Introduction: Teaching and Troubling

Doug Hesse
Writing Program Professor and Director
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Since 2007, over 70 DU faculty have participated in three-day workshops, as preamble to their teaching a Writing Intensive Core course. I've invited each to write a short informal article after the experience, and this slim volume collects the work of 28 professors who have taken me up on the offer. In each case, they're responding to a brief and fairly open prompt:

> Explain how and why you've designed the writing intensive component of your course. This piece should briefly introduce the course in ways that would be clear to nonexpert faculty colleagues, explain the writing assignments and teaching practices you propose, and discuss what you hope the writing component will achieve and why. You might also discuss challenges you anticipate your students will face—or that you might face in teaching the writing component of the course. Write for an audience of DU faculty members. Alternative: Discuss a particular issue in student writing or teaching writing that's of interest to you (perhaps an issue raised in the workshop) and important to several of your colleagues.

The essays that follow, then, represent thoughtful responses to that invitation. They are very lightly edited, and you should assume that any errors or glitches are my fault.

Writing Intensive Core Courses manifest an ambitious campus decision to improve not only the quality of student writing but also the visibility and centrality of writing to the undergraduate experience, a decision emanating from the Marsico Initiative that created a new first year seminar and first year writing program and that formed a writing center. All students are required to complete at least one writing intensive core course, preferably during their junior years. DU hired over twenty tenure-line faculty in several departments to build capacity to meet these new requirements. Taught in sections capped at 15 students, to foster writing and exchanges between students and professors, the WI element meets four components:

1. Students write a minimum of 20 pages (about 6000 words), some of which may be informal, but some of which must be revised, polished, and intended for an educated readership.

Different kinds of writing serve different kinds of purposes. For example, "writing to learn" assignments are designed primarily to have students grapple with course concepts in order to engage them more fully. They might consist of reading summaries or responses, course journals, or answers to specific questions. They might even be assigned in class, during the first ten minutes to help students focus on the topic of the day or during the last ten minutes, to formulate some ideas about the preceding hour. These and other informal writing assignments might be relatively short, single draft assignments, receiving brief comments and graded holistically.

More formal writing assignments put a premium not on the student as learner but on the student as communicator of ideas to various audiences. The stakes are higher in this kind of writing—everything counts—so students tend to have longer to produce these assignments, which almost always require multiple drafts. Given the extra time and significance of these writings, faculty generally respond more fully to them, including comments on drafts before the final version is due. The faculty development provide numerous options for assignment making, but here are some scenarios:

- At the beginning of every class meeting, Professor Whitt has students turn in a one-page response in which they comment on what they found most interesting, puzzling, or disturbing about the readings for that class meeting. She writes a brief reaction on each of them and assigns a rating from one to

three. Professor Whitt also assigns two four-page papers, in week 5 and week 10.

- Professor Becker has his students keep a media log, in which each week they summarize and analyze at least two television episodes, YouTube videos, or films related to his course content. Students post their logs on the class Blackboard, and every two weeks, the write a comment on someone else's posting. Becker has a final 10-page paper due at the end of the course. Students turn in a draft in week 8.
- Professor Kvistad wants to focus on more extended, formal writings in her course. Accordingly, she assigns three seven-page papers, due in week 4, 7, and 10.

2. Students complete a minimum of three writing projects that are distributed over the quarter; exceptions might include a cumulative project completed in multiple stages.

It's more effective—both to develop writing abilities and to learn course content—for students to write frequently rather than infrequently, even if doing so means that papers will be shorter. Generally, then, students should write at least three papers in the course. The faculty development seminars for the Core writing intensive courses will provide strategies for making effective assignments. The pattern of assignments can take many forms. For example,

- Professor Jefferson assigns ten 2-page papers, one due each week. She requires students to revise three of these papers, collecting them in a final portfolio with a reflective introduction introducing the work.
- Professor King begins the course by having a one-page paper due each class meeting for the first 10 classes. She then has a five-page paper due in week 7 and a second five-page paper due in week 10.
- Professor Jones assigns three 6-7 page papers, spaced over the course of the semester.

In a few cases, professors may find it vital to have fewer than three papers, perhaps because they find it important to produce a single, larger writing project. Such projects can—and should—be divided into several smaller projects that culminate in the final whole. Doing so, and providing feedback to each piece, accomplishes many of the goals of a longer project.

- Professor Klaus wants students to complete a 20-page, researched position paper on a topic central to the course. In week 2, assigns a one-page proposal. In week four, he assigns a 2-page paper that summarizes and analyzes two key readings on the topic. In week five, he assigns an annotated bibliography of all the sources to be used in the paper. In week six he asks for a 4-5 page section of the paper. In week eight he requires a first draft of the entire paper, and students make 10-minute class presentations about their work in program. The completed final draft is due in week 10.

3. Students are required to revise some of their work based on feedback from their professor.

One of the most powerful strategies for teaching writing is to provide feedback to students on a draft, then have them revise the work before turning it in for a grade. "Providing feedback" is not editing or correcting. Instead, the professor indicates strengths and areas of improvement for the student, who must then do the real work of revision (literally, "seeing again"). Except in the rare cases when students have turned in a highly polished draft that is the product of extensive revisions already, most revising feedback focuses on "higher level" matters than mere grammar, punctuation, or style. Some examples of revision comments are:

- Your draft is too one-sided to be effective. That is, while you present the arguments for X pretty well, a lot of reasonable people would argue for Y instead. Can you take into account their arguments and still defend your position?
- Your draft relies extensively on quotation and summary. While these are generally apt, the paper doesn't have enough of your own thinking. For example, when you summarize X, what do you see as its significance or importance?
- Your assertion X lacks sufficient evidence to be convincing. What facts or analysis could you provide to make your point.
- I have a difficult time following your line of thinking. For example, on page 2 you jump

between point A and point B, and the connection just doesn't make sense. You'll probably need to write more obvious connections, but you might also have to rearrange the parts of the paper—or even discard some.

4. Some instructional time is given to writing matters.

Giving "some instructional time" to writing certainly doesn't require providing extended lectures. (In fact, that would be less effective than other strategies.) One of the purposes of the Core Writing Intensive faculty development seminars is to provide some minimal strategies that nonetheless can be very useful to students.
Consider several possible teaching practices

- Whenever Professor Wallace gives a writing assignment, she takes 10-15 minutes of class time to talk about the assignment. She asks students to brainstorm ideas, she contributes some ideas of her own, and she discusses evaluation criteria for the papers, perhaps sharing a grading rubric.
- For each assignment, Professor Kalter has students bring a draft to one class. He divides into small groups and has them furnish some peer response to one another, following a review sheet he has provided.
- After each assignment, Professor Mencia selects two or three of the strongest papers and reproduces them for the entire class, then takes several minutes of class time to point out their strengths.
- Professor Karas discusses her writing process on an article she's writing, including sharing drafts with the students. Occasionally, she invites a colleague or advanced student to do the same.
- A few times a quarter, Professor Roen invites professional staff from the Writing Center to guest teach in the class, for about 45-minutes each time. These topics range from helping students generate ideas to helping them revise to helping them document sources effectively.
- Once a week, Professor Anukye leads a 15-minute discussion about a piece of writing from her field. She invites the students to "read like writers," that is, to point out the features of a text and to speculate how its writer got from blank screen to finished product.

As the essays that follow reveal, DU faculty have implemented these requirements in several creative ways, showing not only personal preferences but also the influences of their disciplinary backgrounds and the course themes.

These essays also deal with some complex issues; hence the "troubling" element in my title. For example, what's the right line between giving students too much guidance, so that writing is reduced to paint by numbers formalism, and giving them too much leeway, so that writing becomes a frustrating guessing game—and professors get works depressingly far from their expectations? To what extent should writings in these courses target educated public audiences vs. narrower academic audience, even members of disciplinary traditions? A variant on this question is whether faculty teaching in the core are representing "how we write in my field," "how academics write to one another," or "how educated people write to, say, readers, of *Harpers* magazine or trade publishing.

More questions. How do we deal with a range of writing abilities and interests, including, for example, the situation of bright international students whose English language skills necessarily differ from native speakers? How do we prioritize our own attention and teaching energies when dealing with student writings that present numerous opportunities—and challenges—yet we have finite amounts of time and expertise? How ought we to balance focus on the course content and attention to student writing, especially when faculty don't—and can't—have certain kinds of expertise teaching writing? In terms of responding and grading, are rubrics helpful, clear, and fair, or are they reductive tools of a testing culture gone rampant?

I could continue to list questions that have emerged from the workshop, but you get the point. I take it as a healthy sign, both for teaching and for the situation of writing at DU, that so many colleagues across campus are turning over these questions so thoughtfully. I hope that readers of the works that follow appreciate both the clear, confident descriptions of courses and teaching practices and the messy explorations of issues yet to be resolved.

WRITING BY NUMBERS?!

Kim Axline
Theatre
2009

One, two, thesis to do;
Three, four, cite some more;
Five, Six, grammar to fix;
Seven, Eight, my tenth "A" straight!

As I ponder my ongoing task of teaching writing to undergraduates or evaluating their work, nothing frightens me more than the daunting conviction that most students assume there is a magic rubric that will guarantee them an "easy A" if only they check off each task as they go. The arguable need to respond to their work in a more formalized way—beyond the grammatical edits and contextual notes with which I am accustomed to filling the margins of their papers—only compounds this sense that our current collegiate *zeitgeist* is more that of "writing to task" than "writing to persuade" or "writing to illuminate." And forget writing for the sheer joy of it!

Perhaps the "teach to test" mentality that most students have endured in their secondary educations is to blame; perhaps our mediatized culture somehow is. [Personally, I believe that so many students are unable to write coherent narratives today because they have read so few of them in traditional print or edited formats.] Regardless, each year I increasingly feel that the majority of our students view writing as a "to do" list rather than the most powerful of discursive and creative tools. Many of them seemingly could care less about crafting a powerful argument with nuanced reasoning and daring rhetoric; they'd rather identify the two or three "quick fixes" they can address on subsequent assignments to ensure a better grade (that being an A, of course). When that rare writer comes along who truly understands the allure and weight of the written word, it is a sheer joy to nurture and guide their efforts. Much of the time, however, I must confess to dreading student papers in my larger classes, knowing that the formulaic responses will far outnumber the truly inspired ones, and that my job will be to convince these students that they deserved the (gasp!) B they were awarded rather than truly engage with them in an evolving discourse.

Ultimately, I fear that students have lost the joy of the *journey*—learning to craft and refine a written piece in any number of styles—for the sake of the *destination*—the presumed, guaranteed A. I hope that in choosing exciting topics for class discussion and by assigning a diverse array of topics/styles, some of the enthusiasm and rigor from their verbal discourse will carry over into that of their written work. Yet I still can't shake that feeling of apprehension each time the papers come in that I'm about to be buried under several more "write by numbers" efforts from even the best-intentioned students. Writing is not necessarily a dying art, but it does seem to be suffering from some serious *rigor mortis*…

Such, at least, has been my experience with a growing number—arguably, a standing majority—of students both within my own major field of study as well as within the various General Education courses I teach. More than a decade of teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels (wildly rewarding as it has been for a variety of reasons!) has both proven this "rule" with increasing alacrity, as well as provided some notable exceptions to it. Many of the student assumptions about the nature and "numerology" of writing in this *particular* course may come from its very designation as a "CORE" course or its "Writing Intensive" moniker: for them, it's merely one last hoop to jump through in the Gen Ed curriculum prior to graduation. Their expectations for this or any other interdisciplinary course might well hinge on its required status, prompting them to think that there is a hidden rubric that their professors want them to learn and that by following a prescribed pattern they can cross off yet another category on their graduation check-list in exemplary fashion. Consequently, before I taught this course for the first time six

years ago, I found myself somewhat dreading the "write by numbers" phenomenon it might engender, much as I genuinely enjoy reading and responding to strong cases of student writing.

First and foremost, then, I sought an overall topic that might "speak to" my student audience in such a fashion that they didn't merely regard it as yet another requirement, but rather an area of personal interest and investment. Drawing from my own enduring fascination with mythological traditions and their incessant reformulation in popular culture traditions, I arrived at what I thought would be one of those elusive, "sexy" titles so many of us craft in an effort to draw in our students: "Archetypes Through the Ages: The Evolution of World Mythologies, from Osiris to Obi Wan." [And yes, if you're wondering, the first time I offered this course it coincided perfectly with the release of George Lucas's *Revenge of the Sith*; each year since then, I've had any number of block-buster movies to choose from as the required outing that ties back to our core concepts in the class.] In this fashion, I hoped to enroll students who were not merely ticking off another requirement in a time-slot that complimented their daily schedules, but rather those pop-culture savvy individuals who would take a real interest in the mediatized images of ancient archetypes that surround them on a daily basis—and, consequently, to put the time and effort into various written assignments detailing this phenomenon.

Cribbing an excellent technique from my own graduate school education, I initially envisioned a series of short papers (1-2 pages each) written in response to a series of prompts I would offer every few weeks throughout the quarter. By making the students write constantly throughout the quarter rather than in one big push at the end of the term, it was my intent to build up "muscle tone" in writing over time. Rather than sprinting in the final week(s) to collate a number of ideas and images into a grand project, they would incrementally think about smaller facets of our overall philosophical trajectory, drawing from their own experience to provide concrete examples of these trends. To my great relief (and wee bit of surprise, I must admit), these short papers elicited much better written responses than I initially expected. Furthermore, I could see demonstrable progress from those students who took the time to read both my grammatical edits and content notes on each short paper, eliminating mistakes over time and developing a more astute discourse with each new prompt or iteration. [It goes without saying that other students—those who did not pay attention to my feedback—did not make the same progress in their writing skills, but there was enough significant progress from those who did to convince me I was on to something good here.] Then, at the end of the quarter when they were required to submit the "grand project" to me synthesizing the theoretical concepts we'd explored and which they'd applied to an archetypal figure of their choice, I was pleasantly surprised to discover that the bulk of papers I received were not merely written "by the numbers" according to the criteria on the assignment sheet, but rather well considered and constructed discourses that were fuelled by personal passion and interest. The melding of topic and style through constant practice had paid off in large part, and encourage me to keep developing the course along these lines in the years that followed.

Beginning with three short papers in the first year, I refined my topics and added additional prompts in the years to follow, resulting in a course that required five short responses (now 2-3 pages each), one mid-term project (3-4 pages), and one final essay (10-12 pages)—in addition to a rather rigorous open-book exam at the midterm to ensure that students were keeping up with the reading. To be frank, the course had been "writing intensive" in terms of sheer number of pages required for some time—and yet I didn't feel that I was teaching the art of writing as effectively as I might, especially when faced with 35-40 students in a class that typically over-enrolled based on demand and where I could only dole out so much to a GTA limited to 10 hours of work a week. I consequently leapt at the chance to convert this course to a "WI" section, eliminating the midterm exam in favor of even more in-class time dedicated to teaching students how to effectively construct and persuasively argue theses from a myriad of prompts. The reduction of the class from 30(+) to 15 students will also afford me the opportunity to require re-writes and successive drafts of the shorter papers, a "luxury" I never could have managed with the larger class. Effectually, then, I have been able

not only to preserve the course's content and focus in the conversion, but also to augment it through the writing process itself, illuminating for my students in on-going written statements the on-going process of archetypal reformulation itself.

Specifically, I have the following writing exercises in place for my next "Archetypes" course, with the goal of constant, incremental writing and revision leading to a substantive, polished verbal argument at the conclusion of the quarter.

1. Define "archetype" and "stereotype" using a dictionary and your own extrapolations of these terms. How are they similar, different or connected? Provide an example of each from contemporary culture, and note if these might change over time. (1-2 pages)
2. Write your own, original Creation Myth incorporating the major themes we've encountered thus far in class. Remember, even if you subscribe to a particular religious or scientific worldview, you job is to write a fictional, hypothetical myth that covers the same "big questions" as other myths we've seen. P.S. If it's "plausible" in *your* universe, it doesn't necessarily have to be "possible" in ours. (2-3 pages)
3. Argue pro or con for the following: modern rhapsodes carry on the same essential duties as their ancient predecessors. You'll need to: define a "rhapsode," noting techniques and goals; look at 20/21c culture, determine who or what—a person/character, institution, form of media, etc.—best fulfills this ancient role (if at all!); and note if there are any telling discrepancies between the classical model and more modern examples. (2-3 pages)
4. Why do we have "Super-Heroes" in the 20/21c, while classical societies merely had "Heroes"? What's the difference, and when/why might it have come about? And why do today's "Super-Heroes" need a "secret identity," while ancient heroes did not? Has something changed in society or our ideals? (2-3 pages)
5. Using the summary provided by your readings in Bierlein's *Parallel Myths*, write a "position paper" supporting the views of Myth and Archetypes as professed by S. Freud, C. Jung <u>or</u> C. Levi-Strauss (choose one!). To do this effectively, you'll need to note how your chosen figure differs from the other two in their approaches to the purpose, function and future of these supposedly "universal" ideas and figures. (2-3 pages)

Students will henceforth be required to revise at least two of these short responses, though I'm still debating whether or not to assign which specific ones that should be or to allow the student to choose which ones (s)he wishes to re-assay. My fear with the latter scenario is that students will automatically select those responses for which they received a lower mark (more on my grading schema to follow), rather than choosing to re-write those topics which deserve the most elaboration and refinement—even if they earned a decent score for it to begin with! My inclination at present is that I will split the difference with these revisions, meaning that I will dictate a particular short response that each individual student must revise as per my notes *and* that each student will be able to select another short paper to re-work (or even the one I've selected, in yet another iteration?) within one week of its receipt. This will, ideally, both spread my own grading workload out more so throughout the quarter, as well as provide each student with a sense of agency in the selection of which piece(s) of writing they wish to refine in an attempt to improve their rhetorical skills.

Students will also be required to submit a smaller project on an "intermediary archetype" near the midterm mark, falling between the third and fourth prompts listed above. The specifics for this written assignment are as follows:

> Once you have selected an ancient archetype of which you are particularly fond (e.g. the Trickster as seen in the Norse stories of Loki), your job will be to trace the evolution of your figure over time and/or geographical distance. You need to be able to tell me what specific form this archetype took in both time(s) and place(s) (note any essential characteristics or symbols); what connections there are between the two societies (e.g. influence *a la* Greece →

Rome, or absorption *a la* Slavs → Christianity); and how each incarnation of your archetype embodies certain social or philosophical "norms" for the time and place where you find it.

Your "original" archetype can be from ANY ANCIENT CIVILIZATION we've studied in class; your "reincarnated" archetype MUST PRE-DATE THE 20TH CENTURY (i.e., come from late Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, or the 18-19th centuries). You will NOT be dealing with 20/21c archetypes until your final project…though you may well set yourself up for that by tracing a figure of interest that you can follow through at a later date right up to the modern day! You will need to turn in a slightly longer response paper (3-4 pages) to trace this "evolution," as well as additionally provide at least one image of both your "original" and "reincarnated" archetype. You will then be asked to BRIEFLY (5-7 minutes) give an overview to the class for our discussion that day.

While this assignment has always been a part of the course, the elimination of the midterm and my renewed focus on writing have increased its importance on the whole. I envision asking each student to revise and expand upon a particular portion (1-2 pages) of this project as per my response to each individual, in this fashion urging them to consider how one strand of a larger argument can be "teased out" in a meaningful way. This is perhaps *the most frequent content note* I give on student papers overall (i.e. "develop this idea in greater depth!"), and avoids the potential pitfall of students revising a short project by merely tweaking or "padding" out small parts of it on the whole.

It is my ardent hope and intent that the preceding writing "practice" has then adequately prepared the student to undertake the final project for the course, which must address the following criteria:

As a culminating experience for this course, you now get to choose a specific contemporary archetype that resonates with you on a personal level, and then connect that "ground" figure or idea with both an urban legend (folktale) and a mythological antecedent (source). Specifically, you will need to identify the following in a **10-12 page essay** (exclusive of the required iconography):

1. **A single modern-day (mid 20c-21c) archetype**, enumerating what it/they stand(s) for in the popular consciousness.
2. **A single modern urban legend** that deals with a similar theme/mythic construct as your chosen archetype, noting in what ways it is similar &/or different.
3. **A single classical mythological "source" (figure, idea)** that you can plausibly argue was the model for your modern archetype, noting similarities & differences.
4. **An overview of your personal credo** as to WHY myths exist, HOW myths work, and in what way your chosen figures "MIRROR" their respective cultures (accounting for differences between eras and ideologies). In essence, what are the meanings and methods of "archetypes through the ages," as SPECIFICALLY evidenced by your chosen materials.
5. **An iconography** providing visual "proof" of #1, 2, 3.

You may address the preceding elements in whatever order or style best serves your argument—just be sure to address all of them somewhere in your paper. Assume your audience is educated yet not familiar with the specific terminology or tropes covered in our class (i.e., you will need to briefly define your terms). You should make frequent use of the *critical readings* in this course to substantiate your hypotheses, as well as the *Encyclopedia of Urban Legends* (on reserve); but also feel free to *intelligently speculate* if there are no "experts" to back up your particular point of view. Ideally, by choosing an area of personal interest, this assignment will be both exciting and challenging, synthesizing the many concepts we've broached in this course thus far.

While these final projects have, to date, been surprisingly strong on the whole, I believe the course's renewed focus on persuasive writing techniques will bolster the overall quality of these arguments. It has always been my intent that the short response prompts and the midterm project would all "feed into" the final project in some fashion, as each raises a vital point of discussion and broaches issues of cultural transmission

in line with the goals of the culminating essay. Indeed, over the years I have increasingly stressed to my students that all of their previous written work in the course has been a preparation for the final written project: while they cannot merely "recycle" the shorter papers wholesale into the longer one, the additive process of their various written responses can and should contribute to the larger discussion I'm asking them to engage in here. Thus, I am hoping to gradually lead them into the thoughtful construction of a grand written argument step-by-step, rather than asking them to create one *en toto* during the harried final weeks of the quarter. With the relative "luxury" of added time to respond to student writing and a reduced number of writers on the whole, I am confident that my attempt to guide them incrementally to an evolving, well-informed narrative will help alleviate the "write by numbers" phenomenon I so fear from my student authors; and maybe, just maybe, they'll start to conceive of writing as a process of investigation, revision, and collation rather than a singular "mind dump" in response to discrete criteria.

On the subject of grading the shorter responses, I can confidently say that a "sliding scale" of check-pluses and check-minuses has worked rather well through the years, particularly in urging the students to consider their overall progression as a writer rather than the concrete numerical scores they so crave and expect. If a student has addressed the core components of the assignment in an adequate fashion (with no egregious grammatical errors or leaps of logic), then they earn a solid "check" for their efforts. If a student falls short of this mark by omitting an element of the prompt or due to disruptive grammar, syntax or logic, then they earn a "check-(minus)" for this work. If a student surpasses the basic requirements and displays solid writing skills and rhetoric throughout, then (s)he earns a "check-(plus)." Finally, in those rare cases when a student produces a truly exemplary piece of work in both form and content, greatly surpassing my expectations for the given assignment, then they may earn the elusive "check-plus." The benefit of this grading system—apart from removing the numerical scores that seem to obsess most students today—is that it gives me room for a bit of "subjectivity" in that I can reward those students whose work consistently climbs the grading scale throughout the quarter, without having to "bend" literal numbers in the grade-book. For the midterm projects, the students *are* given a numerical score on a 100-point scale; but this is accompanied by a grading rubric addressing such criteria as focus, details, connections between ideas, iconography, etc. This rubric will then be re-applied to the portion of the written project I am requiring that they re-write as of this year. And on the final project—which, alas, very few students over the years have actually picked up the following quarter!—the students will be given two grades out of a 100-point scale, one for content and one for style. These grades are then averaged for a final project grade, and collated with the preceding short responses to arrive at a course grade. In this fashion, the bulk of their performance in the course (in addition to daily participation) is dependent on successive writing assignments and revisions, yet I have allowed for a "sliding scale" with the check (+/-) system throughout the quarter that emphasizes quality over quantity and rewards studied application and process more than a straight numerical scale for each paper.

I have, incidentally, employed a similar style of short responses and a sliding grade scale for my First Year Seminar throughout the years. It may be worth noting that not only are these freshmen less indoctrinated in the "write by numbers" approach than their upperclassmen peers seem to be of late, but on the rare occasion that I have a former FSEM student subsequently join my CORE class their written performance tends to exceed that of those classmates who have not been consistently exposed to these types of assignments. Now, I can in no way infer that this approach is better (or worse) than others I have encountered, but merely that it beneficially addresses my specific fears of the "write by numbers" phenomenon that seems to be increasing with the years. In conjunction with the Writing Program's focus on style<u>s</u> of rhetoric and writing, and in support of the soon-to-be implemented Advanced Seminars, it remains my steadfast hope that students can and will be introduced to writing as a "way of life" and the strongest tool in their personal or professional arsenal, and not merely the formulaic product of a "to-do list" that we—their very professors—may have inadvertently held up as the standard to meet. In facing my own demons when it comes to assigning writing in the classroom, I hope to re-write the norm for my students as well, ultimately arriving at a far more productive "archetype" for the process of writing itself.:

One, two, think it through;
Three, four, revise it some more;
Five, Six, can't rely on tricks;
Seven, Eight, I've got worlds to create!

CULTURE OF DESIRE: QUEER THEORY

Luc Beaudoin
Languages and Literature
2008

In the 2008-2009 academic year, I will be teaching CORE 2531: Culture of Desire: Queer Theory as a writing-intensive Core course. The theme is Self and Identities, and the course is built around the nature of identity, primarily looking at the way (self-)identity is constructed through linguistic means. In the syllabus, I give the following blurb as a course overview: "The course examines the nature of gay male and lesbian desire and identity as reflected through the prism of queer theory and as exemplified through national politics, literature, film, and art in general. Queer theory posits an Other that is usually defined through society, and particularly through artistic and linguistic means, hence the role of literature and any art form that uses some sort of 'text' (such as film, ballet, music, etc.). This course is not really intended to answer questions, but it will try to make you ask questions that will eventually bring up even more questions. This course is also not intended to be an exercise in identity politics. The course is divided into three broad areas: sexuality, queer theory, and identity. This course is also writing-intensive, which means that I will try to work with you on your written expression as much as possible." We approach the concept of identity with readings ranging from Michel Foucault's *Introduction to Sexuality* to Didier Eribon's *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self.*

The course title likely is one of the reasons why the class attracts a diverse audience. While I do not get the student who picks Core classes to fit her or his schedule, I do get a wide variety of seriously interested students: gay and lesbian students who are looking, somehow, for an affirmation within DU's academic structure; "allies" -- people who have close gay friends and family who are taking the course as a gesture of solidarity and eagerness to understand; the open-minded "straight" student, who is just as eager to experience something new and different. The differing expectations make this course a challenging one to teach, especially since I try to make certain that the course is not an "exercise in identity politics." It is impossible not to have some of those issues pop up during the course, but I try to continually keep things focused on the construction and shifts of identity as much possible, as opposed to politicizing what identities may be.

Perhaps my struggle to keep topics relentlessly intellectual and academic as possible is what makes students often say that they argue and discuss class topics late into the night, which is gratifying. Given this sort of expectation and engagement, it seems to me that this class is an ideal writing-intensive Core class: writing gives the students a chance to process what they are learning, and, frequently, a reason to receive my personalized feedback. But it is suited to be writing-intensive is a rather personal way, because, ultimately, the writing that takes place is an exchange between the students and me. Peer reviewing, for instance, would only work with difficulty because the writing students produce, even when on topic with an intellectualized approach with queer theory, is often quite personal and revelatory.

Given all of these dynamics, I try to start the course with a bang, by shocking the class into heated discussion. I screen the 2003 documentary *Capturing the Friedmans*, by director Andrew Jarecki. The film is about a family -- the Friedmans -- in Great Neck, New York, during the 1980s. Allegations of serial sexual child abuse are filed against the father Arnold, and against one of the sons, Jesse. This film not only forces the audience to consider the impact of the sexual abuse of children, but also to consider the ties that sexual abuse all too often has to homosexuality: the outsider role of both pedophilia and homosexuality are reinforced by interviews with various members of the police force. Since the film is significantly tied together by the Friedman's passion for videotaping their lives, my course can

begin with a discussion of our chosen self-perception and how it is seen and used by others to categorize us. Once we have investigated some of these general ideas, the course continues with an overview into the history of sex and sexuality as tied to identity and difference.

We start with historical perspectives on sexuality, reading articles about the social construction of same-sex desire, pairing that with James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*. That, in turn, leads us to a discussion of race, sexuality, and queer theory. We then move to the invention of heterosexuality as a concept that is developed specifically to oppose homosexuality. Discussing the origins of these dueling ideas leads us to an examination of peoples in New Guinea where "homosexuality" (as we would see it) is practiced by a majority of people and, in a sense, institutionalized. Our travels then take us to very late Soviet Ukraine, where (male) homosexuality was criminalized. We finish with an exploration of gender identity, Jacques Lacan, and the use of sexual categories in countries and societies around the world.

I confess that I have used this class as one of the original writing-intensive pilots in the Core, but I always viewed the concept as a way to work with students more individually on their understanding of the course, instead of guiding them in their writing as well as in the topics of the course. The workshop I attended in March, 2008, really drew my attention to the idea that we need to teach our students how to write: not in the way that we are writing teachers exactly, but in the fashion that we need to explain what writing -- and thinking -- in fact are. The practice of writing is crucial, but someone needs to walk students through what it is. It is something that I did not do before, mainly on account of the fact that I felt that the writing in this class is so personal. But talking about writing does not have to as intimate. As a result, I will be spending about 15 to 20 minutes every week talking about writing, specifically here in the context of this course's topics. It is too easy for students to slide from talking about the conceptions of (sexual) identity to value judgments, positive or negative. Talking about writing -- how these thoughts are structured -- will not only help the students' writing, but also help avoid that certain pitfall. That, in turn, will help them integrate the personal with the academic ever better in their written work.

I try to organize the writing assignments in a spiral of intensity so that they match, in a sense, the complexity of the topics we discuss. I will quickly cover these assignments, which I developed for the Core writing-intensive workshop. While I will be developing more assignments as the course progresses, these now form the backbone of the course. The first assignment is an informal, exploratory writing assignment that encourages the students to process the *Friedman* film:

> We have just finished watching the film *Capturing the Friedmans* (2003). Write for ten minutes, where you explore your reactions to the film -- specifically addressing whether you think Arnold and Jesse Friedman are guilty of child molestation. Grammar and punctuation are not important here, only the depth of your reaction. Are few of you (including me, if you like) will be called upon to read your thoughts to the class.

It is important to me that I share in the experience of writing with the students themselves: something I would not have thought of prior to the workshop. What better way to give a message about the process of writing, particularly since I am trying to intimate to my students, by beginning with this film, the challenges ahead? By writing with them, I am letting them know that I also have to deal with these issues as I teach. This writing assignment, I think, also indicates to these students (most of whom are really quite highly motivated in the class) that I am valuing thought and reaction simultaneously.

I will be following this assignment with another informal one assignment the following week, regarding the novel *Giovanni's Room*. I have found that students have difficulty reconciling Baldwin's novel with their own lives: it is almost as though they view the novel as a parody of what they see their own immediate experience as being. Once they get deeper into a discussion of the novel's development, however, they begin to understand the function of labels that are, it seems, a series of large semiotic circles that intersect one another in a type of Venn diagram

fashion: man-gay-queer overlapping in multiple sets with prostitute-faggot-murder. The informal assignment allows them to begin the exploration of these questions prior to class discussion:

> Write for ten minutes, where you explore whether you think that David and Giovanni are gay in Baldwin's novel *Giovanni's Room*. What makes them gay -- or not? Grammar and punctuation are not important here, only the depth of your reaction. Are few of you (including me, if you like) will be called upon to read your thoughts to the class.

Baldwin's novel is our first opening to the idea that categories of identity may, indeed, be only something that we absorb from the world around us, and this writing exercise should be crucial in getting that conversation going.

So far I have covered informal assignments. The first formal assignment revolves around the construction of heterosexuality as a category. It is an assignment worth 10% of the student's final grade. Again, the student is encouraged to react to something that is provocative, but, this time, the reaction must be written as a paper that needs to reveal some reflection and thought:

> Writing in the first-person, explore your reaction to the following quotation from Jonathan Ned Katz's *Invention of Heterosexuality* (1995), a book in which Katz argues at length that normative heterosexuality is a reaction to the establishment of homosexuality as a category of identity.
>
> "In the first years of the twentieth century, with Freud's and other medical men's help, the nineteenth century's tentative, ambiguous heterosexual concept was stabilized, fixed, and widely distributed as the ruling sexual orthodoxy -- The Heterosexual Mystique -- the idea of an essential, eternal, normal heterosexuality. As the term heterosexual moved out of the small world of medical discourse into the big world of the American mass media, the heterosexual idea moved from abnormal to normal, and from normal to normative." (Katz, 82)
>
> Explain the premise of Katz's argument and then respond to it. Your paper should be 5 to 6 pages in length. This essay is worth 10% of your final grade.

This paper gives the student an opportunity to engage personally with Katz's work, which is a somewhat idiosyncratic historical view of the development of sexuality. Students read this work after Foucault's *A History of Sexuality*, so they are ready to react both personally and in an informed academic manner. I will be meeting with the students individually after this assignment, both in order to work with them on their writing, but also to push them in their assumptions about identity.

The next informal assignment achieves the same goal. We screen part of the 2000 documentary film, *Keep the River on Your Right*, which records Tobias Schneebaum's return to New Guinea to his husband in a society where "homosexuality" is expected and cannibalism occurs. Like the *Friedman* film earlier, queerness is portrayed, at least implicitly, as something that is broader than sexual activity. Earlier in the course, we will have discussed sexual practices and sexual identity: how can a woman be a lesbian yet be only in heterosexual relationships? How can heterosexual men, who do not identify as gay at all, enjoy being penetrated, or, even, involved in a monagamous relationship with a man? How can a man attracted to women become a woman himself and then be attracted to men? These discussions lead us into this assignment:

> In this class, we have watched a segment of the documentary *Keep The River On Your Right*, in which you have seen that in certain societies everyone engages in "homosexual" behavior as much as "heterosexual." We have also discussed the fact that in the United States there are straight men in gay long-term sexual relationships with another man. Imagine that you are

> Dan Savage, writing a draft column for "Savage Love" in which you are going to take apart the issue of sexual identity by referring to both of these facts. Grammar and punctuation are not important here, only your thoughts and reactions.

As an informal assignment, it is more guided, because by this point the students have been familiarized with identity constructions for quite a number of weeks. Whether the column really reads like Dan Savage is not important, but the sense of irony Savage brings to his writing is (and the students will have read some excerpts from Savage's work).

