

English 108 syllabus

Fall 2004, T/Th 11:00-12:15

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Course Description

Welcome to English 108: Writing, Healing, and the Humanities—a sophomore-level composition class utilizing classroom discussion, academic research, and revision in order to consider the real meaning of "health" and "illness" in our lives today. We will look at how interpretations and misunderstandings of terms (e.g., "alternative healing," "traditional medicine," "curing," "healing") distort the reality of what it means to be a human being grappling with life's mysteries: illness, pain, joy, happiness, life, death, suffering, growth and healing. Together we will move through a sequence of integrated reading and writing assignments that focus on the relationships among stories, language, health, illness, life/death/morality/ethics and choice. Our central text, a novel, individually chosen by each student from either the following list or another instructor-approved petition letter, will explore various interpretations of the dilemmas we face in "modern" life situations. We will also do some other readings. **I HIGHLY ENCOURAGE STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND WELCOME STUDENT-DIRECTED DISCUSSION DAYS, esp. EVERY TUESDAY, reading-discussion days.**

In the first unit, "Narrative Representations: The Power of Stories," we will consider the impact of storytelling on self/other/subjective/objective identity. Your assignment for this unit asks you to reflect on the significance stories or possessions play in your own life. The second unit, "Interpreting a Novel," focuses on interpretation, reading, and the value of reflective reading. Each student examines one particular book and focuses on "reading" the text and "writing" about its symbolic, real and perceived layers of meaning. In your essay for this unit, you will research and analyze your novel, engage with additional sources, and write an interpretive novel review essay. In our final unit, "Ethical Dilemmas: What Kind of a (????), do I want/not want to Become?", we will wrestle with the ethical challenge of how perception influences long and short-term professional behavior as it is both understood and practiced in a particular setting. This unit asks you to explore your own goals, beliefs and practices and how you wish to function in a particular professional setting. By taking up these challenging issues, we will be developing our own capacities as thoughtful, attentive, and sophisticated language users who can move among a variety of roles, contexts, and discourses as we examine the culture of health and illness, and their roles in our everyday lives.

Texts & Materials

Successful Writing, Maxine Hairston, Michael Keene

ONE Novel of Democratic Class-Vote Choice:

Access to Reference Handbook

A folder for your reading/writing log

Portfolio Notebook

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. If you are absent from class, you are responsible for making up whatever work you miss and for finding out what assignments are due during the next class period. For every absence over four, your grade will be affected, unless you meet with me to discuss your situation and work out additional e-mail correspondence; if you miss class more than 8 times, your grade will be significantly lowered. You may make up two to three absences by doing additional e-mail and/or Reading/Writing activities. Please see me for additional details if you wish for further information about this option.

Reading/Writing Logs

Throughout the semester you will be asked to do a number of 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 purposes for these writings are:

- *to help you prepare for class discussion
- *to help you work through ideas for your paper assignments
- *to help you think critically about your writing and reading habits
- *to record some of the thinking you have done about your reading and writing.

These writings can be short. One double-spaced typed page is sufficient. You may write longer ones if you wish. There will be one assigned reading/writing log given per week this semester and you are required to complete 10 by the end of 1st of December. You may choose which ones to complete, but you must complete five by October 29th in order to receive full credit. Turn them into me when you complete and I will return promptly. Be sure to keep all of your entries together in a folder or notebook. **IF YOU COMPLETE MORE THAN 10, you may receive extra credit for overall class participation. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KEEPING ALL YOUR WRITTEN r/w LOGS TOGETHER UNTIL THE END OF SEMESTER.** I will collect all December 1st and assign a r/w log grade. I will return this on the last day of course.

Portfolio: Over the course of the semester, you will write three short focused (3-6 page) essays. More specific prompts for the essay assignments will be distributed as noted. You will receive my feedback and response to your essays, but drafts will not receive individual grades. Instead, your portfolio as a whole will be graded at the end of the semester, and you may continue revising any of your essays until the final portfolio is due during exam week. You will also have an opportunity to write a cover letter for your portfolio in which you assess your own progress and performance. 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. If there is a major concern about your progress I will inform you immediately.

Peer Response Work: 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 draft. 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 the final draft. After each peer response session, you will be asked to reflect upon your own roles in the peer response workshop and to reflect upon the roles played by your fellow group members. These reflections, along with your written responses to the drafts of your fellow group members' texts, will help determine your grade for peer response and class participation.

Paper Format: All drafts and all essays must be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, and you must turn in all previous drafts (and peer response notes) along with your final drafts. 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.

Plagiarism: Intentionally using someone's words (or ideas) as your own is a serious offense in the university. If you have questions about proper citation and documentation of any sources you are using, please see me. **YOU WILL RECEIVE AN F FOR THIS COURSE IF I DON'T SEE THE DRAFT PROCESS FOR ALL PAPERS WRITTEN IN THIS CLASS. Since roughly 25% of college students CHEAT today, I WILL NOT GIVE CREDIT TO ANY WORK DONE WITHOUT PROOF THAT YOU ARE DOING YOUR OWN WORK AND ENGAGING IN THE PROCESS of READING, WRITING, and THINKING. SEE ME IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT VERIFYING ORIGINALITY OF YOUR WORK.**

Grade Distribution

In order to receive credit for the course, all of the following must be completed.

Failure to complete any one assignment will result in failure of the course.

Portfolio of 3 Essays & Cover Letter	60%
Reading/Writing Logs (Due Dec. 1st)	20%
Peer Response Group & Class Participation	15%
Individual Presentation	

05%

COURSE CALENDAR

English108-FALL 2004
(Tentative, ONGOING)

Monday, September 7th

Discuss Syllabus/Class Policies

Discuss "The School," Reading Assignment

Assign Weekly r/w log Assignment/Distribute reading assignment

Thursday, September 9th

READING DISCUSSION DAY, **Read Chapter 1 and 2, Successful Writing**

Distribute Day-to-Day Schedule for First Essay Unit