Course Overview

The objective of this course is to help honors students improve critical thinking and writing skills by focusing on the rhetorical strategies employed by the writers of slave narratives. I will share my enthusiasm with you for the richness, variety, and complexity of these narratives, and will provide the historical context that helped to produce them. Since these narratives were written self-consciously, with an eye to how they would be perceived by readers, they are a natural vehicle through which to examine rhetorical strategies as you fine-tune the rhetorical strategies you employ in your own papers.

You will learn to shape your essays by first expressing an analytical or argumentative purpose and then presenting facts, observations, inferences and ideas in support of that expressed purpose. While skills in interpreting narrative will be covered and practiced in class, students should already possess the ability to read for inferences (that is, you should be able to recognize and explore ideas that are communicated indirectly in a text, not just explicitly). Although issues of grammar and syntax may be addressed in class, students with deficiencies in these areas should see me about where to get additional help outside of class.

Why is this class a “core” course?

This 3000-level writing and rhetoric seminar satisfies upper-division core requirements in the College of Arts & Sciences because it extends rhetorical knowledge and writing skills by engaging theoretical perspectives and addressing specialized disciplinary communities. This upper division seminar is part of the state-wide “Guaranteed Transfer” pathway of courses. Thus, this course meets the goals of an Advanced Writing course (GT-CO3) through:

Rhetorical Knowledge: The course examines the historical context in which slave narratives were written, as well as the rhetorical perspectives of the authors of slave narratives, including their attempts to persuade readers to engage in the anti-slavery cause. While our focus will be on persuasive writing—primarily analysis and argument—the course also focuses on critical reading strategies to enable students to recognize how authors choose images, language, and syntax as rhetorical strategies aimed at particular audiences. Key rhetorical texts that will guide our discussion of the primary materials include Rosenwasser and Stephen’s Writing Analytically, which focuses on strategies for critical analysis of disciplinary discourses, the writing process, and writing conventions. Key theoretical texts that help students examine these narratives through different theoretical frames include excerpts from W.E.B. DuBois’s The Souls of Black Folk, Hazel Carby’s Reconstructing Womanhood, and Toni Morrison’s Unspeakable Things Unspoken. We also will engage scholarly essays that analyze slave narratives from a variety of perspectives, providing opportunities for students to write papers that enter into conversations taking place about the slave narrative genre within various discourse communities.

Writing Process: The course provides multiple opportunities for students to understand writing from the perspective of various audiences. For example, in addition to examining reception of slave narratives within their historical context, students will engage in peer review of their own works in progress. The course covers a variety of approaches to the writing process, including strategies for generating ideas, how to make initial
ideas more complex, use of multiple drafts, techniques for approaching revision, as well as a variety of techniques involved in conducting constructive peer review.

**Writing Conventions:** The theoretical and scholarly texts within the course will introduce students to the specialized vocabulary and conventions of selected disciplines that engage the genre of slave narratives. In addition to learning the conventions of writing within a particular field, students also will learn how to make their analysis accessible to secondary audiences.

**Effective Communication Strategies:** Students will become familiar with writing within a disciplinary or specialized rhetorical situation, will practice effective communication strategies appropriate for different contexts and audiences, and will adapt their writing style to the context in which an analytical argument is made.

**Required Texts**

- **Slave Narratives**, Library of America College Edition, William Andrews and Henry Louis Gates, Jr., eds. An anthology of slave narratives that provides students with the primary source material for the course.

- **Uncle Tom’s Cabin** by Harriet Beecher Stowe, Norton Critical Edition, ed. Elizabeth Ammons. In addition to primary source material, this edition provides rhetorical context for the slave narrative genre, as well as scholarly essays that approach the genre within a variety of disciplinary discourses.

- **Writing Analytically**, 4th ed., David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen, eds. A textbook focusing on critical reading strategies, rhetorical strategies and conventions for different types of writing projects, evaluation of sources, and the writing and revision process. Referred to as "WA" in the syllabus. **Please note:** the 5th edition of this textbook is available, but the bookstore helped me acquire enough copies of the 4th edition to keep costs down; page numbers in the syllabus refer to the 4th edition.

- Handouts and articles on CULearn: https://culearn.colorado.edu An educational technological platform that supports teaching and learning.

- Articles on the Program for Writing and Rhetoric (PWR) website: http://www.colorado.edu/pwr

- Photocopies of your and your classmates' papers. Copies of drafts of your papers are REQUIRED and should be considered part of the textbook costs for the course.

- A grammar and style book; recommended: **A Pocket Style Manual** by Diana Hacker or **The Everyday Writer** by Andrea Lunsford.

