

Missouri Western State College

Division of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism

ENG 104.03: College Writing and Rhetoric

Spring, 2001

Dr. Mike Cadden

Class: 9:30 – 10:50 a.m., T/Th, 211 Spratt Hall

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Office Hours: 11:30-12:30 pm T/Th; 10 am-12 pm W; and by appointment.

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On the Course: ENG 104 is designed to help you write with more awareness, clarity, and purpose. To those ends, I have arranged the course so that we will be dividing our time between outside essays, in-class activities and homework directed toward those essays, and workshops designed to increase our awareness of the essay assignments. I think you'll find that class time and homework are intimately related to the essays you'll be writing this term.

ENG 104 is a tough course. It is "tough" in the sense that it requires a lot of work and a good attitude about a process that may have you stumble before you write with confidence. Writing is hard work at any level; it never gets easy, though you will get better at both understanding what you have to do and executing those writing and revision tasks. Since, as I write above, the in-class and out-of-class portions of the course are designed to help you understand and succeed in completing each essay, your success hinges on your willingness to be here, prepared and attentive.

See a department description of the course's general goals: www.missouriwestern.edu/~engdept/eng104.html

Materials:

Rottenberg, Annette T. Elements of Argument: A Text and Reader. Sixth Edition.

See <http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/rottenberg>

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

Suggested: A college-level dictionary and thesaurus.

Evaluation:

Essay Assignments: 60%

Workshops: 25%

Homework & Exercises: 15%

Attendance: The MWSC *Policy Guide* states that "each instructor will determine and make known to the class the requirement for attendance" (45). **When you have missed class for the fifth time (2.5 weeks) your final letter grade will be lowered by one-third of a letter grade.** (For instance, if you have a B- by my records you will be dropped to a C+). For each day you are absent subsequent to that your final letter grade will be lowered by one-third. The *Policy Guide* also states that "consideration will be given to students in the case of genuine illness, emergency, or when acting as a representative of MWSC" (45). You should be able to represent this college, anticipate illness, and meet other obligations without missing more than four classes. If you have obligations to fulfill that conflict with your successful engagement with this course, please drop the course. If you feel as if you may have problems regarding work or sports or other activities, please consult me early and we will discuss the matter.

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 shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the class instructor prior to the absence and if possible, meet the instructor upon the student's return to discuss the material missed" (*Policy Guide* 45).

Constant tardiness will be recorded and considered along with absences in my final assessments.

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, however many times that you like, and may be resubmitted by our last class period. Homework may be revised up until one week after it is returned. Workshops may not be revised.

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 Rottenberg 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. 16 T- Introduction to the course; exercise on five issues/stages. A brief discussion of the essay assignments in relation to each other.

18 H- Introduction to Webmail by Mr. David Carlile. Handouts on summary provided.

23 T- Summary introduced. (Gilligan exercise)

25 H- Summarizing "The Declaration of Independence" (Rottenberg 21-22) by discussing claims and support (Rottenberg 51-56, 71-72, 152-174)

30 T- Claim, support, and warrant analysis: *Griffon News*; "Blessed Mothers," "The Declaration of Independence." Claims of value and warrants (Rottenberg 9-14, 60-63, 199-211).

Feb. 1 T- An examination of claim, support, and warrant: "College Life vs. My Moral Code" (Rottenberg 89-91).

6 T- The "so what" of essay #1: implications (or Part IV of the assignment)--a return to the texts discussed above in order to discuss matters of significance.

8 H- Workshop #1:

13 T- Workshop #2:

15 H- **Essay #1 due**; Essay #2 discussed: defining a debate in your major--brainstorming categories of inquiry and beginning a test case for a class model: choosing an issue (collect and focus).

20 T- Working through a model of essay #2 as a class: establishing a balanced argument of claims and support (order).

22 H- Model continued: identifying warrants and drawing conclusions about them (order, draft).

27 T- Workshop #3:

March 1 H- Workshop #4:

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

8 H- Identifying a thread running through several texts: Read any three from Chapter 16.

Spring Break

20 T- Sharing the claim, support, and warrant links in class on screen; **Midterm Grades Due.**

22 H- Drawing conclusions-- "So what?"

27 T- Workshop #5:

29 H- Workshop #6: ; **Last Week to Drop.**

April 3 T- **Essay #3 due**; the inverted pyramid of revision and the set-up for assignment #4; Joe Schlabotnik revises an essay.

