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Office Hours: 1-3pm Tuesday, Friday

ENG 151: CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING

Sections.04.06: Reading, Writing and Urban Experience

Course Description:

The practical goal of this course is to improve your skill as a writer of college-level English. Over the next sixteen weeks we will read, write and revise intensively, exploring the various phases of the writing process and examining a wide range of challenging texts. We will focus on summarizing arguments and principles of writing and revision, simultaneously sharpening our skills of rhetorical analysis through class discussion, reading and written response. Critical thinking, as this course makes clear, is not something that exists prior to writing, nor can it simply be *translated* into prose. Rather, good writing *is* critical thinking: a practice in which ideas and beliefs are expressed, refined, tested and realized.

Yet this semester is not just concerned with ‘writing’ or, for that matter, with that other inseparable element of writing: ‘reading’. This course is fundamentally about language and the ways in which it forms our cultures, our technologies, our arguments and our identities. Language, as one critic puts it, is the medium of our conscious life. As high school graduates you will have already demonstrated your knowledge of English and a proficiency in its usage. This course offers the opportunity precisely to test and revise any assumptions you might have about the way language works. By training yourself to analyze language, manipulate its parts and enjoy its possibilities, you will create habits of communication that will serve far beyond the term of a college degree.

The texts that form points of departure for our discussions are largely concerned with aspects of city life and urban experience. As newcomers to one of the very few Liberal Arts colleges situated in an urban environment, you may have already developed an interest in the city fabric of Memphis. Perhaps you come from another major urban environment and already have a perspective on city life or a point of comparison. Our class readings will vary greatly in subject and disciplinary affiliation, from seventeenth century accounts of plague conditions to early twentieth century accounts of New York and wars of words in the Middle East. These texts should be considered as starting points for your own thinking and writing about aspects of the city and the multiple roles that language plays in defining and anchoring our social and personal experiences.

Required Texts:

What’s Language Got to Do With It? eds. Walters, Brody (New York, 2005)

Everything’s An Argument eds. Lunsford, Ruskiewicz (Boston, 2004)

Reading City Life eds. Bruch, Marback (New York, 2005)

Course Format

The class meets three times a week in a **seminar** and **discussion** format. Sometimes this will be preceded by a short introduction by me introducing a topic or proposing a new idea. In the opening units of the course – Unit 1: Urban languages, Unit 2: Urban Conflicts and Unit 3: Urban Media/Suburban Rituals – you will be expected to complete a range of **readings** and prepare for class discussions upon them. This may mean preparing the answers in advance to particular questions so you are able to talk about them when called upon. **Discussion** is a vital part of this course and your overall semester grade will reflect that. With each reading you should expect to comment or pose questions about it, as well as challenge or test the ideas within it. You should also expect brief quizzes on the assigned texts.

We will also regularly run **workshops** in the class: that is, four students will supply their work in advance and I will create a packet of (anonymous) materials that we will look at in class. These sessions are designed to help you respond to drafts and understand the different phases of development that writing undergoes. Members of the group will read the essay, discuss how it might be improved and give feedback on the paper. (Instruction sheets will be supplied for this purpose.) Drafts are due electronically at 9am on a given Monday. There can be **no extensions for drafts** because of the nature of the class workshop. If you feel your draft is not going to be ready you must arrange to switch with another member of the class in advance of the submission date. Please remember to inform me if this is the case. Failure to turn in a draft by the designated time will result in the deduction of a full letter grade off that particular assignment.

After your writing has been discussed in a class workshop, you will then be in a position to revise it substantially for final submission. Every student will hand in each paper, but those who have had papers discussed in workshop will also include peer review sheets and a statement of revision, indicating what you concentrated on in your re-writing.

Conferences / Writing Fellow.

There will also be two formal writing conferences that you are required to attend. One of these will be with the writing fellow during the semester; the second will be with me in week 15. These meetings are required and failure to attend will count as an absence. These meetings are designed to improve your writing and concentrate on your individual development. However, you want to speak to me more regularly about your writing and its progress. Please email me to arrange a time or come during office hours.

The fellow working with our section of 151 is Whitney Howell. Whitney is an extremely experienced writer and English major, and will be available to talk with you outside class about your writing. This is an excellent point of contact for you and I strongly advise you to take advantage of this resource outside the required meeting.

In addition to this, as I have indicated, your work will be in workshop once in the semester. Please sign-up for a particular workshop and week to see the writing fellow.

