

Honors: Advanced Composition and Critical Thinking

Bob Lyman

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EngWr 482
Section 19312

Office: LL 022
Office Hours: M-Th 9:30 – 9:55; MW 1:30 – 1:55
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Required Texts:

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. 4th ed., Aunt Lute, 2012.
Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*. Houghton Mifflin, 2006.
Nordberg, Jenny. *The Underground Girls of Kabul: In Search of a Hidden Resistance in Afghanistan*. Crown, 2014.

Goals and Objectives:

This is a course in which you will learn to write *intentionally* and *precisely*, expect to do a great deal of reading and writing. One of the reasons we write is to externalize our thinking. Good writing not only demands clear and focused thinking, but it also requires that our thoughts be well-developed, anticipating our readers' viewpoints and addressing their concerns while exploring that which we as authors find significant. Good writing should be persuasively presented, demonstrating a coherent analysis and a clean grammatical style, helping our readers to easily understand what we have to say. What and how we write reflects directly on what and how we think, allowing us a chance to look at the external world as well as the world within; moreover, others judge us professionally and personally by our writing.

Writing allows us to dialogue with others—exploring, sharing, comparing, contrasting, and testing our thinking in a public forum. These dialogues help us to better understand the world around us and also provide us a chance to **consciously** shape our environment, external and internal. To meet these thinking and writing goals you will learn to:

- read and critically analyze diverse and difficult texts,
- distinguish fact from opinion,
- draw sound inferences,
- integrate texts, analyzing them for accuracy and credibility,
- apply various theoretical approaches to your argument,
- distinguish deductive from inductive reasoning, and
- identify and use grammatical constructions as elements of style.

You will develop your own position(s) on issues and **compose** essays which reflect your growing awareness of these skills. And since these skills are almost never practiced in isolation, this course will emphasize a collaborative, cooperative, and social approach: you will work with

others, giving and receiving feedback as you thoughtfully develop each of your essays. I hope that the course challenges you to explore and develop new ideas, but also that you will learn to express those ideas with clarity, confidence, and authority.

Course Requirements:

Attendance: Since this course emphasizes a collaborative approach, your presence and participation are essential; your absence not only affects you but also deprives your peers of your valuable input. Therefore, **attendance is mandatory**. I expect you to attend class. If you miss a class, **you** are responsible for homework due on that day and for material covered in class—not I. Class assignments must be turned in the day they are due or before; **late homework assignments will not be accepted!** If you anticipate missing class, please speak to me in advance. **More than three absences will result in your being dropped, without notice, from the class.**

I expect you to show up on time for class; coming to class late is both rude and disruptive. I take attendance at the beginning of each class; if you are not present in the classroom when I take attendance, I will mark you absent. Since I arrange my schedule to be here on time for each class, I expect you to do the same.

Online Discussion Group: The homework assignments are designed to help you gather your thoughts and prepare for the larger writing assignment. The readings assigned in this class are complex, dense, and most are lengthy; a cursory read will simply **not** be sufficient. Nor will you be able to “remember” these readings, carrying them around in your head. Thus, the class includes an online discussion web. Typically, I will give you a question to consider in class, and you will be given time to discuss this in groups, taking notes. You will post a written response to **each** reading assignment (the equivalent of 1½ to 2 *typed* pages—**350 to 500 words minimum**) **after** class discussion in groups. The written posting will usually be due within a day of the class discussion. These discussion postings will often become part of your rough draft. It is easy to let these discussion responses slide, but they constitute a significant portion of your course grade.

Essays: You will write three formal essays for this class. Although the length requirement will remain a fairly consistent 1500 to 2000 words, the requirements for each successive paper will become more rigorous as you build your skills and become increasingly more sophisticated writers and thinkers.

All papers *must* be printed, using MLA 8th edition format, and must be turned in at the *beginning* of class on the day they are due. I do NOT accept late papers.

Please note: You *MUST* submit all drafts and revisions to pass the class!

You will submit a rough draft of each essay (worth up to 150 points) to the class D2L drop box, and then participate in a peer-critique workshop *before* the revised essay is due in to me. To receive all 150 points, the draft **must** consist of *at least 750 words* (lengthy quotes will not be accepted and may cost points unless **I** can see that they are justified), **must** address the assignment, and **must** be posted to the drop box by the scheduled time on the day they are due

(no later than the day of the draft workshop). In addition, you will receive 100 points for participating in the draft workshops; you must bring two printed copies of your draft and critique two other students' drafts to receive these points—and you must post a draft in the drop box to qualify for workshop points. If you plan ahead, you will have no problem meeting these requirements, and you will always have an opportunity to revise your essay before you submit it to me for comments. Individual essays **will not be graded**.

