to turn in a draft for workshop will result in a full letter grade deduction from the final draft.**
- As soon as all the submissions are in, I will email the drafts (with names removed) to the rest of the class. Everyone in the class, including the draft writers, will download the drafts, print, read, and comment on them in preparation for the workshop the next day. I will go over more detailed instructions in class.

Conferences: You are required to meet with me in conference at least **once** during the course of the semester to discuss some stage of a paper, either formulating or revising it (of course, you may meet with me more than once). If you wish to discuss a draft, make sure you come to the conference with a copy of the draft and that you have reread it recently enough to discuss it

intelligently. If you come to discuss ideas, make sure you have carefully reread the assignment and the assigned text and that you have questions to discuss.

Attendance: Much of the work of this course will take place in the classroom, in discussion, workshop, and writing exercises. You are allowed two absences without an effect on your grade. Three absences will affect your grade, and **six or more absences is grounds for failing the course**. If you do miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you may have missed from a trustworthy classmate and to **confirm the assignment for the next class**. The syllabus is a tentative schedule, and assignments will be added or changed as needed.

Lateness: If you are repeatedly late or unprepared for class, you will be counted as absent.

Grades: First drafts and reading response papers will receive grades of Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory and will be figured in your grade for class participation. Each final revised essay will receive a letter grade, and overall grades for the semester will be totaled as follows:

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| Essay 1 (3-4 pages) | 15% |
| Essay 2 (4-5 pages) | 15% |
| Essay 3 (5-6 pages) | 20% |
| Essay 4 (8-9 pages) | 25% |
| Research presentation | 5% |
| Writing assignments, quizzes, peer review | 10% |
| Participation | 10% |

HONOR CODE

All of your work for this course must adhere to the Rhodes Honor Code.

Schedule of Assignments (subject to change as needed)

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| January | Th 1/13 Introductions |
| | Writing and Identity |
| | Tu/18 <i>EA</i> chap. 1-3; Algranati (<i>Signs</i> pp 608-612) |
| | Th 1/20 <i>EA</i> chap. 4-5; Fan Shen (<i>Signs</i> 613-622) |
| | Tu 1/25 <i>EA</i> chap 6-7; Bernstein (<i>Signs</i> 599-604) |
| | Th 1/28 "On Summary" (handout); |
| | **Mon 1/31 drafts of essay #1 due by noon |
| February | Tu 2/1 Workshop |
| | Consumer Culture |
| | Th 2/4 Norton (<i>Signs</i> 63-69); <i>EA</i> chap. 8 |
| | Tu 2/8 Revised drafts of essay #1 due ; "What Is Analysis?" (handout); |
| | Th 2/10 Kron (<i>Signs</i> 101-111); Shames (<i>Signs</i> 56-62) |
| | Tu 2/15 Goewy (<i>Signs</i> 112-121) <i>EA</i> chap 9 |
| | Th 2/18; Twichell (<i>Signs</i> 205-209) |

****Mon. 2/21 drafts of essay #2 due by noon**

Tu 2/22 Workshop

Advertising

Th 2/25 Schlosser (*Signs* 181-185); *EA* chap 10

March

Tu 3/1 **Revised Essay #2 due** “Advertising and the End of the World” (film)

Th 3/3 Calfee (*Signs* 210-16); Lasn (*Signs* 217-20)

Tu 3/8 Spring Break

Th 3/10 Spring Break

Tu 3/15 Workshop;

****Wed 3/16 draft of essay #3 due by noon**

Th 3/17 Begin research discussion; *EA* chap 18

Tu 3/22 **Revised essay #3 due**; Research brainstorming

Th 3/24 Easter Break

Tu 3/29 [library]

Th 3/31 *EA* chap. 21

April

Tu 4/5 TBA

Th 4/7 TBA

Tu 4/12 TBA

Th 4/14 TBA

Tu 4/19 Research presentations

Th 4/21 Research presentations

****Mon. 4/25 draft of essay #4 due by noon**

Tu 4/26 Workshop;

Th 4/28 no class; **revised essay #4 due by 5pm**