- A CU email account that you check regularly

**Course Format and Participation**

This class will be taught as a writing workshop. Most of our class time will be spent analyzing and discussing your essays. The goal of the workshop method is threefold: to teach you how to analyze and critique the work of others; to provide you with feedback in order for you to improve your essays, and to give you models for how to assess your writing after this course ends. **Coming to class prepared, with all the reading done and with written and oral comments for other student papers, is a substantial part of your grade (see below).**
Workshops

The workshop sessions will focus on the strengths and weaknesses of drafts of your papers, and are designed to help you learn from each other. Therefore, I require that you carefully consider and critically appraise the work of your peers; in return, you will receive the benefit of your classmates' assessment of your work, along with my comments. Your critiques of other papers should try to identify flaws in logic, organization and expression and make suggestions for improvement; it also is helpful (and nice) to identify points that are persuasive and clearly expressed. Your written comments should include suggestions for how the writer might improve the paper. The focus always will be on the writing, not the writer. It can be difficult to accept criticism of your writing, but by listening to and considering such critiques, you will become a better writer. Revision is an essential part of the writing process. I expect that you will make substantive changes to each draft of your papers.

Paper Drafts

You will be required to write multiple drafts of each of the major papers. When you submit the final version for a grade, you will need to turn in the previous drafts that have my comments on them. Papers must go through the draft and revision process to receive a grade. If you do not turn in drafts, you will earn a zero for the assignment.

Overview of Assignments

The major, graded essays that you will write in this course (Papers 1, 2, 3) will develop out of a sequence of reading, writing, and thinking assignments that will culminate in a rhetorically sophisticated, idea-driven essay. Although the “short written assignments” are put into their own category and are not weighted heavily in terms of point totals, they provide the basis for you to explore ideas and get thoughts down on paper with little risk—if you do the assignment, you get the credit. There is a correlation, however, between effort put into these homework assignments, and the quality of your papers, as the homework helps you lay the foundation for developing your initial thoughts in to a thesis-driven paper.

Formal Exercise, Paper 1: this exercise helps students sharpen critical reading and writing skills and attend to claims and evidence by requiring students to choose an image from our first primary text (Frederick Douglass’s Narrative) and interpret it two different ways. 10%

Formal Essay, Paper 2 (approx. 5 pages): an analytical essay that uses one of several theoretical approaches studied in class as a lens through which to interpret and analyze a primary text. 35%

Formal Essay, Paper 3 (approx. 5 pages): an analytical essay that engages the claims of a scholarly article, uses strategies for engaging counterarguments, anticipates and addresses the responses of a particular audience, and uses strategies appropriate for the chosen audience. 35%

Short Written Assignments: exercises, worksheets, student questions. 5%

Class Participation: includes thoughtful participation in class discussion, preparation of oral and written comments for peer workshop, in-class reflective writing, timely submission of drafts, and attendance. 10%

Reflective Final Synthesis: a 2-3 page essay due at the end of the course in which students reflect on and analyze their engagement with the writing process and with the content of the course, and identify the writing strategies they will implement in future writing projects. 5%

In addition to the formal essays, you will complete a number of shorter, sometimes impromptu, assignments: in-class or take-home exercises, written questions for class discussion, quizzes on student papers, and detailed written reviews of your peers' work. Short assignments will be administered only once and are due in class (not email) unless otherwise specified.
Late Work

Late policy for homework: late homework will be accepted for half-credit if it is turned in by the class period following the original due date. Emailed homework will earn half-credit, even if it is sent before the class period in which it is due. I will not print emailed assignments; you may email me late homework to show that you have completed it; but please bring me a hard copy when you are able to return to class. Repeated late work will lower your final grade for the course, regardless of the total of your individual assignment grades. Plan ahead: computer or printing problems do not excuse late work.

Late policy for paper drafts: late drafts of your papers will affect your grade more severely than late homework. Drafts count as late if they are missing, incomplete (e.g., three pages when the full draft should be five), or you bring an insufficient number of hard copies to class for your group members. Late drafts will cause the final paper to be marked down by one-third for each instance (A- to B+, for example). Drafts sent electronically will cause your paper to be marked down. Repeated late work will lower your final grade for the course, regardless of the total of your individual assignment grades.

Attendance Policy

Class time is for the exchange of ideas and for deepening your understanding of the narratives and of writing strategies and conventions. If you don’t attend class, you won’t get much from the course; thus, I have an attendance policy: each absence after 3 ABSENCES (1.5 weeks of class) will drop your class participation score. If you miss 6 classes, you will earn a zero for class participation. For each absence after 6, students can expect their grade to further drop by one third (B- to C+ for example). Students missing 9 classes or more may fail the class. An absence is an absence: I do not distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences, so take care not to use up your three "penalty-free" absences early in the semester. Two late arrivals and/or two early departures count as one absence; text messaging in class counts as an absence. If you are absent, you are responsible for finding out what you missed before the next class. Extenuating circumstances, such as a documented extended illness (hospitalization), will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Please be considerate and turn off cell phones before class begins.

