ENGLISH 202B.202: Advanced Rhetoric and Composition—Writing in the Humanities

Literacy, Critical Thinking and Cultural Critique

06/30/2003-08/08/2003
315 Willard MTWRF 11:10A - 12:25P
Instructor: Janet Holtman
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Email: jmh403@psu.edu
Office Hours: Monday 12:30-2:00, Thursday 12:45-2:15 and by appointment
Mailbox: 116 Burrowes Bldg. (above the name)

Texts:

Behrens and Rosen, Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum (WRC)
Browne and Keeley, Asking the Right Questions (ARQ)
Glassner: Culture of Fear (CF)
Rose: Lives on the Boundary (LB)
Schlosser: Fast Food Nation (FFN)
The MLA Handbook

In addition to the texts, you need to have an active e-mail account. Obviously you also need to check that e-mail account regularly. During the course of the semester it may be necessary for me to be in contact with the class to send announcements, cancellations, updated assignments, etc. through e-mail.

Course Description:

Development, skills, and expertise in reading and writing can never be separated; therefore, Writing in the Humanities is an intensive reading and writing course. The theme of this section is "Literacy, Critical Thinking and Cultural Critique." English 202B "asks students to consider problems or issues of perennial concern to those in the humanities." Our section will fulfill this goal by concentrating on the various levels of literacy and critical awareness that exist in our society and the ways in which students can become better, more critical and aware thinkers and writers.

Our reading on issues of what counts as "literacy," on reading, writing, and critical practices inside and outside the academy (within and across academic disciplines and various communities and up and down socioeconomic categories) will serve as a basis for our classroom discussions of what constitutes effective reading and writing, what qualifies a person as literate and what qualifies a person as a critical thinker. Hopefully our readings, discussions, and writings will enable you to become a stronger, more confident, and more flexible writer than you were when the semester started.

The idea here is for you to explore various aspects of literacy, including, at the highest level,
literacy as cultural/social awareness. Certain questions will be at the core of our discussions: What is literacy? What does it mean to be a literate individual? Why is it important? What is the purpose and value of your education in terms of your personal development within and beyond the academy? How can you develop your critical thinking and writing skills to serve you as a citizen throughout your life? We will address a wide range of topics and issues, and I don't expect you to have all the answers to the problems of the universe. I do expect you to have thoughts, opinions, questions, possibilities and other types of input. Therefore, I first and foremost, expect you to do all of the reading. I realize that this is a tall order for a summer class, but I will be giving weekly unannounced reading quizzes to see that everyone keeps up. These quizzes will count toward the participation portion of your grade.

Papers in this course will, for the most part, be on topics of your choice with a few parameters from me. As long as your papers are 1) well-organized, 2) persuasive, and 3) supported by logical reasoning and research, you can write on whatever topic related to literacy or cultural/social critique interests you.

Course Requirements:

You will be expected to (1) attend class meetings and be prepared. That means DO THE READING and pass the quizzes; this is a discussion-based class and if you haven't done the reading, you won't be able to contribute, and your grade will suffer accordingly. (2) participate in class discussions--this course is what you make of it and will work only if everyone participates. (3) actively participate in in-class exercises. (4) participate fully in writing workshops and group work. (5) draft and write four papers of various lengths and purposes. (7) Attendance--you are allotted only two unexcused absences during the session for fatigue, burnout, spring fever, summer fever, cocktail flu, personal reasons, malfunctioning alarm clocks, etc. You decide. For each unexcused absence after your first two, your final grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter down to and including "F." Absences accompanied by documentation from the medical center or other legitimate sources are considered excused. (8) submit all work on time--late papers will be docked one letter grade per day.

Note: Passing the course requires timely completion of all of the assignments, long and short, in-class and out-of-class.

Grades:

2 short (4-5 pp) writing assignments (professional literacy statement and cultural analysis essay): 20% each = 40%
1 research overview paper (4-5 pp) = 20%
1 research paper (6-8 pp) = 25%
Class participation (weekly quizzes, attendance, discussion, homework, in-class writing,) = 15%

Four formal writing assignments in all. Also, during the course of the semester you may
revise one paper for a new grade (either the literacy statement or cultural analysis). The research overview and research paper are not revisable. Grading standards are the same in ENGL202B as they are in other PSU composition courses.

**Accommodation and Alternative Formats:**

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. 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.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions including being reported to the University's Judicial Affairs Office for further disciplinary sanction. Also, according to university policy on plagiarism and dishonesty, a mandatory academic integrity form WILL be filed with the College of Liberal Arts.

For more information on the new academic integrity policies, go to:

http://www.la.psu.edu/assocdea/academicinteg.htm

**Class Schedule:**

(Subject to change): Readings and written assignments are listed on the day they are due. Changes in reading assignments, additional reading and writing assignments, prompts for formal papers, and peer-response workshops will be inserted throughout the semester as will unannounced in-class writings and quizzes.
Tentative Syllabus -- English 202B.202 -- Summer 2003

Week One

June 30: Introduction to course, introductions of students and instructor, class roster (name, e-mail, etc.). Introductory writing: "Tell me about yourself as a writer and what you think it means to be a writer--What is your history as a writer? Where are you now as a writer/reader? Where would you like to be? What is critical thinking? What impact does it have on writing? How has your education contributed to your abilities as a reader/writer and your opinions about the importance or value of reading/writing and critical thinking?"
July 2: LB: ch 1-3:
July 3: LB: ch. 4-6
July 4: No Class. Independence Day.

Week Two

July 7: LB: ch. 7-8.
July 8: WRC: "The Perils of Obedience" and "Review of Stanley Milgrams' Experiments..." "The Stanford Prison Experiment"
July 9: Film: Milgram's Obedience Study

Week Three

July 15: CF: "Youth at Risk," "Monster Moms."
July 16: CF: "Black Men." "Smack is Back."

Week Four

July 21: WRC: "We’ve Got Mail—Always." "Going Postal." ARQ reading TBA.
July 22: WRC: "Journey of an Email," "Virtual Love." ARQ reading TBA.
July 23: WRC: "Fat and Happy: In Defense of Fat Acceptance," "Fat and Happy?" ARQ reading TBA.
July 24: WRC: "Too Close to the Bone:" The Historical Context for Women’s Obsession with Slenderness," "The Man Who Couldn’t Stop Eating." ARQ reading TBA.
July 25: WRC: “Gaining on Fat,” “Too Much of a Good Thing.” ARQ reading TBA.
Research Paper Overview due.

**Week Five**

July 28: FFN 1-57 Introduction through “Your Trusted Friends.”
July 29: FFN: “Behind the Counter” and “Success.”

**Week Six**

Aug 5: FFN: “Global Realization” and “Epilogue: Have It Your Way.”
Aug 8: Last day of session. Conclusion. Revisions due.