

First-Year Writing, Fall 2017

Unit Two Assignment Guidelines

- Working Draft due Friday, October 13, before class
- Peer Review due Tuesday, October 17, by 6:00 a.m. (begun in class on Friday, October 13)
- Final Draft due Wednesday, October 25, before class
- Group Presentations: Wednesday, October 25 and Friday, October 27, in class

Unit Two calls on you to work with a small group of your peers to research and teach the class about a specific genre that you find particularly useful or powerful.

The fact that 50 million Americans suffer from chronic pain does not comfort me. Rather, it confounds me. “This is not normal,” I keep thinking. A thought invariably followed by a doubt, “Is this normal?”

...

“One of the functions of the pain scale,” my father explains, “is to protect doctors – to spare them some emotional pain. Hearing someone describe their pain as a ten is much easier than hearing them describe it as a hot poker driven through their eyeball into their brain.”

—Eula Biss, from “The Pain Scale,”

The disciplines function increasingly as techniques for making useful individuals. Hence their emergence from a marginal position on the confines of society, and detachment from the forms of exclusion or expiation, confinement or retreat. Hence the slow loosening of their kinship with religious regularities and enclosures. Hence also their rooting in the most important, most central, and most productive sectors of society. They become attached to some of the great essential functions: factory production, the transmission of knowledge, the diffusion of aptitudes and skills, the war-machine. Hence, too, the double tendency one sees throughout the eighteenth century to increase the number of disciplinary institutions and to discipline the existing apparatuses.

...

In a word, the disciplines are the ensemble of minute technical inventions that made it possible to increase the useful size of multiplicities by decreasing the inconveniences of the power which, in order to make them useful, must control them. A multiplicity, whether in a workshop or a nation, an army or a school, reaches the threshold of a discipline when the relation of the one to the other becomes favorable.

...

Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons?
(309)

—Michel Foucault, from “Panopticism”

Northeastern's faculty scholars pursue use-inspired, interdisciplinary research with a focus on discovering solutions to global challenges in health, security, and sustainability. Our advances in cybersecurity, drug discovery and delivery, healthcare delivery and policy, infrastructure resilience, and urban sustainability are characterized by global collaborations with industry, government, and other academic institutions. The university is home to more than 30 federally funded research centers.

—Northeastern University homepage

Genres, and the texts they comprise, do not emerge from a vacuum; rather, they facilitate the power relations connecting readers, writers, and society at large.

For this project, your group will give a researched, 20-minute presentation on a particular genre. The presentation should be accompanied by a reference document that encompasses the presentation's key information but would also make sense if seen apart from the presentation.

A passing presentation should:

- Focus primarily on one genre
- Identify the distinguishing characteristics of the genre: How does the genre organize or prioritize information? How does it differ from other, similar genres?
- Provide a brief history of the genre: when, where, and how, and why has the genre been used?
- Make critically informed claims regarding the genre's effects on those who encounter it. To paraphrase Foucault, how does the genre fabricate individuals in our social order?
- Use *at least* three (3) sample texts from the chosen genre to illustrate those overarching claims
- Show how the genre functions within larger institutional and social systems (e.g. academic, scientific, economic, journalistic, juridico-political, familial)
- Cite *at least* five (5) credible sources, including *at least* one (1) peer-reviewed journal

A passing accompanying reference document should:

- Convincingly stand alone, if seen apart from the presentation
- Contain few grammatical errors
- Codify the presentation's most important information
- Include a works-cited page that lists sources in APA or MLA format