English 30: Honors Rhetoric & Composition ♦ Fall ‘02

Sections: 12, T/R 11:15-12:30, 114 Keller
17, T/R 2:30-3:45, 171 Willard

Instructor: Sheila Squillante
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Office Hours: Tues. 9-10:30
Wed. 1:30-3:00
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Required Texts: (available at Campus Bookstore)

♦ The Life and Loves of a She-Devil, by Faye Weldon
♦ The War against Boys, by Christina Hoff Summers
♦ Penn Statements
♦ Course Packet (available at the Student Book Store on College Ave.)
♦ Selected handouts and web articles

Optional Texts: (NOTE: You must choose one of these titles for your book review assignment)

♦ The Cloister Walk, by Kathleen Norris
♦ The Duke of Deception, Geoffrey Wolff

♦ A good college dictionary
♦ An MLA style book
Course Objective

On a large scale, the main function of this course is to get you to read, write, and think critically about the information you absorb on a daily basis. Additionally, this course aims to teach you how to express your own opinions/ideas to best advantage. It invites you to take part in a discourse community (i.e. this classroom) with sometimes like-minded, sometimes adversarial voices: a microcosm of the very world we live in. Learning to interact with these voices--informing, persuading, questioning & celebrating them -- will help you better understand your own evolving values and beliefs—a first and most important step to becoming a conscientious citizen of the many communities outside of this classroom.

Regarding the course's content, we will focus on a specific theme this semester: the construction of identity, as it pertains to both the individual and the (sometimes marginalized) group. What elements make us who we are? Family? Profession? Health? Education? Geography? Economic class? Appearance? Ethnicity? Race? Religion? What contexts throw our ideas and mythologies about ourselves into doubt? And why are we so heavily, intensely invested in who we think we are (as opposed to who we might actually be)?

Recently, one need only look to Japan to witness the anxiety that often surrounds the issue of identity (in this case, national identity). New textbooks have been approved by the Japanese government for use in the public schools there; these texts feature important, large historical omissions, including Japanese atrocities and failures during wartime, as well as information about how Korean women were once subjected to lives of sexual slavery to Japanese soldiers. The conflict here is obvious: current Japanese leaders want children to feel positive and loyal to their country, arguing that this skewed portrait of the past will be good not only for the children's self-esteem, but also for the national morale and, thus, Japan's future. However, opponents argue that without knowing all parts of their nation's history—the positive and the negative—these children will likely evolve with a false mythology about their country, built on a kind of rhetorical deception, which disempowers and violates those who suffered long ago. If you're a leader in Japan, what do you weigh as most important? And what are the possible long-term consequences of each choice?

From this contemporary example—for which one could rather easily find an analogous American example—we can witness the great inherent tension that surrounds issues of identity, thus making it ideal for discussion and exploration. You won't necessarily leave this course with answers, but you will leave with the critical skills necessary to think and write intelligently about important matters, as well as sensitivity to the concepts of rhetoric apparent in your everyday life.
Policies & Requirements

In order to pass this course, you must satisfactorily fulfill the following requirements:

♦ **Complete all papers.** Each paper must be submitted in a folder, along with all rough drafts, signed peer review comments from draft workshops, and other materials and notes that represent the various stages of the paper’s development (including notes and photocopies of, and printouts from, any sources you have used), along with a revised version of your argument proposal.

♦ **Complete all homework assignments** (reading and writing).

♦ **Maintain regular attendance** and active participation as both reader and writer in draft workshops, in-class exercises, and classroom discussions.

**Attendance**

This class runs on your intellect and energy. If you don’t show up, it can’t get very far and neither can your writing or thinking. Every voice is necessary to make this class work. So, barring emergency, you are expected to be present, prepared and involved. After two absences, you can expect to have your participation grade lowered for each subsequent absence. Missing more than 6 classes, or, put another way, 3 weeks of the course, will constitute an automatic failure. If you are present but unprepared to take part in discussion, you will be counted among the absent. Additionally, I will not tolerate excessive lateness or any other flavor of disruption and will reflect such in your final grade.

1 absence = ☺
2 absences = ☺
3 absences = **B in class participation**
4 absences = **C in class participation**
5 absences = **D in class participation**
6 absences = **F in class participation**
7 absences = **FAIL THE CLASS ☹**

The above scale assumes you’re otherwise earning an ‘A’ in class participation. To figure out where you stand, simply detract one letter grade per absence. That means if you’re earning a ‘C’ in class participation, a fifth absence brings you down to a ‘D,’ and you fail after six absences.
More on Attendance

You are allowed two absences...

...this DOES NOT mean two “freebies” (sleeping in, leaving early for the weekend, spacing out and missing class) plus “excused” sicknesses. It means two total. In other words, save them for when you’re really sick or for your sister’s wedding in Honolulu. For those students who must attend regularly scheduled, university-approved curricular and extracurricular activities (such as field trips, debate trips, choir trips, and athletic contests), I provide, within reason, opportunity to make up work. However, if these trips hurt your scholastic performance, I will present such evidence for necessary action to the head of the English department and to the dean of the college in which you are enrolled. Regardless of illness or other problems, the purpose of this course is to engage yourself thoughtfully in a discourse community—something which cannot be accomplished if you are not present.

