1. Contact Information and Statement of Purpose

Office: Temporary Building #1, Room 113
Phone: 303-735-0823 (Please do not use the WRTG main number.)
Email: Use the email function on the course-website in CU LEARN. If you have any difficulty with that, use timlyonscu@gmail.com.

Office Hours: to-be-arranged. Class location and meeting-time: HUMN 160; MWF 10-10:50

This class satisfies the upper-division writing requirement for the University of Colorado.

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In this course, you will learn how to take a position and defend it. Though this sounds like a simple process, most people don’t find it so. They find that to write a good argument requires practice, patience, and a willingness to question. I can’t promise that by the end of this course you’ll be able to argue like Noam Chomsky or write like Jonathan Swift, but hopefully you’ll take some significant steps in that direction. By the end of the course, you should have improved in your ability to take a clear position on an issue, find arguments to support that position, organize your ideas effectively, anticipate and respond to counter-arguments, read your own papers objectively and critically, check your own grammar and sentence-structure, and develop strong persuasive techniques in your writing. In addition, you will learn to direct your argument to a particular audience – to deal with what rhetoricians refer to as “the rhetorical situation.”

Hopefully, too, you will begin to develop your own style, your own voice, so that your writing entertains even as it informs, causing your reader to smile and nod approvingly as, feet on the divan and illegal Cuban cigar in hand, he moves joyfully through your essay.

In addition, by reading the assigned readings and writing the papers, you will learn a lot about educational issues and how to discuss them more effectively. Though we will focus on your writing, writers need something to write about, an area to cover; in this course, we will “cover” some issues and problems related to education. However, those issues and problems serve as means to an end: the improvement of your writing.

You will also learn a good deal about rhetorical theory, do a variety of exercises to help you improve your sentence structure and grammar, learn the basics of research and documentation, and get a taste of public speaking (as you give an oral presentation of your literature review).
will spend a lot of time workshopping papers, sharing ideas, critiquing arguments, and looking into the relationship between language and its relation to the world that it purportedly deals with.

2. Meeting State-Mandated Criteria

The Colorado Commission of Higher Education has mandated that upper-division writing courses meet key criteria in four areas: rhetorical understanding; experience in the writing process; writing conventions; advanced comprehension of content within a specific discipline or disciplines. This course will meet these criteria in the following ways:

Extend rhetorical understanding. You will work to meet this criterion in at least two ways, one theoretical and one practical. You will do a good amount of reading in what some call “rhetorical theory.” In particular, you will read substantial sections of S.I. Hayakawa’s classic, *Language in Thought in Action*, in which Hayakawa explores how language functions in various areas of our lives. Hayakawa not only examines the role of language in various prejudices and misevaluations, he also offers principles (many of them drawn from general semantics) of sound thinking, evaluation, and communication, paying particular attention to the following: distinguishing among reports, inferences, and judgments; exploring the contexts in which words take their meanings; clarifying the distinction between denotation and connotation; cultivating an awareness of the level of abstraction at which one’s assertions operate; seeing the confusions that often arise from classification and two-valued orientation; studying the role played by language in various attempts at social control, persuasion, and our ongoing efforts to achieve social cohesion.

You will also do some work, both theoretical and in your own writing, related to syllogisms (or enthymemes, the form syllogisms generally take in arguments) and their role in persuasive writing. You will work, here, with some of the writings of John C. Gage (*The Shape of Reason*) and Martin Luther King’s “Letter From a Birmingham Jail.” We will use King’s essay as a model of an argument that a) makes careful use of syllogisms and what we might call “syllogistic logic,” and b) makes arguments based on ethos, logos, and pathos in admirable ways. You will get a lot of practice in applying these techniques and principles in your own work, not only in refutation assignments that you will do early in the term, but also in the longer papers that you will do later.

Finally, you will learn to apply many of the principles of general semantics as articulated Mr. Hayakawa and other writers. These principles will prove relevant not only to class discussions and quizzes, but to all of the papers that you write in these classes – in, to use general semantics terminology, the verbal maps you draw and your attempts to make those maps congruent to the territories you wish to map.

Master Writing Conventions. If you need work on basic grammar, sentence-structure, or other writing conventions, the class should help you to improve in these areas. You will work on a variety of grammar exercises and in some sentence-level general semantics work which should help you to improve your writing and sharpen your thinking, helping you not just to write strong and clear sentences, but to link those sentences together to form a clear line of thought. You will also see the relationship between sentence-structure and clear thinking, using some of the principles of general semantics to help you hone your descriptions, analyses, and arguments.