The problems with labels guide the next formal assignment in the course. *The Wrath of Dionysus*, a 1910 novel by Evdokia Nagrodskaia, was one of the boulevard novels printed in Saint Petersburg between 1905 and 1917. These novels typically were intended to be sensationalist, and, often, tried to tackle the topic of same-sex love. Nagrodskaia's novel is no exception: in it, the heroine Tania discovers her true (lesbian) nature through painting and art. The novel's plot is inconsequential, but the conceptualization of sexual identity permeates it. It is, as such, an interesting experiment for students to do some formal work in questions of sexual identity, as reflected in cultural and temporal difference:

> At the conclusion of Evdokia Nagrodskaia's 1910 novel, *The Wrath of Dionysus*, Alexander Vikentevich explains to the heroine Tania what he thinks drives her identity: "Tatiana Alexandrovna, you are a *man*. You only have the body of a woman. You're feminine, soft, and gracious -- but you're still a man. If one looks at you as a woman, your character appears quite original and complex. But as a man, you're plain and simple." (Nagrodskaia, 182).
>
> While he later uses the word "lesbian" in his speech to Tania, Alexander Vikentevich is, in fact, talking about transgenderism. Respond to his analysis of Tania in an essay of 4 to 5 pages. This essay is worth 10% of your final grade.

This paper gives students the opportunity to engage with the book in a fashion that is quite unexpected, and they are, by this point of the course, able to argue some subtle elements of sexual and gender identity.

The final paper in the course is an attempt to encapsulate the work that the students have done over the quarter, while letting them explore on their own. I refer to "current cultural discussions" in my instructions for this assignment, and the students have had the opportunity throughout the course to see what is meant, and how broadly they can take things. This paper is worth 15% of the final grade in the course.

> In this course, we have -- are -- exploring the nature of sexual identity. We have looked at language, cultural norms, physical drives, psychology, and philosophy. Didier Eribon writes in *Insult and the Making of the Gay Self* (2004), one of our more recent readings:
> "For the project of *Madness and Civilization*, as it is given in the 1961 preface (which Foucault removed from the 1972 republication), was to inaugurate the vast future work of a 'history of limits,' of gestures that establish borders, 'gestures that are obscure and necessarily forgotten once performed, whereby a culture refuses something that will come to function as its Outside.'" (Eribon, 265)
> Beginning with this quotation from Eribon, expand on the connection between madness as explained by Foucault and (homo)sexuality. First analyze the meaning of this view of Foucault's work, which Eribon admits is not easily interpretable in this fashion. Then expand for the remainder of the paper your application of this interpretation to current cultural discussions in the United States or your own home country. Feel free to use the

discussions we have had in class as a starting point. For the second part you will need to refer to sources we have have read/watched in class (including *Madness and Civilization*, excerpts of which we have also read in class), as well as do research on your own (using the library, current magazines and newspapers, and the Internet). Cite sources using any academic style you are comfortable with (but remain consistent). Your essay should be between 10-12 pages. It will be graded for clarity of thought and is worth 15% of your final grade.

Prior to the paper, I will have handed out my grading criteria for the paper. I have always resisted providing my students with this sort of statement, because, in a way, I think that I am afraid of being cornered, of somehow being forced to grade in a way that is more mechanical than I would like. But the wonder of criteria is that they actually provide for that sort of inventiveness and they encourage students to actually try (it is the papers that do not have that sort of "umph" that get "C"s). Here are my criteria:

Required Elements: Will get a grade in the "C" range if met:

1. There is an introductory section on the Eribon quotation.
2. You bring in cultural viewpoints and discussions from class discussions in your paper.
3. You expand with items from other sources.
4. Those sources are properly identified, and fit your argument for the most part.
5. You are trying to expand the Eribon viewpoint beyond its original intention, but not always logically: more passion than reason.
6. The paper is generally understandable and well-organized, with occasional confusing sections.
7. You stick to one academic style for your citations.
8. The paper generally understandable, with frequent errors in mechanics (grammar, spelling, punctuation).

Superior Elements: Will get a grade in the "B" range if met:

1. The introductory section on the Eribon quotation engages with an expanded interpretation of limits and outsiderness.
2. Class discussions on cultural viewpoints are smoothly expanded into items culled from further research.
3. You are successfully expanding the Eribon viewpoint beyond its original intention, with only occasional relapses into passion instead of reason.
4. The paper is understandable and generally well-organized
5. The paper has few errors in mechanics (grammar, spelling, punctuation).

Extraordinary Elements: Will get a grade in the "A" range if met:

1. The introductory section on the Eribon quotation smoothly brings in the overall tone of the paper in engaging with discussions of cultural otherness and difference.
2. Class discussions on cultural viewpoints are merged seamlessly with further research.
3. The paper's style embodies the contradictions presented by the conception of otherness and limits, revealing unexpected correlations between the concepts presented -- keeping with the original spirit of the Eribon interpretation of Foucault.
4. The paper discusses questions fully.
5. The paper flows smoothly and has no confusing sections.
6. There are no errors in mechanics (grammar, spelling, punctuation).

With this assignment, the course ends. I hope that the students will have been able to both work on their perception of writing, and engage more fully with the topics of the class. I think that the writing element of this course is central to its mission. In a way, I feel even more convinced of that centrality after attending the Core writing-intensive workshop. That workshop was revelatory -- I was struck at the variety of ways that faculty guide their students in their writing. There are those who specify each step of research and writing that their students must do. Others are much looser in instructions, but subtly try to achieve the same result. What is common is the desire to really have students learn the material and learn to think through it. Writing is crucial in this exercise, and having the opportunity to teach this Core class as writing-intensive is central to the goals of all of our courses. I can think of few ways of teaching that are more satisfying, and I look forward to teaching this course again, with that much more eagerness!

AMERICAN UTOPIAS, ON PAPER AND IN PRACTICE:

David Ciepley
Political Science
2008

The United States may be regarded as the world's utopian hothouse, not only because of the sizeable dose of utopianism in its literature and political thought, but also because of the numerous communities that have been launched here to put utopia into practice. Indeed, its first significant English colony, the Massachusetts Bay Colony, was a quasi-utopian venture to build a Holy Commonwealth, a New Israel, in New England. This course examines American utopian ideals and the troubled attempts to institute them in lived human communities.

The first weeks of the course are definitional and historical. We will explore several operative definitions of "utopia" and discuss the advantages, for analytic purposes, of adopting a narrow and precise definition over a loose, expansive one. The specific definition with which the course will work comes from Krishan Kumar, who distinguishes utopian literature—a specific product of Western European civilization—from the more commonplace cultural visions of a past Golden Age or a future Elysium. A utopia is an envisioned society characterized by social harmony and general human well-being that, from the author's point of view, could in principle be realized, using humans more or less as they are, and using entirely human (as opposed to divine) means. We give this definition specific content by looking briefly at the two main tributaries that together formed the Western utopian tradition: Christian millennialism, which gave the tradition is vision of peace, prosperity, and human concord; and Greek rationalism, which contributed the notion that this could be brought about through wholly human means (in effect, accomplishing through human rationality what the Bible promised through divine intervention).

The remainder of the course centers on five case studies, five American visions of utopia. The first—the Puritan attempt to build a Holy Commonwealth—was not utopian in Kumar's strict sense, because it conceived of itself as reliant on divine aid. Nevertheless, the case is a fitting place to start because the Puritans introduced into the United States the millenarian impulse that would fuel so many subsequent American utopian experiments. Furthermore, it is a classic, well-documented case of the compromises that typically must be made in institutionalizing an ideal vision. As a theoretical framework for analyzing the process of institutionalization, Max Weber's writings on the institutionalization of charisma will be introduced. As their first formal written assignment, students will be asked to assess Weber's framework using the Puritan case.

The next case is Bellamy's Marxist industrial utopia, as presented in *Looking Backward*, a wildly popular novel of the late 19th century. We will read Marx's "Communist Manifesto" along side it, and for their second paper, students will be asked to assess what was gained and what lost in Bellamy's translation of Marx into an American idiom. In class, we will also tease out the traces of Christian millenarianism in both Bellamy's and Marx's visions of the future.

The third case study is B.F. Skinner's vision, presented in *Walden Two*, of a social-scientifically engineered utopian community. This will be paired with a fourth case—Twin Oaks, a 1960s era commune which is still going strong and which was, in its inception, meant to pattern exactly Skinner's vision in *Walden Two* (although it was quickly transformed by an influx of hippies carrying very different "back to the land" ideals). We will read selections from the writings of Katherine Kincaid, co-founder of Twin Oaks, on the early years of the commune and the compromises that they, like the Puritans, found themselves forced to make. As a special event, students will have an opportunity to interview, via video link, two current, longtime members of Twin Oaks.

The above three cases interlock closely. Marx was the inspiration for Bellamy, who was the inspiration for Skinner, who was the inspiration for Katherine Kincaid and her fellow founders of

Twin Oaks. In comparing these cases, a pattern emerges: as the utopian vision comes closer to institutionalization, the imagined society contracts in size and wealth. Marx imagined a universal civilization of great bounty. Bellamy imagined a similarly bountiful society on the scale of the individual American states. By the time we get to Skinner and Kincaid, the aspiration is for a 1000 person, middle-class community. Finally, the Twin Oaks reality is a community of 100 persons who live in what might be called dignified poverty. For their third paper, students will be asked to reflect on this phenomena. What is it about the nature of humans that brings utopian ideals, in the cases where they have been made workable, down to such a small scale? As an alternative, students may--on the basis of what they have learned about human nature from our readings in genetics, theology, sociology, and political theory, and given the history of Twin Oaks--address the question of whether "engineered cooperation" is happy or unhappy, free or unfree.

For our final case, we will examine the contemporary utopian visions of Ray Kurzweil and other prophets of the information age, whose ideas populate our current futurist fantasies, in both utopian and dystopian inflection. Class discussion will, among other things, ponder the question of why a new technology, identically understood, may generate both utopian and dystopian visions. The final assignment is to draw on these readings to write the first four pages of their very own utopian novel, using a creative mix of standard literary devices in utopian literature (for example, the protagonist as a traveler, or sleeper). This will also be an exercise in examining their own ideals and views about human nature.

With each of the above five cases, we will examine not only the particular utopia, but the political and social context of its generation, in order to understand the kinds of conditions under which these generally available ingredients of millenarianism and rationalism are catalyzed into utopian visions. Catalysts receiving emphasis are political and social oppression (Puritans, Bellamy) and the advent of major new physical or social technologies—that is, new modes of rational control (Bellamy, Skinner, Kurzweil). This will allow the students to appreciate how utopian literature often functions as social criticism of the existing order. We will also use our cases to reflect on the tension between the human idealization of, and genuine capacity for, peaceful cooperation, and the human passions of pride and vanity that generate violent competition. As part of this, we will examine the means that each author proposes for eliminating or deflecting the passion of pride, and as part of their final creative writing assignment, students will be asked to show how their own utopian vision deals with this problem.

Among the objectives of the course is to convey to the students the following skills:

1) An ability to fairly evaluate an abstract theoretical framework on the basis of empirical case studies (Weber's institutionalization thesis applied to the case of the Puritans).

2) An ability to recognize a common social ideal articulated within two distinct cultural traditions, and to discern the different inflections given it by these traditions (the case of Marxism in America).

3) An appreciation of the tension between utopian ideals of cooperation and human impulses toward competition, from the perspective of genetics, theology, sociology, and political theory.

4) An ability to reflect critically on one's own ideals—theological, economic, social, and political—in light of the consequences of efforts to put them into practice.

5) An ability to recognize and use the literary devices of utopian fiction.

In keeping with a writing-intensive course, these desired course outcomes will be primarily evaluated through written work. The first two weeks of definitional and historical materials will be accompanied by a two-page reaction paper. Thereafter will follow three five-page essays (the first of which all students are required to revise after an in-class peer review process, and the second or third of which all students are invited to revise after instructor's grading) and a final four-page creative writing assignment. I may also collect reading notes at various points during the quarter, or assign a second reaction paper. In the first session of week 4, I will devote one hour to a presentation on the elements of a successful introductory paragraph and to a small-group exercise devoted to generating an introduction (successfully used in my FSEM). In the second session of week 4, one hour will be devoted to an in-class peer review of complete drafts of the first paper, using a rubric provided by me and with my

oversight. In week 5, I will distribute excerpts from some of the more successfully written papers, and we will discuss why they were a success. I may repeat this last exercise for the second or third paper, if warranted.

"WEALTH, POWER, AND JUSTICE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION:" REFLECTION ON THE WRITING COMPONENT FOR CORE 2414

Lisa Conant
Political Science
2008

My core course explores the progression of regional integration that formally began with six states in the European Coal and Steel Community in the 1950s and continues today among the twenty-seven member states of the European Union (EU). Peaceful, voluntary integration constitutes a dramatic contrast with preceding centuries of European warfare and unification through military conquest. A central question for the class is why states that recently fought two world wars chose to merge their destinies with a common market, a single currency, and a binding "supranational" legal system. We focus on the evolution of economic and political interests in integration and the legal pressures that erode state sovereignty today. As a "24" series core course that examines the relationship of "communities and their environments," we pay particular attention to the extent to which economic and political developments within the domestic and international environments motivated national communities to form a regional community that transcends the nation-state (supranationalism).

I have been teaching the course in a writing-intensive format for a few years since I participated in the original "Marsico pilot" of writing-intensive courses and preferred to continue teaching with writing as a major mechanism through which students engage the course material. As a result, I have experimented with a variety of writing assignments and am currently fairly satisfied with the mix of assignments for this course. My current approach involves two types of writing assignments, both of which are formal.

First, students in cooperative learning groups of three students each write a series of 2-3 page typed essays during class about once a week. I assign students to the cooperative learning groups on the basis of diversity in major, GPA, and gender, and students remain in the same groups all quarter. For these "written analyses," one group of three students essentially writes one essay together. They must take turns at being the "scribe" who does most of the typing on the laptop, although they tend to pass the laptop around a bit as they work through the material and revise their writing. Each group submits their analysis to me as an email attachment that I print out, comment on, and return as a hard copy.

The questions that their essays must address ask the students to analyze an issue from the assigned readings. One example would be "Explain how the EU exercises influence and leadership in the world, drawing on the texts by Mark Leonard and John McCormick. Discuss specific examples of successful EU approaches in international economics and politics." I intend the written analysis assignments as "writing-to-learn" exercises that encourage students to read carefully and reflect on ideas in the text. In this particular example, most students think of the EU as anything but a leader in world politics given its lack of an "EU" military and its difficulty coordinating a single EU position on issues such as the war in Iraq. Yet, the EU has come to exert a powerful influence in international economics and a more subtle influence in international politics that I would like them to be aware of and critically evaluate.

My priorities in grading these assignments are (in descending importance) the extent to which the essay (1) reflects an understanding of central ideas from the reading, (2) justifies its claims with specific and relevant evidence from the readings, and (3) reads coherently in paragraphs and complete sentences. I also expect that students practice acknowledging their sources in the format required for the individual papers that constitute the other primary type of writing assignment in the course. Each written analysis is worth ten points, and a bonus extra credit point can be earned if all group members correctly answer a quiz question based on the analysis.

Groups earning 90 percent of the possible points (not including the bonus points) on all written analyses will earn an A for 20 to 25 percent of the course grade. I provide the extra credit bonus points to motivate all members to participate actively and take a stake in each other's learning, and students evaluate each others' contributions as well. I use the student evaluations of fellow group members and my own observations of individual performance within the groups to improve or demote the "group grade" by a +/- that an individual receives.

Students typically take about 50-80 minutes to complete one analysis, so this approach requires a substantial amount of class time. While students discuss the question and write, I circulate around the room answering questions, posing questions to those who have a simplistic answer that needs much more exploration and substantiation, and reading segments of their writing. I have found that the investment of class time is worthwhile because I see evidence of improved mastery of basic course content in quizzes and improved argumentation in individual papers. Compared to a more conventional approach with only lectures and class-wide discussion, where it often seems that only a select group of students really does the reading, I observe everyone grappling with ideas from the reading. They are also discussing writing issues on a weekly basis as they quibble about how to articulate ideas and construct paragraphs.

The second primary writing assignment involves two papers of approximately seven pages each, written individually by each student. One is submitted around the mid-quarter and one at the time of the final exam session. These papers are substitutes for midterm and final "exams." I provide specific questions and expect only assigned readings as source material, but the questions are much broader than the weekly written analyses, requiring students to reflect on and synthesize ideas from five weeks of readings and lectures for the first paper, and from the entire quarter for the second paper. The two papers address issues related to major learning objectives for the course, where they critically assess issues such as (1) the extent to which the contemporary institutions of the EU transcend the system of sovereign states that originated in Europe and characterized world politics for the past five hundred years, (2) the future potential for a single currency and cross-national mobility to forge a common European identity among "EU citizens" in the communities that pioneered nationalism two hundred years ago, and (3) the relative importance and interaction of economic, legal, and political pressures for European integration at different points in the postwar era. There is not a "right" answer to the questions assigned for these papers, and students are exposed to a range of theoretical perspectives on the particular question that they consider. I evaluate the papers foremost in terms of the quality of the argumentation and the extent to which it reflects a comprehensive understanding of the history of European integration as it has been presented to them as well as the competing theoretical interpretations of that history.

These papers have a "dual deadline," which includes an initial deadline for a complete draft for the purposes of an in-class peer review session, and then a second deadline to submit a polished draft to me that I grade. The deadlines are two to five days apart (usually two for the first paper and four or five for the second paper). The students review the two papers of the other two students in their cooperative learning group, and receive feedback from those two students on their own paper. After inviting writing instructors from the Writing Center to lead one of these sessions this past fall, I have changed my approach to guiding students through peer review. In the past, I distributed a sheet that included a series of questions to consider as they read papers that involved issues of argumentation, organization, and basic mechanics. This was overwhelming, and most students simply edited what others wrote, focusing on correcting spelling and grammatical errors. The writing instructors guided the students to focus on what is most important in my grading criteria: issues of argumentation and supporting claims with evidence. I have adopted this approach, and student evaluations of how helpful peer review is have gone up, and I also see improved argumentation in the second drafts that are submitted to me. During peer review, I circulate among students and look at components of their draft that they have concerns about and answer questions that arise as they read each other's work. I deduct a full letter grade on the final paper grade for anyone who does not (1)

bring a reasonably complete draft that is written in sentences and paragraphs and (2) make a serious effort to provide feedback to others on their drafts.

I expect these papers to conform to political science norms, which includes a "thesis" that essentially answers the paper question in the first paragraph, along with an organizational "road map" that indicates how subsequent discussions will proceed to substantiate the thesis. We discuss this basic format in class, and how it usually emerges after a significant degree of drafting and revision. Students who have taken a number of political science courses before may takes notes and outlines and refrain from formal drafting until they can formulate a first paragraph with a tentative roadmap, but many will produce an entire draft before they are prepared to identify their thesis and go back and restructure and revise their discussions into a more coherent argument that they can then present in a formal introduction. Students at the University of Denver have improved tremendously at this task in recent years. Changes in the writing curriculum have largely coincided with a substantial improvement in the class ranks and test scores of incoming students (and increasing numbers with AP and IB credits), so this improvement in basic structure that I observe may be over determined, but I welcome it in any case. In my experience, if students have a "good" introduction by the standards of political science, they usually have an analytical paper that develops and supports an argument. The quality of the argumentation still varies in terms of ambition, creativity, and plausibility, but the paper has typically moved beyond unqualified assertions of opinion and lengthy description. By contrast, most of the descriptive narratives that include an accurate reporting of facts, but little to no argumentation, do not have a "good" introduction.

More generally, I evaluate papers on the extent to which they (1) demonstrate an understanding of course material, (2) develop a consistent argument based on relevant reasoning and evidence, (3) organize discussions in a coherent manner, (4) articulate ideas clearly, using the English language correctly and (5) provide adequate acknowledgment of sources with appropriate citation. I determine the letter grade on the basis of the first three criteria, and +/- on the basis of the last two criteria, with the exception of plagiarized papers, which result in F's. I have used a rubric for many years that I have been tweaking periodically, and after the writing workshop that I attended in June 2008, I now plan to make a significant change to the existing rubric. In the past, the rubric has helped me to communicate expectations to students (who receive the rubric before submitting the paper) and helped me to grade more efficiently and fairly. Observing the range of rubrics presented in the workshop, and experiencing such a dramatic improvement in student writing I graded this year, I now seek to develop a simpler, but also more demanding rubric, to differentiate between papers that meet essential criteria and those that genuinely display creativity, nuance, and sophistication.

I worry that integrating what others called an "x factor" into the rubric will make the grading look more subjective and may result in a lot more student complaints, but I want to try to differentiate among papers given that 1-2 students in a class of 25 write papers that are truly extraordinary while 10-12 write what I would have considered to be a solid A in the past. Even two years ago, fewer than five students in 25 would have written an "A" according to my existing rubric. I want to challenge our top students and do not want these talented students to look at the current rubric and "coast" to an easy A. I typically offer the opportunity to revise papers after students receive a grade from me, but I do not require revisions. In my experience, requiring revisions only results in many submissions of papers with minor changes, usually the fixing of any errors that were noted. The first paper is usually worth 20 to 25 percent of the course grade, and the second paper is usually worth 30 percent of the course grade.

Constituting 70 to 80 percent of the course grade, the writing components of the course are central to my evaluation of the students' engagement with course material. Through the writing assignments, I hope that students learn about the major postwar developments in European integration and critically reflect on the implications that these developments have for the prospects for (1) peace in regions characterized by endemic conflicts, (2) greater democratic accountability in international

arenas, and (3) norms to guide relations between communities of variable prosperity and power. As students encounter the central questions that integration scholars pose and research, students cannot "guess" what the "answers" are, but must actively engage in thinking about the issues in order to write out short in-class essays and their longer individual papers. They must enter into a dialogue at least with two other students and myself as they prepare their short written analyses and their longer individual papers. By practicing how to construct arguments supported by logical reasoning and empirical evidence, I hope that they will also learn a skill that I think is useful in a variety of settings beyond academia. I particularly hope that they might begin to recognize the difference between the assertion of opinions unsupported by any compelling logic or systematically gathered facts and the articulation of arguments that are supported by plausible reasoning and valid evidence.

GOOD VIBRATIONS: ELECTRONIC MUSIC, TECHNOLOGY, AND CULTURE

Ron DeLyser
Electrical and Computer Engineering
2008

"Good Vibrations - Electronic Music: Technology and Culture" is my first Thematic Core class, presented for the first time in Fall 2007. My teaching background is in the areas of engineering electromagnetics, electronics, computational methods in engineering and electromagnetics, engineering mathematics, engineering signals and systems, and recently, engineering economics and ethics. My experience teaching general education consists of a foundations course and a Core course, both under the previous system of general education requirements at DU. The previous Core class was called, "The Art, Science and Technology of Music" and was team taught; Art Bouton of the Lamont School of Music was the "music" half of the team.

Good Vibrations" falls under the "Change and Continuity" theme. Specifically, "it explores the rhythms and complexities of historical and cultural change and continuity; the freedom of individuals and groups to make and re-make history; … the concepts of progress/development and custom/tradition; … the nature of causality; … the roles of purpose and chance in everyday life; the relationship of past, present, and future."

In a sense, most music today is electronic music. Recorded music dominates the listening space for most of us who do not have the time to devote to an evening performance of live music by a group of musicians using natural instruments. Our primary listening spaces include our home, our cars, and movie theaters; with the advent of cassette tapes, compact disc players, and most recently the iPod, the gym, the bike trail or even CORE classes can be added to the list. The course, however, limits the definition of electronic music primarily to that music realized in analog and digital electronic circuits and computers. Even with that limited definition, electronic music is pervasive in western society (in the course, the music is also limited to western music).

The course answers the question, "How did we get here?" History frames the topics of the course. In order to understand characteristics of musical instruments (electronic or not), the course begins with the anatomy, physiology, and perception (psychoacoustics) of the human auditory system. Material presented in class integrates human auditory response and the aural characteristics of classes of natural instruments. A student assignment to study specific natural instruments in more detail follows. There is a natural transition to electronic instruments in that the characteristics of natural instruments are the model for many modern electronic instruments. Although, in the experimental years early in the 20th century, all traditional models of music were questioned, which included musical notation (in place since Charlemagne's rule in A.D. 800), the number of notes within an octave, the number of notes within a span of time.

History also frames the motivation for the development (the engineering side) and use (the compositional and performance side) of new musical instruments. The synergy of history (both music and general), culture, technology, and art are explored by looking at the inventions, the compositions, the aesthetics and the acceptance of electronic music by western culture. The development of electronic technology in general in an historical context is essential to understand the "means" (transistors, integrated circuits, computer on a chip, etc.) of electronic instrument development. The instruments themselves are studied from a systems or functional level.

After reflecting on the first offering of "Good Vibrations" I decided that a better pedagogical approach should include a more intense writing component. The first offering included three essays on various topics, integrating the readings on human auditory response, the technology of electronic music, the historical events surrounding the technological developments, and the musical and social cultures at various times during the developments. The course also had listening assignments where students were expected to critique electronic music and films where electronic music is the subject and where it is used in a score. These listening and viewing assignments required a fairly short, but structured response. My expectations for student performance were not met in the essays or in the listening assignments.

The basic structure of the assignments will remain the same; however, participation in the Writing Intensive Core Workshop has enabled me to write better assignments and support these assignments with proven pedagogical methods. The methods include students writing ungraded drafts, the use of idea maps or tree diagrams instead of outlines, incorporation of instruction on how to do idea maps and tree diagrams, instructions on how to critique a piece of music or the soundtrack of a film, and creating a rubric for evaluation of assignments. These methods will allow the students to learn the material and achieve the goals that I have for the course, which are listed below along with the three main essay assignments (rewritten after being critiqued in the workshop):

Essay 1

Outcome 1: Explain the anatomy, physiology and psychoacoustics of human auditory response.

Outcome 2: Describe and quantify the characteristics of a select number of natural musical instruments.

We have been reading a little bit about electronic means of making music and a lot about human auditory response. Little has been offered in the way of how natural musical instruments produce sound. Preparing for this essay will give you a chance to expand your knowledge about two musical instruments; specifically, how they produce sound, what determines their timber, their pitch and loudness ranges, etc. Given what you already know about these characteristics in the context of human auditory response, write an essay that includes physical descriptions and acoustic characteristics of two natural instruments of different families not covered in the class discussions and present them considering the characteristics of the anatomy, physiology and psychoacoustics of human auditory response.

There are a number of references available through traditional and electronic reserves (please read the list provided below). Submit a list of possible references and an idea map or tree diagram at least two weeks prior to the due date of the essay. Your audience consists of your fellow students in this course. Liberal use of pictures, charts, graphs and other diagrams to help explain the instruments is encouraged.

Essay 2

Outcome 1: Reflect upon musical and general historical events leading to development of technology, social change, and the shaping of electronic music and its technology.

Outcome 2: Describe the relationship of technology to the aesthetics of electronic music.

Write an essay addressing at least one technological development in the context of an electronic instrument, an artist or performer, and the relevant social and cultural environment at the time. The paper should address historical events, musical events, and social changes that lead to or influenced the development of the technology and visa versa. The technology should be described using appropriate terminology along with its relationship to the aesthetics and instrument(s) of choice of one composer or performer of electronic music. Liberal use of pictures, charts, graphs and other diagrams to help explain the instruments and their technology is encouraged.

Students will submit a list of possible references and an idea map or tree diagram at least two weeks prior to the due date of the essay. Your audience consists of your fellow students in this course.

Essay 3

Outcome 1: Investigate the history of electronic music and instruments with emphasis on the period starting with the voltage controlled synthesizer.

Outcome 2: Compare and contrast the technologies of electronic music and address how they are constrained or their design is influenced by the anatomy, physiology and psychoacoustics of human auditory response.

Write an essay describing the history of an electronic instrument not covered in the class and different from the one chosen for Essay #2. If an instrument from any of the assigned readings of the course is used, significant additional material from other sources must be presented in the essay. The essay should compare and contrast the technologies (digital, analogue, FM, hybrid, mixed signal, etc.), capabilities (voices, sampling capability, input controllers, etc.) and market (price, types of users, etc.) of the chosen electronic instrument with at least one other type of electronic instrument (no restrictions and can be from essay #2 or the class readings). The instruments should be presented within the context of the history (historical and musical events, and social changes) of electronic music, and the limitations imposed by the anatomy, physiology and psychoacoustics of human auditory response (frequency range, loudness range, loudness contour (ADSR), spectra, changing spectra, etc.). Extra credit will be given for added material (at least two pages) related to the use of the instrument by performers and/or composers of the time.

Students will submit a list of possible references and an idea map or tree diagram at least two weeks prior to the due date of the essay. Your audience consists of your fellow students in this course.

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I was also given the opportunity to select, modify, or create a rubric for the writing assignments. Fortunately, after a little modification, a rubric that was provided on the internet by Western Washington University was very useful for my purposes.

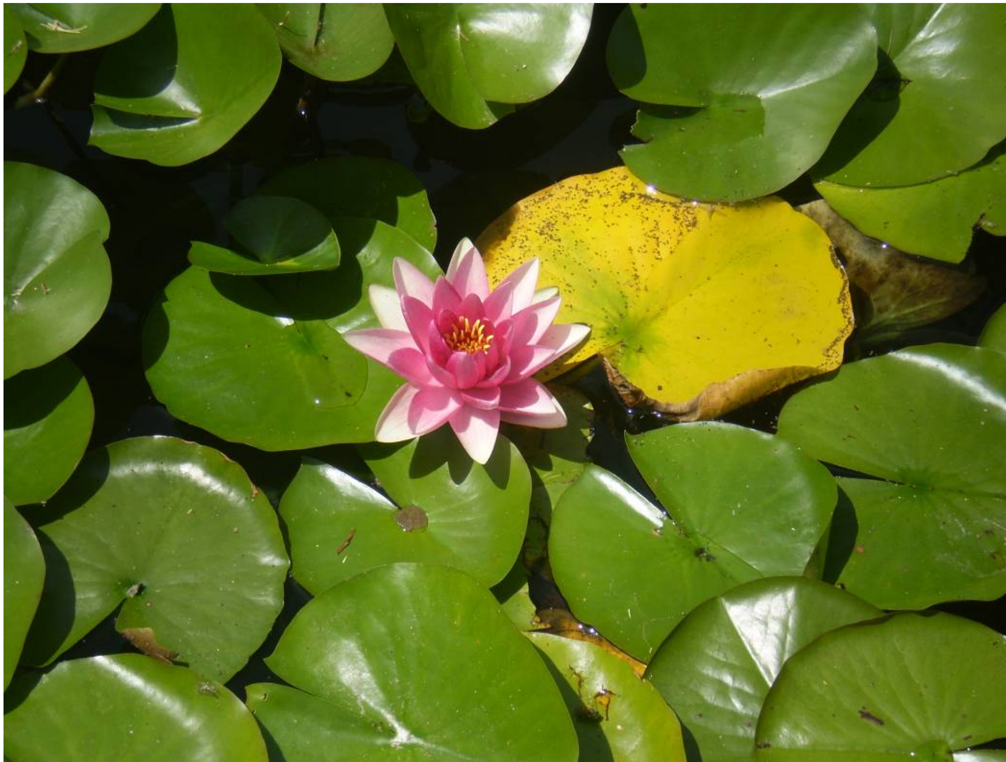
Adapted from
http://www.wwu.edu/wis/WritingRubric.shtml

CONTENT	strong	accept	weak	not accept
1. How appropriate is the topic in terms of the assignment? 2. How evident is the purpose for writing? 3. How ambitious is the content in terms of concepts and connections? 4. To what extent is the evidence/information relevant, accurate, necessary, and complete? 5. How effectively does the writer provide a context?				
REASONING	strong	accept	weak	not accept
1. How significant are the claims/ideas/purpose? 2. What is the quality of the evidence? 3. Is the quantity of evidence sufficient? 4. To what extent does the writer provide discussions that				

explicitly connect evidence to claims? 5. Are references to the literature suitable and sufficient? 6. To what extent does the interpretation and analysis of evidence/information/visuals show depth of thinking, logical reasoning, complex reasoning, and accurate conclusions?				
ORGANIZATION	strong	accept	weak	not accept
1. How well does the overall organization capture the designated purpose? 2. To what extent does the ordering of information/evidence lead the reader through the text? (e.g., signposts, transitions, headings, bullets) 3. How well do the parts connect with each other and the governing ideas? 4. How well integrated are the visual and verbal elements?				
RHETORIC OF THE DISCIPLINE	strong	accept	weak	not accept
1. To what extent is there sufficient knowledge of the subject demonstrated? 2. To what extent does the use of specialized concepts demonstrate understanding? 3. How appropriate to the discipline are the language and tone? 4. To what extent is there evidence of disciplinary ways of thinking and an appropriate sense of audience?				
CONVENTIONS/PRESENTATION	strong	accept	weak	not accept
1. To what extent is there clear evidence of crafting, editing and proofreading? 2. How appropriate is the documentation style? 3. How effective is the format used, including visuals and diagrams?				
OVERALL EVALUATION	strong	accept	weak	not accept

The Writing Intensive Core Workshop provided ample opportunity for general philosophical discussions about writing, Thematic Core, and general education at DU. As I am the Chair of the Faculty Core Committee and a member of the General Education Review Committee, I was very interested in and especially enjoyed these discussions. I came away from this two and a half day experience with a new appreciation for the role of writing as a pedagogical tool to foster deep learning, critical thinking, and reflective judgment. I believe that this pedagogy has not been used extensively in the engineering curricula. We expect our engineering students to have critical thinking skills upon graduation, however, I don't think that we have fully addressed how to accomplish that in our programs. I think that making some key courses in the engineering curricula writing intensive would increase our students' critical thinking skills, and more importantly, their creativity.

While writing in the discipline is probably included in most program learning outcomes (yes, I'm also on the Committee for Learning Assessment of Students) it doesn't provide the same experience that writing in Thematic Core offers. Our discussions in the workshop about expectations for writing in Thematic Core revealed that those expectations are different from expectations in the disciplines. In Thematic Core, content, organization, and creativity are valued; modes of writing specific to the discipline are generally not expected as the audience is a general audience. If we are to be a "great private university dedicated to the public good", we must produce graduates who can not only write and express themselves within their discipline, but who are also able and feel a responsibility to participate in public forums. Currently, we have a writing intensive Thematic Core requirement. I feel that a requirement for a course ore courses such as we now offer in Thematic Core should remain in our general education experience no matter what that looks like in the future.



