

Instructor: Stacy Bell

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Office: Humanities 105

Office hours: MTW 2-4 and by appointment

Required Texts & Materials

Butler, *A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain*

Kang *This Is Paradise! My North Korean Childhood*

Yang *American-Born Chinese*

Miscellaneous assigned readings

Course Description & Objectives

This course is an examination of grammar, mechanics and principles of effective written expression, with primary emphasis on the expository essay. Writing topics are inter-disciplinary, to emphasize the importance of effective written communication across the curriculum. 184 is required for students who need to review essential writing skills in order to meet college writing requirements. This course prepares you to formulate and support your own arguments effectively in writing. By reading texts that examine important current social issues, you examine some of the ways in which writers present claims to persuade their audiences. From these arguments, you can derive your own critical conclusions in order to create your own claims. As you develop confidence and greater understanding of the issues discussed in the texts, you argue more articulately and persuasively in writing and in class discussions.

Effective writing is characterized not only by strong presentation and support of a clearly identified thesis, but also by fluency in the grammar and mechanics of written Standard English. Students bring to a diverse academic community a variety of linguistic forms, some of which may deviate from the accepted classroom “standard.” Many students have been acculturated to classrooms in which “stamping out” errors and replacing them with socially and academically acceptable forms has been the norm. There is considerable debate among writing teachers about the extent to which grammar instruction improves student writing. In 184 grammar instruction will be contextual and based on the needs of the students in each class; you will learn to distinguish between errors and mistakes and in so doing will make an effort to eliminate nonstandard forms in your formal

writing. You will learn the differences between spoken and written English and will apply this knowledge in the process of expository writing. You will submit no fewer than 20 pages of writing, which will be well organized and will demonstrate mastery of grammar, mechanics and organization appropriate in college-level writing, as well as the ability effectively to utilize a variety of rhetorical forms. Some of the pages you submit will be revisions of previous essays. Writing is a process and the most effective writing requires multiple revisions.

You will read three books: one graphic novel, one memoir, and selections from one book of short fiction. The books explore themes of freedom, identity, culture, equality, immigration and social justice. You will need to read in order to write your essays, and if you don't, I will know.

Writing assignments in this class are short [350 word limit, strictly enforced] and frequent [almost weekly]; you will always receive your graded essay at the end of the next class. Assignments will vary from first person reflective writing to objective analytical and critical writing. You will use only primary texts in 184; secondary sources are not permitted.

Evaluation

Free Writing: At the beginning of each class you will respond in writing to an assigned prompt for three minutes. You will receive full credit [100 points] for these writing exercises if you do not have more than three unexcused absences. Free Writing is 5% of your final grade.

Reading quizzes: I will quiz you in class on the day you are to have completed the assigned book. If you fail the quiz, you will lose ten points from your Free Writing grade.

Oral presentations: You will lead class discussion of our text or an assigned topic once during the semester. You will sign up at the very beginning of the semester for the week you will present. Your oral presentation is 5% of your final grade. If you are absent without an excuse on your assigned day, you cannot make it up.

Essays: 8 written responses of no fewer than 300 and no more than 350 words x 8% = 64% of your final grade.

Debate: On November 14 and 18 your class will engage in a planned debate. You will be assigned to one of two teams and will be expected to prepare ahead of time through informal research and discussion. Each team member must speak during the debate. I will assess your team's performance through an informal rubric and your classmates will decide the winner. You will submit a 250 word written summary of your team's argument and evidence. Your summary is 6% of your final grade.

Portfolio Revisions: At the end of the semester, you may resubmit three essays for a second evaluation. Choose essays that best demonstrate the skills you have mastered this semester. You must submit the original marked essay with the revised essay. You will also write a 100 word reflective summary of the ways in which your writing skills have improved this semester. I will reevaluate the essays, which may result in additional points.

Your final exam will be a written response to a film we will view together in class. Your final exam will be 20% of your final class grade.

**Note:* Your written work will be evaluated based on a rubric of a predetermined set of criteria, including demonstration of competency in the mechanics and organization of essay writing. This is a college level writing course; spelling errors will not be tolerated. An essay with more than five spelling errors will receive a failing grade--NO EXCEPTIONS.

Business

Blackboard: Your class conference, including all information about assignments, your grades and your class syllabus, is available to you on Blackboard. You are responsible for knowing the information and materials posted there.

Office Hours: Please sign up for an appointment. There will be a sign up sheet outside my door every week. If you cannot see me during office hours, contact me to arrange an appointment.

Late Essays: Your essays are due at the *beginning* of class on the specified date. I will lower the grade for an unexcused late essay by one full letter grade for each day it is late; after one full week the essay will receive a grade of zero.

Attendance: I will not distinguish between tardies and absences. You may miss three days of class without penalty; after that, you will lose 10 points from your First Words grade for each absence.

Email: Use email for the following reasons:

- To cancel an appointment
- To notify me of an absence
- To ask a legitimate question about an assignment
- To say hello!

I delete emails requesting information contained in the syllabus. I delete emails about grades. Let's have those conversations in person; let me know and I will be happy to talk to you in my office. Your grades and averages will be available to you on our Blackboard site.

Plagiarism: The work you submit for class must be your own. You may not submit an essay more than once. If you use another author's words or original ideas in your writing, you must give credit to the author by using MLA documentation form as it is presented in *The Bedford Handbook*. All papers suspected of plagiarism will be turned over to the Honor Council (*Oxford College Handbook*). If you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, read your handbook and please see me.

Electronic toys: Laptops are permitted when I require them in class. Silence your phone and put it away during class.

A Note about Printing: Blue and gold makes green! Print preliminary drafts on recycled paper, and print double-sided final drafts to save paper. You must turn in paper copies of all your essays, no exceptions.

AUGUST

24 Introduction and Objectives

26 Intellectual Property—What is it? Does it matter?

Reading assignment: "Plagiarism Lines Blur for Students in Digital Age"; "Toward a Rational Response to Plagiarism"

29 What does effective writing look like?

31 How to write an email

SEPTEMBER

2 How to speak in class

5 Labor Day: Class will not meet today

American Born Chinese: What does it mean to have a national identity?

7 Discussion leader:

9 In-class essay: please bring laptops

12 Discussion leader:

14 Response due.

16

19 Discussion leader:

21 Response due.

23

This Is Paradise!: Thinking through prejudice, knowing the other in context, and practicing tolerance

26 Discussion leader:

28 Response due.

30

OCTOBER

3 Discussion leader:

5 Response due.

7

10 Fall break--Class will not meet today.

12 Class will not meet today.

14 Class will not meet today.

17 Discussion leader:

19 Response due.

21

A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain: Learning about ourselves through narrative fiction

24 Discussion leader:

26 Response due.

28 Class will not meet today.

31 Discussion leader:

NOVEMBER

2 Response due.

4

7 Discussion leader:

9 Response due.

11

14 Debate: TBD

16 Debate: TBD

18

21 In-class essay: bring laptop.

23 THANKSGIVING BREAK--no class.

25 THANKSGIVING BREAK--no class.

28 Debate summaries due.

30 Film

DECEMBER

2 Film

5 Review film and discuss final

Exam Schedule

Students will report to classroom with laptops during their appointed time.

8:30

MWF Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2:00-5:00

10:40

MWF Monday, Dec. 12, 2:00-5:00