In addition to the essays, you will, working in groups, research and present a summary explanation of a school of theory, and I expect to see an application of these theoretical frames informing the class discussions as well as the arguments of your papers.

Portfolios: 65% of your course grade will be determined by a portfolio of your work: your best, most carefully revised writing, including associated drafts of those essays (along with any and all feedback you received), any applicable journal entries or postings used in preparing to write the drafts (*so be sure to save all this material*), and an analytical introductory letter in which you evaluate your own personal reading and writing process. You will have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to **revise** and improve the work you include in your portfolio. But portfolio grading does not mean that you can turn in a dishonest effort for an essay you do not intend to include in your portfolio. I expect each essay you submit to be representative of your best effort. Should any submission not meet minimal standards for the course, I will ask you to revise, and you will not receive credit for the assignment until it *does* meet minimum standards.

The ten posted responses will each receive a score of up to 50 points. The sum total of these collected assignments—along with the draft and workshop points and grammar quizzes—is worth 30% of your grade, and that grade is calculated by a straight percentage of total possible points. 5% of your grade will be determined by your theory paper and class presentation.

A short word of warning here: the homework points are as easy to overlook as they are to accumulate. They are intended as incentive to keep pace with the class and as a way of developing a process of reading and writing; the points will make a significant difference in the grade you receive for the course. I have tried to design this class so that our focus is on your thinking and your writing rather than on the grade you might receive for any individual paper. Although I specify *part* of the content of the class and portfolio, you have a great deal of control over what is included; additionally, two class days will be dedicated to revising documents for your portfolio. **All of this allows you to take chances with your writing; try to stretch yourself in new directions.** If an approach to an essay doesn't work, you will have a number of opportunities to revise it. If, on the other hand, your approach *is* effective, you will have strengthened your control of language and thus your world.

Overview of major homework assignments—

Quiz	Points
Independent Clauses	10
Compound Sentences	20
Complex Sentences	30
Final Sentence Test	200

Homework Points (30% of Course Grade):

Assignment	Total #	Points	Total Points
Drafts	3	150	450
Draft Workshop	3	100	300
Reading Responses	10	50	500
Grammar Quizzes		260	260
Total ⇨			1510

Class Grade Calculations

	Pts	%
Homework Points	1510	30
Theory Paper & Class Discussions	252	5
Portfolio	3273	65
Total ⇨	5035	100

Always check online for changes to the schedule

Week	Monday	Wednesday
1	1-16 • Holiday—No Classes	1-18 • Intro to course & course rubric • Interactive reading & D2L postings • Analytical structures
2	1-23 • Small-group discussion • Exploratory writing assignment	1-25 • Submit printed copy of writing assignment • Read Said, "Knowing the Oriental" • Close reading and analysis
3	1-30 • Introduction to theory • Read "Allegory of the Cave," and summary of semiotics • Discuss impact of context and theory on meaning	2-1 • Read Foucault—from <i>The History of Sexuality, Volume 1</i> • Post to D2L
4	2-6 • Read Butler—"Preface (1999)" • Read NaMaste—"The Politics of Inside/Out" • Post to D2L	2-8 • Read Rubin, D.—"An Unnamed Blank" • Post to D2L
5	2-13 • Read Nordberg— <i>The Underground Girls of Kabul</i>	2-15 • Discuss Essay Assignment #1 • IC and Compound sentences • IC Quiz
6	2-20 • Holiday—No Classes	2-22 • Thesis workshop—Essay #1
7	2-27 • Draft workshop #1 • Bring 2 clean copies of your draft • Compound sentence quiz	3-1 • Essay #1 due at beginning of class • Read Turner—"Liminality and Communitas"
8	3-6 • Read Butler—"Performance Acts and Gender Construction" • Read Johnson—"Queer Theory" • Post to D2L	3-8 • Read Rubin, G.—"The Traffic in Women" • Post to D2L
9	3-13 • Read Rich—"Compulsory Heterosexuality" • Post to D2L	3-15 • Read Anzaldúa— <i>Borderlands/La Frontera</i>
10	3-20 • Discuss Essay Assignment #2 • DC and Complex sentences • DC Quiz	3-22 • Thesis workshop—Essay #2
11	3-27 • Draft workshop #2 • Bring 2 clean copies of your draft • Complex sentence quiz	3-29 • Essay #2 due at beginning of class • Portfolio review
12	4-3 • Read Gough—"The Origin of Family" • Post to D2L	4-5 • Read Lacan—"The Mirror Stage" • Post to D2L
13	4-10 • Spring Break—No Classes	4-12 • Spring Break—No Classes

