

University of San Francisco

Multicultural Alliances in Class, Gender, Race & Sexuality in a Human Rights Framework

College Writing II-Course 215.26 -Time: 1:45-3:00

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Required Texts:

1. *Toxic Literacies* by Denny Taylor, non-fiction/case studies
2. *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West* by David Rieff, journalistic narrative
3. *The Man Who Fell in Love with the Moon* by Tom Spanbauer, novel

Additional articles and documents provided in class

Supplemental Texts:

Bibliography to be handed out in class

Course Overview and Objectives:

All 215 writing courses are based on literature with a cross-cultural perspective. In this particular course, through our discussion and writing based on fiction and non-fiction, we will examine different cultural dimensions of class, gender, race, and sexuality as ways of understanding ourselves and others. And because education is a process of inquiry, on the basis of the themes of this course, we will entertain such questions as How do we define these four categories? How do they define us? How do we use them to fit in or not fit in with mainstream society? How do they illuminate our culture and society? How do they connect to universal human rights? What connections can we find among our differences and diversity? How do we speak and write about them? And what do human rights have to do with writing?

This course aims to allow a space for difference yet promote social cohesion, to broaden awareness of diverse groups as well as of universal human rights, to question assumptions and to undo prejudice. It is my hope that this course will encourage a view of writing as a discourse significant to participatory democracy, that it will create an open democratic space for the free expression of conflicting viewpoints, and that we will be able to rewrite our lives in the light of the texts we read.

As a writing course, this class further aims to:

- strengthen your skills in written and oral expression, including a refinement of research skills learned earlier
- help you apply course material for understanding yourself and improving your critical thinking, your problem solving, and your decision making

And by focusing on writing as a process, primarily through argument and analysis, the course also aims to:

- develop or strengthen your sense of personal responsibility (self-reliance, self-discipline, and self-interrogation).

Course Requirements:

For a grade of C or above, you must fulfill the following:

Attendance:

Be in class! More than FOUR ABSENCES WILL JEOPARDIZE YOUR GRADE. Call me whenever you will be absent (this will not necessarily excuse you). If for an utterly urgent reason you must be absent, you must contact me if you wish any credit.

Tardiness:

Late arrival is not acceptable. Students who arrive late disturb the class, often miss vital information, and insult both instructor and peers by implying the class is not worth the effort of promptness. (The #1 reason for employees being fired today is absenteeism and tardiness. Learn this now.)

Assignments:

Late assignments are not accepted. If absent, arrange to have them sent in with another student.

All work must, of course, be your own. Give credit when using others ideas and words. Plagiarize, and you fail.

Participation:

Frequent active participation in class discussions is expected. It is not a question of right or wrong responses. I want to hear your ideas, your point of view; I value different perspectives. Democracy cannot work without it.

In short, you are expected to come to class on time, your homework done, prepared to engage in discussion, asking questions, contributing to debates, and developing informed opinions about the issues raised.

Grades:

I dislike grades intensely. I would prefer to give helpful comments and questions only. However, grades are a university requirement. The total grading system for this course is composed of your three major essays (60%), your final paper (10%), frequent participation (10%), drafts and other writings (20%). Because thinking, perceiving, and writing are all acts of composing, you will be evaluated on how well you think on your own, how well you incorporate outside sources, and how carefully you express yourself. (See the Grade Rubric on the last page for more details.)

Short assignments will often be marked + (strong), (okay), and - (weak). If you have a several weak papers, make an appointment to consult with me about how to improve.

Your Manuscript:

ALL assignments should be done on word processor or typewriter, using 12 point (standard) type size and a serif typeface (such as Bodoni, Courier, or Times Roman). Double-space, but do not space between paragraphs except for a specific, literary format. Use one to one-and-a-half inch margins, UNJUSTIFIED, and number your pages. This is standard for nearly all publications in the United States. Your name, class section, professor and date (in that order) should appear at the upper right or left of your paper. Place the word count of your manuscript at the opposite corner, e.g., about 1260 words--round it off to the nearest zero.

Major Papers:

You will be writing three major papers on some idea based upon the three major texts for this course. These essays should be from 1400-1750 words (about six to seven pages) long and **MUST** include cited outside reading. Your final paper (on the self) may be shorter: four to seven pages. Some smaller papers will also be assigned. Make use of the Writing Center in Cowell Hall if you need extra help with your drafts.

Finally, I expect to confer with each of you at least once during the semester in my office. Make the appointment at your discretion. Don't hesitate to see me more often to discuss writing or other issues. If something disturbs you personally, please discuss it with me. Keep the channels open. Dialogue is vital to justice, community, and compassion. Though my standards are high, I do not bite or eat my students. I am a gentle man willing to listen, willing to see more than two sides to an issue, willing to help you through this course.

Schedule

The following schedule of paper and reading deadlines is tentative and subject to change depending upon the progress of the class:

Date Due; Assignment Completed:

January 26

- Read Taylor: 1-15.

Write a titled paper 250-300 words discussing something about this text which is neither a summary nor a platitude. Make a point.

January 28

- Taylor: 16-103.

In 250-350 words discuss both class issues and human rights issues involved.

February 2

- Taylor: 103-132.

Write a short paper (350-500 wds) discussing an element of the text that you connect with, i.e., which resonates as most familiar or true to your own experience. What specific experience of yours connects to one of Cindy's or the author's?

February 4

Draft of Essay I (4 p. minimum). Bring 3 copies.

February 9

Draft II of Essay (6-7 pp.). No copies. N.B.: Be sure you have cited sources using MLA style!

February 11

- Taylor: 133-214.

Write a short paper discussing an element of the text (language, idea, theme, character, incident) that most violates--or seems most alien to--your own attitude. Discuss a specific experience that created that attitude. How important is this difference between you and the text? Does it influence how you react to the text? If so, how?

February 16

- Taylor: 214-conclusion.

February 18

Final Draft of Essay I.

Bring Reiff's Slaughterhouse.

February 23

- Reiff: Chapters I and II.

Free response of 250-300 words, but refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

February 25

March 2

March 4

March 9

- Reiff: 76-78, 81-82, chapters V and VI. Reiff: 162-65, 188-89, 196-97 and chapter IX.

Write a response that discusses the failure of the West in light of Bosnia. Do research for your essay. Avoid plagiarism!

Draft of Essay II (4 p. minimum). Bring copies of draft and of 5-10 questions. Turn in one copy of questions to me.

March 11

Draft II of Essay II (5-7 pages). Bring ONE EXTRA COPY.

March 23

Letter of critique to your peer. Bring extra copy for me.

March 25

Final draft of Essay II. Turn in to secretary by 4:00 PM.

March 30

- Spanbauer: 3-103.

Give an emotional response to the reading then analyze that response. What has influenced you to respond in this way?

April 1

- Spanbauer: to p. 168.

April 6

- Spanbauer: to p. 260.

Write a paper (300-500 wds) discussing something from this text that is not a summary nor a platitude. Where does the UDHR fit?

April 8

Spanbauer: to p. 302.

April 13

- Spanbauer: to conclusion.

Response paper.

April 15

Draft of Essay III (3 or 4 pp. is ok for now. Fewer than three will receive no credit.) Bring 3 copies and questions.

April 20

Draft II of Essay III (6-7 pp.).

April 22

Letter of critique to peer re: draft II. Bring one extra copy of letter.

April 27

Continue research and revision for final draft.

April 29

Final draft of Essay III.

May 4

Draft of essay on the Self (4-7 pp.). Bring copies with 8-10 questions.

May 6

Draft II of Self essay, incorporating course terminology. Line editing.

May 11

Final draft & presentation of abstract of essay.