

Rhet 202: Advanced English Composition Spring 2005
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Office Hours: T/R 12:30-1:30 p.m. & by appointment

Course Description

This course is aimed at students with strong writing skills who want to take a closer look at not only what they write, but how they write. We will focus on terms like "rhetoric," "style," "process," "audience," and "diction" to explore how successful writers operate. Think of the classroom as a community of thinkers and authors-- a "discourse community" in which we will participate. This writers' community should foster confidence demonstrate how writing benefits and affects us.

Writing, as a means of discovery, should produce more writing; it should generate questions and produce new paths of investigation. We will engage in writing assignments both in and outside class, and you will have opportunities to revise your work. Format for class sessions will vary and will include discussion, small group work, peer response, workshops, and individual conferences with the instructor. Be prepared to share your writing with others and to bravely voice your reactions, insecurities, inquiries, and suggestions. I will likely add readings and handouts as we progress, and you will take part in short style and rhetorical exercises periodically.

If there are specific issues about writing you'd like to discuss, say so. Since this is a seminar-sized course, I hope to satisfy everyone's requests the best we can as a class. So think about potential writing issues you'd like to cover and bring them to our attention.

Course Requirements and Methods

Writing Projects: You will complete four writing assignments. All must be completed in an acceptable format (double spaced, with original title, heading

info, numbered pages, in 12-point Times New Roman font). We will use MLA style unless you wish to use a format from your own field. Late Assignments are marked down one fraction of a letter grade per day late and are accepted for one week past the due date (no later!). They should be turned in to my office door drop box with the time/date submitted written in pen at the top of page one.

Readings: You should read all assigned pieces in preparation for class and should be prepared to discuss them intelligently. Mark them up, take notes on them, or at the very least make mental notes about what you'd like to contribute to discussion. NOTE: You need only do exercises that accompany readings when I assign them, but you're welcome to do any of them for your benefit.

Workshops: You should be prepared to share your writing and to respond to the writing of your peers during workshops. You'll need to develop ways to express ideas tactfully and respectfully; you'll also need to learn to grow through the comments of others. You should enter into workshops with some predetermined questions about your own work, and you should address others' questions thoughtfully and thoroughly. Workshop is your chance to accomplish great things-- whether that means generating ideas, organizing a draft, receiving feedback, perfecting a specific skill, or polishing your diction. Some workshops involve small group work or partners, and others will operate as a class. Sometimes we will work on specific topics. We should do a lot of talking during workshops, working out composing issues as a supportive group.

Revisions: "Revision" means what it sounds like. When we revise something, we don't simply edit or correct it; we "see it again" and arrive at a new vision of our work. We will work on drafts, and you're encouraged to revise essays beyond our "completion" of them (papers are never really complete). Just include both the original and revision (marked as such) in your midterm or end-of-term portfolio, and I'll

provide further feedback. Revised papers cannot hurt your grade, but please note that I do not formally "grade" revisions. You will, however, be recognized for revising, and it can gently boost your grade much in the way attendance can. It will, most importantly, enhance your writing experience and ability.

Conferences: We will engage in frequent individual conferences. You should play an active role in your conference, coming with questions and concerns you've already pinpointed. This is the best time to voice any issue about writing or the course that you feel warrants one-on-one attention. A missed conference is an absence, and, as always coming prepared enhances your participation grade. If you miss the conference sign-up in class, I post the sheet on my office door. During conference weeks we will not meet for our typical class sessions, but you will continue to work on your writing either by meeting in small groups during class time or working on the end-of-term paper.

Portfolios: I will collect portfolios of your essays twice during the semester (once at midterm and once at semester's end) to have a chance to look at the body of your writing in the course. Portfolios allow me to see drafts, revisions, your work over time-- mainly how you've improved or implemented new things into your writing. I do think about grades in terms of overall improvement. Put all writing done in the course, including exercises and drafts, in your portfolio.

Attendance and Participation: More than two absences (even excused) will affect your grade. This includes conferences and workshops. If you're not prepared for workshop, don't come. Obviously, lively participation and engagement in all aspects of the course are keys to your success.

Student Presentations: Once during the semester, you will lead the class. Presentations will have a specific format; you should retain the handout on the sessions given out the first week of class to refer to when your turn arrives. Your presentations will

include both general information and personal perspectives.

Arriving: Come to class on time. Every two tardies count as an absence. Please inform the class if you have a regular conflict that affects your timely arrival to class.

Honor Code: Oberlin's Honor code applies to all assignments submitted for academic credit. In this course, papers will be the medium for presentation of your work; therefore, we are concerned primarily with plagiarism. You must affirm the Honor Code Pledge for all work submitted for credit. This should appear on each writing project: "I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment" (and sign your name). Please read more extensively about the Honor Code at <http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/rules-regs.html#honor>.

Required Texts available at the bookstore:

- Joseph Williams, *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity & Grace*
- John Trimble, *Writing With Style*
- The work of your peers and course handouts

NOTE: You might also procure a handbook (Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference*, for example).

Grading:

Writing Projects - 60%
Individual Presentations - 20%
Participation - 20%

Rhetoric 202: Working Course Calendar

Textbook Key:

T-# = Trimble+chapter

W-# = Williams+chapter

2/8 Introduction to the course; info sheets

2/10 W-1 (Understanding Style); T-1 (Thinking Well);
Introduction to rhetorical terms and sentence structure

2/15 T-2&8 (Getting Launched and Superstitions);
Workshop

2/17 W-2 (Correctness); Assignment #1 Due

2/22 & 2/24 Individual conferences

3/1 I: W- 3 & 4 (Actions and Characters)

3/3 T-3 & 4 (Openers and Middles); Workshop

3/8 T-5 (Closers); Workshop

3/10 I: W-5 (Cohesion & Coherence); Assignment #2 Due

3/15 & 3/17 Individual conferences

3/22 T-6 (Diction); W-6 (Emphasis)

3/24 Midterm Assessment; Midterm Portfolio Due

3/29 & 3/31 Spring Break

4/5 T-7 (Readability); Workshop

4/7 W-7 & 8 (Concision & Shape); Assignment 3 Due

4/12 & 4/14 Individual conferences

4/19 T-12 & 13 (Punctuation and Quoting)

4/21 W-9 (Elegance)

4/26 Workshop (Group 1)

4/28 Workshop (Group 2)

5/3 Workshop (Group 1)

5/5 Workshop (Group 2)

5/10 Last chance: open session with me to handle
questions, drafts, paper issues.

5/12 Last Week Wind-down: Evaluation & Assessment;
Assignment 4 & Final Portfolios Due