

367H SAMPLE SYLLABUS (REVISED VERSION)

English 367H.01

Language, Identity and Culture in the U.S. Experience: Education in America

OVERVIEW

The goal of this course is to foster in you the ability to recognize and develop connections between various texts and to reflect on these connections relative to personal, academic and cultural needs. Through a sequence of writing assignments, you will be asked to analyze essays, poems and fiction with an eye toward developing arguments about education and popular culture in America. In doing this, you will be asked to explore your own beliefs about the processes of teaching and learning. Such self-reflection is empowering in that it allows us to reconsider the value and usefulness of critically-centered education in a democratic society. Two guiding principles of this course are that a) reading and writing are related activities and b) that readers bring a wealth of previously acquired knowledge to bear on a given text. To recognize these points of intertextuality and to reflect on them enables you to better understand your own cognitive processes and compositional strategies. A typical class period may consist of writing workshops, discussions of essays or film clips, small group activities, reflection on the writing process – or combinations of all of these.

COURSE TEXTS

Hunger of Memory by Richard Rodriguez, *Educating Rita* by Willy Russell, *The Longman Pocket Writer's Companion* by Chris Anson; “Dangerous Minds” and “Freedom Writers” (films); several handouts.

WRITING WORKSHOPS

A great deal of in-class time will be devoted to writing workshops and peer reviews. In a writing workshop, a rough draft of an essay is distributed to and read by class members, who then comment on strategies for rewriting. Each student will have at least one whole-class workshop during the semester. Every time the class has a workshop, you will be asked to fill out a reader response form. This response will be given to the person whose essay is being workshopped, who will then hand it in with his or her essay. Reader responses are important to the success of workshops, and you are expected to take them seriously.

Important: You are responsible for providing copies of rough drafts for either whole class or peer reviews; each class member's rough draft is due on the same day (see schedule) regardless of whether it is being workshopped. A schedule of workshops will be developed as the quarter progresses.

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Assessments will be based primarily on your writing, but will also take into consideration other factors, such as being prepared for class and willingness to engage in discussions. The base-line grade for this course is a "B", which you'll automatically receive if you do the following:

- miss no more than three classes
- hand in late not more than two assignments
- show clear evidence of desire to revise writing
- demonstrate good copy editing
- give useful feedback in workshops
- participate in class discussions
- show the ability to make connections between the various readings

A fair grade ("C") will be considered when these criteria are not met; an excellent grade ("A") will be considered when these criteria are exceeded.

RESPONDING TO THE READINGS: STUDENT-LED DISCUSSIONS

In-class discussions will not proceed from lectures, but from your responses to the material at hand: your questions, your challenges, your concerns. You will need, therefore, to be prepared to speak about the readings on the designated days, and you'll be expected to contribute to the evolving classroom conversation.

PARTICIPATION

Attendance is required. Your participation in workshops and class discussions is integral for successful completion of the course. *More than three absences will affect your grade, and more than four may result in failure.* If you come to class more than ten minutes late, a half-absence will be assessed. If you are unable to attend classes due to an emergency or illness, please let me know. You are expected to hand in all work on time. If you are unable to hand in work due to an emergency or illness, please let me know.

CONFERENCES

Please see me during the first two weeks of class for an informal conference. You'll also be asked to come in sometime in the final three weeks to discuss your final project. In between those visits, you can see me any Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, from 1.30-3.00, to discuss your writing concerns.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

There are two main kinds of writing for this course: rough and final drafts of your essays written in response to assignment, and Workshop Responses. Rough drafts should be at least 2 pages, which will be used in workshops and/or for instructor response; evaluation drafts should be 5-7 pages, *except for the final essay, which should be 10-12 pages long and have a strong research component.* You are required to write a Workshop Response for each in-class workshop (see "How to Write a Workshop Response," below). See course schedule for due dates and specific assignments.

