
COLLEGE WRITING – ENG 1111
COURSE THEME: “READING CULTURE”

Instructor: Elizabeth Hopwood

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Office Hours: Tues/Fri 12-1:30 and by appointment

SHORT COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students complete a series of sequenced writing assignments in which they engage with complex texts and ideas. While the primary focus of the course is academic writing, students can expect to write in multiple genres (and perhaps media). They will also conduct library research when appropriate, to reflect critically on their own and their peers’ writing, to revise and edit their writing, to work with and document sources, and to compile a portfolio of their writing. ENGL1111 fulfills NU’s first-year writing requirement.

<http://www.northeastern.edu/writing/first-year-writing/>

LEARNING GOALS

The Writing Program comprises First-Year Writing courses, Advanced Writing in the Disciplines courses, and the Writing Center. The goals below apply to all three sites, but our expectations for how well and to what extent students will accomplish the goals vary in each.

1. Students write both to learn and to communicate what they learn.
2. Students negotiate their own writing goals and audience expectations regarding conventions of genre, medium, and situation.
3. Students formulate and articulate a stance through and in their writing.
4. Students revise their writing using responses from others, including peers, consultants, and teachers.
5. Students generate and pursue lines of inquiry and search, collect, and select sources appropriate to their writing projects.
6. Students effectively use and appropriately cite sources in their writing.
7. Students explore and represent their experiences, perspectives, and ideas in conversation with others.
8. Students use multiple forms of evidence to support their claims, ideas, and arguments.
9. Students practice critical reading strategies.
10. Students provide revision-based response to their peers.
11. Students reflect on their writing processes and self-assess as writers.

Visit the Writing Program website for more information about Writing Program policies (transfer credit, placement, grading, etc): <http://www.northeastern.edu/writing/writing-program-policies/>

REQUIRED TEXT

Ways of Reading, 9th edition. Eds. David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky (*If purchasing from outside NEU bookstore, be sure to buy the 9th edition only*)

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

In this course, you will be reading and writing about culture. Not Culture, something you get if you go to the museum or a concert on Sunday, but culture—the images, words, and sounds that pervade our lives and organize and represent our common experiences. This course invites your reflection on the ways culture “works” in and through the lives of individual consumers. Most of our readings ask you to imagine that you are the product of your culture; that your ideas, feelings, and actions, your ways of thinking and being, are constructed for you by a large, organized, pervasive, and historical force (sometimes called history, sometimes called culture, sometimes called ideology). You don’t feel this to be the case, but that is part of the power of culture, or so the argument goes. These forces hide themselves. They lead you to believe that their constructions are naturally, inevitably there, that things are the way they are because that is just “the ways things are.” The assignments in this sequence ask you to red against your common sense. You will be expected to try on the role of the critic—to see how and where it might be useful to recognize complex motives in ordinary expressions. The authors in this sequence all write as though, through great effort, they could step outside culture to see and criticize its workings. The assignments in this course will ask you both to reflect on this type of criticism and to participate in it.

Workload

The subject of this course is writing. One of the goals in this course is to arrange your work to highlight your relationship as a writer to the past and to the words of others (to history and to culture). This is the reason for the assigned readings, and this is the primary role reading will play in this course. You will be asked to read a series of assigned texts and to write in response to what you have read. I want to foreground the ways in which your writing takes place in relation to the writing of others. One of my goals is to make that relationship interesting, surprising, and productive. You might think of our course as a studio course, like a course in painting or sculpture or composition. You will be practicing your art by working on specific projects. I will be looking over your shoulder, monitoring your progress, and assessing the work you gather together.

In this sense, this course is one where you practice writing. You can expect to write regularly, at least one draft or short response each week. You will need to develop the habits and the discipline of a writer. You will need a regular schedule, a regular place and time for writing. There is nothing fancy about this. You need to learn to organize your time so that there is time for writing, so that it becomes part of a routine.

You’ll need to learn to work quickly but also to keep your attention inside sentences for hours at a time. This requires discipline, a kind of physical training I can best describe as athletic. Writers need to be able to sit in one place and to think inside of sentences for long periods of time. You’ll have to set your own goals and work schedule. I suggest four hours a week in two two-hour sessions. These are writing times, when you’ll be sitting in one place and working closely with words, yours and others’. You should do nothing else during these sessions although you may find you need some trial and error before you find your most productive time and place.

