

Missouri Western State College, Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism  
**English 104-90: College Writing & Rhetoric**  
Fall 2002

Instructor: Roger Kirschbaum  
Eng. 104, Section: 90  
Time: Tuesday 6:30 p.m. to 9:20 p.m.  
Room: JGM 104

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### **Course Description:**

In this course we will explore the various ways that perspectives can create multiple worlds of understanding. Using the Vietnam War Era as a focus for our studies, we will read and discuss various texts in a search for various perspectives. We will write in both personal and academic voices in an attempt to convey our understanding or confusion, our criticisms, and our unique ideas and reactions. In this course you will become more familiar with an academically accepted style of writing, be encouraged to think critically, and pushed to question sources, ideas, and the opinions of many different perspectives, including those of your peers. The types of texts that we will come in contact with are historical narratives, political documents, short fiction, poetry, video, music, photography, and journalistic analyses.

It must be stressed that this is not a history course, and that I am not a history teacher. There might be some of you who know more about the conflict in Vietnam than I do. However, I am a specialist in writing. An ideal semester would be one during which we as a group learn more about a turbulent era in our country's history, and you as students of writing become more comfortable with putting your ideas and responses in an academically acceptable written form.

It should also be noted that since we will be discussing war, the most barbaric of human endeavors, some of the materials we will read, hear, and see will be graphic and at times disturbing. Negative responses can be expected and will be addressed empathetically and with the utmost respect. With this being said, I look forward to a semester of growth – for each of you, as well as me.

### **Required Texts and Materials**

Negotiating Differences, eds. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg  
Born on the Fourth of July, Ron Kovic  
The New Century Handbook, Hult & Huckin  
Pocket folder for reading/writing logs

### **Attendance:**

Because class discussion, small group work, and in-class writing will be important components of our class, your regular attendance and participation are required in order for you to be successful in this class. You are allowed to miss a total of one week of class for any reason. Since you are in an evening section of the course, that means you are allowed one absence. For every absence over one, your grade will be lowered; if you miss class twice, I will advise you to drop the course rather than receive a failing grade. Because work in class is an essential part of the course, there will be *no distinction made between explained and unexplained absences*. Missing more than a week of class simply means that you have not completed the necessary course work. The course is intensively interactive, which means that an essential part of the work for the course takes place in class, and cannot be made up outside of class. If you are absent from class, you are responsible for finding out about the work you missed and for whatever assignments are due during the next class period.

With this said, if unusual circumstances (as judged by me) force you to miss more than one class period, I will allow that time to be made up by visiting the Center for Academic Support. For every class period missed over one, two

hours must be spent in the center working on a revision for one of the essays that is required for the course.

The Center is located in the SS/C building. Contact Corla Dawson, the center's writing coordinator, to make an appointment. She can be contacted in LRC 213 or at 271-4531.

### **Grading:**

In order to receive credit for the course, the following must be completed. Failure to complete any one assignment will result in failure of the course.

Four essays of varying lengths	60%
Reading/Writing Responses & Other Assignments	10%
In-Class Presentation	10%
Class Participation	<u>20%</u>
	100%

### **Essays:**

Over the course of the semester you will write four essays, each written in a series of drafts. One of the essays will also involve a research component and an oral component, which will be presented to the class. Due dates are listed on the course schedule and detailed prompts for the essay assignments will be handed out well in advance of the due dates. You will receive my feedback and response to each of your essays as well as responses from your peer groups. I will be talking with you about my assessment of your work throughout the semester, and you should feel free to ask at any time where you stand. Generally, though, you will know how you are doing from comments on your papers. I will let you know immediately if there is a concern about your progress.

### **Reading/Writing Responses:**

Throughout the semester you will be asked to do eight informal writing assignments in response to the reading, writing, and other activities that we are working on in class. Some of this writing will be done in class and some will be assigned as homework. The purpose of this writing will be:

- I. to help you prepare for class discussion**
- II. to encourage you to think critically about your own writing and reading habits**
- III. to give you a record of some of the thinking you have done during this class about your reading and writing.**
- IV. to provide source material for use in your essays**

You should also feel free to complete additional, unassigned responses to the readings we are addressing and the discussions that take place during class. I prefer that your responses be typed, and about one-page (double-spaced) in length. Bring the folder containing your responses to class each day. I will collect and respond to your individual responses from time to time. You are, of course, welcome to turn in your log or specific entries from your log at any time you would like a response. Be sure to keep all of your entries together in the folder.

During the semester, *one* of the eight responses must be to some other text outside of the assigned readings. This "other" text should be a contemporary newspaper or magazine article that deals with the Vietnam conflict that we are discussing or a protest song from that era. Attached to the class syllabus and schedule you will find a list of possible songs that could be used; it is by no means exhaustive. If you choose the protest-song option, and I hope many of you will, you will transcribe the song's lyrics and present them to the class. I have many of the recordings and should be able to help you find the others if you cannot find them on the internet or from some other source. We will play the song in class and use your transcribed lyrics and brief paragraph response to spark discussion.

### **Peer Response Workshops:**

Early in the semester, we will form small groups whose primary responsibilities will be to read and respond to group members' writing. During the peer response session, you will be asked to respond carefully and conscientiously to each group member's writing. For each peer response workshop, you will be responsible for making notes about the feedback your peers offer to you and for keeping track of the feedback you offer to your peers. These written responses must be turned in with any final drafts of essays.

### **Due Dates:**

Dates when assignments are due are listed on the attached course outline. No late work will be accepted. If unusual circumstances will keep you from completing an assignment on time, please speak to me about it immediately.

### **Paper Format:**

All drafts and all essays must be typed, double-spaced, in a twelve point font or the equivalent, with one-inch margins, and *you must turn in all previous drafts (and peer responding notes) along with your final drafts*. Sometimes I may ask that you turn in additional materials with your final draft, such as, for example, source materials. *Final drafts will not be accepted without earlier drafts, and other supporting materials*. Having all your notes and drafts available when I read your final draft allows me to offer you more specific and detailed responses to your work and helps me better understand how you're developing as a writer and reader. Such materials are also an essential safeguard against plagiarism, since they demonstrate your own involvement in developing a final draft.

### **Plagiarism:**

Intentionally using someone's words (or ideas) as your own, without explicit citation, is a serious offense in the university. The use of appropriate sources, citations and documentation will be important topics throughout the class. If you have questions about proper citation and documentation of any sources you are using, please see me.