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ENGL 151-02, First Year Writing Seminar: Essays in Evolution, Fall 2011

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FYWS 151.02
FIRST-YEAR WRITING SEMINAR: ESSAYS IN EVOLUTION
Fall 2011 MWF 9:00-9:50 Clough 100

Prof. Michael Bogucki
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319 Palmer Hall
Office Hours:
2-3pm M, T, W, and by appt.

Overview

The First-Year Writing Seminar is your opportunity to explore how you read, how you write, and, ultimately, how you think. Over the course of the semester, you will learn to recognize and develop all the successive stages of your writing process—from the scrawl of a late-night epiphany to the polish of a final draft. You will experiment with making a grand mess of your writing and you'll see what it's like to hone a word so finely that it gleams.

The seminar is designed to help you develop your ability to create, refine, and express ideas in effective prose and your skill at intelligently adapting that process to the conventions of professional academic research. The first part of that goal means that you'll be doing some serious thinking about the who, what, when, where, why, and how of *composing*. Basically, we'll ask, how do your sentences come together? How do they do their work? The second part of that goal means that you'll be making a serious study of how professionals in different disciplines such as English or Biology talk to each other—that is, what sort of *rhetoric* they use. You'll go beyond the rhetoric that *sounds* studious to think about what actually *is* studious, i.e. what *counts* as valid argument and valuable knowledge in different fields.

Our section will explore the megaton impact of evolution on writing. Starting with the young Charles Darwin's account of his world travels on the HMS *Beagle*, we will read selections from Darwin's major works and a wide range of responses to natural selection in biology, social theory, religion, politics, philosophy, and contemporary fiction. Our class discussions will analyze how the concept of evolution is used within these texts, paying particular attention to how it affects argumentative and narrative strategies across several different genres of academic inquiry.

Required Texts

Philip Appleman, ed., *Darwin: A Norton Critical Anthology*, 3rd Edition
Doris Lessing, *The Fifth Child*
Writing Center Staff, *Rhodes College Guide to Effective Writing*
Various readings online (tba)

Course Organization

Most of the work in the class will occur within assigned writing groups. You will be sharing your writing with your group throughout the course, and your group members will be a valuable source of feedback at every stage of the writing process. By getting to know the different habits

and processes of the writers in your group, you will be able to cultivate a broader understanding of how your own strategies and patterns of writing might be adjusted or completely transformed.

All draft workshops will take place within your group. By continually editing and responding to your groupmates' work, you will learn the most effective ways to improve your own and others' texts. Over the course of the semester, I will gradually turn over responsibility for the activities in the draft workshops to you as you become more experienced writers and editors.

Course Requirements

Attendance is mandatory. Since the core of this seminar is your work in workshops and your responses to the feedback you receive in class, you *must* be in class to succeed. In this class, when you are absent, you not only deprive yourself of useful feedback, but you also deprive your fellow group members of your responses and editorial work.

I understand that wonderful and awful things sometimes happen to make you miss class, so there is no penalty for up to three absences. I do not require an explanation, although it's always appreciated. Beyond those three absences, *each* additional absence will cost your final course average one full letter grade, i.e. C to D, A- to B-, etc. If you miss more than six classes, you will fail the course. I will pass around an attendance sheet at the beginning of each class: if your signature is not there, you will be counted as absent. Chronic or unreasonable tardiness (i.e. more than once or twice, more than two or three minutes) will count as an absence.

Participation is mandatory. You don't have to be the most talkative person in the class, but I expect that you will read attentively, contribute thoughtfully to class discussions, and work productively in your writing group. I also expect that you will take all our in-class writing (including daily freewrites and regular response writing) seriously. I will periodically ask you to assess your own and your groupmates' participation. These assessments, weighed along with my own sense of your participation, make up 10% of your final grade. Sleeping in class, forgetting to silence or turn off your phone, texting, off-task laptop use, off-task writing, or other potentially distracting behavior will count as an absence.

Writing will happen in every class and probably every day. Most classes will begin with a short freewriting exercise, giving you the opportunity to think on paper and prepare some of your responses to the day's readings.