AN OVERVIEW OF WRITING IN CORE 2560: AMERICA THROUGH FOREIGN EYES

Christof Demont-Heinrich
Mass Communication and Journalism Studies
2007

The United States, and Americans, occupy a unique, privileged and powerful position in the contemporary world order. Indeed, according to many scholarly and public accounts, the U.S. has achieved unprecedented status as *the* preeminent world power. Yet despite, or, paradoxically, perhaps because of its status as what some have called a world "hyperpower," large numbers of Americans are mostly, if not totally, unaware of what U.S. global preeminence means to them, and to other people around the world. CORE 2560, America through foreign eyes, aims to inspire critical reflection about the role of the United States -- its political and economic system and practices, its culture, and, most fundamentally, its social actors, meaning its people(s), in a globalizing world. It does so by asking a simple, crucial question:

- How does the rest of the world view the United States, Americans and, as the international communications and political economy scholar Herbert Schiller has put it, the "U.S./American situation" with respect to globalization?

The course will use hands-on research, analysis, and frequent writing assignments – both informal and formal and in- and out-of-class -- to promote multi-way learning, dialogue, interesting and informed discussion, and debate about the U.S., Americans and how global "others" view Americans, "ought to" view "us," and how "we" therefore (ought to) view ourselves and "others". All of the assignments, and methods used, are designed to help students develop and hone, in a hands-on fashion, their research, analytical, writing, and critical thinking skills. Indeed, one of the fundamental teaching premises of this course is the notion that writing and critical thinking skills are inexorably linked and that, furthermore, writing about what one is thinking in relation to others' thoughts is an extremely effective and stimulating way to foster deep, long-lasting intellectual development.

Formal and informal writing assignments will ultimately demand that students critically evaluate a variety of ideologies and attitudes about commonality and difference as a means of developing and constructing their own evolving views on national, and global, human social relationships.

In total, students will submit six formal individual written assignments, typically ranging in length from 3 to 5 typed pages, with one longer group paper (10 to 12 pages). The group project will also include a formal presentation in which students present research and analysis of various foreign representations of a specific aspect of America's global "situation" from a specific region of the world.

After attending the CORE Writing Intensive Workshop in June of 2007, I plan to devote more in-class time to explaining and discussing formal writing assignments than when I taught CORE 2560 as class as a 30-student, "non-writing intensive" class (I put quotes around "non-writing intensive" because I had students write 3 formal papers).

Additionally, I plan to work hard to link formal and informal and in- and out-of-class writing. This is something I did not do enough of in CORE 2560 when I taught it as a "non-writing intensive" class. In fact, one of the most important things I learned from the June 2007 Core Writing Intensive Workshop was the ways in which formal, graded writing assignments can be linked up to more informal in-class activities, discussions, debates, and so on.

So, for example, I plan to devote in-class time to discussing what students will focus on/write about for a given formal assignment.

I hope to incorporate in-class time to collective brainstorming and construction of the group assignment, perhaps having students start by writing a 'core paragraph' on the empirical object(s) and questions they hope to grapple with in this assignment.

I also plan to devote more time and attention to linking out-of-class informal writing with in-class activities and discussions. For example, I plan to have students write about, and reflect upon, in-class group activities out of class. Ideally, this linking of in-class with out-of-class intellectual engagement by way of reflective, informal writing, would often, though not always, be done with an eye toward helping students develop material for the formal writing assignments.

Collectively, writing assignments will account for 67.5% of students' quarter grade. Additionally, students will be frequently asked to post informal written responses and analyses to an international class discussion board (10% of their quarter grade). Four "pop" quizzes (7.5%) and class participation and attendance (10%) account for the final portion of students' grades.

Below is a list of the proposed writing assignments for "American through foreign eyes." The total number of formally graded written material will total approximately 35 pages.

- Six individual writing assignments
  - personal reflection paper (2-4 pages) 5%
  - study abroad student interview paper (3-5 pages) 5%
  - foreign student interview paper (3-5 pages) 5%
  - summary-response paper (3-5 pages) 10%
  - analysis paper (3-5 pages) 10%
  - comparative analysis paper (5-7 pages) 15%
- Group project (10-12 page paper & group presentation) 17.5%

TOTAL = 67.5% of quarter grade

The assignments represent different genres (personal writing, journalistic writing & academic writing). They are also "scaffolded," meaning they move students from cognitively simpler to harder tasks (from personal summary and reflection in the first paper to summary, response, comparison, analysis, critique, and synthesis in the final paper).

Students will have an opportunity to revise all written assignments, with the exception of the final group paper. In order to help facilitate the revision process and to make it more concrete as well as more intellectually engaging, I plan to regularly bring into class examples from students' own writing. I will discuss these in terms of what students are doing well as well as in terms of what they need to work on in terms of improving their writing and critical analytical thinking skills.

I will strongly encourage students to come in and meet with me to work on their writing. Indeed, I plan to appeal to students more often in class to meet with me individually. This sort of one-on-one engagement with students and their writing is one of my favorite parts of teaching. Honestly, in the two years I have been at DU, I have been disappointed that more students haven't come to me to work with me directly on their writing.

I will strongly and frequently encourage students to conference with me 1-on-1 about their writing for the individual writing assignments. However, I will not require 1-on-1 conferences for individual assignments. For the group written project, though, I will require teacher-student conferences. Finally, I plan to promote the University Writing Center and actively encourage students to go to the Center to receive 1-on-1 attention.

The reflections and ideas I have advanced here are grounded in the notion that it is crucial to make very clear, to oneself, and to students, the basic intellectual foundations and aims of a given course. In keeping with this approach, I believe it is critical to be make as clear as possible with students on how their informal and formal writing will be evaluated and why it will be evaluated in a given manner. Indeed, I have always explicitly referred to the criteria by which I evaluate formal writing in class. This is one of the means by which I seek to achieve clarity, fairness and consistency in evaluating student writing.

Students' formal writing assignments will be evaluated according the criteria listed below. I will

introduce and discuss these criteria before the first writing assignment. I will also use the terminology from this evaluative rubric in workshopping students' writing in class and in the marginal comments I write in their papers. I draw these evaluative criteria – *purpose, focus, development, organization, style/grammar* -- from Dr. Stephen Reid, who has written a widely used textbook (*The Prentice Hall Guide for College Writers*) and from whom I learned much while working as a GTA for the Colorado State University Department of English in the late 1990s.

Here are the criteria by which I evaluate formal written assignments:

An "A" paper will meet ALL of the following criteria:

- Writer establishes a clear claim addressing the specific question(s)/set of sub-questions outlined in the assignment sheet.
- Writer stays focused on his or her claim(s) from beginning to end, making sure to answer key questions within the larger analytical frame outlined in the assignment sheet.
- Writer makes sophisticated and frequent use of an array of specific AND relevant evidence/support/examples/quotes to support and develop his or her position.
- Writer has organized essay in a logical way that consistently shows a clear connection between the questions outlined in the assignment sheet, his or her main claim, and the evidence/support offered in support of that claim.
- Writer has a clear sense of style and grammar which makes it easy for the reader to follow his or her ideas from start to finish.

A "B" paper will be deficient in ONE of the above criteria.

A "C" paper will be deficient in TWO of the above criteria.

A "D/F" paper will be deficient in THREE of the above criteria.

Ultimately, as a writing intensive CORE course, America through foreign eyes will aim to help students develop a number of critical thinking, writing and practical skills. These include, but are not limited to:

- research skills
- interviewing skills
- analytical skills
- synthesis skills

I am excited about teaching CORE 2560 with writing assignments serving as the primary mechanism of learning and evaluation. In-depth writing assignments, *rather* than multiple choice questions, and short answer/essay questions of the sort I used on my midterm and final in the "non-writing intensive" form that this course formally took, are, in my view, much better suited to inspiring the hands-on, reflexive, and critical learning I would like to see my students experience in this class.

In sum, then, students will emerge from CORE 2560:

1) with a greater understanding, awareness and ability to critically reflect upon, and write about, the diverse views of the United States and Americans advanced by people who reside outside of the U.S.;
2) with the ability to compare, contrast, classify and critically assess competing theories and definitions of "globalization" and competing perspectives on the U.S. role in a globalizing world in both verbal and written form;
3) with the ability to apply theories and key terms learned in class in diverse educational and real-life contexts, both in verbal and written form;
4) with the ability to effectively question and challenge others' views on the U.S. role in the global context in intelligent, informed and socially productive fashion, both in verbal and written form;
5) with the ability to clearly, cogently, and reflectively defend their own views and persuade others of the basic soundness and validity of those views, in written and verbal form;
6) with a heightened sense of larger global context and having shed some of the individual and national insularity that has been traditionally associated with social actors who, as Schiller (2000) has put it, reside in the world's "ruling core society."

RACE, INEQUALITY AND PUBLIC POLICY: WRITING INTENSIVE ASSIGNMENTS IN A CORE CLASS

Lucy Dwight
Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
2008

My writing intensive course, CORE 2567: *Race, Inequality and Public Policy,* explores the policy implications of racial and ethnic inequality in the contemporary U.S. by exploring several competing explanations of racial inequality. The first section of the course reviews the debate over IQ and test scores in explaining racial and ethnic inequality. The next section considers a structural view of racial inequality through the lens of place, with particular focus on the causes and consequences of the concentration of poor blacks and Latinos in disadvantaged urban neighborhoods. The final section of the course considers the role of prejudice among whites in their attitudes towards public policy aimed at reducing racial and ethnic inequality in the U.S.

Course objectives include the following:

1. Students will describe patterns of racial inequality in the contemporary U.S. by considering evidence of socio-demographic, geographical, economic and educational inequality.
2. Students will critically assess competing biological, social structural and attitudinal explanations for these patterns.
3. Students will discuss public policy implications of competing explanations for racial inequality.
4. Students will extend these perspectives to a public policy issue (e.g., in the criminal justice system) or racial/ethnic group (e.g., Korean-Americans) not explicitly covered in class by locating these issues or groups within the framework of the course's theoretical material.
5. Finally, students will formulate knowledgeable arguments grounded in scholarly research for their own views on the underpinnings of racial inequality and how it should be addressed through public policy.

Assessment of these goals is accomplished through multiple methods, each requiring significant writing. Students must complete three take home exams corresponding to the three sections of the course, compose frequent in-class reaction papers, and prepare a 12-14 page policy brief relevant to the course material. These are described below.

Take-home Exams

The take-home exams assess students' mastery of the course material and their ability to critically assess various perspectives on the causes and consequences of enduring racial inequality in the U.S. For each exam, students choose one essay question out of two or three distributed to them approximately one week before the due date. They then compose a 3-4 page response to the question. Each of the potential questions requires students to integrate the material for the section of the course, weigh the relative merits of competing views, and discuss the public policy implications of these perspectives. For example, one potential question for the first section of the course asks the following:

> Weighing the material we've reviewed thus far, assess the argument(s) that you find most compelling about why racial gaps persist in test scores, and discuss the policy implications that follow from the argument(s) that you select.

In-class Reaction Papers

In order to encourage preparation for each class, students complete unscheduled 5-minute reaction papers in response to questions that I pose from the readings. These are collected occasionally and scored on a simple plus/check/minus scale based on demonstrated review of the assigned reading for the class. These

in-class writing assignments serve two purposes. The first is to facilitate class discussion about the course material. Secondly, these assignments are meant to encourage students to write out preliminary ideas that can be re-worked and refined later as they prepare their take-home exams.

Policy Brief

The paper assignment represents a major portion of the course grade. The paper requires students to utilize their deepened understanding of the dynamics underpinning racial inequality to explore a topic of their choice. This allows them to explore their own views on racial inequality but within a scholarly context that transcends the emotional or rhetorical responses that many of us have to these issues. The completed paper takes the form of a public policy brief on an issue with racial/ethnic implications, e.g., residential segregation, the immigration debate, racial implications of the death penalty, affirmative action, educational equity, etc.

The paper assignment includes three incremental steps that are submitted during the quarter for feedback from students and/or from the instructor – a draft of the introduction, a first draft of the complete paper, and the final paper. These incremental assignments provide two opportunities for the instructor to assess directly students' writing. In addition, ongoing group workshops provide feedback to students from their peers for these incremental assignments as well as others. For instance, students are asked to bring in a two-page discussion of competing views on their topic for feedback from others in their workshop groups.

Each of the writing components for this course can be linked directly to the course objectives. Moreover, each requires that students practice several strategies that I consider to be essential to writing well. First, I believe that the best writers also read extensively. To that end, the in-class reaction papers require that students prepare for class by reading scholarly material relevant to the study of racial inequality in the U.S. Through these reaction papers and ensuing discussion, we explicitly consider the effectiveness of various writing styles. Second, this course requires completion of draft material with subsequent revisions. This is most obvious with the incremental assignments required for the paper assignment. The in-class essays are also designed to facilitate completion of the take-home exams. Third, the in-class essays prompt students to write quickly without the opportunity to extensively edit as they write. This method may encourage students to flesh out ideas more fully, and may mitigate writers' block that can occur when staring at an empty computer screen. Finally, students are actively engaged in critiquing others' writing through the workshop sessions scheduled throughout the quarter as well as their evaluation of the required reading material.

REFLECTIONS ON THE WRITING INTENSIVE CORE WORKSHOP

Tony Gault
Mass Communications and Journalism
2008

The Core class I teach is called, "Analyzing the American Dream," and it falls into the Core category of "Self and Identities." My teaching background is in film studies and film production, and the class focuses on one of my favorite periods in American film history, the post World War II era. I've taught the class as writing intensive for three years.

The goal of the class is to analyze a sampling of films from the post-war period and come to understand the implications of Hollywood's power in constructing identity in our culture then and, perhaps more importantly, today. Students choose from a list of ten or so current films, and they write a series of papers about their chosen film over the course of the quarter. My hope is that each student will find a personal connection to the film he or she chooses to write about and explore the ways identity is reflected and constructed in the film.

For example, a current favorite is *Pretty Women*. Often female students will choose to write about the film because they grew up with it and see it as influential within the context of their childhood. After watching, reading about and discussing a few 1940s and 50s films that grapple with the pressures of conforming to domestic enslavement, women who write about *Pretty Women* often come to a new and confusing reading of the film. What once was a magical fairy tale that promised material happiness and romantic love to a few lucky girls like Julia Roberts becomes a nightmare of shallow existence where a woman's only hope of success comes in the form of tracking down a wealthy man and propping him up emotionally for the rest of his wretched, workaholic existence.

We also read a wonderful novel called *Revolutionary Road*--about a newlywed couple in the1950s who struggle between the seeming necessity to conform to suburban life and the impulse to "chuck it all" to become bohemians in Paris. The author, Richard Yates, is cynical (and astute) enough to color each choice as banal as the other. The book offers no solutions – just a vivid depiction of modern life and the limitations of how identity is defined in our culture. Students love its rebellious and cynical tone, though they clearly are disturbed by the lack of options it offers. The question of the class becomes, "how can I formulate an identity that is truly my own?" All of the movies in the class agenda address this question in some way.

I try to answer the question loudly and clearly - "Through your writing!" My training as a writing instructor came in the late 80s and early 90s when "personal voice" was a catch phrase of the time and main focus of my training. I still live by the pedagogical goals inherent in teaching writing through personal voice. I firmly believe that if a student doesn't have a personal stake in his or her writing, it will suffer. Twenty years of experience teaching writing has shown me that when a student discovers this personal stake - organizational and stylistic problems start to fall away, and content begins to determine form. When this approach works in the Core class, good writing becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy: the content of the class compels them to ask a desperate question about identity, I provide a solution through their writing and everybody's happy and literate. Unfortunately, it never works out so neatly.

Each student comes to the class with a different background in and attitude about writing. However diverse the students seem to be, they do seem to fall into two general camps. The first feels liberated by the notion that they can explore and experiment with personal opinions and voice in the discovery stages of writing. Many of these students are under the mistaken impression that the argument and form of a paper must be worked out first and foremost, and they hate the confining nature of this demand. The first assignment I hand out encourages

experimentation and exploration, and the first camp loves this process of discovery and doesn't want to move beyond it.

The second camp is also under the impression that figuring out their argument and creating a formal strategy comes first on their list of things to do. However, unlike the first camp, they love the limitations of imposing form on the process. They want to figure it out NOW and be done with the process. They resist my initial assignments regarding discovery and have a difficult time finding personal voice.

However, both camps suffer from the same basic problem: a lack of willingness to express a strong personal opinion about how identity is constructed in their film and how this construction affects them and the culture at large. The discovery camp doesn't want to be nailed down by an opinion, and the formal camp doesn't want to explore and develop an opinion. The discovery camp tends to write unfocused essays that wander through the thought process using flowery prose. The formal camp tends to write rigid, underdeveloped essays whose language is often stilted and awkward. Obviously, I am being reductive in my assessment of student writing problems. Most students struggle somewhere between these poles. But, for me, the bottom line is that almost all student writers are resistant to the discovery of and/or the commitment to a strong, personal opinion about their film and its personal and cultural implications.

With a strong personal opinion, a student is equipped to move beyond the problems of both the wanderer and the repressed. With a strong opinion, the wanderer feels compelled to organize ideas to prove an opinion, and the repressed feels compelled to search for a deeper articulation of what they're trying to say. I'm not sure why students have such a difficult time formulating strong personal opinions about the world. Perhaps the digital age and our new interactive approach to things encourages the attitude that one choice is as good as another (though I had problems wrenching opinions from students before the internet came into popular use). My guess is that it's more of a long-term pedagogical issue.

When I first began as a writing instructor, I was intent on teaching students how to impose form on their ideas. After all, a finished essay should be neat, clean, concise and coherent. Years of struggle with learning the essay form had taught me these attributes, and I believed that my students should incorporate them into their work immediately. The goal of "neat, clean, concise and coherent" was paramount and, damn it, my students would keep these goals first and foremost in mind. I didn't even consider how many years of hell I had to go through to learn how to write a decent essay. In an almost unconscious process, I had discovered - above the clamor of demands about "neat, clean, concise and coherent" - that I had to have an approach, an intent, *an opinion* about my subject before I could impose structure on it. My diatribe may seem obvious, but I honestly don't think a majority of our students understand that an opinion needs to come before structure.

The first class discussion we have in my writing intensive course addresses the students' perceptions of what a good essay is and how they've come to learn these values. Over and over, I hear the same clichés: "good structure," "strong argument," "related evidence," "clear thesis statement in the first paragraph introduction," "conclusion that summarizes the argument." Have students been trained to think this way about the essay because of our cultural (and educational) obsession with finished product? I am waiting for the day in our class discussion when I hear phrases like "passionate point of view," "a reflection of my worldview," "a means of changing the reader's (and the world's) position on an important issue."

It's been 24 hours since I wrote the preceding pages. A student just sent me an email draft of his final paper for the Core class. He is writing about what drives the main character, Patrick Bateman, of *American Psycho* to become a serial killer. In it, he argues that Bateman, a well-heeled investment banker, feels "frustration" about the fact that no matter how hard he tries, he cannot achieve a level of success that doesn't leave him feeling like a failure. Ultimately, the student argues that Bateman must savagely kill his victims to find a sense of balance. He relates Bateman's experience to his own experience as a student, a hockey player, a son. The student writes that even if he does his best, he is often made to feel like a

failure, and he must lash out in order to find balance.

Considering that the student and I have spent over two hours in personal conference trying to isolate his argument, he has made pretty good progress. However, the heart of his argument ends up being (and I paraphrase here), "violence and rage are necessary to achieve a sense of balance in a world where failure is not an option." I know, from our hours discussing the film and his relationship to it, that this is not exactly what he's trying to say. In the draft, he argues that violence is justified. In our conferences, he was more interested in what makes him feel like a failure after trying his best, where this feeling comes from, why he gets violent because of it and how American Psycho is a perfect representation of this cycle.

His writing problem is not uncommon in my experience. He's been led astray by his own thought process, and this process is more concerned with formulating a "strong argument," "good structure" and collecting "related evidence" than with discovering and articulating what we discussed in conference – that some cultural force is at work and that the only way he (and Patrick Bateman) knows how to respond to it is by lashing out. After our last conference, he left with explicit instructions to explore what that cultural force is, how it affects him and other people, and what its repercussions are.

But, for some reason, he (and the majority of my other Core students) is not willing to go there. Many of my students don't want to be challenged in this way, and the resistance is a major barrier to discovering their writing voice. I'm not sure what keeps many of our undergraduates from becoming astute observers and critics of culture - maybe it's their age or the impermeable constructions of hegemony. I do, however, believe that the mission of liberal arts universities is to teach students to be free thinkers who challenge the status quo.

During the last minutes of our three-day writing workshop for the Core, I found myself arguing for the creation of some common foundational goal, agreed upon by all faculty members who assign essays to their students. "Can't we all admit that if a student isn't able to clearly state what he or she is trying to prove, how the paper will be argued and why it will be argued, that he or she should be held back?" It's a simplistic question I hear sometimes from colleagues but most of the time in my head, echoing obsessively.

It reflects a frustration that some teacher down the pike let yet another student pass with substandard writing skills. It's a question that implicitly asks, "Why can't all students and teachers think the same way?"

Every discipline, class and teacher asks a student to think in a different way. This is imperative to a liberal arts education. Given this, how could I ever wish for a student to employ a cookie cutter method of writing to my class and its unique demands? To every other discipline, class and teacher? This seems absurd. What I'm really searching for is the employment of something else. Colleagues in the workshop called it "the X Factor." And I think the mysterious "X Factor" in student writing is also called "style." In my experience, style comes from the development of personal voice. Ultimately, if I embrace the principals of a liberal arts education, I also need to embrace teaching my students how to become fluid writers whose style will transcend the demands of most disciplines, classes and teachers. However, writing about this principal and living it are two very different things. The development of a writing culture where inquiry, experimentation, personal voice and style are valued more than formal concerns is a messy, time consuming business.

When I think of my best moments as a teacher, I think of students who've made the leap from conventional thinking to developing a worldview that is truly their own. I think of students who can articulate a unique worldview with the written word and how their lives will be enriched by this ability. I think of the writing teachers who took the time with me so that I could develop a personal worldview and articulate it. I think about how this has enriched my life - giving me a freedom of expression that's far too rare in our world. I think of style – those who've been able to learn it and cultivate it and those who are left behind.

So, how can I become a better writing teacher? The Core workshop helped me in three distinct, concrete ways. First, it made me more tolerant of the fact that each discipline has different expectations for the kind of writing students should engage in. I think this makes me a more malleable instructor and encourages me to spend more time addressing issues of student training and audience.

The workshop also helped me to realize the importance of revising my own approaches and assignments. I can see now that my *American Psycho* student writer is struggling because I didn't spend enough time helping him to clarify his relationship to the film. Ten weeks is not a long time to teach the different strategies of analyzing a film (cinematography, editing, sound, mise en scene, etc), and my impulse was to get him thinking and writing about these formal elements before he knew what he was looking for in the formal elements. The workshop encouraged me to break my assignments into smaller parts that reflect the thought process inherent in good film analysis. Instead of giving students a five to seven page essay due in two weeks, I am now breaking assignments down into three or four parts, each due the next class.

I can't expect a student to write well about one thing if there's another broad conceptual demand begging for attention in the next bullet point of my assignment. It's smarter to have a student write about a character's struggle with identity and how it reflect his or her own struggles before having to think about how the cinematography reflects this too. Those ideas can come in steps two or three. Student focus, engagement and exploration of each concept is essential to the development of personal voice in a paper, and it's worth grading three clearly written assignments over two weeks rather than one incoherent mess. I'm confident that it will save me work in the long run.

I also learned about grading rubrics. I've seen them before in other workshops about teaching effectiveness, but this time I got it. For one thing, I learned that they don't all have to be the same. "Screw it," I said, "This time I'll make a rubric that has as much personality as I expect my student papers to have." I created a rubric that reflects my eccentric expectations, how much value I place on them and why. I use the rubric to explain my pedagogy. The students will know, in no uncertain terms, that writing which reveals no personal stake in their topic will be "unacceptable." It looks very formal, but it reveals my personal voice as a teacher.

There it is in black and white: a clear statement of purpose.

Art and the Environment

Annabeth Headrick
Art and Art History
2009

The CORE writing course I will be teaching is called "Art and the Environment." The subject of the course represents an attempt to engage students with the issues of climate change, but through the lens of art history. I have taught this course as a graduate seminar, but it will be transformed into a CORE class with assignments and discussions redesigned for this demographic.

The topic of the course stems from my own personal intellectual experiences as well as a desire to engage students on a subject that is clearly and directly relevant to their lives. While at a previous institution, I participated for two years in an interdisciplinary faculty research group entitled, "Ecology and Spirituality in America." The group included professors from law, anthropology, political science, philosophy, history, and religion. Because of the interdisciplinary aspect of the participants, we read research from multiple fields, something beneficial to academics but often difficult because of time constraints. We began with the basics on global warming and evolved into a group that interacted with the strong, local religious movements combating climate change through creation care ideology.

The experience led to much personal methodological growth, but it also tapped into a previously unrecognized need to teach about topics of immediate relevance. Like any historian, I certainly maintain that the teaching of history has value in that it educates us about the present. In all of my courses I consistently make analogies to contemporary issues to illustrate the past; however, as a Precolumbianist who works on material over one thousand years old, it was refreshing to explore issues discussed in the newspaper each day. As these issues tumbled over into my teaching life, I felt the need to create a course where students could see that art also might provide avenues to address issues of global warming. Perhaps, I should also confess that I felt a personal need to actively contribute to what may be the greatest challenge to human survival.

While the course will ultimately ask students to consider the merits of current artists involved in projects surrounding climate change, as an art historian, I will also take an historical perspective. We begin with one of the most famous works of environmental art, Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty*. Iconic and hauntingly beautiful, the earthwork immediately lets us move right into the critical issues of the course. The work certainly demands that viewers reevaluate their preconceived notions of what art is, and it equally demonstrates that artists can actively incorporate the natural environment. On the other hand, this "environmental" work involved considerable destruction to the natural landscape and is representative of the male, heroic gesture quite prevalent in the 1970s. This work will facilitate discussions about the need to consider artworks within the framework of their own time period while simultaneously allowing that we can also analyze works with current notions of the world.

Other sections of the class will investigate artists thoroughly immersed in environmental materials but who distance themselves from any direct environmental message. For instance, the course will explore the work of Andy Goldsworthy. Goldsworthy uses twigs, stones and leaves to create visually stunning works of art out in the landscape, photographs them, and then lets these transitory objects dissipate into the environment again. These works intrinsically use the environment, but they do not contain any overt message about human destruction of the landscape. Goldsworthy made another work in which he gathered snow and installed giant snowballs in urban London, but expended much energy transporting and storing the snow before installation. We will ask questions about the ethics of using environmental

media in ways that have major, negative environmental impacts. As the course moves forward, we will focus upon artists who directly address issues of environmental degradation in their art, like Mel Chin who created the *Reclamation Field*. In this work, Chin took a small plot of land and planted vegetation designed to draw out the toxic pollutants in the industrialized soil. As a class we can discuss the commendable aspects of bringing environmental damage to public awareness even as we note that the real environmental benefit may be minimal and might even be construed as the continuance of the male heroic gesture and its ability to further a career in the art world.

Finally, the class will encounter emerging artists who directly attack global warming by engaging large social groups, thereby raising awareness of the issue and creating works that potentially have a real, positive effect on the environment. These include artists who construct public gardens, plant trees, and clean public waterways for eco-tourism. In viewing these artworks we can easily see the beneficial environmental impact even as we swing back to earlier issues about the nature of art. These artists so blur public activism and reject traditional media that they reasonably engender questions about the categorization of their work as art. I further hope to use these artists to discuss the multiple routes to solving global warming, routes that in the aggregate could make a substantial difference.

On Writing

Like many who take this faculty workshop on writing, I must admit to some degree of fatalistic dread when I contemplated the time I would devote to the project. Imagine my chagrin as each hour in the workshop I faced the reality that my writing assignments had become rather boring and traditional. Following the age-old methods of college and graduate instruction I received, I had clung to the research paper as the standard assignment. I still value the research paper's ability to elicit a number of important outcomes. First, it allows a student to pursue a topic of their own choice, offering freedom outside the constraints of a syllabus. Second, it exposes students to the real character of a discipline and thus prepares students pursuing graduate work in the field. Third, I appreciate the manner in which the assignment develops research skills which I hope will make our students better prepared to locate information when the need arises in their own lives. Therefore, I will continue assigning a research paper in the upper division courses in my own field, but I admit a certain delight in the fact that this workshop led me to discard its use in my CORE class.

Our graduate educational system does a fine job of preparing us as scholars, yet in truth, the effort given to preparing us as educators leans towards a lackluster apprenticeship system with little in the way of direct engagement of educational strategies. Many of us succeed nevertheless, but as I found in the workshop, it is an exciting revelation when we have the opportunity to tune up our approaches through the exposure of concrete suggestions. Case in point, I found the text, *Engaging Ideas* an incredibly useful tool. Certainly one could critique the text because its attempt to offer suggestions for a myriad of fields makes many examples inappropriate for some disciplines; however, I truly appreciated the format of the text. Written in a succinct manner for busy people, the organizational strategy of theory followed by concrete examples provides a wealth of ideas for those designing assignments. I further appreciated the text's efforts to encourage creativity and openness in the assignments. I can sincerely state that it was a personal revelation to realize that I had become a bit boring in my assignments. It forced me to see how the interesting questions I routinely pose in the classroom can be more effectively extended into the written assignments. The workshop let me better put into perspective that these students will not be majors in my field, so we can use the class as a place to enjoy significant conversations, both oral and written, about an issue which we all have passionate opinions.

Given this wonderful opportunity to expand my writing assignment repertoire, let me explain how I plan to institute some of these lessons in the upcoming CORE class. Overall, I intend to incorporate much more variety in the types of assignments I assign. In the workshop I came to respect that the inclusion of different types of writing leads to an expansion of the students' horizons and facilitates the emergence of

various students' strengths. The elimination of the long research paper will permit me to include more, but shorter, writing assignments which will, in turn, give the students more opportunities for feedback.

Another aspect of the workshop I found helpful is that it was focused on the one specific course each instructor would teach, and Doug Hesse designed our assignments so we could create real projects that we could actually use in class. One such project will serve as the first assignment I will use in my CORE class. On this day we will have read Smithson's essay about *Spiral Jetty*, and we will also watch the film he made about the earthwork in class. In the midst of discussion, I will give the students the following informal, write-to-learn assignment.

> You are driving across the wilds of Utah with your parents when your mother sees a sign reading, *Spiral Jetty*. Knowing that you took a class on environmental art, she veers off the road, and after miles of bumpy road you and your family arrive at the promontory overlooking the artwork. Dumbfounded, your parents look to you with questioning eyes, appealing to you for some insight. You decide to explain the meaning of the color red in this work and in Smithson's writings and film. Take fifteen minutes and write what you would say to your parents.

This assignment asks the students to explain a narrowly defined issue, but its purpose in the class is manifold. First, it asks the students to use the information from their readings and the film to recognize a persistent theme that exists in both sources. Secondly, it has been my experience that questions like this often result in little response during class discussions, as the students have missed such themes. It is my hope that by giving them time to quietly process the question and pull their thoughts together, the exercise will promote better, more substantial discussion. Finally, this assignment will begin the process of helping students to use description as evidence, a necessity of particular importance to art history. I will include more of these fifteen-minute, in-class assignments, but this one serves as an example.

Apart from readings on the art itself, the course will have an interdisciplinary aspect, including readings from scientists, historians, and literary figures on the environment and global warming. The class is certain to contain students with a variety of opinions on climate change, so it is critical to let them voice their opinion on this issue. After having read and discussed two articles on opposite sides of the climate change issue, I will ask students to write a two-three page paper where they defend or refute the proposition that climate change poses a real danger. This assignment will let students freely express their opinion and diffuse any possible tensions that may have come from the discussion. It will also require that the students present a clear thesis and offer supporting evidence for their position.

Because the course participants will have strong opinions on the issue of climate change, I have chosen this assignment for peer review. I particularly liked Eliana Schonberg's suggestions for peer review, and frankly, I am going to use her model which gives the reviewer clear instructions for a first and second read-through. After revising this paper using their reviewer's comments, students will turn the paper into the instructor.

Later in the class we will discuss the overt beauty of Andy Goldsworthy's art and the temptation to fetishize the environment. We will consider the seductiveness of beautiful art and the value of art for art's sake. Turning the tables a bit, we will look at some of Goldsworthy's work that might be considered irresponsible in a world of environmental footprints and sustainability. This assignment will capitalize on this discussion.

> A friend of yours went to an Andy Goldsworthy exhibit and came back gushing about this artist's work. As he talks to you, he says that Goldsworthy is the perfect example of an environmentally sensitive artist. You, on the other hand, know that not all of Goldsworthy's art is especially friendly to the environment, and the two of you get into an argument, ending when your friend storms out, slamming the door behind him. Write a one- to two-page essay where you try to explain

> your position to your friend in a more calm and rational manner.

Another write-to-learn assignment, it should let students consider how art can be viewed through the lens of sustainability. Unlike the previous assignment, it directs the student to take a particular position; however, they certainly can acknowledge the other side of the coin as they write.

The next assignment will again ask students to take an issue from class and apply it to something from their own world, thereby extending the ideas beyond the limits of the classroom. This is a formal writing assignment of a greater length.

> In the fourth chapter of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* the author explores examples of well intentioned human actions that have resulted in a cascade of environmental and health issues. Think of an example from our own world where something once thought beneficial has emerged as toxic or harmful. Write a four- to five-page essay where you either defend the continued use of the substance or recommend the cessation of its use. Your argument should include background information about why the toxin was first introduced and what the possible detrimental effects are.
>
> To complete this assignment, you will have to do some research to find key facts about the issue, but you do not have to conduct the comprehensive research necessary for a full-blown research paper. You will need to include citations (the in-text method discussed in class is fine) and a bibliography. In class we will discuss the types of sources I would like you to use.

Developed during the workshop, this assignment benefitted greatly from the comments made by participants during discussion. Apart from making the course material more relevant to their lives, the assignment directs the students to take a position and develop a clear thesis. To complete the assignment, they must also find and marshal evidence to successfully make their point.

The last formal writing assignment will develop skills that are more directly related to art history. In particular, it will ask students to use art and the description of art as supporting evidence, a skill with which students particularly struggle. Some in-class short writing assignments and class discussion will prepare them for this assignment.

> Choose one artist discussed in class who directly explores issues surrounding environmental degradation. Write a six-page paper where you argue whether this artist's attempt to combat environmental problems is effective. You should use specific works of art created by that artist as evidence to support your case. Make sure you describe these works of art, and use this description as evidence.

Like many of the other assignments in this class, this paper pulls directly from class discussions, thereby integrating the writing fully into the class.

In addition to the assignments above I will be using short, in-class writing or think-pair-share to both encourage careful reading of the course materials and to better facilitate class discussions. Some examples of these will include:

> —Take five minutes to talk with a partner about whether Michael Hiezer's *Double Negative* is morally justifiable.
>
> —Take fifteen minutes to jot down your thoughts about the difference between Michael Heizer's mounds and those of an archaeological culture.
>
> —Take five minutes to discuss with a partner what Goldsworthy's art really is. Is it the actual object, the photograph, or something else.
>
> —Make a list of five ways Peter Erskine's work educates the viewer about environmental art.