A NOTE ON PLAGIARISM

This is the official OSU English Department Writing Programs policy on plagiarism: "All academic work submitted to the teacher must be a result of a student's own thought, research or self-expression. When a student submits work purporting to be his or her own, but which in any way borrows organization, ideas, wording or anything else from a source without appropriate acknowledgment of the fact, he or she is engaging in plagiarism. When a student submits work in his or her own name that has been written wholly or in part by another person – regardless of whether or not it has been taken from unattributed source materials -- he or she is engaged in a kind of plagiarism known as collusion. Collusion should not be confused with the kind of collaboration that arises in writing course during workshops, peer responses and student/teacher or student tutor conferences, all of which are endorsed by writing pedagogy; collusion involves receiving 'unauthorized' aid. Both plagiarism and collusion are considered major academic infractions, and should be treated with the utmost gravity by the teacher."

RESOURCES

Writing Center: Besides giving feedback, these English graduate students can help with other writing issues such as topic development, organization, coherence, clarity, and self-editing. Call 292-5607.

Ombud: The Ombudsman of the Writing Programs, Matthew Cariello, mediates conflicts between students and teachers in English 367 and 110. His Winter 2007 office hours are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 11.30-1.00 in Denney Hall 533. He can also be reached at cariello.1@osu.edu and 292-5778. All conversations with the Ombudsman are confidential.

Office of Disability Services: Students with disabilities who need accommodations should be registered at the Office for Disability Services. Call 292-3307.

General Education Curriculum General Description and Objectives

English 367.01H fulfills the second half of the GEC requirement “Category 1: Writing and Related Skills.”

Goals/Rationale: The purpose of courses in this category is to develop students’ skills in writing, reading, critical thinking, and oral expression.

Learning Objectives:

- Students apply basic skills in expository writing.
- Students demonstrate critical thinking through written and oral expression.
- Students retrieve and use written information analytically and effectively.

English 367.01H fulfills “Category 6.A: Diversity Experiences: Social Diversity in the United States.”

Goals/Rationale: The purpose of courses in this category is to foster an understanding of the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States.

Learning Objectives:

- Students describe the roles of such categories as race, gender, class, ethnicity, and religion in the institutions and cultures of the United States.
- Students recognize the role of social diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (March 26 & 28)

Introductions, etc.

“The 20 Most Common Errors in College Writing”

Readings: Freire, “The ‘Banking’ Concept of Education,” found at the Carmen website/

Week 2 (April 2 & 4)

Readings: Freire & others, continued discussion & in-class activities; Essay #1 assigned.

Week 3 (April 9 & 11)

Workshops: Essay #1 rough draft due T; workshops as scheduled.

Week 4 (April 16 & 18)

Film: “Dangerous Minds” (in-class viewing)

Writing: In-class activities.

Essay #1 final draft due Thursday

Week 5 (April 23 & 25)

Readings: “The Achievement of Desire” (HM).

Writing: In-class activities; Essay #2 assigned.

Week 6 (April 30 & May 2)

Workshops: Essay #2 rough draft due T; workshops as scheduled.

Week 7 (May 7 & 9)

Viewing: *Educating Rita* (film & book).

Writing: in-class activities.

Essay #2 final draft due Thursday

Weeks “8, 9 & 10” (May 14, 16, 21, 23, 28 & 30)

Workshops, In-class Activities & Conferences: Final Project

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Essay #1: “FREIRE AND ME”

Anyone who has made it through twelve years of formal education can think of a class to serve as an example of what Freire calls the “banking” concept of education, where students were turned into containers to be filled by their teachers. If Freire is to be useful to you, however, he must do more than enable you to call up quick examples. He should allow you to say more than that a teacher once treated you like a container – or that a teacher once gave you your freedom.

Write an essay that focuses on a rich and illustrative incident from your education and read it (that is, interpret it) as Freire would. You will need to provide careful detail: things that were said and done, perhaps the exact wording of an assignment a textbook or a teacher’s comments. And you will need to turn to the language of Freire’s argument, to take key phrases and passages and see how they might be used to investigate your class.