5 H- No Class (conference trip).

10 T- Paragraph and Sentence Revision.

12 H- Workshop #7:

17 T- Workshop #8:

19 H- **Essay #4 due**; The Essay Exam introduced (handouts and discussion).

24 T- Essay Exam: brainstorming class materials for the exam.

26 H- Essay Exam: question-writing workshop; course evaluations.

May 1 H- Essay Exam: Dry run and final questions established.

Final Exam: Tuesday, May 8, 8:30 a.m. -10:20 a.m. in Sprat 211.

English 104 Essay Assignments

Dr. Cadden

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

Models and examples will be provided when appropriate.

All essays are to be accompanied by a brief letter from you to me. Really, a letter--addressed to me and written informally. You will use this letter to do any number of things. Consider a few:

- Explain what went well for you in the essay.
- Explain what didn't go so well for you in the essay.
- Ask questions about things that you are still unsure of even after submitting the essay.
- Point to places to which you want me to pay special attention as I read.
 - Tell me about what you plan to do with this when you have more time for continuation/revision.
 - Tell me general concerns or ask specific questions about the class that you don't want to come to my office to talk about.

Do I expect you to do all of the above each time? No! Tell me what you want to or think you should, but there surely must be something on your mind as you prepare to send this my way. Consider this an exercise in (and an opportunity for) setting the mood with which you want me to read your essay.

Essay #1

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

In Rottenberg there are six debates highlighted throughout the book (see table of contents). I want you to choose one of those debates and analyze the two positions by focusing on the following issues in the following parts:

Part I: In your introduction, provide us with some **context** (preview the place of publication, the author's biography in the book, and features of each essay) and a sense of **your own purpose** (what are you proposing to do here?) You want to avoid beginning with the summaries in Part II.

Part II: Write a critical **summary** of each essay that includes somewhere a statement of each essay's **thesis (claim)** and principal support. 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?

Part III: Identify the **explicit** and **implicit assumptions/warrants** in the essay as they relate to **both audience and subject**. 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, she might discuss the 2nd amendment,

human nature and violence, kids and guns, gangs, the Brady Bill, etc. Does she address these things? Do her statements show some assumptions that she holds about those things? What are they? You needn't disagree with the assumptions, mind; you might agree completely.

Questions to ask about the implied audience: To whom does the writer seem to be speaking? It might be more than one group or type of reader. 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 certain readers might have? Is the reader implied by the text identifiable by race, gender, economic class, political affiliation, religious affiliation, or other marker? Does the writer write *about* a group and does that mean he or she isn't writing *to* that group?

Part IV: So what? Evaluate the assumptions made in and across the essays. Can you draw any conclusions about the assumptions as they compare across the essays? Are there any interesting contrasts or comparisons? 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? Find something **significant** about how any of the assumptions compare regarding audience or subject.

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 construct the debate itself.

For this assignment you will need a few materials: the Missouri Western State College Catalog, 2000-2001; 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 warrants. Even though they are your own crafted positions, what assumptions/warrants are made by each side regarding both their subject(s) and the audiences?

Lastly, 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/warrants behind them in making that decision.

Part I: Define and explain the debate you've found/created.

Part II: Present the positions of each side of this debate in a well-balanced fashion.

Part III: Analyze the assumptions/warrants each side makes about both audience and subject.

Part IV: 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.

Choose three or more essays from Part Three of the book (Chapters 12-19, **with the exception of chapter 16**). You will define and explain the focused issue that you have found that unites these essays and discuss the complexity of the issue yourself.

Part I: Identify the thread or focus that unites the essays you've chosen and put it in the form of a question.

Part II: 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.

Part III: 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 the original with my comments and the latest version.

If you do not submit a complete version of 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 to be determined.

The Essay Exam: Tuesday, May 8, 8:30 a.m. - 10:20 a.m. in Spratt 211