—Take fifteen minutes and write down whether you think Christo's *Over the River* project should be made in Colorado. Use specifics about the work and back up your ideas with specific evidence.

These examples exemplify how the writing workshop not only urged me to vary the writing assignments themselves, but also how the discussions encouraged me to incorporate more short writing assignments and directed discussion to assist with comprehension of the material.

Finally, the writing workshop encouraged me to alter the way in which I approach grading. I have always been a thorough grader on writing assignments, but evidence provided by Doug and Eliana persuaded me that such extensive commentary may overwhelm a student and not result in the help needed. Therefore, I will be using rubrics for at least some of the assignments in the class. Again, the text and the workshop facilitators provided some fine examples of rubrics from which to work. I am still in the process of refining my own rubrics, using those examples as models, but I have every expectation that students will more clearly receive my suggestions.

In sum, I found this a professionally satisfying experience, and I hope to participate in similar workshops in the future. In very real terms the workshop modified the way I will teach the class and gave a sense of reinvigoration to my concept of teaching. The assignments I have developed are more thoroughly integrated into the class, and I hope that they better engage the students on the issues.

NARRATIVE STRATEGIES AND NARRATOLOGY IN CINEMA

Elizabeth Henry
Communications
2008

The writing intensive course which I began to prepare in this workshop is a course on narrative strategies and narratology in cinema. This course will explore foundational writing on storytelling structures from Aristotle to Propp and then continue with a more detailed analysis of cinematic narrative utilizing further insights from cognitive psychology-based film theorists. The course will function, hopefully, to heighten students' awareness of the psychological and ideological function of this powerful and popular medium. (Although the course will also explore non-traditional cinematic structures from experimental and "post-modernist" narrative strategies.) Those of us in Film Studies realize that ten years from now students may not remember too much about Godard's editing techniques, Kieslowski's symbolic relationships to freedom or the history of the poetic mode of documentary from Berlin: Symphony of a City to Koyaanisquatsi, but they will remember how to glean argument, idea, and ideology from the visual elements of the motion picture—a skill that will serve them well and deeply into the 21st century.

In this Core course, as in those that we offer to our majors, the writing process is at its heart. Indeed, the Core/Writing Center's charge to those of us who teach in the Writing Intensive Series is that writing, indeed, be a process initiated and activated throughout the quarter. Rather than assigning one, large, looming writing project completed by quarter's end, faculty are encouraged to engage with students' process throughout the quarter—intervening, guiding, interjecting and instructing throughout. In my own experience teaching writing over the past fourteen years, I've discovered that this kind of process-based instruction is key to students' growth as writers, and also key to student development as thinkers and creators. To me, a twenty-page paper assignment due at the end of the term, with some brief comments and a grade attached during Finals Week, isn't really a writing assignment. It's more likely a research project, a fact-processing assignment, perhaps even an analysis or interpretation assignment. But without the multiple drafts, without the shorter assignments building up to that tome, very little writing education can occur.

Thus my newly developed core class is filled with a series of small writing assignments, progressively more complex, and many of them proceeding from and building upon the ones prior. I also offer many points of intercession in their writing—the shorter, more frequent assignments will be quickly commented upon and returned to the student. I will engage with students during class meeting sessions about writing strategies and writing assignment results. The longer, progressive series of assignments will also include in that process a one-on-one conference with myself in order to get to what students are "really trying to say". These sessions will help students to clarify their thinking process, identify a compelling thesis, discover a means of organization. I've discovered that when composing argumentative or interpretive essays, most students are unable to develop a thesis, to discover what it is they are trying to say without a lot of prodding, freewriting, modeling and discussing. Mostly, I hope these individual sessions will encourage students to speak from their unique, buried, creative and intelligent selves. My experience (and our Writing Center colleagues concur with this) is that for students to have worthwhile writing experiences, my job is to immerse myself in the process of writing right along with them. They need that much encouragement to discover something worthwhile for themselves.

In the early 1990s, novelist Don DeLillo declared during an interview with the Paris Review that "we're all one beat away from

becoming elevator music." His statement is in the context of the "fate of the novel" question, but I take his comment much more broadly. Recently, while reading about the fate of reading in Sven Birkerts' The Gutenberg Elegies, I came across some rumination from Lionel Trillings The Liberal Imagination. Written in 1950 when, according to Birkerts, "literary and intellectual culture had reached its apogee," Trilling anticipated DeLillo. "For all our supposed riches, our culture feels impoverished; it lacks the kinds of animation that regular exposure to ideas and works of imagination supplies; and it is without an affirmative circulation of mental and spiritual energies." Now, whether one supposes that it has always felt this way to writers, intellectuals, artists and academics, one cannot deny that a University might function to alleviate this sense of dearth somewhat. Birkerts' specific complaint is about "the fate of reading in an electronic age." But one could argue that the same fate has befallen writing, our students' writing especially (if not our own of the "publish-or-perish" genre.) While we know how to communicate via liquid crystal display units, wires and satellites, Birkerts attests, along with Trilling, that we have much more trouble doing so with any verve, depth or intellect. Writing matters and writers matter. If there's no other function of a university, it is to explore and "draw out" (*educare*) the thinker, hence writer, in each individual student.

We talked about this necessity in our Writing Intensive Faculty Workshop, although the passion around this discussion did not emerge until the last several minutes of the many hours' of meeting and workshopping we had done together. Perhaps this was due to our acquired comfort-level with each other. Perhaps we had avoided discussing our passion for teaching writing for so many days and hours that the dam had to burst, finally, at the end. "The structures of language represent a doorway back into duration" says Birkerts. Shall we allow these structures to crumble?

But I have an addendum (and perhaps, as Thoreau would assert, a pettiness to expiate). The subject-based knowledge from a core class may not endure. But the knowing won't pass quite so easily or quickly. Writing, to me, is a means to explore the interior and while making connections to the exterior. Writing is a means of navigating between the two. So let the writing come out before trying to control it. (This is Natalie Goldberg's idea.) The control comes later. A student needs to engage in writing first for themselves as process, rather than product. The structure of the Core Writing Intensive classes rather insists upon that process. Those requirements are not subtle. But perhaps, at this point in our cultural literacy skills, they can no longer afford to be.

So I take this as far as I can in the current iteration of my Core syllabus. I insist upon several steps to the process: freewriting, discovery, evidentiary construction and from there, thesis assertion, organization, presteps, draft and revision. I may also have to take some time to differentiate for the text-message generation the difference between "there" and "their". This low-level of language literacy illustrate s a deeper, systemic problem with our students—their generally inadequate preparation for college-level writing. Doubtless, many hours have been spent in many Writing Intensive Faculty Workshops lamenting this fact, and, as Birkerts does, lamenting its supposed causes. But the "no child left behind" version of writing here at DU would be, I feel, assigning a project or even a process about which the student can find no sense of interior. So in addition to above process-oriented writing exercises, I will also assign weekly writing that's informal, expressive, exploratory by way of in-class freewriting exercises, group work and journal writing. What I've discovered in previous classes in which students write freely and constantly is that, surprisingly, students develop more formal writing skills simply by doing writing. In this informal context students don't worry about thesis statements and organization. (They often don't worry about "their" nor "there" either). But in these contexts I encourage students to start where they are and see what happens. In classes in which I've assigned 2-page weekly informal responses (while concurrently sneaking in an increasingly more formal component to the assignment as the quarter progresses), I've discovered that by the end of ten weeks, students are writing cogent, cohesive and rather densely packed essays with an insightful and creative interpretive stance towards cinema and some naturally organized paragraphs. Not bad for informal writing exercises.

So the true blessing of these writing-intensive core courses is that writing doesn't have to be the subject. The "Subject" is the subject and writing is the process within it. As we discovered in our workshop together, while the subject is knowledge, writing is the knowing. And yet writing is even more than this kind of subject intimacy acquisition.

Our first exercise in the Writing Intensive Faculty Workshop was to talk about a passage by Kenneth Burke in which one enters a Victorian parlor. This parlor bears an appropriately heavy analogy to students' experience of a "writing class." It's indoors. It's stuffy, as parlors tend to be. You have arrived late. Essentially it has very little to do with you as an individual. No one tells you why it's important to be there. No one else seems very happy or relaxed in this place either. If I were a student, my mind would wander from this room towards something more invigorating: learning to body surf or working on my Frisbee skills, for example. But what if the room were of the students' own design—what if the challenge were for the students to paint and furnish the room themselves, to knock out a wall in order to add a window? Or what if the option was given for students, simply, to move out of doors? The analogy doesn't perfectly extend this far. But the idea is that, through writing, students could discover some refreshment of their own in the writing process, at least as much refreshment as oppression. Perhaps that kind of liberation within syntactical and compositional traditions is more to the purpose of the liberal arts education and more what a university can offer its students. We can offer them themselves, their own minds, a future embodied and inhabited by free thinkers. Their thinking, their freedom will serve them well—educators, writers, historians, wisdom seekers, gardeners, Animal Planet editors, cinema curators, performance artists, Industrial Light and Magic processors, child-raisers, filmmakers, performance artists, activists, physicians, researchers, legislator, lawyers, stockbrokers, captains of industry or they may be.

SATIRE AND THE ONE-TWO PUNCH OF CREATIVITY AND ANALYSIS

Allison Horsley
Theatre
2009

Sitting in my office at a theatre in La Jolla, California in early 2006, I took some time to consider what type of interdisciplinary course I could propose for my new venture. I had accepted a job of assistant professor in the theatre department of my undergraduate alma mater, University of Denver, and was being urged/instructed to submit a Core course proposal. I wanted to teach something that reflected my intellectual interests as well as my fascination with popular culture and comedy. Something that would inspire students to think analytically and creatively, and in turn, inspire them to view the world through different eyes. I glanced out the window and saw my friend Chris, a burly carpenter-type in his mid-twenties, making his way into one of the nearby theatres carrying technical gear for a set and wearing his traditional Friday t-shirt, a black shirt with a yellow logo that he designed. I was wearing the same shirt. In fact, most of the administrative staff—generally women—were wearing the same shirt.

You see, Chris and his brethren in the scene shop—all men—had felt disconnected from the administrative and artistic departments of the theatre for years. Firstly, there was the shop's deep resentment toward the managing director of the theatre, a dark and mysterious man who knew none of them by name but held the purse strings. Then, there was the shop's total hatred of my boss, the mercurial artistic director of the theatre, whose demands of last-minute major overhauls to scenery regularly broke the spirit (and budget) of the managing director and bred the need for our scenic crews to work overnight shifts. Feeling powerless and trapped, the rebellious scene shop began calling it quits for several hours each Thursday night—no matter what—to imbibe in Thirsty Thursday, a new tradition of drinking and nacho-eating at a nearby Tex-Mex hangout. Following Thirsty Thursday, their dream was to initiate Fist Fight Friday, another new tradition at the Playhouse which involved an elected official from the scene shop walking into the administrative offices and decking the first admin staffer he saw, because the innocent victim was "one of them."

A couple of years passed with no such incident and the downtrodden populations of the administrative/artistic offices and scene shops came together in the tradition of Thirsty Thursday, finding a common ground in cheap margaritas and shared contempt for their powerful higher-ups. Chris, one of the heads of the scene shop, then established the tradition for which he may best be known: designing t-shirts that expressed the staff's resentment toward the reigning regime through dark satire and esoteric commentary. Chris came out with one or two a year, but my favorite was always the simple black "F-cubed" t-shirt which featured the letter "F" with a tiny "3" to its right, and one yellow stick figure punching another, under which was written in sweet cursive, "We do it because we care."

Through his subversive and lucrative t-shirt business, Chris was subconsciously engaging in an age-old process of observation, analysis and synthesis to empower himself and his those like him by creating pieces of satire directed at authority figures. His creative product was brilliantly attuned to his audience and the times. As writers and scholars, don't many of us dream of achieving this level of efficaciousness in our work? And isn't that ability to perceive the world and respond to it with a unique contribution a skill we want for our students? I proposed a class that I felt would best invite this type of process: a satire class in which students would study the best satire in the world and its context and audience, along with creating their own work.

I am now in the middle of my fourth year of teaching at University of Denver, and will present the fourth incarnation of my Core class, Satire in the Arts and Media, in the spring quarter as a writing intensive course. In my first year of teaching the class, I required students to analyze historical pieces of satire and the biographies of satirists, in addition to writing their own shorter piece at the end of the quarter and discussing its origins. In general, I found the analytical writing stale and uninspired while the satirical/creative writing seemed to open a little window for the students that had never been opened, inviting them to share some considered views on the world. A new part of their brains seemed to open up as a result of engaging in a highly analytical process cunningly shrouded in creativity and I began to realize that this writing component needed to become a central focus of the course. In my admittedly limited experience, students can be analytical without being particularly creative, but it's tough to be creative without being the least bit analytical where humor is concerned. The study of satire effectively marries creativity and analysis.

Once my students are introduced to satire as a coherent genre instead of just another subset of comedy, they begin to see the intentionality behind favorite shows like *The Family Guy*, *South Park*, *The Daily Show*, and *The Colbert Report* that they previously considered pure entertainment. We discuss what aspects of society are being targeted by these shows, and illuminate the critical mechanisms at work behind these shows. Through the writing component of the course—analyzing existing materials as well as generating their own—students find an outlet for their sometimes undirected revolutionary impulses through an academic medium because they spend the entire quarter immersed in a genre that continually espouses the power of the pen over the sword.

After attending the Writing Center's training for the Core Writing Intensive courses, I have expanded the repertoire of available styles of writing I might employ in the class. Whereas in the past, I employed analytical (typical essay) and creative writing, this year I will introduce a few more assignments in the form of student-written discussion, exploratory writing at home and in the classroom, and group projects that demand critical and creative writing through collaboration. I have utilized student-written discussion questions before in my class as a method of assessing student comprehension of assigned materials in advance of class meetings, but those questions have always been for my use in guiding class discussion. This year, each student will be assigned a day before which he or she must craft a mandatory set of discussion questions and submit them to his or her classmates via Blackboard. The rest of the class will be required to respond to a question of their choosing with a few sentences of exploratory writing. The students can see one another's responses online and come to class prepared to continue the discussion in person. This will help students better prepare for class, having considered their opinions beforehand through critical writing and thinking. Additionally, it will give each student the sense of responsibility toward his or her classmates.

A challenge I've often faced in recent years is that of some students talking more than others, and quiet students not stepping forward to offer their analysis. The discussion question model will allow those quiet students an opportunity to challenge their classmates through writing online and voicing their opinions, in addition to having ready responses when an opportunity to speak arises in class. With similar goals in mind, I will utilize the end of some classes to invite students to jot additional comments on that day's discussion so that we might continue or finish the conversation on the next class day. This further solidifies the course material as being part of a continuum, as opposed to isolated topics of discussion that disappear after their day in class.

Brief, assigned exploratory writings at home will encourage students to reflect on the current reading and arrive in class prepared for discussion. The following are sample prompts for shorter exploratory writings in and out of class:

a) "Satire has to be offensive to be effective." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?

b) In your opinion, who is the more effective satirist, and why: Jon Stewart or Stephen Colbert?
c) If you were to compose an updated adaptation of Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" what groups of people would you depict in place of the English and Irish and why? Please limit your response to two paragraphs.
d) Which 3 or 4 sections of Monty Python's *The Meaning of Life* feel the most satirically "true" about human nature or modern life?
e) Who or what are Pope's intended satirical targets in the *The Rape of the Lock*, in addition to the young man and woman at the center of the controversy?

An example of an individual, formal, writing assignment that I've given in the past with the purpose of enticing the students into critical territory with American society and its customs involves the following question, which requires several types of analysis on the students' part:

> Create a fake, satirical, American national holiday and describe and/or design each of the following for your new holiday:
> a) the name of the holiday and the regular spoken salutation associated with that holiday (like "Merry Christmas!" or "Happy New Year!")
> b) the population or faction which mainly celebrates it
> c) a greeting card associated with this holiday, including type of image and greeting/message; this could vary by demographic, and if so, you can describe which one
> d) the decorations placed in front lawns or in homes and the material goods/foods sold in stores to support celebration of this holiday
> e) the origin of this holiday (this can be a fictionalized "creation" story if necessary about its founder, patron saint, precipitating event, etc.)
> f) the song most often associated with this holiday – write out all of the song lyrics and describe the style of the song, whether it's normally sung in chorus, by carolers, by stars on the radio, etc.
> g) the group of people who regularly protest against the public celebration of this holiday and why they find this holiday offensive or problematic
> h) The reasoning behind your choice of holiday. Did you create this one as a commentary on a holiday that already exists (if so, which one) or as a commentary on something within the culture that is not talked about (if so, what)? What did this assignment permit/force you to consider that you haven't considered before?
>
> Note: Because your holiday needs to be satirical in nature, make sure that it holds within it an inherent sense of criticism or commentary of American society, custom, or holidays. In other words, you can't create "Me Day" with decorations of cardboard cutouts of your personage unless there is an obvious commentary in there somewhere that your professor will get. Also, you cannot satirize this class or your professor in this exercise.

A seemingly fun and innocuous assignment like this requires considerable social analysis, cultural analysis, and historical analysis, and provides students with a productive venue for expressing their beliefs and synthesizing them into something new and original.

Some group projects with which I've experimented in the past and which I plan to replicate this year in a different form involve creating new satirical work, and analyzing student-written work. In the past, I never required students to share their new work with one another in a draft form, but this year I will require the students to bring in a draft of their first creative work—a piece of

satire directed at their chosen major at DU and intended for an audience of general university faculty and students—and distribute it to a small group of their peers in class. I plan to require students to first respond to one another by asking some of the questions I encourage them to ask about each piece of satire we read in the course:

- Would you characterize this piece as Horatian or Juvenalian in tone? Does the tone shift or remain consistent throughout?
- Does the tone feel appropriate to the content of the piece?
- Does the writer/creator take a meandering approach to his/her subject or is the commentary constant throughout? Is this a strength or a weakness of the piece?
- Who is the intended audience of this piece?
- Is the writer/creator of this piece a member of the same community he or she is satirizing? How does this knowledge affect your interpretation of the piece?

After this initial discussion opens the doors for talking about the student-written work in the same manner we've talked about published pieces, I will ask students to identify inconsistencies within the pieces, places in which the writer/creator's satirical focus or intention is unclear, particular moments of strength within the piece, etc. Each student would be required to write a reflection on their group's reaction to his or her satire and ruminate, in writing, on the options for revision. When the satire is due, the students will be required to submit a short formal paper discussing their process of revision and describing their decision-making process. The purpose of the creative component of this assignment is to push students to observe their major disciplines as objective but educated viewers. They must analyze their own observations, and in many cases, consider the details of a situation they may have previously taken for granted. They must then process this information and synthesize it into a unique contribution to their community that reflects their beliefs of how things are, and how things should be. By analyzing his or her own process and describing options for revision, the student will hopefully grow to see the many available avenues to creation and that all creative choices are made for a reason as opposed to sheer arbitrary entertainment.

I intend to assign group creative projects so that students may experience the type of negotiation that must occur in collaborating on a creative venture. One successful prompt I've used in the past is:

> After studying how your assigned musical genre (country/western, rock/pop, heavy metal, rap/hip-hop) deals with sex and pregnancy through language, underlying message, imagery, etc., please write the lyrics to and describe the action of a 30-second public service birth control announcement music video directed at your genre's primary audience. Please time your lyrics to fit perfectly in a 30-second slot, and use 1-2 pages to describe the action of your commercial (scenery, costuming, actors, plot, etc.). You will present your work to the class and invite feedback from other groups.

This assignment proved popular and successful last year with students reporting to that they had never analyzed aspects of popular culture like music or advertising, and that this assignment opened their eyes to so much of the world around them. The impact of this assignment caught me off-guard and alerted me to the impact my class may have in encouraging students to view popular culture as something that reflects and can provoke thought. I want my students to leave the satire class not only with a sense of how broad and impactful the genre can be in provoking change to the world, but with a heightened awareness that critical thinking should not be relegated to "school" or the classroom but integrated into daily life. The writing component of the course bolsters this awareness.

Every year I have students who experience a kind of paralysis when facing an open creative assignment like the major satire

or the final assignment, which invites students to satirize any phenomenon they want (outside of me, the class, their classmates, or the ore curriculum). The writing intensive workshop gave me a number of tools I plan to employ for supporting student writing in the form of guiding the class through a series of "problem questions" that they might use to spark inspiration for the original pieces of satire, such as: Is there something that makes you angry every day? Traffic? TV? A relationship? An ad? A political figure? Is this thing a person, an idea, a phenomenon, an image? What is it about this thing that bothers you? Is this thing unique to you and your life or is it something that occurs with some frequency in society? Can you create a parody of this person/idea/phenomenon/image and use it as satirical commentary on the thing itself? To model a creative process for the students, I plan to generate my own piece of satire at the same rate as they, and discuss each step of the process with them, including my own answering the above questions, my options for a medium in which to present my satire, and my analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the piece I create.

In terms of my challenges in integrating the writing component, it is always a primary concern of mine that I effectively balance the provision of historical context with the invitation to students to bring in their own knowledge and context to bear in analyzing the course material. Students need to understand the context of the more distant historical pieces we cover (*The Rape of the Lock*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Animal Farm*, etc.) in order to get humor of these pieces and understand why they were effective. Such context isn't as necessary as often with contemporary issues, but where do I draw the line between providing too much information and not enough? Should I eliminate a text from class study because it seems to require too much historical background? Or do I limit texts that require none for fear the students are not "learning" enough because I am merely shining a light on that with which they're already familiar? These are the challenges I will face in putting together a good mixture of readings, and similarly in focusing students' writing assignments to require advanced analysis without dulling the wonderful edge of the material. Nothing kills humor more quickly then over-analysis, but I do want students to recognize the forethought and labor required to execute an effective piece of writing for publication.

At the end of the spring quarter, I hope to have many excellent examples of knowledge spoken to power through humor. Though I have had satires submitted in all forms, for the record, I haven't received a t-shirt. I imagine it's only a matter of time.

WAYS OF KNOWING THE WRITING INTENSIVE REQUIREMENT

Elizabeth Karlsgodt
History
2008

My initial goals for this brief article were overly ambitious. Inspired by Michael Carter's article "Ways of Knowing, Doing, and Writing in the Disciplines" (CCC 58:3, February 2007), I had planned to analyze DU's mission for undergraduate student writing – the skills we expect students to develop by the time they graduate – and how University requirements help them acquire those skills. Next I would analyze writing assessment rubrics from several different DU academic departments, comparing criteria across what Carter calls academic "metagenres." This awareness of other departments' "ways of doing" would enable me to explain how my writing intensive core course would achieve interdisciplinary writing objectives. Feeling like a student again myself, I dutifully set about gathering this information which, I imagined, surely would be available on the DU Web site. Full disclosure: I am entering my third year as a DU faculty member so my relative lack of experience may help to explain my naiveté.

Undergraduate Writing at DU

It didn't take long for me to reach my first stumbling block. I was surprised to find that there is not a clear statement on the Web site or in the undergraduate bulletin about how writing fits into the University's general requirements. Although I am a relatively new faculty member, I am familiar with the University's recent initiatives that emphasize the importance of writing – the creation of the Writing Center and expansion of its services, more systematic training of faculty teaching writing intensive core courses, and stipends offered to faculty for teaching and training. Yet I could not find a clear statement summarizing why all of these things are fundamental to undergraduate education at DU.

Ok, so there's no overarching statement on the importance of writing – or not one that I could find. At least I would be able to evaluate the University's clearly defined objectives related to writing intensive core courses. Again, I was surprised by a lack of information. According to the *Undergraduate Bulletin 2007-2009*, students must take three core courses, one of which must be writing intensive. (p. 62) Yet there is no explanation as to why the University created the writing intensive requirement. The core curriculum web site, moreover, does not even mention the writing intensive requirement. (http://www.du.edu/Core/index.html) This contradictory information must be confusing for students and faculty alike. I imagine that some faculty who are advising juniors and seniors are not aware of the writing intensive requirement. Is it possible that the *Bulletin* is incorrect?

Well, fine. I could still find the departmental assessment rubrics on Portfolio. I had helped out with the history department's assessment process this year, so I knew how to find the rubrics and I would be able to gauge the importance of writing and assessment criteria across various majors. Unfortunately, there were not as many departmental rubrics as I had thought, and only a few seemed sufficiently thorough for the analysis I wanted to carry out. Yet all of this searching was not fruitless; it raised some interesting and important questions. Has the University defined the importance of writing in the undergraduate general requirements? If so, why isn't this information readily available to students, advisers and faculty? Why has the University made a financial commitment to support writing? Why am I being paid rather generously to create a writing intensive course, receive training, and write an article on my use of writing assignments? What is the reasoning behind the resources?

I have my own reasons for teaching a writing intensive course. I use rather extensive writing assignments anyway because I believe they are the best way for students to learn history and develop key analytical skills. I also like the idea of

teaching a smaller class so I can devote more time to discussing the assignments, and working on the mechanics and process of writing. I also will happily accept the stipends, of course. But how should I explain the intensive writing requirement to my students and advisees? As a newly elected member of the core faculty committee, I also would like to have a better sense of why the requirement was created so that I am able to evaluate proposals fairly. (Come to think of it, this would have been useful information as I was preparing my own core course proposal.)

Departmental Writing Assessment Rubrics

In the Carter-inspired section of my article, I had hoped to compare writing assessment rubrics from the disciplines that figure prominently in my core course on the French Revolution, namely history, art history, philosophy, sociology and theater studies. As with any research project, the information we expect to find often isn't available (sometimes historians figure this out only after travelling thousands of miles to archive centers), and we modify our projects accordingly. My new goal: to address how my writing intensive core course will benefit students in various majors, not necessarily in the disciplines directly related to my core course. I located several departmental writing rubrics that would fit into most of the "metagenre" categories defined by Carter. In the "problem solving" category, the engineering department has a rubric for a "final design project" in which students are evaluated according to their ability to "solve computer problems, monitor performance of engineering systems and/or to create computer engineering designs." Unfortunately, the assessment criteria are not defined beyond "below expectations," "meets criterion," exceeds criterion." From the rubric, it's not clear to me how the project is evaluated and I'm not sure how writing could provide a bridge between my core course and this area of problem solving.

The math department, arguably also a "problem solving" area, has a writing rubric that assesses the following skills:

- Understands and appreciates connections between different areas of mathematics and with other disciplines
- reasons vigorously in mathematical arguments
- engages effectively and efficiently in problem solving
- communicates mathematics clearly and effectively
- thinks creatively at an appropriate level

In each category, the assessments are simply "minumum/two/three/maximum." Again, it is difficult to see a direct link between these assessment criteria and writing assignments in my core course. Perhaps students who are majoring in the "problem solving" metagenre will benefit by simply honing their writing and analytical skills – key abilities for students entering any major or professional field.

Comparisons come more easily from departments that seem to fit into Carter's categories of "performance" (School of Communication) and disciplines that use "research from sources." (History, religious studies, international studies, English, political science. Carter placed political science in the "empirical inquiry" category, but DU's political science department does not appear to be testing hypotheses in an empirical way. Its rubric thus seems to fit better into the "research from sources" category.) There are common elements in all of these writing rubrics: Students are evaluated according to their ability to argue a central idea that is supported by evidence. A paper's organization must be coherent with clear transitions. Grammar, punctuation and spelling must be correct, and external sources must be credited and integrated appropriately.

Language variations in the rubrics reveal some important disciplinary priorities. The English department looks for voice and style. The history department requires use of both primary and secondary sources, and a clear understanding of historiography. Religious Studies assesses the ability to "recognize and bring to bear the interdisciplinary assumptions and strategies that are relevant to religious studies." Political science requires students to address "relevant concepts, events and debates" in the discipline. Yet the common elements are more significant than the differences. In all cases, student writing should be organized, clear, nearly free from grammar and spelling errors, have a central argument supported by evidence from integrated and credited sources,

and reflect an understanding of important works in the field.

Writing in My Core Course

So how does this information influence the way I am planning the writing assignments in my core course? Although I have a relatively small sampling of departmental writing rubrics, this exercise has validated claims I have made to students in all of my courses: the skills they develop will serve them well in any major they might choose. My core course on the French Revolution will require a combination of informal and formal writing assignments. For example, students will post weekly reading responses to a Blackboard discussion board. They will submit a 400-word essay plus a 100-comment on another student's essay. This assignment requires students to reflect on one another's writing and argumentation, while encouraging them to learn from one another. The use of the discussion board also will enable me to identify writing problems or challenges early and consistently. I will grade the postings, placing more emphasis on argumentation and clarity but marking down postings that contain too many spelling and grammar errors. The writing workshop helped me realize that in the past I have spent too much time correcting students' mistakes. I now plan to indicate in the margins which lines contain errors, and encourage students to find the mistakes themselves.

In another assignment I will require students to write or modify a Wikipedia entry. This is not a new idea – history professors have been using it for years – but it will be the first time that I have required it. Students will read the main French Revolution entry and either correct an erroneous passage or add some new information to the entry. This assignment will require them to demonstrate knowledge of the Revolution, and learn to read online sources critically. I hope to tap into their interest in the Internet and provide a way for them to make Wikipedia a more credible and reliable resource. Students will read and critique other students' draft contributions, creating a community of knowledge within our classroom first, and then among Wikipedia users.

The main formal writing assignment will be a 10- to 12-page research paper. I plan to invite the Writing Center staff to assist students in two phases: first, when they are formulating their central arguments, and again when they have completed a rough draft. I will schedule deadlines throughout the quarter to help students plan ahead and think about their paper topics. Initially, I had planned to ask students to select their own topics, but after discussing assignment strategies in the workshop, I have decided to define the topic myself, or at least narrow the options to a few topics. I consider the research paper an important assignment that will help students learn how to write effectively across the disciplines – in those common areas repeated in the various writing rubrics. We will spend time discussing how one uses, integrates and cites sources. They will work with partners or in small groups to discuss the central arguments they are developing. I will grade a rough draft of the paper, providing extensive comments and giving them time to correct errors and strengthen their prose. I will provide a grading rubric so they know the relative importance of argumentation, source citation, clarity, syntax, correct spelling and grammar.

This modest project has made me wonder if the Writing Program could partner with relevant administrations and/or faculty committees to define a mission for undergraduate writing, one that is clearly stated in degree requirement descriptions. The writing intensive core requirement also could be more clearly explained. Regarding student assessment, it is my understanding that all academic departments should have some kind of rubric in place, similar to the ones that are already on Portfolio. If additional departments were encouraged to create rubrics, perhaps with the mission for undergraduate writing in mind, the Writing Program would have a better sense of faculty expectations and tailor services and training accordingly. As Carter argues, "Having faculty identify disciplinary ways of doing and then assess them through students' writing is a step toward situating writing in, not outside, the disciplines." ("Ways of Knowing, Doing and Writing," 391) It could be a positive step for DU students and faculty alike.

Strangeness, Irregularity, and Non-linearity

Brian Kiteley
English
2010

In my writing intensive Core class (Versions of Egypt) I give my students the option of a couple of writing assignments I will describe in this essay. I use these irregular, nontraditional instructions for expository papers as much to explain how essays work (or can work) as I do to trigger unusual papers (I also give them dozens of traditional assignments). As a teacher of fiction writing I have always been interested in finding the sources of writing, rather than just helping students revise their fiction once they've brought it to class, which is the usual approach of fiction and poetry workshops. I've written two books on this process, *The 3 A.M. Epiphany* and *The 4 A.M. Breakthrough*—which together have 400 exercises for writing fiction. In *The 3 A.M. Epiphany* I say, "I use exercises to derange student stories, find new possibilities, and foster strangeness, irregularity, and non-linearity as much as to encourage revision and cleaning up after yourself, and I don't worry too much about success or failure." Because I teach mostly fiction writing, I've spent less time worrying over expository papers in my classes, but lately I am thinking more about how to startle students into writing unusual essays.

One method of writing papers I propose is that students take six or eight favorite quotations from one of the books they've read. The quotes can be fairly long or quite short. Choosing them is the hard part, but it may not be as difficult as it seems at first. I suggest students choose these selections thematically, if they can, sticking to one or two problems. I tell them to study the quotes they choose over a few days—cutting out parts of the quotation that don't seem useful to the argument or problem that may be forming as they look at the group of them. Eventually I urge them to write a bit about each quote—paraphrasing, summarizing, reacting, or noting other areas in the books that these bits of writing resonate against. Eventually, in this manner, they may have the rough draft of a paper literally built around the ideas of these other writers. The final product may have very little of the original quotations, or the quotes might remain solid and substantial. In class we talk a lot about what analysis is and isn't. I'll go over a paragraph from one of the books we've read that is a both a good example of analysis and needs analysis from us in order to fit it into the context of the course. This approach to writing papers gives me room to talk about basic components of essay writing.

Somewhat in contradiction to this assignment, I also warn students not to rely too heavily on long quotations in their papers. I think one can instruct students to do both things—gather a small collection of quotes to build a paper around and keep the quotes short and sweet. One or two relatively long quotations, though, can be useful and interesting to examine very closely, as a sort of *explication de texte*, the French approach to literary study. M. H. Abrams describes this form of close reading as "the detailed analysis of the complex interrelations and *ambiguities* (multiple meanings) [Abrams' emphasis] of verbal and figurative components with a work." This method of reading usually applies to poetry, but I like asking my students to consider prose in the same fashion. Most of the students in these Core classes have never done close readings of any kind of prose (let alone poetry), so it is useful to guide them in this process.

The old idea of these Core classes at DU, which is being replaced by another form of the Core as of the fall of 2010, was that the courses studied a subject through the lens of at least two scholarly disciplines (the new Core doesn't do interdisciplinary studies). My course examines Cairo and Egypt from the point of view of travel writing (by foreigners), fiction (by Egyptians), and anthropology (by

academics, generally also foreigners). The close analysis of the prose (and methods) of these different disciplines is the heart of this course, something I do during class anyway, so I've found it very valuable to offer a writing assignment that incorporates this simple procedure into the general analysis of the texts.

Another assignment I suggest is for students to write a sort of self-interview. They choose two books as their subject. They are to write down carefully, over a few days or even weeks, ten or twelve questions about both or either of these books. I tell them to revise the questions until they're happy with them and until they see links between the questions—a progression of some sort. They will likely find themselves changing the order of the questions and deleting a few of them as they go along (this is important, I emphasize, that they begin to think about the progression of an argument these questions represent). Once they are satisfied with the integrity and toughness of the questions, I tell them to write down answers, briefly and then eventually at length. Students find that coming up with the answers is not be nearly as difficult as coming up with the questions. I allow them to hand in a finished product that is only these questions and these answers (although I also tell them they can hand in the paper with the questions removed and only the answers to these unseen questions).

