English 30-2, Freshman Honors
Ethical Questions
MWF 9:05-9:55
318 Willard

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Office hrs. Monday, 11:30-12:30 [Willard]
Thursday, 1:30-3:30 [Scott Bldg]
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Texts:
Pantheon.

Maus II. A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began.
Pantheon.


Course Description: English 30 is an honors course in which you read and write in
dialogue with other texts and your fellow classmates. The topic for our class is “Ethical
Questions.” In our study of the September 11 attack and other traumatic events of the past
and present, we will ask questions about the “right and wrong” of individual actions within
complex historical situations.

As we ask questions, we will also study types of argument—how to define a
particular event (the what of an argument), how to trace its multiple causes (the why of an
argument), and how to evaluate or make judgments of what we define and causally
understand (the value of an argument).

Our classroom will be a writing community in which you constantly respond to
each other’s work at various stages of the writing process. For every paper, you will turn
in a prewriting (your topic and strategy). And before each paper is due, you will be part of
a peer review (in workshops and email evaluations) in which fellow classmates give you
needed feedback on your work.

Papers
(1) “Memorials of 9/11”
(2) 9/11
(3) Maus I and II
(4) Copenhagen
(5) Interpreter of Maladies

Participation and Peer Reviews

Type of Argument % of Grade
Definition/Evaluation 10%
Causal Analysis 20%
Pro/Con 20%
Causation/Evaluation 20%
Evaluation/Narrative 20%

Late Papers, Absences: Talk to me if you cannot complete a paper on time. Do you have
two major exams or a major semester project on the day a paper is due? Email if a problem
arises. If you don’t make these prior arrangements, I’ll be forced to dock a late paper one
letter grade for each class period.

I expect you to attend every class. Absences without excuse are just not acceptable.
Three unexcused absences will result in a grade deduction.

Revision: You have the option of revising one of your papers for the possibility of a higher
grade (the average of your first and second grade). If you take this option, talk to me
before you begin your work so we can agree upon a revision strategy. (This is important.
You cannot get credit for revisions on your own.)
On Accommodations: The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please talk to me as soon as possible.

Academic Integrity: I expect that your work in this course will be honest and responsible—that you will correctly cite your sources and turn in work that is your own. To do otherwise results in a failing grade for that assignment. (In our class, we’ll work on summarizing and assimilating texts so that your work is “your own.”)

Texts on Electronic Reserve (for assignments 1 and 2):

Class Schedule
August 28(W)
30(F)

- Course introduction and in-class writing
- Clarification of assignment #1, “Memorials of 9/11.”
- “Planners organize Sept. 11 services,” CDT (electronic reserve or ER)
- Ottó Orbán, “On the Destruction of the Twin Towers” (ER)

LABOR DAY, Sept. 2 (M)
Sept 4(W) - Ramage, "On Causal Argument" (ER)  
- Ajami, "The war they gave us" and "Nowhere Man" (ER)  
- "Interview: 11 September, Terrorism, Islam, and the Intifada" (ER)  
6(F) Juergensmeyer, "Terror in the Name of God" (ER)  
9(M) Crenshaw, "Why America? The Globalization of the Civil War" (ER)  
11(W) Bring the New York Times to class today: how we memorialize 9/11/01  
13(F) *workshop #1 (2-3 prewritings and introductions on transparency)  
16(M) *workshop #2 (1 paper on transparency plus in-class peer review)  
18(W) *Paper #1: "Memorials of 9/11" definition/evaluation [plus your prewriting and draft with student comments]  
- in-class self evaluation  
- Selected pieces from Granta 77: "What We Think of America" on electronic reserve:  
  - introduction by Ian Jack (11-12)  
  - Ian Buruma (17-20)  
  - Benoît Duteurtre (32-34)  
  - Hans Magnus Enzensberger (34-36)  
20(F) More selections from Granta 77:  
  - John Gray (36-38)  
  - Ramachandra Guha (38-41)  
  - James Hamilton-Paterson (44-47)  
  - Ivan Klíma (50-53)  
  - Doris Lessing (53-54)  
  - Harold Pinter (66-69)  
  - Raja Shehadeh (71-74)  
  - Ahdaf Soueif (78-81)  
23(M) Tony Judt, "America and the War" [the complete article] and "Its Own Worst Enemy" [Part I] (ER)  
25(W) Judt, cont.  
Pamuk, "The Anger of the Damned" (ER)  
27(F) Amanat, "Empowered Through Violence" (ER)  
30(M) Amanat, cont.  
  - Hollander, "Anti-Americanism" (ER)  
  - Hoffman, "On the War," Part IV (ER)  
October 2(W) Causal study, cont.  
4(F) Study of prewritings  
7(M) *workshop #1 (first 2 pp. of 1-2 drafts on transparency)  
  DRAFT (1-2 pages) 
  [After class, exchange draft with one other person. Email one-paragraph evaluation before Wednesday.]  
9(W) *workshop #2 (one paper on transparency; in-class peer review)  
11(F) Paper #2: *Causal analysis due (with a copy of the email you sent to another, your prewriting, and final draft with peer evaluation)  

