Contact information:

Office: Temporary Building #1, Room 113
Phone: 303-735-0823 (Please do not use the WRTG main number.)
Email: Contact me at tlyons3020sp12@gmail.com. Though the course has a Desire To Learn (D2L) website, I have decided to make only minimal use of the email function on that site. If you wish to contact me after the course has ended, do so at timlyonscu@gmail.com.

Office Hours: TBA  Class location and meeting-time: MWF 2-2:50; Hlms 104

As part of the University of Colorado A&S Core, this class satisfies the upper-division writing requirement for the University of Colorado at Boulder.

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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, all writers need something to write about; in this course, you will write about some issues and problems related to education. However, those issues and problems serve as means to an end: the improvement of your writing.

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Texts and Course Materials

- Noam Chomsky’s [Media Control](#) (PDF file on the class D2L website)
- [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, like me, like books at least as much as screens.)
- [The Underground History of American Education](#), by John Taylor Gatto; available online (recommended; not required)
- Selections from [Language in Thought and Action](#), by S.I. Hayakawa; available on the class website
- Other documents available either on the website or through web-links (accessible through the website). To find the exact location, check D2L (the “Practical and Useful Information” folder).
Class Policies

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

- First major paper - 10%
- Second major paper - 15%*
- Third major paper - 15%**
- Birthday Assignment (AKA: Inquiry Paper) – 10%
- Other assignments - 30***
- 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 30% breaks down into 20% 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.

II. 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.”)

III. 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.

IV. 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.)

V. 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.)

VI. 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/.

VII. 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.

VIII. TEXTS: Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr.; Media Control, by Noam Chomsky; selections from Deschooling Society by Ivan Illich; selections from The Underground History of American Education, by John Taylor Gatto (available online; see CU LEARN weblink); other texts as assigned. (See the list above.)

IX. 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. Despite this reservation, I think you will find me quite willing to comment on any draft upon which you have done substantial work.

X. 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.)

XI. SUNDORY: 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.

XII. 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.

XIII. 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.

XIV. 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](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html) and [http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code](http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code).

XV. 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/](http://www.colorado.edu/sexualharassment/)

XVI. 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, January 17-20

M. No class. Holiday.

W. Introductions, policies

F. **Quiz: Thinking and Writing About Moral Questions**  
   Discuss Television Addiction (1st short assignment)

Week Two, 01/23/12-01/27/12

M. **Grammar Quiz I**

W. Review Grammar Quiz; Q/A on Television Addiction

F. **Television Addiction due**; discuss the assignment  
   Discuss Plagiarism assignment (1st long assignment) and IOCMR

F. Grammar work; Q/A on Plagiarism assignment

Week Three, 01/30/12-02/03/12

M. Grammar Work. Q/A on Plagiarism assignment.

W. **Plagiarism drafts due (no more than one page)**; workshop Plagiarism papers

F. Assign **Police Brutality (2nd short assignment)**; Workshop Plagiarism papers

Week Four, 02/06/12-02/10/12

M. Workshop Plagiarism papers

W. **Police Brutality due**; discuss the assignment

F. Workshop Plagiarism papers

Week Five, 02/13/12-02/17/12

M. **Plagiarism papers due**; discuss Chomsky-Hirsch assignment.

W. **Quiz on Deschooling Society, by Ivan Illich.**  
   Discuss the material and the 2nd major assignment.

F. General Semantics work; grammar. Q/A re: Illich and the assignment.

Week Six, 02/20/12-02/24/12

M. **Quiz: Hayakawa, chapters 1,2.**  
   Illich drafts due (1.5 pages maximum for now). Workshop.

W. Workshop

F. Workshop; grammar/sentence-structure

Week Seven, 02/27/12-03/02/12

M. **Quiz: Hayakawa, chapters 3-5;** Illich drafts due; workshop

W. Workshop

F. **Quiz: Steven Lewis’ website** (see web-link); grammar/general semantics

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1 Ideals, Obligations, Consequences, Motives, Rights: the subject matter of “Thinking and Writing About Moral Questions”
Week Eight  03/05/12-03/09/12
M.  Workshop
W.  Illich drafts due. Workshop
F.  **Quiz:** MLK’s2 “A Letter From a Birmingham Jail”; discussion

Week Nine  03/12/12-03/16/12
M.  Workshop
W.  **Quiz:** Hayakawa, chapter 7; workshop; general semantics work
F.  Workshop; grammar/sentence structure work. Discuss Birthday Essay.

Week Ten  03/19/12-03/23/12
W.  **Quiz:** E.D. Hirsch’s Cultural Literacy. Discuss the quiz and the text.
F.  **Quiz:** Chomsky’s Media Control.

SPRING BREAK: 03/26/12-03/30/12. STUDENTS GO OFF INTO THE WORLD, USING EFFECTIVE ARGUMENTS TO MAKE IMPORTANT POINTS CLEAR TO THE PEOPLE YOU MEET. USE AGENT PROSE AS NEEDED.

Note:
From here to the end of the term, whenever you have drafts due, you can submit a draft of either Final Argument Essay (aka Chomsky-Hirsch) or the Birthday Essay.

Week Eleven  04/02/12-04/06/12
M.  **Quiz:** Introduction to General Semantics.
   Discuss final argument assignment and Birthday Essay (aka: Inquiry Assignment).
W.  1st draft of Final Argument Essay (or, as noted above, Birthday Essay) due.
   Send your Birthday Essay draft to your partner. (See assignment guidelines.)
   Workshop. **Quiz:** Hayakawa, chapters 8,9;
F.  **Quiz:** Hayakawa, chapter 10. Workshop. workshop; general semantics.

Week Twelve  04/09/12-04/13/12
M.  Workshop. **Quiz:** Hayakawa, chapters 11, 12.
W.  Workshop.
F.  2nd draft of Final Argument Essay due. Workshop.

Week Thirteen  04/16/12-04/20/12
M.  Workshop.
W.  Workshop.
F.  Workshop.

Week Fourteen  04/23/12-04/27/12
M.  3rd draft of Final Argument Essay due. Workshop.
W.  Workshop
F.  Workshop; grammar/sentence-structure/general semantics work

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2 “MLK” = “Martin Luther King”
Week Fifteen 04/30/12-05/04/12
M. Workshop
W. Sample Grammar Quiz; grammar review; Q/A about whatever.
F. Grammar Quiz II; Rewrites Due.
   Birthday Assignment Due.

I’ve used Red Bolder font for graded assignments or quizzes; I’ve used green for other material that you have to turn in, though not for a grade. I’ve used Green regular font for assignments that I will not grade.