

ENGLISH 101.33: TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS

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Class time: Monday & Wednesday, 2:00–3:15, MHRA 3208

Office hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 12:00–1:30, McIver 213

WHAT IS THIS THING?

This course is designed to guide undergraduates in improving their writing, revising, and critical reading abilities. We will study a variety of essay forms, giving particular attention to how tone, diction, perspective, and use of detail produce the argument of each form. In doing so we will focus on the formation of a individualized writing process through the use of freewriting, the completion of multiple drafts, and peer review.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Many of our readings will come from handouts I distribute in class and make available online. Please read each essay before coming to class. Bring readings in with you when we are scheduled to discuss them; if necessary, print out copies of online reading unless otherwise directed. We will read *The Stranger* by Albert Camus (New York: Vintage Books, 1989; ISBN 0-679-72020-0), in the translation by Matthew Ward. *Writing Matters*, a publication of the UNCG English Department, is a required text for all freshman composition courses. Although not a “required text,” a collegiate dictionary like *The Random House-Webster’s* or *The Merriam-Webster* might prove useful.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Preparation. Come to class prepared to take part in our discussion. Bring essays to class the day we are scheduled to discuss them—you may find them useful to reference during class. Please ask questions and share your observations, and be respectful to your colleagues as they do the same. There is no attendance policy, but without evidence to the contrary I must assume that if I do not see you in class you are not participating.

Technology in the classroom. Cellular telephones should be off. Laptops may be used in class only by those with special needs. Those who do have special needs should make a specific arrangement with me to use a laptop in class. No one may use a laptop in class without a prior arrangement with me.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Those of you with any sort of disability that could affect class performance or for which you need accomodation should contact me (see above) or the Office of Disability services (336.334.5440, ods@uncg.edu).

ASSIGNMENTS

Readings. I will assign one or two readings a week. Please read each essay completely before class. If for whatever reason you find yourself behind with the reading, I expect you will still come to class.

Brief written assignments. At the beginning of the semester I ask everyone to introduce themselves to me with a letter of introduction. During the semester I will occasionally assign brief, one-page responses to essays as a means for you to organize your thoughts for classroom discussion.

Longer written assignments. Three 3–5 page essays will be due throughout the semester: one observation essay, one personal narrative, and one critical reading essay.

Portfolio. At the end of the semester I ask everyone to collect 15–20 pages of their most polished writing from the semester. To give insight into the writing process that forms the essays in the portfolio, each should be accompanied by a brief writer’s statement and the working drafts that led to the final draft. Working drafts will not count toward the 15–20 page goal, however. I will provide more details about this assignment as the course progresses.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

I expect everyone to adhere to UNCG’s Academic Integrity Policy, available online at <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu>.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, we will be able to identify and analyze arguments within a text, and respond to them; to produce a clear argument through a writing process that involves brainstorming, freewriting, and revision; to read closely and evaluate the claims of a text; and to demonstrate understanding of the standards of academic writing.

EVALUATION

Class participation, 25%

Drafts of essays, 20%

Editorial work, 15%

Portfolio, 40%

SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NECESSARY)

- 25 AUG Introduction of course. *Assignment: Letter of introduction.*
- 27 AUG Sight: Part one of “The Loss of the Creature,” Walker Percy (handout).
- 1 SEP Labor Day holiday. No class.
- 3 SEP Sight: Part two of “The Loss of the Creature.” *Letter of introduction due.*
- 8 SEP Sight: First reading from “On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense,” Friedrich Nietzsche (handout); “Talking Back to Books: In Defense of Marginalia,” Michael Parker (handout).
- 10 SEP Sight: Second reading from “On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense.”
- 15 SEP Sight: “Seen From the Window,” Henri Lefebvre (handout). *Assignment: first essay.*
- 17 SEP Inquiry: Excerpt from *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, Robert Pirsig (handout); “Berkeley Eclogue,” Robert Hass (handout).
- 22 SEP Perspective and details: Dorothea Lange’s “Migrant Mother” (handout); “Discourse Communities,” Richard Marius (handout). *In-class freewriting activities.*
- 24 SEP Argument: inquiry and perspective. First reading from “Making Arguments,” Richard Marius (handout).
- 29 SEP Argument: the claim. Second reading from “Making Arguments.” *First draft of first essay due.*
- 1 OCT Structures of words: phrase, sentence, paragraph. *In-class revision activity.*
- 6 OCT Conferences.
- 8 OCT Conferences.
- 13 OCT Structures of thought: metaphor and tone. First reading from “Figurative Language,” Richard Marius (handout); “Concepts We Live By,” George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (handout). *Assignment: second essay.*
- 15 OCT Seeing the self: “Stranger in the Village,” James Baldwin (handout). *First essay due.*
- 20 OCT Polishing words: “Good Diction,” Richard Marius (handout).
- 22 OCT *First draft of second essay due. Peer review activity.*
- 27 OCT Autumn break. No class, but the leaves may be falling.
- 29 OCT Critical reading: review. “Park II,” “Preface to *The War Against Cliché*,” Martin Amis (handout). *Second essay due. Assignment: review.*
- 3 NOV Critical reading: discussion. “Robert Frost’s ‘Home Burial,’” Randall Jarrell (handout). *Review due. Assignment: third essay.*
- 5 NOV Conferences.
- 10 NOV Conferences.
- 12 NOV First reading in *The Stranger*, Albert Camus.
- 17 NOV Second reading in *The Stranger*.
- 19 NOV *First draft of third essay due. Peer review activity.*
- 24 NOV Reference frames: first principles. “Learning the Language,” Perri Klass (handout). *Third essay due.*
- 26 NOV Thanksgiving break. No class: Unscrew the locks from the doors! Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!
- 1 DEC *Assignment: portfolio.*
- 3 DEC Final polish: “False Rules and What Is True About Them,” Richard Marius (handout).
- 8 DEC *First draft of portfolio due. Peer review activity.*
- 15 DEC *Portfolios due. (3:30 in the afternoon.)*