

Laura Carter
Southern Polytechnic State University
Department of English, Technical Communication, and Media Arts
ENGL 1102 – Fall 2009

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Hours: TT 3-4:15
and by appointment
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Texts: *Seeing and Writing*, 3rd edition, Donald and Christine McQuade, eds.
Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006.

The Open Handbook

Course Objectives: The objectives for this class are to:

- Offer extensive practice in “exploratory writing” and give you opportunities to experiment with your writing, experiment especially with developing your involvement and thought in your writing.
- Better understand the connections between reading, writing, and thinking processes.
- Understand the choices we make as readers and writers and how these choices affect the way we construct and revise texts. We will develop our writing by becoming better readers of others’ –and in time our own writing.
- Understand the ways we read and research and practice strategies that help us become better readers and researchers.
- Understand the ways we name our experiences through language and the ways we incorporate the voices of others through interpretation, research and assimilation.
- Understand the ways we interpret, analyze and create visual images through reading strategies and acts of composition.
- Give us opportunities, through reading and writing, and speaking to envision ourselves as a voice within an ongoing conversation of other writers and thinkers—as part of a writing community.

Course Organization and Requirements

The writing and reading in this course will focus on your own ideas and experiences, with the members of this class as your intended audience. Through writing and reading we will work to understand ourselves in relation to the ideas, images, and relationships around us. In this course, we will use writing as a way to think and explore connections and negotiate between the voices we encounter through reading, discussion, and thinking.

Although I will give you prompts to guide you along the way, I encourage you to make the assignments your own by finding the ways in which you connect to them—as an individual. You should do, on your own, any brainstorming, note taking, and drafting it takes for you to come up with writings to hand in for our reading. You will get responses to these papers which will help you open up questions and focus in on ideas that might be pursued in future writings. In class we will discuss samples of our writing to talk about the ideas we have brought up and how we might work to express those ideas more effectively.

The purpose of these writing assignments is to give you practice pursuing lines of thought on particular subjects over a sustained period of time and to create a community of student writers in this class. Through our class discussions we will begin to construct a working definition of what makes reading and writing effective. All writings in this class should be “exploratory writings” in which you sort through and try to come to terms the ideas we are working with in class and in the readings.

Types of Assignments

Exploratory Writings: For each selection you read you will respond, in writing, to an idea or passage. Many of these assignments will involve both a free writing response or a and a more focused exploratory writing (see attached sheet for full description). As a class, we will look for more than a plot summary or a review—we will look for you to interpret and discuss the meaning of the text in connection with your own ideas, opinions, and experiences. As a class, we will pay particular attention to your efforts to use writing as a way to arrive at a better understanding of the reading selections. We expect you to say something in your writings, to share your discoveries, and to teach us, as a group more about the way you—as an individual—perceive and interpret the selections. You will be asked to interact with the readings and to open up a dialogue in writing with those texts. These writings might be prompts, exercises, drafting or responses to the readings. As you write, consider yourself in the imagined company of the rest of the group as your audience because you will often be asked to share these

writings with us. These writings are primarily for you and your classmates as they ask you to put your ideas in writing and develop more productive reading strategies.

Process Memos: Several times during the semester you will be asked to reflect on your progress in the class and your development as a reader and writer.

Extended Essay Writing: In addition to the series of exploratory writings you will have other, more shaped writing assignments (including a research paper) that ask you to explore your ideas in your previous writings further. These extended exploration papers will still be “exploratory” in nature but should also demonstrate evidence of your desire to focus, expand upon and complicate your ideas and your ability to shape and refine your expression of those ideas.

Writing Portfolios and Grades

We will downplay grades in this course to emphasize risk, effort, and learning. Although you will not receive individual grades on your exploratory writings you will often get written and verbal responses from me. We will also meet in individual conferences to discuss your progress and focus. Keep in mind that if you engage yourself in the work of the course, put forth a genuine effort, use your writing to push your thinking, and take risks in your writing you will do well. I am looking for you to seriously work on and develop your writing.

I will evaluate your portfolios as a whole and assign a grade to the body of your work and your overall performance in the class; the quality of your drafts and final essays, the quality of your revisions, the contributions of your talk in class, your development in the areas of writing you’ve been working on and your overall progress in the course. Our talk in class will give you a good sense of what will be valued in writing.

Course Grades: Your course grade will be determined through the following percentages:

Portfolio 1: Coming to Terms with Place	25%
Portfolio 2: Projecting Gender/Examining Difference	25%
Portfolio 3: Icons and Images/Examining the Spectacle	25%
Participation	25%

Conferences: You should schedule at least one conference with me during the term. We will discuss your writing and your progress in the class. Bring your up-to-date writing

portfolio to each conference. A missed conference is equal to one hour of absence. It is your responsibility to set up additional conferences on your own. If you are having difficulty with the writing or just want to talk about your developing ideas I will happily make myself available.

Attendance: I do not “allow” any absences. After more than three hours of absence your grade may be lowered. More than six hours of absence is grounds for failure. Notify me ahead of time if you plan to miss a class. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and make up assignments no later than the following class period.

Tardies: Excessive lateness might also affect your grade. After 4 tardies your grade may be lowered.

Plagiarism: According to university policy, plagiarism (which I will broadly define here as passing off somebody else’s work as your own or passing off work that is not original for this class) constitutes ground for failure of the specific paper in question and the course. Writing lifted off the Internet or through online paper services is easily traced through plagiarism detection programs. Please do not risk your status or compromise your ethics in this class or at the university. I encourage you to include the work of others and collaborate with proper documentation and credit.

Grammar and Mechanics: I must emphasize that I assume you have a standard competency in grammar and mechanics. You will not pass this course unless I think you have such a competency. If you need to do some work in this area, we should get together early and make arrangements.

Email Correspondence: Email is generally the best way to communicate with the class and professor. Each student is required to register an email address with the SPSU Registrar. It is your responsibility to check your email regularly for this class. I will use it to communicate changes in the schedule and to post some assignments and to communicate with you individually. If, for some reason I miss class I will contact you via email. Please make sure your address is up-to-date with the Registrar. Something else to remember... Although email is convenient, it is not foolproof. Do not assume that your audience will always receive your email and/or attachments. This mode of communication should not be used as substitute for timely preparedness.

DISABILITY STATEMENT—*Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to discuss them with the teacher or contact the*

counselor working with disabilities at 770-915-7244. Please contact them as soon as possible to better insure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.