

Syllabus for ENG 104-03

College Writing and Rhetoric

(Mike Cadden)

Missouri Western State College
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism

ENG 104: College Writing and Rhetoric
Spring, 2000

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URL: <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/faculty/cadden.asp>(A copy of this syllabus can be found on my website)

Materials:

Barnet, Sylvan and Hugo Bedau. Current Issues and Enduring Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking and Argument, with Readings.

Ebest, Sally. et al. Writing from A to Z.

Composition Course Guide: <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/genstud.asp>Suggested: A college-level dictionary and thesaurus.

Evaluation:

Essay Assignments: 60%

Workshops: 25%

Homework & Exercises: 15%

Attendance: Six absences (three weeks of class) will constitute failure in the course; the fifth absence will constitute a one-letter drop in what would have been your final letter grade; the first four absences will be considered in terms of general participation, which is always a factor in borderline final grades; you aren't given four "freebies."

It will be your responsibility to find out what information was covered during your absence. You are responsible for knowing about date or assignment changes. Ignorance due to absence is no excuse.

Academic Dishonesty: All cases in which students pass off others' work as their own will be referred to the Dean of Student Affairs.

Late and Missing Work: I reserve the right to refuse any late work.

Revision Policy: All essays may be revised at any time and may be resubmitted by our last class period.

Policy on Students with Disabilities: Any student in this course who has a disability which requires different contexts for either evaluation or expression should contact me in the first few weeks of the course so that those needs can be considered.

Calendar

Readings and exercises will be clarified daily. In cases where pages in Barnett and Bedau (B&B) are listed for a class meeting, please have those pages read for that day unless you are told otherwise.

Homework will be assigned when I think additional practice or completion of an in-class activity is warranted. This is another reason for your attendance. An absence is no excuse for a missed homework.

Jan. 18 T- Introduction to the course; exercise on five issues/stages (handout); learning names.

20 H- Visit by Mr. David Carlile--Discussion of Webmail.

25 T- Discussion of the essay assignments in relation to one another; Summary (B&B: 22-34); "Gilligan's Isle meets General Hospital."

27 H- Summary of Charles Lawrence's "On Racist Speech" (39); assignment of workshop participants.

Feb. 1 T- Assumptions analysis: subject and audience (B&B: 9-14, 57); Griffon News assumptions; "Blessed Mothers."

3 H- Assumptions analysis: subject and audience (B&B: 167-70, 178-82) ; On-line course guide assumptions; Workshop discussed.

8 T- Workshop #1:

10 H- Workshop #2:

15 T- Essay #1 due; Essay #2 discussed: defining a debate in your major--brainstorming categories of inquiry.

17 H- Presenting pros and cons (B&B 173-78)

22 T- Examining the assumptions behind pros and cons.

24 H- Drawing conclusions from assumptions.

29 T- Workshop #3:

March 2 H- Workshop #4:

7 T- Essay #2 due; Essay #3 discussed; essay passage dialogue exercise.

9 H- Identifying a thread running through several texts: Dialogue (Chapter 26).

Spring Break

21 T- Working through an example from our own majors; Midterm Grades Due Tomorrow.

23 H- Workshop #5:

28 T- Workshop #6:

30 H- Essay #3 due; the inverted pyramid of revision and the set-up for assignment #4 (B&B 183-

90); Tomorrow is the last day to drop this or any course.

April 4 T- Joe Schlabotnik revises an essay.

6 H- Paragraph and Sentence Revision.

11 T- Workshop #7:

13 H- Workshop #8:

18 T- Essay #4 due; The Essay Exam introduced.

20 H- Essay Exam: brainstorming class materials.

25 T- Essay Exam: question-writing workshop.

27 H- Essay Exam: final questions and conditions chosen; course evaluations.

May 2 T- Final Exam dry run.

The Essay Exam: 9:30 a.m. class: Tuesday, May 9, 8:30 a.m.-10:20 a.m.

12:30 p.m. class: Tuesday, May 9, 11:30 a.m.-1:20 p.m.

English 104 Essay Assignments

Dr. Cadden

Essays #1-5 (60% of Final Grade)

Models and examples will be provided when appropriate.

Essay #1

This first assignment focuses on the "debate" section of our book (as will the second) and asks you to consider the assumptions that writers make about their subject(s) and audience(s).

Here's what you do: In Part Four of B&B there are listed five "Pro/Con" debates. I want you to choose one of those debates and analyze the two positions by focusing on the following issues in the following parts:

- In your introduction, provide us with some context: "preview" the contexts and features of each essay (Ch. 2).
- Write a critical summary of each essay that includes (somewhere) a statement of each essay's thesis (Ch 2). You should recognize that the thesis may not be simply stated as a position "for" or "against" the subject of X; it will likely be more specific and narrow than that. Even though your writer is "against abortion," what is his or her specific argument against it?
- Identify the assumptions as expressed in the essays regarding both implied audience and subject matter. What do these essays assume about their respective subjects or audiences?

