

Freshman Writing Seminar (Fall 2016)
Writing and Pop Culture
English 1010.31

Instructor: Kelsey Norwood
Office: Stokes 490B
Office Hours: Tues 4:30-5:30, and by appointment
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Class Meetings:
Stokes Hall 133S
Tues/Thurs 3:00-4:15pm

Course Description

Welcome to FWS! The objective of this course is to introduce you to successful writing practices that will help you in your future as a BC student and in the “real” world. We will practice writing by working with different genres and exploring them in four genre-specific assignments: personal narrative, rhetorical analysis, researched essay, and comedy sketch. Your conscious work with these different genres will help you to practice the skill of writing for an audience, something you will need to apply to almost any writing situation in your college or later careers.

Our course will focus on the practice of writing through this guiding question: how can we look at pop culture in a way that helps us to become better writers? By bringing in our shared interests—favorite television shows, movies, music, literature, sports, et cetera—we can engage in classroom discussion that has relevance for all of us, finding intellectual stimulation and clarity in a culture that we interact with every day. It will also frame our consideration of different rhetorical techniques, which are often more transparent in pop culture texts.

Required Texts

Richard E. Miller and Ann Jurecic, *Habits of the Creative Mind*

Readings from the required text are marked “HCM” in the syllabus.

All other readings will be available on the class Canvas site. You are expected to print these articles out in advance and bring them to class on the day they are assigned.

Please purchase a notebook for in-class writing and bring it to class every day.

Grading

I don’t discuss individual grades over email or in class, but I’m happy to talk with you about your grades during my office hours. Your final grade for the course will be based on the following:

Pop Culture Narrative: 15%
Comparative Rhetorical Analysis: 15%
Pop Culture Research Project: 15%
Comedy Sketch: 15%
Final Portfolio: 20%
Participation: 20%

Course Policies

Attendance:

Attendance in this class is required. For every absence after the third, your final grade for the course will be lowered half a letter grade (i.e. A to A-) each time you are absent. More than six absences will result in a failing grade for the course. If you are late for three classes, it will count as one absence. In case of family emergency or prolonged illness, please contact your dean.

Conferences:

This class meets 2 times per week as scheduled, but four times during the semester, we will meet individually to discuss your in-progress writing assignments. The conferences will take place in my cubicle in the English department on the fourth floor of Stokes Hall (South). A missed conference counts as a class absence.

Late Work:

All writing assignments should be submitted to me (on Canvas) before class on the due date. If the assignment is a draft for in-class peer review, you should also bring paper copies to class for the members of your peer review group. Each day a writing assignment is late (starting the day it is due), you will lose half a letter grade (i.e. A to A-).

Formatting:

All written work should be double-spaced with 12 pt. font size, and in MLA format. For help with MLA format, please see the following Purdue site:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Electronics:

Electronic devices are not to be used in class without my permission. Please bring all assigned readings as hard copies.

Academic Integrity:

Boston College values the academic integrity of its students and faculty. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the university's policy on academic integrity:

<http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/resources/policy/#integrity>

If you have any questions, please ask me before turning in assignment. Violations of academic integrity will be reported to your class dean and judged by the academic integrity committee in your school. If you are found responsible for violating the policy, penalties may include a failing grade as well as possible probation, suspension, or expulsion, depending on the seriousness of the violation.

Disability Statement:

If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with Kathy Duggan (kathleen.duggan@bc.edu), Associate Director, Academic Support Services, The Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or ADHD) or Suzy Conway (suzy.conway.1@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for Students with Disabilities (all other disabilities).

Advanced notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.

Campus Resources:

[Connors Family Learning Center \(CFLC\):](#)

The CFLC, located in O’Neill Library, offers one-on-one writing tutoring. This is a great resource if you’re struggling with an assignment or any aspect of the writing process. Tutoring is free for all BC students. To schedule an appointment call 617-552-0611.

Counseling Services:

If you’re having a difficult time or need someone to talk to, there are people available at University Counseling Services. This service is free for BC students. To set up an appointment, call (617) 552-3310 or stop by Gasson 001.

Sexual Assault and Misconduct

From the Boston College policy on sexual misconduct:

“Boston College seeks to foster a campus environment that supports its educational mission and is free from exploitation and intimidation, as well as discrimination based upon gender. Sexual misconduct of any kind, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, domestic and dating violence, and stalking, is antithetical to the mission of Boston College and the values it espouses and will be responded to accordingly.”

To report sexual assault or misconduct, call the Sexual Assault Network (SANet), an anonymous hotline available 24/7: (617) 552-2211. You can also see BC’s official policy and list of resources for sexual misconduct at the following web address: <http://www.bc.edu/offices/dos/sexual-violence-policy-website>

Course Schedule

This schedule is preliminary and I reserve the right to make changes throughout the course of the semester. I will announce all changes in class. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to learn what you have missed.

Tues. Aug. 30 – Introduction to the Course

Syllabus, introductions

Assignment introduced: Pop Culture Narrative

Writing the Personal Narrative

Thurs. Sept. 1 – Narrative Arc, Part 1

Reading: Soivilien, “Haiti’s Flag. My Flag. Our Flag?”

