

Instructor: Stacy Bell

Phone: 770/784-8469 (o); E-mail: smcquai@emory.edu

Office: Humanities 105

Office hours: MW2:00-5:00, and by appointment

Required Texts

Pham *The Eaves of Heaven*

Shah *The Storyteller's Daughter*

Vapnyar *There Are Jews in My House*

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. This section of English 185 is required specifically for students for whom English is not the native language. Students who have been admitted to Oxford are expected to function at a high level of proficiency in English. However, concurrent with the college's mission and goals, language support is necessary for students who are studying in the United States for the first time; for foreign-born students who continue to struggle with English grammatical forms and idioms; and for native born students who use more than one language in the home. Research in second language acquisition suggests that generation 1.5 students who speak the parents' language at home may have difficulties with writing in English, even if they speak and read it fluently.

Language teachers may distinguish between fluency and accuracy in a student's written work; however, teachers in other disciplines may expect strict adherence to standard grammatical forms. The ESL designation is not intended to be punitive; languages are valuable resources, but often it is necessary for multilingual students to negotiate situations in which their resources are undervalued or misunderstood. There is debate among language teachers about the extent to which grammar instruction can improve the quality of a student's writing. The emphasis in this course will be on reviewing grammatical structures which pose difficulties for non-native speakers. It is likely that some students in this course will benefit from direct grammar instruction. Students will continue to develop their

skills in identifying and correcting grammatical errors in their written work; the revision process is crucial, and students will be expected to write multiple drafts and to seek help outside the classroom.

Improving oral communication skills is also very important for nonnative English speakers in the English-speaking university system. To this end students will have multiple opportunities throughout the semester to lead discussions, read their written work aloud, and to present their research findings during class.

In 185 students engage in rhetorical analysis of the texts; at this level students are able to distinguish facts from claims, and can formulate and support their own arguments. The next step is to analyze the use of the various rhetorical forms utilized in contemporary media. Our texts examine global conflict, the immigrant experience, and cultural diversity. For each text we will discuss and analyze the merits of the author's argument. Students may use research to strengthen their critical evaluations of arguments. Students will examine the differences between spoken and written English and will apply this knowledge in the process of expository writing. Students will submit short essays and one long essay for each text. Students will learn research techniques for collecting information for both written and oral presentations. All essays will be well-organized and will demonstrate mastery of grammar, mechanics and organization appropriate in college-level writing, the ability to utilize a variety of rhetorical forms, and application of MLA guidelines for documentation.

You will read three books: two memoirs and one book of short fiction. The books allow us to explore themes around identity, equality, immigration and social justice. I expect you to do your reading, and if you don't, I will know. You will need to read in order to write your essays. If you haven't finished a reading assignment, you may do very poorly on your essay. **DON'T MAKE ME QUIZ YOU.**

Your essays will vary in length, from 250-500 word responses to 1000 word essays. In some cases your short responses will be developed into longer essays. Assignments will vary from first person reflective writing to critical and analytical writing. You will be required to use secondary sources for some essays; research skills are an essential component of ENG 185, and you will be visiting the library twice this semester for research instruction with Mary Moser.

Assessment

Essays: You will write two short responses and one longer essay for each book we read.

6 short responses: $2.5\% \times 6 = 15\%$ of your final grade

3 essays: $10\% \times 3 = 30\%$

**Note:* Your final essay will be evaluated based on 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.

First Words: At the beginning of each class you will respond in writing to an assigned prompt for three minutes. Responses will be written in a spiral notebook that will be submitted at the end of the semester. You will receive full credit [100 points] for these writing exercises if you do not have more than three unexcused absences. First Words is 5% of your final grade.

Oral presentations: each of you will lead a class discussion of our text or an assigned topic. You will sign up at the very beginning of the semester for the day you will lead. 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.

Debate: On November 23 your class will engage in a planned debate. You will be assigned to one of two teams and each of you will prepare a 500 word discussion of your talking points + annotated bibliography of 5 sources; you must participate orally during class. You will submit your discussion to me and I will assess your team's performance through an informal rubric. Your talking points grade + debate score is 10% of your final grade.

Current issues research presentation: Working in groups of four, you will research a current event related to the issues raised in our books. Each of you will submit a minimum 750 word discussion of what you learned about the issue through your group research; your discussion must include an annotated bibliography of 8 sources generated by you and your group members. You will submit your individual discussions to me and I will

assess your team's presentation through an informal rubric. Your individual discussion paper grade will be 10% of your final grade.