The Writing Center

CU-Boulder has an outstanding Writing Center where you can receive extra help with your writing. You can bring in papers from any class (not just a writing class), and you don’t even need a draft: you can bring in your assignment sheet and brainstorm thesis ideas with the Writing Consultant to get your paper off to a strong start. Consultants provide feedback and advice on all aspects of writing, including development of ideas, organization, the clarity of your language, and so on. They won’t “fix” your papers, but if you need help at the sentence level they will help you identify patterns of error and help you learn to correct them.

Planning ahead is key: the Writing Center is popular and appointments fill up. See http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html.

Hint: I’ve heard that if you can’t get an appointment, you might try stopping in at the top of the hour to see if there are last-minute cancellations.

Communication: please communicate. If a situation arises that interferes with your ability to do the work for this class, please tell me about it, write me a note, or talk to me after class. I would rather learn about problems, concerns, or suggestions during the course when I have a chance to help you succeed, than on a course evaluation, when it is too late to remedy things for you.
Campus Policies

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 (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member (including but not limited to failure of the course) and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Papers may be submitted to Turn-it-in.com. Other information on the Honor Code can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please provide a letter from Disability Services (DS) and discuss specific needs with me, preferably during the first two weeks of class. DS determines accommodations (303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, if a religious observance conflicts with your ability to attend class, please notify me two weeks in advance and make arrangements to make up the work.

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh
Schedule

- The due dates for assignments are subject to change. Short assignments may be added.
- Readings and assignments are to be completed for the date listed. You are not required to do the exercises in the textbook unless they are specifically assigned.
- If you miss class, look for homework assignments and handouts on CULearn.

Rhetorical Focus: Rhetorical Contexts for Slavery and Autobiography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Aug. 25 | Introduction to course; background on American autobiography  
Hand out homework |
| Aug. 27 | Theories and components of autobiography; reading strategies  
Read Howarth's essay, "Some Principles of Autobiography" on CULearn:  
https://culearn.colorado.edu (about 30 pages)  
Read the prefaces by Garrison and Phillips, and Chapter 1 of Douglass's Narrative  
pp. 267-286 in Slave Narratives  
Read these parts in Chapter 1 in WA (Writing Analytically):  
- Seeing the Details, pp. 1-5  
- Tolerating Uncertainty, pp. 11-12  
- Paraphrasing, pp. 13-14  
- Freewriting, pp. 14-16  
**Turn in homework** (handed out in class; also posted on CULearn) |
| Aug. 25 | Read entire syllabus (on CULearn) |

Rhetorical Focus: Strategies for Critical Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Sept. 1  | Read *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, pp. 267-368 (the entire narrative)  
Homework due (to get credit your homework must be typed); see assignment on CULearn  
Read assignment sheet for Paper 1, posted under the "Papers" link on CULearn  
Turn in course questionnaire (you may print and bring to class, or send to me in private mail via CULearn) |
| Sept. 3  | Continue discussion of Douglass’s *Narrative*  
Read the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution’s preamble and Bill of Rights (on CULearn); Homework due  
Read Chapter 1 in WA (Writing Analytically), section 3, pp. 24-34:  
“Basic Analytical Strategies” |

Rhetorical Focus: Making and Supporting Claims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Sept. 8  | **Turn in first draft of Paper 1** (4 copies);  
Read Chapter 1 section 4, and Chapter 2 in WA  
Begin workshop of drafts; discuss how to write helpful peer responses |
Sept. 10  Workshop Paper 1; claims and use of evidence
Read Chapter 5, part A in WA on linking claims and evidence
Read Chapter 3, part A in WA
Read pp. 113-116 in WA on passage-based focused freewriting
Recommended: "Slavery and Intersectional Strife" by John Hope Franklin, on CULearn

Rhetorical Focus: Reading Conventions and Strategies

Sept. 15  **Paper 1 due** (attach first draft); Assign Paper 2
In-class reflection on Paper 1
Discuss homework due next class; discuss proper documentation of sources

Sept. 17  Read William and Ellen Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles…* pp.677-742
Student questions due (to get credit, your questions need to be typed)
Read Chapter 4, pp. 133-136 “Reading With and Against the Grain,” in WA

Sept. 22  Read *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, pp. 243-266
Student questions due