Course syllabus

Tues. Sept. 6 – Writing Yourself as a Character; Starting with a Hook

Reading: Lopate, “On the Necessity of Turning Oneself into a Character”

Crosley, “The Pony Problem”

Thurs. Sept. 8 – Giving Feedback; The First Draft

Due: Draft 1 of Pop Culture Narrative

Reading: Straub, “Responding—Really Responding—to Other Students’ Writing”

Lamott, “Shitty First Drafts”

Tues. Sept. 13 – Peer Review 1; Style, Part 1

Due: Peer review response

Wed. Sept. 14

Conferences

Thurs. Sept. 15 – Structure and Tone for a Casual Audience

Reading: Allie Brosh, “The Year Kenny Loggins Ruined Christmas”

Tim Sniffen, “Seeing Hamilton”

Conferences

Rhetorical Analysis

Tues. Sept. 20 – Understanding a Writer’s Project

Due: Final draft of Pop Culture Narrative

Reading: The Onion, “Books Vs. E-Readers”

The Onion, “Video Game Henchmen Plan Meetup Around Explosive Barrels”

“On Playing with Conventions” (HCM)

Assignment introduced: Rhetorical Analysis

Thurs. Sept. 22 – Thesis and Argument

Reading: Gay, “The Rise of Texts”

“On Writing to a Question” (HCM)

Tues. Sept. 27 – Using and Citing Textual Evidence

Reading: Greene and Lidinsky, “Integrating Quotations” and “Avoiding Plagiarism”

Thurs. Sept. 29 – Academic Tone

Due: Draft 1 of Rhetorical Analysis

Tues. Oct. 4 – Peer Review 2; Style, Part 2

Due: Peer review response

Wed. Oct. 5

Conferences

Thurs. Oct. 6 – Revision and Organization

Reading: “On Revising,” “The Post-Draft Outline” (HCM)

Conferences

Research Writing

Tues. Oct. 11 – The Research Process

Due: Final draft of Rhetorical Analysis

Reading: “On the Theater of the Mind,” “On Going Down the Rabbit Hole” (HCM)

Assignment introduced: Pop Culture Research Project

Thurs. Oct. 13 – Rhetorical Strategies in Different Mediums

Reading: Dargis, Morris, and Scott, “Oscars So White? Or Oscars So Dumb? Discuss.”

Due: One example of the issue from the reading being discussed in a different medium

Research Project topic ideas

Tues. Oct. 18 – Introduction to Library Research

O’Neill Library visit

Thurs. Oct 20 – Organization, Introductions, and Conclusions

Reading: Lund-Wilde, “The Story Behind Harry Potter’s Magic”

Tues. Oct. 25 – Paragraph Structure

Reading: PDF of student examples

Due: Annotated bibliography

Thurs. Oct. 27 – Synthesizing Sources

Reading: “On Joining the Conversation” (HCM)

Bring to class: Texts of one primary and one secondary source for your paper

Tues. Nov. 1 – The Writing Process

Due: Draft 1 of Pop Culture Research Paper

Thurs. Nov. 3 – Peer Review 3; Style, Part 3

Due: Peer review response

Conferences

Friday, Nov. 4

Conferences

Tues. Nov. 8 – Persuasive Writing

Reading: Froehlich, “Dove: Changing the Face of Beauty?”

Assignment introduced: Comedy Sketch

Writing the Comedy Sketch

Thurs. Nov. 10 – Narrative Arc, Part 2

Due: Final draft of Pop Culture Research Paper

List of Comedy Sketch topic ideas

Watch: SNL, “Lucy A-Bomb”

SNL, “A Thanksgiving Miracle”

Tues. Nov. 15 – Navigating Rhetorical Situations

Due: Research Assignment #1: How to Write a Comedy Sketch

Reading: Seth Meyers, from Tina Fey’s *Bosypants*: “Palin/Hillary Open”

Kerr, *Build to Laugh*, chapter 8

Watch: SNL, “Palin/Hillary Open”

Inside Amy Schumer, “Football Town Nights”

Thurs. Nov. 17– Dialogue and Character

Due: Research Assignment #2

Short Assignment: Analyzing a Comedy Sketch

Watch: *Life's Too Short*, "Liam Neeson"
SNL, "Bern Your Enthusiasm"
SNL, "Undercover Boss: Starkiller Base"

Tues. Nov. 22 – How to Be Funny, Part 1

Reading: "On Laughter" (HCM)

Watch: *The Heat*

Due: Draft 1 of Comedy Sketch

Thurs. Nov. 24

No class; Thanksgiving

Tues. Nov. 29 – Peer Review 4; Style, Part 4

Due: Peer review response

Wed. Nov. 30

Conferences

Thurs. Dec. 1 – How to Be Funny, Part 2

Reading: Toplyn, "How to Edit Jokes"

Conferences

Tues. Dec. 6 – Writing for Performance

Due: **Final draft of Comedy Sketch (including individual reflection)**

Assignment introduced: Final Portfolio

MediaKron info session

Thurs. Dec. 8 – Wrap Up the Semester

Performances of comedy sketches

Tuesday, Dec. 20 by 12:00pm

Due: **Final Portfolio**