WRTG 3020-012
Topics in Writing: Alice in Wonderland

Dr: Paul Thomas Murphy
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Course Description: This is a topic-based writing course centered upon Lewis Carroll's two tales, Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass. We will begin the semester by discussing the tales, and throughout the semester we will be looking at a number of published critical essays concerning Carroll's work. The focus of the course, however, will be upon your critical ideas about these works. You will be working upon two major writing projects—culminating in one essay analyzing Carroll's work, and one essay that argues against another critical perspective.

Texts: Your own written work: the primary texts in this course.
Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, and Through the Looking-Glass (Signet).
Published critical essays on Alice: available through course e-reserves.

Coursework: You will be writing several short assignments in this course—short analyses of the Alice tales, as well as assessments of critical interpretations of those tales. Also, you will be responsible for two full-length essays. These essays will be the last step in a process of writing and revising. You will be submitting drafts of work in progress about every fourth or fifth class day for workshops. Although I will not be grading these preliminary drafts, they are necessary to class discussion and necessary to the process of your own writing. Therefore, it is imperative that you get your drafts in on time. You will lose 5 points from your essay grade for each class day any draft is late—including the final draft. Also, you may change the subject of your essay at any time, as long as we discuss the subject of your final draft at least once in class.

Participation: Your written and spoken participation is as important as your attendance. Also, I will be considering preparation as an important component of participation. Please read and mark your colleagues' drafts before you come to class, and be ready to comment on their papers. 10% of your grade depends upon your preparation and participation. To put it simply: if you prepare and participate regularly, you will get 10 points towards your final grade; if you don't prepare or participate, you will get 0 points. If you foresee a problem with participation, please see me during the first week of classes; if you foresee a problem with preparation, you shouldn't take this class.

Attendance: I'll allow three absences, but after that you will lose five points from your final grade for each subsequent absence. If you miss a class, find out from another student (or from me) what you missed; you'll be responsible for knowing what went on. Moreover, if you miss a class before a workshop day, please pick up and prepare the drafts for that next workshop. (Those drafts will be in my mailbox, at TB-1.) If you will be missing a class when you are due to pass a draft around, please call me or arrange to have someone bring your copies to class—otherwise, I will consider your draft late.

Come to class on time; late arrivals count as absences.

Plagiarism: Your work must be original. If you plagiarize any work in any way, you will fail the course. Ignorance will not be an excuse.
Special Note on Disabilities: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (Willard 322, 303-492-8671, www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

Paper and Paragraph Format: All work—except most of the short assignments—must be typed. In your heading, please include your name, the course number (WRTG 3020-012), and my name. Also, please make 19 copies of any work that we will be discussing in workshop—one for every member of the class. If there is not a copy for everyone, I will consider your draft late. Photocopying is a textbook cost; I cannot accept shortage of cash as an excuse for a late draft. Your analytical and argumentative essays should be as long as they need to be—but you should consider three full pages as a minimum length.

Grading: Analytical essay: 35%  
Argumentative essay: 35%  
Shorter Work: 20%  
Participation: 10%  
(Also remember that attendance can affect your grade.)

Tentative Schedule for the Course:

Week 1: Introduction to the course and to the Alice books.
Week 2: Discussions: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.
Week 3: Discussions: Through the Looking-Glass.
Week 5: Workshops: analytical thesis paragraphs.
Week 7: Workshops: first full drafts.
Week 9: Workshops: second full drafts
Week 11: Discussions: third critical essay, argument; Analytical Essay Due.
Week 14: Small groups: argumentative full drafts.
Week 15: Small groups: argumentative full drafts
Week 16: Argumentative Essay Due.

Reading Schedule: the Alice books:

January 25: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, chapters 5-8 (49-85).
January 30: Through the Looking-Glass, prefatory material, chapters 1-3 (120-158).
February 1: Through the Looking-Glass, chapters 4-6 (159-194).
February 3: Through the Looking-Glass, chapters 7-12, final material (195-239).