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WRIT 015, sections 13 and 14
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Writing for Humans Spring 2014

This writing course is about how to move your reader, who, let's assume, is human. And humans come equipped with standard limitations in memory and attention, as well as an attraction to stories. But they also develop specific needs, desires and quirks as readers and writers. How, then, even as our increasingly digital world changes the ways we read, do we humanize the writing process and our writing? Our job in this course will be to identify the writing habits, strategies, and tricks that work for us, learn how and why they work, and apply and personalize them.

We'll look at classic advice about writing and more recent scholarship about how people read today. We'll read great fiction (such as Joyce's *Dubliners*) and award-winning nonfiction to learn the power of voice, storytelling, and figurative language. Most importantly, we'll write and read each other's writing, from blog entries and short op-eds to academic essays and a "real-world" assignment for a local non-profit.

You will come away from this course better able to read critically and to write and edit clear and compelling prose in a variety of genres and for multiple audiences.

Course Goals:

You will learn to:

- Read critically, paying attention to a text's context, purpose, and audience(s)
- Analyze audiences and the responses you hope your writing prompts
- Write clear and compelling prose
- Adapt your writing for specific audiences, genres, styles, and technologies
- Tap language's many resources, including its figurative power and its conventions (grammar, punctuation, syntax, and semantics)
- Edit to ensure your reader will find your writing clear, coherent, correct and compelling
- Research, evaluate, and synthesize evidence to build effective analyses and arguments

Texts

The principal text in the course will be your own writing. Drafts are required, but not graded. I will not accept final papers that were not posted in draft form according to our schedule. These required texts are available at the Georgetown University Book Store:

- Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say, I Say: Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*
- James Joyce, *Dubliners*, Viking Critical Edition
- Joseph Williams, *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*

I will make other assigned readings available on our class site:

<https://blogs.commonsgeorgetown.edu/dcl/>

Time and Location:

Section 13: 11:00am – 12:15pm, MR White-Gravenor 209

Section 14: 12:30pm – 1:45pm, MR, White-Gravenor 409

Requirements

- Three essays (55% total):
 - Op-ed (15%)
 - Literary analysis of Joyce's Dubliners (20%)
 - Web content for the Red Cross or Cystic Fibrosis Foundation (20%)
- Final portfolio (20%), which will consist of revised versions of your three essays along with your own writing tool and a short introduction to your portfolio.
- Your blog (15%): your posts and your responses to others' blogs.
- Class participation (10%): attendance is required. **Two late arrivals (of five minutes or more) count as an absence. If you have more than three (3) absences your grade will suffer. If you have more than five (5) absences you will fail the course.**

"The analytic work and editing your students did for us last fall transformed our Online Donation Processing Guide. Their work was reviewed at high levels at the Red Cross, and everyone was impressed and grateful. What's more, we reworked the Online Guide based on their recommendations. Please let your students know they really made a difference in an organization that prides itself on making a difference for people in need."

-Director, Donor Customer Service at **American Red Cross**

Honor System

I expect you to follow the GU Honor System: <http://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system>

Graduate Writing Assistant: We are lucky to have a talented and experienced graduate student, Marielle Hampe, help us in this class. Marielle will periodically attend class, comment on your blogs, run her own office hours before essays are due, and occasionally lead class. Think of Marielle as another teacher in this class, only a lot younger and more culturally savvy.

Writing Center: Writing Center: In this class, I'm hoping you will approach writing as a process, one that is social, not solitary. A great way to make writing social is to visit the Writing Center (217a Lauinger) and talk with one of the Center's trained tutors. While you will always be solely responsible for the writing you submit and the Center's tutors won't do your work for you, tutors can talk you through any stage of your writing process, from brainstorming a thesis and organizing your thoughts to revising, editing and proofreading. To set up an appointment, visit <http://writingcenter.georgetown.edu>.

Tentative Schedule

(This will likely change, so see our class blog for the most current info)

Wed 1/7	Introduction: the syllabus, the class blog, and your blog
Thu 1/8	Read Graff and Birkenstein, "They Say, I Say," Intro and ch 1-3 (pp. 1-51).