In class, I spend a lot of time asking students to come up with questions. I break the class up into groups and tell the groups to write a question about a problem or set of characters in the book we're reading. When they've all written their questions, I transcribe them (often in short hand) onto the blackboard, and we vote on which is the best question. I strongly suggest that the students write down these questions and use some of all of them later. We talk about how the questions work, how they explore complex problems, and whether they seem to provoke good and interesting answers. I also tell students to email me sample questions, if they've chosen this assignment. It is easier to correct or reorient questions like these than to revise excerpts of their papers.

One of the attractions of this assignment for students is that they do the hard work first, and what often seems hard in writing papers—the arrangement of the argument—is more or less done once they've written and polished the questions. Answering the questions is not easy, but it seems easier to think of writing small blocks of prose in response to tough questions than stringing together four or five pages on the same topic. Students also don't think they have to come up with a topic when they write this kind of paper, although the questions always point them toward a topic.

I tell my students these two types of expository writing assignments are related to the one creative project I assign them during the term, which is to write a mock travelogue, as if they'd been to Egypt themselves. I like to point out the close relationship between so-called creative writing and expository prose (I usually note that there is no real difference between the two). In the creative assignment, I suggest, for instance, that they imagine themselves sitting in a café eavesdropping on a conversation between two characters from the fiction they've read (from two different books). Or I suggest they actually have a conversation (or write it down) with one of these characters. The two creative expository assignments work this way—as a form of conversation. The essay built on quotations is a conversation between the student and the prose from the text they're studying. The other essay—the self-interview—is literally a conversation with themselves.

William Butler Yeats said, "We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry." I urge students who've done either of these papers to think of them as very good rough drafts of another paper they won't (or may indeed) rewrite. It is important to remind young writers that all writing is part of a process of understanding their own thoughts, not something that is done once and for all as a reflection of what they think their teachers want them to have thought.

VARIETIES OF LATIN@ RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS
Reflections on the Writing Intensive Requirement Transformation

Luis Leon
Religious Studies
2010

In December 2009, I participated in the nine-hour seminar designed for converting a regular "core" course into a course that meets the writing intensive requirement. This proved to be a valuable learning experience for me, and I am therefore writing my reflections now while they are still fresh. The experience for me has resulted in a fresh and improved writing component to my existing core course: Varieties of Latina/o Religious Traditions. I will teach the course next during this summer, 2010.

The learning goals for this course are lofty; I expect students to acquire a grasp of some basic religious studies jargon, and to apply them. Key concepts such as myth, ritual, and symbols provide students with a linguistic template to synthesize, compare and contrast the religious expressions within Latina.o communities both in the past and today. This exercise will enable students to integrate this distanced perspective into their understanding of religion more generally. The thesis question for the course requires students to think both creatively and analytically: is there something we can call "Latina/o religion?" If so, describe it. If not, why not? Central to this question is the religious studies *raison d'être:* What is religion? Students will develop methods to identify and describe religious expressions, and to contextualize those within a Latino/a social reality.

Writing, of course, facilitates this process. Hithertofore I have required four formal writing assignments for this course: two in class midterms, and two film analyses. Cinematic representations of Latina/o cultural traditions serve as key texts for student analysis. However, since the seminar I will change the writing requirements for the course, and I describe those changes below. In brief, I will require informal writing assignments, and will require a long paper that integrates the total course materials. But, in order for me to fully process and articulate the ways in which writing in my course will be transformed, I need to preface this discussion with a reflection on the seminar discussions, exercises, and readings.

A SKEPTIC IN THE CHURCH OF HUMAN SCIENCES

As a student of the *postmodern* age, I maintain serious doubts about the so-called "human sciences"—in so far as this discourse is based in a modern notion of a universal human subject with categorical (read: able to be put into categories) variations. Modernity taught that humanity could be dissected and categorized according to a scientific theory of classification. Yet, humans have a history, they have a society, culture, and personalities that vary radically, making it impossible to accurately predict behavior as if forecasting weather patterns or diagnosing disease. Hence, I am suspicious of educational science. A sage senior professor once told me that teaching is about trial and error—you fix the things you've done wrong. This attitude does not incline me favorable toward a writing workshop. Yet, Doug Hesse understands and appreciates the issues I raise, and rather than proposing a universal model, his approach is to propose a variety of techniques and strategies for purposes of trial and error.

I have participated in three writing workshops with Doug Hesse, and each one I found helpful mostly because of Doug's practical and even philosophically pragmatic approach to the material: "truth" in teaching writing is largely what works to produce virtue. Paraphrasing William James, like the optical glass, if the religious or philosophical lens improves vision, then it works! And, like the prescription lens, not all truths fit all frames, correcting blurred vision. When applied to teaching writing, pragmatism brings into sharp relief my perspective that not all teaching strategies produce improved writing for all students. Hence, as I experienced and understood

it, Doug's approach was to 1) help teachers appreciate students' learning needs, and; 2) present a variety of strategies to employ at one's discretion, rather than a universal formula designed to work in all places at all times.

Equipped with this background, however misguided, I believe I was able to gain the most from the core writing intensive transformation seminar inasmuch as I was able to perfect techniques, accepting some of the information and rejecting other aspects. However, if I was not already familiar with Doug's pedagogy, I would have felt stifled and frustrated by some of the seminar discussions and by the readings especially. Overall, I found John Bean's *Engaging Ideas* to be quite useful. It provides a wide range of writing problems, situations, goals, while delimiting many useful strategies and specific techniques to teach writing across a broad curriculum. This, however, was also my first critique: the examples used to illustrate points were far too unfocused. That is, Bean drew examples from Biology and Economics in addition to English Literature and what he calls "religious studies." As the examples increased in enormity and generalization, my trust in the text shrank. I think a volume focused on the humanities alone would be generalized, but would suit me better in trusting its advice.

My second criticism of the text unfolds also around its generality: I was unconvinced by the premise that the teaching narrative textually presented is universally applicable across the college curriculum. My experience and my reading of the literature leads me to conclude that variations in instructor identity greatly vary how students respond to course content. According to the "AHSS Teaching Task Force Recommendations," chaired by Barbara Wilcots, and dated July 29, 2007, teaching evaluations, like teaching itself, must be contextualized: "Contextualize student evaluations, considering course, student, and instructor characteristics that research shows may affect assessment of teacher effectiveness."

By contrast, none of the situations, techniques, or strategies presented by Bean for teaching writing were contextualized within a student body, faculty, and national reality that varies according to race, class, gender, erotic identity and more. While I understand that that project would have required a meta-discourse, even some cursory remarks or qualifications would have greatly improved the book's plausibility. Finally and perhaps most generally, the text completely lacked a critique of the literature, and a critique of itself.

Bean references data as if they were sacred revelations. Data are of course bias, skewed, and should be treated critically for they displace many key factors influencing teaching—especially minority issues that by definition are insignificant in information collecting that privileges large clusters. Still, I found the information useful and below is how I factored it into my core course, with my own criticism.

LATINA/O RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS:
Writing to Learn/Learning to Write

Perhaps the first classification I find troubling is the easy distinction Bean makes between writing intended to teach content, and writing intended to teach writing. I find really very little distinction in my own course. I always teach writing. I take time in my courses to explain each assignment in great detail, which enables me to teach composition techniques including grammar issues. Yet, I am incorporating the techniques Bean suggests, especially the impromptu writing assignment. In the next section of this essay, I provide a course description, with amendments I made after the seminar. Similarly, I have provide before and after narratives of my writing assignments in the hopes of demonstrating learning and progress in my own teaching and writing!

VARIETIES OF LATINA/O RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS
Course Description and Learning Objectives

As a seminar in the core curriculum under Communities and Environments, the thesis question of this course focuses on the varied religious traditions practiced by people of Latin American origin in the United States. What are Latina/o religious traditions? How can they be studied and described? We explore this question through a variety of secondary texts, film, and art. It is not possible to completely understand the religious expressions of a cultural group within one academic semester. It is possible, however, to study patterned myths, rituals, and symbols within

history and society to better fathom religious traits characterizing groups of people in time and place. Toward this end we rely on a methodology used in "comparative religions," also known as "history of religions." This framework requires that we ask broad general questions about the place or *environment* of religious "phenomena" constituting Latina/o traditions broadly, while focusing specific historical examples. At the core of this task lies the question: "What is religion?" More specifically, from the various representations of religion we seek to glean how (many) people of Latina/o origin in the U.S. ordered experience, understood reality, made cosmological sense of themselves and others, and anticipated death.

In other words, what is the U.S. Latina/o religious experience? How has Christian theology shaped and informed this distinctive historical reality? What is the character, the nature, the quality of "religion" and "spirituality" in U.S. Latina/o history and society? How do we answer this question, and why is it important?

In order to address this question, this course attempts to *map* and understand a small part of the complex religious traditions of Latin America, with special attention to their expressions/reformulations in the United States. Our *comparative* approach seeks to uncover the similarities and differences in various U.S. Latina/o religions, asking: How can Latina/o religions be characterized and represented? Is there a distinctive quality in Latina/o religious expression that cuts across space, time, and *theological* boundaries? Even more, how has religion contributed to a sense of identity and power for Latina/os in the U.S.? Is religion a tool for keeping Latina/o people oppressed, and/or can religion, Christianity in particular, liberate people from material oppressions?

There is of course no "scientific" solution to this inquiry. Instead, the outcome of the course is to gain perspective, and to be able to articulate that point of view convincingly, using evidence, especially through writing. Instead of a definitive answer to the question about the existence of a "Latina/o religion," students should gain 1) a working understanding of the major terms and issues in the study of religions; 2) a familiarity with key texts and traditions within Latina/o religiosity; and 3) an understanding of the historical background and social contexts out of which Latina/o religions emerge.

Our trajectory roughly follows the demographic profiles of Latina/os in the U.S.: over 60% of the Hispanic-American population is of Mexican origin, and thusly that group orients the first part of the course. The second half focuses on the Caribbean diaspora (Puerto Rican and Cuban), and Central and South American immigration.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING IN BRIEF

FIRST MIDTERM: 16 October (20 points)
SECOND MIDTERM/ FINAL: 13 November (20 points)
FILM REVIEWS: 2 @ 20 points each (40 points)
October 9: & November 20
Class Attendance and Participation, including group discussions: (20 points)

MIDTERMS: Each reading unit will be introduced with a series of terms and questions, reading and test "prompts." I will draw from these exact prompts for the midterms. Midterms will require the entire class period to complete. Each student must provide a blue book, and in-class exams must be written in ink. There is no minimum length for the exams, but the highest grades will be awarded for answers demonstrating detail, depth of analysis, critical insight, and proper grammar and general writing skills.

ESSAY GRADING CRITERIA:

1. Does the essay answer the question?
   Correct Information:
   Well Organized:
2. Does the essay reference information properly?
   Lectures:
   READINGS:
3. Does the essay analyze, critique, or compare the material?
   Class concepts:
   Fresh insight and analysis:
4. Does the essay use all possible examples for answering the question?
   Minimum effort:
   Maximum strength:

DISCUSSION GROUPS:

I will break the class into small "discussion groups." Each group will be assigned a question or more and must hand in a group

answer. I will also respond to questions printed on the bottom of each page.

FILM ANALYSIS: You are to compare and analyze the films screened in the class. The film reviews should be 2-4 pages, or 500-1,000 words, typed, double-spaced, with Times New Roman 12 point font and 1" margins. It must be submitted in paper ("hard copy"). It should address the following questions:

1) What is the *thesis* of the film? What does it mean to tell us, why and how does It do this?

2) How does it represent religion?

3) What does the film tell us about Latin@ religions?

4) How does the film square with (compare to) assigned readings and class discussions?

LATINA/O RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS:

Post Core Writing Seminar Writing Revision

ASSIGNMENTS (in brief): You are required to write a term paper consisting of 15 pages, broken down into three actual papers. The final term paper enables you to integrate and revise the first two essays into a longer, more polished project. Goals for the first two papers are generally uniform, but the content is different. The first paper focuses on Christianity, comparing Latina/o forms of Catholicism with evangelical and Pentecostal traditions. The Second paper asks you to compare the medium-ship based healing traditions extant at the time of colonialism and now thoroughly integrated with Christianity: Santeria and *curanderismo*. I will return both papers to you with comments that will help you to revise them to integrate into the final paper. The third and longer paper asks you to revise the shorter papers in light of my comments, and to compare the forms of Christianity you wrote about to the neo-Indigenous healing traditions focusing on myth, ritual, and symbol, asking if there is enough commonality among them in form if not content to be classified together as an ethnic religious tradition. Papers require you to understand, compare, analyze, synthesize, and integrate materials from readings, class lectures and discussions, and films. Materials should be drawn from in class sources only. Bear in mind that your audience is religious studies scholars.

PAPER ONE: CHRISTIANITY. This first paper asks you to compare the myths, rituals, and symbols of Pentecostalism to those of devotional Catholicism, focusing especially on the cases of Mexican devotion to Guadalupe, and the Cuban devotion to Caridad. How do these traditions resonate pre-colonial religious practices and inclinations? Discuss both the form of the expressions and the content—that is, what are people praying for? What do they expect? How do they imagine and position Christ within their cosmology? Are these forms of Christianity more alike than they are different, or vice versa?

ALTERNATIVE: Place a practitioner of Pentecostalism in conversation with a Catholic devotee. How do they disagree? How do they agree?

PAPER TWO: SPIRITUALISM: This second paper asks you to compare the myths, rituals, and symbols of spiritual healing traditions ("spiritualism") focusing especially on the cases of Mexican *curanderismo*, Cuban Santeria. How do these traditions resonate pre-colonial religious practices and inclinations? Discuss both the form of the expressions and the content—that is, what are people praying for? What do they expect? How do they imagine and position Christ within their cosmology? Are these forms of community-based indigenized Christianity more alike than they are different, or vice versa?

ALTERNATIVE: Place a practitioner of Santeria in conversation with a *curandero* devotee. How do they disagree? How do they agree?

FINAL PAPER: Latina/o Religions? Our study of Latina/o religious traditions has focused on Mexican American expressions as examples of mainland Latin America, and on Cuban religious systems to represent Latina/o traditions found in the Caribbean. The final paper requires you to synthesize the first two papers. Compare the myths, rituals, and symbols of all the traditions we have studied in the course. Integrate your arguments of your revised shorter papers into a longer sustained theoretical argument about Latina/o religions more generally. Whereas your shorter papers relied heavily on examples and

evidence, this final paper should draw from that pool of resources, integrating them into a longer theoretical analysis about what is religion broadly, and what is Latina/o religion specifically: does such a thing exist? Why or why not? If these traditions are too varied to be classified as a unified whole, explain the differences. If they are similar enough in content if not form than argue for the essence of a Latina/o religion that transcends individual confessional traditions.

ALTERNATIVE: As a scholar of religious studies, you have read conversations between Latina/os of various faiths. Based on these transcripts, create an argument about the nature of Latina/o religions. Does such a thing exist in the singular? Why or why not?

AMERICAN UTOPIAS

Caleb McDaniel
History
2007

"American Utopias" is a course about visionary people who believed they could change the world by living in utopian communities. In the mid-1800s, for example, John Humphrey Noyes founded a religious community in Oneida, New York, in which members held property in common and practiced polygamous "free love" relationships. Other utopian planners in the 1800s created societies in remote places like New Harmony, Indiana, based on new theories of labor being develop by European socialists. In the twentieth century, during the early years of the Civil Rights Movement, a group of liberal Southern Baptists in Georgia founded an interracial cooperative farm called Koinonia Farm, which went on to become the spark for the present-day non-profit organization Habitat for Humanity. In the 1960s and 1970s, a variety of hippie communes and New Age communities were formed, some of them modeled on earlier utopian experiments like Oneida.

By exploring the history of these and other communal societies, this course will examine a variety of colorful reformers and try to understand their motivations for creating utopias. Many of the questions raised by the course are historical: Why were certain moments in American history conducive to the formation of utopian communities? What do these eccentric communes reveal about the larger society of the time, and how (if at all) did they influence society? Why and when did particular utopias disband? Other questions explored in the course are sociological. By examining planned communities, we will consider group dynamics and struggles over power that can be found in nearly every community. We will discuss how social phenomena like class and gender norms affect relationships between people. Finally, we will think about how communities work and what makes them succeed or fail. Although the course will examine lofty questions about what an ideal community would look like, we will be equally interested in the more mundane questions of how actual communities organize and deal with the problems of communal life. As one sociologist asks, "In utopia … who takes out the garbage?"

This course on utopias is writing-intensive. Perhaps that is fitting because the very premise for writing—the idea that we can communicate our ideas through language and even change someone else's ideas as a result—may seem a little utopian. Most of the utopians we will study were also prolific writers. They believed that by not only living in special communities, but also by writing about them, they could *make* the world better. Our goal in this course is more modest: we will use writing to *understand* the world better. Writing in this course will not simply take the form of graded assignments—hoops you must jump through to show what you have learned. Rather, the course is built around the theory that writing is itself a means of learning. Students will regularly complete short, informal writing assignments in class designed to help formulate, analyze, and answer historical and sociological questions about utopian communities and their social environments. Some of these short writing assignments—such as short reactions to assigned readings—will be familiar to students. Other creative writing assignments, however, will allow students to adopt roles and write as if they were nineteenth-century utopian communalists, or will ask students to design and analyze their own utopian community. In addition, in-class discussions of assigned scholarly articles will

consider readings not just for what they can teach us about utopias, but also for what they can teach us about writing. Students will be encouraged to consider assigned readings as pieces of writing and to analyze how scholarly authors in different disciplines make and express arguments.

In addition to informal writing assignments, students will complete a major research project over the course of the quarter. Students will select and conduct research about a utopian community of interest to them, reporting on their findings to the class throughout the quarter. By the end of the quarter, students will complete two formal writing assignments based on their research. First, students will create or revise a Wikipedia entry of about 300 to 500 words on their utopian community. By contributing to Wikipedia, students will address their writing to general audience outside the classroom and will also think seriously about what makes a Wikipedia entry authoritative or credible. Second, students will write a 7-9 page, thesis-driven paper that identifies and answers a historical or sociological question about their research. These two pieces of writing belong to different genres and address different kinds of audience. A Wikipedia entry, for instance, resembles an encyclopedia article and should be designed more to report basic facts about a subject than to articulate an opinion or thesis about it. But a thesis-driven essay should go beyond a basic summary of research and instead offer and persuasively defend an interpretation of that research.

For all writing assignments, students will receive extensive assistance and training both inside and outside of class. Writing workshops held in class will help students at each stage of work on their research projects, from identifying a community to research to outlining and drafting the final thesis-driven essay. Standards for evaluating and grading written assignments will also be made clear to students with "rubrics" distributed at the beginning of the quarter. All written assignments will be read and evaluated primarily for evidence that students have thought critically about their subjects, structured their essays logically, and addressed their writing to the audience appropriate to the genre of the assignment. Stylistic flair and grammatical correctness, though important parts of writing, will not affect student grades as much as argumentative boldness, clarity, and the use of evidence to defend assertions.

By taking writing about utopians seriously, this course will also treat utopians seriously. While communalists have often seemed wacky and are usually treated as such, they are worthy of study. Utopians deserve close attention if only because many of the challenges that they faced in their communities still confront local, national, and global communities today. By writing and thinking about the challenges that threatened utopian groups in the past, we will indirectly be writing and thinking about our communities in the present and how they might be able to overcome the problems created by living together. Ideally, utopian though it may seem, we may discover that communalists were on to something. And if, by writing about the world, we can understand it better, perhaps we can come a step closer to changing it too. "It is folly, it is worse than folly, it is mere individual conceit," wrote philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey, "for one to set out to reform the world, either at large or in detail, until he has learned what the existing world which he wishes to reform has for him to learn." The objective of this course, then, is to figure out what the history of utopian attempts to reform the world have for us to learn.

INTERDISCIPLINARY WRITING AT HOME AND ABROAD: EXCAVATING AND EXPLORING ITALY

Eleanor McNees, English
M.E. Warlick, Art and Art History
2008

The two linked CORE classes, Excavating Italy (CORE 2613) and Exploring Italy (CORE 2518) are unique among the University of Denver's general education offerings. Team-taught and thoroughly interdisciplinary, the classes combine the complimentary yet different perspectives of literature and art history. Excavating Italy (CORE 2613) is a 50 student lecture class, fulfilling the "Change and Continuity" theme. In this class we examine chronologically the great achievements of Italian art and literature that inspired the tradition of the European Grand Tour. We study the architecture and sculpture of Classical and Baroque Rome; the evolution of Renaissance art in Padua, Florence and Venice, and we read the Roman and Italian writers of these periods, including Plutarch, Suetonius, Dante, and Savonarola, along with Shakespeare's Italian plays – *Julius Caesar* and *The Merchant of Venice*, and other works by English literary figures inspired by Italian art and culture.

Exploring Italy (CORE 2518) a Writing Intensive seminar, fulfills the "Self and Identities" theme. While any student can enroll in CORE 2613, students whom we accept through an application process into the travel class must take both the lecture class and the seminar. In the seminar, we introduce the museum collections that the students will visit; we provide additional background to the culture of Italy and its history; and we direct the students in their writing and research projects that will be explained more fully below. Soon after exams, usually on Thanksgiving Day, the two professors and the students fly to Rome and spend the next fourteen days exploring the art and literary sites that we have been studying all Fall Quarter. In effect, Italy becomes for those two weeks a cultural and aesthetic laboratory in which the students are able to reinforce and test at first hand knowledge gained from the on-campus classes.

The travel portion of the class includes five days in Rome, with trips to the Forum, Coliseum and other classical monuments; St. Peter's Basilica; the Capitoline and Vatican Museums; and the Borghese Gallery, followed by a day trip to the Archeological Museum in Naples and the excavations at Pompeii. We then travel to Florence for four days to visit the Cathedral, the Baptistry, the Convent of San Marco, the Uffizi Gallery, the Pitti Palace, and a number of smaller museums and local churches with Renaissance frescoes. On our way to Venice, we stop in Padua to see Giotto's inspiring frescoes in the Arena Chapel, and our final four days are spent in Venice, where we explore the Byzantine splendor of San Marco Cathedral, local churches containing paintings by Titian and Tintoretto, the Ducal Palace, the Academia, Peggy Guggenheim Museum, and travel to the island of Torcello to see the famous Byzantine mosaics in the church there. Within all of these cities we visit sites that evoke the literary works we have studied in the fall, including the place where Caesar was assassinated in the Roman forum, the Piazza della Signoria where Savonarola was executed in Florence as well as his cell at San Marco, and the melancholic Bridge of Sighs in Venice, evoked by Lord Byron in his *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and Dickens in *Pictures from Italy*.

The design of these two courses reflects the experience we have gained in over twenty-years of collaborative team-teaching, beginning in 1986 with the year-long CORE class, Making of the Modern Mind. We discovered then that we shared an interest in nineteenth-century British art and literature, and we subsequently created several graduate and undergraduate interdisciplinary classes on Victorian and the Pre-Raphaelite art and literature, expanding those classes to others on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British artists and writers and their admiration for Italian

art and culture. We also both have had extensive travel experience leading study abroad classes in Europe. Dr. McNees designed the University of Denver's London Program and has directed that program four times, and Dr. Warlick directed it once. Dr. Warlick also team-taught with Dr. Jere Surber (Philosophy) the interdisciplinary Making of the Modern Mind: European Experience travel class, which included a six-week block of classes on campus for twelve AHUM and CORE credits, followed by a twenty-three day travel class to England, France and Germany during Spring Quarter from 1992 to 2002. The design of Excavating and Exploring Italy germinated from our conviction that a strong grounding in the academic disciplines of art history and literature together with solid practice in writing prior to departure are essential to ensure the students' appreciation and understanding of what they will experience on the road. The unusual design of these two classes has enabled us thoroughly to integrate the literature and art history students study. Both classes are, in fact, writing-intensive, although they were not designated as such until recently, and we try to build skills in the lecture class that can be augmented in the seminar, and further amplified during the travel portion of the course.

Writing Assignments

CORE 2613: Excavating Italy

The lectures on art and literature in Excavating Italy along with readings from both academic disciplines provide the materials from which students draw their writing assignments. The lectures aim to reinforce and help students synthesize the reading. The literary writing assignments in the class consist of 1) a paper comparing one of the characters in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* to that character's historical model in the writings of Plutarch or Suetonius; 2) an in-class close reading and interpretation of one of the cantos from Dante's *Inferno*; 3) a mid-term essay comparing a Browning dramatic monologue to a painting; and 4) a final examination essay on Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. The primary goals of these assignments are to encourage students to become analytical and interpretative readers and to translate analysis into coherently constructed essays.

The Art History writing assignment in the lecture class requires students to pick two paintings or sculptures from specific periods covered in class and to compare and contrast them. This is a standard type of art historical iconographic and stylistic analysis. Through a handout, students are given some guidance to discuss the subject matter of the two works of art, and then to analyze their stylistic similarities and differences, and to observe the ways in which the two artists use gesture, figural placement, color, lighting, perspective and other pictorial devices. The goal is not the argument of a thesis, *per se*, but rather an exercise in careful observation, a challenge to discover appropriate and evocative language to describe what they see, and an opportunity to organize their ideas and express them clearly. Art History exams often incorporate comparative questions of this sort, and so this writing assignment gives the students the time to develop their responses without the pressure of an exam situation. Hopefully, their essays reflect their understanding of the evolution of the artistic styles of the Classical and Renaissance periods that Dr. Warlick has presented in class and that the students can ground their essays within that framework. Though we each read and grade all of the written work, we are not able to devote as much time to individual meetings with students to discuss papers as we are in the smaller Exploring Italy seminar. We hope next fall to have a graduate teaching assistant who will be available to assist students who desire more one-on-one work with their writing.

CORE 2613 Exploring Italy (Writing-Intensive)

The on-campus two-hour weekly seminars of Core 2518 Exploring Italy in some ways build on students' reading assignments in Core 2613 Excavating Italy since Core 2518 students take the two courses concurrently. However, the writing assignments for Core 2518 are completely separate from and more intensive than those in Excavating Italy. In Exploring Italy students have two principal assignments before they depart for the two-week travel portion of the course. The first assignment consists of weekly paragraphs both in student journals and on Blackboard. Each week students choose three dates from either Core 2613 or Core 2518 reading and lectures. They must post those dates along with a paragraph analyzing the significance of the

three dates in relation to the weekly lectures and readings. Each week we choose three students' postings to discuss at the beginning of class. This weekly writing practice has two principal purposes: creation of personal timelines that will contribute to a comprehensive class timeline at the end of the quarter, and an understanding of audience demonstrated by the difference between private journal writing and more public Blackboard writing. Part of class discussion of the postings will include attention to style and grammar as essential parts of communication.

The second and main assignment is a research project chosen from the following specific options:

- Choose a specific Italian artist whose work is represented in at least two of the cities (Rome, Florence, Venice) you will visit during the travel portion of the class. Focus on several specific paintings or sculptures of this artist in relation to readings from Vasari, Robert Browning, Walter Pater or other art historians and literary figures. Instead of simply describing the works, formulate a research question that drives your investigation. One pattern for formulating this question is the 3 part statement: "I am studying the works of…in order to find out how / whether…so that I can convince my readers that…." Note that you can use this pattern for any of the research topics.
- Investigate the connections between the Biblical version of a story from either the Old or New Testament and its manifestation in at least one piece of artwork in each of the three cities you'll visit. Pay particular attention to how the artists variously interpret the story you've chosen. If you choose a New Testament story, read and compare at least two different Gospel accounts. Specific topics can be culled from the following: Old Testament—Creation and Fall of Adam & Eve, Noah and the Flood, Moses's life, Abraham and Isaac, Judith; New Testament—Annunciation; Nativity; Last Supper; Crucifixion; Last Judgment; versions of such saints as St. Peter, St. Sebastian, St. Francis, John the Baptist; Mary.
- Choose a myth from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or Virgil's *Aeneid* and compare artistic renditions of the myth in the three different cities. Consider how each artist translates the literary myth into palpable art (words into visual object). Examples of possibilities include the following: Bacchus, Apollo, Medusa, Perseus, Venus Juno, Jupiter.
- Choose a political figure from classical Roman or 19th century Risorgimento Italian history. Compare several historical and literary accounts with the artistic embodiment of that figure in painting and/or sculpture in three of the cities. Principal figures from the Roman period include Julius Caesar, Augustus Caesar, Brutus, and Marcus Aurelius. Figures from the Italian Risorgimento are Garabaldi and Victor Emanuel.

The research assignment consists of several stages and is intended to teach students how to formulate a research question, how to assemble, organize and use a variety of sources, both print and on-line, and how to write clearly and persuasively. Students will have a chance to rewrite their assignments up to the final draft. They will also present their papers in four-person panels during the last two weeks of class. Following are the five steps of this assignment:

1) Week Three: Submit a research topic with a paragraph justifying the choice of topic and indicating at least three sources. This should be submitted in hard copy and posted on Blackboard. Schedule an appointment with the professors to discuss your topic. (5%)

2) Week Five: Narrow your topic to a research question and rewrite your original paragraph. Submit an annotated bibliography with at least five sources. This should be submitted in hard copy and on Blackboard. (5%)

3) Week Six: Submit a one-page introduction that clearly articulates your thesis by asking a question and posing a hypothetical conclusion. Schedule a meeting to discuss the introduction. (5%)

4) Week Eight: Submit a rough draft (approx. 6-8 pages) to allow adequate time for electronic comment from the professors. In

some cases you will be asked to schedule another appointment to discuss the draft. (10%)

5) Week Ten: Final paper (8 pages double-spaced) is due with title page and complete bibliography in MLA style. (30 %) Students will receive grades on steps 2-5 with progressively more weight on each grade. They will receive their final graded papers at the airport before the flight to Italy. They should keep those papers in their journal notebooks for reference on the trip.

In addition to the above assignments, we will devote one in-class workshop and one optional workshop to writing concerns—grammar, punctuation, citation, sentence structure and diction, style, audience. Before the travel portion of the class, students will be asked to identify two specific "problem" areas in their writing and to focus on these two areas in their journal entries on the road.

Assignments on the Road

The opportunity to examine and evaluate original works of painting, sculpture and architecture is a foundational experience for any student of art history. Without question, original works have an impact that can never be achieved with digital or photographic reproductions. Students can experience the true scale and context of the work of art and they can see many smaller details for the first time, including the ways in which the paint is applied, the condition of the object's surface, its true colors, etc. Giving students the time to examine and analyze works of art within museums, chapels and other public places is essential to ensure that each student has an opportunity to reflect upon the things they have learned in class and to apply that knowledge in their writing projects. At the same time, there are some logistical problems posed within museum settings that can alter the ways in which these assignments actually work.

Our extensive experience in conducting student visits to museums has taught us that lecturing within the museum is not an effective approach. While a few diligent students might cluster around the professor, most tend to tire quickly and search for the nearest bench, usually in the middle of the gallery, far away from the paintings and sculptures they are supposed to examine. One passes lively groups of elementary school children, seated on the floor in front a single painting with a teacher asking them "where do you see this" kinds of questions, but that's not the best approach for college-aged students. We have also learned that both students and professors vary considerably in the pace with which they go through museums. Some are very methodical and view each work of art in turn while others move quickly past most works to linger at greater length in front of those works that really capture their attention. We try to ensure that each student can view works at his or her own best pace. We therefore allow students reasonable flexibility within each museum but make ourselves separately available to answer all questions that may arise during their visits. What one might term epiphanic moments occur with nearly every student at least once when that student draws one of us aside to point out details related to that student's paper topic or simply point out aspects of the art work the student had not perceived in class.

Our goal is to have each student look carefully at as many paintings / sculptures as possible, to find a few that relate to their research topic, to take the time to "read" and analyze those works carefully, and to make substantive notes that will form the basis of their journal entries. Museums differ greatly as to whether this goal is possible. Some museums, like the Vatican, are so large that the group quickly spreads out in different directions and into several different galleries. Other museums are small, such at the Arena Chapel in Padua, but there we have only the twenty minutes allowed to each group to visit that delightful, but hermetically-sealed environment. Mid-sized museums work the best, but at the relatively modest Borghese Gallery in Rome, the two-hour time limit is not enough for some students to examine each work thoroughly. To reinforce the class community, we have developed a successful exercise of having students in at least one museum per city, give an impromptu oral lecture to their peers on a work of art they have found and analyzed. Luckily, we travel to Italy in late November and early December at a time when museums are generally free of tourists, and so having some breathing room, not being herded by museum guards, being allowed to return to rooms visited earlier, all contribute to achieving that desired flexibility of movement. We have

discovered over the years that the topics selected by the students must be broad enough to allow students consistently to be engaged in searching for relevant works of art throughout the trip. This realization was in response to our having some students in the early years pick very specific topics that they could not apply to all three major cities.

We include below the journal assignment for the travel portion of the class to indicate specifically how students are required to continue to build on the intensive writing from the on-campus portion of the class. Since the travel journal constitutes a large part (45%) of the final grade, students are generally motivated to do a thorough job. Since receiving writing-intensive status for this course, we have incorporated several suggestions from the writing-intensive faculty training class we attended in December. We have decided to include peer review to help students retain a sense of audience. We have also decided to have students choose one specific entry from each city for us to critique. We shall then choose a second entry from each city. We will be looking specifically at the "problem areas" of writing that each student has identified prior to departure. This focus will allow us to assess whether or not the student's writing is improving and exactly how.

Travel Journal for Core 2518

Please take this sheet with you and place in your journal. It details the required journal assignments which constitute 45% of your grade for the course.

You will be responsible for the following entries:

3 one-page entries on your paper topic: These include descriptions of actual works or sites you see that are directly related to your paper topic. In these entries you should offer a thoughtful, evaluative response to each art work, building on the vocabulary you learned in both classes during the quarter. Where applicable, we encourage you to connect the art to the literature from either Excavating Italy or Exploring Italy or both. You should consult your final papers to reflect on the difference between studying particular works of art and seeing them "live."
Total: 3 one-page entries.

3 one-page entries on *each* of the three cities we visit: These would include three entries for specific sites (building, painting, sculpture) we will view as a group and that you've studied in class. They will NOT be on your paper topic. For Rome, one entry may include Pompeii or the Naples Archaeological Museum. For either Florence or Venice, one entry may include the Giotto chapel in Padua.
Total: 9 one-page entries.

3 one-page entries on a work or site NOT on our scheduled tour: These may include visits to museums like Florence's Bargello or the Medici Chapel; St. Peter-in-Chains Church (with Michelangelo's Moses) or the Risorgimento Museum in Rome; various churches in Venice which we have not already scheduled. Be creative with this one, and stray from the beaten path.
Total: 3 one-page entries.

Minimum required total: 15 one-page entries. You may write more than one page or choose to include more than the minimum number of entries. However, if you write thoughtfully and analytically, you should have at least 15 good pages for us to peruse. Each entry will be worth 3points.

