

English 108-08: College Writing and Research

Spring 2008

MWF 11-11:50, MH 112

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Welcome

Hey, how's it going. In this class you will study the academic argument. We will learn how the argument cannot exist without a counter-argument, why the art of compromise is so critical today, and how to conduct successful research so these arguments and counter-arguments are valid.

Texts/Required Materials

Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. "They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing." New York: W.W. Norton, 2006.

Quinn, Daniel. "Ishmael." New York: Bantam/Turner, 1992.

Jump/flash drive [\[1\]](#)

Reliable printer and a steady supply of ink cartridges [\[2\]](#)

An open mind/ability to examine alternative viewpoints

Assignment Overview/Grade Breakdown

You will write four main papers over the course of the semester, in addition to other informal writings you will do in and out of class. I will give you a detailed assignment sheet before we begin each task.

Argument/Counter-Argument Paper: 10%

Finding a Common Ground Paper: 10%

Annotated Bibliography: 20%

Ishmael-Related Research Paper: 25%

You will also be graded on your participation in class discussions and the three debates [\[3\]](#) we have scheduled for the semester.

Debate 1: 5%

Debate 2: 10%

Debate 3: 10%

Overall Class Participation: 10% [\[4\]](#)

Absence/Tardiness Policy

In order to improve student learning as well as to achieve compliance with federal financial aid policies, Western has a mandatory attendance policy for all 100- and 200-level courses for Spring 2008.

You will be given an excused absence when acting as an official representative of the university, provided you give prior written verification from the faculty/staff supervisor of the event.

All other absences will be deemed unexcused. The maximum number of unexcused absences allowed for this class before the midterm report, March 19th, is five. Thus, when you have six unexcused absences you will be reported to the Registrar's Office, who will automatically withdraw you from this class. The Financial Aid Office will reduce financial aid as appropriate.

Your first two absences will have no effect on your grade, but on the third, fourth, and fifth I reserve the right to lower your grade by one letter. This applies after mid-term as well. You are responsible for all material covered and assignments given during your absence.

If you know you are going to be absent on a particular date when an assignment is due you must turn it in ahead of time. Any work missed in class cannot be made up if the absence is unexcused.

If you come in after I take attendance you are considered tardy. Every three times you do this it counts as an absence.

Conferences

Occasionally I hold conferences several days before a paper is due in order to give you time to discuss it with me. Conferences are generally 10-15 minutes and held in my office. You are expected to prepare for these by having a full-length, rough draft or extensive outline. **Missing a scheduled conference counts as an absence.**

Communication/Community

Especially in an English class, especially in an English class that focuses on argument, communication is central. We will have a range of discussions, and I look forward to your participation. Good communication encourages community, and hopefully that is what we will form through our creative and critical discussions.

The best way to get in contact with me is through email, though calling during office hours also works pretty well. I check my email Monday through Friday. It is important you ask questions when they arise and stay in steady contact with me. Make sure your university email account is active.

Please remember Missouri Western requires all students to help maintain good conditions for teaching and learning. All students will treat their classmates, teachers, and student assistants with civility and respect, both inside and outside the classroom. Anyone who violates Missouri Western's policy on Civility and Cooperation will be asked to leave my classroom.

Student Disability

Any student who has a disability should contact Missouri Western's special needs coordinator for possible certification of special needs and expert recommendation for assistance. We can discuss class requirements.

Academic Honesty Policy

Academic honesty is required in all academic endeavors. Violations of academic honesty include any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another's work, falsifying documents or academic records or any other fraudulent classroom activity. Cheating and plagiarism are not acceptable. If there is evidence of cheating or plagiarism, you have the burden of showing that the paper has in fact been written by you. You should keep thorough evidence of your writing processes for all papers so that you can meet this burden of proof. You will receive a grade of F (0 points) for any paper/assignment/exam that shows evidence of cheating and/or plagiarism. If you plagiarize a paper, you forfeit the right to revise that paper; if you cheat on an exam, you will not be allowed to retake the exam. Violations of academic honesty will be reported to the Provost of the designated representative on the Academic Honesty Violation Report Forms. Please see the 2007-2008 Student Handbook and Calendar for specific activities identified as violations of this policy and student due process procedure. This handbook is also available online at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/handbook/index.pdf>.

Misc.

- I do not want to see or hear your cell phone, iPod, BlackBerry, or any other electronic during class. It is disruptive to the learning environment, not to mention disrespectful. Keep them off and out of the way. **I reserve the right to mark you absent if you pay more attention to an overpriced gadget as opposed to the glory of education.** If, for some reason, you need to keep your phone on during class, please see me prior to class starting.
- Late work is not accepted.

Inspirational Literature

- “A class learns to teach itself.”^[5]
- Don’t mistake kindness for weakness.
- Writing is a process.

Spring 2008 Schedule for English 108^[6]

Week 1

Monday, 1.14

Agenda: Introduction to class, course goals

Homework: Purchase materials for class, read “Hidden Intellectualism,” pg. 142

Wednesday, 1.16

Agenda: Discuss reading, introduce first assignment

Homework: Think of a topic

Friday, 1.18

Agenda: Examining the Counter-Argument

Homework: Read The Declaration of Independence

Week 2

Monday, 1.21

Class cancelled for MLK Day

Wednesday, 1.23

Agenda: Reading discussion

Homework: Gather sources for your assignment, Read “The Ways we Lie”

Friday, 1.25

Agenda: Asking the question is it okay to “lie” in arguments?