Mon 1/12	Read the op-eds on torture (Sullivan and Krauthammer, available on our class blog). On your own blog, summarize Sullivan or Krauthammer (200 words) following the advice of Graff and Birkenstein.
Thu 1/15	Read Graff and Birkenstein Part 2: "I Say": ch 4-7 (pp. 55-101) and read the op-eds published by students . On your blog, tell us (roughly 200 words) which student(s) did the best job of answering the reader's question, "Why should we care?"
Thu 1/22	Identify your op-ed topic and your target publication. On your blog, tell us about your topic, your current opinion on the topic, and where you aim to publish it (roughly 300 words). Read your classmates' blog posts on their planned op-eds. Comment on at least five posts.
Mon 1/26	Post a draft of your op-ed on your blog (as a blog post, not as an attachment) by class time on Thursday, 9/18. Read the material on peer review (class blog)
Thu 1/29	Essay # 1: Before class, post your op-ed on your blog as a downloadable attachment.
Mon 2/2	Read "Troublesome Gulch" by Matt Bai (pdf); this is the first chapter in Matt Bai's book <i>All the Truth Is Out: The Week Politics Went Tabloid</i> . Then read the adaptation of the book published in <i>The New York Times Sunday Magazine</i> : "How Gary Hart's Downfall Forever Changed American Politics." Then post on your blog your thoughts/reflections/questions about how Matt Bai adapted the portions from the book's first chapter that made their way into the NYT piece (your Thursday post should be 200-300 words). What do you notice about how he re-arranged the order, how he reworded passages, what he deleted, and any other changes he made?
Th 2/5	Read Joyce's <i>Dubliners</i> : "Araby," "Eveline," "A Little Cloud," and "Counterparts." On your blog, post at least one passage that surprised you, something that made you say, "That's odd" or "I wonder why Joyce used those words?"
Mon 2/9	Read Joyce's <i>Dubliners</i> : "Clay," "A Painful Case" and "A Mother." On your blog, post at least one passage that surprised you, something that made you say, "That's odd" or "I wonder why Joyce used those words?"
Thu 2/12	Read Joyce's <i>Dubliners</i> : "The Dead." On your blog, post at least one passage that surprised you, something that made you say, "That's odd" or "I wonder why Joyce used those words?"
Thu 2/19	In your Viking Critical edition of <i>Dubliners</i> , read the essays by Scholes, Miller, Burke, Loomis
Mon 2/23	Read the essays by previous students (Our class blog). On your own blog briefly summarize a point made in one of the essays we read, and then state your opinion on the same issue. In other words, do a "They Say, I Say" move.

Th 2/25	Post a draft of your Joyce paper due on your blog (as an attachment). Please bring a hard copy of your Joyce draft to class on Thursday. We will workshop the drafts in class.
Mon 3/2	Revise your essay as you see fit and repost it. Read your classmates' drafts. Post comments on at least five drafts. Please bring a hard copy of your Joyce draft to class on Friday. We will workshop the essays in class.
Th 3/5	Essay # 2: Before class, post your Joyce essay on your blog as a downloadable attachment
Mon 3/16	Suzanne Cooper, Red Cross
Th 3/19	Marybeth McMahon, VP of Communications, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, will visit class.
Mon 3/23	Read Jakob Nielsen "How People Read on the Web" (1-122, 158-192 and 306-345)
Th 3/26	Joseph Williams, Style. Lessons 3-10 (pp. 27-167)
Mon 3/30	Joseph Williams Web assignment
Th 4/9	Post draft of the Proposal section of your CFF or Red Cross project; in-class workshop
Mon 4/13	Post draft of the "Sample content" of your CFF or Red Cross project; in-class workshop
Thu 4/16	Essay # 3: Post your CFF or Red Cross project before class.
Mon 4/20	Post a revised version of one of your essays to your blog as an attachment. Bring a hard copy of this revised version to class on Friday, where we will workshop it.
Thu 4/23	Post a revised version of another one of your essays to your blog as an attachment (a different assignment than the one you posted for Thursday). Bring a hard copy of this revised version to class on Friday, where we will workshop it.
Mon 4/27	Draft your own one-page writing tool. Post it to your blog so you can present it and explain it.
Exam period	Final Portfolios submitted on your blog.