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1 And that you will have an opportunity to revise later in the term.
Gain Experience in the Writing Process. Though a famous writer once said that writing comes “right out of the...gut and onto the...paper,” most writers find that writing involves much reflection, revision, and recursive pondering. Through the workshop process, you will find that most good pieces of writing don’t come together “all in one swoop,” but require much re-writing, re-thinking, and re-considering. You will receive a lot of feedback in this class, both from your classmates and from me. You will write multiple drafts and receive comments both orally and in writing; you will find yourself going back to some of the readings on rhetoric (see “Rhetorical Knowledge”) and applying that material to your writing. As you consider counter-arguments to any of your positions, you will need solid arguments in which you demonstrate the relevance of the evidence you present.

When you write arguments, you will have to distinguish between facts and arguments. Though we may think that facts by themselves serve as proof, usually they do not. In some of your assignments, all of you will have the same facts to work with. When you support your argument, therefore, you will have to do more than offer facts (for your reader, after all, will agree with you about the facts): you will have to show why you find those facts relevant.

Develop disciplinary knowledge; develop skills in specialized discourse within specific discourse communities. Your work in this class will involve many disciplines or discourse communities. In your papers, you will offer arguments about educational theory and practice. In doing so, you may find yourself dealing with issues in any or all of the following areas: economics, parenting, learning-theory, sociology, psychology; child development, politics, international affairs, philosophy, history, and ethics – and possibly others as well. However, once you have a clear sense of direction for your paper, you will need to speak to issues relevant to people conversant in the matters you address. You will therefore need to inform yourself about those issues and learn how to direct your argument toward those people.

Because educational questions have relevance to many audiences, you will have to make decisions about which audience to address. Once you make that decision, you will have to do what all writers do: think of the reader. What does your reader know or not know? What assumptions does your reader make or not make? What kinds of questions will that reader see as “questions at issue”? What kinds of arguments will best persuade that reader? You will have reason to recall John T. Gage’s definition of argumentative writing:

…a process of reasonable inquiry into the best grounds for agreement between a writer and an audience who have a mutual concern to answer a question. (The Shape of Reason: Argumentative Writing in College)

Finally, you will find that moral questions underlie almost all educational questions. Certainly the writers whose work you will engage see educational questions as moral questions. Even questions that seem to involve only the school budget will have a moral dimension. Those who make decisions about educational priorities have obligations to those for whom (or as whose representatives) they make those decisions, and students and parents have rights in matters-educational. Furthermore, decisions reflect value judgments and lead to consequences with profound implications for all concerned. Because you will find yourself talking in a very practical way about moral questions and will find yourself making moral arguments, I will present you with some very practical ways to evaluate moral questions.

Further, as you grapple with moral questions related to education, you will find yourself involved with what some have called “critical pedagogy,” using your writing and critical thinking to engage current social, political, and technological concerns. This critical pedagogy will find its
application in at least two ways, one direct and one indirect, the former having to do with the material you will study, the latter having to do with what you do with that material. The first has much to do with what Ann George says in Critical Pedagogy: Dreaming of Democracy: that “critical pedagogy can be distinguished...by its usually explicit commitment to education for citizenship,” a statement closely connected to the title of this course. The second has much to do with the training in critical thinking and argument, both crucial to citizens of this country as they analyze proposals put to them by people either in or vying for positions in government.

*Work with varied technologies.* You will work actively with the course website: you will follow web-links, turn papers in through the Internet, and exchange papers online. You will use Microsoft Word’s “Comment” function to comment on others’ papers or leave reminders in your own. You will engage in online discussion groups, exchange papers by email and by posting material to the website, and access material from online sources. I will encourage you to submit drafts as emailed attachments; I will then return them to you with comments.

In doing your literature review (see below), you will do some web-based research and receive instruction in working with the resources of the University of Colorado library system; in doing this, you will receive specific instruction and guidance from one of the Norlin reference librarians. In making an oral presentation of your research (see below), you can use any of a variety of media, including but not limited to power-point presentations, slides, film, and relevant web-sites, gaining experiences in techniques that may prove useful to you in either academic or professional work.

3. Course Overview

You will write three major papers (and numerous drafts thereof), a literature review, and at least two shorter papers. The two shorter papers will not deal with educational issues *per se*, but will help you to work with some of the tools and skills relevant to argumentative writing (e.g. syllogisms, dealing with counter-arguments, grammar and sentence-structure, distinguishing between description/summary and argument). You will also take a number of quizzes on assigned readings and do an oral presentation of your literature review.

As the course title suggests, you will look at the multifarious relationships involving authority, education, and the creation of a decent, moral, and effective society. The class readings raise some provocative questions about this relationship. You will grapple with these texts and learn to write claim-driven papers in response to them.

