

EN 05202: College Writing Summer Session 2005

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June 27-August 3
M/W 8:30-11:30 am
Campion 235

Texts

Models for Writers: Short Essays for Composition, Alfred Ross &
Paul Eschholz, Editors
The Elements of Style, Strunk & White
A Writer's Reference: 2003 MLS Update, Hacker

Great Writing Comes From The Heart: *Or, if you want to write well, you can*

Despite an ever increasing emphasis on learning to write, an awful lot of people still believe the old myth that great writers are born that way. Sure, talent helps. The same can be said of almost any pursuit. Let's be honest: who'd argue that Pedro Martinez isn't a more gifted athlete than most? The important thing is, along with his natural ability, Pedro has heart. That means, he believes in himself and, no matter how terrific his stats, he always strives to improve. These two basic qualities—confidence and drive—separate the Cy Young caliber pitcher from the rest of the pack.

While you might never become the Pedro Martinez of the literary world (hey, you might not *want* to!), you *can* become a better, and even an excellent, writer. After all, writing, like baseball, is something anyone can learn. Learning to write well is simple: First, you have to *want* to write well. Next, you have to *believe that you can* write well. Finally, and most important, you have to practice (read: revise). And practice. And practice.

Whether you're a terrific writer already or just starting out, it's my hope that this class will help you gain greater confidence in your writing ability; that you'll learn to ask thoughtful questions; and that you'll discover new ways of using your inherent brain-power and creativity to answer those questions intelligently. Mastering these basic elements of good writing *will* make you a better writer.

Essay Assignments: This class requires three major (two-three page) essays, which you'll write in steps, along with regular short-shorts (one page practice assignments). Since all good writing requires revision—it's impossible to write a good essay in one sitting (ask anyone who writes for a living)—you'll be asked to write at least two drafts of each of your major essays. Only the final version will be graded. *All drafts must be handed in with each revision.*

Please note: All work must be handed in, at the beginning of class, on the morning it's due. In fairness to those of you who regularly turn in assignments on time, late papers will be penalized.

Paper Format: We'll be using the Modern Language Association (MLA) manuscript format for English and the humanities.

Academic Integrity: Plagiarism hurts everyone. Plagiarizing deprives you of the chance to prove to yourself what a good writer you really are; cheats your classmates of the opportunity for fair appraisal of their work; and steals the acknowledgement the original author rightly deserves. Therefore, unacknowledged "borrowing" of another's work will not be tolerated.

Attendance and Class Participation: Please come to class, on time, ready for discussion. Talking, a form of prewriting, prepares us for writing. And remember: your classmates depend on you for your support and insights.

Incentive: Attendance and class participation count for 20% of your grade.

Please note: two lates equal an absence. If you anticipate a problem with either attending a class or arriving on time, please discuss the situation with me in advance.

Journal: Journal entries are designed to help you develop your critical thinking skills and to serve as a step in the writing process. Please type your journal entries and hand them in with your homework.

Another incentive: Homework counts for 10% of your grade.

Grades: I don't expect you to write like a grad student. I do, however, expect you to put forth your best effort. This means, you'll be expected to:

- 1) do *all* work assigned—including the reading;
- 2) come to every class on time and prepared for discussion;
- 3) hand in your work the morning it's due;
- 4) turn in papers that are clean; that is, not full of silly mistakes (using its, for example, when you should be using it's—if you have problems that require one-on-one help, please either meet with me or take advantage of BC's terrific tutoring staff);
- 5) give thoughtful consideration to my critique of your drafts and take the time necessary to rethink and revise your papers.

Adhere to these five standards and you will earn at least a "B" in this class.

Conferences: I'm pleased to meet with you, to discuss whatever you're working on—or just writing in general. So that I'm able to put an appropriate amount of time aside for you, I ask that you schedule an appointment at least one class period before you would like to meet.

Discussion Groups and Peer Workshops: Much of the work for this class will be done in groups. Sometimes, your group will meet in class; other times, I may ask you to meet on your own. But more on that later.

Above all, I hope you have a pleasant and rewarding semester.

Syllabus: Summer 2005

Please adhere to page lengths EXACTLY as listed on the syllabus. All written work must be typed and double-spaced.

