SYLLABUS: OVERVIEW, POLICIES, AND SCHEDULE

WRTG 3020-587: Sports in American Culture  
Fall 2013: September 3 to December 13 (see D2L Course Calendar for actual dates)  
Instructor: Dr. Peter Kratzke

* Office: Stadium 266C  
  Directions to my Stadium office. Go to Gate 11 (far northeastern corner--all the way going counterclockwise). Go past Office #188 to next door on left. Go up stairs. Turn right at top of stairs, then left into Hallway 266. 266C is a corner office with a wonderful eastern view.
* Office Hours ("Comma Club"):
  Thursdays: 10-12:15. Also by appointment.
* Office Phone: 303-(49)2-7282 (note: do not leave messages; email is better)
* Email: peter.kratzke@colorado.edu

Our Eyes to the Horizon

Welcome to this on-line section of Writing 3020, "Sports in American Culture." My name is Peter Kratzke, and I shall serve as your host, guide, teacher, and coach. At first, an on-line course such as this one--especially given the stereotypical barroom discussions about sports--might seem impossible: how can we engage in good collegial chat when our "classroom" is virtual? The question is a good one, but it is ultimately not all that crucial. Indeed, while we shall use D2L's Discussions to replicate the spirit of those discussions about our favorite team's chances for the upcoming season or the results of the latest sporting event, you should keep your eyes fixed on what should be your individual purpose: writing with greater rhetorical awareness and, therefore, effectiveness. After all, at the end of your college career, only you will be left on life's stage, as it were, to face your professional Future. Let me put the matter this way: I hope you recognize the story's lesson depicted in the Leroy Neiman painting above.
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SECTION ONE: COLORADO COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION CRITERIA

WRTG 3020 meets the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) criteria for an advanced writing course (GT-CO3) in the Colorado system of higher education through the following principles.

Extend Rhetorical Knowledge. Rhetoric is, according to Aristotle, "to see the available means of persuasion." In this course, we shall consider effective strategies for distributing ideas, using evidence, and shaping language for given audiences and purposes. We shall also employ reflective practices by informed response to each other's and our own work. Finally--and perhaps most importantly--the field of Rhetoric/Composition is our cornerstone for answering what the CCHE calls "advanced rhetorical knowledge." For each of the four major units composing the curricular backbone of this course, I shall supply a kind of keynote critical essay from the field.

Extend Experience in Writing Processes. Reading, speaking, and writing are dynamically related in developing, revising, and editing our writing. Our workshop exchanges (in the Discussions and with the third and fourth major units) will provide opportunities for constructive feedback as well as incorporating feedback into the development of subsequent work. Assignments demand research methods and handling specialized sources connected to issues, language, and modes of analysis across disciplines. Along the way, we shall attend to the accuracy and relevance of sources.

Extend Mastery of Writing Conventions. Conventions define "discourse communities" (or, as I like to say, "communities of expectations"). In this course, the sequence of assignments moves from exposition to analysis to argument. Elements of effective writing style create awareness of the writing process.

Demonstrate Content Knowledge and Advanced Communication Strategies. Advanced writing means understanding how logic shapes how we present concrete information. In this course, the progression of assignments, as well as work with peers, heightens awareness of the
relationship between content and audience. Anyone, after all, can memorize sports statistics. In this course, we attend to what we do with information!

SECTION TWO: CU AND THE PROGRAM FOR WRITING AND RHETORIC (PWR)

Let us shift to how the Program for Writing and Rhetoric (PWR) responds to the CCHE's stipulations. The following is the program's overview of objectives for 3020.

"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. This course reinforces skills taught in first-year writing classes and builds on them, with a greater emphasis on the situational nature to writer, reader, subject, and purpose in the formation of a text.

Topics in Writing courses focus upon specific subjects, but these courses are not intended to supplement one's knowledge in a major. Rather, the topic serves 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 (and revising, and revising!) to meet the needs of their readers. Instructors of 3020 courses demand a high level of student participation and emphasize each student's role as both writer and as audience: observant, inquisitive readers of the writings of others. Students should leave a 3020 class as more sophisticated writers who understand that the rhetorical situation--rather than a rule book--will invite unique responses based upon their particular goals. This experience should help them recognize writing as a form of personal engagement, demanding an awareness of the inherent power of language and its ability to bring about change.