*The papers and their raison d’etre.*

*The two shorter papers.*

You will begin with refutation-assignments, summarizing the assigned arguments and then refuting them. In each case, you will attempt to demonstrate not that the claim “is wrong,” but simply that the argument doesn’t hold up. In other words, you will not challenge the *thesis* of the essay, but rather the way the writer attempts to *support* that thesis. In doing this, you will examine

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3 We may need to make specific arrangements to get access to these media, so you will have to let me know what you need. We will discuss all of this at the appropriate time.
assumptions, learn to ask straightforward questions about textual material, organize your ideas effectively, and support your assertions. You will not, however, have to come up with your own claim because I will give you the claim (i.e. that the argument doesn’t hold up); you will just have to support it. (See the annotated schedule and the course website (the “Assignments” folder) for details.) You will find, in these as in all assignments, that the principles of general semantics will prove helpful, perhaps even essential.

The first long paper: the “plagiarism” assignment.

Here you will make a policy argument: given a set of facts about a hypothetical case of plagiarism, what policy-option would you choose from a set of four possibilities? This assignment emphasizes four skills: summarizing (you will have to summarize the facts of the case), distinguishing relevant facts from irrelevant ones; angling your argument to a specific audience; supporting a claim. To do this last, you will have to not only give facts, but also demonstrate the relevance of those facts. Because everyone will have the same facts, simply giving the facts will not suffice as support for your claim. Each person will contextualize those facts differently. You will also have to take into consideration your reader’s knowledge of the case, assumptions, responsibilities (if any), and values.

The second long paper: E. D. Hirsch and Ivan Illich.
The Literature Review and Oral Presentation

You will read some of the work of E.D. Hirsch and Ivan Illich, two writers who at first glance (and perhaps at second and third glances) seem to sit at two sides of the educational fence. (As you look more deeply into these men’s ideas, though, you may decide that the two-valued thinking suggested in the previous sentence doesn’t prove very useful.) Having done the readings, you will write an essay in response to one or both, engaging the issues they raise and offering an argument of your own. As with all previous assignments, you will have to do some summarizing (though how much you do depends on your choice of audience). And, as in the previous assignments, you will find yourself looking at assumptions and doing close readings of texts. You will need to make decisions about what your reader knows and doesn’t know, assumes or doesn’t assume, values or doesn’t value.

At this point in the course, you will not only use all the skills mentioned previously, you will also have to come up with your own claim and narrow that claim sufficiently. (Recall that in the previous paper, you had only four choices, and in the two short papers, none at all. Here, you have an infinite number of choices.) You will need to ask, “What questions arise as questions-at-issue for my reader?” Once you answer that, you will need to ensure that your question has sufficient focus that it will lead you into a coherent essay (instead of, say, a two-volume work). To accomplish all of this, you will work in groups as well as on your own; you will have conferences with me, receive feedback on drafts and relevant exercises, exchange papers and comment on them via internet, looking again and again at your work as you chisel out your paper.

The Literature Review and Oral Presentation. Both Hirsch and Illich have a deep concern with that mysterious educational element we call curriculum: Hirsch makes some fairly specific statements about what he wishes to include (even providing a sourcebook) containing the material

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4 I have borrowed this phrasing from John Gage.
5 The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy. I have a copy in my office; come by and peruse it if you wish.
he sees as essential) and also presenting broad guidelines; Illich wants to dispense with most or all of what we call curriculum. Both writers give reasons for what they say.

How has curriculum developed over the years and centuries? Who has said what about it? Taking these and other questions into consideration, you will do what we will call a research assignment and rhetorical analysis related to curriculum-related matters. You will find that in different societies and in different times, people had different ideas about the purpose of education or schooling, and that they accordingly came up with varied ideas about curriculum. Admittedly, you won’t, by investigating these matters, answer all of your questions about curriculum, but you will perhaps get a better idea of what questions to ask and what pitfalls to avoid – and why. Your assignment will have three parts:

- Inquiry. You will find out who does what in this area, and why.
- Oral Presentation. You will make an oral presentation of your findings and analysis, using whatever technical aids you find helpful.
- Literature Review. You will present those findings and conclusions in a literature review. (For details, see the assignment guidelines: 3020 Inquiry, Rhetorical Analysis, and Presentation in the Assignments folder.)

In connection with the literature review, we will do some exercises related to research, documentation, the integration of source-material with your own writing, and other related matters. You will also have a one-day information-literacy seminar directed by one of the librarians.

One limitation on your research: because you will read the sections of The Republic in which Socrates presents his ideas about curriculum, you should, for your literature review, investigate someone other than Socrates.

