Syllabus: Conversations on the Law WRTG 3020 Section 049 Spring 2013

Mon/Wed 6:00-7:15 pm
Location: Eaton Humanities 270
Instructor: Gail Georgeson, J.D.; M.A.-Linguistics-TESOL Emphasis
E-mail: Gail.georgeson@colorado.edu (best way to reach me)
Office Phone: 303-735-3058
Office Hours: M/W/F 10:00-10:50 AND by appointment. Additional hours will be available the week a paper is due. My office is in the ENVD building basement level, Room 1B50-F.

Reading assignments will be handed out in class, will be made available on Desire2Learn (D2L) or will be emailed to you. In addition, you may be asked to conduct independent research to find texts for certain assignments. This course has a REQUIRED online component which can be found on Desire2Learn (D2L) at https://learn.colorado.edu/. It can also be accessed from MyCUInfo. Sign into D2L with your username and identikey, then click on the name of the course. Go to “Content” to find assignments and other resources.

Writing Resources for Students:
The CU Boulder Writing Center, located in the Norlin Commons (Norlin E111), offers one on one consultations and is an excellent opportunity for you to get feedback and advice on your writing. To make an appointment go to their website:
http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html.

Online Resources:
The Purdue University OWL (on-line writing lab): http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl
The Colorado State University Writing Center: http://writing.colostate.edu
The Oregon State Resource Center: http://cwl.oregonstate.edu/Webresourcespage.html
Dictionary of Legal Terms: http://thelawdictionary.org

Objectives:

Open to Juniors and Seniors in the College of Arts and Sciences, WRTG 3020 (Topics in Writing) sharpens critical thinking and critical writing skills. The course focuses on rhetorical forms students will use in academia, in the workplace, and in the civic domain, across a full spectrum of persuasive strategies, including analysis and argument. The course reinforces skills taught in first-year writing classes and builds upon them, with a greater emphasis upon the situational quality of writing or upon rhetorical context: the relationship between writer, reader, subject, and purpose in the formation of a text.

Conversations on the Law focuses on developing rhetorical skills particular to the study and practice of law. Students will sharpen their skills in framing relevant issues on actual and simulated legal cases, or in a broader public policy context. Summarizing techniques will be followed up with drafting and revising effective arguments on selected legal and policy issues. The legal topics serve as a means to an end—to create a knowledgeable audience and a context for discussion and writing: a discourse community. In a workshop setting, students engage in a
dialogue with their audience, working out meaningful theses, testing rhetorical strategies, responding to objections and potential objections, and revising to meet the needs of their readers. Your instructor demands a high level of student participation and classroom assignments will emphasize each student’s role as both writer and as audience: observant, inquisitive readers of the writings of others. Specific goals of this course include:

A. Critical Thinking and Its Written Application

- See writing as a form of personal engagement, demanding an awareness of the inherent power of language and its ability to bring about change.
- Pose and shape a question at issue.
- Locate and use resources when necessary to exploring a line of inquiry.
- Critically evaluate information sources for credibility, validity, timeliness, and relevance.
- Draw inferences from a body of evidence.
- Distinguish description from analysis and argument.
- Distinguish flawed from sound reasoning, and be able to respond to and challenge claims.
- Recognize a thesis, and understand the organic relationship between thesis and support in an essay.
- As writers, structure and develop points of argument in a coherent order to build a case; as readers, recognize this structure and development within texts.
- Critique one’s own works in progress and those of others.
- Recognize that academic and public writing is dialogic, addresses an audience, and anticipates the thinking, the questions, and the possible objections of readers.

B. The Writing Process

- Understand writing as an ongoing process that requires multiple drafts and various strategies for developing, revising and editing texts.
- Understand that revision is informed by critical dialogue.
- See the critical analysis of others’ work as relevant to one’s own writing.

C. Rhetorical Situation

- Exercise rhetorical skills: frame issues, define and defend theses, invent and arrange appeals, answer counterarguments, and contextualize conclusions.
- Value writing as a collaborative dialogue between authors and audiences, critics, and colleagues.
- Make decisions about form, argumentation, and style from the expectations of different audiences.
• Recognize that a voice or style appropriate to one discipline or rhetorical context might be less appropriate for another.
• Develop “topic”-specific language that is appropriate for the defined audience while also intelligible to a non-expert audience.

D. Mechanics and Style

• Convey meaning through concise, precise, highly readable language.
• Apply the basics of grammar, sentence-structure, and other mechanics integral to analytical and persuasive writing.
• Develop skills in proofreading.
• Use voice, style and diction appropriate to the discipline or rhetorical context.
• Use paragraph structure and transitional devices to aid the reader in following even a complex train of thought.