Homework: Prepare a list of possible topics you think worthy of debating

Week 3

Monday, 1.28

Agenda: Examine debating strategies, brainstorm and vote on debate topics

Homework: Prepare to turn in the final draft of your first assignment

Wednesday, 1.30

Agenda: **First assignment due**, assign debate teams and topics

Homework: Meet with your debate group

Friday, 2.1

Agenda: Use class time to compile evidence, discuss strategies for your debate

Homework: Prepare for your debate

Week 4**Monday, 2.4**

Agenda: Begin first debate

Homework: Prepare for your debate if you haven't gone yet

Wednesday, 2.6

Agenda: Complete first debate

Homework: Evaluate your debate partners

Friday, 2.8

Agenda: Reflect on debates, turn in evaluations, introduce second assignment

Homework: Think of a topic

Week 5**Monday, 2.11**

Agenda: Examining common ground

Homework: Read "Empire of Images," pg. 149

Wednesday, 2.13

Agenda: Reading discussion

Homework: Continue working on your draft

Friday, 2.15

Agenda: Finding common ground on controversial issues

Homework: Draft a proposal for your common ground issue

Week 6**Monday, 2.18**

Class cancelled for President's Day

Wednesday, 2.20

Agenda: **Proposal due**, intro to Plato

Homework: Read handout of Plato's "Crito"

Friday, 2.22

Agenda: Reading discussion, the Socratic method

Homework: Prepare to turn in your second assignment

Week 7**Monday, 2.25**

Agenda: **Second assignment due**, brainstorm and vote on ideas for second debate

Homework: None. Enjoy it.

Wednesday, 2.27

Agenda: Assign debate teams and topics

Homework: Meet with your team

Friday, 2.29

Agenda: Use class time to compile evidence, discuss strategies for your debate

Homework: Prepare for your debate

Week 8

Monday, 3.3

Agenda: Begin second debate

Homework: Prepare for your debate if you haven't yet gone

Wednesday, 3.5

Agenda: Complete second debate

Homework: Evaluate your debate partners, read handout of Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant"

Friday, 3.7

Agenda: Turn in evaluations, reading discussion, intro to Ishmael

Homework: Begin reading Ishmael, ch.1-3

Week 9

Classes cancelled for Spring Break

Week 10

Monday, 3.17

Agenda: Begin discussing Ishmael, examining themes

Homework: Continue reading, ch. 4-6

Wednesday, 3.19

Mid-Term

Agenda: Continue discussion on Ishmael, symbolism and metaphors

Homework: Continue reading, ch. 7-9

Friday, 3.21

Agenda: Look at possible arguments in Ishmael, introduce annotated bibliography and final research paper

Homework: Think of a possible topic, ch. 10-11

Week 11

Monday, 3.24

Agenda: Topic/argument discussion

Homework: Continue reading, begin compiling sources for your annotated bibliography, ch.12

Wednesday, 3.26

Agenda: Examining voices in the text, time period

Homework: Continue reading and gathering sources, finish reading Ishmael

Friday, 3.28

Last day to withdraw

Agenda: Expectations for Ishmael

Homework: Have at least 3-4 sources

Week 12

Monday, 3.31

Agenda: Wrap up discussion on Ishmael, reflecting, informal reviews

Homework: Continue compiling sources for your annotated bibliography

Wednesday, 4.2

Agenda: Brainstorm and vote on Ishmael-related debate topics
Homework: Prepare to turn in your annotated bibliography

Friday, 4.4

Agenda: **Annotated Bibliography due**, assign debate topics and teams
Homework: Meet with your debate team

Week 13

Monday, 4.7

Agenda: Use class time to compile evidence, discuss strategies for your debate
Homework: Prepare for your debate

Wednesday, 4.9

Agenda: Begin third debate
Homework: Prepare for your debate if you haven't gone yet

Friday, 4.11

Agenda: Complete third debate
Homework: Continue working on your research paper, read handout of Swift's "A Modest Proposal"

Week 14

Monday, 4.14

Agenda: Assign presentation order, sign up for conferences
Homework: Prepare for your conference

Wednesday, 4.16

Class cancelled for individual conferences with me

Friday, 4.18

Class cancelled for individual conferences with me

Week 15

Monday, 4.21

Agenda: Presentations
Homework: Prepare for your presentation if you haven't yet gone, work on draft

Wednesday, 4.23

Agenda: Presentations
Homework: Prepare for your presentation if you haven't yet gone, work on draft

Friday, 4.25

Agenda: Presentations
Homework: Prepare to turn in your final draft

Week 16

Monday, 4.28

Agenda: **Final paper due, Last day of classes**

April 30 – May 6: Final Exams

[1] For a brief time in the nineties, blaming a computer for lost/corrupted work was acceptable, but it became overused and is now considered hackneyed. Save your work in several places, as this excuse will not be tolerated on due dates.

[2] “My printer ran out of ink” is also no longer an acceptable excuse, nor will it ever be. There are 63 printers on this campus, in addition to an approximate gross of staplers.

[3] If you miss a debate, you must write a 2-3 page paper in order to receive credit.

[4] Class participation includes your critical input to discussions, quiz grades, preparedness for class/conferences, general alertness (read: not sleeping. I reserve the right to mark you absent if you sleep through class), contributions to group work, paying attention to your peers/me, not interrupting, not texting, exercising civility, asking questions which spark intelligent dialogue, and contributing to the greater good.

[5] If this doesn't make sense to you now, ideally it will toward the end of the semester.

[6] Subject to change, though always with ample warning. Keep up with the syllabus in case of inclement weather and class cancellations. This is also available online if you lose it, so that excuse of not knowing what's going on due to Syllabus Loss is also no longer valid.