The third long paper: Chomsky and Socrates

Here you will grapple with the ideas of two of the foremost thinkers in the history of “Western Civilization”: Socrates, as depicted in the works of Plato, and Noam Chomsky, linguistics professor at M.I.T. and well-known social and cultural critic. People still discuss the writings of Plato, and Chomsky would rate as one of the foremost intellectuals of the 20th century even if he had never said a word about politics or world affairs (the arenas in which he has become best known, at least among non-linguists). Both men concern themselves with education, Socrates

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6 We might also refer to it by the (in my opinion) more awkward phrase, “Assignment in Information Literacy.” I’ve opted for “Research Assignment,” but we should note that, properly speaking, looking up what others have said doesn’t really qualify as research. The research begins after you find out what other people have said or done. When our government decides to fund “research projects,” the government expects that the people who get the funding will do more than look up what others have said: the government expects those people to start with that and then go on to the real research. For example, if the government offers funding for something having to do with lasers, the people who get the funding will perhaps start by finding out (if they don’t already know) what others have done and how. Then they will go on to their own research. Most likely they won’t get the grant unless they demonstrate, in their proposal, an extensive knowledge of what others have done in the area-in-question.

7 Most scholars consider Noam Chomsky as one of the most important figures in the field of linguistics.
quite explicitly and directly, Chomsky by implication.\(^8\) You may find your researches into curriculum quite relevant to this final paper.

Having done the readings, you will write an essay in response to one or both, engaging the issues these writers raise and offering an argument of your own. As in the Hirsch-Illich paper, you will have to do more than offer summaries (though how much summary you offer will depend on your choice of audience). You will work your way toward a clear thesis and then support that thesis with relevant arguments, looking carefully at assumptions and anticipating counter-arguments as you do close readings of the texts. As in previous assignments, you will need to make decisions about what your reader knows and doesn’t know, assumes or doesn’t assume, values or doesn’t value.

As this assignment comes at the end of the term, it will serve many of the purposes of a final exam. Because we will have limited time available, you’ll have to work mostly on your own. The paper will therefore show how well you do when working on your own.\(^9\) Though I will help you with your work, I will not give you nearly as much feedback as heretofore. I will not offer thesis-suggestions, issue ideas, or direct you to evidence. You will have to apply all the skills you’ve developed up to this point. As with the previous assignment, you will have an infinite number of thesis options and may find that you need to do some research once you’ve developed a sufficiently focused claim.\(^10\)

**Quizzes and other work**

In addition to writing the essays described above, you will do a variety of exercises and take some quizzes on reading material that I will assign.

- **The Exercises**

  Some of these will involve grammar and sentence structure. We will usually work on these in class. The exercises will deal with such matters as modifiers, linkers, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, subordination, and pronoun-reference.

  Other exercises will come from general semantics. These exercises will focus on the relationship between language and evaluation. For example, you will do at least one exercise that asks you to take a questions on a high level abstraction (for example, “Is democracy a failure?”) and reduce the abstraction-level to something more operational – and that therefore lends itself to focused discussion.

- **The quizzes**

  You will take a number of quizzes on readings that I will assign. Some of these (e.g. Stephen Jay Gould’s “Darwin’s Delay”) will simply serve as models of good, focused prose. (Mr. Gould’s writing demonstrates many of the writing-principles that we will

\(^8\) At least in the work you will read. In other places, he has made some more explicit statements about education, but I have not found anywhere in which he makes the kinds of explicit statements that Socrates does. He usually emphasizes the social constructs in which schooling and education take place.

\(^9\) I don’t mean, here, that I won’t meet with you. But I think we will find that we can’t do so very often, not only because not much time remains in the semester, but also because you, with your various end-of-term demands, won’t have much if any extra time.

\(^10\) You may find the work you did for the literature review quite helpful.
discuss in class, as does that of Martin Luther King.\textsuperscript{11}) Most of the reading, however, will present material directly relevant to the writing assignments. (See the material above on “rhetorical understanding”). Much of this reading will come from Language in Thought and Action (see above) in which Hayakawa discusses abstraction-levels and their importance, the distinction between connotation and denotation, Alfred Korzbysky’s map-territory analogy, as well as various subjects related to summary, inference, and judgment.

4. Texts and Course Materials

- Selections from The Republic, by Plato, available online or through a PDF file that I will make available to you.
- Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know, by E.D. Hirsch; available in the CU Bookstore
- DeSchooling Society, by Ivan Illich (You can find a full-text version online. However, I have also ordered some books for those who prefer holding a book to reading material on a screen – a preference I find laudable!)
- Selections from Language in Thought and Action, by S.I. Hayakawa; available through Norlin E-Reserves
- Media Control, by Noam Chomsky, available through a PDF file on CU LEARN.
- Other documents available either on the website or through web-links (accessible through the website). To find the exact location, check CU LEARN (the “Practical and Useful Information” folder). On CU LEARN, you can find a document that tells you how or where to access all the materials you will need.)
- The Underground History of American Education, (recommended, not required) by John Taylor Gatto; available online

