WRTG 3020: Writing with Style

Spring 2005
Section 027 MW, 3-4:15
ECCR 108

Instructor: Piper Murray
Office: ENVD 1B63
Phone: 303-735-5693

e-mail: piper.murray@colorado.edu
Office hours: T 12-4
and by appt.

Required Textbooks and Materials

- Copies of essays for workshopping.
- Weblog account.

Course Description and Objectives

Welcome to Writing with Style, a course that conceives (and celebrates) style as an art of selection, adaptation, strategizing, and self-fashioning. The goal of this class is to cultivate your stylistic savvy, or your working knowledge of the myriad ways that style can affect meaning. We will cover most of the basic elements of style, including voice, syntax, grammar, diction, perspective, sentence rhythm, and the like. However, we will always study and practice these elements with an eye for their rhetorical and political effects: that is, how their significance changes depending on context, how that significance is determined, and by whom. Toward that end, assignments will be geared toward honing your ability to identify the stylistic strategies at work in others' writing, and also to put those strategies to more powerful effect in your own. The format of the class will be seminar-style, with the majority of time spent discussing and workshopping writing—again, both others' and your own.

Course Requirements and Grade Percentages

Close Reading Essay (15%) A short essay in which you identify a particular stylistic strategy used by an author and demonstrate how that strategy contributes to the overall meaning or effect of the piece.

Academic Style Essay (20%) A longer essay, written in traditional academic style, in which you make an argument about the politics of academic writing.

Hybrid Style Essay (20%)
A non-traditional essay in which you explore some tension in your identity or background through the creative use of style. The culmination of your semester-long study of style, this essay will also be
accompanied by a letter of reflection in which you describe some of the key stylistic choices you made and why.

**Presentation (15%)** At the beginning of the semester, you will be asked to sign up for one of the assigned readings on our schedule. For that reading, you and a classmate will give a short (10-15 minute) presentation and then lead our discussion of that piece.

**Weblog (15%)**
You will be responsible for creating and maintaining a blog in which you write about and work through what we're doing in class. While the topics will be assigned, the “voice” will be your own.

**Attendance and Participation (15%)** Consistent and thoughtful engagement in class discussions and workshops is expected.

**Course Policies**

**Attendance** Because of the seminar and workshop format of this class, you need to come to all class meetings in order to keep up. Although any absence may affect your grade, the official policy is this:

- You are allowed four “free” absences (the equivalent of two weeks of class) without any formal penalty. For each absence past those four, five percentage points will be deducted from your final grade.
- There is no such thing as an “excused” or “unexcused” absence, so I would suggest saving your four “free” absences in case you have an emergency or are ill later in the semester.

If you know ahead of time that you will be absent on a certain day, please let me know in advance. The absence will still count as one of your four, but we can work together to help you stay caught up. Also, I take attendance at the beginning of every class period, so please try not to be late for class or you may be marked absent.

**Late work.** Late work won’t be accepted unless arrangements are made with me in advance. Please see me well ahead of time if you know you’ll be absent on a day that an assignment is due. That way, we can arrange for you to turn it in before the due date.

**Plagiarism Policy** Plagiarism is defined as the use of another’s ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgment. Examples of plagiarism include: failing to use quotation marks when directly quoting from a source; failing to document distinctive ideas from a source; fabricating or inventing sources; and copying information from computer-based sources, i.e., the Internet. Any plagiarized work in this course will receive zero credit, and may result in a failing grade for the course. We will be talking over the course of the semester about how and when to use and cite outside sources, but it is your responsibility to be educate yourself about what constitutes plagiarism and to avoid it. If you have any questions, I suggest consulting the university’s honor code and/or a handbook like Diana Hacker’s *Writer’s Reference*—or, as always, come talk to me about it.

**Important Note** I want to help you complete this course as successfully as possible, and the best way to can help me do that is by communicating with me. If there is any reason why you think you might have particular difficulty meeting any of the course requirements, such as that you speak English as a second language or have a disability, please let me know about it as soon as possible so that you and I can work together to address your needs.