To that end, the PWR's institutional approach to WRTG 3020 has established goals within four key areas:

Critical Thinking and Its Written Application
The Writing Process
Rhetorical Situation
Mechanics and Style

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.
* 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.

**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.

**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.

**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."

**SECTION THREE: REQUIRED TEXTS/MATERIALS**

* Readings. With only a few exceptions, I shall post readings on D2L. You will note that, for files in Microsoft Word ("doc"), I have also saved for you in HTML when possible. The doc files, of course, are much nicer to read, so I advise you use those. I do not offer the PDF-formatted documents in HTML, but, if you wish, you can generally find those documents on the web.
* Lectures and key documents (e.g., what you will come to know as Notes on Language, Rules and Principles, Essay Contract, et al.). You should print and study these materials. Instead of your buying a textbook, consider printer supplies as equivalent in your financial budget.

* Required: access to Microsoft Word that can be format and read a "doc" (2003) and "docx" file. For my part, I use the "doc" format to keep all my files in alignment and, more importantly, for ease of that version’s Track Change (marginal comment) feature. When you submit documents to me, you may use either "doc" or "docx"--no "rtf" or "zip" or any other format. Aside: if you ever receive a response with no apparent Track Changes, hit "New Comment" over one of the red vertical lines to reveal my comments (such is usually not a problem, but I mention this trick just in case).

SECTION FOUR: POLICIES

"Consistency at the Major League level is difficult to achieve and maintain, be it individually or as a team. But when the small parts of the game are recognized, attended to, and executed, it makes consistency and winning that much easier to accomplish. The teams that consistently compete for division titles and playoff berths are usually those that take advantage of opportunities to win by executing the fundamentals of the game[. . .]."

- Jeff Bridich, Rockies Director of Baseball Operations, 2009

The following is a veritable barrage of information, much of it probably familiar to you from other courses. My advice is that you skim over all of it to see what might pertain, then peruse (i.e., study carefully) what you find important. As citizens of the course, though, know that you are responsible at some institutional level for all policies and practices. Allow me: in my experience, students continually demonstrate that "competence is of a piece." By this idea, I mean that everything about a student's performance tends to run together toward a given level of achievement. You already know the idea from sports: rarely can one, for instance, shoot a basketball "lights out" but not dribble well. Likewise, rarely is a student neglectful of reading, habitually tardy in submitting work, but otherwise capable of producing excellent writing.

University Policies

* Disabilities. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner 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 Medical Conditions: Injuries, Surgeries, and Illnesses guidelines 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. Please
notify me in advance, and I shall accommodate you.
See full details at the following:
http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

* Classroom Behavior (see note, below). 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, 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 the following:
http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and
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://www.colorado.edu/odh

* Honor Code (see note, below). 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 the following:
http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at
http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/

English as a Foreign Language. If you speak English as a second language, then you need to contact me before the second class meeting 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.
Special Notes/Amplifications

Dropping the Course. Should the occasion arise, students are responsible for dropping themselves from the course and verifying the process.

Email. This class will use e-mail communication for messages from me, for general discussion, and at times for the circulation of drafts. Please check your university e-mail account (Colorado.edu) each day. If you use a non-university e-mail account (e.g., hotmail, msn, et al.), be sure to link it to the university e-mail account. Access to on-line library materials requires that you be identified as a university user. For assistance on technical computing matters, contact 735-HELP for the Information Technology Help Line.

Complaints. Before you do anything, please consult with me should you have a question, comment, or other consideration about the class content or my conduct/teaching. If we can reach no amicable solution, then I shall work for you in discussing the matter with the appropriate authorities.

Plagiarism (Honor Code). I have one word about plagiarism (from Greek, "to steal"): don't. The crowning irony of almost every plagiarism case is that competent students who could plagiarize successfully do not need to resort to it, and incompetent students who can't do it well do and, almost inevitably, either so misuse their sources that they fail on the level of answering a given assignment or, worse, get caught in their duplicity. Depending on the school, getting caught could land you in a world of hurt. Of course, if you get expelled, you might find another school, but, if your school permanently marks your transcript, the party's over. No prospective employer, much less graduate or professional school, is going to want you. No matter how desperate you might feel in any college course, no assignment grade is worth that fate. Anyway, I do not anticipate any problems during the course, but do note that plagiarism for this course at the least will result in an automatic F for a course grade as well as university-mandated disciplinary procedures.