Consult the schedule at the end of this syllabus early and often in order to gauge workload so that you can plan your reading and writing time accordingly, particularly if you anticipate excused absences (student athletes etc.).

Course Readings

I can insist on this kind of care and attention, but I can’t teach it. I can, however, teach you ways of working on your writing. One of the most important skills I can teach in a writing class is reading—the ability to read closely and critically. But we will keep your writing as the focus of critical attention. We will ask what your writing might say about our culture, about language, etc.

Revisions

The essential work of any writing course is revision. There is more to writing than first thoughts, first drafts, and first pages. This is not a course where you dash off a 5-page paper the night before it is due and never look at it

again. A writer learns most by returning to his or her work to see what it does and doesn't do, by taking time with a project and seeing where it might lead. This class is a place where you will practice writing, but it is also a place where the writing is expected to change. You will be writing regularly, but I will also be asking you to review—to step outside your writing, to see what it might represent, and to make changes.

This course is organized so that you will work a single essay through several drafts; each essay will be part of a larger project. When I assess your writing, I will be looking primarily at the progress from draft to draft.

Schedule and Routines

I have planned for fourteen weeks and divided the semester into three units, each with a particular focus.

You should plan to read each assigned reading twice before we begin to discuss it in class. The first time through you should read quickly, to get a general sense of what the writer is doing, what the piece is about. Then you should read through a second time, this time working more closely and deliberately with the text, focusing on those sections that seem difficult or puzzling or mysterious. You should read with a pen or pencil, marking the text in a way that will help you when you go back to it and when we discuss it in class. I'll provide an annotation system that we'll follow for at least the first essay, so that you can get into the habit of annotation.

Each week you will write one essay and/or revise one essay, both as stages in a larger project. Keep everything you write for this class in a Google Doc folder (more on Google Docs below) that is shared with me.

I will provide comments on your work and we will also meet regularly in small groups. If your work seems thoughtless or quickly done, I will notice. I have taught writing for many years and I know when writers are working hard and when they are fooling around. I will tell you if I think you are fooling around. I will expect you to consistently and successfully proofread all papers, including first drafts, and to use MLA formatting.

Attendance

Writing Programs policy requires regular attendance at class meetings. Because so much of the work you do for your unit papers depend on class lecture, short writing practice, peer review, and peer workshop, attendance is necessary in order to pass both the individual units and the course as a whole. Students have the right to a limited number of excused absences due to a religious observance, illness, a death in the family, required participation in athletic events, or other equally serious and unavoidable life circumstances. These will not count as cuts if a student can provide a doctor's note or prescription, a note from a coach, or other similar written evidence.

A missed class, excused or not, does not exempt a student from the assigned work for that day.

Three or more absences will lower your overall class participation grade (10% of final course grade) by one half step for each absence beyond two (B⇒B-). If an absence is unavoidable or needs to be excused, please contact me as soon as possible so we can make appropriate arrangements. If you miss class or part of class, it is your responsibility to find out what you have missed.

Three tardies (up to fifteen minutes after the start of class) will count as an absence.

If you miss 6 or more classes, you will automatically receive an F for class participation, no questions asked.

It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the number of absences and tardies accrued, i.e., I will not email you to alert you of your accrued absences.

Because writing classes are conducted workshop-style, the student who misses too many class meetings is not completing the work of the class. In that case I may ask the student to withdraw rather than fail the course.

Please take a few moments to obtain three email addresses from fellow classmates. In the event of an absence, plan on emailing them as well as me in order to find out what you've missed.

Participation

Participation is more than attendance. Because this class functions as a workshop, your active participation is essential to its effectiveness. Your participation grade consists of being in class and prepared for the work of the class. It also consists of completing in-class assignments, working cooperatively in groups and contributing to class discussion.

The extent to which this class is productive, educational, and interesting to you and your classmates is dependent upon the insights, questions, and responses of all of us—thus, your presence and active participation will be key. Although I will be doing some lecturing, the focus of our time together will be based in discussion, group work, and in-class writing exercises (both individual and collaborative). In-class writing exercises and prompts should help you develop and practice various writing techniques in a low-stress, low-stakes environment. Expect to write often (and sometimes quickly), to share your writings with your classmates, and to talk about your classmates' writing in productive, helpful ways. Each unit paper will go through multiple stages and drafts before grading. We will use class time to talk about your responses to the readings, to work on our writing, and to share writing with one another. I will regularly reproduce student essays either in whole or in portions for us to use for class discussion.

Any observed “distracted” behavior: nodding off, head on the desk, furtive texting or non-class-related Internet will equal an absence for that day's class. If you find yourself feeling ill, exhausted, or embroiled in a Facebook Emergency (and yes, that has happened), it would behoove you to take one of your allotted absences, or to excuse yourself from class while you take care of whatever you need to care take of. In other words: when you're sitting in the classroom, you should be prepared to work **ONLY** on our assignments.

Technology

This class will be paperless; plan on bringing a laptop to class if you are able. If you do not own a laptop or prefer to draft on paper, you should be prepared to do so with notebook/all your course notes and work. You may use paper for drafting and peer review, but everything/anything turned in to me must be done electronically.

We will use Google Docs (now called Google Drive) to share unit and final papers with one another. Please familiarize yourself with how to use Google Docs (a how-to handout will be posted on Blackboard). Note that you will need a Google account to access Google docs (but will not need a Gmail account).

I will use your husky email addresses to contact you via email, so check your accounts regularly.

Digital Etiquette

Please turn the volume off your cellphone and/or other devices (iPods, etc) before you enter the classroom. I understand that your phones connect you with your friends and family, but the classroom should be a place apart, however briefly, from the outside world. You will learn more, in short, if you can concentrate on the course while you're in the course.

You should not use a laptop during class to follow a game, check your friends' statuses on Facebook, play Farmville, IM, respond to email, etc. Such activities not only distract you (meaning you will be less able to participate meaningfully in the class' conversations), they also distract anyone around or behind you. If you often seem distracted by what's on your or someone else's screen, I will ask you to put your laptop away for either the class day or for the duration of the course.

We may occasionally meet in a computer lab in Holmes (English Department) to work on your writing. You should use this time to stay on track with our course's significant writing load. During such labs, you *should not*:

1. Check your email (or Facebook),
2. Work on writing from another class,
3. Twiddle your thumbs. Etc.
4. Study/do work for other classes

There will always be a writing assignment or peer review to work on.

In short, use laptops/technology responsibly or not at all.

Late work

Late papers are subject to a penalty of one half-step letter grade (A to an A-) for each day that they are late. Papers and drafts that are handed in more than seven days after original due date will not be accepted and will receive an F. Because this is a writing workshop, all drafts must be **complete** (however "rough") and submitted on the designated due date. Failure to produce a **completed draft** on the assigned due date will result in a loss of one half-step letter grade for each day it is late/incomplete (A to an A-). Failure to produce a draft will result in a loss of 25 points on your final paper.

If you are absent due to illness the day your draft is due, you will have 24 hours to share with me your working draft. You will receive unit assignments well in advance of the due dates and should plan on beginning work on them immediately. Thus, even if you are sick the day before a paper is due, you should already have substantial work done on it.

Communication

Please be in touch with me if you have questions or concerns about the course material. It is best to be in touch with me well in advance of deadlines. However, I will not be available to answer questions about your paper or revisions on the day or night before it is due, so plan accordingly. I will make every attempt to answer emails within 24 hours of receiving them (weekdays) and 48 hours (weekends).

Writing Groups

I will divide the class into groups of 3-4. Few writers work alone; they rely on friends and colleagues to listen to ideas, to read drafts, and to help with copyediting. You will be responsible for commenting on one group member's

essay or draft each week. Your groups will occasionally meet with me in small group tutorials to discuss your progress.

Grade Breakdown

Unit 1 – 25%

Unit 2 – 25%

Unit 3 – 25%

Participation -10%

Retrospective – 15%

Grading Policy

All grades issued by the instructor are final and non-negotiable.

A student must receive a grade of C or better in order to pass all required writing courses in the Department of English (C is required for Graduation). Any student earning a C- or lower will need to repeat the course in order to fulfill the writing requirement.

Blackboard

Check Blackboard daily for announcements, assignments, and handouts. Syllabi, unit assignments, grading criteria, and pertinent readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Academic Honesty

Northeastern University is committed to the principles of intellectual honesty and integrity and to respecting intellectual property. All members of the Northeastern community are expected to maintain complete honesty in all academic work, presenting only that which is their own work on tests and assignments. In required writing classes, this definition of plagiarism applies not only to borrowing whole documents (other students' papers, internet articles, published articles) but also to borrowing parts of another's work without proper acknowledgment and proper paraphrasing or quotation. In these courses, students will receive instruction on using sources properly as well as feedback from instructors and peers. They will also be directed to important resources on avoiding plagiarism.

If instructors determine that an incidence of plagiarism is intentional, they consult a Writing Program administrator. Based upon the severity of the infraction, the student may a) fail the assignment, b) fail the course, c) be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution, or d) any combination of these. Students may be failed regardless of whether the matter has been sent to OSCCR and regardless of that office's finding.

Other Support

If you have specific physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know immediately so that we can work together to appropriately meet your learning needs. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Disability Resource Center, 20 Dodge Hall (x2675)

Writing Center

The Northeastern University Writing Center is located in 412 Holmes (x4549; for current hours see <http://www.northeastern.edu/english/writing-center/>) in the English Department and offers free and friendly help for any level writer, including help with reading complex texts, conceptualizing a writing project, refining your writing process (i.e., planning, researching, organization, drafting, revising, and editing), and using sources effectively. You can receive feedback face-to-face during regular hours or via email/online response. Questions about the Writing Center can be directed to Professor Neal Lerner <n.lerner@neu.edu>, Writing Center Director.

ADA

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA 1990) Northeastern University seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities. If you will need accommodations in this class, please contact the Disability Resource Center (20 Dodge Hall X2675, TTY X2730) at your earliest convenience to ensure that arrangements will be made.

Course Assignments and Calendar Fall 2012
subject to change, but always with notice

Week 1 Ways of Writing & Reading

Fri. 9/7 Introduction to course

HM: Read and annotate Introduction to *W/R* p. 1-21

Week 2 Social Spaces, Contact Zones & Writing the Autoethnography

Tues. 9/11 Discussion of *W/R* Introduction

HM: Read and annotate “Arts of the Contact Zone” by Mary Louise Pratt p. 485-498

“I use this term [contact zone] to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today. Eventually I will use the term to reconsider the models of community that many of us rely on in teaching and theorizing and that are under challenge today” [from *Profession* 91]

Questions for a Second Reading #1 (p. 498) due on BB

Fri. 9/14 Class discussion on “Arts of the Contact Zone”

HM: Draft of Unit 1 (must be a complete draft)

Week 3

Tues. 9/18 Unit 1 draft due. Revise Unit 1 draft

Fri. 9/21 Revise Unit 1 draft

Week 4 “Poking Holes in Cultural Pieties”: Reading and Writing the Polemic

Tues. 9/25 Revise Unit 1 draft

Fri. 9/28 Unit 1 final portfolio due by classtime

HM: Read and annotate “Reader Advisory” and “Love’s Labors” by Laura Kipnis (390-412)

“Might we entertain the possibility that posing philosophical questions isn’t restricted to university campuses and learned tomes, that maybe it’s something everyone does in the course of everyday life—if not always in an entirely knowing fashion? If adultery is more of a critical practice than a

critical theory, well, acting out *is* what happens when knowledge or consciousness about something is foreclosed.” [From *Against Love: A Polemic*]

Questions for a Second Reading #2 p. 412 due on BB

Week 5

Tues. 10/2 Class discussion on “Love’s Labors”

Fri. 10/5 HM: Draft of Unit 2 (must be complete)
Unit 2 draft due. Revise Unit 2 draft