To do this you will need to read your account as not simply the story of you and your teacher, since Freire is not writing about individual personalities (an innocent student and a mean or rude teacher or thoughtless teacher), but about the roles we are cast in, whether we chose to be or not, by our culture and its institutions. The key question, then, is not who you were or who your teacher was, but what roles you played and how those roles can lead you to better understand the larger narrative of education as an organized attempt to “regulate the way the world ‘enters into’ the students.”

ESSAY # 2: FREIRE & RODRIGUEZ

Paulo Freire, in his chapter on the “banking” concept of education, discusses the political implications of the relations between teachers and students. Some forms of schooling, he says, can give students control over their lives, but most schooling teaches students to submit to domination by others. Freire suggests that the unequal distribution of power and authority in the banking classroom alienates individuals from their own historic situation. Richard Rodriguez, on the other hand, writes about his education as a process of difficult but necessary alienation from his home, his childhood and his family, although he too writes about power – about the power he gained and lost as he became increasingly successful as a student.

If you look closely at the history of Rodriguez’s schooling from the perspective of Freire’s essay, what do you see? Write an essay describing how Freire might analyze Rodriguez’s education. How would he see the process as it unfolds through Rodriguez’s experience as a student, from his early schooling (including the study he did on his own at home), through his college and graduate studies, to the position he takes, finally, as the writer of *Hunger for Memory*.

Alternate approach: Since both Freire and Rodriguez write about education as a central event in the shaping of an adult life, it might be interesting to see what they might have to say to each other. Write a dialogue between the two in which they discuss what Rodriguez has written in “The Achievement of Desire.” What would they say to each other? What questions would they ask? How would they respond to one another in the give and take of conversation? This should be a dialogue, not a debate. Your speakers are trying to learn something about each other and about education. They are not trying to win points or convince a jury.

FINAL PROJECT for the Honors Version

This final project asks you to pull together the various themes of this course and draw some larger conclusions about teaching and learning in our culture. Your main task is to imagine ways in which traditional education might be revised to reflect more accurately the reality of schooling and the needs of students. The form is open, although each variation of the project must refer to at least one course text and one additional text (book, movie, article, etc.) not read for the course. Here are some possible approaches:

A) Write an argumentative essay that synthesizes the various points made by the texts in this course. This essay will need to have a clear theme, such as bilingual education, tracking, school funding, grading systems, etc. Your goal will be to explore as fully as possible the parameters of the problem: solutions or plans of action aren't necessary.

B) Write a "literacy autobiography" that critically examines your own history as a learner, paying special attention the experiences of reading and writing. You may wish to revisit key moments with important teachers, and discuss how these teachers fit or don't fit the traditional models. You will also need to compare / contrast your experiences with those offered in one other course texts, and one outside text.

C) Devise an alternative curriculum for an imaginary classroom, and create a set of lesson plans for teaching a piece of literature in a progressive manner. Write a brief reflective essay on the process. You may also test your plans by teaching the class.

D) Feel free to propose your own project.

Timetable

November 16 & 18: present outside sources to the rest of the class (see below for guidelines)

November 18: proposal for final project due (see below)

November 30: rough drafts submitted for feedback

November 30 & December 2: workshops & teacher conferences

December 9: Final drafts of final project due

Source Presentations

These will be fairly informal. Bring in copies of a half-page summary (with useful quotes) of your source for everyone in the class (include title, author, where you found it, etc.). If you're using a movie, you may show a very short excerpt (a VCR/DVD player will be available both days). Talk for five to ten minutes about how this text is relevant to a discussion of the problems of education in the US generally.

Proposals

Please have a few ideas for this project (a proposal, a few pages, an outline, a whole draft, etc.) by Thursday November 18. Bring enough copies for the whole class.