Course Requirements

You will complete four formal writing assignments. These will be handed in approximately every four weeks throughout the semester. All assignments must be typed in 12pt Times New Roman font, double-spaced with margins of one inch. Full format details can be found in the Appendix on MLA style in Everything's An Argument. You can also consult the MLA Handbook for Writers (sixth edition) in the library or ask the writing fellow. Although I assume this will mean there are approximately 300 words on each page, every paper must include **a word count, your name, my name and a title to be decided upon by you**. Every paper must be proofread for grammatical and spelling errors. Your grade will reflect the appropriate penalties if errors are not corrected.

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|--------------------------------------|---|-----|
| • Essay 1 (Rhetorical Analysis) | 1500 words/ 5 pages | 15% |
| • Essay 2 (Exploratory writing) | 1500 words/ 5 pages | 15% |
| • Essay 3 (Argumentative Essay) | 1800 words/ 6 pages | 20% |
| • Essay 4 (Research Writing) | 3000 words/ 10 pages | 30% |
| | Presentation/ Research Proposal & Annotated Bibliography (5%) | |
| | Final Essay (25%) | |
| | | |
| • Participation & Discussion | | 10% |
| • Brief Writing Assignments/ Quizzes | | 10% |

PLEASE NOTE: You cannot receive a passing grade unless you submit all major assignments.

Attendance Policy:

You are expected to be in class everyday. This means that you will be present, fully awake, prepared and ready to contribute to class activities. Failure to meet the terms of that definition may result in a student being marked absent. You are also responsible for signing in each class. The attendance policy is firm in 151 because the success of the course depends on the feedback, involvement and participation of all its members. You may miss two classes in the term without penalty (for illness, sickness, religious holidays or other absences). Further absences will result in your final grade for the entire course being lowered a third of a point (i.e. From B+ to B, from B- to C+). More than six absences will result in failure of the course.

Honor Code:

Please make sure you are absolutely clear about the terms of the honor code. All written work must be your own. If you are ever unsure whether you might be violating the code, please contact me, the writing fellow, or another professor to find out.

Disabilities

If you have a disability, please contact me in advance of the class to discuss any additional requirements you may have, such as large print handouts or extra time in assessments.

Email and WebCT

If you wish to contact the class about anything, please email 10246@rhodes.edu (10am) and 10248@rhodes.edu (12pm). If materials are to be made available to you on WebCT, I will send an email advising you of that fact. Please check your email each day for notices about the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE
Subject to Revision

<i>Week 1</i>	W 24 Aug	Introduction to the Course
		<u>Unit 1 – Urban Languages</u>
	F 26 Aug	Introduction to Argument Reading Due: <u>EA</u> chaps. 1-3: pp.3-21; pp.27-45; pp.51-61
<i>Week 2</i>	M 29 Aug	Multilingual Cities; Arguments and Summary Reading Due: “You say Hispanic, I say Latino” (<u>WL</u> 9-12) “Why and When We Speak Spanish in Public” (<u>WL</u> 207-9) “I’d Never Made Love in Spanish Before” (<u>WL</u> 210-12)
	W 31 Aug	Focus on Language; Lines of Argument Reading Due: <u>EA</u> chaps. 4-7
	F 1 Sep	Thesis Statements Reading Due: “Immigration as Dangerous Waters”(WL 25-41) “Anti-Hispanic Fearmongers”, <u>Miami Herald</u> *
<i>Week 3</i>	M 5 Sep	Labor Day
	T 6 Sep	Writing Due: Brief Writing Assignment 1 (500 words)
	W 7 Sep	Urban Languages; Determining the Thesis; Reading Strategies Reading Due: “Graffiti: Tunnel Notes of a New Yorker” (<u>RCL</u> 41-48) “Nobody Mean More to Me than You” (<u>WL</u> 314-32) “Talking Wrong” (<u>WL</u> 275-77)
	F 9 Sep	Preparing a Rhetorical Analysis Reading Due: “Suite for Ebony & Phonics” (<u>WL</u> 278-86) “I Has A Dream” (<u>WL</u> 330-32) “Ebonics! Weird Names! \$500 Shoes!”

Week 4	M 12 Sep	Close Reading Writing Due: Essay 1 Drafts for workshop Reading Due: Toni Morrison, <u>Jazz</u> * Charles Dickens, Bleak House (<u>BCR</u> 76-79) *
	W 14 Sep	Workshops: Revision
	F 16 Sep	Argument Analysis Worksheet Writing Due: Essay 1 FINAL DRAFT: Rhetorical Analysis Reading Due: 'Debate, Dissent, Discussion; Don't Go There' (<u>WL</u> 59-63)