Decorum/Behavior

Given an idea I shall repeatedly note in this course, electronic communication is a notorious example of how body language, verbal inflection, and the speaker's overall presence are not transcendent. What we wish to say is not necessary what we convey. Your postings, for instance, to the D2L Discussions should thus be respectful and constructive. Check your spelling, use an appropriate greeting, and do not use all caps (the email equivalent of shouting). Should you become disruptive or rude, I reserve the right to remove your postings and lower your course grade to the point of your failing. Likewise, peer review of drafts, which we shall undertake during the second two major units, should always be conducted in the best spirit of professional criticism (that is, constructive in substantive terms while kind in personal terms).
SECTION FIVE: COURSE PHILOSOPHY

"A little learning is a dangerous thing;  
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.  
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,  
And drinking largely sobers us again."
- Alexander Pope

The words of Alexander Pope (of no sports note whatsoever) are probably the truest ever inked about education or, for that matter, the world of sports. Rules and principle define procedure; competitive arenas are social and, so, have sets of expectations; attitude is critical to community; the activity at hand transcends those who happen to be doing it at any given moment: all these aspects apply to argumentation and sports equally. Although our topic thus serves as a driving metaphor, our ultimate concern in this course is to develop skills in the Liberal Arts core tradition of critical thinking and literacy (I call the two "the twin headlights of the Liberal Arts"). Throughout the semester, you will have the opportunity to develop these two facilities that define, I would argue, nothing less than one's personal and even cultural identities. In a reductive sense, then, this course is not really about sports at all. Rather, it is about how you think about sports--the heart of what is called "metacognition" (that is, thinking about thinking).

As you enter this semester, I demand only three overriding, sequential qualities in you: curiosity, hard work, and honesty. Only through these qualities, I believe, might one ever achieve true enthusiasm. Before you dismiss enthusiasm as meaning little more than a kind of giddiness, check the Greek etymology of the word (it means "to walk with God"). No two ways about it: I take this course very seriously, and you should, too.

SECTION SIX: COURSE DELIVERY, EMAIL, AND THE LECTURES

"Do I repeat myself?  Very well, then, I repeat myself."
- Peter Kratzke, adapting Walt Whitman

Given the course calendar, I shall email you files (in "doc" format) that will constitute (1) my discussions about curricular matters and (2) specific instructions about reading and writing assignments. I call these files "Lectures," and they put flesh on the bones of the skeletal course outline found in Section Ten. Just how carefully you read my transmittal emails and study the Lectures--believe me when I say the following--will be manifest in all sorts of ways: the quality of your work, your grade, and your education. Self-reliant students who truly study materials quickly separate themselves from students who merely scroll cursorily along on their computer screens. Far more than the grades that quantitatively separate the two kinds of students, though, the former students take something useful to their work in other courses and beyond college.
Notes about Email and the Lectures

* I work with my "normal" colorado.edu email. My transmittals to all students, my distribution of the Lectures, your submission of assignments, and the exchanges between you and me on an individual basis: all these occasions will use the colorado.edu email.

* So that I can file emails properly, please title "subject" line with your name, section, and one-word topic. For instance: "Joe Tate, 3020-583, assignment question."

* Be very careful to keep your email capacity under control. A bounced email is a real headache for me.

* Save all of my emails and Lectures in a separate email folder for handy reference.

* Between my transmittal emails and Lectures, I shall repeat myself at times, but that is not a problem: call the effect a matter of emphasis.

* I shall format Lectures in Times New Roman font. The better students print the Lectures for study--and in a font that suits their eyes.

* In your own writing for this course's assignments (essays or papers), "Do as I say, not as I do." The Lectures, after all, are meant to be far more informal than I shall allow in your formal essays as you journey toward argumentation.

* If you do not understand something at any point, you will not necessarily have a chance to "catch up" later. The result will cost you in your performance and, ultimately, your education. Believe this truth: on-line work truly puts the "independent" and "study" in the term "independent study" even while we proceed as a community.

* If you see even so much as a comma in the Lectures that does not make sense to you, please please please call it to my attention or ask about it. In your asking questions, always be specific: what, exactly, do you not understand? Not only will I be able to answer you directly, but I shall revise my materials. For instance, you should write, "On Page X of the Lecture, you write so-and-so; do you mean by so-and-so that we are to do such-and-such?" This practice of your asking informed questions is crucial to driving (and defining) your very education. On my end, you "help me"--in those familiar words from Jerry Maguire--"help you"!

