

COMPOSITION--PR. BIZZELL--SPRING 2004

OFFICE HOURS: M, T, R 2-3:30, W 10-12, 1-4, and by appointment. My office is Fenwick 210, x 2524 or 2562, email pbizzell@holycross.edu

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Bizzell, Patricia and Bruce Herzberg. Negotiating Difference. Boston: Bedford Books, 1996.

Hacker, Diana. A Writer's Reference. Boston: Bedford Books, 2001.

O'Hair, Dan, Hannah Rubenstein, and Rob Stewart. A Pocket Guide to Public Speaking. Boston: Bedford Books, 2004.

COURSE PLAN:

The primary purpose of this course is to help you improve your writing. We will be focussing on expository writing, that is, writing that aims to explain, argue, and/or persuade (not fiction, for example). The writing that you do for most of your college classes is expository writing; but expository writing is also used more widely in the public sphere to debate issues and attempt to move people toward decision and action.

My hope is that this course will enable you not only to write better for your college courses, but also to become a more confident and effective rhetorical player in the public arenas of politics, social policy making, religious leadership, and more.

My contribution toward accomplishing this goal will be to see to it that you get plenty of practice--practice analyzing the rhetorical strategies of other writers and developing your own through frequent assignments. These exercises will be based on readings from Negotiating Difference [ND], which focus on moments in American history when different groups were contending for the power to be heard on important public issues.

Your contribution must be to take responsibility for your own development as a writer. This will mean completing assignments on time, attending class and your weekly meeting with me, and contributing regularly to class discussion.

A secondary purpose of this course is to help you improve your public speaking. The compositional skills needed to write well are very similar to those needed to prepare a good speech, and as you know, oral reports are required in many college courses. You will have several opportunities to present oral reports in this class and to get feedback on how to improve.

GRADING

My method of grading in this course gives you many opportunities to show what you can do with language and to improve your final mark by weighting grades at the end of the course more heavily.

Attendance/participation: Because regular attendance and participation are so important to your success in this course, you will receive a grade at the end of the semester that reflects your performance in this area. A good way to prepare for class discussion is to review the “critical reading” questions at the end of each selection in ND. I will give you a mid-term estimate of how you are doing in this area.

ND Unit Papers: You will have a paper to write almost every week in response to an assignment from ND. These assignments usually ask you to analyze the arguments and rhetorical strategies of the assigned readings in ND while developing your own ideas on the issues addressed. We will prepare for the paper assignments in class by discussing the ND reading questions, planning organizational strategies together, addressing common grammar problems, etc. Eight papers in all will be assigned.

These papers should be typed, and as well written as you can make them. Length will vary, in the 5-page range. I will try to respond to these papers quickly so that you will have my comments and a grade within a week of submitting the paper to me. In your weekly meeting with me, we will discuss any individual problems that may be arising in your writing and any help you may need with the next assignment.

We will study three units in ND. At the end of each unit, I will average the grades you have received on the papers in that unit, and record that grade to be factored into your final grade.

Oral Reports: at the end of all three units in ND, each class member will make an oral presentation. You will receive a grade on each oral report, and the three grades will be averaged together to be factored into your final grade.

Optional Rewrite: you may rewrite any paper and submit it for a new grade at the end of the course. This rewrite grade is factored into the final grade.

The Final Grade: To arrive at your final grade in the course, I will average at least five grades: your class participation grade; the three averages of your ND unit grades; and your oral report average grade. If you choose to rewrite one of the ND papers, to raise your average, that will give you a sixth grade to be factored in. There will be no final paper or final exam in this course.

SYLLABUS

All assigned reading and writing should be completed for the first day of class each week.

WEEK:

22 January:

Only one class meeting this week, devoted to introducing the course and each other.

26 January:

Read: ND Unit II Introduction; Jefferson, “Draft of the Declaration of Independence” and excerpts from Notes on Virginia.

2 February:

Paper due: Jefferson Writing Assignment #2, p. 188 (summarizing his opinions against slavery).

Read: Walker, excerpts from Walker’s Appeal; Langston, “Address to the Court.”

9 February:

Paper due: Langston Writing Assignment #3, p. 238 (comparing Langston and Walker for either black or white audiences).

Read: Douglass, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?”.

16 February:

Oral Report due: dramatic reading OR analysis OR argument with/from Douglass. **Note:** more information on this report will be given in the previous week, when we will work on it in class.

Read: ND Unit V Introduction; Roosevelt, “Executive Order 9066”; DeWitt, “Instructions to All Persons of Japanese Ancestry”; Flowers, from The Japanese Conquest of American Opinion; . U.S. Department of War, from Final Report; Japanese American Citizens League, from The Case for the Nisei; U. S. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, from Personal Justice Denied.

23 February:

Paper due: “There were good reasons for relocating and interning Japanese Americans during World War II: true or false?” Take a position on this question, using at least 2 sources from last week’s reading.

Read: Yasui, oral history; Sone, from Nisei Daughter.

1 March:

Paper due: Choice: Respond to one of these questions, using both Yasui and Sone. 1. “How did the internment affect family life?” OR 2. “How did the internment affect Nisei self-identity?”

Read: Okada, from No-No Boy; Houston and Houston, second excerpt from Farewell to Manzanar [beginning p. 757].

SPRING VACATION

15 March:

Paper due: Choice: Respond to one of these questions, using Houston and Houston, Okada, and Sone. 1. “How did the internment affect Nisei self-identity?” OR 2. “How did the internment affect the Nisei’s ability to re-integrate into American society?” **Note:** Paper will be returned with estimate to date of your attendance/participation grade.

Read: Yamamoto, “A Fire in Fontana”

22 March:

Oral Report due, Contemporary connections: Each class member will make an oral presentation this week on materials you select that connect Unit V issues to contemporary concerns. We will work on this assignment in class in the previous week.

NOTE: no class on Thursday this week.

29 March:

Read: ND Unit VI Introduction; Dodd, from a speech to the U. S. Senate; Potter, from “The Incredible War.”

5 April:

Paper due: Compare Dodd and Potter in terms of their concerns for how the war in Vietnam affects EITHER the Vietnamese or the American people.

NOTE: no class on Tuesday or Thursday this week.

EASTER VACATION**13 April:**

Read: King, “Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam”; Agnew, “Parasites, Protestors, and the Press.”

NOTE: no class on Monday this week.

19 April:

Paper due: “It was unpatriotic to protest the Vietnam War: true or false?” Take a position on this question, using Agnew, King, and either Dodd or Potter.

Read: Kovic, from Born on the Fourth of July; Kerry, testimony before the U. S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Bryant, oral history; McClusky, oral history.

26 April:

Paper due: Using Kovic, Kerry, Bryant, and McClusky, describe three key features of the Vietnam War experience for those who fought.

3 May:

Oral Report due, Contemporary Connections: Each class member will make an oral presentation this week on materials you select that connect Unit VI issues to contemporary concerns. We will work on this assignment in class in the previous week.

NOTE: 4 May is last day of class, spring semester.

Optional Rewrite due Friday 7 May; no final exam.