ENGLISH 30 HONORS FRESHMAN ENGLISH: COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC

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REQUIRED TEXTS:
- Copenhagen  Michael Frayn 0385720793  Knopf Publishing Group
- Phaedrus  Plato, translated by Alexander Nehamas 0872202208  Hackett Publishing Co.
- Lies My Teacher Told Me  James W. Loewn 0684818868  Touchstone Book
- Persepolis  Marjane Satrapi 0375422307  Pantheon Books
- Cat's Cradle  Kurt Vonnegut 038533348X  Dell Publishing
- Arcadia  Tom Stoppard 0571169341  Faber and Faber
Reading Packet  To be printed off by each student

OTHER READINGS AS ASSIGNED

WHAT WE WANT TO DO. You will begin to master the skill of writing. You will learn how to communicate given any situation: by the end of fourteen weeks you will be able to wow a teacher or woo a lover, win a job or wing a memo. This is, really, a course that will help you forever.

More specifically, you will practice writing that considers both an audience and a purpose -- often both at once. And we will learn how to read more critically, since good readers tend to make good writers. To do so, we will break writing down into steps that aren't really separate (the writing process is more like an escalator, or the fluid swing of a baseball bat) -- invention, planning, composing, re-visioning, editing. We will also discuss fundamental aspects of effective prose -- ethos, pathos, logos, structural movement, style and tone.

And we will be doing a lot of reading. This is an honors course and you have the honor of exploring many different kinds of writing not usually found in the typical Freshman Comp anthology. We will be reading novels, poems, essays, reports, plays, short stories -- and find that each of these different modes of writing have distinct differences, and require very different reading strategies. But without exception you will need to read closely, and more carefully than you probably are used to right now. This means, among other things: you will need to keep a notebook and you will need to take notes on your reading. You will need to look up every word you don't know and write its definition down in your notebook. You will need to write reminders to yourself in your notebook of questions, conjectures, confusions, delights and areas that you would like to discuss in class. The notebooks will not themselves be graded. In fact, I will never see them. But all quizzes and exams will be closed book and open notes.

The course comprises three different components: the readings, the class lectures/discussions, and the papers. It will seem in the beginning that none of these things relate to any of the others. The lectures, in particular, may seem to dwell far from anything dealt with in the books, or asked about in the papers. But this is not really the case. Trust me. By the end of the semester the themes of the books, discussions, lectures, and writings will begin to reveal their underlying patterns.

And let's have fun. Do you think I want to be bored senseless through the best weeks of fall? Ultimately the course is about ideas, about what we believe and how we can best express such stuff. So the course is as interesting as
those seated beside you, as yourself. Don't let the class down.

**HOW WE WILL DO IT.** Besides the reading and the discussions, the big chunk of work is five papers. For each, you will work through the writing process, developing a topic proposal, rough draft, and final draft. People will help along each step. I will respond copiously to the final draft. Work must be done on time, because one assignment often leads up to the next. As for late final drafts, if you set something up with me ahead of time, fine. But if you don't, you lose a grade level (i.e., from A to A-) each calendar day. Buy a folder and keep all your rough drafts and final drafts. At the end of the semester you'll hand in everything one more time for a final folder review. Don't lose anything. You may pick up the folder through Fall semester at my office.

As for attendance, you must come to class -- every day. There are no excused absences. We discuss things here, muck about as a group. I don't have wisdom from on high to bestow on you. **SO you must talk, and you must listen.** We've only got fourteen weeks to do an impressive amount of writing and thinking, so BE HERE. After two unexcused absences I reserve the right to drop your grade 10% for each additional absence. So don't get sick more than twice or you'll really be sick when you get your grade.

Also everyone in this class will send an e-mail messages to the rest of the class weekly. These messages are your opportunity to discuss, critique and question the readings or the concepts from class. They should be sent out by Sunday at noon; giving time enough for everyone to have read all of the messages **BY CLASS TIME** Tuesday. This means you must schedule your weekend so that 1) You have finished reading whatever text we are on before you begin your e-mail 2) you have sent in your e-mail on time and 3) you have read all of your other classmate's e-mails. These e-mails are every bit as much part of the assigned writing and reading in this course and will be treated as such.

And finally, clearly, you must participate. **If the answers are anywhere they are in our discussions and searches for answers.**

**WHERE ELSE WE CAN DO IT.** My office is always open to all of you. Drop by during office hours, or set up an appointment. I'm here to help you grow as a writer, and sometimes individual attention is the best way. Visiting me is not like visiting the principle; after I whack you a few times with a ruler, we can be friends, really.

**WHAT YOU WILL GET FOR IT.** A lifetime of excellent expression. **OK, you want to know about grades.** English 30 is about process, about what you take away from the class. Unfortunately, I end up grading five steps along the way. Life isn't fair. That said: Paper 1 is worth 5% of your grade. Paper 2 is worth 10%. Paper 3 is worth 20%. Paper 4 is 25%. The group project/presentation is worth 15% That leaves 25% which will come from participation which includes both the e-mail discussions and your in class participation.

**SAVE ALL OF YOUR ROUGH DRAFTS AND FINAL PAPERS.** You will hand them all in at the end of the class in a portfolio. You will have the opportunity to rewrite any of your papers that you wish. The rewrite grade will be averaged in with your original grade on that paper. You will also write a rhetorical analysis of all the writing in the portfolio.

Finally plagiarism -- why bother? Is there a more pointless activity?. Not only is it a waste of a great educational opportunity, it will get you flunked out of English 30 (I promise) and I will do all in my power to bring down the wrath of the University and the folks at home if you are caught. Please don't take this as a challenge. Plagiarism is above all stupid, and you're not here in English 30 in order to demonstrate stupidity. **End of lecture number one.**

**Rhetorical. Value. Fact and Truth. Communication.** We'll talk about all these things in the classes to come. Welcome.