5. Teaching Philosophy

The ideas, theories, and techniques associated with general semantics, many of which you will find in the material from Hayakawa, inform much of my teaching. More particularly, I have found that many student writing-problems and arise from problems working with abstractions, particularly when the writer doesn’t have a clear sense of what operations lie beneath those abstractions. In practice, this will mean that I will encourage you to pay particular attention to your sentence subjects, to ensure that you avoid the kinds of propositions that though grammatically correct, do not contain a coherent idea. This usually occurs when the writer uses a high-level abstraction as a subject. We will have much to say on this as we proceed, but the short version goes something like this: If we wish to think critically, we must have in view some material – usually some set of operations – to examine; only then can we ask pointed, helpful, and coherent questions about the material-in-question. To take an extreme example, we could say, “Socialism is bad,” but unless we know what operations “socialism” stands for (because, after all, we will find many states that we might categorize as “socialist,” but in those states we will find a multitude of different practices, some of which we might applaud and some of which we might criticize) and unless we know what we mean by “bad” (do we refer to principles? obligations? rights? consequences? some combination of these?), we don’t have a coherent thought. If we wish to do what we call “critical thinking,” we must have something in the world to think about, but most of that world seems to consist of operations – of, perhaps, people taking

\textsuperscript{11} See the schedule for the assignment on “A Letter from a Birmingham Jail.”
various actions – and if we don’t keep this in view in both our thinking and our writing, we will find ourselves hopelessly muddled.

6. Grading

I. GRADES: I will use the following formula to calculate your final grade:

- First major paper - 10%
- Second major paper - 10%*
- Third major paper - 20%**
- Literature Review – 7.5%
- Oral Presentation - 7.5%
- Other assignments - 25***
- Grammar quiz - 10%****
- Class participation - 10%

* You'll have only a couple of weeks for the first paper – not much time. Some of the grades may turn out rather low. If you do better on the second paper, for which you'll have twice as much time, we can ignore the first grade and have the second paper count 30% as long as I'm convinced that on your first paper you gave what some people in the dim times used to call “the old college try.”

** We may not do very much workshopping for the third major paper. You'll need to apply to your third paper the skills you've developed while working on the earlier papers.

*** This category includes two short essays, a number of quizzes on reading material, and written critiques of other students’ writing. The 20% breaks down into 15% for writing assignments and 10% for quizzes.

**** You’ll have two grammar quizzes, one early in the term and one at the end. You can take the higher grade of the two. You must get at least 60% on one of these quizzes in order to pass the course. You must get at least 70% on one of them in order to get a “C” in the course.

You may also rewrite one of your papers; if you get a higher grade on the rewrite, that grade will go on your record. In this and other ways (“other ways” you can discern by reading between the lines of the percentages, so to speak), I have set up the grading scheme so that later grades have more influence than earlier ones. See the second-to-last bullet point below.

I will use letter-grades:

- A = Excellent
- B = Good; superior
- C = Average
- D = Below average, but passing
- F = Not passing

• When I evaluate your papers, I will take into consideration clarity, logic, substance, originality, mechanical correctness, and stylistic grace.
• What kind of paper receives an A? Just as all policies have drawbacks, so all papers have imperfections. Nevertheless, some arguments please even as they convince, providing both aesthetic pleasure and intellectual satisfaction. Those arguments will get an ‘A.’

• “B” indicates superior work. The argument needs to persuade quite well, but if it doesn’t address an important counter-argument or if it contains problems with grammar, mechanics, and sentence-structure, I won’t award an ‘A.’ We might see a B-paper as A-paper in need of some polishing, or as a A-paper lacking a key component, or lacking a certain je ne sais quoi that the A-paper possesses.

• I categorize ‘C’ as a commendable grade. ‘C’ means “average”; it does not mean “poor.” You will get a C if your paper has significant problems with grammar, mechanics, and sentence-structure, and if it doesn’t address some of the more important counter-arguments. A C-paper needs to have a clear structure, though, and it needs to take a clear position and offer some support. (Also: reasonably competent; formally complete, focused, developed, and balanced; perhaps lacking in originality or significance; some ideas left undeveloped or insufficiently developed; marred by distracting errors in grammar; with some strengths, but also with some weaknesses. For the argument papers, a error-free description will receive a ‘C.’)

• A ‘D’ paper contains even more mechanical problems and makes little attempt to deal with the relevant counter-arguments. It makes little attempt to deal with the issue or thesis. A ‘D’ paper leaves important matters unproven, often lacks organization, and either contains logical errors or leaves the reader befuddled. However, even a well-organized paper may receive a ‘D’ if it contains too many errors in grammar, spelling, or sentence-structure.

• An ‘F’ paper contains so many mechanical errors that it becomes difficult to understand. Also, a plagiarized paper will receive no credit (0%), as will papers that do not fulfill the assignment guidelines.