Questions to ask about subject matter: I'm reading the debate about gun control, but what other subjects are discussed about which the writer might be making assumptions? Well, they might discuss the 2nd amendment, human nature and violence, kids and guns, gangs, the Brady Bill, etc. Do they address these things? Do their statements show some assumptions that they hold?

Questions to ask about the implied audience: What sort of word choices does the writer make? (Examine whether the language imply a particular profession, education level, regional affiliation, etc.) Does tone of voice imply an audience? Does the writer appeal to fears, beliefs, values that a certain group might have? Does the writer write about a group and does that mean he or she isn't writing to that group?

- Evaluate the assumptions made in and across the essays (page 14 of B&B contains a checklist that might help you come up with questions to do this). Can you draw any conclusions about the assumptions as they compare across the essays? Does the audience implied by the essay match with the assumptions made about any subjects? Do the two essays assume different audiences but deal

with the same points?

Does this sound like a lot of work? You betcha. Better start yesterday morning! (Yesterday afternoon might be too late!)

Essay #2

This second essay asks you to define a debate going on in your own major. While you had to analyze how debates are formed, you haven't yet had to name the debate itself.

For this assignment you will need a few materials: the Missouri Western State College Catalog, 1999-2000; the course handout for your major, available in your department or in the counseling office; other materials that your department publishes that explains the majors or sub-specialties that the department offers. You are also invited to interview or speak informally with your advisor in your departments (or a faculty member with whom you happen to get along) to pick their brains (ouch) about the major.

Once you have carefully explained the debate in a balanced, even-voiced, and fair way (as you did in essay #1), you will then draw some conclusions about that debate regarding the subject and audience assumptions. Even though they are your own crafted positions, what assumptions are made by each side regarding both their subject(s) and the implied audiences?

After you have presented both the pros and cons as well as revealed the assumptions made by each side regarding subject and audience, you'll tell us what position you prefer and why. In the process of explaining your own position you'll comment on the significance of examining both the arguments and the assumptions behind them in making that decision.

In summary:

- Define the debate you've found/created.
- Present the positions of each side of this debate in a well-balanced fashion.
- Analyze the assumptions each side makes about both audience and subject.
- Take a position on the debate yourself based on the assumptions you've seen above. Do certain implausible assumptions held by one argument turn you off?

Essay #3

This essay moves us from debate to dialogue. In a dialogue there are multiple perspectives, points of view, interests, contexts—we see that an issue like "abortion" isn't simply a matter of "pro" and "con" but that it is the forum for a variety of questions and issues.

You will choose a chapter from either Part Five or Part Six of B&B and define and describe the dialogue that is going on. You will do the following: define and explain the focused issue that you have found that unites these essays (refer to your careful notes on our discussion of "What is and Ideal Society?" from Part Six of B & B); choose, from among the rhetorical tools we will have discussed, the appropriate way(s) to present this issue that you see among the several essays; lastly, you will devote the remainder of the essay to discussing and drawing conclusions about the complexity of the issue yourself.

In summary:

- Identify the thread or focus that unites the essays you've chosen and put it in the form of a question.
- Point to the idea's development and presence across/among the essays and explain how each essay treats that issue/idea in contrast to the others.
- Comment on the significance of this/these contrast(s).

Essay #4

Choose one of the first three essays in order to revise. The advantage here is that you will start from an essay that you've already "begun." The grade you receive on essay #4 will replace the grade of the essay you've chosen to revise, so there's no sense in automatically choosing an essay on which you've already done well (I give you all credit for figuring out all the angles!) What you will submit with that revision is a rhetorical summary of the essay (handout forthcoming), a brief letter explaining the steps you took in revision (and anything else you want me to know about the process), the original with my comments, and the latest version.

While I won't grade the letter as part of the revision, I will withhold a grade on the essay until I have an acceptable response on your process. I reserve the right to reject any unsatisfactory effort in reflection. I will consider the rhetorical summary in my grade, however.

If you do not submit assignment #4 I will take that to mean that you are replacing your highest essay grade with an "F" through an act of revision.

Essay #5: Essay Exam

Subject yet to be determined.

The Essay Exam: 9:30 a.m. class: Tuesday, May 9, 8:30 a.m.-10:20 a.m.

12:30 p.m. class: Tuesday, May 9, 11:30 a.m.-1:20 p.m.