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ENGL 151-11, First Year Writing Semina: Fakes Frauds and Forgeries, Fall 2011

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Fakes, Frauds, and Forgeries

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When we read a novel or watch a movie, we recognize that no matter how "real" the story seems, it's a manmade work of fiction. But how do we interpret fictions presented as fact? This introduction to college writing and argument explores a variety of fakes, frauds, and forgeries, including con artists, circus sideshows, photographs of fairies, blackface minstrels, and writers working under assumed identities. Some of our subjects—like counterfeit money—have joined the real world without being seen, while others—like artists who adopt alternate personas—raise questions about the very nature of "the real." Our course material, which spans some three-hundred years of history, won't provide us with a comprehensive history of fakers, but it will help us investigate issues of authenticity, identity, authorship, performance, and that trusty old standby, reality. In addition to a final research project, you will write three shorter essays related to the course material and work to improve your own rhetoric and style. In your prose, you'll practice a smooth presentation that helps you take down your mark. Successful academic argument shares some of the skills of the confidence man.

This course emphasizes:

- **Argument construction** (Each essay must have a clear claim, supported by strong sub-claims and analysis of evidence, with cited quotations and paraphrases of evidence)
- **Style** (transitions, word choice, tone, figurative language, sentence structure)
- Learning to **analyze** and **critically evaluate** ideas, arguments, and points of view
- **Asking questions** of texts and objects
- **Applying** course material to solve new problems you frame yourself
- **Finding and using resources** to solve answer questions and to solve problems
- **Thoroughness** (All work will be carefully conceived, cited, and proofread)

TEXTS

Joseph Williams' *Style* (978-0205605354), Caryl Phillips's *Dancing in the Dark* (978-1400079834), James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-colored Man* (978-0809000326), and essays and short stories either on reserve in Barrett Library or available on the class Moodle website.

ASSIGNMENTS

Your final grade is comprised of the following assignments:

ESSAYS - 60%

I will hand you an assignment packet at the beginning of the semester. You are responsible for knowing and following the guidelines for each essay.

QUIZZES AND ASSIGNMENTS - 20%

- **Quizzes:** Many class periods will open with a brief quiz designed to determine if you are prepared to discuss the reading assigned for that day. Success in quizzes requires reading well—not skimming—and taking notes.
- **Homework:** Assignments include preparation of discussion questions, handouts based on reading assignments, emailed or online responses, and your William's Style section.

- **Research Assignment:** This exercise requires thorough exploration of the library's resources in preparation for your research paper.

GROUP EDITING ASSIGNMENT – 10%

Working in a group, you will negotiate, revise, and discuss writing quality with your group. The finished product will be a short, polished essay that reflects the best of all the group's writers.

PREPARATION AND DISCUSSION– 10%

The final 10% of your grade depends upon my evaluation of your preparation and contribution to the classes' discussions and work. You will not automatically receive these points—you must earn them.

MEETING WITH THE PROFESSOR

At some point in the semester, everyone must meet with me about an essay other than the one work-shopped in class. It's important to me that I spend work with each of you individually. Please make use of my office hours to discuss drafts or simply to brainstorm. Failure to meet this requirement will result in a failing preparation grade.

ABSENCES

The nature of a skills course like ENG151 (unlike a content course) requires that you be in class, where you will see and practice those skills. In our class, I grant you two "free/excused" absences regardless of cause. Please use these skips wisely: plan ahead. Each absence beyond the first two results in a .1 point deduction from your final grade. Any student who falls asleep in class or texts during class will be counted as absent for that class.

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 will miss class on the day a paper is due, please leave it outside my office door no later than 8 am that day, otherwise it will be considered late. If you physically miss more than six classes, you will fail the course. These policies are consistent with other English courses.

Note: you are responsible for finding out from a classmate what happened in class the day you were absent or late.

EMAIL POLICY

Emailing a professor is like emailing your boss. Take the opportunity and impress her. As an English professor, I do not appreciate emails without a salutation. Emails with egregious typos, grammatical and punctuation mistakes, and no capital letters appear disrespectful and are not worth my time to read. Simply put, I will not respond to sloppy emails. Write accordingly.

HONOR CODE

Enrollment in this class constitutes your acceptance of the Rhodes College Honor Code and the Department of English Expectations and Policies.

ENGL 151: Fakes, Frauds, and Forgeries

All texts not purchased for class are available on reserve in Barrett Library or electronically.

Wk 1	Th, Aug 25:	Introduction to Claims and Parts of Argument.
Wk 2	Tu, Aug 30: Th, Sept 1:	Williams, "Introduction", Ch. 1-2 . Quiz on Claims & Parts of Argument. Michael Lewis "The Extracurricular..." (on Moodle)
Wk 3	Tu, Sept 6: Th, Sept 8:	<i>Catfish</i> (viewing time TBA) 2 claims due . Jack Lynch on George Psalmanazar (on Moodle) Williams 4 . Groups.
Wk 4	Tu, Sept 13: Th, Sept 15:	Williams 3 & 4 practice. Groups. Identity Analysis DUE. Williams 5 . Introduction to Problem Statements.
Wk 5	Tu, Sept 20: Th, Sept 22:	James Weldon Johnson's <i>Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man</i> Johnson cont. Williams 3 . Essay guideline discussion: Intro to MLA style
Wk 6	Tu, Sept 27 Th, Sept 29:	Workshop Paper 1 (drafts due Mon, Sept 26 @ noon by email to EPL) Paper 1 due. Meet in Barrett Library to discuss research paper
Wk 7	Tu, Oct 4: Th, Oct 6:	Discussion of <i>My Kid could Paint That</i> (watch on Moodle). Discussion of <i>F for Fake</i> . (I recommend watching it twice)
Wk 8	Tu, Oct 11: Th, Oct 13:	Weschler on J.S.G. Boggs, parts 1 & 2 (on reserve) Library research assignment due. Plagiarism discussion. Williams 6
Wk 9	Tu, Oct 18: Th, Oct 20:	FALL RECESS: NO CLASS Workshop for everyone! Problem Statement due (Bring 3 Xeroxes) Concision assignment DUE
Wk 10	Tu, Oct 25: Th, Oct 27:	Workshop Paper 2 . (drafts due Mon, Oct 24 at noon). Paper 2 due Figurative language discussion. Williams 7
Wk 11	Tu, Nov 1: Th, Nov 3:	Meet in Barrett Library to work on research paper Caryl Phillip's <i>Dancing in the Dark</i> part ; Williams 8 ;
Wk 12	Tu, Nov 8: Th, Nov 10:	Annotated Bibliography Due; <i>Dancing in the Dark</i> part 2; <i>Dancing in the Dark</i> part 3.
Wk 13	Tu, Nov 15: Th, Nov 17:	<u>Bamboozled</u> Williams 9 ; Workshop for everyone! Problem Statement and 1000 words of research paper due
Wk 14	Tu, Nov 22: Th, Nov 24:	Workshop Paper 3 (drafts due Mon Nov 21 at noon). THANKSGIVING RECESS: No Class
Wk 15	Tu, Nov 29: Th, Dec 1:	Paper 3 due. Williams 10 All about Conclusions. Bring copies of your 3 previous conclusions to class. Workshop research paper (Drafts due Mon Nov 30 at noon)
Wk 16	Tu Dec 6	LAST CLASS. Research presentations. Research paper due (This class has no exam)

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 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.

Attendance Policy from the Rhodes College Catalog

Any student who fails to attend the first day of a class without providing prior notice of his or her absence to the instructor of the course or the chairperson of the department may be removed from the course upon request of the instructor to the Registrar. The student is responsible for dropping the class officially upon notification that such action has been taken.

Specific attendance policies are set by individual instructors, who state them in the course syllabi and during the first class sessions. Students are responsible for knowing the attendance policy in each of their courses, for obtaining and mastering material covered during an absence, and for determining, in consultation with the instructor, whether and under what conditions make-up work will be permitted.

Student's should understand if undertaking college-sanctioned activities (e.g., varsity athletics, internships, and off-campus competitions connected with courses) that their participation in such activities may come at the cost of absences from other courses or even forfeiting credit on certain assignments when making them up is not feasible. It is the student's responsibility to address the issues related to missing a class whatever the reason for the absence.

If, in accordance with the course policies, the instructor determines that excessive absences are jeopardizing a student's ability to obtain a passing grade in the course, the instructor may make written request to the Dean of the College that the student be removed from the course with a grade of F. If a student is removed from two or more courses in the same semester for this reason, the student may be asked to withdraw from the College.