• Grading writing assignments often proves tricky, more so than grading math tests. In the latter, everyone agrees that 2+2=4 (in base 10, at any rate), but in the former, not everyone agrees about what constitutes good writing. If everyone agreed, editors and publishers probably wouldn’t reject so many excellent manuscripts. I make every attempt to grade fairly, and in the end I will stand by my judgments. On the other hand, discussion about your grade(s) can benefit both of us if it encourages us to think carefully about how we evaluate written work. I hope that this course enables and encourages you to evaluate your own writing accurately and honestly. Hopefully we can use the grading process to help us achieve this goal.

• I often tell students that I use the Lapsang Souchang Method of Paper-Grading. After reading an A-paper, I put my feet on the divan and say, “That paper deserves a fine cup of lapsang.” After reading a B-paper, I nod my head approvingly, but I do not feel I should celebrate with souchang. While reading a C-paper, I wonder if I need some strong lapsang souchang, with its smoky flavor and strong kick, in order to get through the paper. While reading a D-paper, I find myself wandering toward the souchang after the first paragraph. An F-paper requires several strong cups; without them, the reader develops nervous tics.

• Early-term grades may reflect nothing more than that you haven’t developed the skills necessary to writing good arguments. Presumably, many of you have decided to take this course precisely because you feel that you don’t have these skills. If your early-term

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12 John Kennedy O’Toole’s A Confederacy of Dunces stands as a case in point. We could cite many others. For example, Herman Melville’s later work – pretty much everything he wrote after Bartleby, the Scrivener – received rather negative reviews from both critics and readers. Today, many critics and readers find that work profound and enjoyable. Go figure.
grades seem lower than you’d like, don’t worry too much. Note that I give more weight to late-term papers than to early-term papers. And I reserve the right to put even more emphasis (that is, more than the percentages indicate) on those late-term papers if your grades improve steadily. Furthermore, you will have the opportunity to rewrite one of your early papers. After all, this class has to do with skill-development, not information-retention\textsuperscript{13} so your final grade should reflect how well you’ve mastered the relevant skills by the end of the term. If you feel rather shaky in the early going, you may feel disappointed in your grades for the early-term papers; yet if you’ve developed the necessary skills by the end of the term, your grade should reflect the skills you’ve developed by then rather than the skills you lacked early on. So, though you will do no worse than the percentages give you, you may do better.

- I do not grade your drafts. I will offer comments on them, of course, as well as on the final papers.

7. Other Policies

1. ATTENDANCE: You can miss three classes without hurting your grade. Each absence after the third may lower your final grade: a C might magically transform into a C- if you have 4 absences, a D+ if you have 5 absences, and so on. You must make up all work missed due to absence, but I won’t chase you down to give you the assignments. Those arriving after the roll has been taken may attend class, but every two such instances may count as one absence. If you arrive late, make sure I’ve marked you present.

If you miss a week or more due to illness (thus using up, in one fell but not-entirely-pleasant swoop, all your absences), discuss your situation with me. (See remarks below under “WEBSITE.”)

2. WORKLOAD: You’ll write three major papers and several minor ones. You will also have to read several essays and write summaries or critiques of some of them.

3. LATE PAPERS: I will accept late papers, but I will mark them down at the rate of one grade-increment for every day late. (For example, an A paper due at 10:00 AM Monday magically turns into an A- once 10:00 AM has passed away down the mysterious stream of time. It turns into a B+ once 10:00 AM has done similarly at the same time Tuesday, and so forth.) Writers have to deal with deadlines, so I take deadlines seriously. Sometimes the pressure of a deadline forces a writer to produce quality work. (I have heard that the pressure of deadlines has driven some writers to drink, but these cases have occurred mostly on the East Coast.)

4. PARTICIPATION: We will do a lot of workshopping, reading and critiquing student papers. Try to contribute. Why? Oral work can help you to clarify your ideas. Also, it can help your grade. (No-one will lose points for not contributing, however.)

\textsuperscript{13} Contrast this course with a history course. If you take a course in 19\textsuperscript{th} century American history and you don’t do well early on in your test on the Creek Indian Wars or Andrew Jackson’s presidency, your teacher would seem justified in giving that grade equal weight with a later-term grade on the Civil War and the Reconstruction. Your teacher might feel justified in holding students accountable for an entire body of knowledge, and he might feel justified in giving the Creek Indian Wars equal weight with other events. In that class, you don’t so much develop a skill as master and understand information. Our class has a very different emphasis. You have a skill to master, not a body of information to ingest.
5. PLAGIARISM: I won’t tolerate plagiarism in any form. If you plagiarize, you will receive no credit for the paper and may have to leave the course. I intend to use turnitin.com.

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, academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. I will report all incidents of academic misconduct to the Honor Code Council. Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information may be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/.

