

STPEC 393A
Junior Writing
Wednesdays 1:25-4pm
Machmer W-27

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hours: Wed 12:00-1pm
And by appointment

Writing for Critical Consciousness

I have two goals for you this semester: (1) to gain fluency in academic expository writing, and (2) to analyze the structure of language and your place within this structure. The intent of the assignments in this class is not merely to reproduce the academic style, but to examine it. This may include unlearning old lessons, putting our own work under the lens, and changing the ways you approach the writing process. This course presents an opportunity to work with and to apply the theory that you encounter as members of the STPEC community. We will rely primarily on academic language as the vehicle for our voices, and as we do so, we will examine its emotional, psychological, gendered, racial, and imperialist and any of its other mechanisms and implications.

During the first week of this course, our discussion on ‘accessible language’ led to a conversation about the inclusive and exclusive powers of slang. With this in mind, I have chosen readings that discuss the ways in which meaning is created, how we understand language, and how communities of readers interpret, understand, or create texts. Additionally, we’ll work on the nuts and bolts of writing – because grammar and punctuation are important, we’ll work on developing peer review skills, and we’ll strive toward comfort in academic writing.

I hope this course will encourage all of us to engage critically with our work – our writing, our reading, our teaching and learning, our expression and exploration. This is not merely an individual struggle: while each of us is individually responsible for committing to the work in this course through assignments and activities, we will also communicate and share our work with each other via peer revision, discussions and conversations. Critical engagement depends upon personal responsibility, collaboration, trust and solidarity.

Classes will be conducted primarily as seminar-type discussions, though we will also spend some class time writing individually and peer reviewing each other’s work. Class time is an opportunity to share and discuss your work and ideas with your cohort. Come to class prepared. All work is due by the end of the semester; because of the nature of the course assignments must be turned in on time. Incompletes are possible in extreme cases only.

Texts are available at Food For Thought in Amherst.

Feitlowitz, Marguerite. *A Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Poole, Steven. *Unspeak*. New York: Grove Press. 2006.

Strunk, William and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*, 4th edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000. (Any edition of this book is fine)

Truss, Lynn. *Eats, Shoots and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*. New York: Gotham Books, 2004.

Other readings will be made available throughout the semester.

Assignments:

Late assignments are not accepted. If you are having trouble, or a personal emergency has come up, let me know as soon as possible. Extensions are possible in extreme cases only, and must be requested **and confirmed by me** 24 hours before the due date. **Be prepared to show me your work and have a sound case for an extension.** I intentionally space assignments to give you as much time as possible to work on them; one late assignment causes a train wreck of overdue papers down the line. It's best to stay on top of your work.

Peer Review:

We will spend substantial time this semester reviewing each other's work and discussing ways to revise our essays. Peer review can be a great way to develop as writers, develop our ideas, and build community. In order for the process to be effective, everyone must participate enthusiastically. I encourage you to review papers for other courses as well. Evidence of peer review is necessary for a passing grade on essay assignments.

Journals:

I require you to keep a reading journal. I will collect these occasionally to gauge your work. You should write *at least* two entries per week about experiences that relate to class, thoughts on readings, impressions of class discussions, ideas for papers, or experiences with peer review sessions. We may draw on your journals to stimulate class discussions or essays. **Bring it to class always.**

Essays:

The majority of your written work evaluated in this class will be in the form of very short (1000 word) essays. The intent is to gain research skills, gain fluency in the academic format for research essays, and write with power. You will also write several journal entries each week as well as short, informal pieces that will contribute to your formal essays.

Participation:

Especially since this is a small class, everyone's avid participation is desired and necessary. Come to class, be here on time, do your work on time, contribute to discussions and peer review sessions.

Essays (3): 20% each
Letter 15%
Journal: 15%
Participation: 10%

A 93-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-70	D+ 67-69
A- 90-92	B 83-86	C 73-76	D 60-66
	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	F <60

Schedule:

All work is due on the date it appears on the syllabus. So, for September 10th, you should be ready to discuss Strunk and White, you will hand in a 750-word freewrite on grammar, and you should be prepared for a quiz on Lynn Truss' book, *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*.

Sept 3 Intro	Introduction to the course; course expectations and goals; University writing curriculum and expectations
Sep 10 Grammar	The History of Junior Writing Strunk and White: Come to class with grammar queries Lynn Truss <i>Eats, Shoots and Leaves</i> Punctuation Quiz! A Word on Journals Freewriting Due: 750 word freewrite on grammar Read for 9/17: “Politics and the English Language” available on-line at http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/orwell46.htm Write for 9/17: Journal entry – do words express or inform your ideas?
Sep 17 Revision	Theory: Grammar and Politics William Safire goes to Burger King Discuss “Politics and the English Language” Praxis: Writer’s Block, The “Board of Directors” Write for 9/24: A letter to your “Board of Directors” Read for 9/24: Stanley Fish; Robert Scholes (handouts)
Sep 24	Theory: Is there a text in this class? Constructing meaning Praxis: The Writing Process Due: A letter to your “Board of Directors” Journal Entry: 10 Writing Resolutions Read for 10/1: Foucault and the Freshman Writer: Considering the Self in Discourse by Kurt Spellmeyer (handout) Write for 10/1: <i>First</i> generate ideas on politics, language, communication, <i>then</i> organize ideas.
Oct 1 Process / Style / Revision	Theory: Foucault and the Freshman Writer: Considering the Self in Discourse by Kurt Spellmeyer What is knowledge? How does writing relate to knowing? Praxis: Respond to your last 2 official journal entries Peer Review Techniques Go over generated, organized lists and freewrites; Drafting Read for 10/8: “The Politics of Tutoring: Feminism Within the Patriarchy” By Meg Woolbright (handout)
Oct 8	Individual Meetings with Ethan Due: Journal
Oct 15	Theory: <i>Unspeak</i> Due Friday Oct 17 at 10AM: Essay 1

Oct 22	Theory: <i>Unspeak</i> Praxis: Research techniques, Writing with Power
Oct 29	Theory: <i>Unspeak</i> Read for 11/5: Asa Hilliard (handout) and June Jordan (handout)
Nov 5	Theory: Psychology of Language; Discuss Hilliard and Jordan Read for 11/19: <i>A Lexicon of Terror</i>
Nov 12	NO CLASS: TUESDAY SCHEDULE Peer Review, Research
Nov 19	Theory: Marguerite Feitlowitz <i>A Lexicon of Terror</i> Due: Fri Nov 21 at 10AM Review of <i>Unspeak</i>
Nov 26	Thanksgiving Break Begins Research
Dec 3	Tentative Viewing of <i>Slam</i> Finish discussion of <i>A Lexicon of Terror</i> ?
Dec 10	Final Class; Dec 12 Last day of UMASS Classes Research Essays, Peer Review, Course wrap-up Due: Wed Dec 17 at 5pm Final Research Essay