Unit 2 – Conflict & Urban Culture

Week 5	M 19 Sep	Urban Conflicts; Structuring Arguments Reading Due: <u>EA</u> chap.8 "Fighting For Our Lives" (<u>WL</u> 13-24)
	W 21 Sep	Introduction to Research with Darlene Brooks LIBRARY Session –Meet at Barret Library
	F 23 Sep	Making Claims Reading Due: "One Violent Crime" (<u>RCL</u> 51-65) "Guns Aren't The Only Issue" (<u>RCL</u> 65-68) *
Week 6	M 26 Sep	Urban Conflicts; Introduction to Expository Writing Reading Due: <u>EA</u> chap.9 "Houselessness and Homelessness" (<u>RCL</u> 3-10)
	W 28 Sep	Arguments of Definition/ Brief Writing Assignment 2 Reading Due: In The Mideast This Year, Words Shoot To Kill" (<u>WL</u> 4-8) "The Talk of the Town" <u>The New Yorker</u> *
	F 30 Sep	Workshop Writing Due: Prepared draft of Brief Writing Assignment 2 Reading Due: "School Shootings and White Denial" (<u>RCL</u> 68-72)
Week 7	M 3 Oct	Cities of the Future (<u>Bladerunner/Metropolis</u>) Writing Due: Brief Writing Assignment 2 – Final Reading Due: <u>EA</u> chap.10 Arguments of Evaluation
	W 5 Oct	Analyzing Prose Style/Evaluating Claims Reading Due: Michel Foucault, <u>Discipline and Punish</u>
	F 7 Oct	Class Cancelled.
Week 8	M 10 Oct	Reading Difficult Texts:

Reading Due: "After Tomkins Square Park", BCR*

Writing Due: Drafts of Essay 2 for workshop

W 12 Oct **Workshop; Revision**

F 14 Oct The Ideal City

Writing Due: Essay 2 FINAL DRAFT

Reading Due: From Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities *

Unit 3: Urban Media/ Suburban Rituals

Week 9

W 19 Oct Urban Media; Figurative Language

Reading Due: EA Chap.14

"City of Bits: Space, Place & the Infobahn" (BCR 52-59) *

"Short Cuts" London Review of Books *

F 21 Oct Language as Technology; Persuasive Arguments

Reading Due: "I Think, Therefore IM" (WL 152-56)

"UR2KEWL, Romeo" (WL 157-59)

"Happy Birthday ☺ to you" (WL 160-62)

Week 10

M 24 Oct Brief In-Class Presentations The

Reading Due: EA Chap.17 Spoken Arguments

"Technologies and Religious Practices" (WL 174-78)

W 26 Oct Causal Arguments and the Persuasive Essay

Reading Due: EA Chap.11

"Separate and Unequal" (RCL 111-18)

"Park Slope: Notes on a Middle Class Utopia" (RCL 118-23)

F 28 Oct Essay Topics and Issues; Fallacies of Argument 1

Reading Due: EA Chap.11

Week 11

M 31 Oct Proposal Arguments

Reading Due: EA Chap.12

Frederick Law Olmsted, "The Misfortunes of New York" *

W 2 Nov Visual Rhetoric – Images of the City

Reading Due: Léon Krier, "The Urbanization of the Suburbs"

F 4 Nov Workshop on Introductions: the Persuasive Essay
Strategies for Organization

Writing Due: Bring draft of introduction for Essay 3

Week 12

M 7 Nov 'Urbane' v 'Slapstick': Paraphrasing City Comedy

Writing Due: drafts of Essay 3 for workshop
Reading Due: EA chap. 13 Humorous Arguments

W 9 Nov Workshop on second draft of Essay 3 Revision
 F 11 Nov Group Research Colloquium; Towards the Final Research Essay Topics, Theses and Working Knowledge
Writing Due: Essay 3 Final

Unit 4: Urban Issues – Your Research Project

Week 13 M 14 Nov Research Strategies; Notetaking & Integrity
 Preliminary Research Sheet
Reading due: EA chap 18
 W 16 Nov Synthesizing Sources/ Evaluating Competing Claims
Reading due: EA chap 21
 F 18 Nov Student Presentations
Writing Due: Research Proposal & Annotated Bibliography

Week 14 M 21 Nov Student Presentations continued.
 S 27 Nov **Writing Due: Draft of Essay 4**

Week 15 M 28 Nov Individual Writing Conferences
 Check webct for schedule
 W 30 Nov Individual Writing Conferences
 F 2 Dec Individual Writing Conferences

Week 16 M 5 Dec Workshop: Introductions and Conclusions
Writing Due: Draft #2 of Essay 4 for workshop (4 people)
 W 7 Dec Class Review
 F 9 Dec **Writing Due: Final Essay 4 Due**

16 December: Grades Submitted to Registrar

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.