6. GRAMMAR AND SPELLING: If more than two spelling or grammatical errors occur in your final paper, your grade may suffer. An A paper may magically transform into an A- with the third error, a B+ with the fourth, a B with the fifth, and so forth. Because I don’t grade drafts, students often say, “Oh yeah. I know. I won’t make that mistake on my final paper.” Alas, they often do make “that mistake” on their final papers. Great sadness results! I would therefore recommend that you make every effort to write and spell correctly on your drafts. Like cigarette smoking, good writing is habit forming.

7. TEXTS: Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr.; Deschooling Society, by Ivan Illich; selections from Plato’s The Republic; Noam Chomsky’s Media Control; The Underground History of American Education, by John Taylor Gatto (recommended, not required; available online; see CU LEARN weblink); other texts as assigned. (See the list above.)

8. LIMITS: I reserve the right to limit the number of times I critique your papers. Most likely, I will critique no more than one version of your first paragraph, one version of each of your support-sections, and one version of your conclusion. An in-class critique counts as one of these critiques.

9. WEBSITE. I will use CU LEARN. This class has a website there. I will use that website for all emails and other communications. You can also find there all sorts of material relevant to the class: schedules, texts, assignment guidelines, various assigned essays; keys to the marks I make on your papers, and other materials. You should browse through that website and familiarize yourself with its contents. (You may find the website particularly useful if you have to miss classes.)

10. SUNDRY: Type all written work (including drafts). Serious and not-so-serious studies have shown that typed work drastically improves the disposition of university instructors, and sometimes the clarity of student writing as well. You will often need to provide a copy of your draft for each class-member. Please turn in two copies – the second an electronic version – of the final version of each major paper.

I may not accept a final paper for which I have not seen at least three preliminary drafts.

11. 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
12. RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS: Campus policy requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, I will make every effort to accommodate all reasonable requests as long as you give me some reasonable lead-time. See details of the university’s general policies at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

13. CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty-members 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. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, and nationalities. See policies at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.

14. 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 at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the OSH and the campus resources available to assist individuals who believe they have been sexually harassed may be found at http://www.colorado.edu/sexualharassment/.

15. Ever since the dim times, course guidelines in American universities have been written to sound harsh and unfeeling. In order to uphold tradition, I have made every effort to make these guidelines sound as harsh and unfeeling as possible. Remember, though, that guidelines exist so that you might master the subject matter of the course and so that we have a basis for negotiation should disagreements arise. Even in the twenty-first century, we should emphasize people more than policies, but sometimes we profit from policies that prod us toward perfection. Still, policies often need tempering, for the vicissitudes of life often bring on the unexpected.
Week One  August 24-28
M. Introductions, policies
W. Grammar Quiz I
F. Quiz: Thinking and Writing About Moral Questions
   Review Grammar Quiz; discuss Television Addiction (1st short assignment)

Week Two  August 31-September 4
M. Discuss “Thinking and Writing About Moral Questions”; grammar work
W. Television Addiction due; discuss the assignment
   Discuss Plagiarism assignment (1st long assignment) and IOCMR
F. 1st draft (no more than a page) of Plagiarism assignment; workshop

Notes:

• The Television Addiction assignment will test and tax your ability to work with syntax, grammar, and punctuation. It will provide training in summary, in paper-organization, and in relating your ideas to those of the writer: after reading Marie Winn’s “Television Addiction” (available on CU LEARN), you will summarize Winn’s argument and then refute it, relating all of you evidence back to your claim (i.e. that Winn’s argument is not convincing). We will not workshop this assignment in class.
• You will work on the Plagiarism assignment for some weeks and will therefore write several (at least three; more if you wish) drafts. We will workshop these papers in class, so you will have the opportunity to respond to various critiques of your work. Through this process, you will consider different strategies, reconsider various phrasings, learn more about various writing conventions, and angle your argument toward a specific audience.
• In Television Addiction, you will critique someone else’s claim-and-support (focusing, as you will see, on the latter); in Plagiarism, you offer your own claim-and-support.

Week Three  September 7-11
M. Holiday: Labor Day. Students labor joyfully on their various papers.
W. Assign Police Brutality (2nd short assignment)
   Workshop; syllogism work connected to Police Brutality
F. Workshop; syllogism work connected to Police Brutality.; grammar

Week Four  September 14-18
M. Police Brutality due; discuss the assignment; workshop
W. Plagiarism due; grammar/general semantics work
F. Quiz on Cultural Literacy; discuss the book and 2nd major assignment

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14 Ideals, Obligations, Consequences, Motives, Rights: the subject matter of “Thinking and Writing About Moral Questions”
Notes:

- The Police Brutality assignment has many similarities to the Television Addiction assignment: you will summarize and then refute; you will not have to offer a counter-claim; you will work on organization, etc. However, whereas Television Addiction rests on an improperly formed syllogism (or, we might say, the logic doesn’t hold up, among other problems), Police Brutality relies on a series of unacceptable assumptions (among other problems).

