Description

Welcome. This course uses *The New York Times* as its primary text. *The Times* has been a widely-read and well-respected source for national and international news for more than 160 years, and it provides many interesting topics to discuss, write about, and research. We will compare the content and rhetorical elements and you will compose your own versions of various types of writing that appear in *The Times*. We will read and compare articles about the same (or a closely related) topic but written in different genres in *The Times* and compare *The Times* with other news sources.

As you draft, workshop, revise, and edit your writing assignments, some of the questions and ideas that we will consider are: What is the news? What are *The Times*’ goals and how well does it achieve them? How does it compare to other traditional and new media news sources? Does *The Times* achieve political and social neutrality? What are the main differences between various types of news writing? What genres of news writing intend to make an argument and which intend to be impartial, and how well are such objectives achieved? Which rhetorical elements are most effective in which situation?

We will also consider many of the issues the documentary *Page One: Inside The New York Times* raises concerning the ways in which traditional news sources have struggled to find a place within the new media landscape. Since the beginning of 2009, more than a hundred newspapers have gone out of business, thousands of jobs were lost, and both print ad sales and circulation declined. Not only has there been talk of “the end of newspapers,” but traditional journalism has had to change substantially in the age of new media. What is/has been the role of newspapers in the US? What are the strengths and limitations of traditional news reporting? How exactly has new media affected journalism? How have newspapers attempted to integrate new media into their reporting? What is the role of social media and bloggers on news reporting? How are different interactive media being used to enhance news reporting? We will begin to answer these questions and more through thoughtful, critical inquiry into *The New York Times*. By the end of this course, we should not only have engaged thoroughly with *The New York Times*, but we should have a good sense of the way new media is both challenging traditional journalism and providing opportunities for better, more engaged news reporting and storytelling.

Designed for Juniors and Seniors in the College of Arts and Sciences, Topics in Writing strives to improve students’ writing and critical thinking skills. Through sustained inquiry into a selected topic or issue, students will practice advanced forms of academic writing. The course emphasizes analysis, criticism, argument, and rhetorical knowledge, while also placing a premium on substantive, thoughtful revision.

Materials

Please purchase a digital or print subscription to *The Times* and bring your laptop and/or digital device to class every day (unless otherwise noted). We will read and discuss the Sunday edition of *The Times* every week and you are expected to keep up with *The Times* daily. To purchase a subscription go to: NYTimes.com/CollegeDiscount. You may use your laptop or device in class as long as you ONLY use it for-course related purposes. Also, email access is integral to this course. I use email frequently for updates, clarification about assignments and schedule, and to address any questions or concerns you may have. Please check your University of Colorado email at least once a day.
Helpful Websites

For information about rhetoric: http://rhetoric.byu.edu
For help with writing and research: http://dianehacker.com/resdoc and http://owl.english.purdue.edu

Objectives

This course subscribes to PWR goals (http://www.colorado.edu/ArtsSciences/PWR/) and meets the CCHE criteria for the general education requirement in communication for advanced writing courses (CO3) in the following ways:

Rhetorical Knowledge: This course undertakes a rhetorical examination of The New York Times newspaper. We will analyze the rhetoric of news writing/reporting, argument/op-ed composition, investigative reporting, reviews, letters to the editor, and visual media. You will also be asked to switch between very different genres of composition and do so in a way that is rhetorical. We will also study texts relating to editing, argument, audience awareness and other rhetorical elements.

Writing Process: In this course you will learn to evaluate sources for accuracy, relevance, credibility, reliability and bias. Through the process of critical reading, writing and revision, you will learn to critique your own work as well as your classmates’ work as you draft and revise your writing assignments.

Writing Conventions: In this class you will extend your mastery of writing conventions, including structure and grammar. You will also become comfortable using genre conventions and vocabulary appropriate to your audience, purpose and medium.

Content Knowledge: By reading and writing about The Times on a daily basis you will gain a better understanding of important national and international current events and issues in journalism.

Requirements

Attendance (10%) & Participation (5%): The seminar style of this class demands your active involvement. You have a responsibility to me, yourself and your classmates to show up for class on time, prepared, and with your course work. Noticeable and unexcused lateness as well as failure to be prepared for class will likely be counted as an absence. You are allowed 6 absences before your attendance grade drops to 0%. Even though six absences are automatically excused, it’s always best to email me when you are going to miss class--especially if a serious illness or an emergency prevents you from attending a few class periods in a row. If you have more than 9 absences total, you will likely fail the course. Students who miss two classes during the drop/add period may be administratively dropped from the course.

Workshops & Conferences (20%): On the days designated as workshop, you will provide constructive criticism of your classmates’ work. Peer critique and draft preparation is extremely important, and both will count towards your final grade. Also, you will occasionally conference with me to discuss your progress and receive help with revision.

Weekly Writing Assignments (WAs) (20%) (roughly 250 words each): You are expected to read several articles of different types in the NYT every week (even on days we don’t meet for class). We will begin the course with an analysis of the different kinds of writing found in the NYT. We will compare both the content and rhetorical elements of news articles, investigative articles, editorials, reviews, and other genres that exist in The Times. We will read and compare a few articles about the same (or closely related) topic but written in different genres in the NYT as well as compare Times articles with other news sources about a similar topic. More importantly, we will examine how arguments are made in the NYT and
compare genres of news writing that intend to make an argument with those that don’t, and ask ourselves whether objectivity is achieved or whether arguments are inadvertently made. Which rhetorical elements are most effective in which situation?

