

Missouri Western State University
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
English 104 Sections 9 and 21
Section 9 meets 9:30-10:50 Murphy Hall 104
Section 21 meets 2:30-3:20 Murphy Hall 210
Fall 2008

Instructor: Dr. Karen U. Fulton
Office: Eder Hall 222H
Email: fulton@missouriwestern.edu
Office phone: 816-271-4317
Office hours: 10-11 and 1-3 Monday
11-12 TR; other times by appointment

Required Text: Anderson, Chris and Lex Runciman. *Open Questions*. Boston:
Bedford, 2005

The Course in Brief:

This course asks you to become part of a community engaged in reading, discussing and writing about how we make decisions that define us and that influence many groups and communities to which we belong. This sounds abstract, but the various readings and scenarios in *Open Questions* will offer many particulars. You shall use these readings as material for frequent in-class conversations and as the basis for a variety of writing assignments. And you shall use these assignments as opportunities to more thoroughly understand many of the writing aims and practices that you will adapt for use in courses later.

Grades:

Grades for this course will be determined on three factors:

1. Course participation (20%) Three times this semester you'll be asked to rate your own participation according to specific criteria, the form is posted on the O/P-drive and Web CT (which we will go over today). If I agree with your rating, I'll record it as you've indicated. If I disagree, I'll ask you for more information. If you do not turn in an evaluation within one week of the due date, I'll make my own estimate of your participation.

2. Informal writes (30%) (which I will sometimes refer to as a process journal; it means the same thing). You are required to complete 25 informal writes this semester in order to receive a grade of C on this portion of the course. You are encouraged to do more on your own. In general, these are to be word-processed ½-1 page (definition and example of a page are also on O/P-drive and Web CT) paragraphs that capture some point of your thinking about some aspect of this course. I will frequently provide a prompt for you to begin from. They won't be read for grammar, punctuation, or spelling. They will be read according to what they are saying or trying to say. I'll make some return comment and put a check mark next to your name in the grade book. The informal write must pertain to some aspect of the reading. During the course of the semester, I will collect informal writes on some days and not on others, so that you are getting feedback from me. When I pick up informal writes, I may pick up informal write 2 from one group and 3 from another.

At the end of the semester, you will turn in all your informal writes to me for an overall review. However, if you have missed an informal write during the course of the semester, I will accept only one for the last class day. In short you cannot "save up" your informal writes for the end of the term. You need to keep up with them and be prepared to hand in anyone assigned at any time. You may want to keep them in a binder which you bring to class. Occasionally, I will assign an in-class informal write; obviously this will be handwritten and not word-processed.

If you miss a class when an informal write has been collected, it is your responsibility to email or hand me a word-processed copy no more than two class sessions later than when it was done in order for it to receive credit. All informal writes will be posted on the O/P drive and/or Web CT in advance of when they are

due (except for in-class informal writes).

3. Formal writing assignments (50%) You'll be asked to complete several papers this term. Each will have its own process which might have preliminary assignments. Each will count as roughly equal weights though I reserve the right to reward significant improvement over time. In general, I award grades so that I can sleep at night. If at any time you have concerns about your progress or your grade, you owe it to yourself to come and discuss this with me.

Here, in brief are the formal assignments:

1. The personal-essay assignment (5 pages). Drawing from your own experience and from at least two of the essays we've read and discussed, write an autobiographical assessment of your own childhood. Focus on incidents or themes that explain the complexities and clarities of what was considered right or normal or praiseworthy in the world of your childhood. End by explaining your own current view of all this.

2. The school-as-community essay (6 pages). Drawing from your own experience and from at least two of the essays we've read and discussed, explain your understanding of what would be the ideal college community. What purpose would it serve? What would it value? What would it ask from students and professors? How would these things be explained and embodied in classes? How and where do you see any of these present at this institution?