- M 6/27 Introduction: Why Write?
Reading: Baker, "Becoming a Writer"
In-Class: Where do I begin? Read to write. Write to discover.
Brainstorming.
- W 6/29 Reading: "The Wounds that Can't be Stitched," Russell, 148
Essay #1 "Shame," Gregory, 142
 "Beginnings and Endings," 129
Journal: Copy the first and last paragraphs of any piece of writing that you consider really great—this could be an essay, an article from a newspaper or magazine, a favorite novel—then write a paragraph explaining what you think "works" and why.
Essay #1: If you were a cartoon, who or what would you be? Take a look at the comic page in your favorite newspaper; notice the different styles of the various strips. Some cartoon characters are realistically drawn, while others are more satiric (Dilbert, for example); others aren't people at all. What type of creature would you be? Why? How would your cartoonist draw you? What would you look like? What role would you play in your strip? Who would read your strip and why? Be as specific and concrete as possible. **Draft Length: 1 1/2- 2 pages**
In-Class: Beginnings and Endings
 What makes a great essay?
- W 7/6 Reading: "On Being 17, Bright, and Unable. . .," Raymond, 247
 "A Hanging," Orwell, 279
 "Diction & Tone," 237
 "Figurative Language," 265
Journal: Find an ad you like, cut it out, and bring it to class. In your journal, write **two paragraphs** describing the ad's target audience. Who is the advertiser trying to reach? Young? Old? Male? Female? Athlete or couch potato? What techniques does

he use to appeal to that audience? Is there any group that the ad purposely excludes? Be specific.

In-Class: Audience.

The Writer's Voice

M 7/11
Revision

Reading: "The Corner Store," Welty, 117

"Doubts About Doublespeak," 122

"Organization," 106

Journal: In **one paragraph**, describe how organization affects the essay. Your reading of the essay.

Writing: Revision Due of Essay #1 **Length: 3 pages**

In-Class: Organization

W 7/13

Reading: "Anxiety: Challenge by Another Name," Collier, 75

"My Name," Cisneros, 89

"Thesis," 67

"Unity," 86

Journal: On any material except paper, describe an issue or problem that you are passionate about. This might be pollution, for instance, or global warming or using cork bats or the way adults treat younger people. The only requirement is that this is something you care deeply about and are emotionally invested in. Explain why this problem or issue is important to you.

In Class: What is a thesis?

Gathering Evidence: Library Visit

M 7/18
Essay #2

Reading: "Why We Crave Horror Movies," King, 457

"Surfing's Up and Grades Are Down," Sanchez, 471

"Cause & Effect," 457

Journal: Describe the essay "Why We Crave Horror Movies." What is King's main point? What reasons does he give to support his thesis? Evidence? How does he build his argument? Does his argument make sense? Why or why not? **2-3 par.**

Writing: Essay #2: Draft a persuasive essay of your choice. Be sure to provide valid reasons and solid evidence. You should be able to persuade someone who *doesn't agree with you* that your argument makes sense. **Draft length: 2 pages.**

In-Class: Focus and Development
Arguing Cause and Effect
One on One Conferences Begin

W 7/20

Reading: "As They Say, Drugs Kill," Rowley, 507
"Life Is Precious, or It's Not," Kingsolver, 546
"Argument," 487

Journal: Make a list of ways in which you could improve your last essay. What would happen if you changed the beginning? The end? How could your essay be more convincing? What additional evidence might you provide? Examples?

Journal: List two pieces of evidence in support of each point you've used to build your argument. How would someone who opposed your argument rebut those points? How would you rebut those rebuttals?

In-Class: Building a Solid Argument
Conferences Continue
Group Workshop: Evaluating Your Evidence

M 7/25
Revision

Reading: "In Praise of the F Word," Sherry 519
"The Right to Fail," Zinsser, 524

Journal: List three reasons the drinking age should be lowered, then three reasons why it should remain at 21. Cite good reasons. Try to think from the perspective of the other side.

Writing: Revision Due Essay #2 **Length: 3 Pages**

In Class: Revision: A re-envisioning
In the Courtroom
Conferences Continue

M 7/27

Reading: "Be Specific," Goldberg, 299
"The Case for Short Words," Lederer, 303

Journal: As you've researched your thesis, have you learned anything surprising? How has your research influenced your thinking? Please bring three copies of your essay to class.

Writing: Essay #3 Researched Human Interest. Form an argument based on the issue or problem you are passionate about. State your thesis clearly, then, using solid evidence,

create a strong argument in support of your thesis. *Please bring a copy to class.* **DRAFT LENGTH: 3 PAGES**

In Class: Revision

Group Workshop

Conferences Continue

W 8/1

Reading: "On Dumpster Diving," Eighner, 383

Journal: Outline the last essay you turned in, then analyze the piece and describe the various techniques you used to persuade. What points did you make? How did you back them up? What evidence did you use? **Length: One Page**

Journal #2: List ways you could improve your research paper.

Please bring your essay and a pair of scissors to class.

In-Class: Workshop: Rethink and revise.

Conferences Continue

W 8/3

Reading: TBA

Revision

Journal: Write a brief reflective essay describing the ways in which your writing has improved, ways you'd like to continue to improve.

Writing: **Revision Essay #3 Length: 3-4 pages**

In-Class: Wrap-up

