

English 697: Special Topics

Writing like an English Professor

Dr. Susan Louise Stewart

Summer 1, 2015

Susan.Stewart@tamuc.edu

Hall of Languages 314

Phone: 903-468-8624

Fax: 903-886-5980

Office Hours: Tuesday, Noon-5:00, during class conferences, and by appointment. I will generally respond within 24 hours (M-R) of receiving your email.

Course Description

Students will read, write, analyze, and workshop their texts with the ultimate goal of refining or producing a text that reflects graduate-level (or better) writing.

Required Texts: Our own

Goals

Students will work on ways to:

- Make words pop and beguile
- Tighten their prose
- Be direct but inviting and eloquent
- Develop a unique but professional voice/style
- Embed, explain, and work quotations;
- Summarize, paraphrase, quote, and properly attribute the works of others in a way that reflects academic writing
- Understand the ins and outs of MLA
- Develop strategies to make the conventions of academic discourse work for them
- Collect terms academics use in their writing
- Find and incorporate the best sources

Activities

In order to accomplish the above, students will:

- Analyze a variety of texts—theirs, mine, and published articles—to identify what makes a text work (or not);
- Consider strategies that make a text “move”
- Identify ways to make a concept “portable” so that other scholars will quote their work when they publish it
- Incorporate the discourse associated with the discipline
- Recognize and include the work of notable scholars on the topic
- Locate a possible niche for their writing

Audience

I have designed the course for writers who:

- Are new to graduate school or coming from a different discipline
- Want better command over their writing
- Have encountered challenges when wrangling words
- Have received comments from professors suggesting that they need to work on their prose
- Want to fine tune a potential article or a graduation project (proposal, thesis, or dissertation)

I welcome students from all areas in the department; however, I will emphasize the conventions associated with film and literature, composition studies, and rhetoric.

By the way, I will be working on my own article and expect students to help workshop my text. In other words, I will engage in the same activities as students.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

- Produce a text that reflects graduate-level (or better) writing
- Demonstrate an ability to analyze their own texts

Required Texts: None

Late Policy (This is REALLY Important)

Hand your papers in on time. If I accept a late paper, I won't grade it until the end of the semester. That's not good, for you won't have the benefit of my comments for the next paper you hand in. Neither will I provide comments when I do grade it at the end of the semester. The highest grade possible will be a B+; after that, I deduct 10% of the grade. That's if I accept the paper.

If eCollege breaks, which it frequently does, email me your paper so that it won't be late, and keep trying to upload it.

Double check that your paper uploads, for as indicated above, eCollege breaks. Thus, once you upload, go to another part of the class (a different week, for instance) and then go back to confirm the paper uploaded.

Unless otherwise noted, upload your paper as a document; don't paste and copy into the comment section of the gradebook/dropbox.

Explanation of Rhetorical Analysis:

A scholarly essentially makes a promise that the author is going to accomplish something—make and prove an argument, identify something

that has gotten little attention in the past and make it relevant, contribute to the academic discussions regarding the topic, etc. To get to the heart, you'll need to identify the function/argument/purpose of the essay. Once you've done that:

Does the author accomplish her promise? How?

What kinds of historical text does the author use in order to make her point?

How does she use those texts? To what end?

How much time does the author spend quoting primary source material?

How much time does the author spend quoting scholarship?

When does the author actually explain the quotations from scholarship?

Who are the scholars she relies on? Anything interesting about those scholars? From different fields/disciplines for instance?

Identify words or turns of phrase that seem to "pop" or that sound particularly pleasant or catchy (these are "I want to put this in my word bank" words).

What's the author's "hook"? That is, what about the first few paragraphs potentially makes you want to keep on reading?

Discuss the conclusion. For instance, is it a repetition of the thesis? Does it offer any kind of synthesis of the essay? What about the last sentence?

Does it pop? How so?

Said in a different way:

Explain the way the article works, for instance what the argument is, strategies the author uses to convey meaning—this is an analysis of HOW the article is written rather than what it says. Thus, you might look at sentence structure, diction/syntax, how the author emphasizes ideas, how the author uses sources and to what end. **Explain how you might adopt some of the author's strategies. Pay attention to how the author writes and how you write.**

Graded Items: (we will determine the assignment rubrics in class)

Rhetorical Analysis of "The Absence of Moral Agency in Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War*" (20 pts). Be sure to explain how you might adopt some of the author's strategies. Pay attention to how the author writes and how you write. 1500+ words

Rhetorical Analysis of "Examining Millie and Christine McKoy: Where Enslavement and Enfreakment Meet" (40 pts). Be sure to explain how you might adopt some of the author's strategies. Pay attention to how the author writes and how you write. 1500+ words

Final Paper (40 pts). The final paper will be an academic text that includes an argument. The final draft should be between 3,000-3,500 words.

Rhetorical Analysis of Final Paper (60 pts). Just as you have analyzed published articles, you'll now analyze your own text. 1500+ words.

Revision Journal (50 pts). Keep track of your writing/revising/workshopping process. This will be graded on how thorough and detailed the journal is.

Participation (50 pts). This is not a "gimme." Students have to really work for the full points. The last 15 minutes of class, students will write a short report explaining how they contributed (this does not include workshopping).