You will submit your journals to us periodically throughout the trip but at least once during our stay in each of the three cities. You will designate one entry per city for us to read and evaluate and one per city for one of your fellow students to evaluate. Your peers must write a response to the entry you select. In addition, we will choose several entries randomly to read and comment on. You should work hard on the "problem areas" you've identified in your writing. We will be looking specifically for improvement in those areas as well as at your increasing skill and flexibility in style and voice. Keep in mind that ultimately your journal will serve as a record of your trip and as a final summary of the course. It is worthwhile to take time to craft your entries not only for us and your peers but perhaps also for your family and even for the family you may yourselves have in ten years!

Goals/Assessment

We hope to engage students more deeply in the course topics by making them responsible for exhibiting some of their writing assignments on Blackboard to the entire class. In addition to working on constructing a viable argument / thesis, students will simultaneously view and critique others' writing and thus gain progressive knowledge of each other's projects. This will be a much more collaborative model than we have used in past versions of this course. By commenting on the research projects at each step and allowing students to rewrite/correct pieces, we hope to see improvement in student writing in the following areas: sentence structure, grammar, diction, punctuation (micro level); persuasive argument with secondary support, awareness of style and audience (macro level). Another goal will be to assess how students are able to discuss and apply pieces of their research projects on site in their reports to the class. We hope to create a traveling community and to interest students in each others' topics in advance of the trip so that the on-site experience will be greatly enriched and reinforced.

In terms of the general goals of the CORE curriculum, both our classes and the travel portion fulfill many of the desired learning outcomes. The interdisciplinary nature of our linked classes speaks to Epistemology and Inquiry in that we incorporate the diverse but complementary modes of literary and art historical investigations, while at the same time conveying the variations between our Disciplinary Knowledge and Practices. Students refine their Communication skills during the on-campus portion of the class through written assignments, group discussion of the postings on Blackboard, and the final project panel. During the travel portion, they give at least three oral presentations in museums and discuss their journal entries with professors and peers. The Engagement with Human Diversity is a natural component of our travel class, as many of our students are abroad for the first time, and those who have traveled before with their families become more aware of cultural distinctions between Italy and the United States since we discuss and emphasize these differences both before and during the travel portion. As the students become increasingly aware of their own cultural biases, their self-reflection and intellectual growth increase. This increased self-awareness, in turn, leads to Intellectual Engagement and Reflection as students develop empathy for their peers and for Italians and Italian culture. We hope that the scholarly and intellectual preparation students receive in both Excavating Italy and Exploring Italy makes them better representatives of the University of Denver abroad and more informed and appreciative travelers. In a very real sense, we view Exploring Italy as important preparation for future study and travel abroad.

INTENSIVE WRITING IN "CULTURAL INTERSECTIONS"

Maik Nwosu
English
2007

"Cultural Intersections" will explore the dynamics of cultural reception or the translational dimension of modern culture, particularly the reception of narratives within particular cultures and beyond. The main focus will be the principles that integrate and divide people along the lines of race, class, ethnicity, and culture. How, for instance, do cultural narratives cross local and national boundaries – and with what interpretive consequences? What factors, or intersection of factors, within and beyond the text, account for the manner in which narratives are received or interpreted? To answer these questions, we will take a virtual journey around the world, focusing on the differences and similarities in the reception or analysis of cultural narratives within and beyond their points of origin. Our journey will involve studies of cultural contacts, contexts, and narratives from Africa and the Caribbean, Asia and the Middle East, Europe/the Americas.

While the main objective of the course is to develop or enhance students' ability for comparative or transnational interpretation, taking into account reception dynamics, "Cultural Intersections" will also be writing intensive. The course will therefore seek to improve students' writing skills. Three formal writing assignments will be used to assess students' achievement of this learning outcome.

The first writing assignment will test students' understanding of critical and analytical terms. Some of the questions that I might ask students to respond to include:

- What is "world literature"?
- Is "world literature" a literary or political concept?
- What is the relation between literary interpretation and cultural reception?

These will be short response assignments of two pages each (six pages in all) in which the ability of students to respond clearly and concisely to questions of description and definition will be particularly assessed.

The second writing assignment will be a medium-length essay (six pages) that will specifically test students' analytical skills with respect to their ability and willingness to undertake a text/context analysis of narratives from other parts of the world (Africa and the Caribbean, Asia and the Middle East) in striking ways. Some of the questions I might ask them to respond to include:

- Write a paper arguing against the banning of *Children of the Alley* in Egypt (when it was first published). Your paper should examine the reason(s) for the ban and provide a persuasive counter-argument involving interpretive references to the text.
- With reference to *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman, write a paper discussing the increasing popularity of the graphic novel. Your paper should examine the effect of presenting the story of the Holocaust in the form of a graphic novel, as Spiegelman does in *Maus*.

The specific evaluation criteria will be: knowledge of the subject (or text); effective presentation or structure; and evidence of research.

The third essay assignment will be a long essay (eight pages) that will test students' comparative skills in relating cultural narratives (and their reception) from one part of the world to another. Some of the questions I might ask them to respond to include:

- Write a report for publication in a US national newspaper adapting (the plot of) *Children of the Alley* by Naguib Mahfouz into an American narrative. Your report should specify what you consider a key theme in the novel and then discuss the 'replication' of that theme in an American narrative,

explaining the differences in historical and cultural particulars.

- Using two exemplary narratives from two different continents, write a paperon what you consider the most instructive way to read narratives outside their original cultural contexts. In accounting for your choice, your paper should examine other interpretive possibilities and their limitations in this instance.
- Write an alternative ending for *Children of the Alley* by Naguib Mahfouz, locating the setting of the novel outside Egypt, with a critical prologue or epilogue explaining your imaginative revision of that part of the text (the ending) in relation to its overall structure. The specific evaluation criteria will be: knowledge of the subject (or text); effective presentation or structure; and voice.

Students will also submit a portfolio at the end of the course that will contain the revised first essay assignment, revised based on feedback from me. The specific evaluation criterion for this revised version is the extent of its improvement on interpretation and presentation issues identified in the previous draft.

My projection is that the process of research and writing will further help students clarify and structure the knowledge that the course will provide. The planned writing assignments particularly expect students to

- read holistically, taking into account both textual and contextual factors in their analysis;
- and to develop or enhance their analytical openness to new ideas and interpretations, relying more on in-depth reflection than popular assumption.

The writing assignments are also planned in such a way that students will progress from simply demonstrating competence in comprehension through text/context analysis aided by research to longer writing assignments that emphasize the individual voice and imagination.

REFLECTIONS: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

Pallab Paul
Marketing
2010

The core course I will be teaching is *Civic Engagement in International Marketing*, with the theme Communities and Environments. Specifically, it examines the issues of global prosperity and justice, ecological and economic sustainability and balanced growth, ethical dimensions of business, international trade and marketing, and norms and values that dictate our lives (both personally and professionally) on local and global scales. All of these issues are important dimensions of the Communities and Environments theme. It is truly an interdisciplinary course that integrates concepts from the fields of business in general, marketing, international trade, sustainability, economics, sociology, political economy, law, ethics and technology, among others. Additionally, the opportunity to be in Italy during the course and the first-hand experience to observe the applications of the theories discussed in class (via field trips) will make it very unique, exciting and challenging.

With increasing globalization and increasing consumer awareness around the world, there has been a growing groundswell of social movements aimed at marketing as a discipline. These movements share the key ethos of civic responsibility and community involvement in generating changes in public values. They also have their mantra of responsibility and social justice tailored towards interactive dimensions with the business community. The purpose is to engender collaborative, productive, innovative modes of an eco-effective sustainable development. These include constructing green buildings and parks, using toxicity-free safe products, reducing wasteful consumption of non biodegradable petro-products, etc.

This course on civic responsibility in marketing will take a close look at corporate responsibility and community involvement and will incorporate these ideas to understand the current consumer and business attitude toward marketing. Students will examine how businesses, communities, NGO's, and governments work together to create and consume products and services, with an ultimate goal of sustainable growth and prosperity for all. The opportunity to be in Italy (under the DU-Bologna Study Abroad Program) and visit its local/ national companies, non-profit organizations and civil administration will provide us the extra dimension of being "international." We will learn about the cultural, social, political, legal, and economic differences between Italy and the United States and how the marketing strategies in each country need to be adjusted because of these differences.

In terms of the current massive economic crises, civic morale about business integrity is very low. This makes it a timely course for students interested in learning about the perils that economic progress represent in the absence of adequately negotiated social governance. Civic engagement by multiple actors with stakes in the economic arena represents an interactive context of extant information dissemination, germination of new ideas, distribution of responsibility based on a negotiated understanding of what is the best path forward in terms of material and moral progress. Such modes of deeper alignment of social goals of various social actors is likely to represent better modes of problem solving, innovation and preservation of critical aspects of life that are highly valued by society, such as the environment.

A significant stakeholder in all of these issues is the young minds that we are providing foundational support to, so that they can go on to become leaders with strong initiative to shape a better world. However, the flowering of such a possibility requires that the youth of today learn to explore their potential and enhance their understanding

through self-generated synthesis of situations that they purview around themselves. Hence, this class has three critical components – active field-work, formulating the resources of that field-work by reading the latest works on the subject matter, and writing about not just what has been learnt but also about what is potentially possible from their viewpoint.

The process of writing is intended to help the students formulate their 'active learning' into coherent thought patterns that lend a deeper insight into not just what they have seen and analyzed, but also how those tie up into their own self-conceptions and their visions of the world. The attempt is to get the students beyond the stupor rendered by any dominant discourse and set them free to search alternate paths of visualizing existence through active involvement rather than mere arm-chair theorizing.

Writing is a journey into self-discovery, a way to let loose the passions of ideas and concretize convictions about goals. It clears all confusions and ignorance by forcing one to 'spit out' what one is trying to grapple with. This is done by not merely stating ideas but stating them with some semblance of clarity - in short, grappling with the meanings and consequences of one's ideas and actions. I want to deliver this path of awareness to my students by getting them to tentatively explore their ideas in various mini-projects before finally rendering them into a systematic, synchronized, well-defined, final paper with something insightful to offer beyond the obvious. It is expected that at the completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

1) Identify the economic, political, legal, social and cultural differences among nations as they influence marketing (knowledge acquisition and application)
2) Reflect on current consumer and business attitudes (in Italy and the USA) towards sustainable growth and prosperity for all (enhancement of higher order thinking and skills)
3) Demonstrate an understanding of civic responsibility as a citizen, and the roles of businesses, communities, NGO's and governments (development of psychomotor skills)
4) Advocate a position one wants to take in this controversy of 'sustainable development' and suggest a solution (changes in attitudes or values)

As a 'writing intensive' core course, there is a great emphasis on writing deliverables in this course. The following four papers are the major deliverables:

1. Five-page paper on identifying the economic, political, legal, social and cultural differences among nations as they influence marketing, due in week three; revised version (based on instructor's feedback) due in week four.
2. Five-page paper on reflecting on current consumer and business attitudes (in Italy and the USA) towards sustainable growth and prosperity for all**,** due in week five; revised version (based on instructor's feedback) due in week six.
3. Five-page paper on demonstrating an understanding of civic responsibility as a citizen, and the roles of businesses, communities, NGO's and governments**,** due in week seven; revised version (based on instructor's feedback) due in week eight.
4. Five-page paper on advocating a position one wants to take in this controversy of 'sustainable development' and suggest a solution, due in week nine; revised version (based on instructor's feedback) due in week ten.

Besides these deliverables, there will be a few writing assignments that I developed as a direct outcome of attending the Writing Intensive Core Workshop.

1. Exploratory Writing Assignment examples

(a) The purpose of this assignment is to get you going on developing a 'portfolio' of exploratory writing on concepts central to the course. The

expectation is that your exploratory work based on your understanding of the concept, aided over time with research done on the subject matter, will help you to ground yourself in some of the basics that are required for you to turn in your course deliverables. The length of these exploratory writings should not exceed a page.

The idea is for you to take a first cut into delving into the concept and understanding its complexities. The focus of these writings is not so much structure as a stream of thought process that helps you to lay out visually what your mind has configured through absorption of various readings, actions of individuals and institutions that you have seen throughout your life and during your current travels abroad.

For further enrichment of your ideas, you can engage in an interactive dialogue with your peers over the DU BlackBoard site. You can post your writings, get feedbacks from others, as well as constructively critique their writings in return. With this in mind, explore the concept of civic responsibility in general. Your next assignment should focus on the difference in cultural understanding of this concept in Italy and the US.

(b) Read about the current consumer and business attitudes (in Italy and the USA) towards the marketing of sustainable growth. You can use the internet, newspapers, journals, and any other resources you see fit. Based on your conceptual understanding of these issues from your textbook, can you apply these concepts to the current affairs? Keep a journal where you pick a news event each day and think about its relevancy vis-à-vis your knowledge of the course material.

2. Formal Writing Assignment examples

(a) A formal writing assignment is designed for you to do several things. First, you should construct a thesis that should be stated succinctly in the form of a question or statement that poses a problem.

Second, you should provide extant arguments of the subject matters that roughly encompass that thesis or do what is termed a 'literature review.'

Finally, you should provide evidentiary proof to back up your thesis. You are free to take up any position you want on the subject matter. However, please ensure that you provide a balanced judgment as to why the reader should be persuaded by your argument. This involves you stating several counter positions and why you are not convinced by them. The paper should have a clear outline with definite headings. Each section of the paper should begin with an introduction and conclude by reiterating the main purpose of the section. With this in mind, write a paper on sustainable development.

(b) Write brief letters to the Editor of *Roman Times* representing (i) a Roman citizen, (ii) a typical Roman business, (iii) a typical Roman community, (iv) a typical Roman NGO, and (v) a Roman government official. You need to argue either in **favor** or **against** urban development and growth in Rome in each letter and provide a solution of your own.

I also learned a lot about grading rubric from this workshop. Below are a couple of examples that I may use:

1. Read about the current consumer and business attitudes (in Italy and the USA) towards the marketing of sustainable growth. You can use the internet, newspapers, journals, and any other resources you see fit.

Based on your conceptual understanding of these issues from your textbook, can you apply these concepts to the current affairs? Keep a journal where you pick a news event each day and think about its relevancy vis-à-vis your knowledge of the course material.

Grading rubric:

(i) Support of Theses

A. Statement of theses	10 points
B. Clarity of support	10 points
C. Logic of the arguments	10 points
D. Quality of source support	10 points
E. Quantity of source support	10 points

(ii) Specific Features

A. Grammatical errors	10 points
B. Organization	10 points
C. Accuracy	10 points
D. Adherence to a style manual	10 points
E. Logical conclusion	10 points

2. Write brief letters to the Editor of *Roman Times* representing (i) a Roman citizen, (ii) a typical Roman business, (iii) a typical Roman community, (iv) a typical Roman NGO, and (v) a Roman government official. You need to argue either in **favor** or **against** urban development and growth in Rome in each letter and provide a solution of your own.

Grading rubric:

A. Quality of ideas	25 points
B. Organization /development	25 points
C. Clarity and style	25 points
D. Sentences & mechanics	25 points

My fervent 'hope' is that students will be able to use these writing assignments as a tool for their self-discovery. For my specific course, I hope that students will exhibit traces of moral sensibility critical for progress that is sustainable, rather than short-term rendering of a glitzy world whose glitter palls in the blink of an eye. However, I do not try to define or impose what that moral sensibility is going to be. I try to avoid being a Leviathan that renders a moral certitude that reeks of intolerance and bigotry, and instead try and create a democratic atmosphere of dialogue. My hope again is that this will prod people to strive for a moral purpose that gives life dignity by doing the right things or 'what ought to be' despite the costs. The development of a love for virtues and ideals that may not necessarily be requited is a step forward in this direction. Oftentimes, self-expression through writing is a tentative first step into this love affair that is ridden with multiple pitfalls.

To achieve this journey, students will be required to share their writing samples with their classmates. This will hopefully help ensure that there is no eristic rhetoric that degenerates into unproductive 'personal' strife about whose ideal is better. Instead of creating a politicized environment of partisan spins, there will hopefully be a productive collaboration on exchange of ideas. A fair constructive critique of these ideas will lead the path forward to learning what true collaboration really entails – tolerance and a fair hearing of the ideas on board. This tends to generate dialectics of good conversation that seeks to jointly explore a path of common humanity instead of trying to win or lose by turning the exercise into a 'game' of ideas that has to end with the emergence of one truth.

Mere subversion of the extant modes of actions and ideas in order to be gloriously labeled as a 'non-conformist individualist' who is not part of the 'herd' is not helpful. Simultaneous fruitful engagement with the possible is a pre-requisite to generation of creative writing. Avoiding sophistry and digging deep into the real world of pathos and hope will hopefully create a generation of thinkers and doers who are consciously aware of the political implications of the world that they are creating.

This, I firmly believe, is the path to generating students' critical analytical power. Wisdom of effective and substantively valuable choice should hopefully emerge in this conscious process of self-immersion into the gritty world of real engagement outside and inside the academia. This will provide students with the confidence to create a public persona that will enable them to be better business leaders in the emergent world of post-crises. An articulate illustration of their ideas, both vocal and in writing is indeed a prerequisite.

TEACHING "TESTIMONY, MEMORY AND ALLEGORY: THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CHINESE CULTURAL REVOLUTION"

Li Li Peters
Languages and Literatures
2008

In the spring of the 2008-2009 academic year, I will be teaching a new core course entitled "Testimony Memory and Allegory: the Representations of the Chinese Cultural Revolution." The theme of this course falls into the category of Change and Continuity, and the goal of it is to help students to critically understand the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) as a crucial historical link in revolutionary China (Mao's China, 1949-1966) and post-revolutionary China (post-Mao, or Deng's China 1976-the present). For many historians, the Cultural Revolution is one of the biggest disasters in twentieth-century world history because of the astronomic casualty and economic damage caused by this long socio-political upheaval, commonly known as "the ten years of chaos." The new scholarship in the field of Chinese Studies, however, further suggests viewing the Cultural Revolution as a critical turning point of more than half a century of devastating nationalist and socialist revolutions in China and the post-revolutionary era that has had a riveting impact on the world economy and global geopolitical reconfigurations since the end of the Cultural Revolution. In this light, the Cultural Revolution that serves as a historical cite of "change and continuity" is best described, to borrow historians Macfarquhar and Schoenhals' insightful statement: "To understand what happened during the Cultural Revolution, one has to understand how it come to be launched. To understand the 'why' of China today, one has to understand the 'what' of the Cultural Revolution."

Indeed, as an ever increasing number of our students are striving to know more about China's culture traditions, social structures, and economic development; they can hardly move far without an in-depth understanding of the many intriguing and complex aspects of the Cultural Revolution. To help students gain a comprehensive understanding of the complicated and sometimes even contradictory, aspects of the Cultural Revolution in terms of the reasons it was launched, the socio-economic structures during and after it, as well as its impact on the collective psychology of the Chinese people over a few generations, this class aims at engaging students in closely reading and critically examining a highly diverse body of representations of the Cultural Revolution, including official and unofficial historical accounts, memoirs produced by writers of the Chinese diaspora and those who still live in China, realist and avant-garde short stories/novellas, poems, films, and visual arts. Though the Cultural Revolution is a historical event, this course, will primarily approach various representations of it from the perspective of cultural and literary studies. As the course syllabus indicates "This course investigates the complicated and often interwoven relationships between testimony; memory; signs; meanings of both writing and reading about traumatic events; ethical (personal and collective) commitment to memory; and historical, literary and artistic representations of the past expressed in different mediums. We will pay special attention to how each kind of representative account functions as a link between the past and the present by looking into how it copes with its producer's distinctive memories of the Cultural Revolution and responses to the producer's own times, as well as that producer's political and artistic conventions."

The challenge in achieving the complex objectives of this course, I predict, lies not in the fact that our students have little knowledge about the Chinese Cultural Revolution, but in the danger of only seeing it as a Chinese "holocaust" in an over-simplified fashion. It is crucial to provide a repertory of hybrid representations and

to allow students to closely read and thoroughly discuss the many complicated aspects and layered meanings embedded in these texts. To this end, a writing-intensive course that enables students to rigorously explore the studying material via small group discussion and regular writings provides the most ideal learning environment. This is the reason that I intend to have this course be a writing-intensive one.

This identification of the course objectives with this format of the class seems to coincidently respond to the natural tie between doing, knowing, and writing that Michael Carter emphasizes in his ambitious essay "Ways of knowing," an essay I read while attending the Writing-Intensive Core workshop last week. Despite its disputable over-arching argument about writing as "the meta genre," I found Carter's claim that "doing enacts the knowing through students writing, and the writing gives shape to the ways of knowing and doing in the disciplines" is theoretically illuminating and practically useful. Indeed, to facilitate effective learning ("knowing" in his term), the instructor needs to carefully assess their disciplinary objectives and the processes toward those objectives through structuring diverse writing assignments that not only match, facilitate and reflect student's learning at each stage, but also help them step by step to make progress toward the final goal of the course, and even able to emulate the discourse of the ongoing scholarship. All said, writings, together with student's oral performances are the primary means that demonstrate the progresses and results of students' learning in the class.

I found the Writing Intensive Core workshop to be of great help in many regards, especially in terms of how to use writing as a way for students to learn the specific subject matter that I'll be teaching. Though I designed all the writing assignments when I wrote the course proposal, it is the workshop that really forced me to reassess the specifics of, and my expectations for, each and every assignment in relations to the general objectives of the course. I'll briefly discuss the developmental phases of the course and the correspondent assignment for each phase that I revised and further developed while attending the workshop.

In the first two weeks of this class, the students will view two films. The first, *China: A Century of Revolution*, serial 2, is a PBS production that lays out the general socio-political environment by sketching out the major political campaigns launched by the Communist party before the Cultural Revolution. In the meantime, students will read a few book chapters about the Cultural Revolution, one from *The Search of Modern China* by Jonathan Spence, a renowned American historian of Chinese history; and the other from *Ten Years of Turbulence* by Yan Jiaqi, a leading Chinese scholar who lived through the CR. While these first three materials provide the authors' unidirectional investigations following the chronological order of the historiography of the Cultural Revolution, the fourth one, the documentary film *Morning Sun*, mainly consists of scenes of a variety of historical events, interviews with participants in, and witnesses of, the Cultural Revolution. The hybrid narrative of this documentary film probably provides many of our students the very first opportunity to look into this complicated historical event from different angles.

Upon the completion of all the reading/screening assignments and class discussions at the end of the second week, the students are required to start their first writing assignment: writing an informative essay of five pages for an imagined reader who knows little about the Cultural Revolution. The essay should primarily be based on the texts we will have studied in the class. As the students are encouraged to find the most effective narrative strategy and style to convey ideas to their readers, they will be asked to include the following information in their writing:

- Time frame and major developmental stages of the Cultural Revolution;
- Indication of the rationale under which Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution, paying special attention to the details of the material that they have come across and including different explanations from different groups of people, such as the Red Guards of the time, the intellectuals and Communist officials of different factions, and Chinese and American historians;

- The full name of the Cultural Revolution is "the Great Chinese Proletarian Cultural Revolution." Students are asked to describe this term in the context of the Chinese socialist revolution and political campaigns that happened prior to the CR. Why "proletarian"? Why "cultural revolution"? Whose revolution was it, and who against whom?

- The general socio-economic situation prior to, during, and immediately after the Cultural Revolution.

This writing exercise means to teach students how to synthesize information from different—even contradictory—sources in an inclusive manner and in an objective third person narrative. Furthermore, since this will be the first assignment of the class, I will also make clear that while quality of content is essential, that content should be properly showcased with correct grammar and style, and attractive typography and formatting as fitting an academic work; and that all of these elements will be evaluated. All the written work for the course should follow the specifications listed below:

1. Assignments shall be typed, double-spaced, and the body of the essay should use a 12-point font (Times Roman, Times New Roman, Helvetica, or Arial are suggested);

2. Students are required to submit their writings electronically in Microsoft Word 2003 format so the instructor can supply feedback through the redlining feature of Word. You may use Word 2007 to prepare the work if you have it, but should save the final document in Word 2003 format. The resulting file may be attached to an e-mail sent to the instructor at li.peters@du.edu.

3. The papers should be written using the *Chicago Manual of Style* as a format guide, and citations should be prepared using that standard.

4. Endnotes, rather than footnotes, should be used. If you wish, you may prepare the notes as footnotes using Word's Insert/Reference/Footnote… feature, then at the end use Word's conversion utility (see Help/Convert footnotes to endnotes and vice versa to find out how) to convert all the notes to endnotes.

5. Each type of text treatment should be consistently applied throughout the document. For example, body text, extended quotes, numbered lists, and so forth, should all be done the same way each time. You will find that the use of Word's style feature is invaluable in easily achieving this. Some of the "canned" styles may need modification to conform to the treatments specified in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Learn to use these features now, and it will serve you well in all your future writing productions, especially longer formal works such as theses and dissertations.

The readings of the third and fourth week comprise the second phase of this course. Students will be asked to select and read one memoir from a list of some twenty five titles that I will have passed to the class in the very beginning of the quarter. The authors of these memories have diverse backgrounds, but generally fall into four categories:

1. Those who were Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution, but later left China and reside in Britain and the United States;

2. Those who were Red Guards but still live in China;

3. Those who were established intellectuals or with preeminent social status; immediately before the Cultural Revolution;

4. Scholars who grew up in the Cultural Revolution, yet didn't directly involved in it during the time. In addition to the memoirs, students will also read elected passages from Jerome Bruner's *Making Stories: Law, Literature, Life*.

Each student is required to give a ten-minute in-class oral presentation on the memoir chosen. The presentations should be accompanied by an informal handout of a brief introduction of the memoirist for the whole class and a three-page outline that will be posted on the blackboard. The

outline will be counted as part of the writing assignment; it should demonstrate an adequate coverage of the basic story line and important aspects of the story of the memoirist, such as the adversity faced because of the advent of the Cultural Revolution, the dilemma when caught between their concerns for family and political demands, the triumph of personal growth and psychological transformation during the course of the Cultural Revolution, etc. The outlines also need to provide the following specific information about the memoir and memoirist:

1. What were the social identity, education and family background of the memoirist before and during the Cultural Revolution? Does the author's social status and family background affect the memoirist's life during the Cultural Revolution? What was the memoirist's identity during the time she/he composed the memoir about the Cultural Revolution? Do you think the change of status affected the way that the memoirist wrote about her/his past?
2. Who is the intended readership of the memoir that you read? Do you think that the authorial concern about the target readership affects the author's presentation of past and memory, and if yes, in which ways? Please consider the insights that Jerome Bruner brought out.
3. The narrative of each memoirist's own life contains details of reported feelings and other personal touches. How does the personal narrative approach facilitate the telling of this particular memoirist's story and storytelling in general? In relation to the historical work you read earlier, describe anything especially striking to you because of the personal narrative approach.

The purpose of this assignment is twofold. As an individual project, it urges students to scrutinize in their own eyes how an author's social status, political identity and individualized expectations for readership contribute to the features of the memoir as a genre. Or, in Bruner's words, how are stories made instead of found, and why does "their slant and believability [depend] on the circumstances of their telling." The aspect of oral reporting on various memoirs also makes it a collective project that enables students to share not only the stories that their peers presented orally, but also a wide-range of writing analysis. One of the important things that differentiates a writing-intensive course from a regular course is probably that the former requires the instructor's frequent intervention in students writing to affirm that students' "knowing" of the meaning-making modeled in the learned texts can be precisely conveyed in writings. After this assignment, I'll intervene by offering an open discussion about the strengths and weakness of a couple of selected student works.

At the third stage of this course, roughly from Week 5-8, students will read a few poems and four fictional representations of the Cultural Revolution: the short stories "On the Other Side of the Stream" and "Reencounter," the film screenplay "King of the Children" and the novella *To live*. I also plan to project two films: "In the Heat of the Sun" and "To Live" an internationally well acclaimed film adopted from the novel of the same title. Although the authors of these fictional works and films are contemporaries of most of the memoirists and spent their childhood or adolescence in the Cultural Revolution, the representations of the Cultural Revolution in those works are significantly complex, ambivalent, and even ironic from time to time. By the end of Week 8, students will submit their third formal writing: a five-page paper containing a close reading of one of the stories or films. Students need to articulate an analytical discussion about the differences between fictional writings and biographic writings in terms of narrative perspectives, authorial voices, tones, the employment of symbol, trope and irony, presentation of moral values, the way that the respective story was ended, and so forth.

I always believe it is more productive to have face-to-face discussions about a student's writing than simply put comments or corrections on the margin of the paper. An individual discussion opens an opportunity for the instructor to understand a student's unique ways of thinking, of processing information and interpreting the texts. After this assignment, I plan to invite students to meet with me individually to go through the suggestions and comments that I will have offered when I read their papers. The students could

choose to rewrite their papers to achieve a better grade. At this point, we should have covered most of the weighty readings on the list, I'll also discuss with students individually their initial ideas about the final writing project or help them to develop practical topics in the context of the course.

Week Nine will be devoted to the visual representations of the Cultural Revolution. As students will continue to read a couple of interesting articles about revolutionary posters and modes of visual testimony in contemporary Chinese popular arts, they will start to write the drafts of their last formal writing: a 7-10 page paper. Students at this stage should be able to come up with a wide range of topics of inquiry. They may choose to focus on one theme of the presentation of the Cultural Revolution, such as the function of body and violence, or betrayal and loyalty; to conduct a comparative study of two or more texts of the same genre, or different genres, such as the film and the fiction that the film is based on; to discuss the different forms and meaning of certain representative revolutionary icons or images that are repeatedly used by various medias of representation; to explore how a certain themes or imageries were represented in memoirs and fictional works, etc. Students will have all class preparation time during Week Nine to complete their drafts and will be invited to discuss them with me during the week and share their drafts with their classmates during the class meetings in Week Ten. By doing so, students presenting their drafts could get constructive comments and suggestions not only from me, but also from their peers; and in the meantime, students who will be listening to the presentations will find inspiration and new perspectives from the presentation. Given that this last assignment is by nature a comprehensive analytical paper, students are allowed to incorporate aspects, arguments, analysis that they discussed and composed in their previous writings.

REFLECTIONS ON "JEWISH ITALY"

Gabrielle E. Popoff
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
2010

When the University of Denver asked me to design a writing-intensive class for the Core Curriculum for the winter and spring quarters of 2010, I immediately turned to a long-cherished project: an overview of Jewish culture in Italy. The workshop not only enabled me to better integrate writing into my ideas and plans for the course, but also pushed me to interrogate some of my perceptions and notions about academic writing. Finally, I benefited from the workshop's camaraderie, from its mediated forum for discussion with other faculty members about writing--a forum that rapidly revealed how writing touches upon so many other aspects of teaching and learning.

Indeed, the first obstacle I encountered as I began my planning would be words. I had opted to file my course under the "Communities and Environments" rubric. Specifically, the communities and environments that the class would address were going to be rather difficult to name. This may seem like a pedantic academic quibble--after all, haven't I just described briefly in the previous paragraph the topic of my course? Yet, to cite a famous aphorism, Italy was a mere geographical abstraction until the 1860s when the modern nation of Italy was founded; so referring to "Italians" and "Italy" would utterly anachronistic for 19 or so of the 20 centuries I wished to cover. Even today, regional and local identities loom so large in Italy that Italians have coined the term "campanilismo" to describe their deep, fierce, and proud attachment to their birthplace, derived from "campanile" or bell tower, traditionally the tallest building of each town. One extreme example of campanilismo is the famous Palio of Siena, a horse race that expresses the traditional and heated rivalry of different *neighborhoods* of the *same town*!

And if the "environment" at its simplest in what is now Italy (note again my awkward description of that geographical abstraction!) thus resisted easy definition, how would I describe the people I wished to study? "Jews on the Italian peninsula" was awkward and ignored the presence in modern times of less religiously observant people of Jewish origins who may or may not identify as Jewish; the Hebrew term "Italkim" ("Italians") wouldn't be immediately intelligible to many students; and yet even if I did admit anachronisms into my terminology "Italian Jews" implied the primacy of religion for identity whereas "Jewish Italians" implied that of nationality.

I decided in the end to opt for a specious clarity over accuracy, vowing to explain to the students on the first day of class that my chosen title of "Jewish Italy" demonstrated the importance of language, and, in this case, my failure to find the correct words to describe the relationship between people and places indicated the complexity and difficulty ahead of us. *Va bene*!

Next, given the interdisciplinary nature required by the University of Denver for my class, I gathered and reviewed an array of materials. As I did so, I questioned how to join writing and these materials in ways beyond the traditional midterm and final papers. One important point I had taken away from the writing workshop was a fresh appreciation for the conventions of academic writing--to me comfortably familiar--as well as its diversity across disciplines. Thus, while collecting photos and inscriptions from the ancient Jewish catacombs underneath Rome and its environs for the first unit of the course, which begins with ancient Rome and ends with the sacking of Jerusalem in 70 CE, I asked myself how students could respond in writing to such materials using different disciplinary conventions.

Looking over the catacombs' brief, occasionally illegible inscriptions, I recalled the 19th century Italian author Ugo Foscolo, whose poem "Dei sepolcri," "On Tombs," was wrought out of epitaphs, replicating with his pen the engraver's chisel, gathering famous names as the foundation for an Italy which did not yet exist. Foscolo's melancholy imagination would be inverted by Giorgio Bassani, a twentieth-century Jewish Italian author whose masterpiece *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* opens with silent Etruscan tombs, which rather than suggest the future, loom as monuments to an inscrutable past. I will be asking students to similarly respond in a literary fashion or to take their cue from the historical materials assigned for this initial unit--a historian's essay, excerpts of Philo of Alexandria's diplomatic correspondence to the emperor Caligula regarding his anti-Jewish persecutions, and Flavius Josephus' *The Jewish War*.

I hope to combine this thematic beginning--the beginning of Jewish life in Italy--with the beginning of engaging students in academic writing. We will discuss the tombs' epitaphs as well as writings of Philo of Alexandria and Flavius Josephus in terms of their intended audience(s). The obvious differences among these materials will, I hope, prompt students to reflect on which audience they are setting out to write for, what discipline their writing might therefore suit, and how this affects their choices as authors. Such questions parallel our discussion during the workshop of how to grade students' writing; I plan to design my grading rubric for student work concurrently with my design of their assignments.

