

What Makes a Hero? **English 101: 10J**

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Fall 2007
T/Th 10-11:15 am
Library Study Room 2

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 11:30 am - 3:30 pm in my office, Humanities Building 205.

Content and Goals:

English 101 is first and foremost a writing course, focused on building analytical skills including logical argumentation and original thinking. As such, we will begin the semester with a focus on “big picture” writing issues, including developing an argument, outlining and drafting, paragraph structure, organization, introductions and conclusions, and logic. Approximately halfway through the semester, we will turn our focus to the fine points of grammar, punctuation, diction, word choice, revision, and developing a personal writing style, although these skills will be practiced throughout the semester. You will also practice finding and correctly citing sources by using the library’s electronic research tools, writing annotated bibliographies, and incorporating outside information and arguments in your papers. We will try to increase your comfort-level with public speaking in classroom discussion and oral presentations. Because we will be discussing many difficult, complex, and sensitive topics in this course, I expect each of us to actively work toward constructing a civil community in the classroom.

In this course, we will investigate and debate heroism by writing on and discussing questions such as: What makes a hero? Who is defined as a hero? What must an ordinary person do to be redefined as a hero? Is heroism gendered? How do we use the word “hero” today? Is heroism culture-bound, changing over time and location, or are there universally heroic traits? We will examine a wide range of materials, from epics to comic books, *Buffy* to *The West Wing*. This range will allow you experience writing on a variety of media while providing in-depth work on grammar, usage, and style. This course is not designed as a comprehensive overview of heroism across time and space, but instead a sampling of a few key texts and ideas. I have divided the course into four key themes: Current Uses of “Hero,” Hero and Mythology, Female Heroism, Superheroism, and Passive Heroism.

Blackboard:

Our course will take place in two locations: our classroom in the library and online. You can access our course documents (syllabus, writing packet, readings, and assignments), post to the discussion board, and email me all through our Blackboard site, accessible through <https://classes.emory.edu>. If you do not see the course when you log in, please let me know via email and I will add you.

Required Texts:

Three texts will be available at the bookstore and are required. You may to buy them online and/or used (Amazon.com seems to be the cheapest place), but make sure the editions are correct and that you have the books well before we are reading them for class.

--*Maus* by Art Spiegelman. There are several editions of this book, so make sure you have the complete edition, with part I: *My Father Bleeds History* and part II: *And Here My Troubles Began*. You can buy the two parts separately or in a boxed set with this ISBN: 0679748407.

--*Howl's Moving Castle* by Diana Wynne Jones. ISBN: 006441034X

--*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6th edition. ISBN: 0873529863 You will be expected to use MLA formatting for all papers, so will need this as a reference.

You will also be responsible for purchasing on your own three comic books (of the same title, preferably three that came out one after another so you see how the story develops) or one graphic novel of your choice that includes superhero character or characters.

You may also wish to buy *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk and E.B. White and *Being Logical* by Dennis McNerny. Both are simple, approachable explanations of different elements of good writing. The first three chapters of *The Elements of Style* are on our ereserves and will be referred to in my comments on your papers.

Other Materials:

All other readings are available through the library's electronic reserve system, found at <https://ereserves.library.emory.edu/reserves/>. A link to our class and instructions about how to add it to your ereserves are on our Blackboard site, under "Readings." Ereserve readings should be read and a printed copy brought to class with you on the day(s) assigned. They include: essays by Lord Raglan and Dean A. Miller, excerpts from Arthurian legends, and other essays as time allows. You will also be asked occasionally to find and bring to class articles or examples for discussion.

We will also watch episodes of *The West Wing* and *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* and the movie *X-Men*, based on the Marvel comic.

Assignments:

Additional information about writing assignments can be found in the Writing Packet which is also on our Blackboard site.

Blackboard postings: As a portion of your participation grade, you are expected to post one original discussion question about the reading by midnight on the day before class. I'll set up the discussion section of our Blackboard site with a separate area for each day's posting. You may want to write up to a paragraph explaining why this area of the reading interests you or otherwise further illuminating your question. Be sure to read through the already-posted questions so that you do not repeat what someone else has already asked.

Annotated Bibliographies: You have two annotated bibliographies during the semester, one of which will be on the same topic as your final research paper, due Oct. 2 and Nov. 20.

Papers

--3 page paper on the use of "hero" in contemporary life due Sept. 20

--In-class writing on applying Raglan or Miller's article on Oct. 4

--5-7 page research paper on female heroism due Nov. 1

--In-class writing assignment on *X-Men* on Nov. 15

--7-9 page research paper on your own definition of heroism or a topic of your own devising approved by teacher, due Dec. 11 in final portfolio.

