

ENGLISH 101.05: TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS

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Class time: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 10:00–10:50, MHRA 2204
Office hours: Monday & Thursday, 3:30–5:00, 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, focusing on how tone, diction, perspective, and use of detail produce the argument of each form. In doing so we will focus on the formation of an 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. You may find it helpful to bring printed copies of readings in with you when we are scheduled to discuss them. We will read *Jesus' Son* by Denis Johnson (New York: HarperCollins, 1992; ISBN 0-06-097577-6). 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. Please be mindful that simply attending class is not participating in class.

Attendance. Three classes may be missed without penalty. After four absences, I will deduct 10 points from class participation. After five absences I will deduct another 10 points. I am required by the university to fail anyone with six or more absences.

Technology in the classroom. Cellular telephones should be off. Laptops may be used in class only to take notes pertaining to our class or to view online readings. Anyone who uses a laptop for any non-classroom activity during class time will not be allowed to use a laptop in class again.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Anyone with documentation of special needs should arrange to see me about accommodations as soon as possible. If you believe you could benefit from accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Disability Services on campus before they can be made. The office is located on the second floor of the Elliott University Center (EUC) in Suite 215, and the office is open 8:00 to 5:00, Monday through Friday. Telephone: 334-5440; e-mail: ods@uncg.edu.

ASSIGNMENTS

Readings. I will assign two or three 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. During the semester I will occasionally assign one-page responses to essays you may use to organize your thoughts for classroom discussion.

Longer written assignments. Three 6–9 page essays will be due throughout the semester: one observation essay, one personal narrative, and one critical reading essay. The observation essay will ask you to use a scene of your choosing as a "text" for inquiry. In the personal narrative you will use a memory from your life as a "text" for analysis. The critical reading essay will invite you to construct and present an argument about Denis Johnson's *Jesus' Son*.

Portfolio. At the end of the semester I ask everyone to collect 25–30 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 25–30 page goal, however. I will provide more details about this assignment as the course progresses.

Submitting work. I will not accept late work, except by prior arrangement. Avoid submitting work through email, as it is never possible to be sure that I receive it.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

From UNCG's Academic Integrity policy: "Academic integrity is founded upon and encompasses the following five values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Violations include, for example, cheating, plagiarism, misuse of academic resources, falsification, and facilitating academic dishonesty. If knowledge is to be gained and properly evaluated, it must be pursued under conditions free from dishonesty. Deceit and misrepresentations are incompatible with the fundamental activity of this academic institution and shall not be tolerated." I expect you to abide by the Academic Integrity Policy. To ensure that you understand the university's policy on academic integrity, please review the guidelines and list of violations at <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu>.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, we will be able to write and speak clearly, coherently, and effectively, and be able to adapt different modes of communication to different audiences; be able to interpret academic writing and discourse in a variety of disciplines; and be able to locate, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information.

EVALUATION

Class participation, 25%
Drafts of essays, 20%

Editorial work, 15%
Portfolio, 40%

SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NECESSARY)

- 21 JAN Introduction of course. **Letter of introduction assigned.**
- 23 JAN Sight: Part one of "The Loss of the Creature," Walker Percy.
- 26 JAN Sight: Part two of "The Loss of the Creature."
- 28 JAN Sight: First reading from "On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense," Friedrich Nietzsche. **Letter of introduction due.**
- 30 JAN Sight: Second reading from "On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense."
- 2 FEB Sight: Third reading from "On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense."
- 4 FEB Sight: Excerpt from "The Critique of the Thing," Henri Lefebvre.
- 6 FEB Sight: "The Rhythmanalyst: A Previsionary Portrait," Lefebvre.
- 9 FEB Sight: "Seen From the Window," Lefebvre. **Observation essay assigned.**
- 11 FEB Sight: The essays of John Muir and John Barlow.
- 13 FEB Class cancelled. Enjoy the cold brightness of winter.
- 16 FEB Perspective and details: Dorothea Lange's "Migrant Mother"; first reading from "First Principles," Richard Marius.
- 18 FEB Details: Second reading from "First Principles," Richard Marius; notes on beginning essays and priorities for rough drafts.
- 20 FEB In-class revision activity: How much detail is descriptive? **Rough draft of observation essay due.**
- 23 FEB Paragraphs: sentence to sentence, paragraph to paragraph.
- 25 FEB Conferences: meet me in the EUC coffeeshop at the time you selected.
- 27 FEB Conferences: meet me in the EUC coffeeshop at the time you selected.
- 2 MAR Conferences: meet me in the EUC coffeeshop at the time you selected.
- 4 MAR The next revision: first reading from "Grammar and Mechanics," Richard Marius.
- 6 MAR Revision: second reading from "Grammar and Mechanics."
- 9 MAR Spring break. *Unscrew the locks from the doors!*
- 11 MAR Spring break. *Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!*
- 13 MAR Spring break. *Exclamation points!*
- 16 MAR Narratives: "Preface to *The Art of the Personal Essay*," Phillip Lopate. **Second draft of observation essay due. Personal essay assigned.**
- 18 MAR Narratives: "Shooting An Elephant," George Orwell.
- 20 MAR Narratives: "Notes of a Native Son," James Baldwin; "Goodbye to All That," Joan Didion.
- 23 MAR Narratives: "Goodbye to All That," Joan Didion. **Rough draft of personal essay due.**
- 25 MAR Narratives: "Seeing," Annie Dillard.
- 27 MAR Conferences: meet me in the EUC coffeeshop at the time you selected.
- 30 MAR Conferences: meet me in the EUC coffeeshop at the time you selected.
- 1 APR Conferences: meet me in the EUC coffeeshop at the time you selected.
- 3 APR The next revision: strategies for narrative. **Peer review assigned.**
- 6 APR Argument: inquiry and perspective. First reading from "Making Arguments," Richard Marius. **Peer review activity.**
- 8 APR Argument: the claim. Second reading from "Making Arguments."
- 10 APR Spring holiday. No class, but everything will be coming alive.
- 13 APR Argument: the point. Third reading from "Making Arguments." **Second draft of observation essay due.**
- 15 APR Critical reading: first reading in *Jesus' Son*, Denis Johnson.
- 17 APR Critical reading: second reading in *Jesus' Son*. **Critical reading assigned.**
- 20 APR Critical reading: third reading in *Jesus' Son*.
- 22 APR In-class revision activity: what does a sentence say?
- 24 APR **Rough draft of critical reading due. Portfolio assigned. Critical reading peer review assigned.**
- 27 APR **Peer review activity.**
- 29 APR The next revision: notes toward analysis.
- 1 MAY Final polish: notes on editing advanced drafts.
- 4 MAY **In-class portfolio work day.**
- 5 MAY **Portfolios due. (12:00 noon)**
- 8 MAY **Graded portfolios returned. (12:00 noon)**