Following are general guidelines on how you will be graded for this class:
  ➢ 40% Major Papers
  ➢ 20% Attendance and Class Participation
  ➢ 20% Homework and Short assignments
  ➢ 20% Quizzes

You will receive numerical grades for these assignments out of 100 points. All grades will be posted on our course page on D2L. At the end of the semester your final calculated numeric grade will be converted to a letter grade, which will be your final grade for the course.

Written Work Requirements: ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TYPED, DOUBLE SPACED AND LONGER PAPERS MUST BE IN MLA FORMAT. You are responsible for bringing in the specified number of copies when the paper is due. You will not receive credit for hand written work. You will receive grading rubrics for the writing assignments which will give more detail about how your papers will be graded.

Plagiarism and the CU Honor Code: Copying work from another student or a source without giving credit to the author is PLAGIARISM and is a violation of the CU Honor Code. Students in this course who plagiarize or who work on (collaborate on) a paper with another student without permission from the instructor will receive academic sanctions. This starts at a grade of 0 for the assignment, and depending on the situation could lead to a failing grade for the entire course. If you copy any text or paraphrase any idea from an outside source, including any paper written by another student, without citing it, this is plagiarism, and you will receive academic sanctions. 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; 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty.
member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). 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/.

Attendance Policy: Because this is a small seminar class, your attendance and classroom participation including writing workshops are REQUIRED and points will be deducted from your grade for missing classes and workshops. I allow for 3 absences, after which points are deducted from your grade, and I reserve the right to fail any student who has excessive absences.

Policy on use of electronics in the classroom: Use of any electronic devices such as cell phones and I-Pods for any use other than class work is not allowed in the classroom. Laptops and I-Pads used for in class activities are allowed with the instructor’s permission.

Students with Disabilities: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to your professor a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner (for exam accommodations provide your letter at least one week prior to the exam) so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see Temporary Injuries under Quick Links at Disability Services website and discuss your needs with your professor.

Religious Observances: Campus policy regarding religious observances 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. If you are planning to be absent due to a religious observance, you must email the instructor at least one class period before the absence and explain what the religious holiday or observance is that requires you to be absent. If you give the instructor this advance notice, your absence will not count towards your allowed three absences. If you do not give advance notice of this observance, your absence will be counted towards your three allowed absences. See full details of the CU religious observance policy at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.

Classroom Behavior: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. 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. All students are prohibited from causing a disruption in the classroom, and if they do cause a disruption, the instructor has the authority to ask the student to leave the classroom, and will report the student to the Judicial Affairs Office and to the Assistant/Associate Dean of the College. "Disruption," as applied to the academic setting, means behavior that a reasonable faculty member would view as interfering with normal academic functions. Examples include, but are not limited to: persistently speaking without being recognized or interrupting other speakers; behavior that distracts the class from the subject matter or discussion; or in extreme cases, physical threats, harassing behavior or
personal insults, or refusal to comply with faculty direction. Civil expression of disagreement with the course instructor, during times when the instructor permits discussion, is not in itself disruptive behavior and is not prohibited.

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, disability, 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.

**Discrimination and Harassment:** The University of Colorado Boulder (CU-Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. The University of Colorado does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities. (Regent Law, Article 10, amended 11/8/2001). CU-Boulder will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "Protected Classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or veteran status. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Student Conduct (OSC) 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://hr.colorado.edu/dh/.

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**Assignment Schedule**

*This schedule is tentative and I will try to give ample advance notice of any changes. You are responsible for completing all assignments even if you are absent. Points will be deducted for late assignments.*

**Assignments/Topics Covered**

**Week 1**

Short Assignment 1 Due: Questionnaire/Reflection on Legal Writing piece.
**Week 2**

(*No Class Monday Jan. 21)

**Jan 23** Syllabus Quiz; Due: Homework: Six Questions on Burns Editorial.

Discuss Short Writing Assignment 2: Write a Rhetorical Analysis of the Burns Editorial. (See handout for details). Bring draft to class next week for writer’s workshop.

**Week 3**

**Jan. 28** DUE: DRAFT of Short Assignment 2. Writer’s Workshop in Class. See handout for details.

Writer’s Workshop on Short Assignment 2.

**Feb. 1** DUE: Final Short Writing Assignment 2.

**Week 4**


**Feb 6** Homework: Questions on Malcolm Article Introduction Due.

**Week 5**

**Feb. 11** Homework: Questions on Malcolm Article Parts I-IV Due.

Begin discussion of Supreme Court’s Heller decision on constitutionality of D.C. handgun law. Discuss 2nd Major Writing assignment: Find a law review or law journal article in opposition to the 2nd Amendment arguments in the Malcolm article. (See handout for details).

