

English 400-02 Spring 2008

M 7:30 pm

Prof. Sandra Zagarell

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Office Hours W, 3:30-4:30 Fri 12-1:30, and by appointment

The Senior Tutorial

The tutorial is the capstone of your English major. Its objectives are

- 1] to give you the opportunity to explain, to yourself and others, the character of your English major and its significance to you
- 2] to allow you to synthesize and extend the skills, knowledge, and capabilities you have developed by writing a 20-25 page paper of your own design
- 3] to give you the opportunity to pursue sustained independent work
- 4] to allow you to benefit from working in a collaborative environment with peers in which you present your work-in-progress to others, get feedback from them and keep abreast of and respond to their work-in-progress.

I've organized the first part of the semester around consideration of what each of us does when s/he talks and writes about literature or other forms of cultural expression. It's also set up to help you hone your skills in designing a substantial project and conducting research for it. To get at the question of what we talk about when we talk about an English major we'll reflect on how you engage with some fiction that is provocative and, I hope, appealing; on how you explain your English major to yourself; on papers you've written that exemplify something about your critical approach and accomplishment. In conjunction with that, we'll also read recent accounts of methods and approaches that have predominated in the academic study of literature.

At what I hope are helpful points in the semester we'll read Booth, *et al*, The Craft of Research, on designing, researching, drafting, and revising projects such as yours.

For a good deal of the semester, you'll be drafting your essays and working in small groups in which each member's draft is presented/responded to.

Your ideas, questions, concerns, writing processes, posts and drafts, along with the feed-back and other responses you give to others in the tutorial, will constitute the substance of the tutorial. That means a lot of the semester's work will center on what each you is doing, together and on your own. Each small

group will devise the structure that works best for the participants. Everyone in the tutorial will be able to read everyone else's work, and can communicate electronically as they wish and need to even when we're not all meeting face to face. Moreover, everyone will get to hear what everyone else has done: we'll meet as a whole at the end of the semester and each participant will present her/his work.

Required Texts

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams, eds., The Craft of Research, 2nd ed. (Chicago: U Of Chicago Press, 2003). Available at the Oberlin Bookstore.

Articles and fiction on ERes; posts and drafts on BkBd

Requirements

Attendance and preparation.

The tutorial presumes everyone's presence and participation. **Preparation and attendance are mandatory.** Consistent, active, thoughtful, respectful participation as a researcher, writer, reader, and evaluator is required. Your written and oral participation will figure significantly in your final grade for the course.

The final "result" or "product" of the tutorial is the substantial (~20 page) critical essay you will write. Your final grade will be based in large part on that essay. The essay, however, is not a stand-alone "product" and certainly not a last-minute one. It will emerge over the course of study and inquiry, of planning, researching, drafting, and revising in which you will engage this semester. For the final grade, the essay will be considered on its own and also as part of this process. In other words, because the process is critical to your work this semester, your final grade will reflect what you've done as you've designed, researched, drafted and revised your essay and participated in the tutorial as well as the essay itself.

Schedule (a general outline, open to revision)

Feb. 4 Prospecti due by noon on BkBd

In class: Introduction; introductions. Present and discuss prospecti.

Sunday, Feb. 19, by noon. Blackboard Posts (c. 400 words) on the questions you asked about these works of fiction assigned for the coming week, what you did to come to terms with them--and, given that, what you made of them. The main objective of this

assignment is to give you an opportunity to reflect on what you do when you read/interpret/analyze a text; the outcome is interesting but for this assignment secondary.

Feb. 11 Read Jorge Luis Borges: "The Garden of the Forking Paths," "The Library of Babel" (both on ERes)

Sunday, Feb. 17, by noon. Blackboard posts, 1- 1 ½ pp, explaining to yourself and each other how you would characterize your English major: the overarching concepts and questions you have asked, what you have gotten out of it, how you envision your senior project fitting into it and extending it. You may find the two assigned readings for this week helpful in contemplating this.

Feb. 18 Read M. H. Abrams, "The Transformation of English Studies. . . ," Catherine Gallagher, "The History of Literary Criticism," both on ERes.

Feb. 25 Discussion of the English papers each of you has posted on BkD. Discussion format to be decided on Feb. 18.

March 3 What is a project? Why? How? For whom? Read Booth et al, chs 1-4 (we'll talk about chapters 5 and 6 next week, so read them now if you wish).

Sunday, March 9, noon: revised or new prospecti with 1 p annotated bibliography posted on Blackboard

March 10 Library session on research; return to seminar room to discuss The Craft of Research, chapters 5, 6. Meet briefly in your assigned small groups, determine how the groups will proceed, and post protocols on blackboard.

Sunday, March 16, by noon: first 5 pages of draft due on blackboard

March 17 Meet in small groups to discuss drafts

Sunday, March 23, by noon: second 5 pages of draft due on Blackboard

March 24 Small groups meet to discuss first 5 pp of drafts of each person in the group

*** **SPRING BREAK** ***

March 31 Tutorial meets as a whole: assignment: Craft of Research, Section III and Section IV, pp.185-240

Sunday, April 13, by noon: final 10 pp of draft of your paper due on Blackboard

April 14 Small groups meet to discuss the draft of final 10pp of each person in the group

April 21 Group or individual work: we'll decide closer to the date

Sunday, April 27, by noon: full first draft of your paper due on Blackboard

April 28 Small groups meet to discuss drafts (you may need to schedule an additional time to get to everyone's draft)

May 5 Presentations of your work to the tutorial as a whole

May 12 Small groups meet for work on almost-final essays.

Final essay due: May 17, 7 pm

Nota Bene:

Obviously, you'll be working on your essays throughout the semester--drafting, re-writing, etc. You also meet individually with SZ at least once every two weeks. Make sure you set your appointments with me up well in advance.

HONOR CODE:

I take the honor code very seriously, and expect the same of my students.

You should all be familiar with the honor code, which is available at

http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/rules-regs05/06honor_code

It is essential that you write and sign the honor code on all work you hand in for this class, including all Blackboard posts (where you may type your name in). If you have not, I will return the work to you without reading it until you have added the honor code and your signature and returned it to me.