I look darkly upon the student who shows up unprepared the day after an absence, cheerfully explaining, “Well, I wasn’t here yesterday, so I didn’t get the homework/class work.” When you are absent, you need to take responsibility for the next class period’s work, or you will earn two absences instead of one. You are responsible for work covered in any classes you miss. This means if you miss a discussion of a reading, I’ll ask you to type up a one-page, single-spaced response to the reading in addition to your normal journal entry at the end of the unit. I would encourage each of you to find a “buddy” in class with whom you will exchange phone numbers or email addresses for the purpose of keeping on top of missed assignments. Remember: the syllabus may change daily and without notice! You must be rigorous in your attention to the expectations of the course—especially when you have been absent. Additionally, if you miss class on the day of a rough draft session, or come to class without a completed draft, your grade for that paper will be lowered by one grade.

DO NOT TEST this attendance policy—perennially one student per course thinks they can skate by without showing up. That student perennially skates on the thin ice of an “F” grade in English 30.
Grading

You will find in the course packet a copy of the department's grading standards, to which I will refer when I read your papers. Here is the overall breakdown of grades for the course:

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<td>Paper #3</td>
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<td>Journals</td>
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<td>HW &amp; Participation</td>
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**NOTE** I will only discuss grades in person, and please know in advance that I don't generally change grades. Please note also that I have in place a 24 hour rule in regard to papers. After I hand them back, you must allow 24 hours to pass before discussing any questions or issues that you may have.

**Reading Journals:** You must maintain a reading journal throughout this course. You are required to TYPE a single-spaced, one-page-long entry at the end of each week that contains your personal reactions to readings and/or topics we address in class. These entries will be turned in each time you turn in a paper. These journals are NOT personal memoirs, nor are they venues for grousing about grades. If you have questions or problems regarding grades, you should talk to me during office hours or make an appointment with me. Furthermore, they are never to be used as a space to attack the beliefs, opinions, or personalities of your classmates. If I see that your journal is being used to this end, you can expect to be called in for a conference about your commitment to the intellectual community of the class. I expect all comments made during class—whether written or oral—to be thoughtful, respectful, and intelligent. I will not tolerate petulant or mean-spirited critique or retort. We are here to learn from one another, and that is a privilege above all others!

**Email protocol:** I consider email a necessary evil. While I concede that it has its conveniences, I also believe strongly that too much reliance on it as a medium for communication does more to separate us than to make us closer. Therefore, I do not accept emailed drafts of any kind. I mean this. Please do not send me a last-minute paper via email with a note attached explaining, "I know you don’t like this but..." Your email will be returned to you unread.

Email should be used to inform me if you will be absent for any reason, for brief clarification of assignments, quick questions, or to set up an appointment to meet with me. For in-depth conversation of any kind, please come to my office hours. I am always happy to meet with you personally.
Quizzes: If it becomes apparent to me that people are “blowing off” reading assignments, pop quizzes will be administered regularly and count as part of your HW grade.

Late Papers: One half-grade will be deducted for each day that a paper is late. NOTE: This includes EVERY day, so if a paper is due on Thursday and you get it to me Tuesday, your grade will drop by five (i.e., if it’s an ‘A’ paper, you will receive a ‘C+’; if you start out with a ‘C+’, you will ultimately earn an ‘F’).

Extensions: If you need to get an extension on a paper, you must talk to me. I am usually pretty flexible and reasonable on this point. My only condition is that your request must come BEFORE the day that the paper is due. In most cases, I am willing to give you an extra day or two if the result will be a paper that reflects your best work.

Optional Revision: You will have the opportunity to revise one paper which has earned a grade lower than ‘B-’ for the purpose of replacing your original grade. The last day that optional revisions will be accepted this semester will be two weeks before the last class meeting (see syllabus).

Format: Your papers should be typed or word-processed, using black ink, double-spaced, with one inch margins on all sides. No odd fonts, please. No separate title page should be used---save a tree! Place your name, the date, and the instructor’s name in the upper right-hand corner of the first page. A creative, appropriate title (that is not the name of the assignment!) should appear above the text on page one. The title should not be underlined or in quotation marks. Page one need not be numbered, but all subsequent pages should be. Always fasten pages together with a staple.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism demonstrates contempt for ethical standards, your instructor, and your peers. Don’t do it. You risk failing the class and being referred to the Office of Judicial Affairs, which may recommend academic probation, suspension, or expulsion for academic dishonesty. You will find in the course packet a departmental statement which defines plagiarism. If you still have questions about what plagiarism is after reading the document, see me. Additionally, I expect all of the material written in this class to be new—not something recycled from other classes.

ADA accommodation: Penn State encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell me.
Course Schedule (subject to change)

Week One

Ad Unit

HW: Read Steinem and Barthel articles. Type a 1-2 pg. intro of yourself which includes background, interests, goals or anything unique to yourself. Be creative. OR, type 1-2 pgs. about a time you persuaded someone of something. Tell me how you argued, what the response was, and how things ended. BE SPECIFIC.