**Week 6**

**Feb. 18** DUE: Email to me the title, publisher, and date of publication of your Law Review or Journal article, the URL if online, and a summary of the arguments. Quiz on Malcolm article and Heller case.

**Feb. 20** Workshop on Analysis Paper.
Week 7

Feb. 25  Class will attend Rothberger Moot Court Competition at CU Law School.*

March 1  Begin fact pattern and legal issues for Moot Court project. Sign up for roles in Moot Court.
          Analysis Paper Due by email to me by midnight. URL or hard copy of your article must be turned in with your paper.

Week 8


Week 9

March 11 DUE: Briefs for both sides in Moot Court case. Judges’ questions for oral argument.

Week 10

March 18 Moot Court Oral Argument in class.
March 20  Judges’ Opinion due and presented in class.

*******Week of March 25 No Classes – Spring Break *******

Week 11

April 1  Discuss 3rd Major Writing Assignment due April 19. Choose a topic on a legal issue of interest to you. Find a Law Review or Law Journal article on the issue and write an Analysis. Begin researching topic. (See handout for details).

          Begin discussion of Moot Court #2. Choose roles, review fact pattern and legal issues.

Week 12

April 8  Start preparations for Moot Court #2. Lawyer teams workshop briefs; judges workshop questions for oral argument.
          DUE: Email me your topic for 3rd Major Paper, name and credentials of the author, title of piece and publisher.
Week 13

April 15    Workshop on Analysis papers.  
            Continue work on briefs for Moot Court #2.

April 19    Paper Due by Email to me by midnight

Week 14

April 22    Moot Court #2 Oral Argument held in class (or possibly at the law school).

April 24    Judges only in class, discuss issues at oral argument; writing the Opinion.

Week 15

April 29    Judges’ Opinion DUE and presented to class. In class discussion about Opinion  
            and final Reflection/Analysis Paper (4th Major Writing Assignment).

May 1       Wrap-up; Questions on final paper assignment.

May 3       Final Moot Court Reflection/Analysis due in class.
            **Last day of class**. **There is no final exam for this class.**

EXTRA CREDIT CHOICES:

Attend one of these events open to the public at CU Law School, held in the Wolf Law Building  
unless otherwise noted. PLEASE check the website a day or two before to make sure the  
program/speaker is still scheduled. To get credit you must also write a one page reflection on the  
legal topic covered and the effectiveness of the speaker. If it’s a law school visit reflect on the  
class you sit in on. Due one week after you attend the event.

1) International Law and Drug Policy: a Presentation by Professor Carol Conzelman.
   Summary from Law School Website: Join Students for Sensible Drug Policy and CU  
   Professor Carol Conzelman for an excellent presentation about Professor Conzelman's  
   work in Bolivia. Topics should include the international treaties and laws governing drug  
   policy in member nations, the difficulty of changing or exiting those treaties, and the  
   indigenous people of Bolivia's fight to use the coca leaf for traditional purposes. Food will  
   be served.  
   WHEN & WHERE: Wednesday February 13 at 12:00 pm Room 205.

2) Affirmative Action…Then and Now (NOTE: Affirmative Action will be the issue in  
   our second Moot Court activity in April).  
   Summary from Law School Website: In a University of Texas case, US Supreme Court  
   Justices will have considered whether affirmative action can be justified if a school is
achieving diversity without using race. The case poses a new question for the court, which heard arguments in October 2012. Can affirmative action be justified if a university is achieving diversity without using race? The answer could determine the future of affirmative action in college admissions in much of the nation. Come learn about this pivotal question. Presenter: Professor Melissa Hart Lunch: Sponsored by Office for Diversity & Inclusive Excellence

WHEN & WHERE: Wednesday April 10 at 12:00 pm Room 207.

3) Visit CU Law School and sit in on a class. Go to http://www.colorado.edu/law/about/visitus to make a reservation for a tour and class visit. (Available Jan. 28-April 26 – excluding spring break week - see website for times).

*The Competition begins at 4:00 and you should plan to get there a bit early to get a seat. Please try to rearrange any conflicts in your schedule so you can attend this event. Please let me know if you have an unavoidable conflict. It should be over by 7:00. From the Law School Website: The Rothgerber Moot Court Competition, Colorado Law’s premier internal appellate advocacy challenge court, will take place on February 25, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. in the Wittemyer Courtroom. Top Colorado Law students will compete for honor and prizes in this traditional event that will showcase their talent. The competitors will be reviewed by three highly esteemed federal appellate court judges — Judge Alex Kozinski, US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, Judge Paul Watford, US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and Judge Diane Wood, US Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. The students will argue a case torn from the headlines — whether a publisher can he held liable for wrongful death when a reader, inspired by its how-to book, kills three innocent people in cold blood.