FALL BREAK, October 14, 15
October 16(W)  Introduction to Pro/Con argument
    Maus I
18(F)    Maus I
21(M)    Maus II
23(W)    PREWRITING
25(F)    Maus I and II and study of prewritings
28(M)    *workshop #1 (first 2 pp. of 2 drafts on transparency)
            DRAFT (first 2 pages)
            [Email 1 paragraph evaluation to fellow student before Wed.]
30(W)    *workshop #2 (one paper on transparency and peer review)

November 1(F) *Paper #3: Pro/Con Maus paper (with your email, prewriting, and final draft with student evaluation).
            -Introduction to Copenhagen and problems of causation/identification
4(M)     Copenhagen, Act 1
6(W)     Copenhagen, Act 1, cont.
8(F)     Copenhagen, Act 2
11(M)    Copenhagen, Act 2 plus Postscript.
13(W)    *workshop #1 (first 2 pp. of 2 drafts on transparency)
            DRAFT (1-2 pp.)
            [Email 1 paragraph evaluation to fellow student before Friday.]
15(F)    *workshop #2
            DRAFT
            [one paper on transparency and peer review]
            -Introduction to Lahiri and idea of cultural displacement/assimilation
20(W)    Lahiri, "Mrs. Sen's"
22(F)    Lahiri, "When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine"
25(M)    Lahiri, "Interpreter of Maladies"
27(W)    Lahiri, "This Blessed House"
December 2(M) Lahiri, "A Temporary Matter"
4(W)     Lahiri, "The Third and Final Continent"
6(F)     *workshop #1 (two transparencies-entry #1)
            DRAFT-entry #1
            [Email 1 paragraph evaluation to fellow student before Monday.]
9(M)     *workshop #2 (two transparencies-entry #2)
            DRAFT-entry #2
            [Email 2nd paragraph evaluation to your peer reviewer.]
11(W)    no official class; optional conferences in Scott Building.
13(F)    *Paper #5: Evaluation/Narrative Lahiri paper.
            -last day for optional revision
            -in-class evaluation. Bring your No. 2 pencil.
Paper #1. Definition-Evaluation Argument
"Memorials of 9/11"

How do we memorialize the September 11 attack on America and to what end? In your first paper, define "memorials" and their purpose and support your thesis with examples of such events on television, in the newspaper, or in your experience in your hometown or at Penn State.

Your might begin your paper with multiple examples at 9/11 commemorations before focusing on two or three, or with a type of memorial that, also, will introduce your specific examples.

The body of your paper will be your description/narration of two or three such examples:
- perhaps a memorial in New York and the other in your hometown or Penn State
- perhaps two types of memorials like a solemn eulogy for those who died at 9/11 and a celebratory chorus to the living
- perhaps pictures of commemoration, like the Palmer's "Picturing America"

[Give an overview of the exhibition; focus on two or three pictures.]

As you develop your paper, let us know why you've selected particular examples. How do they memorialize 9/11? Do they move us with pathos and set up a thinking space? Give us details that evoke such feelings and thoughts.

If your materials comes from a web site or a newspaper, attach this material to your final paper.

Audience: our class Length: 3-3 1/2 pages

Paper #2. Causal Argument on September 11

Write a causal paper in response to one of the following "why" questions (or one of your choice):

(1) Why did terrorists attack America?
   or

(2) Did American actions in the world cause the September 11 attacks? [Is the "victim" somehow implicated in the terror it suffers?]
   or

(3) Why is there so much anti-American feeling in the world, even after (especially after) 9/11? [Is "anti-American" the right word for your argument?]

You might develop your argument with multiple causes; then focus on a primary or underlying cause, a remote cause, or a contributory cause.

These topics, of course, are huge and almost unmanageable in all of their complexity. Here are some suggestions to make this paper a possible one:
(1) Create a probable dramatic situation. Write your argument in the form of a dialogue in which someone asks you a question and you respond. In this “dialogue,” you will do most of the talking. Consider a situation like the following:

- You are working on your Granta articles at the kitchen table and someone in your home asks you a “why” question. (Someone has picked up your articles!) You will respond to their questions, and, in the process, work out multiple causes, perhaps focusing on an underlying cause.

- You are working on your 9/11 paper in your dorm and . . . .

- You are part of an organization (in film, drama, psychology, philosophy, history, political science) and have been asked to take part in an informal round table discussion of 9/11. You are asked a “why” question, and you respond (with the help of your research).

- You are a poet or fiction writer who is writing a poem or short story on some “why” question about 9/11. In an informal setting, you are asked about that “why” question and the kind of causal thinking behind your work-in-progress.

Introduce your “dialogue” or drama with a brief prologue in which you indicate setting and speakers and situation. Then begin your drama, with each speaker’s name underlined.

Or set up your paper as a round table discussion or an interview. In a brief introduction, let us know the setting, the speakers, and the situation.

Of course, there are other inventive ways to present your argument, like two letters to the Collegian, one that sets up a “why” question, and the other that answers it. Find the format that pleases you most.

(2) Focus on about two or three of the articles we discuss. Find the articles that seem most convincing to you and use them to respond to the “why” question.

Your can write an “academic” argument, with quotes and paraphrases from your sources or a more conversational-academic argument with paraphrases. Your challenge will be to make your paper both authoritative and “conversational”—as if this talk could have taken place.

Research. There should be at least two items in your “Works Cited” sheet, a separate page at the conclusion of your argument. Follow the MLA format. In your paper, cite authoritative sources in a parenthesis after a paraphrase or quote.

Length: approx. 6-8 pages

Audience: our class