SECTION SEVEN: COURSE DELIVERY AND ONLINE D2L DISCUSSIONS

"Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man."
- Sir Francis Bacon

Throughout the semester, we shall "walk the talk" of Bacon's formulation. I shall treat writing in Section Eight, which leaves reading and conference for this section. As you already must sense, you will read a great deal this semester, beginning with the Lectures. Meanwhile, our sports-related readings will be largely informational, our emphasis on what we do with information in formal argumentation--that doing, not the information itself, is what represents our curricular
focus. Do not, in other words, confuse our curriculum for one centered on "sports in literature," much less "sports writing." In terms of our conferencing with each other, rather than attempting synchronous ("real time") online discussions, we shall use the D2L Discussions feature. I shall post categories for your responses, and your job will be to contribute something intellectual and substantive (that is, not gratuitous) as well to monitor the D2L Discussions. Whether discussions go to current events, the readings, or matters of writing practice will vary, but the purpose of the D2L Discussions is that we help each other. On occasion, I shall contribute to the interplay, but I think of the D2L Discussions as your space.

SECTION EIGHT: SUBSTANTIVE INFORMATION ABOUT UNITS AND ASSIGNMENTS (INCLUDING PAGE COUNT)

"We don't learn from experiences. We learn from reflecting on experiences."
- Kristen Ulmer, former US Ski Team member

We shall follow a progression through four major units toward true argumentation. After a unit involving a series of short assignments that will orient you to what is called the Rhetorical Triangle, we shall dive into three units involving our major assignments (three major assignments is a number that is a more-or-less specified curricular requirement for any WRTG 3020 course). At first, the Lectures will be fairly long, but, by the four unit, they will be much shorter, the "ball in your court." More specific to the intellectual substance of our three major writing assignments, the first explores in an expository fashion categories ("creating a box," I call it). Through it, you will apply in a fairly static way the information from Unit One. The second major writing assignment moves contextual analysis ("creating a box and putting something in it"). Through it, you will move to a more dynamic practice of writing, which will include more sophisticated methods of distribution. Finally, the third major writing assignment moves to the time-honored argumentative question of appreciation ("creating a box, putting something in it, and judging the whole"). Regardless of these assignments, again I say it: with this or any other writing course, only when, though each of our assignments, you can see the intellectual and rhetorical dimensions to your writing--again, not the subject material--will your education matter in your life. To be equally clear: some students reach that level, but many do not.

Notes about Page Count

The normative "page count" for advanced writing courses is approximately 30 pages of double-spaced text that I, as the teacher, process. I shall attribute to that total count four pages for your D2L Discussions entries, but, to be honest, more than that number would not "do justice" to (1) the general CCHE/CU core curriculum and (2) the specific principle of keeping matters roughly equivalent to on-campus courses. In this sense of expectation, you should understand the following overview, rendered here in page counts of double-spaced format (aside: we submit in a single-spaced format, which I shall explain in due time):

Introductory unit exercises (Unit One): 3 pages
Categorical polemics essay (Unit Two): 4-6 pages
Pieces of Evidence document for contextual analysis essay (Unit Three): 2 pages
Contextual analysis essay (Unit Three): 5-7 pages  
Canonical argument essay (Unit Four): 6-8 pages  
D2L Discussions postings (with .5 page per for each required posting): 4 pages  
Formulation of all unit sign-ups and preliminary drafting documents: (at least) 3 pages of material  
Total: 30–36 pages

SECTION NINE: GRADING

"Never mistake activity for achievement."
- John Wooden

Grades are more and less complicated than they might seem. Should you have any questions--at any time--please consult with me. On such an occasion, you might ask, "Should the course end today, what would be my grade?"

Notes about the Qualitative and Quantitative Nature to My Grading

* On a philosophical basis, I evaluate (both for papers and overall grades) in the spirit of William F. Irmscher's *Teaching Expository Writing*, here adapted. Each word in the following description is important:

- Demonstrates unusual competence: A
- Suggests unusual competence: B
- Demonstrates competence: C
- Suggests unusual incompetence: D
- Demonstrates unusual incompetence: F

Irmscher's formulation is spot-on: an A demonstrates . . . unusual . . . competence. Every assignment. Every step of the way. No shortcuts or sloppiness. A-level students, for instance, do not wait until the last day of a unit to submit a posting to a D2L Discussions. Rather, they check the D2L Discussions regularly throughout a given time period. A-level students, likewise, do not need to be told twice about a problem in critical thinking or literacy: every problem, for them, is an emergency to be understood and subsequently practiced!