Sometimes I will assign specific articles or types of articles (emailed to you or posted on D2L) and other times I will simply expect that you are up-to-date on current stories. Writing assignments include short summaries, responses and analyses. Also these writing assignments will assist your drafting and revising of your major assignments--an Inquiry Project and op-ed piece--and will receive either credit (P) or no credit (F). You are allowed to rewrite any writing assignments that receive an F; otherwise you will not be expected to revise them. Please type all writing assignments, unless otherwise noted.

**Inquiry Project** (30%) (2,000+ words): What are you interested in? For this assignment, you will choose a topic and do research about the ideas and issues related to your topic. You will use articles from the NYT and expand your research to include other popular and academic sources. Your goal in this assignment is to inform the audience about a topic at a deeper level than any news articles or opinion pieces alone could do. You will not simply report about your topic, but engage in inquiry, analysis and/or argument (more guidelines TBA). News analysis and feature articles in The New York Times are good examples of how you will approach writing and researching on your chosen topic. Your inquiry project should be engaging, interesting, well written, and enjoyable to write and read. It may also be multi-media. This assignment will be extensively drafted, workshopped, revised, and edited.

**Opinion-Editorial** (10%) (700-900 words): For your Op-Ed assignment, you will follow The Times’ guidelines for writing an op-ed piece and create your own argument about a topic of your choice. You may write for any subsection of “The Opinion Pages” and your editorial should adhere to the purpose, style and appearance of a NYT opinion piece. Most importantly, the topic should be timely, well argued, and clearly written (more guidelines TBA). It will be thoroughly drafted, workshopped and revised.

**Final Reflection** (5%) (500+ words): Near the end of the course you will write a final reflection on the writing you’ve done throughout this class. Your reflective essay will analyze your experience of the course requirements. Here are a few questions to consider: What was difficult for you? What did you enjoy? What kind of revisions did you make? How has the writing for this class been different than the type of writing you usually do? How has your thinking about writing changed? How has reading the NYT every day changed your view of the world? How has it affected your interest in the news and events in the world? What have you learned? Take your time and reflect thoughtfully on your progress as a writer, reader and thinker. The reflection should be engaging and detailed.

**University Policies & Procedures**

**Respectful Classroom Behavior:** Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty has 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 variance, and nationalities.

The University of Colorado at Boulder’s policies on Discrimination and Harassment, Sexual Harassment, and 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 at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Go to [http://www.colorado.edu/odh](http://www.colorado.edu/odh) for more information about the ODH.
**Plagiarism and the Honor Code:** This course is designed to help you avoid plagiarism. However, plagiarism is an extremely serious offense that can result in failing an individual assignment or failing the course. Plagiarism includes not only copying or paraphrasing from a published source or using Internet materials without appropriate acknowledgment, but also presenting another student’s work as your own. If you have questions about how to properly acknowledge a source, please consult with me. 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 and non-academic sanctions (including university probation, suspension, or expulsion). More information is available at [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html).

The University of Colorado at Boulder has a legal and moral obligation to accommodate all students who must be absent from classes or miss scheduled exams in order to observe religious holidays. For more guidelines go to: [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-and-or-exams](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-and-or-exams).

**Writing Center:** If you want additional help with your writing, go to the Writing Center (view its website for information on location, hours and services: [http://www.colorado.edu/pwr.writingcenter.html](http://www.colorado.edu/pwr.writingcenter.html)). Make an appointment well in advance.

**English as a Second Language:** If you speak English as a second language you should contact me during the first couple weeks of the semester so that I can better assist you in the course, advise you about special ESL courses, and/or refer you to appropriate services on campus.

**Disabilities Assistance:** If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to me from Disability Services in a timely manner. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities ([www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices)).
WRTG 3020 FALL 2012 COURSE SCHEDULE (More info will be emailed to you & on D2L)

Week 1  M 1/14 - F 1/18
Intro to course & watch Page One.

Week 2  W 1/23 & F 1/25

Week 3  M 1/28 - F 2/1
Analyze the NYT. WA 3 due Friday.

Week 4  M 2/4 - F 2/8
Analyze the NYT. WA 4 due Friday.

Week 5  M 2/11 - F 2/15
Analyze the NYT & begin working on Inquiry Project. WA 5 due Friday.

Week 6  M 2/18 - F 2/22
Analyze the NYT & draft Inquiry Project. WA 6 due Friday.

Week 7  M 2/25 - F 3/1
Analyze the NYT & draft Inquiry Project. WA 7 due Friday.

Week 8  M 3/4 - F 3/8
Analyze the NYT & draft Inquiry Project. WA 8 due Friday.

Week 9  M 3/11 - F 3/15
Analyze the NYT; workshop & revise Inquiry Project. WA 9 due Friday.

Week 10  M 3/18 - F 3/22
Analyze the NYT; workshop & revise Inquiry Project (due Friday 3/22).

Week 11  M 3/25 - F 3/29
SPRING BREAK (NO CLASSES). Begin working on op-ed.

Week 12  M 4/1 - F 4/5
CONFERENCES (WA 10 due). Draft op-ed.

Week 13  M 4/8 - F 4/12
Analyze the NYT; draft op-ed & revise Inquiry Project.

Week 14  M 4/15 - F 4/19
Analyze the NYT; workshop & revise op-ed & Inquiry Project.

Week 15  M 4/22 - F 4/26
CONFERENCES AND/OR WORKSHOPS (op-ed and Inquiry Project)

Week 16  M 4/29 - F 5/3

NO FINAL EXAM! HAPPY SUMMER! *THIS SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE*