

ENGLISH 207: INTERMEDIATE WRITING (FALL 2008)

Self and Community in a New Media Culture

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REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- *Readings:* There is no mandatory textbook for this course. Instead, the readings from the course will be drawn from a variety of print and digital sources. Most of these sources will be available for download from the Internet or BGSU's E-Reserve. You are required to print and bring copies of the readings being discussed each class period.
- *E-mail:* You must have an active BGnet e-mail account that you check regularly.
- *Digital Storage:* You should purchase a flash drive for saving your work each class period and at least one rewritable CD for submitting an electronic version of your final writing portfolio.
- *Print Storage:* You should purchase a 3-ring binder, folio, album, or other appropriate apparatus for displaying the print version of your final writing portfolio.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

It is highly recommended that you obtain a college-level dictionary and an up-to-date writer's handbook, since these are important reference tools for any writer, in any writing environment. These items may be purchased at reasonable prices from Amazon.com, SBX or the BGSU Bookstore and may also be checked out from the Jerome Library.

COURSE GOALS

The main emphasis of this course will be to develop your mastery of the rhetorical principles of planning, executing, and revising prose, with a particular focus on analytical writing. This course will ask you to read and analyze a variety of texts with an eye toward making logical connections to your own area(s) of interest, whether personal, academic, civic, professional, or all of the above. Additionally, my objectives in this course will be:

- To develop your process-oriented composition skills in both print and digital formats
- To deepen your understanding of and appreciation for a variety of genres and modes of composition
- To encourage your critical thinking about the relationships between self and community, as well as how those relationships are mediated by new media technologies
- To expand your conceptions of what "counts" as writing, particularly analytical writing
- To encourage your participation in a discourse community that is of interest to you (in other words, to help you join the conversation)
- To assist you in developing a body of work that is relevant to your interests and aspirations.

DESCRIPTION OF GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Weblog Project: This semester-long project will involve you in the analysis, conceptualization, construction, and maintenance of your own weblog. This project should be tailored toward your own personal or professional interests as you consider the public conversations you would like to join. The project underscores writing as being simultaneously a personal and social activity and will ask you to consider the extent to which new media technologies may encourage both self-reflection and social commentary.

Critical Autobiography: This assignment will ask you to craft a personal essay that analyzes the ways in which a particular experience or series of experiences contributed to your present interest, understanding, perception, or attitude on a topic of your choosing. The "critical" aspect of this assignment is crucial – this personal essay will not be a mere recounting of events, but will instead

analyze how those experiences have shaped your identity and, by extension, your participation in various communities.

Writing toward the Workplace Project: This series of writing tasks will ask you to build on the self-analysis begun in the autobiography assignment. Specifically, this project will ask you to use your personal values as a starting point for aligning yourself with the values and vision of a particular organization. After crafting a personal mission statement, you will research an organization of your choosing and will ultimately compose a detailed letter of introduction to a specific individual within that organization. You are encouraged to mail or e-mail the final draft of your letter.

Researched Argument: This assignment will ask you to choose a current controversy within a community to which you belong (or to which you wish to belong in the future) and develop a strong analytical stance within that controversy. Options may include arguing a position on the controversy, speculating about the possible causes for a trend or phenomenon relevant to the community, or proposing a solution to a problem within the community. You will conduct extensive research in support of your position and will present your argument in a format appropriate to your chosen audience and purpose. You will also be asked to present your findings to the class using an appropriate presentation method (such as Powerpoint).

Critical Parody: This assignment will ask you to craft a critical parody or other piece of humor for the purpose of critiquing a person, organization, trend, event, or other topic of your choosing. This project will coincide with the 2008 Election, so topics related to the election or democracy are especially encouraged, though not required. The purpose of the assignment is to deepen your understanding of how composition strategies such as parody can be used as powerful tools for dispatching social commentary and public argument.

Remix Project: Your final graded assignment will ask you to “remix” – or provide an alternate version – of one of the assignments you’ve done earlier in the term. You may choose to create an alternate version of your autobiography, researched argument, or parody piece. Options may include turning one of your more traditional, print-based projects into a photo essay or iMovie project. This assignment underscores the complex relationship between image, text, and message, while also reinforcing the rhetorical complexity of revising an existing message for a new format and/or audience.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Your grade in this course will be based on your performance in the following major areas:

- I. **Attendance, Participation, and Daily Work** (worth 20% of your grade) – 100 points
- II. **Personalized Writing Portfolio** (worth 80% of your grade) – 400 points. Your portfolio will be comprised of the following graded assignments:
 - a. Weblog Project (60 points – semester-long project)
 - b. Critical Autobiography (70 points)
 - c. Writing Toward the Workplace Project (60 points)
 - d. Researched Argument (70 points)
 - e. Critical Parody (70 points)
 - f. Multimedia Revision Project (70 points)

Total Possible Points: 500

450-500 points = A

400-449 points = B

350-399 points = C
300-349 points = D
Less than 300 = F

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY

You will be allowed *two* “free” absences; after that, each absence will result in a 20-point deduction from your attendance/participation score. More than three absences will result in a conference with me to discuss your class standing; students with six or more absences will not pass the course. Similarly, failure to participate actively in class discussions/activities may result in a 10-point deduction per class period. For this class, “active participation” involves coming to class with all materials, being prepared to discuss readings and/or homework, offering thoughtful contributions to class discussion and workshops, and fully utilizing studio time to work on course projects.

MISSING/LATE WORK POLICY

Each missing informal blog response (on the course blog) or other ungraded assignment will result in a 10-point deduction from your daily work points. Each missing presentation (including Studio Review presentations) will result in a 20-point deduction. Work is due on the designated due date, and late work will not be accepted, except in the event of a documented medical emergency. If you anticipate problems meeting a draft deadline, then please discuss it with me ahead of time so that we can make alternate arrangements.

SUBMITTING YOUR FINAL PORTFOLIO

You should submit your final portfolios in a physical format *and* an electronic format (i.e., all files burned to a CD with your name clearly written on it). For the physical version, you may present your materials in a standard 3-ring binder with dividers *or* in an approved alternate format (see me for approval).

ADVANCED DRAFTS AND STUDIO REVIEW

I will assign a preliminary grade to the draft you bring to Studio Review (our whole-class peer review sessions). This draft should not be considered a “first” or “rough” draft, but should be the product of your careful drafting and revision. If you need help in your early drafting process, then please visit me during my office hours or make an appointment and I will be happy to help you; you may also wish to form a small writing group with other members of the class. The preliminary grade you receive on your advanced draft will be accompanied by my comments and suggestions for revision, should you choose to revise your project for a higher grade. If you do choose to revise a project for a higher grade, you may turn in your revised final draft at any point during the semester. You must also submit a “revision summary” form with your revised draft (we will discuss this in class).

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE AND DECORUM

Differing opinions will likely emerge during class, and while you are *not* required to agree with me or your peers, you *are* expected to be respectful and courteous to me, your peers, and yourself during these discussions. You should feel free to express your alternate perspectives at any time, but be sure to keep your focus on the ISSUE at hand and not on the PERSON you may be disagreeing with. Sexist, racist, homophobic, or otherwise discriminatory language will not be tolerated. Additionally, as a courtesy to others in the room, please turn off all cell phones and electronic devices before class begins.

OFFICE HOURS AND CONFERENCES

My office hours for Fall 2008 are Tuesdays from 3-4 p.m., and by appointment. I encourage you to visit me during my office hour and to make appointments with me to discuss your writing progress or any other concerns you may have about the course. Please come to your conference with copies of your work and a clear sense of what you would like to cover during our meeting. Be sure to make note of your conference time, as well - *a missed conference will count as an absence.*

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form. In the event that you are caught violating the University's Academic Honesty policy (see your BGSU Student Handbook under "Codes of Conduct," or visit http://www.bgsu.edu/catalog/Acad_policies/Acad_policies2.html), I will immediately recommend that you be withdrawn from the course and assigned a grade of "WF." Cheating is not worth the risk. You are an intelligent person capable of submitting original material, and I expect nothing less.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

It is university policy to provide reasonable accommodations for students affected by documented disabilities. If you need such an accommodation, then please talk to me after class and contact Disability Services at (419) 372-8495, 413 South Hall.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: This schedule is tentative – I reserve the right to adjust due dates, class activities, and homework assignments as needed. In the event that significant changes are made, I will provide you with an updated schedule.

Readings are available on the course E-Reserve site, unless otherwise indicated. The E-Reserve Web site can be accessed by clicking “Electronic Reserves” at <https://reserve.bgsu.edu>. Search for Intermediate Writing and select our course. The course password is **207F08ED22** (that’s two zero seven F zero eight E D two two). The password is not case sensitive. However, it is sensitive to the difference between the number zero and the letter "O".

	Assignment Due	In Class Activities	Homework for next class
Tues., 8/26	None	Introductions to course and each other; review syllabus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review syllabus ✓ Think about how you might tailor your portfolio to your own major/interests/career ✓ Read Mary Pipher’s “Blogs—A Revolutionary New Tool” ✓ Read Penelope Trunk’s “Blogs ‘essential’ to a good career” (I will provide link) ✓ Bring 3 personal artifacts to the next class.
Thurs., 8/28	None	Set up class blog; introduce individual blog project; identity brainstorming activity; begin blog analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Finalize a topic, audience, and purpose for your individual blog. ✓ Craft an entry (approx. 300 words) that will serve as an introduction to your blog readers ✓ Read William Zinsser, “Writing About Yourself: The Memoir” ✓ Read Phillip Lopate, “The Personal Essay and the First-Person Character”
Tues., 9/2	First individual blog entry	Studio Review – ground rules, purpose, etc. Focus on blog intros. Introduce Critical Autobiography project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read John Trimbur, “Writing Memoir” ✓ Read Gary Soto, “Black Hair” ✓ Read Marian Wright Edelman, “A Family Legacy” ✓ Begin drafting your critical autobiography. Be prepared to continue working on your draft during the next class.
Thurs., 9/4	None	Discuss readings. Strategies for critical autobiography. In-class drafting time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read Ali Tariq, “An Atheist Childhood,” followed by selections on visual design ✓ Read “3 Things You Need to Know about Using Dialogue in Non-Fiction (I will provide link) ✓ Continue drafting your critical autobiography. Consider adding images or other media to enhance your narrative. Be prepared to work on your draft during the next class.
Tues., 9/9	None	Discuss readings. Strategies for improving narrative writing. In-class drafting and workshop time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Finish a strong, grade-worthy draft of your critical autobiography. Be prepared to share your work during Studio Review.
Thurs., 9/11	CRITICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY	Studio Review. Introduce Writing toward the Workplace project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read guides for writing mission statements (I will provide links) ✓ Craft a personal mission statement. Be prepared to share your work during the next class.
Tues., 9/16	Personal mission statement	Brief Studio Review. Aligning personal values with community values. Search for organizations. Guide to institutional profiles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Based on what you found in your search, craft an institutional profile of an organization that is of interest to you. ✓ Reading TBA
Thurs., 9/18	None	The genre of letters of introduction; tailoring your message; importance of design. In-class drafting time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Finish a strong, grade-worthy draft of your mission statement, institutional profile, and letter of intent. Be prepared to share these items during Studio Review.