Please note that I will deduct points from course total if I don't see a good-faith effort regarding drafts (which includes turning them in), absences that preclude workshopping, or a lack of commitment regarding workshopping,

Grading

| | |
|---------|---|
| 90-100% | A |
| 80-89% | B |
| 70-79% | C |
| 60-69% | D |
| 50-59% | F |

Academic Honesty Policy: Texas A&M University-Commerce does not tolerate **plagiarism** and other forms of **academic dishonesty**. Conduct that violates generally accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty. "Academic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), recycling papers written for other classes, cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material. See the following helpful resources regarding plagiarism:

1. your *MLA Handbook*
2. <http://www.plagiarism.org/>
3. <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/plagiarism.html>
<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

Plagiarism will result in one or more of the following: a 0 for the assignment, an F for the class, disciplinary action administered by the university.

University Specific Procedures

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that

provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library- Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*). Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom and in online courses with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Communication and Support and Primary Communication Tools

While I will maintain office hours on Tuesdays from Noon-5:00, I will also provide conference times during class. I will generally respond within 24 hours (M-R) of receiving your email.

I reply to individual e-mails with non-campus e-mail addresses; however, if I send out a mass e-mail, it will go to your campus e-mail address. Please check your campus e-mail daily.

eCollege Student Technical Support:

Texas A&M University-Commerce provides students technical support in the use of eCollege. The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Chat Support: Click on “Live Support” on the tool bar within your course to chat with an eCollege Representative.

Phone: 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with eCollege Technical Support Representative.

Email: helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with eCollege Technical Support Representative.

Help: Click on the “Help” button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege (i.e. How to submit to dropbox, How to post to discussions etc...)

University Student Technical Support

The writing center located in the Hall of Languages is a great resource. They work with graduate students all of the time. Take advantage of their expertise.

University Procedures/Policies

Drop a Course: Students may drop a course by logging into their myLEO account and clicking on the hyperlink labeled “Drop a class” from among the choices found under the myLEO section of the Web page.

Schedule of Activities

The schedule is not writ in stone ☺

Please note that it is the student’s responsibility to find the assigned articles by going to the university library databases.

| Date | Monday Dropbox | Reading for class (have materials read by class time) | In-class | Thursday Dropbox |
|--------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Monday, June 8: | | “At a Mirror, Darkly: The Imagined Undergraduate Writers of Ten Novice Composition Instructors.” | Introduction to Databases Rhetorical analysis of “At a Mirror.” As you go, identify words you’d like to use terms you think are common. Just note these on the article. MLA Handbook (Chapters 2, 3, 5) Writing Analyses (see doc sharing) Plagiarism Participation Report 1 dropbox | |
| Monday, June 15 | By class time: Upload the paper you’ll be working on | “‘Americans as They Really Are’: The Colored American and the | Rhetorical Analysis of “Americans.” Workshop: Bring in a | Thursday, June 18, 11:59 PM, Absence Dropbox: |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| | <p>in class.</p> <p>Draft 1 Dropbox</p> | <p>Illustration of National Identity.”</p> <p>MLA Handbook (Chapters 6, 7)</p> | <p>paper you’ve written in the past. If you don’t have a past paper, write about 5-7 pages of something you want to work on for another project. Be prepared for peer review and revisions. The final paper will eventually need to be between 3,000-3,500 words not including works cited.</p> <p>Keep a journal of plans/revisions/comments from peer review, etc. You will turn this Revision Journal in at the end of the course.</p> <p>Individual conferences.</p> <p>Work on revision journal</p> <p>Participation Report 2 dropbox</p> | <p>Rhetorical Analysis of “The Absence of Moral Agency in Robert Cormier’s <i>The Chocolate War</i>.” 1500 words</p> |
| <p>Monday, June 22</p> | <p>By class time: Upload the revised paper you’ll be working on in class.</p> <p>Draft 2 Dropbox</p> | <p>Find one article of your own choosing</p> | <p>Be prepared to discuss in class the strengths and weakness of the article of your choosing; identify areas for revision. We’ll probably spend about 30 minutes on each article.</p> <p>Create our own handbook</p> | <p>Thursday, June 25, 11:59 PM, Examining dropbox:</p> <p>Rhetorical analysis of “Examining Millie and Christine McKoy: Where Enslavement and Enfreakment Meet.” 1500 words</p> |

| | | | | |
|-----------------|---|-----|---|---|
| | | | <p>Individual conferences.</p> <p>Crafting Arguments</p> <p>Definitions</p> <p>Work on revision journal</p> <p>Participation Report 3 dropbox</p> | |
| Monday, June 29 | <p>By class time: Upload the revised paper you'll be working on in class.</p> <p>Draft 3 Dropbox</p> | TBA | <p>Workshop Draft 4</p> <p>Individual conferences.</p> <p>Crafting Introductions</p> <p>Work on revision journal.</p> <p>Participation Report 4 dropbox</p> | |
| Monday, July 6 | | TBA | <p>Crafting conclusions</p> <p>Complete handbook</p> <p>Work on revision journal</p> <p>Participation Report 5 dropbox</p> | <p>Thursday, July 9, NOON.</p> <p>Final Project dropbox (one document): (1) Your final essay (3,000-3,500 words) with (2) a rhetorical analysis of your own work (1,500+ words).</p> <p>Revision Journal Dropbox: your revision journal.</p> |