English 30- MWF 9:05-9:55  230 Arts Building
Pop (and Unpopped Culture): Reading and Writing in the Real World?

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Required texts:
*The Elements of Persuasion* by William A. Covino
*Writing Lives* by Garnes, et al.
*The Mouse that Roared* by Henry Giroux
*Arkham Asylum* by Grant Morrison and Dave McKean available at the Comics Swap

Welcome to English 30! This course satisfies the requirement for a freshman-level rhetoric class- but it has an edge. Unlike the traditional English 15 course, English 30 is a “themed” class and requires more effort. Many of the paper assignments are similar to those in English 15, but in this course my expectations are even higher. There will be complicated readings, complex levels of discussion- in short more work. At the same time, when the semester ends you will be rewarded with a larger, more complicated understanding of rhetoric- and you'll see your level of writing improve greatly.

The theme for this particular course explores the concepts of rhetoric and argument through many different cultural arenas. What is the difference between “pop” culture and “high” culture? Who decides which is which? How do the differences affect the manner we decide which movies to rent, which cds to buy? How does what I read, and what I see manipulate me into purchasing items? Where does all this come from? These questions are our entry point into the discussion of what is “pop” and what is not.

To explore these issues, we will be reading and analyzing elements from many genres- books, films, music, commercials, magazines, and etc. We will be considering iconography and ideology of all things through a variety of units linked with the major writing assignments.

The major writing assignments are as follows:

Project #1- Cultural Analysis of Education and Literacy
Project #2- Analysis of Advertising
Project #3- Evaluation Project
Project #4- Pop Cultural Analysis
Project #5- Rhetorical Analysis

These projects are to be 4-6 pages in length (double spaced) and they should utilize the skills obtained from lectures, discussions, and readings. The assignments must handed in on TIME. A penalty of ONE FULL LETTER GRADE for EACH DAY will be imposed on tardy papers. The final projects should be submitted to me in a folder- a file folder is fine- along with the peer-edited copy, and any additional materials you have used (notes, articles, and etc).
Re-Write Policy

In addition to the major projects, you will have the opportunity for a re-write of one of your major projects. If you choose, you may re-submit one of your projects to me one week after they are returned to the class. I expect all re-writes to bring something new to the table- the re-submission must be a SIGNIFICANT REVISION!!! This means completely changing the approach, style, organization, tone, genre, or argument. I DO NOT want to see a re-submission with only a few corrections made. If you choose to do a revision, I will grade the ‘new’ project and average the grade in with the original project- so you may receive a higher grade... or a lower grade depending on effort and quality.

Peer-Editing Process

To help achieve the highest level of aptitude on class projects, we will actively be holding ‘peer editing’ sessions during class time (usually the class before the project is due). These sessions will be extremely helpful, as a classmate will read a complete draft of your project and give suggestions for improvement. I expect quality commentary for the peer-editing process, not merely grammar and spell-checks. Copies of the peer edited drafts MUST BE SUBMITTED with the final drafts. Any project submitted without a peer-edit will be considered incomplete. Therefore, it is of vital importance to be IN CLASS the day of a peer-editing session.

Response papers

In addition to the major writing assignments, you will also be required to produce 6 response papers, each at least 1 single-spaced page in length. These papers should be a response to the day’s reading assignment, or a response to something that occurs in class discussion. You may debate with something from one of my lectures, pursue an element of interest from the reading that we were unable to address, or even work out some ideas concerning the current reading assignment. Often, students stumble upon excellent paper topics as a result of the response papers, so take them seriously. If you miss even one of the papers, you will unfortunately fail the class, so don’t get too far behind.

Attendance

Regular attendance is mandatory. I take roll call every class period, so I know when you are present and when you are not. Certainly circumstances arise that may keep you from class- illness, family emergency, weddings, funerals, and etc. If any of the aforementioned occurs, you will surely miss class. If you can, I would appreciate an email before class time so I may account for your absence. You have three days (one full week) of absences before incurring any penalty on your final grade. After that, I reserve the right to lower your grade according to how drastically your absences have affected your class participation.
Tardiness

Being late makes me angry. You wouldn’t like me when I’m angry. Please arrive to class on time.

Plagiarism

The departmental plagiarism policy is strict and unforgiving. If one is found trying to claim another’s work as his or her own, I will prosecute and initiate the academic dishonesty process. Possible outcomes may result in failing the paper, failing the course, notice on your academic transcript, or even academic dismissal.

Nota Bene

Penn 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 tell the instructor as soon as possible.

Grade Breakdown

Project 1------------- 15%
Project 2------------- 10%
Project 3----------- 20%
Project 4------------- 15%
Project 5------------- 20%
Response Papers----- 10%
Class Participation---- 10%
ENGLISH 30 SECTION 18
SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND PROJECT DUE DATES
8/31- Class Introduction

9/1- Semiotic Lecture

9/3- pg 25 WL George Orwell “Why I Write”

9/8- pg 34 WL Sylvia Scribner “Literacy in Three Metaphors”

9/10- pg 63 WL Lars Eighner “Dumpster Diving”

9/13- pg 86 WL Richard Roderiguez “Aria: A Memoir of a Bi-lingual Childhood”

9/15- pg 282, 294 WL Benjamin Barber “America Skips School”
       Allan Bloom “The Student and the University”

9/17- Peer-Editing for Project 1

9/20- pg 1-27 EOP ***PROJECT 1 DUE***


9/24- ONLINE “Consuming Passions: The Culture of American Shopping”

9/27- pg 91 EOP “Selling in the Super Bowl”

9/29- ONLINE “Signs of Shopping”

10/1- In-Class Ad Exercises

10/4- Peer-Editing for Project 2

10/6- Intro to Evaluation ***PROJECT 2 DUE***

10/8- ONLINE “Jackass article”

10/11- pg 1, 17 MOUSE “Introduction,” “Disney and the Politics of Public Culture”

10/13- pg 63 MOUSE “Learning with Disney”

10/15- pg 83 MOUSE “Children’s Culture and Disney’s Animated Films”

10/18- pg 123 MOUSE “Memory, Nation, and Family in Disney Films”
10/20- **ONLINE** “The Tradition of the Oldie,” “The Not-So-Big Hit Single"

10/22- Peer-Editing for Project 3

10/25- Intro to Cultural Analysis ***PROJECT 3 DUE***

10/27- **ONLINE** “Introduction,” Shakespeare as Cultural Artifact

10/29- Shakespeare part 2, Tromeo and Reduced Players

11/1- **pg 378 WL** Elayne Rapping “Daytime TV”

11/3- Intro Batman as Cultural Artifact

11/5- **ONLINE** “Commodity as Myth,” “Political Economy of a Commercial Text”

11/8- **Arkham Asylum**

11/10- **Arkham continued**

11/12- Buffy the Vampire Slayer

11/15- Peer-Editing for Project 4

11/17- Intro to Rhet Analysis ***PROJECT 4 DUE***

11/19- Intro to Tropes and Techniques

11/22- Musical Analysis

11/24- **ONLINE** Martin Luther King Jr. “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

11/26- “Letter”

11/29- “Letter”

12/1- “Letter”

12/3- Conferences

12/6- Conferences

12/8- Peer-Editing for Project 5

12/10- Course Evals ***PROJECT 5 DUE***