As the course next leaps forward to the Middle Ages, I will be aiming to incorporate both in-class writing and in-class reading in this unit. My experience in the workshop and in my previous classrooms has lead me to embrace quiet time during class, to allow class (especially during two hour class periods) to have an ebb and flow, to not equate bustle to learning. I find it striking that students expect only rarely to read beyond the occasional passage while in class. We will be reading novellas featuring Jewish characters--including a novella that was the basis for Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*--to understand how non-Jews represented and understood Jews. We will read these texts as homework and then together in class. Our in-class reading will again include images, in order to hone our critical skills by applying them to different kinds of material. We will examine together images from Debra Higgs Strickland's *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* as well as Alfred Rubens' *A History of Jewish Costume*. We will also view a Youtube.com video of the "Festa dei Giudei," the "Festival of the Jews" as celebrated in contemporary Sicily during Holy Week, online at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ya1_Xzh4JIc

Proceeding chronologically, the course will next treat the Renaissance, Reformation, and Counter-Reformation by examining Jewish dancing masters and musicians in Renaissance courts as well as the notorious papal bull, "Cum nimis absurdum," that inaugurated the Roman ghetto. By now, we will be approximately halfway through the quarter; I will be assigning a midterm paper, but to encourage students to consider writing as an ongoing process, their midterm paper will be based on their previous writing. Additionally, this paper will undergo a peer review before being rewritten and turned in a second time. I will be using the peer review guidelines from the workshop; I have conducted peer review sessions before with some success. I do find that their utility is limited, but nonetheless such sessions can at the very least cull the most tangled sentences and contorted ideas from students' papers. I have usually received positive student feedback regarding peer review sessions. After the midterm paper, the students will have a more tranquil unit with a week off from writing assignments in which we will study the intertwined topics of food and the religious cycles of the Jewish calendar, in particular the Passover celebration. Our focus will be on the interaction between reading and thinking or doing—the performativity of language in ritual, the transfer of text into act in following a recipe's instructions.

At this point in the term, we will only have a handful of weeks left to cover the truly fascinating history of Italy's Jews in the 19th and

20th centuries. We will move from the temporary emancipation of Jews from Italian ghettoes by Napoleonic troops to their embrace of the *Risorgimento* to their shock at the 1938 racial laws, before concluding with some more contemporary portrayals of Italian Jews. Again, to foster an appreciation for writing as both a method of learning and as a skill, rather than the means of producing the "product" demanded by the instructor, I will be charging students with more responsibility in regards to their final papers. However, to facilitate this potentially daunting process, I am following a suggestion from the writing workshop by breaking the final paper into discrete (and individually graded) steps: a proposal and a rough draft will precede the final draft.

Concluding both this course and my reflections here is Italian-Turkish director Ferzan Ozpetek's 2003 film "Finestra di fronte," "Facing Windows," a film set in the Rome of today and of the 1940s. A secret epistolary romance weaves together past and present—the letters continue to speak through the years, and, by drawing together their readers, create a new story, that of the film itself. Passion, writing, and reading, it seems, are well-suited.

WRITING AS A WAY OF TEACHING STUDENTS HOW TO TALK "ART TALK"

Carl Raschke
Religious Studies
2010

Since my course RLGS 2576 ("Art, Thought, and Spirituality") was converted into the current format, I sought to redesign those facets of the original instructional plan that could be utilized effectively to promote the broader strategies of the writing program.

The course by intent is broadly conceptual and intellectually challenging, and is aimed at not only fostering a more sophisticated, philosophical understanding of the meaning of art works, but of teaching students how to speak self-confidently the language of art itself, or what is sometimes called "art talk." According to the syllabus, the course examines "the close and complex relationship between esthetic expression and private religiosity, or 'spirituality.' The word 'spirituality' refers to the varieties and patterns of personal religious experience as opposed to the beliefs, institutional structures, and ritual practices of organized religion." It also investigates "how theories as well as personal accounts of artistic creativity, experience, and appreciation can both broaden and deepen our understanding of the inner life that is otherwise communicated in religious terms and how artistic expression can also have a quasi-religious or "spiritual" character… The central objective will be to illumine the way in which the construction of the individual self and the formation of the personal identity are intimately tied to different quests that are *artistic* and *spiritual* at the same time."

The course objectives themselves elaborate these general goals. The course objectives are as follows:

- Enabling students to grasp what is actually involved in the production of an art work, or art form, as well as the relationship between the act of creation and the experience of art.
- Comprehending the nature of creativity itself in the development of thought along with the appropriate philosophical and conceptual models that have been used to make sense of the process.
- Exploring at length the meaning of the term "spirituality" as a unique dimension of art.
- Understanding why the "artistic and the "spiritual" cannot be divorced from each other. .

Clearly, this sort of pedagogical undertaking requires a rigorous disciplining of the student's capacity for the sort of abstract, specialized, and modestly technical language that dominates formal esthetics, avant-garde art statements and manifestoes, and poetry criticism (among other genres). Success in such a venture from my standpoint as an interdisciplinary scholar, who has built an academic career around communicating the wide-ranging "global" significance of postmodern religious thought and philosophy, demands familiarizing students with, and empowering them to speak as "fluently" as possible, such an argot itself. The form of the earlier writing assignments were retained because my experience in teaching the initial course version twice convinced me that they worked very well. As the cliché runs, "if it's not broke, don't fix it." The general parameters of these assignments are explained below.

But in order to retrofit them for a "reinvented" course with the added practical task of *teaching writing*, I made significant modifications that emphasized a deliberate process of self-study and self-critique involving *re-writing* with both the aim and hope that students would at the same time discover how the crafting of sentences and the refinement of thought itself are inseparable. Since the kind of "thought" this courses pushes cannot be captured in the quotidian, "give me the facts, mam" sorts of discourse that students are not only most acquainted and comfortable with, but are often advanced even in an academic setting as the "norm" for verbal expression, a new approach to both in-class and out-of-class writing exercises became vital.

In the "pre-conversion" course context these assignments were structured for the most part to force students to grapple with content issues. But it gradually became apparent – especially after some bad experiences with students in the second go-round who seemed both to lack the capacity for abstract thought and resented having to engage with it – that the interconnection between the comprehension of content and the type of discipline-specific writing the course necessitates had to be seamless.

The most significant example of this "core conversion" procedure can be found in what I did with the journaling requirement for the course, which was always crucial. Originally the journal was merely a device through which I as an instructor could keep tabs on the degree to which the students were doing the weekly readings and understanding the lecture material. It also served as an instrument of feedback and assessment of where their stumbling blocks in their comprehension of the course material might be situated. The earlier specification of the journal assignment on the syllabus was about as straightforward as one could get – "keep a journal and do it weekly."

However, the refurbishing of this very basic type of assignment presented immense opportunities for the development of the course-specific writing I had already deemed essential. The result was that the assignment now required more than an entire page of explanation and direction with the result that its outline became a lengthy supplement to, rather than one simple component of, the syllabus. According to the syllabus, each journal entry "must accomplish at least two of the following goals, and at some point the student in the journal must address *all* of the same goals". These goals are:

- A short summary of what the topic was for that week, what the professor talked about in class, what other students said either in class or outside of class, what the student got out of the assigned readings.
- A brief statement of the problems the student encountered in understanding the material and the nature of those problems, if any. If the student did not encounter any problems in understanding, the student may reflect on what conceptual or intellectual issues he or she may have had with the material itself.
- A summary along with a thesis and account of what the student learned, or didn't think they learned, in the weekly material. If the student had problems with the material, the summary should lay out the problems as long with an hypothesis about what the problem might be. NOTE: Students often think it is simply the responsibility of the instructor to make it "clear" to them, but that is an unacceptable and too passive approach.

In an "active learning" setting, which this course has, the student has an *equal responsibility* to take steps to resolve issues by either discussing the problem with the instructor, seeking help outside of class, or turning to peers within the group. Simply brushing the problem off with such statements as "I don't get what art is all about" or "I'm not interested" or "this is much too abstract for me", for example, is unacceptable.

Some comments about how the student has been developing and deepening their own understanding of the relationship between art, thought, and spirituality, including perhaps some observations about "how my mind has changed".

The journal is supposed to be turned in twice, once at the end of the fifth week of class and the final one by the last day of the course. The journal is simply checked, or not checked, the first time to see if the student has 1) met the goals of the assignment 2) completed the assignment with thoughtfulness and clarity 3) the degree to which the assignment utilizes good grammar and punctuation (though grammar and punctuation are not corrected). If the student is not meeting these goals, the student receives a brief explanation as to why. The second time the journal is graded in accordance with the aforementioned three criteria.

In short, the journal exercise, which actually takes up as much as a fifth of the total writing expected of the student during the quarter, is configured to promote a modicum of *active learning*. The student is obliged not only to report impressionistically on what they heard ,or read, or thought about, but to reflect strenuously through a prescribed writing regimen what they feel they do not understand, where are the gaps, and even what are the deficiencies from the student's own perspective. The usual complaint of students, which standard university evals unfortunately encourage them to make, is that the "professor

didn't do enough", or something of that order, to make sense out of the material. Through the writing intensive modality the student has to wrestle not only with their own commitments, inabilities, or blind sides but with the *process* of evaluating the problems as well. *And they have to make the process clear not only to themselves, but to the instructor as part of what amounts to a significant segment of the course grade*. Most journal writing in a pedagogical setting tends to be passive and a well camouflaged prosthesis for the lazy-minded, including the instructors themselves. This assignment leverages some conventional techniques for improving English composition to immerse the student in the rigors of content mastery as a whole, to which the course in terms of "core knowledge" criteria also gives very special attention.

A second key dimension of this course, as specified in both its previous and present incarnations, consists in teaching students to "interpret" important esthetic artifacts, the meaning and interpretations of which are *not only not obvious*, but pose a challenge to those who do not possess "the language skills" to engage and comprehend them. Again, the enhancement of this dimension of the course through writing intensive protocols has major benefits that go far beyond simply "teaching good writing." The earlier version of these sorts of "art-object hermeneutics" style of exercise tended to stress only explicating what the artifact was "all about." On past occasions students tended to parrot or embellish the way in which I as the instructor in lectures had already talked about the artifacts while evincing the all-too-familiar anxiety and obsessiveness common to undergraduates about "saying just what the professor wants."

The bare-bone text of the assignment, as stated on the syllabus, is as follows. The first sentence refers to the fact that the course is divided into four different thematic modules on the concept of creativity as well as the verbal and visual arts.

> During each of the four modules students will write short essays (750-1000) words each) on specific "artifacts", such as a special reading selection, a painting, or a poem relevant to that section. The paper must address the following questions: How does the artifact bring together the different methods and focus an understanding of the data presented in the module? How does it show the relationship between the artistic and the spiritual? How does it illumine the process of creativity and its relationship to thought and spirituality?

Since, of course, each artifact is different, the more detailed instructions that will be given out to these sorts of assignments (two additional exercises of a similar nature are done in class) have now been modified to necessitate that the student reflect on how *they are writing what they are writing about*, as if the two approaches depended entirely on each other. The wording of an early assignment for the course, refurbished from its original version which amounted more or less to just the first three sentences, has now been expanded to have the student write on the task of writing about the material itself.

> The painting shown above is Wassily Kandinsky's *Composition No. 8* (1923), which is also being projected on to the screen right now. In his book *The Spiritual in Art*, which, we have talked about in class you should have read for the most part by now, Kandinsky identifies and explains what he means by the "spiritual" dimensions of a painting. Write a draft of a short, exploratory essay of 200-400 words in which you identify the "spiritual elements" that you see in this individual painting. Describe in your own words exactly what you see in this painting and how your description illustrates Kandinsky's criteria for "the spiritual". At the same time, make sure in your writing you pay attention and endeavor to communicate, as you are asked to do in the journal, what it is you personally find "problematic" in identifying these elements of spirituality and the degree to which you think you have problems correlating your criteria for recognizing these elements to Kandinsky's own criteria, as laid out in the book we are reading by him. To what degree do you think the "problem" lies with you, with Kandinsky, or with the assignment itself, and why? Most problems are more complex than the way we consider them at first glance.

I fully expect that students will have a difficult time writing about their own sense of

what is "problematic" in both mastering the course material and in their own writing. Students are accustomed to viewing a university education as one of "customer service" with the professor supposedly providing the kind of product they expect. Writing is often seen as an instrument of exchange in the academic setting. The work the student performs serves as the coin of the realm to purchase the product that is supposedly delivered by the educational provider.

Rarely is writing seen as the medium whereby learning actually takes place. In a course like this one, however, the writing assignments bring into relief the nature of the very challenges and difficulties involved in what is often and misleadingingly termed the "appreciation" of the arts. The writing assignments are no more add-ons to the course. They configure the structure and direction of the conceptual material itself in such a way that the students begin to ask questions they would not be accustomed under normal circumstances to ask.

VESTIGES OF THE NATURAL HISTORY OF CORE: A TEAM-TAUGHT, INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO A WRITING-INTENSIVE, HONORS COURSE

Gregory Robbins, Religious Studies
Dean Saitta, Anthropology
2008

Both of us joined the University of Denver faculty in 1988. At that time, we were presented with a Core curriculum (in place since the middle of the decade) that featured a collection of team-taught, interdisciplinary courses. Coherence was provided by organizing themes. And, most notably, they were *year-long* offerings! Funded initially by a substantive grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities, the University of Denver's Core had garnered a good deal of national attention, drawing praise from many segments of the higher education community, including Lynn Cheney's approbation.

Today, there remain but palimpsests of that approach to general education at DU (e.g., the year-long sequences in NATS). Employing teams of three, four or more faculty members from as many disciplines, the old Core was labor-intensive to say the least. Scheduling was a nightmare. Students locked into year-long courses during the first two years of their undergraduate careers complained of being trapped, of having very little freedom or choice about their schedules. "Core sucks!" became the litany among students.

Our course in the revised curriculum, CORE 2410: "Science and Religion in Dialogue—The Case of Darwin," is, to our knowledge, the last hold-out from this era of interdisciplinary, team-taught Core. To be sure, ours is not a year-long offering (and we are divided on the wisdom of requiring a year-long sequence of courses in *any* subject given the complexity of knowledge, and brevity of attention spans, in today's technology-saturated world). But our course is certainly an interdisciplinary one. As faculty we represent two departments in different Divisions whose disciplines are characterized by broad-ranging methodological inclusiveness. Our approach is thematic, reflecting not only the "Communities and Environments" niche into which we have opted, but also a sustained and carefully-orchestrated conversation over the course of quarter. The current configuration of Core and the discussions in which we are now engaged about its revision (which include a new litany—this time among faculty—that "Core doesn't work") have not altered our conviction that a team-taught, thematic approach—one that is genuinely interdisciplinary (i.e., *across divisions*)—is absolutely the best way to prepare students to engage with topics of paramount importance to their lives as thoughtful, engaged citizens.

University Professorships and the Origins of Core 2410

The decision to teach Core 2410: Science and Religion in Dialogue: The Case in Darwin was the result of our selection, in 2000, as "University Professors" in the Arts and Humanities and the Social Sciences. Ours were three-year terms stipulating that we collaborate in a joint teaching venture of our design. We hadn't talked long before it became clear that we share certain passions. We are acutely aware that science and religion are two important forces in American life. The relationship between science and religion has become increasingly controversial in our country, as indicated by ongoing, oft-heated debates over the proposed teaching of "Intelligent Design" in public school science classes, the morality of stem cell research, genetic engineering and cloning, and, more broadly, what the Founders meant when they prescribed a Constitutional separation of church and state. These imbroglios are deeply consequential; our ability to settle them depends on how we understand, and relate, science and religion. In our opinion, one cannot join responsibly as citizens in those conversations until s/he comes to terms with Darwin. Our course began to take shape.

The University Professorships also provided us with professional development funds for the period (regrettably, this development opportunity for faculty no longer exists). As we began to work on the course, the first third of which was to focus on Darwin's intellectual development and the 19th-century backdrop for his scientific contributions, it became clear to us that a research trip to experience the Galápagos Islands first hand would be essential to the teaching strategies we intended to employ. Fortunately, we were able to join in the field component of a DU Seminar (BIOL 3110) for advanced students in biology led by Professor Michael Monahan for a three-week stint in Ecuador in November and December, 2002.

Beginning with the 700-mile flight from Quito to Baltra on Islas Seymour, the trip proved to be the adventure of a lifetime. Over the course of eight days we re-traced Darwin's odyssey on a boat even smaller than the *HMS Beagle* (a 90 foot brig of a type described by British seaman as a "floating coffin"). Aboard our yacht, *Daphne*, we journeyed to Bartolomé Bay on the island of San Salvador, and from there to the islands of Fernandina, Isabel, Santa Cruz, Plazas, Santa Fé, Española and San Cristóbal. We visited the Darwin Research Station in Puerto Ayora and stalked giant tortoises in the wild. We experienced the same remote, isolated, exotic landscape, came face to face with the same peculiar species, and grew to appreciate the cruel existence of nature "red in tooth and claw" that Darwin himself had documented. Photographically, we took note of how, in Puerto Ayora, murals on the enclosing wall of the Adventist Church directly across the street from the Darwin Research Station, and on the bell tower of the church in Puerto Baquerurízo Moreno, bore witness to present-day, Christian, creationist opposition to the conclusions Darwin drew from his visit to the Islands.

In the summer of 2003, we followed up the Galápagos trip with one to England. To spend some time at Darwin's family home, Down House, in County Kent, to peer into his study from which emanated, over the course of 40 years, not only his famous treatises but also nearly 15,000 letters, to trace his footsteps along the sand walk he meditatively negotiated three times each day, to visit his grave in Westminster Abbey, and to participate in a conference on Darwin in Oxford University deepened considerably our engagement in the material we were to teach.

The inaugural iteration of the course was launched in the fall of 2003. We have taught it annually ever since. Our goal from the outset was to create a highly-interactive, engaged teaching and learning environment. At the heart of our syllabus was a careful reading and analysis of primary sources, including large sections of *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*. A hefty writing component was envisioned from the beginning. However, given the demand for Core offerings at DU and the recent strictures that have attended team-teaching, our enrollment was capped at 60 students. Our hopes for the course as we had envisioned it were ultimately frustrated. And so, for the spring quarter of 2009, we have proposed to teach it as a writing-intensive Core course for students in the University Honors Program. To be sure, this will present us with a new set of challenges, but may allow us to realize, for the first time really, the ideals encoded in the conceptual DNA of DU's innovative Core of the 1980s.

The challenge of teaching Honors students

We anticipate an enrollment of no more than 30 Honors students. If recent trends continue, among those we may expect a sizable group of students majoring in the Natural Sciences. For example, of the 124 Honors students slated to graduate in 2009, 31 have declared majors (BS or BA) in the Natural Sciences. In 2010, 16 per cent of all DU Honors students are expected to graduate with degrees in the sciences. In has been our experience that being a science major does not necessarily mean a student has had any sort of sustained exposure to Darwin's writings. Science majors read *about* Darwin; Darwinian evolutionary theory is a *presupposition* for the work they do, not the object of their study. Few Honors students have had much acquaintance with the academic study of religion. Only 10 per cent of the Honors cadre majors in Arts and Humanities. Honors students do, however, seek out opportunities to stretch their horizons. They want to be challenged as critical thinkers, and welcome the opportunity to hone their skills by writing. We relish the opportunity to re-cast our course to meet just those expectations.

The key question for our team-taught, interdisciplinary, writing-intensive Honors course will be this: "What is the best way to understand or construe the relationship between science and religion?" To anchor our inquiry we shall focus on the life, the scientific discoveries, and the religious commitments and struggles of Charles Darwin. Darwin's evolutionary theory fundamentally transformed the scientific environment of his day. But in so doing, it also raised significant challenges to religious belief, particularly in Christian communities of faith. More than any other scientific discovery of his time, Darwin's theory caused ordinary people to re-examine their core beliefs about origins and about the presumed dignity of human existence. Thus, Darwin's career and his writings, taken on their own terms, provide the foundation for considering much broader issues in the relationship between science and religion, ones that developed in the years that followed, and which cast a long shadow on American life.

Four ways of construing the relationship between science and religion

During the first week of the course, we will lay the groundwork for our quarter-long conversation by introducing our students to the options Ian G. Barbour presents in his groundbreaking work, *When Science Meets Religion: Enemies, Strangers or Partners* (2000), where he proffers four ways of framing the relationship between science and religion. They are:

1. *Conflict*—This view contends that science and religion make *literal* statements about the same domain (the history of nature) that are diametrically opposed. Science and religion present an "either/or" decision; a person must choose between them. Since the late 19th century, the rhetoric of warfare has often been used to characterize the differences in worldview. Currently, scientific materialism and Christian fundamentalism appear to be engaged in mortal combat.

2. *Independence*—This view holds that science and religion are autonomous fields in inquiry. They can be distinguished according to the *questions* they ask, the *domains* to which they refer, and the *methods* they employ. Stephen Jay Gould, the eminent zoologist and paleontologist offered an acronym, NOMA (= "non-overlapping magisteria"), to capture the distinction. The focus of science is the explanation of objective, public, repeatable data. Religion concentrates on the existence of order and beauty in the world, or is more concerned with the experiences of one's inner life (such as guilt, anxiety and meaninglessness, on the one hand, and forgiveness, trust and wholeness, on the other). Science asks objective "how" questions. Religion asks personal, "why" questions about meaning and purpose, and about humanity's ultimate origin and destiny. The basis of authority in science is logical coherence and experimental adequacy. The final authority in religion is God and revelation, understood through persons to whom enlightenment and insights have been given, and validated in one's own, personal experience. Science makes quantitative predictions that can be tested experimentally. Religion must use symbolic an analogical language because God is transcendent.

3. *Dialogue*—This view allows that science and religion share methodological and conceptual parallels. The construction of theories and the "doing of theology" are *both* imaginative enterprises in which analogies, metaphors, and models often play a role. Both are frequently concerned with "limit" questions, viz., questions about origins. While the integrity of each field is preserved and the genuine differences acknowledged, this position holds that each has something to learn from the other, and that communication of information is possible. The subject of ethics is often thought to be an obvious locus of discussion, and, more recently, human responsibility for the environment.

4. *Integration*—This view maintains that science and religion are inseparable, that they are two sides of the same coin. An integrationist view can take the form of a renewed emphasis on *natural theology*, in which it is claimed that the existence of God can be inferred from (or is supported by) the evidence of design in nature, of which science makes us more aware. Or, it can take the form of a *theology of nature*, which holds that some traditional

doctrines need to be reformulated in the light of current science. An integrationist view may seek a *systematic synthesis*, in which science and religion contribute to the development of an inclusive metaphysics, as in the case of process theology, or in some of the more self-disclosing versions of Intelligent Design creationism.

Writing-intensive, Honors-appropriate strategies

With Barbour's categories in mind, our goal for the end of the course is to have the students write position papers in which they stake their claims regarding the relationship between science and religion. Their point of departure will be the contemporary debate over Darwin's work. But the assignment is also intended to be integrative. We shall expect our students to:

- Demonstrate their understanding of why Darwin is still a controversial figure in America life;
- Show a substantive grasp of what they consider the merits and limitations (or tradeoffs) of each of Barbour's alternatives to be;
- Make specific use of selected course material to defend their positions (e.g., Barbour's descriptions; Darwin's own words; the history of Darwinism in America; speeches from the Scopes Trial; statements by mainstream religious groups; arguments by Intelligent Design advocates; theological constructs by process thinkers; etc.);
- Situate themselves firmly within their own communities and environments, and, if appropriate,
- Disclose how their thinking about the science-religion relationship and changed (*or not*) as a result of the exposure to this material.

We expect the paper to be persuasive, subject to peer review by classmates and instructors, colleagues of good will who have been anxiously awaiting the moment when all the cards are laid on the table, the various hands revealed—including those the instructors hold!

There will be, of course, several interim writing projects that make this final exercise possible. To anticipate where we are heading, and to gauge early on how well our students have understood Barbour's categories, our first writing assignment asks students to conduct their own survey about the relationship between science and religion. We invite them to:

1. Read *The New York Times* article from Wednesday, August 31, 2005, "Teaching of Creationism is Endorsed in New Survey."
2. Note how the survey's questions are posed and the statistics presented.
3. Frame a survey question of their own—one that genuinely interests them—that is relevant tot the question of the American public's understanding of the relationship between science and religion.
4. Research available data, making use of resources on the Web (see below for a sample).
5. Analyze their results by asking "On this question, where does the American public's sentiment fall along the spectrum Barbour presents in his chapter, "Four Views of Science and Religion," from *When Science Meets Religion*?
6. Write newspaper articles of about 500 words, using *The New York Times* piece as a model. They should be of interest to the general reader, ones that present fairly (and accurately!) what they have learned, *and ones that reveal the research methods employed.* Provide attention-getting headlines!

   NOTE: For starters, here are a few sites to explore:

   http://pewform.org/surveys/origins
   http://www.religioustolerance.org/ev_publi.htm
   http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris_poll/index.asp?PID=581
   http://www.hcdi.net/polls/J5776/
   or
   From DU's home page type: Marsico/IDEA, to access the data set: General Social Survey.

As mentioned above, the first third of our course is devoted to a careful reading of Darwin and his contemporaries. The suggestions we found in Chapter 8, "Helping Students Read Difficult Texts," of John Bean's book, *Engaging Ideas* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001, 133-148) struck us as particularly useful for helping us

achieve our goals and for engaging Honors students at an appropriate level. For example, it has been famously said of Darwin's contemporary Karl Marx that "*his words are like bats. One can see in them both birds and mice.*" The same might be said of Darwin's words as they relate to the question of religion. *The Origin of Species* was a huge scientific and popular success largely because of Darwin's use of *metaphor* to capture the readers' attention and to excite their imaginations about other ways the history of life might have unfolded. These metaphors have also inspired much scholarly speculation as to what, if anything, they imply about Darwin's belief in a personal god. So we envision an early assignment that will require our students to identify three "metaphor-rich" passages in *The Origin* that address the issue of Darwin's "god." Then we ask:

1. Do these passages imply belief? Non-belief? Uncertainty? Agnosticism?
2. Alternatively, might they reflect tactical, rhetorical moves by Darwin to soften heretical or atheistic ideas?
3. Based on how your answers questions one and two, where would you place Darwin in terms of Barbour's categories for understanding the relationship between science and religion? Why?

Similarly, when we turn our attention to David Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion,* a guided journal assignment seems like an ideal solution for helping our students navigate its multi-faceted argument. Hume (1711-1776) did not publish *Dialogues* during his lifetime. He left copies with his nephew, his publisher and with his close friend, Adam Smith, to ensure that the work would appear after his death. *Dialogues* made it to print in 1779. Darwin, by his own admission, admired it greatly. We propose a writing assignment that includes both reading strategies and attempts to draw the students into conversation with the author and with Darwin as a reader of Hume. For us, the leading question is: What leverage does Darwin gain for his own scientific conclusions from Hume's philosophical musings? Answering that question requires a careful reading of the *Dialogues*, accompanied by thoughtful journaling. Here is the assignment we envision:

1. Read the *Dialogues* carefully and deliberately, one section at a time. Once you have finished each part (there are 12), stop and jot down, briefly, how you think the discussion has advanced.
2. Can you now distinguish, in a way that makes sense to you, between an *a posteriori* argument and an *a priori* one?
3. Can you summarize for yourself the main lines of Cleanthes' argument? In your opinion, what is most persuasive about the case Cleanthes makes?
4. Why do Demea and Philo take issue with Cleanthes? Why do they find his argument less than compelling? Do you find yourself siding with them? Why? Why not?
5. How does the interchange between these friends end? Is it, to you way of thinking, a satisfying conclusion? If so, why? If not, why not?
6. What is the overarching "topic" of the *Dialogues* really? Why was it of keen interest to Darwin? In the end, do you think it is an important one? How, specifically, does it relate to the subject matter of this course. Is it a topic with which thoughtful people still wrestle?

The middle third of the course is devoted to the reception of Darwin in America and the events that led up to the 1925 Scopes Trial. That chapter in American history provides a way for us to sharpen the focus of our theme, "Communities and Environments," to illustrate the value of Barbour's categories. As a means of transitioning to the final part of the course and contemporary, 21st-century debates, we use a film as our "text" for analysis. Since its release, many have maintained that Stanley Kramer's 1960 film, *Inherit the Wind*, has significance to students because it illuminates a piece of America's intellectual history (the Scopes Trial) and presents important ideas in a compelling, dramatic format. After all, the authors of the original 1955 Broadway play (Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee) indicate that their fundamental premise was "to establish some way for this society to survive despite its duality of beliefs."

However, critics have suggested that presenting *Inherit the Wind* as a history lesson can be dangerous. There are serious discrepancies

between the account of the trail portrayed in the film and the actual trial records themselves (which we will have read). Sophisticated viewers warn that the dramatization of historical events gave both the playwrights and the filmmaker opportunities to represent history in a way that expressed particular personal biases and prejudices. Insights gained from Chapter 7 of Bean's book, "Designing Tasks for Active Thinking and Learning," have led us to frame this writing exercise:

> Draft a "white paper" for middle school teachers (both science and humanities instructors) that:
>
> 1. Identifies what you consider to be the most glaring historical inaccuracies in *Inherit the Wind*;
> 2. Discusses what you perceive (from your perspective as an informed viewer steeped in early 21st-century American sensibilities) to be the significant biases—political, cultural, religious, ideological, etc.—that potentially "contaminate the film;
> 3. Makes a reasoned case—on the basis of the film's strengths *and* weaknesses—for why *Inherit the Wind* might or might not be a useful teaching tool for enhancing a classroom discussion about the following:
>
> - The general issue of the relationship between science and religion in American life, and
> - The specific issue of what should be taught in America's public school science classes: evolution only, creation only, both, or neither.

The final third of the course concentrates on recent debates about the shortcomings of evolution theory and teaching Intelligent Design in public schools. Once again, students will be introduced to the key figures and acquainted with the more trenchant arguments on both sides of the controversy. The earlier writing exercise on Hume asked students to "eavesdrop" on a late 18th-century dialogue that identified the philosophical weakness at the heart of any argument from design. The previous assignment asked students to write with a specific audience in mind: middle school teachers. For this portion of the course we envision a cooperative learning and writing project for which students imagine and script a dialogue *in which they participate.* We shall ask students to work in groups of three outside of class. And, we shall "embed" them in a community and environment for their collaboration: "Your local school board is considering changes to the high school science standards in order to accommodate growing public interest in alternatives to evolutionary theory as an explanation of the history of life on earth. The board has invited an advocate of evolutionary theory and a proponent of Intelligent Design to debate, before the Board, the key issues at stake." Here is the assignment:

> Your task is to co-author a dialogue that covers what you take to be the most important issues around
>
> 1. Scientific method
> 2. Data interpretation (similar to what they undertook in the initial writing exercise)
> 3. Curriculum control
> 4. Church-State separation, and
> 5. Consequences for liberal learning
>
> You and your fellow group members play the roles of school board members (identified as "SBM's 1, 2, and 3") who insert yourselves into the dialogue at key points as a way to deepen and re-direct the discussion. These interventions should reflect your personal questions and concerns about the so-called "teach the controversy" debate. The dialogue need not end in a decision about curriculum change; rather, the point is to engage the issues in a comprehensive and critical manner.

These five formal writing assignments, supplemented by more informal, exploratory writing activities in class, should provide our Honors students with considerable confidence in their ability to produce the final position paper for the course. Our hope is that these strategies will likewise prepare them to assume responsible roles as citizens in communities where religious convictions and scientific worldview frequently collide. The plan is ambitious, the prospect audacious.

Conclusion

In 1844, fifteen years before Charles Darwin had the courage to publish *The Origin of Species*, a Scottish journalist named Robert Chambers released, anonymously, a book entitled *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*. Examining the fossil record as it was then understood, Chambers, who was by no means a careful scientist, was convinced that there were, in the organic world, traces or "vestiges" of physical forms that betrayed a history of development, of evolution. As the result of natural laws, the simple appeared first, and then the complex. As time went by, higher and higher forms of life had left their mark. Like Darwin, we are loathe to use the terms "higher" and "lower" to describe the physical forms we encounter in nature. By analogy with Chambers, however, we believe that our re-designed, writing-intensive course for Honors students will bring to expression the latent possibilities present in the natural history of DU's innovative, progressive, Core Curriculum.

ISLAM IN THE AMERICAN MOSAIC : THE WRITING COMPONENT

Liyakat Takim
Religious Studies
2008

"Islam in the American Mosaic" will be my writing intensive course that I will teach. Many scholars who study the phenomenon of American Islam tend to homogenize American Muslims. Those who restrict their study to this generalized analysis of Muslims in America tend to ignore the nuances that characterize and differentiate the diverse Muslim segments in America. It further postulates a monolithic Islam that expresses the "normative Islam." Hence any variant religious expression is perceived as an aberration that is to be ignored or discarded.

This class will explore the different expressions of Islam, especially as it is practiced in America. It will introduce students to some of the essential features of Islam and help them develop a sense how and why Islam came to be a global religion. It will also help students comprehend how various groups came to develop different understandings of Islam. Students will be exposed to a mosaic of Islamic cultures and will be encouraged to compare and contrast the different manifestations of Islam in America.

The course will have guest speakers (2) an "experiential" component that includes visits to specific mosques/worship centers around Denver (3) a discussion and analysis of contemporary manifestations of Islam in the American context that utilizes co-operative learning methodologies.

Incorporation of writing

The class has always included considerable writing. Apart from three quizzes, students are required to write a 5-6 page midterm essay. The class also has one take-home essay examination to be answered in 6-7 pages.

The course will be revised to bring it into the "Writing Intensive" category. First, students will be required to write longer papers, totally about 15 pages per quarter. Instead of quizzes, students will be asked to compile bi-weekly "journals", which will take the form of recording their observations regarding an item in the media pertaining to Islam. In addition, they will be required to write short papers (2-3 pages each) highlighting their observations from a visit to a local mosque.

Learning Outcome

The course will emphasize not only observing and learning about Islam and the Muslim world but also talking to Muslims and writing about their experience. Hence, the learning outcome of the course will be based on the follow categories:

1) Understanding the different expressions of Islam – Sunni, Shi'i and Sufi – by visiting the centers and observing the rituals
Assignment: Visiting and observing the centers; students will be rated by the site visit papers they write. In particular, they will need to write on the differences in decorum, the calligraphy, architecture, symbols etc. They would be rated based on how they describe and analyze what they observed on a 1 – 5 scale

2) Learn how the rituals impact and transform the practitioners – by talking to practitioners of the faith and reading about the important of the rituals
Assignment: In the site visit papers, they will also discuss the rituals they observed and why they are so important to the practitioners – here, they will be asked to speak to the local Imam (priest) or some practitioners. Students will be assessed based on their writing of the importance of the rituals and their symbolic and phenomenological significance. Students will also be offered extra credit to present their observations to the classroom.

3) To compare and contrast the different rituals – why would Muslims adopt different rituals.
Assignment: Here, they can discuss the different genres of rituals in the major papers. They will be given the opportunity to discuss, compare and analyze the rituals. The kinds of issues to be discussed - Why do Sunni prayers take the form they do? Why do Shi'is flagellate? Why do Sufis

perform dhikr (remembrance rituals)? Students will be graded based on their ability to analyze the rituals and encouraged to couch their papers within the wider framework of the theory and functions of rituals. They will also have to show that that far from being monolithic, Islam is multi-dimensional and variegated.

