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Office Hours: W/Th 9-10:30 and by appointment

English 151: Critical Thinking and Writing
Fighting Words: Narrating American Wars
T/TH 11-12:15 and 2:00 – 3:15; Palmer 203

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?

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. *In Our Time* (1925)
O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried* (1990)
Sturken, Marita. *Tangled Memories* (1997)
Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughter House – Five: or the Children's Crusade, A Duty Dance with Death* (1969)

Grading

10% - Participation
10% - Workshop
10% - Paper 1
10% - Paper 2
15% - Paper 3
45% - Final Research Project

Course Requirements

Attendance

Attendance is required. You are allowed three absences. Each absence beyond those three will result in a one-tier grade reduction of your final grade. Hence a B- becomes a C+. If you miss eight classes you will automatically fail the course. Sorry. Also, as tardiness is an ever growing problem, you will be penalized for coming to class late. For every three times you are late to class, I will mark down one absence. *Note: There is not a difference between an excused and an unexcused absence so please plan accordingly.*

Participation

Each student's participation is vital to the overall disposition and accomplishment of the group. Your participation grade will be based on the regularity and quality of your contributions to discussion. Comments that help to advance the discussion and that enable all class members to contribute are highly valued. If necessary, meaning the majority of the class does not regularly participate, I will start giving reading quizzes. These quizzes will be factored into your participation grade.

Workshop

Submitting drafts: Your drafts are due via e-mail 48 hours before we workshop them. So, for example, if we are workshopping drafts on a Thursday, then your draft is due by class-time on Tuesday. This submission process does not apply to our first workshop.

Commenting on drafts: On the day of workshops you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss your work and the work of your classmates.

Grading: I will not grade your rough drafts, but I will be grading you on your participation in the workshop process. I will take into consideration your contributions, or lack there of, to this process. For instance, I will note the thoroughness of comments and the timeliness of submissions. I will also note how well developed or how poorly developed your drafts are. Yes, these are rough drafts, but they should also be well thought out pieces of writing that are on there way to becoming clear and articulate essays.

Workshop 1: Thesis (9/10)

Each student will come to class with 16 copies of a working thesis statement. As a class, we will discuss each thesis statement.

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

Workshop 2: Evidence/Support (10/6)

Prior to class each student will electronically submit a thesis statement along with a working outline that details the evidence/support the author intends to employ when composing his/her essay.

Along with a thesis statement and working outline, the author should also submit four revision questions. The questions should address concerns you have regarding how your evidence does or does not work to support your thesis statement. Furthermore, these questions might address larger, more global concerns you have regarding your essay. In turn, you fellow classmates will come to class with typed responses to these questions. Students should bring two copies of typed responses, one copy to give their fellow students and one copy to turn in.

Workshop 3: Rough Draft of Paper 3 (11/3 – 11/5)

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

Workshop 4: Rough Draft of Final Research Paper (12/1 – 12/8)

This workshop will follow the same protocol as workshop three; however, we will be breaking up into three groups to allow for longer drafts and more detailed discussions of each draft. Drafts should be a minimum of 5 pages in length.

Letters: Along with your drafts, you will also be required to submit a number of letters during workshops 3 and 4.

Along with your workshop draft you will also submit a self-review letter of no less than 250 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've 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 150 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 for improvement. I also encourage you to make in-text comments on print-outs of each paper as well. You should come to class with both letters and print-outs of each draft in-hand. Bring two copies of your letters with you to class: one copy for the student whose work you are commenting on and one to turn in at the end of class. Please staple all of the letters you type up for a given workshop day together and hand them in as a packet.

Finally, please be **RESPECTFUL** of each student and their work. This is a time for you to offer each other helpful criticism, as well as learn more about the writing and revision process.

Writing Assignments

All writing assignments are due at the beginning of class, whether you are there in person or not. If I do not receive papers by such time, they will be considered late. If appropriate, all essays written for this course should follow the MLA rules of style and citation. In addition to following the MLA rules of style and citation, all written assignments should be typewritten in 12 point Times New Roman font and double-spaced. Each paper you turn in should also be stapled and numbered. I ask that you only print on one side of the page.

Papers

I encourage everyone to visit me during my office hours to discuss their papers (or any aspect of the class for that matter). I am always happy to look at and comment on any early drafts. I also recommend visiting the Writing Center. For each of these assignments you will be given a handout detailing specific expectations and requirements.

Paper 1(3 pages): Due 9/17

Paper 2(5 pages): Due 10/15

Paper 3(7 pages): Due 11/17

Final Research Project (45%)

This is a multi-faceted project, requiring a significant amount of research. Below is a brief description of each aspect of the assignment, but you will be given detailed handouts closer to the due dates of each assignment.

Research Paper Proposal (5%): Due 11/10

You are to write a 250 word paper proposal. This proposal should be part introduction to your paper and part summary of the main points you intend to address in order to support your thesis statement. This brief piece of writing should encapsulate your overall goal for the research paper.

Annotated Bibliography (15%): Due 11/24

You are required to compile an annotated bibliography to accompany your research paper. This bibliography should include no less than six sources, each of which must be notated (no less than 250 words per notation).

Research Paper (25%): Due 12/15

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 pages in length.

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 also a violation of the Honor Code. Furthermore,

all assignments completed for this course should be original work written specifically for this class.

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, test, etc., are carefully scheduled as stages toward the fulfillment 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.

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.

8/27: Introduction

9/1: *In Our Time*, Chapters I-VI

9/3: *In Our Time*, Chapters VII-XII

9/8: *In Our Time*, Chapters XIII-End

9/10: Thesis Workshop

9/15: *The Best Years of Our Lives*

9/17: **Paper 1 due**; *Color Me Khaki* handout

9/22: *Slaughter House Five*. Chapters 1-3

9/24: *Slaughter House Five*, Chapters 4-5

9/29: *Slaughter House Five*, Chapters 6-End

10/1: *Tangled Memories*, Introduction and Chapter 1

10/6: Evidence/Support Workshop

10/8: *Tangled Memories*, Chapter 2

10/13: *Tangled Memories*, Chapter 3

10/15: **Paper 2 due**; *The Things They Carried*, pages 1-61

10/20: **FALL BREAK**

10/22: *The Things They Carried*, pages 62-123

10/27: *The Things They Carried*, pages 124-180

10/29: Rough Draft Workshop; Group 1

11/3: *The Things They Carried*, pages 189-end

11/5: Rough Draft Workshop; Group 2

11/10: **Final Paper Proposal Due**

11/12: *Full Metal Jacket*

11/17: **Paper 3 due**

11/19: *Worlds of Hurt* handout

11/24: **Annotated Bibliography due**; *While They're at War* handout

11/26: **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

12/1: Final Paper Workshop, Group 1
12/3: Final Paper Workshop, Group 2

12/8: Final Paper Workshop, Group 3
12/10: READING DAY

12/11 – 12/16: FINAL EXAM PERIOD

12/15: Final Research Paper due by 12pm

A Few Notes:

1. Assignments should be completed by the date listed.
2. Films should be watched prior to the days we discuss them in class. I will make a copy or copies available for you to borrow. I do, however, suggest that you organize viewings with a few of your fellow classmates. These films should also be easy for you to procure on your own through various sources.
3. Not all reading assignments and handouts are included in this schedule. Periodically, you will be required to read selections that accompany these assignments.
4. Handouts and reading assignments not included in the texts you purchased for this course will either be passed out in class or posted online. Reading assignments posted online should be printed out and brought to class for discussion.