Week 6

Tues. 10/9 Revise Unit 2 draft

Fri. 10/12 Revise Unit 2 draft

Week 7

Tues. 10/16 Revise Unit 2 draft

Fri. 10/19 Revise Unit 2 draft

Week 8

Perspectives on Food, Eating, and Culture: Writing the Food Cultural Genealogy

Tues. 10/23 Revise Unit 2 draft

Fri. 10/26 Unit 2 final portfolio due by class time

HM: Read and Annotate “Aunt Jemima Explained: The Old South, the Absent Mistress, and the Slave in a Box” by Maurice M. Manring (on Blackboard)

“Aunt Jemima’s race remains inseparable from the message white females completed when they read her ads. She could not have been white. A white Aunt Jemima (provided she didn’t quit domestic service for other work) could have liberated white housewives from the kitchen, but she could not have accentuated their whiteness and femininity as did the plantation mammy. Aunt Jemima was persuasive because she was a black servant, in an age when perpetual human bondage existed, in a place legendary for its good food and white leisure.” [From “Aunt Jemima Explained” 38]

Response due on BB to the following:

Food and eating are fundamental to cultural processes of sociability, identity-formation, and distinction. Issues of what to eat, when to eat, how much to eat, and where to eat are central to the forming of bodies and the distribution of power. Manring’s essay traces the cultural history of an everyday product—perhaps one that you use or haven’t thought twice about before. What is Manring’s main argument and how does he put together various pieces of cultural lore and history in order to make his argument? Provide quotes as evidence to your ideas. Aunt Jemima seems to occupy a particularly complicated place within American lore and food culture. So let’s think about American food culture for a while. What do you think American food is? Is there such a thing? Or is ‘eating American’ more about a set of practices than a set of foods? What makes some foods ‘good’, ‘bad’ or ‘taboo’? Is ‘disgust’ instinctual or socially determined? How do eating practices change over time and how are cultural distinctions between food practices changing today? How is diet linked to gender and power? How is our collective history shaped by the foods we eat (and the ways in which they are advertised)?

Week 9

Tues. 10/30 Class discussion of “Aunt Jemima Explained”
HM: Draft of Unit 3 (must be complete)

Fri. 11/2 Unit 3 draft due. Revise Unit 3 draft.

Week 10

Tues. 11/6 Revise Unit 3 draft

Fri. 11/9 Revise Unit 3 draft

Week 11

Tues. 11/13 Revise Unit 3 draft

Fri. 11/16 Revise Unit 3 draft

Week 12

Tues. 11/20 Revise Unit 3 draft

Week 13 Making Connections: The Commonplace Book

Tues. 11/27 Unit 3 final portfolio due by class time

HM: Begin Retrospective Project: The Commonplace Book

Fri. 11/30 Revise Retrospective

Week 14

Tues. 12/4 Revise Retrospective. Evaluations.

Final Retrospective Due Thursday, 12/6 by noon.

MLA GENERAL GUIDELINES

For full guidelines, you should of course refer to the *MLA Handbook*.

Citations

Some examples of how to cite sources in the body of the paper:

When the author's name is in the sentence:

Jeffrey Jones states that “good times they are a’coming” (89).

When the author's name is not in the sentence:

It has been stated that good times are coming (Jones 89).

When more than one work by the same author are cited:

One assertion is that his back was “hairy” (Solo-Organa, That Hairy Thing 84) - so hirsute, in fact, that he was likened to “a walking carpet” (Solo-Organa, Second Fiddle to Chewbacca 189).

Two or more authors:

The closed-universe theory has been called into question (Rifle and Hartley 346-69).

No author listed:

The zoo was apparently enclosed in a large drape to emulate night (Tralfamadore in Focus 57).

Works Cited Page

All entries should be double-spaced and listed in alphabetical order by the author's last name. Ex:

Kipnis, Laura. “Love’s Labors.” *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers*, 9th ed. Eds. Donald Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky. Boston: Bedford, 2011. 390-412.

Be sure to read, bookmark, and use the following.

General Formatting Guidelines

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

<http://www.writinghelp-central.com/mla-format-rules.html>

http://www.csus.edu/owl/index/mla/mla_format.htm

Citation Guidelines

<http://www.swccd.edu/~library/Pdfs/MLA6thEd.pdf>