FOCUS: CRITICAL WRITING

Although students sometimes question the need for a mandatory upper level writing class, faculty and administration at the University of Colorado have fought hard to keep the 3020 writing course in the curriculum. Many of us believe that our students’ success—both in their chosen careers and in their personal self-fulfillment—will be determined, to some degree, by their ability to write. This section of WRTG 3020 will build on the work accomplished in the 1150 and 1250 classes by engaging a deeper examination of personal, analytical and argumentative writing. Since exploring the worldviews in our various texts demands an awareness of our own individual worldviews, we have an excellent opportunity to work on both personal and analytical writing throughout the course. To this end, we will read and study several examples of the world novel, focusing our analysis on community, colonialism, race, gender, nationality, corporate culture, religion, violence and love. Required texts for the course are: Gilgamesh, in the translation by David Ferry, Willa Cather’s, My Antonia, Night, by Elie Wiesel, and Best Words Best Order, by Stephen Dobyns. To prepare for these longer forms we will study two shorter works, to be supplied in class. Our work will demand an interest in literature and the patience and humor to work through some provoking books.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

*To understand “worldview” as the prevailing structure of a novel.
*Recognize and evaluate a statement of fact, of taste, and of arguable opinion.
*Read critically, both for argument and beauty of style.
*See writing as a process extending over several drafts.
*Argue for and against other interpretations in order to advance your argument.
*Develop unique perspectives and a powerful personal style.
*Direct your ideas to specific audiences.
*Improve your critical thinking, writing, and speaking skills.

THE WORKSHOP FORMAT

The writing workshop is an exciting way to develop writing skills. By carefully reading and commenting on each other’s work—in an open forum that invites frank discussion—we will develop the critical and stylistic skills we need to succeed as writers. Keep in mind that faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions. Student drafts will regularly be work-shopped in class and will serve as secondary texts. For workshops, please have typed drafts of your work—with the specified number of copies—ready when due.

ASSIGNMENTS

During the semester students will complete several assignments for UNIT 1 and a 6-7 page paper for each of UNITS 2 & 3. Grade percentages are: UNIT 1: 20%; UNIT 2: 30%; UNIT 30%. The rest of your grade will be derived as follows: Class preparation and participation: 10%.
Miscellaneous work including, quizzes, peer reviews, short exercises, and worksheets: 10%. Student drafts will regularly be work-shopped in class and the ensuing discussions will help us develop our writing. All drafts of papers must be typed. Please double space final drafts. Only final drafts will be graded.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Please note that attendance is an important factor in a class organized largely around workshops. It is essential that you be in class, both for the discussion of your own papers as well as those of your fellow students. A one-grade-for-each-absence penalty will be instituted with each absence over two—(B−=C+ for three misses; B−=C for four). There will be no penalty for being over the limit only if all absences are due to medical reasons, and you have presented me with a medical excuse for each of them. I will make every attempt to deal fairly with students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Students needing to miss class for religious observation will be given an excused absence. As it constitutes a disruption of our work, lateness will not be tolerated. Consequently, the grade for class participation will be lowered in direct proportion to the amount of lateness incurred. If you are late you will be marked absent and it will be your responsibility to have me strike that absence from the record. Please turn off pagers and cell phones before class.

HONOR CODE

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council. Students found to be in violation will be subject to both sanctions from me and from the University of Colorado.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The University of Colorado Policy on Sexual Harassment applies to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes s/he has been sexually harassed should contact the Office of Sexual Harassment (OSH) at 303-492-2127, or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to me from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, or www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices.

CONCLUSION

One of the great benefits of small class sizes is that we can interact on a personal level and thus improve our chances of creating both personal expression and authentic learning. This is important because the two are interdependent, I believe. Our work will be difficult at times, but the art of writing may well be the most important basis by which you succeed in your career. I look forward to teaching this class and hope you enjoy the semester.