--Final portfolio with accompanying 2 page reflective essay explaining your revisions and why this represents your best work due Dec. 11.

Lecturette: Lecturettes are short, participatory exercises about the writing process, grammar and punctuation rules. They are meant to refresh knowledge you may already have, address common problems, and hone your writing skills. I'll give a few at the beginning of the semester, but then you'll take over, in pairs. You are expected to complete one 10-15 minute oral lesson on some aspect of good writing. At the end of the lesson, your classmates should have learned everything they need to know about a given topic (how to use semicolons, for example). I will pass around a sign-up sheet with topics and dates in the second week of class as well as a

handout with more suggestions for planning your lesson.

Oral Report: This 5-minute oral report is on the same topic as your final paper, presenting your research and original ideas to the class. You are not expected to create a visual presentation (such as PowerPoint), but should consider your overall style and organization, as they will be evaluated alongside content.

Final Portfolio: Your final portfolio consists of all the formal writing you have done throughout the semester, including the drafts that have been worked on in class and the comments of your instructor and classmates, so **save your work**. The portfolio will also include your selection of your best informal class writings (from the Blackboard discussion postings or in-class essays).

Participation: You are expected to participate fully in class. Full participation includes attending class every day with all your materials, having closely read and thought about the assigned readings, and being ready to discuss them in depth with your classmates. You are expected to read all of a given work by the first day of discussion unless explicitly told otherwise. If any of this will prove a hardship for you, please speak with me immediately about making other arrangements for this portion of your grade.

Extra credit: At various points in the semester, I will offer you the chance to earn extra credit as a part of your participation grade. These will include attending and writing about certain public lectures, completing on-line assignments, or preparing additional items for class.

Late Policy:

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day assigned. You must hand in a hard-copy—emailing an assignment is not acceptable except when approved in advance by the instructor. Late assignments are accepted, but are penalized one grade level for each 24 hours they are late, beginning at the due time. Thus a paper turned in after class on the day it is due will be penalized one 24-hour time period and therefore one grade level. I strongly encourage you to turn assignments in on time as it is a simple way to keep your grades up. Rare extensions may be obtained for demonstrable hardship discussed with the instructor—however, no extensions will be granted within 24 hours of an assignment's due date or for computer malfunctions (so back up your work and leave yourself plenty of time for printer problems).

Attendance policy:

Poor attendance negatively affects your grade. After two unexcused absences, your final grade will lower one level—an A- will become a B+, for example, with the third unexcused absence. An excused absence must be requested and excused *before* class begins the day you are absent. Class will begin at 10 am; if you arrive after 10:05 without prior notice, you will be counted as tardy. Two unexcused tardies equal one unexcused absence. If you miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes from a classmate and any handouts from me as well as turning in any assignments due that day before class time.

Citation/plagiarism:

The Oxford Honor Code is in effect in this class and the instructor takes violations very seriously. Students are expected to adhere to the principles of intellectual honesty and integrity it outlines and will be held responsible for any violations. The honor code is available online at <http://www.emory.edu/OXFORD/CampusLife/Policies/honor.html> and key portions are attached to the Writing Packet. Any suspected plagiarism will be turned over to the Honor Council for disciplinary action by the University.

Writing Center and Peer Assistance:

For this class, I ask that you do NOT use peer assistance in editing your papers except during our in-class draft workshops. Instead, please familiarize yourself with the Writing Center, Language Hall first floor, where you can receive help on all aspects of writing, from brainstorming and thesis formation to organization and revision. You may visit them as often as necessary for any given paper, but they are the only outside help other than your instructor you may receive. The Atlanta campus also has a useful website at www.emory.edu/English/WC.

Accessibility:

Emory University complies with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and offers accommodations to students with disabilities. If you need classroom or other accommodations, please discuss this with me as soon as possible. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

Class Schedule

Thursday, August 30

Introduction and overview of the syllabus and our Blackboard site. Short writing assignment on "What is a hero?"

Current Uses of "Hero"

Tuesday, Sept. 4

Watching the 9/11 episode of *The West Wing* and discussion.

Wednesday, Sept. 5

Your first discussion question is due by midnight to the discussion board portion of our Blackboard site. Look in the first week's discussion section for suggestions about what makes for a good discussion question. Remember to post each Monday and Wednesday before midnight!
(Sept. 5 is also the last day for drop-add)

Thursday, Sept. 6

Discussion on heroism from your papers and *The West Wing*.