Week	Monday	Wednesday
14	4-17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Braid—"Personal Narrative and Experiential Meaning" • Post to D2L 	4-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read McCloud—"The Vocabulary of Comics" • Post to D2L
15	4-24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Bechdel—<i>Fun Home</i> • Discuss Essay Assignment #3 • Compound-complex sentences 	4-26 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis workshop—Essay #3
16	5-1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theory papers due at beginning of class • Discuss application of theory 	5-3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft workshop #3 • Bring 2 clean copies of your draft
17	5-8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio workshop—bring copies on which to work • Chance to critique letter of introduction 	5-10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolios are due today at the beginning of class • Final sentence test
18	5-15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio pick up 12:45 – 1:45 p.m. 	5-17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finals, cont.

EngWr 482 Grading Rubric

A—Excellent—A paper in this category

- Addresses the assignment thoughtfully and analytically, setting a complex and challenging task.
- Establishes a clearly-focused controlling idea and demonstrates strong sense of purpose and audience awareness.
- Demonstrates coherent and rhetorically sophisticated organization; makes effective connections between ideas.
- Provides clear generalizations with specific detail and compelling support.
- Shows a sophisticated understanding of and engagement with multiple texts of some length and complexity.
- Demonstrates an ability to sustain a thorough argument of some length and complexity.
- Cites and analyzes relevant sources and evaluates their validity, effectively integrating them into text when appropriate, accurately using MLA format.
- Demonstrates superior control of grammar, sentence variety, word choice and conventions of standard written English.

B—Strong—A paper in this category

- Addresses the assignment clearly and analytically, setting a meaningful task.
- Establishes a clearly-focused controlling idea and demonstrates a clear sense of purpose and audience awareness.
- Demonstrates a clear and coherent organization, and makes connections between ideas.
- Provides clear generalizations and effective supporting detail and reasoning.
- Shows understanding of and engagement with multiple texts of some length and complexity.
- Demonstrates an ability to sustain an argument of some length and complexity.
- Cites and analyzes relevant sources, effectively integrating them into text when appropriate using MLA format.
- Displays consistent control of grammar, sentence variety, word choice, and conventions of standard written English.

C—Adequate—A paper in this category

- Addresses the assignment, establishing a controlling idea and clear purpose.
- Establishes a clearly-focused controlling idea and meets most audience needs and expectations.
- Demonstrates adequate organization, though connections between ideas may not be consistent.
- Provides support for and some analysis of generalizations.
- Shows some understanding of and engagement with multiple texts of some length and complexity.
- Demonstrates an ability to sustain an argument of some length.
- Cites sources, adequately integrating them into text and showing awareness of MLA format.
- Demonstrates adequate control of grammar, sentence variety, word choice, and conventions of standard written English.

D—Seriously Flawed—A paper in this category may be flawed in one or more ways. It may

- Not address the assignment directly or clearly; it may distort or wander from the assignment or set a trivial task.
- Show insufficient awareness of purpose, audience, or persona.
- Display formulaic, random, or confusing organization.
- Fail to provide clear controlling general statements or supporting detail.
- Replace analysis with narration, summary, or description.
- Demonstrate an inability to sustain an argument of some length.
- Display a lack of understanding of appropriate texts and MLA format; fail to cite, integrate, or analyze material from the texts.
- Show inadequate control of standard written English; error may distract or impede understanding.

F—Fundamentally Deficient—A paper in this category will be flawed in one or more ways. It may

- Fail to address the assignment.
- Demonstrate a lack of purpose or audience awareness.
- Lack a controlling idea or fail to control the argument of the paper.
- Lack organization or organize illogically.
- Display inability to generalize, analyze, or support ideas.
- Fail to use sources or misuses the texts of others and/or fail to demonstrate any understanding of MLA format.
- Show substantially inadequate control of standard written English; error may prevent communication.