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.

Attendance: 5% of your final grade. If you have no more than three unexcused absences, you will receive 100 points.

Responsibilities

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 keeping up with the information and materials posted there.

Office Hours: I have scheduled and open office hours throughout the week. You can come to my office to sign up for an appointment or email me if you would like to meet outside of my office hours. Please come see me for help with your written assignments at any stage in the writing process. I am always happy to help you with your essays.

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: As per Oxford College policy, class begins at the designated time. If you are not present when class begins, I will mark you absent. If you are not prepared for class, I will mark you absent. Attendance requires wakefulness. You may miss three days of class without penalty, beyond which I will deduct ten points from your participation grade for each additional unexcused absence. I will excuse absences in the event of a major illness [with a doctor's note], legitimate emergency, or religious observance. If you are absent without an excuse on a day in which an in-class activity is assigned, you will NOT be permitted to make up missed work.

Email: The best way to communicate with an instructor is in person, during class or during office hours. I accept email for the following reasons:

- To cancel an appointment
- To notify me of an absence

- To ask a legitimate question about an assignment

I will not respond to email requesting information contained in the syllabus. If you don't know what is in the syllabus, you aren't prepared for class. Finally, I will ***never respond*** to requests for grades or "averages" via email or in person. 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: cell phones, blackberries and iPod/Phones are strictly forbidden 📵 in the classroom—except for my iPhone 😊, which I use as a stopwatch. If you have one with you, turn it off. If I hear or see it, I'm going to ask you to remove it from the classroom, and I will mark you absent. Laptops are permitted only when I require them in class.

A Note about Printing: Blue and gold makes green! Please feel free to print preliminary drafts on recycled paper, and print double-sided final drafts to save paper. I realize that you must pay for all printing, and I am not able to subsidize this expense [unless you want to clean my house, which I would more than welcome]. You must turn in hard copies of all your essays, no exceptions. Plan ahead. I cannot accept "I have no money left on my swipe card" as an excuse for a late essay.

Behavior: The instructor and students will display professional and courteous behavior, including but not limited to respect for the opinions of others. What constitutes professional and courteous behavior is at the discretion of the instructor. I will dismiss and mark absent any student who fails to show respect for his or her classmates and/or instructor. Continued disruptions and/or discourtesy will result in automatic dismissal from this class and referral to the Conduct Council. Dismissal from class may negatively impact the final grade.

Unless you obtain approval from the Academic Dean, there will be no exceptions to the policies outlined in this syllabus, which represents a

contract between student and instructor. The instructor will meet her responsibilities in regard to instruction and evaluation of the student, and the student will meet his or her responsibilities in regard to completion of all assignments and adherence to all class policies.

AUGUST

26 Introduction and Objectives

31 Discussion leader:

Intellectual property—What is it? Does it matter?

SEPTEMBER

Immigration, Family Change and Social Change: What does it mean to be from one place?

2 Discussion leader:

7 *The Eaves of Heaven* Response Due

9 Discussion leader:

14 *The Eaves of Heaven* Response Due

16 Discussion leader:

21 *The Eaves of Heaven* Essay Due

Fear of the Unknown: Trying to understand different cultures through memoir

23 Discussion leader:

28 *The Storyteller's Daughter* Response Due

30 Discussion leader:

OCTOBER

5 *The Storyteller's Daughter* Response Due
Class will meet in library today for instruction with Mary Moser.

7 Discussion leader:

12 FALL BREAK—Class will not meet today.

14 Class will not meet today.

19 *The Storyteller's Daughter* Essay Response Due

The Melting Pot: Myth or reality?

21

26 Discussion leader:

28 *There Are Jews in My House* response due
Class will meet in library today for instruction with Mary Moser.

NOVEMBER

2 Discussion leader:

4 *There Are Jews in My House* response due

9 Discussion leader:

11 *There Are Jews in My House* essay due

16 Group Presentations : Groups 1 and 2

18 Group Presentations : Groups 3 and 4

23 Debate: Should the U.S. put a moratorium on immigration?

25 THANKSGIVING BREAK-- Class will not meet today.

30

DECEMBER

2 Essay Four Due
Film

7 Film and Review

Exam Schedule

Students will report to classroom with laptops during their appointed time:
Thursday, Dec. 9, 2:00-5:00 pm.