Tuesday, Sept. 11

Lesson on LexisNexis, Academic Search Premier, and how to access eereserves.
Handout: 3 page paper assignment. Lecturette: So what? (how to write a good thesis statement). (Lecturettes are short, participatory exercises about the writing process, grammar and punctuation rules. They are meant to refresh knowledge you may already have, address common problems, and hone your writing skills.)

Wednesday, Sept. 10

Instead of a discussion question, please post your preliminary thesis statement for your paper and bring a copy of it to class.

Thursday, Sept. 13

Bring in an article that demonstrates a current use of "hero" for discussion and **a copy of your thesis statement for the 3 page paper**. Lecturette: What now? (the writing process)

Tuesday, Sept. 18

Draft workshop: Bring in a complete rough draft of your 3 page paper for peer evaluation.

Hero and Mythology

Thursday, Sept. 20

3-page paper due at beginning of class

Library orientation

Handout: Annotated bibliography assignment

Tuesday, Sept. 25

"The Hero" by Lord Raglan from *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama*, pp. 178-208 and "Aspects of the Quest" by Dean A. Miller from *The Epic Hero*, pp. 162-76.
Lecturette: Who the *%\$? (proper citation)

Thursday, Sept. 27

Discussion Arthurian legends—ereserves reading TBA

Tuesday, Oct. 2

Annotated bibliography due at beginning of class

Continued discussion of Arthurian legends—ereserves reading TBA

Lecturette: How the *#@*? (answering an essay question versus devising an original topic).

Thursday, Oct. 4

Graded in-class writing on applying Raglan and Miller's arguments to the Arthurian legends.

Tuesday, Oct. 9

Midsemester Break—No class

Remember to find three comic books in a series or one graphic novel for the first week of November!

Female Heroism

Thursday, Oct. 11

Watching *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* episodes. This class is scheduled 7-9:30 pm, so that we have enough time to watch 2 episodes. Attendance is required.

Tuesday, Oct. 16

Discussion of *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* episodes and female heroism

Handout: 5-7 page paper assignment

Lecturette: "All the world's a stage" (introductions).

Thursday, Oct. 18

Howl's Moving Castle, Ch. 1-6

Lecturette: And in conclusion . . .

Tuesday, Oct. 23

Howl's Moving Castle, Ch. 7-16

Lecturette: The potential perils of (im)proper punctuation, part 1.

Thursday, Oct. 25

Howl's Moving Castle, Ch. 17-end

Lecturette: The potential perils of (im)proper punctuation, part 2.

Tuesday, Oct. 30

Draft workshop: Bring in complete rough draft of your 5-7 page paper.

Superheroism

Thursday, Nov. 1

5-7 page paper due at beginning of class.

"Heroes and Superheroes" by Jeph Loeb and Tom Morris from *Superheroes and Philosophy: Truth, Justice, and the Socratic Way*, pp. 11-20.

Tuesday, Nov. 6

Read three comic books in a series or one graphic novel with superhero characters and bring them to class for discussion.

Handout: Assignment for final 7-8 page research paper, oral report, and final portfolio.

NOTE: You are responsible for meeting with your instructor to have your final research paper topic approved by Thursday, Nov. 15 at 5 pm.

Lecturette: What's that? (referents and number agreement)

Thursday, Nov. 8

This class is scheduled for 7-9:30 pm, so that we have enough time to watch *X-Men*.
Attendance is required.

Tuesday, Nov. 13

Discussion on *X-Men*

Thursday, Nov. 15

Graded in-class writing assignment on superheroism in *X-Men* and comic books/graphic novel. Your notes from the film viewing and comic books/graphic novel are permitted.

Passive Heroism

Tuesday, Nov. 20

Annotated bibliography for final research paper due

Maus, part I: *My Father Bleeds History*

Wednesday, Nov. 21-Sunday, Nov. 25

Thanksgiving break

Tuesday, Nov. 27

Draft workshop on complete draft of final research paper.

Lecturette: What next? (the revision process).

Thursday, Nov. 29

Revised draft due (with previous drafts attached) to instructor at beginning of class

Maus, part II: *And Here My Troubles Began*

Tuesday, Dec. 4

Draft of research paper returned

Maus, parts I & II

Thursday, Dec. 6

Oral reports

Tuesday, Dec. 11

Final portfolio (including final draft of research paper and 2 page reflective essay) due at beginning of class.

Oral reports

Wednesday, Dec. 14

Reading Day

Dec. 15-16, 19-21

Exams (no final exam for this course)