3. The good-life essay (5 pages). Drawing from at least three of the readings in *Open Questions*, explain the significant arguments about what constitutes the "good life." End your essay by explaining your understandings and the stance to which they lead you. On the basis of this stance, explain what community organization (local or national) you feel inclined to join or investigate further.

4. Final paper in lieu of final exam (to be turned in at the time and date of the final). Return to your school-as-community essay and revise it so that it accurately reflects your views now, at the end of the term, and so that it communicates as clearly as possible.

Grading Criteria:

For Class Participation, Journals, and for Formal Assignments are available in the Fulton ENG 104 folder on the O/P-drive and on Web CT.

Disability Policy: It is the student's responsibility to make the instructor aware of any disability which may interfere with maximum learning. The instructor will work to accommodate the student.

Attendance Policy: More than 2 absences will result in the lowering of a student's grade; more than 3 will result in failure for the course. All missed work must be made up by the student. Under University Policy, if you have 3 unexcused absences (an unexcused absence is one that does not involve a University function), I must report you as FA. This will result in you being dropped from the class and your financial aid being refigured.

Calendar

Week One

Go over syllabus and O/P-drive and Web CT, informal writing #1 distributed.

Read and discuss "Introduction: Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing" (pages 1-15)

Week Two.

Begin personal essay assignment. As time permits, read and discuss from Chapter 1, "Where Are You Coming From?" Specific readings and writings will be assigned from this chapter

Week Three

Continue reading and discussion from Week Two. Discuss strong introductions. Rough draft material (minimum 5 pages—see definition of page) due at the end of the week.

Week Four.

Discuss summarizing versus detailing. Full draft workshop. Personal essay due on 9/21.

Week Five

First class participation evaluation due on Tuesday (9/26) of this week. Begin school-as community assignment. As time permits read and discuss "Too Many Colleges Are Still in Denial About Alcohol Abuse" (begins page 96), "Life Size," (279), "A Clack of Tiny Sparks: Remembrances of a Gay Boyhood" (314), "Claiming an Education" (608), "Passion at Yale" (539), "The Case for Moral Relativism" (619) "Honesty and Honor Codes" (405) "Virtual Virtue: Reflections on Academic Integrity in the Age of the Internet" (415), "The Community of Truth" (627) "The Best Student Ever" (391) and "The Singer Solution to World Poverty" (661)

Week Six

Continue reading and discussion from Week Five.

Week Seven

Writing week. Discuss longer paper as a series of shorter ones. Discuss and compose a forecast outline for Thursday, October 16

Week Eight

Full draft workshop on Tuesday. Discussion of scoring rubric and specifics as determined by professor and by performance in the first essay. Final draft of school-as-community essay due October 23

Week Nine

Begin the good-life essay. Discuss these readings as time permits: "Designer Genes," "The Land Ethic" "On Being a Cripple" "Exile: El Paso, Texas" "The Need for Discernment" "The Casualty" "The Moral Obligations of Living in a Democratic Society" "Welcoming the Stranger" "Serving in Florida" "On Compassion" "Eggs for Sale" "The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Profits" "The Good Doctor" and "Letter from Birmingham Jail"

Second participation evaluation due at the end of the week. (October 30)

Week Ten

Continue reading and discussion from Week Nine.

Week Eleven.

Continue reading and discussion from texts listed in Week Nine

Week Twelve

In class workshops on writing processes, revision, etc. as needed based on class performance thus far. The good life essay due on Thursday, November 20.

Week Thirteen

Return to your school-as-community essay and revise it so that it accurately reflects your views now, at the end of the term, and so that it communicates as clearly as possible. Workshop on December 2.

Week Fourteen

Submit your completed informal writes. Last class participation evaluation. Submit your final revision of the school-as community essay at last class (December 4)

Attend final to receive your informal writes and school-as-community essay back. Attendance is mandatory. Failure to attend the final will result in failure for the course.

Section 09 Final Thursday, December 11, 8:30 am