* Without consideration of the D2L Discussions postings (which I handle separately), you must successfully complete all elements to the writing assignments to pass the course with more than an F (0). I include assignment sign-ups in the category of "writing assignments." When a student falls too far behind, of course, I shall have to use my judgment regarding late work.
* The following is a rough breakdown of how these categories translate to our course work:

  Academic Citizenship: (1) D2L Discussions, (2) preliminary work (quality and punctuality), and (3) workshop: 10%. See penalties for excessive tardiness, below.
  Unit 1: 0%
  Unit 2: 30%
  Unit 3: 30%
  Unit 4: 30%

Regarding Academic Citizenship:

(1) The D2L Discussions. To submit a comment about our readings the day the D2L Discussions closes is, well, almost anti-social--it certainly is against the spirit of the community. Submit early, and check back each day to see about exchanging further comments. Note: I keep records of all dates (and times) when you post to the D2L Discussions; those who wait until the last almost never do well for their semester's grade.

(2) Your preliminary work. Students who repeatedly submit less-than-satisfactory preliminary assignments not only will not do well for the unit grades (see next bullet point) but will suffer in terms of this category.

(3) Workshop. I expect that students will be diligent in working with their peers, especially during Units #3 and #4.
  * Regarding Unit grades. Not only will your major essays be graded, but I shall--especially with Unit #2--calculate preliminary work into your unit grade.

  * Although this course grade breakdown seems clear, I like to think that progress is critical to some students, not just a mathematical average. Overall, then, your grade in the course will be a semester grade, not a direct response to any given assignment.

  * For the major assignment grades, I use a scale of 0-100, and I shall supply a full "rubric" (that is, criteria for evaluation sheet, called the Essay Contract):

    4.0 (A): 95
    3.7: 90
    3.3: 85
    3.0 (B): 80
    2.7: 75
    2.3: 70
    2.0 (C): 65
    1.7: 60
    1.3: 55
    1.0 (D): 50
    0.7: 45
    0.0 (F): 40 and below
* If a student is not responsive to course procedure after one week of classes (Friday of Week One), I shall drop that student at 12:00 noon of Friday if a waitlist exists. Students subsequently added will be handled on a case-by-case basis in terms of their catching up, but, generally, I shall allow such added students one day to submit previous work; if such a student does not response, I shall drop him/her.

* For my comments on your essays, I shall use Word's Track Changes feature. In the way of educational value, I shall not offer such comments--unless requested--on the final essay because, at that point, the time for your active response in subsequent work will be moot!

**Notes/Parameters about Punctuality/Delinquency**

Beyond curiosity, hard work, and honesty, crucial to your success will be punctuality ("The god of on-line courses," I call it). Punctuality is far more about how your teachers manage their time than how you manage yours, so be considerate. Let me explain. As I hope you discern throughout this term, I am a pretty easy-going person. However, to be easy-going means that I must be competent in my job, and delinquent response from students affects me disproportionately. That is, in my personal life, I am very structured in not only how I use my time for certain activities but when. My on-line classes occupy a certain time space in my days. When you submit something late--no matter whether you think late submissions are inconsequential--you disrupt my schedule in ways you cannot measure. Generally speaking, late work takes me at least two times longer to process than properly submitted work.

In this course, we shall have lots of assigned work. The question will be your pattern of behavior, but allow me to lay down the law: I consider more than one late submission during the semester excessive; therefore, I must account for the problem in your overall course grade. Because we often have both written work and D2L Discussions postings, you can, therefore, quickly tally penalties. For instance, to be late by five minutes for a given preliminary assignment involving both written work and a D2L Discussions posting (see policy for D2L Discussions postings, below), you will tally two occurrences of delinquency.

Without regards to individual grades (that is, major paper grades), a general view of how occurrences of delinquency will affect your overall course grade follows.

(1) For D2L Discussions postings, failure to post on time will count as two occurrences of delinquency. At 11:00 am on a given Thursday, the D2L Discussions is closed, your tardy posting "water under the bridge."