Rhetorical Focus: Strategies for Generating Ideas

Sept. 24  Read articles on CULearn:
  - Hazel Carby, "Slave and Mistress…"
  - W.E.B. DuBois, from *The Souls of Black Folk* (theory of double-consciousness)
  - Morrison, “Unspeakable Things Unspoken”
Read Chapter 4 Section B (pp. 120-128) in WA
Homework due (typed)

Sept. 29  Read Chapter 5, parts B and C, and Chapter 6, part A, in WA
Read Murray, "Internal Revision" on CULearn
Homework due (typed)
Recommended: read Chapter 7 in WA (recognizing and fixing weak thesis statements)

Rhetorical Focus: Strategies for Peer Review

Oct. 1  **First draft of Paper 2 due in class**, # copies TBA
Read "Plagiarism and the Logic of citation" in WA, pp. 335-340
How to write a peer response (part 2)
Workshop sample paper(s)

Oct. 6  Workshop of first drafts; peer responses due
Read pp. 296-308 in WA, what to do with secondary sources
Read Chapter 6, part B in WA (using the evolving thesis to organize the final draft)
Skim Chapter 6, sections C and D, in WA

Rhetorical Focus: Peer Review and Writing Conventions

Oct. 8  **Full draft of Paper 2 due in class** (# copies TBA)
Discuss/apply Chapter 6 in WA, parts A, B, C, D

Oct. 13  Workshop full drafts; peer critiques due
Read Chapter 8, section E and F, on conclusions in WA
Oct. 15 Workshop full drafts; peer critiques due
Read Chapter 8, sections A-D, on introductions in WA

Oct. 20 **Paper 2 due** (include drafts with my comments)
In-class reflection on Paper 2
Assign Paper 3

Rhetorical Focus: Strategies for Critical Analysis

Oct. 22 Read Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, pp. 1-131 (Chapters 1-XIV)
Homework due (typed)
Review: Chapter 4, pp. 133-136 “Reading With and Against the Grain,” in WA

Oct. 27 Read Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, pp. 132-264 (Chapters XV-XXVII)
Homework due (typed)

Oct. 29 Read Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, pp. 264-388 (Chapters XXVII-XLV)
Homework due (typed)

Nov. 3 Read two articles in the Norton Critical Edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*:
- James Baldwin, “Everybody’s Protest Novel,” pp. 495-501, and
Homework due (typed)
**These essays are long, so plan accordingly**

Rhetorical Focus: Strategies for Generating Ideas

Nov. 5 Read Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, pp. 744-814 (chapters 1-12)
Student questions due (to get credit, your questions need to be typed)

Nov. 10 Jacobs, pp. 814-881 (chapters 13-26)
Student questions due (to get credit, your questions need to be typed)
Recommended: "Quasi-Free Negroes" by Franklin, on CULearn

Nov. 12 Jacobs, pp. 881-947 (chapters 27-appendix)
Homework due (typed)

Nov. 17 Read two critical articles posted on CULearn:
- Yellin, "Texts and Contexts..." and
- Herzog, “*Uncle Tom’s Cabin* and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*: the Issue of Violence”
Homework due (typed)
**These essays are long, so plan accordingly**
Rhetorical Focus: Engaging Counterarguments

Nov. 19  Paper Proposal due (3 copies); workshop proposals
        Discuss paper strategies
        Read "The Individualization of Elizabeth Bennet"
        on the PWR website; to obtain the paper, go to
        www.colorado.edu/pwr/ click on "Resources," click on "Occasions," click on "all articles."
        Read pp. 20-21 (debate style argument); Chapter 12, part B, and pp. 312-314 in WA
        Read Chapter 4, pp. 128-133 ("Avoiding Agree/Disagree" to “Uncovering Assumptions”)  
        Read "Engaging Counterarguments" by Norgaard, on CULearn

Happy Thanksgiving!

Rhetorical Focus: Writing Conventions

Dec. 1  First draft of paper 3 due in class, number of copies TBA
        Workshop first drafts

Dec. 3  Continue workshop of first drafts
        Full draft due: group Y; # copies TBA
        Read Chapter 9 in WA, focus on section B, the Psychology of Form
        Discuss final synthesis

Rhetorical Focus: Reflection

Dec. 8  Workshop full draft (group Y); peer critiques due
        Full draft due: group Z; # copies TBA
        Read Chapter 10 sections A and D, in WA; recommended: sections B and C

Dec. 10 Workshop full drafts (group Z); peer critiques due

Dec. 11 Final paper and final synthesis due in my box in ENVD on Friday, Dec. 11, by noon
        (See me if you would like to have an extension until Monday, December 14, at noon)
        **Please remember to turn in the drafts with my comments, along with the final draft

Have a wonderful semester break!