Tues., 9/23	WRITING/WORKPLACE PROJECT	Studio Review. Introduce researched argument assignment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Begin researching controversies within a community of interest to you. Make a list of these controversies and bring them to the next class. ✓ Reading TBA
Thurs., 9/25	None	Finding a viable topic. Types of arguments. Developing a proposal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Draft your research proposal and bring it to the next class.
Tues., 9/30	Research proposal	Workshop research proposals. Mini-conferences to approve research topics and offer guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Once you have received feedback from me and your peers, begin researching and drafting your research essay. Remember to gear your argument toward a specific audience and purpose. ✓ Reading TBA
Thurs., 10/2	None	Online research strategies; research databases; in-class research time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue researching and drafting your argument. ✓ Reading TBA
Tues., 10/7	None	Tips on organization, paragraph development, source integration. Form and content – appropriate media for arguments. Methods for presenting research arguments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue researching and drafting your argument. Be sure to choose a format appropriate to your chosen audience and purpose. ✓ Begin crafting your presentation. ✓ Be prepared to work on your draft during the next class period
Thurs., 10/9	NO CLASS – FALL BREAK		
Tues., 10/14	None	Introductions and conclusions. In-class drafting time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Finish a strong, grade-worthy draft of your researched argument. ✓ Finish a short “poster” presentation of your research for Studio Review.
Thurs., 10/16	RESEARCHED ARGUMENT	Studio Review of “poster” presentations. Introduce parody assignment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read Andrea Lunsford and John Ruszkiewicz, “Humor and Argument” ✓ Read William Zinsser, “Humor” ✓ Watch “This Land,” http://www.iibjab.com/originals/this_land ✓ Watch “Vote Different,” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6h3G-IMZxjo
Tues., 10/21	None	Discuss readings; social value of humor. Humor as argument. Brainstorm possible “texts” for parody. Possible formats. Distribute progress reports (note: 10/24 is last day to withdraw).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Choose a “text” to be the subject of your parody. ✓ Determine the critical purpose of your parody ✓ Begin drafting your critical parody
Thurs., 10/23	NO CLASS – INDEPENDENT WORK DAY. Use this time wisely to get ahead on your current project, catch up on individual blog entries, or work on revising previous projects for a higher grade (make sure to fill out a “revision summary”).		
Tues., 10/28	None	Share progress. Strategies for humor. In-class work time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue drafting your critical parody. Be prepared to work on your draft during the next class.
Thurs., 10/30	None	In-class work time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Finish a strong, grade-worthy draft of your critical parody. Be prepared to share your work during Studio Review.
Tues., 11/4	CRITICAL PARODY	Studio Review. Introduce ReMix assignment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Choose one of your projects from earlier in the term to “remix” into an alternate format. ✓ Determine what form your remix will take, who the new audience will be, and what changes you will need to make during the revision process. ✓ Be prepared to discuss your plans for the ReMix project.

Thurs., 11/6	None	Share plans for ReMix project. Overview possible genres (i.e., photo essay, iMovie). Storyboarding workshop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue storyboarding your ReMix project. ✓ When finished storyboarding, begin work on your project.
Tues., 11/11	NO CLASS – VETERAN’S DAY		
Thurs., 11/13	None	Creating impact through visual media; in-class work time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue working on your ReMix project. Pay special attention to the ways your text communicates through image, text, sound, and other elements. ✓ Be prepared to work on your project during the next class.
Tues., 11/18	None	In-class work time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue working on your ReMix project
Thurs., 11/20	NO CLASS – INDEPENDENT WORK DAY. Use this time wisely to finish your ReMix project, catch up on individual blog entries, and start revising any projects from earlier in the term for a higher grade. Be ready for Studio Review on Tuesday.		
Tues., 11/25	REMIX PROJECT	Studio Review. Note timeline for end of the semester, revision policy, portfolio requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Review the work you’ve done this semester and determine if there are any projects you’d like to revise for a higher grade. ✓ Begin working on those projects ✓ Catch up on your individual blog entries, if necessary ✓ Begin assembling the contents of your portfolio. Bring all of the work you’ve done this semester to the next class.
Thurs., 11/27	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK		
Tues., 12/2	None	Options for presenting the final portfolio (digital and print). In-class time for revising or assembling portfolio materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue revising any projects, if desired. ✓ Continue assembling the contents of your portfolio ✓ Make sure to purchase a recordable CD – you will burn the final versions of your work to this CD to turn in.
Thurs., 12/4	None	In-class revision time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue revising any projects, if desired. ✓ Continue assembling the contents of your portfolio ✓ Make sure to purchase a recordable CD – you will burn the final versions of your work to this CD to turn in.
Tues., 12/9	None	In-class revision time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Finish your writing portfolio. Make sure to bring an electronic version (on CD) and a print version to the next class.
Thurs., 12/11	COMPLETE WRITING PORTFOLIO	Final Studio Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Remember to pick up your graded portfolio from me during the designated time on Tuesday.
Tues., 12/16	None	Pick up graded portfolios	
Thurs., 12/18	NO CLASS – HAVE A GREAT HOLIDAY!		