4) Students will have to respond how the course has challenged them to think of Islam differently – compare and contrast what they thought of Islam before and after the course. In addition, they will also have to discuss Islam in the media.
Assignment: This would be in the form of bi-weekly class logs they that would write. Most importantly, they will need to show that the course has forced them to think of Islam as a living, vibrant force in the eyes of its practitioners. They will also need to show how Islam has impacted the American religious landscape and focus on some aspects of the media presentation of Islam.

Overall, students will be expected to focus on religion as a living, changing force in individuals' lives and society. Hence, the concepts that we discuss in class will be linked to issues in the Muslim world, especially those concerning fundamentalism and violence.
Students will not only learn about Islam but also experience Islam as a religious phenomenon. By stressing experiential learning, and by requiring them to write field trip reports, students will understand what Islam means in the lives of Muslim practitioners and to have both an insider and outsider's perspective on Islam. By observing and writing about religious communities engage in rituals, students will grasp first-hand what it means to be religious in different socio-cultural settings. Many students report that this strategy helps them dispel myths they had held about Islam and challenges them to conceive of Islam in an entirely new way.

In addition, students will be able to compare and contrast different forms of Islam. They will be exposed to Sunni, Shi'i and Sufi versions of Islam.

I want to challenge students to think of religion in general and Islam in particular in a wholly different way. As far as the reading of texts is concerned, students will learn that different hermeneutical devices can be used to interpret texts and impose a certain reading of texts. Students will know that the authoritarian reading of a text is interwoven with the closing of the interpretive process, restricting thereby, the text to a specific reading or determination. This determination is then submitted as the final and only possible interpretation of the text.

Assessment and grading
The grades for the course will be based on the two major papers (25% for the mid-term, 35% for finals), 20% for the journals, 10% for site visit papers and a component of 10% of the grade for class participation.
The major papers will be 10-12 pages each, bi-weekly journals 2-3 pages and the site visit reports will be 3 pages long each.

In addition, I want students to develop writing skills that will serve them in their future careers. Hence, the mid-term and final papers will be graded on the following criteria:

1) There is a significant central thesis:
2) Effective argument for the thesis or major ideas
3) Organization is strong and systematic. Paragraphs are focused, coherent, unified and developed. Transitions between paragraphs are smooth
4) Grammar, punctuation, syntax, and format are correct
5) Depth of analysis
6) Adopts critical and objective perspective on the subject matter
7) Sources are varied, appropriate and sufficient

Teaching Practices
In my courses, I try to utilize as many different teaching styles as possible so that as many students as possible will be engaged. Some of these different styles include the traditional lecture, small group projects, in-class discussion, and student presentations. I try to make students aware of the impact Islam has had, and continues to have, on different societies and cultures. For example, in my Introduction to Islam class, I show my students different artistic expressions of Muslim cultures. We discuss how Muslims shaped and molded local cultures wherever they went. I also emphasize that Muslims appropriated some of the cultures they encountered.

In addition, I sometimes I break up my students into small groups and ask them to actively deliberate on thought-provoking

questions and to present their conclusions to the class. I also offer students opportunities to make short presentations in class. Such strategies encourage them to analyze and research the issues we discuss in class. Students' appreciation of my pedagogical methods and techniques is demonstrated by the fact that I have consistently scored high grades in their evaluation of my classes.

SOME THOUGHTS ON WRITING FOR STUDENTS WHO WORK WITH ME:
A DRAFT CONTINUALLY IN PROGRESS

Paul R. Viotti
Josef Korbel School of International Studies
2008

Among Charlie Rose's more interesting guests was biographer David McCullough, author of *Truman*, *John Adams*, *Mornings on Horseback* (about Theodore Roosevelt) and numerous others.[1] He tells us that "to write well is to think clearly and that's why it's so hard, but it's also why it's so enjoyable." He adds that "as soon as you start writing, then you become aware of what you don't know—what you need to know." McCullough strikes a responsive chord from my own experience when he observes how "when you write you suddenly have ideas or insights or questions are raised that you wouldn't have if you weren't writing. That's why it's important for students to be required to write a lot."

McCullough defines writing as rewriting, something he does all the time, again and again and again: "I'm not a writer; I'm a rewriter," he says. I often go back and rewrite the whole first part of the book because I know so much more by the time I get to the end of the book." McCullough notes that his spouse is his best critic. She reads and rereads his drafts. Whether one turns to a spouse, friend or colleague, every writer needs a reader.

It's also good to read what one has written word for word. Best way to do that is to read it out loud, which forces you down into the trees. Boring as that might be, it's the best way I know to catch errors and locate the rough spots. I was delighted—a sense of confirmation—when I heard McCullough say pretty much the same thing. Beyond my finding errors and rough spots, McCullough added another qualitative reason to my list: "I write for the ear as well as the eye. I think that's very important. . . . Read what you've written out loud because you'll hear things that you don't like that you very often don't see."

I guess my mother was right when she told me to write as I speak!

Preparing to Write

It's usually worth knowing what one is planning to write before getting underway. Some people may like the adventure of writing without much sense of destination (much less direction), but most of us don't. Writing an essay (or poem for that matter), a paper or article, a thesis or dissertation, a book or multi-volume treatise without knowing where it's going is like getting into a car without destination or road map. Meandering about leads everywhere or nowhere, notwithstanding hours of driving up and down blind alleys and along other tangents.

It's good to write a single-, no more than two-sentence thesis statement that captures what the work is all about; for example, "that democracies tend not to go to war with each other is the closest one gets to a law applicable to the social sciences" or, perhaps, its converse—that "democratic peace theory distorts the relation between the type of political regime and the propensity to war and peace." Or is the paper about how the power structure—the distribution of capabilities—in international politics facilitates or constrains policy makers? By contrast, perhaps the thesis is that such exogenous factors as structures external to individuals are not what explain foreign policy choices, but rather the interpretive, subjective and inter-subjective understandings these policy makers internalize.

Whatever my thesis may be, it's good to write it down on a 3"x5" card I can post it on the wall by my desk, place it on the table next to my computer, or put it in my pocket so it will be with me wherever I go. In the course of research and, most importantly, thinking about the subject, I

[1] See the interview with David McCullough on PBS program "Charlie Rose" broadcast March 21, 2008. References and quotations used in this essay are taken from that interview by Charlie Rose.

may decide to change the thesis. That's okay, but then it's a good idea to scratch out the old and write the new version in its place. Indeed, when my research takes me far and wide, I'm tempted to explore all avenues that interest me, however tangential they may be. Referring regularly to my 3"x5" card keeps me from going down too many of these alleys or, if I do decide to go down one, then to curtail my brief tour quickly.

One problem with research is that it can become seemingly endless. I remember one fellow writing a dissertation who had a massive number of note cards extraordinarily well organized in neatly arranged file boxes—never could bring himself to write! Or another friend (let's call him Joe) who was "roasted" at a party, uncharitably I think. In the skit another "friend" who was playing Joe carried a seemingly heavy, 3'x3'x4' huge box across the stage. "What's in that box, Joe?" "It's my dissertation." "I know you've been working long and hard on it, Joe, but how much have you written so far?" Joe then turns over the box and one sheet of paper flies out and lands on the floor. [Audience laughs at the real Joe, now red-faced.]

Why does this happen? Is Joe lacking self-confidence in his work? Does he see his dissertation as if it were a *magnum opus* upon which his *persona* forever will be judged by others? Although meeting or surpassing scholarly standards is always the goal, perfection can hardly be the bar. Yet many caught in this form of writer's block fail to complete (or sometime even start) works of any size from essay or article to book or treatise.

For his part, McCullough says he completes some 40-50% of his research before he starts writing. Then he never stops writing, continuing his research as he writes. Research should help, not block the writer. In my own more recent experience—not possible before access to the internet became so easy—I write plugged in, whether to check a date, read a journal article, or find other information useful to the article or chapter in a book I'm drafting.

Finally, once a destination is set (the thesis), research is underway, and thinking continues an outline has begun to form—a roadmap for getting to the destination. Just as need for more research can become a writer's block, so can the task of making a fully developed outline as if it were prerequisite to writing the first lines of a paper, article, chapter, thesis, dissertation or book. Outlines are roadmaps, not end product. They are means to ends and thus always subject to amendment. There are more ways than one to Rome. In any event, hopefully the directions chosen will lead there. If not, we change course, modifying the outline as needed or even replacing it.

Changes in both destination and roadmap are allowed. Theses may change in the course of research, not to mention drastic alterations of both outline and text. Writing is always an ongoing enterprise, sometimes having a life of its own. This short essay is one such work in continuous progress as I learn from writing—mine and those of my colleagues and students. Indeed, even after one has "finished" a text does not mean it necessarily is the last word. Revisions (and even reversals of earlier arguments) in later editions or new articles and books are always possible. The i's are not always dotted and the t's are not always crossed in anything I write. Once "finished," writings are always open for review and revision.

Getting Started

Getting the piece started is more than half the battle. When asked, I always say the way to write (and break any writer's block) is to force oneself to "start" writing whether on a lap- or desk-top computer or, in the old-fashioned way, on a typewriter (haven't seen one in years), a pad or even a scrap of paper, calendar, blank pages, spaces or margins in a book I own, a paper napkin, or whatever is available—didn't Lincoln write the "Gettysburg Address" on the back of an envelope? The important thing is to get words on paper (or these days, in electronic form).

Problem is I'm not always at (or even near) my computer when an idea I should write down comes into my mind. That's why I always try to have paper and pen or pencil with me wherever I go at any time of day. Lest he lose an idea, twentieth-century novelist Thomas Wolfe even used to get up at night to scribble some inspiration he had had in a dream or on awakening—perhaps adding to the content of *Look Homeward Angel* or, having revealed all of Asheville, North Carolina's (his hometown's) dark and dirty secrets, he realized *You Can't Go Home Again*.

Writing in a much different time and place and on very different subjects, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) carried writing materials with him whenever he took his walks in the English or, when in exile, in the French countryside. His biographer, John Aubrey, tells us that Hobbes "walked much and contemplated, and he had in the head of his cane a pen and ink-horn, carried always a note-book in his pocket, and as soon as a thought darted, he presently entered it into his book, or otherwise he might perhaps have lost it."[2] Too bad he didn't have access to the "advanced" technology of a ball-point or felt-tip pen!

Like many (if not most) professors he was comfortable enough with his eccentricities and didn't seem to mind people noticing his strange behavior—writing as he walked. He had this same fear of losing a thought. What was Hobbes to do with his notes gathered helter skelter as thoughts struck him wherever he might be? Aubrey provides the answer: "He had drawn the design of the book into chapters etc so he knew whereabout it would come in. Thus that book [*Leviathan* (1650)] was made." Put another way, Hobbes was organized. He knew how to put seemingly random thoughts to good use. Like what he wrote or not, his book is still "in print" and likely will be for centuries to come!

When asked how he writes something as long as a book, David McCoullough relates an experience early in his career with Harry Sinclair Drago who wrote over 100 books, typically in the pulp-western genre focused on the American West. He relates how at a press conference President Eisenhower had identified Drago as his favorite author, his second favorite, Bliss Lomax (actually the same person—a *nom de plume* used by Drago for some of his books). In a fluke opportunity McCullough had early in his career to speak to Drago, he asked him "how do you do that"—write more than 100 books? How could he could be so productive? The answer was deceptively simple: "Four pages a day!" That's how McCoullough says he does it—four pages a day. He adds: "Best advice an aspiring writer could be given." The same logic no doubt applies to writing a dissertation or thesis, a paper or article, and for that matter an essay like this one. Four pages a day. . . .

Coping with Anxieties

Old fears of losing manuscripts never seem to go away. The most extreme case I've ever heard was the person who kept a copy of his dissertation in the freezer so it might survive even a house fire. Somewhat less extreme, but still obsessive, I'm always hitting "save," particularly if I've just written what I consider to be a good sentence or finished a thought. Woops! I'd better hit the "save" button. Done.

Burning a disk takes more time and energy than I usually want to expend and I'm not always as timely as I should be to copy what I've written to an auxiliary drive—and this after losing my hard drive in January! I was lucky at the time to have copied most of my documents into my auxiliary drive days earlier. A short-term remedy for this problem is quite simply at the end of the day to e-mail myself the essay or chapter and thus save it in cyberspace. Printing it out (when I have a printer and it's working) is another remedy, of course, but saving my work electronically does save trees as well as keeping stacks of paper from forming on my desk.

Wisdom from the Ancients on Intellectual Honesty

Follower of the historical tradition one finds in the Greek writers Herodotus (the "father" of history" in the western tradition) and Thucydides before him, Polybius (203-120 B.C.E.) instructs his readers on plagiarism—obviously not just a 21st century problem. Polybius observes "that there are two kinds of falsehood, the one being the result of ignorance and the other intentional."[3] He differentiates between "pardon [given to] those who depart from the truth through ignorance" and those we "unreservedly condemn . . . who lie deliberately." Writers lie when "claiming as one's own what is really the work of others." More than lying, of course, plagiarism is also both stealing someone else's intellectual

[2] See John Aubrey, "A Brief Life of Thomas Hobbes, 1588-1679" in Aubrey and Richard William Barber (ed.), *Brief Lives* (Rochester, NY and Suffolk, England: The Boydell Press [now Boydell and Brewer], 1982).

[3] See Mark V. Kauppi and Paul R. Viotti, *The Global Philosophers*: *World Politics in Western Thought* (New York: Lexington Books, 1992), p. 83. Cf. Polybius, *The Rise of the Roman Empire*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1979), IX:2, XII: 12, and III:9.

property and cheating by unfairly or unjustly not giving credit where it is due, not to mention when competition for grades or other rewards give the plagiarist an unfair advantage.

Using someone's words directly or as paraphrase warrants a note acknowledging the source placed in such a way as to make clear to the reader what the author has written and what has been taken from other sources. If a number of quotations are used in a paragraph or over several paragraphs or pages, one can avoid littering the text with notes by constructing blanket notes that say something to the effect that references and quotations in this paragraph, page or section are drawn from the same source, listing pages as appropriate. Common or public knowledge can be used freely without attribution, of course, but if someone's summary or ideas are particularly helpful we ought to say so.

Going from a source directly to a paper is worth a comment. When I've checked a source my practice is to put it aside (or if on the web, minimize that window) and then write from scratch. Not having a photographic memory is a distinct advantage. Still, even after I've composed using my own words, I go back to the original to make sure I have not inadvertently repeated what are in essence someone else's words. If quotes or reference are in order, I use them and cite the source. Here's an example, starting with a passage I read on the U.S. Senate website dealing with precedents related to foreign policy and the ratification of treaties:

> On August 22, 1789, President George Washington and Secretary of War Henry Knox presented the Senate with a series of questions relating to treaties with various Indian tribes. The Senate voted to refer these to a committee rather than debate the issue in the presence of the august president, who seemed to overawe many of the senators. Washington decided that, in the future, he would send to the Senate communications regarding treaties only in writing, setting the precedent that all of his successors have followed.[4]

Here is the paragraph I drafted using this source in combination with other information:

> As the first presidency of the new constitutional republic, precedents set in Washington's administration were the bases of important norms that would become institutionalized with the passage of time.[5] For example, Secretary of War Henry Knox accompanied President Washington to the Senate in August 1789 for an advisory on treaties made with native-American tribes. Instead of conducting a debate in his presence, the matter was referred to committee. That was the last time Washington or any of the presidents who succeeded him appeared in person on treaty matters. Washington and all of his successors have met the constitutional requirement to seek the "advice and consent" of the Senate on the ratification of treaties by formal, written exchanges.[6]

Beyond these uses of notes that give credit (or blame) wherever it may be due is the explanatory note that identifies other sources the reader may consult for corroborating or opposing views or presents a more detailed argument that otherwise might have cluttered the main text. Notes are a good place for tangents that, if included in the main text, tend to get the argument off track. One of my professors told us in a graduate class how much he loved footnotes. What he was really saying, of course, is that notes are a reflection of the scholarship we have put into what we have written that, if well constructed, also can be helpful to the reader.

One can use footnotes, endnotes, parenthetical documentation, or some combination of these in some standard, uniform

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[4] See www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Treaties.htm, accessed May 31, 2008.

[5] For a discussion of treaty-related precedents from the Senate's perspective, go to www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Treaties.htm. The account is also an interpretive understanding favorable to the Senate's role—that the President neither participates in nor observes Senatorial proceedings on treaties and the House of Representatives customarily votes to fund Treaty obligations even though it has no part in the treaty ratification process.

[6] *Ibid.* Cf. *U.S. Constitution*, Article II

way. Eclecticism has its place in scholarly work, but not when it comes to notes. Notes—whether footnotes or endnotes—are efficient. One can avoid redundancies, for example, by using *ibid.* to refer to the citation in the immediately preceding note or making abbreviated reference to a source fully cited earlier. My own preference between using notes or parenthetical documentation is for the note because of its unobtrusive quality. It informs me that there is a note without cluttering the text with parentheses containing family names, dates and pages. Not only are notes more pleasing to me esthetically, but also papers written without "parenthesis clutter" are also easier to read quickly.

As between footnotes and endnotes, footnotes win easily. There was a time before word processing when using endnotes was decidedly the way to go—at least from the writer's point of view; changing or adding notes did not necessitate retyping the entire paper, just the list of notes at the back of the paper. It would have been nice for this reason to have been allowed to use endnotes when typing my M.A. thesis some decades ago. But all of that is passé now. Notes are automatically renumbered and reordered by the word-processing program. Footnotes do have the decisive advantage, then, of allowing the reader easily to choose which notes to read closely, skim, or not read at all. Flipping from text to endnotes in the back pages is a pain, particularly when the old reasons for doing so no longer apply!

On Standardization

In *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* T.E. Lawrence ("Lawrence of Arabia"), leader of a British-sponsored Arab movement against the Turks in World War I, provides important conceptual understandings of insurgencies. A maverick in the Royal Army, Lawrence was particularly well equipped to think outside the box—one more than willing to depart from the conventional wisdom, customs and practices.

His going it alone carried over to a dispute with his publisher whose editors insisted that he use one spelling for the same city in the Arabian peninsula. Was it to be *Jeddah*, *Jiddah*, *Yeddah*, or *Yiddah*? Lawrence insisted on using all four spellings interchangeably. After all, how was he to be the authority empowered to settle a dispute over the correct transliteration from Arabic to English?

Be that as it may, most scholars vote for standardization at least within a single piece of work unless there is a plausible reason for varying usage. Thus, the American-English spelling of *defense* usually prevails over the British-English spelling of *defence* in an article or volume written or edited by Americans. On the other hand, if the writer is from the U.K. there's no compelling reason to change her or his spelling, particularly if it is an article on British *defence* policy (woops, my word processor is telling me I've misspelled *defence*!).

When it comes to notes or parenthetical documentation and bibliographies, standardization within a particular manuscript makes sense. Setting aside my personal preference for footnotes based on esthetic or functional reasons, the method of documentation one employs should be internally consistent and conform to generally accepted norms. Thus, authors are listed with given names first followed by family names in notes, usually only family names in parenthetical documentation, and family names first followed by given names in bibliographies, which customarily are alphabetized with the reader's utility in mind—the longer ones often broken into categories (e.g., books, articles, papers, documents, etc.) and some bibliographies annotated as well with descriptive commentary.

Coauthoring—First Draft by One Author Edited by Coauthor

Although single-authored work retains its privileged status in acadème, team efforts are common in both government and business research. An approach to joint writing—the one my co-author and I have used more than 20 years of collaboration on several books—is quite simply to divide the labor between us along entries in the Table of Contents (whole chapters or parts of chapters). One of us does the first draft and in effect gets it off the ground! The other reads, edits, rewrites and adds or deletes words and sentences, paragraphs, and even pages as need be. Then it goes back to the original author who goes over it yet again—sometimes putting some deleted material back in or adding things that have come to mind since writing the first draft. Telephone conversations help resolve any differences.

Here is a first draft by one of us:[7]
In an age of increasing globalization, there is nothing more practical than good theory. Theory allows us to deal with complexity by focusing our attention on key global structures, processes, and trends, whether economic integration or the rising power of India and China. Theory provides us with concepts and perspectives that hold the promise of new insights on international relations and world politics, with explanation the ultimate objective. Divergent images and competing theories should not be viewed, therefore, as a matter of despair, but rather as an opportunity to view the world through multiple prisms or spectacles….

Here, then, is the coauthor's redraft, even adding another paragraph:

In an age of increasing globalization, there is nothing more practical than good theory. Theory allows us to deal with complexity by focusing our attention on human engagement throughout the world, key global structures, diverse state-and non-state actors, human activities and processes, and a long list of items on the world's agenda to include warfare and the spread of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and intercommunal strife, various forms of human exploitation, the quest for expansion and observance of human rights, economic integration and global commerce, competition for scarce resources, environmental degradation, and the rising power of countries like India and China.

Theory provides us with concepts and perspectives that hold the promise of new insights on international relations and world politics, with better explanation or prediction the ultimate objective. We strive to make the world and our part in it more intelligible. Coping with divergent images, interpretive understandings, and a large number of competing theories should not be viewed as a matter for despair, but rather as an opportunity to view the world and our place in it through multiple prisms or spectacles. We improve our understandings not only of the world out there, but also ourselves in relation to others around us….

Authors in joint projects customarily do not keep track of who has written what in this iterative, draft-and-redraft process. In the interest of continued teamwork it's good to regard these as truly collective projects. Ego need not get in the way of inter-subjective exchanges that improve manuscript quality in a geometric way—when working well, the product is always much greater than the sum of its author inputs!

"On August 22, 1789, President George Washington and Secretary of War Henry Knox presented the Senate with a series of questions relating to treaties with various Indian tribes. The Senate voted to refer these to a committee rather than debate the issue in the presence of the august president, who seemed to overawe many of the senators. Washington decided that, in the future, he would send to the Senate communications regarding treaties only in writing, setting the precedent that all of his successors have followed."
Source: www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Treaties.htm, accessed 31 May 2008.

As the first presidency of the new constitutional republic, precedents set in Washington's administration were the bases of important norms that would become institutionalized with the passage of time.[8]

[7] These drafts are the opening lines of a draft Preface to Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 2009 forthcoming).

[8] For a discussion of treaty-related precedents from the Senate's perspective, go to www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/briefing/Treaties.htm. The account is also an interpretive understanding favorable to the Senate's role—that the President neither participates in nor observes Senatorial proceedings on treaties and the House of Representatives customarily votes to fund

For example, the Secretary of War Henry Knox accompanied President Washington to the Senate in August 1789 for an advisory treaties made with native-American tribes. Instead of conducting a debate in his presence, the matter was referred to committee. That was the last time Washington or any of the presidents who succeeded him appeared in person on treaty matters. Washington and all of his successors have met the constitutional requirement to seek the "advice and consent" of the Senate on the ratification of treaties by formal, written exchanges.

Afterword

This short essay is really a working document that I hope to draw from in teaching students about writing, perhaps giving part or all of it to some. I view it very much as a work in progress. What I present here is at least a distillation of the kinds of things I've told students when discussing how to write essays, term papers, theses, and dissertations. No doubt this paper will grow longer as I incorporate feedback and learn more myself about the process of writing. I've tried to strike a conversational tone here, reserving more formal, "field" language to statements of hypotheses or sample text.

Treaty obligations even though it has no part in the treaty ratification process.

Making the Arbitrary Relevant

Sarah Watamura
Psychology
2010

University of Denver undergraduate students largely endorse the statement that writing well will be very important in their careers and personal lives. And yet, on any given writing assignment instructors often feel their students are not performing to their potential. I think that, at least for some students, this conundrum results from adaptive, reasonable behavior on their part that can be modified. Students, faced with a range of competing demands on their time, and acknowledging that any single writing assignment is likely to contribute very modestly, if at all, to their overall writing ability, sometimes choose to allocate the minimal resources needed to get a grade acceptable to them. They do this because they view any given writing assignment as useful only to that end, to achieve a grade, and perhaps abstractly to contribute ever so modestly to their general writing skills. And often, they are exactly right. The assignments we design are sometimes purely academic exercises that lack long term, and sometimes even short term, relevance. I think the problem of students devoting less time and attention to our writing assignments than would represent their best work and serve to further growth in their writing and thinking can be addressed. In particular, I think that by transforming our writing assignments from arbitrary to relevant and thereby increasing student's intrinsic motivation we may be able to stimulate better thinking and relatedly higher quality writing. While this may do little for students who perform poorly for other reasons, it should increase effort by those students making the rational, adaptive choice of allocating the minimal resources needed to get the grade they target. Writing that results from increased intrinsic motivation and effort should further their writing both through the act of practicing pushing oneself and because we will then be critiquing writing that is not stunted by limited effort.

Survey data from 766 students enrolled in WRIT 1122/1622 in January 2009 indicated that 33% of students thought writing would be highly important in their career after graduation, and 80% felt it would at least be important. Further, 63% felt writing would be important or highly important in their personal and public life outside of their career. While only 11% of students felt they were strong writers who excel in most writing situations, 51% felt they are proficient in most writing situations and less than 5% endorsed that sometimes or frequently they think or are told their writing is unsatisfactory. Therefore, the first disconnect between faculty and students may be either a) that they feel they are better writers than we do (perhaps reinforced by grade inflation), or b) they are able to write better than they do in our courses.

As I reflect on my own students, I realize that in many cases I am not sure whether their or my assessment of their writing ability is the more accurate for at least two reasons. First, I'm not sure I have good data on their actual writing ability as I think they often don't submit their best work as assignments in my classes. Second, in order to reconcile this difference of opinion, I may need to compare their writing to some more widely agreed upon criteria. Certainly there are criteria within my discipline, and in my professional life I regularly evaluate the thinking and writing of my colleagues for publication using these professional disciplinary criteria. I think I could make reasonable adjustments to these criteria for the fact that undergraduates are novice professional writers, if I had given them an assignment that in some way maps on to the kinds of writing I evaluate as a professional.

However, I typically have not structured my assignments with an eye toward a professional outlet. When I sit down to read student papers I am not expecting or evaluating them for their potential contribution to the field or as dissemination from the field to lay audiences. Instead I am often simply evaluated whether they have adequately done what I asked them to do in the assignment. Rather than be surprised or frustrated about the lack of creativity and insight in a stack of student papers I should be amazed

that in every stack someone manages to demonstrate creativity and insight with such an arbitrary and uninspiring task.

What makes an assignment arbitrary?

Many of us assign final "term" papers out of habit or obligation. We use a general final paper structure that asks students to choose a topic from the course and write a paper about it using the style and approach common to our discipline. However by 'common to our discipline' we typically mean the arbitrary student assignments common to our discipline that primarily share citation style with our professional work and are otherwise more similar to student papers across disciplines than to anything we would actually read or write as professionals. As faculty we likely excelled at writing term papers in our major, although with reflection we might agree that we also often did not exhibit our best writing and thinking in term papers. As compared to writing I do as a professional, for example, my student work was often completed less planfully, with less time, with no or fewer revisions, and without outside commentary. As a professional I devote considerable attention and energy to the way I present my ideas, I try out multiple options, I discuss these options with my students and colleagues, and I have formal feedback from other professionals on the written product. I would be irresponsible to do less.

Furthermore, the assumed audience of my student paper, if not specified by the assignment, was the instructor or grader, who was likely to be more knowledgeable about the topic than I, the writer, was. As a professional I assume my audience is made up of my peers, and also some students and other readers who are less knowledgeable than I am about the topic. As noted in Bean's *Engaging Ideas: The Professors' Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*, writing for a more knowledgeable reader than oneself is a difficult and inauthentic task. Some common student mistakes may result directly from this practice, for example failing to walk through the steps of an argument in sufficient detail, leaving out appropriate background information, or using an inappropriate (either too colloquial or too arcane) voice. When the reader communicates to an authentic audience an inherent part of the task is targeting the information provided to the knowledge base of the audience. In fact, as professionals we frequently write to provide information at different levels of complexity to different audiences, and we work at this task explicitly (if not always successfully).

The lack of immediacy and relevance we and students feel about the classic term paper can be easily seen in the fact that we usually devote little class time to discussing the assignment, we are generally not looking forward to reading the products, and while we may offer students the opportunity to turn in a draft ahead of time, very few students actually do so. Not only do they not turn in drafts to us, we actively discourage students from seeking help from anyone other than us, although this would almost never be the case in professional writing. Neither we nor they perceive the assignment as anything more than an individual thought piece. Certainly a term paper used by a prepared, organized, motivated student as a thought piece is a pleasure to read and does advance their own learning and reasoning. And of course I think there is value in a though piece when it is truly used as such. However, this potential may be infrequently explored by students, not because they are lazy or unwise, but because they are making a rationale cost-benefit analysis.

We may be able to better stimulate learning and reasoning by designing assignments with increased relevance to students and by encouraging professional writing habits such as revision based in part on reader commentary. To the extent that we do this within our disciplines we may also be able to bring our professional evaluation skills to bear by starting students down the path of writing assignments that are like what they would write as a professional in the field. In that process we can teach them not only about writing but also about reading and critiquing professional writing in their discipline. Further, in my own work I find the reflection and rewriting that comes from thoughtful peer critique is sometimes the most effective way to change and expand my critical thinking. I think that many instructors appreciate the links between advancing critical thinking and good writing and may find benefits from students' participation in this iterative process that is so common in our

professional work. While I have myself and have talked with other colleagues who have sometimes found the peer critique process unsatisfying in classes, I think this process itself may benefit from increased authenticity. Instructors incorporate this technique because we want to improve writing, revision, and discourse, however students may view it as simply another hurdle. If we are able to engage students in an authentic writing project that naturally includes peer critique they may better appreciate this critical part of the writing (and thinking) process.

What might make an assignment relevant?

This idea of differential writing skill being exhibited by the same student in an arbitrary versus a relevant circumstance came from Doug Hesse's example of a student essay for a class as compared to a letter they had written to apply for an internship. In this case it is clear that the letter has obvious immediate practical importance to the writer. There may be circumstances or courses where something as relevant as an application is appropriate, however I imagine this case is rare. Nevertheless, there are types of professional writing that may be more accessible to novice professional writers and which therefore might be real (or convincing hypothetical) options for students. Part of the challenge then is not only creating assignments with potential relevance, but conveying this relevance clearly to students in order to engage their best effort.

Obstacles to creating relevant assignments

The first obstacle that comes to my mind is the fact that students are simply not prepared and do not have the time in a quarter to write something in the form of much of our finished professional work. The second is that we may not as individuals have experience with the types of professional writing in our disciplines that might be most appropriate for students to attempt and therefore we might not be prepared to help students see the process through should they be interested in doing that. A third is that many of our majors do not intend to pursue academic or professional careers directly in their major and therefore might not find disciplinary writing that much more relevant than the classic term paper.

Tackling obstacles

To tackle the obstacle of time, we might consider having students work toward a single finished final product beginning early in the quarter. The usual smattering of smaller assignments, rather than being independent of the final paper, could be essential to the final product. This would not necessarily include only drafts of all or part of the final product. They could include explorations of several potential final product ideas, they could be reactions to products that are similar to what we hope they will produce, and they could include real peer reviews of the work of other students in the course. Some of this effort could occur in small groups set up like workshops to reduce some of the homework burden (and free it for other types of work) and also to reduce the grading burden.

The obstacle of potential outlets may vary considerably by field. A quick survey of social science professional societies reveals that many have publications that aim to provide lay summaries of current research or theoretical debates, or that address policy-relevant questions. Students may actually be ideal candidates to attempt such a task as the divide between professional and lay thinking in their chosen discipline is still very salient to them. Taking students through the process of identifying a question or topic, identifying an outlet (among a restricted set we offer), and working through to actual submission may be particularly rewarding. Another possibility is to partner with students in writing projects that we might ourselves consider; perhaps having them focus on writing what will be a subsection of a larger document, or working as a class to complete one submission.

To tackle the issue of relevance for students not planning to pursue graduate or academic work in their major, students themselves might identify a publication forum appropriate for their intended career. This assignment could occur very early in the quarter and might have the further benefit of helping students explore potential career options more concretely. For example, a number of psychology majors go on to careers in education, human resources, or medicine. There are a number of publications that aim to bridge the gap between psychology research or theory and these applied fields which might be

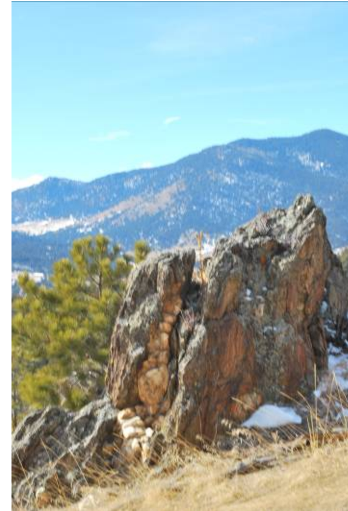
appropriate targets for student writing. Over time, we might also develop a repertoire of potential publication outlets. Students might then narrow in on a publication and using the author guideline information summarize what the publication is looking for, who the readership is, and what types of topics are common and appropriate. Short in-class brainstorming writing could be used to generate topic ideas and students could organize themselves around these topics early in the quarter to work on shared research and peer critique.

Conclusions

While this essay in some sense set up a straw man argument by beginning with the assumption that most instructors are using a classic term paper format, I hope it served to highlight some possible advantages of framing assignments in terms of their relevance to the field. I know a number of DU professors who have very creative writing and other final project assignments, and I certainly don't mean to suggest that assignments that are working well at activating students' intrinsic motivation and stimulating their best thinking and writing should be replaced by assignments geared toward professional outlets. However, in the case where the goal of an assignment is extensive, targeted research into a topic and articulation of a position or argument related to that research, increasing the relevance of the outlet may help motivate students' best work.

Afterword: To ASEM

Doug Hesse



In 2009, after extensive campus-wide deliberations, DU adopted a new general education program, known as the Common Curriculum. The capstone experience in this curriculum is the Advanced Seminar (ASEM), a course students take in the junior or, more often, senior years after having completed all other Common courses.

ASEM in many respects replaces the former Writing Intensive Core courses. These courses, too, are capped at 15 students, to foster interaction between professors and students and to allow significant writing. Course that were approved as "Writing Intensive" in the previous Core program are automatically transferred into ASEM. Following is a thumbnail of the advanced seminar:

> Successful people navigate complex political, social, cultural and economic environments that challenge more traditionally limited concepts of higher education and competencies. To help students better understand the demands of contemporary life, instructors teach advanced seminars based in their area of expertise and passion. The topic will be approached from multiple perspectives in a course designed for nonmajors. Studying in this setting, students demonstrate their ability to integrate different perspectives and synthesize diverse ideas through intensive writing on that topic. This course must be taken at the University of Denver.

Faculty receive stipends to develop a new ASEM course, and they're eligible for this funding every two years or after having taught three offerings. Faculty who haven't previously completed a Core Writing Intensive workshop are required to participate in a Seminar on Writing in ASEM, for which they receive an additional stipend. Additional professional development funding is also available.

We can all look forward to reading essays still to be written about the new advanced seminars.