- Re: Hirsch and Illich: In the previous three assignments, you have not had to work too hard to find a thesis, but merely to support your thesis. (For the two short assignments, I gave you the thesis: that the argument-in-question doesn’t hold up, that it fails to convince you. For the Plagiarism assignment, you had to choose among five options. With this second long paper, however, you will have to do much more work simply to find and articulate your thesis. As you go through this process, you will find yourself giving much more attention to the rhetorical context of your essay: you will make decisions about your audience and about the approaches best suited to that audience; you will try to anticipate the objections that such an audience will raise; and you will develop ways to respond to those arguments fairly, honestly, and straightforwardly.

Week Five  September 21-25
M. Quiz on Deschooling Society; discuss the book and the 2nd major assignment
W. Worksheets due for 2nd major paper (Hirsch-Ilich; workshop
F. Group workshops; grammar/general semantics work

Notes: As noted above, the Hayakawa material you will read in the coming weeks has direct relevance to your writing. Chapter 1 (“Language and Survival”) discusses the significance of language for human endeavors generally. Chapter 2 (“Symbols”) begins with a discussion of the nature and function of symbols; it then introduces Alfred Korzybski’s map-territory metaphor and discusses its significance for all symbol-driven communication (such as writing). Chapter 3 deals with the issues announced in its title: reports, inferences, and judgments. Chapter 4 talks about the various contexts in which words and propositions arise and from which they derive their meaning. Chapter 5 (“The Double Task of Language”) begins with a discussion of denotations and connotations; it then investigates the relationship between language and judgment. Chapter 7 deals with the various ways in which language affects social cohesion, serves as a tool for propaganda, and effects society in pervasive ways. Chapter 8 (“How We Know What We Know”), drawing from Korzybski’s “Structural Differential,” presents various principles related to abstractions, operations, and clear thinking. Chapter 9 (“The Little Man Who Wasn’t There”) continues on the same theme, discussing the problems that readily arise when we don’t have a clear awareness of the level of abstraction at which our propositions operate.

Week Six  September 28-October 2
M. Quiz: Hayakawa, chapters 1,2; discussion
W. 1st draft of Hirsch-Ilich (no more than one page); workshop
F. Workshop; grammar/sentence-structure
Week Seven  October 5-9
M. Quiz: Hayakawa, chapters 3-5; workshop
W. 2
th draft of Hirsch-Illich due
F. Quiz: Steven Lewis’ website (see web-link); grammar/general semantics

Notes: Steven Lewis’ website points to the kinds of problems that can arise in very practical matters when we lose track of abstraction-levels. He emphasizes matters-biological (his field: he teaches biology at a state university) and looks, for example, at sentences like, “Dioxin is a carcinogen,” showing us how a more operational statement (i.e. a statement that tells us what happens when some drinks something containing a specific amount of dioxin) would help us to avoid all sorts of misevaluations.

Week Eight  October 12-16
M. Workshop
W. Workshop
F. Quiz: MLK’s15 “A Letter From a Birmingham Jail”; discussion

Week Nine  October 19-23
M. Final Version of Hirsch-Illich paper due; grammar/general semantics
W. Discussion of Literature Review assignment; frames and claims work
F. Frames and claims; grammar/general semantics. Quiz: Hayakawa chapter 7

Week Ten  October 26-30
M. Library Seminar
W. Quiz: Introduction to General Semantics; 1
st draft of literature review
Workshop literature review drafts
F. Workshop; exercises on grammar/sentence structure

Week Eleven  November 2-6
M. 2
nd draft of literature review due; workshop
W. Workshop; first day or oral presentations
F. Quiz: Hayakawa, chapters 8,9; second day of oral presentations

Week Twelve  November 9-13
M. Third day of oral presentations; workshop
W. Fourth day of oral presentations; workshop.
F. Literature Review due; grammar/general semantics

Week Thirteen  November 16-20
M. Quiz on Chomsky; discussion of Chomsky and the 3
rd major paper
W. Quiz on The Republic; discussion of The Republic and the 3
rd major paper
F. Chomsky-Socrates worksheets due; workshop

Fall Break: November 23-27. Eschewing the verb “to be,” students give things for all sorts of stuff.

15 “MLK” = “Martin Luther King”
Week Fourteen  November 30-December 4
M. Grammar; general semantics; workshop worksheets
W. 1st draft of 3rd paper due; workshop; FCQs
F. Workshop; grammar/sentence-structure/general semantics work

Week Fifteen  December 7-11
M. Workshop
W. Sample Grammar Quiz; grammar review; Q/A about whatever.
F. Final Grammar Quiz; Rewrites Due; 3rd Major Paper due
   Students go off to improve the world by presenting solid moral arguments.

I’ve used bolder typeface for graded assignments or quizzes.