There are four sequences of formal writing assignments, totaling 90% of your final grade. In each, a short "feeder" assignment precedes a larger related project. These are designed to build skills necessary for the later assignments and you **may** include materials from these feeders in the later drafts.

Feeder 1: Description (2-3 pp.)	5%
Essay 1: Travel Narrative (5-6 pp.)	10%
Feeder 2: Critical Annotations (2-3 pp.)	5%
Essay 2: Critical Review and Evaluation (5-8 pp.)	15%

Feeder 3: Evolution in the Media (2-3 pp.)	5%
Essay 3: Political Proposals (5-8 pp.)	20%
Feeder 4: Close Reading (2-3 pp.)	5%
Essay 4: Literary and Cultural Analysis (8-10 pp.)	25%

We will talk in detail in class about my expectations for each of these feeder assignments and essays—if you have any questions, please email me or drop by my office hours.

Essay & Assignment Format

Feeder assignments and unit projects should be typed, double-spaced, stapled, and in 12-point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. Make sure that each paper has a title (not bold, underlined, or in large font).

Each paper you submit should have the following heading in the upper left corner:

Your name
 FYWS 151.02
 Prof. Bogucki
 Date

When you turn in final drafts, you must include all of your first drafts, notes, and peer responses. Please staple or paper clip these materials to the back of your final draft. I will not accept final drafts unless this work is included.

Acknowledgment

Plagiarism, the use of another person’s ideas or words without attribution, is unacceptable in any serious academic setting and is considered a form of lying, cheating, *and* stealing just about everywhere. When you use outside sources, you must clearly indicate which of your ideas derive from those sources and give full bibliographical information (author, title, publisher, place of publication, date of publication, page numbers—or title, volume, year, and page numbers of journals—or web site urls) for every source on which you have relied.

In the spirit of many of the scientists and writers we will be reading in this course, you will write a short “acknowledgements” section in class on the day each of your final drafts is due. Intellectual honesty can be a matter of positive representation as well as negative consequences; it’s at the core of genuine and creative thinking. I hope you will take the chance to acknowledge all the different sources of the thinking on display in your writing. It (almost) goes without saying that I assume that all the work you turn in is your own and produced exclusively for this course, that any borrowed ideas and language will be fully and properly documented, that cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, that convicted violations of the Honor Code will fail this course in addition to whatever penalty is assigned by the Council, and

that, if you have any questions about whether or how to fully acknowledge a source, you should know that you can stop me to talk about it anytime.

Schedule

Reading: You should read the material assigned before coming to class on the date for which it is listed. Please note: the schedule is subject to change. I will announce any changes in class and make an updated schedule available online, but if you are absent you are responsible for getting notes from a classmate and keeping track of the assigned readings.

Writing: Feeders and essay drafts are due at the start of class on the date listed below. If you are absent on the day a paper is due, please hand it to me or slide it under my office door not later than 3:00pm that day, otherwise it will be considered late. **If you do not have a workable draft on the day assigned you will be considered absent.** Unless an extension has been arranged in advance, late papers will lose one full letter grade per day late, starting after 3:00 on the day it's due, i.e. an "A" paper due 3:00 9/26 turned in 3:05 9/26 receives a "B," and a "B-" paper due 3:00 9/26 turned in 3:05 9/27 receives a "D-."

Day	Date	Assignments
Wednesday	August 24	Introduction
Friday	26	On Groups and Travels
Monday	29	Read: Darwin, from <i>The Voyage of the Beagle</i> (Appleman 67-81)
Wednesday	31	Read: Darwin, from <i>The Voyage of the Beagle</i> (cont'd)
Friday	September 2	[Feeder 1 Descriptions DUE]
Monday	5	Labor Day Holiday (no class)
Wednesday	7	[ESSAY 1 Rough Draft DUE] Draft Workshop
Friday	9	Structures of Argument
Monday	12	[ESSAY 1 Final Draft DUE]
Wednesday	14	Read: Darwin, <i>Origin</i> : Intro, Ch.1, Ch.2 (Appleman 95-107)
Friday	16	Read: Darwin, <i>Origin</i> : Ch. 3 (107-111)
Monday	19	Read: Darwin, <i>Origin</i> : Ch. 4 (111-135)
Wednesday	21	Feeder 2 Workshop—bring possible articles
Friday	23	Read: Darwin, "An Historical Sketch" (87-94)
Monday	26	[Feeder 2 Annotations DUE] Structures of Argument
Wednesday	28	Read: Darwin, <i>Origin</i> : Ch. 6 (Appleman 135-147)
Friday	30	Read: Darwin, <i>Origin</i> : Ch. 13 Concl., Ch. 14 (157-174)
Monday	October 3	[ESSAY 2 Rough Draft DUE] Draft Workshop
Wednesday	5	Read: Darwin, <i>Descent</i> : Intro., Ch.1 (175-182)
Friday	7	Draft Workshop
Monday	10	[ESSAY 2 Final Draft DUE]
Wednesday	12	Read: Darwin, <i>Descent</i> : Ch. 2 Concl., Ch. 3 (211-222)
Friday	14	Read: Darwin, <i>Descent</i> : Ch. 21 (243-254)
Monday	17	Fall break / Grades Due at 9:00 am
Wednesday	19	[Feeder 3 DUE] Read: Sedgwick, Owen, Jenkin (265-275)
Friday	21	Read: Hooker, Huxley, Lyell, Wallace (276-288)
Monday	24	Workshop / Read: Carnegie, Kropotkin, and Nowak et al. (396-408)
Wednesday	26	Workshop / Read: Wilson, Gould (409-419)
Friday	28	Workshop / Read: Richards, Adams (434-449)

Monday	31	Read: Scott, <i>Tennessee v. Scopes</i> (542-549)
Wednesday	November 2	Read: Morris, Wheeler (557-568)
Friday	4	[ESSAY 3 DUE] Read: Dawkins, Johnson, Scott (577-592)
Monday	7	Lessing, <i>The Fifth Child</i> (1-30)
Wednesday	9	Lessing, <i>The Fifth Child</i> (30-52)
Friday	11	[Feeder 4 DUE] / Lessing, <i>The Fifth Child</i> (52-68)
Monday	14	[ESSAY 4, Rough Draft DUE]
Wednesday	16	ESSAY 4 Draft Workshop
Friday	18	Lessing, <i>The Fifth Child</i> (68-133)
Monday	21	[ESSAY 4, 2 nd Draft DUE]
W, F	23, 25	Thanksgiving Break begins Tuesday, Nov. 22 at 10 p.m.
Monday	28	Classes resume; Read: Darwin, <i>Autobiography</i> (Appleman 633-634)
Wednesday	30	Draft Workshop
Friday	December 2	Read: Beer and Levin (Appleman 645-652; 658-664)
Monday	5	[ESSAY 4, Final Draft DUE]
Wednesday	7	Last day of class
Fri-Wed	9-14	Final Exams

Important Dates

day	date	event
Tuesday	August 23	Enrollment Clearance/Registration
Wednesday	24	Classes begin Opening Convocation
Tuesday	30	Drop/add period ends
Wednesday	31	Extended drop period begins
Monday	September 6	Labor Day Recess
Wednesday	14	Extended Drop Period Ends Pass/Fail Option Ends
Thursday	15	Withdraw Period begins
Wednesday	21	Last day to remove conditional grades
Friday	October 14	Fall recess begins at 5:00 p.m.
Monday	17	Mid-term grades 9:00 a.m.
Wednesday	19	Classes resume
Friday	28	Withdraw Period Ends
Tuesday	November 23	Thanksgiving Recess begins at 10:00 p.m.
Monday	28	Classes resume
Wednesday	December 7	Last day of classes, 10:00 p.m.
Thursday	8	Reading day
Fri-Wed	9-14	Final Examinations
Friday	16	Final grades due 5:00 p.m.