HW: Read through “Plagiarism” and “Grading Standards” in course packet. Read Craig’s “I’d Rather Go Naked,” Sakata, Bixby and Kula editorials. Find a print ad over the weekend and bring it in on Tuesday for discussion.

Week Two

T 9/3 Claims, reasons, assumptions, and context. Discuss readings. Group work with ads.
HW: Read “The Inner Doughboy,” “The Mr. Peanut Chronicles,” and “Snap! Crackle! Plot!”

R 9/5 Discuss readings.
HW: Bring 2, typed and completed copies of a draft of paper #1 to class. Read PS Ad essays. Begin Weldon’s The Life and Loves of a She-Devil.

Week Three

T 9/10 Discuss PS essays. Rough draft workshop for Paper #1.
HW: Paper #1 including peer reviews & typed journal. (NOTE: ALL future papers should be turned in with these materials included!) Continue Weldon.

Definition Unit

* In this unit, you will be required to visit Howard Rambsy’s exhibit, Step into the Realm: African American Literatures and Literacies, in the Diversity Studies Room; 109 Pattee Library. More information will be given in class.

R 9/12 Paper #1 Due. (include peer reviews & typed journal.) Paper # 2 Assigned: Definition of an Issue. Stasis theory.

**Week Four**

**T 9/17**
Exigence. Discuss readings.
**HW:** Continue Weldon. Read Barry, Syfers-Brady & Fernsler.

**R 9/19**
Humor in Argument. Discuss readings.
**HW:** Finish Weldon & be prepared to discuss. (Discussion questions will be provided) Write an argument proposal for paper #2.

**Week Five**

**T 9/24**
Discuss issues of definition and desire in Weldon’s *Life and Loves of a She-Devil*. Argument proposals DUE.
**HW:** *Step into the Realm* discussion for next class. Have questions ready for our speaker.

**R 9/26**
Tips on structuring: arrangement, intros & conclusions, paragraphing, etc. Guest speaker: Howard Rambsy.
**HW:** PS essays. Bring 2 completed drafts of paper #2 to class.

**Week Six**

**T 10/1**
Discuss PS essays. Rough draft workshop for paper #2.

**Evaluation Unit**

**R 10/3**
**HW:** Locate a relatively in-depth book review (1500 words) in a magazine or newspaper, and bring to class on Tuesday. Read your book.

**Week Seven**

**T 10/8**
Discuss reviews. Problems with published reviews. Evaluating art through criteria.
**HW:** Brainstorm criteria for art: what repels or draws you? Why do you think this is? Read your book!

**R 10/10**
NO CLASS: Palmer Museum visit mandatory before Fall Break. More details TBA.
**HW:** Read your book! Palmer exercise. Type an argument proposal for paper #3.
Week Eight

**T 10/15** FALL BREAK

**R 10/17** Toullmin. Argument proposals DUE.
**HW:** Get ahead on your work

Week Nine

**T 10/22** Library Day
**HW:** Bring 2 completed copies of a draft of paper #3 to class.

**R 10/24** Rough draft workshop for paper #3.
**HW:** Paper #3. Read Prager, Moore-Henecke, Jowers, Shore, Cross & Duhamel.

**T 10/29** Paper #3 DUE. Paper #4 assigned: Cultural Analysis. Discuss readings.
**HW:** Read Engle and Epstein articles. Start reading The War against Boys.

**R 10/31** Discuss articles.
**HW:** Continue War. Type an argument proposal for paper #4.

Week Eleven

**T 11/5** Watch Trekkies. Argument proposals DUE.
**HW:** Finish War and be ready to discuss in class. (Discussion questions will be provided.)

**R 11/7** Discuss Trekkies.
**HW:** Research your topic.

Week Twelve

**T 11/12** Discuss The War against Boys
**HW:** Research your topic.

**R 11/14** Finish discussion of War
**HW:** Bring 2 copies of a completed rough draft of paper #4 to class. Read PS essays.

Week Thirteen

**T 11/19** Discuss PS essays. Rough draft workshop for paper #4.
**HW:** Paper #4. Read Brundage & Algranti. Make a list of the issues/moments/events in your own life which you believe have worked to shape your identity. Eventually this will become your argument proposal for paper #5.
*HW:* Read Duncan, Slater and McCann essays. Type up formal argument proposal.

Week Fourteen

T 11/26  Discuss readings. Argument proposals DUE.
*LAST DAY TO TURN IN OPTIONAL REVISION!* 
*HW:* Read Gibson & Jennings. EAT WELL!

R 11/28  THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week Fifteen

T 12/3  Discuss Gibson & Jennings readings. More tips on effective personal writing: scene vs. summary.
*HW:* Bring two completed drafts of paper #5. Read *PS* narrative essays.

R 12/5  Discuss *PS* essays. Rough draft workshop for paper #5.
*HW:* paper #5

Week Sixteen

T 12/10  Paper #5 DUE. Listen to Sedaris. *Course evals.*
R 12/12  LAST DAY OF CLASS!