(2) For assignment sign-ups or essays, each calendar day of delinquency (on a cycle of 11:00 am to 11:00 am) counts as an occurrence of delinquency. For example, to submit an assignment due by 11:00 am on a given Thursday at 9:00 am the following Saturday means two occurrences of delinquency, etc. (Aside: note that additional penalties apply to the grades for the major essays.)
(3) I shall not accept subsequent work from you until you are "on task"—that is, you may not submit for a grade work that succeeds that work on which you are delinquent. For instance, you may not submit the assignment for Week 6 if you have not completed the assignment for Week 5. Thus, your delinquency only compounds itself, and excessive delinquency means you shall quickly fail the course.

two occurrence of delinquency (either D2L Discussions or written work): no penalty  
three occurrences of delinquency: maximum semester grade 3.7  
four occurrences of delinquency: maximum semester grade 3.3  
five occurrences of delinquency: maximum semester grade 3.0  
six occurrences of delinquency: maximum semester grade 2.7  
seven occurrences of delinquency: maximum semester grade 2.3  
eight occurrences of delinquency: maximum semester grade 2.0  
nine occurrences of delinquency: by my judgment, up to failure in course

Notes about Our Weekly Routine and Due Dates

Except for the first week (when our due date will be on Friday), our weekly cycle of materials (due dates and launching of subsequent launching of materials) will be on Thursdays at 11:00 am. All due times during the semester will be on Thursdays at 11:00 am and are detailed on the D2L Calendar.

The following are the submission instructions for the major units:

Units 1-3. Due on the relevant Thursdays by 11:00 am on announced dates. For work other than D2L Discussions (see above), each two hours late will incur a one-grade-increment penalty (for example, to submit from 11:01 to 12:59 will result in going from a 3.7 to a 3.3; to submit from 1:00 to 2:59 will result in going from a 3.7 to a 3.0, etc.). Maximum penalty: overall grade for the unit lowered to a 1.7.

Unit 4: The Argumentative Engagement essay (that is, final draft of the final essay) is due by 11:00 am on Friday, December 13, at 11:00 am—and I do not mean 11:02 pm. Each single hour late will incur a one-grade-increment penalty for your overall semester grade (for example, to submit from 11:01 to 11:59 will result in going from a 3.7 to a 3.3; to submit from 12:00 to 12:59 will result in going from a 3.7 to a 3.0, etc.). Submissions more than one day late will result in automatic failure for the course.
SECTION TEN: BRIEF SCHEDULE

See D2L Calendar for all dates

Week One
Unit #1: Exploring the Rhetorical Triangle Triangle
Words, Words, Words

Week Two
Sentence Dynamics

Week Three
Evidence and Paragraphs, Research and Bibliographic Form and Philosophy

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Week Four
Unit #2: Categorical Exposition
Distribution of Ideas: "Strange Bedfellows"

Week Five
The Structure of Argument: Introductions, Topics, Conclusions

Week Six
Planning Your Work: Distribution into Lines of Thought

Week Seven
Working Your Plan (Revision)
Categorical Polemics Essay due.

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Week Eight
Unit #3: Contextual Analysis
Context: "Things That Make You Go 'Hmmm"

Week Nine
Historicism, Historicity, Historiography: History IS Narrative

Week Ten
Drafting Along

Week Eleven
Once Again, Unto the Breach of Submission
Contextual Analysis essay due.
SECTION ELEVEN: SHOULD YOU TAKE THIS COURSE?

"If you aren't going all the way, why go at all?"
- Joe Namath

Before you take a step further (or farther!) in this course, you should carefully measure Namath's advice. In the day-to-day journey of the forthcoming semester, you should proceed in an educational spirit that transcends the minimal goal of achieving a passing grade for this course. If you are sports-minded, you will know what I mean when I say that we need to stop the "get away with it" mentality: "If the information isn't on the test, then I can get away with not knowing it"; "If I sit with my head down and the teacher doesn't call on me, then I'll get away with not being prepared"; or "I'll purposefully choose my courses based on a teacher's track record for easy grading and, thereby, get away with an easy education." In the case of on-line courses, the same muse follows: "I don't actually need to read anything because nobody will hold me accountable."

Given our on-line format, those with a "get away with it mentality" mentality will probably survive because, they know, I cannot "get in your grill" the same way I can in an on-campus setting. That said, never was the truth more clear than in this course that, as I like to say with a shrug, "It's your future, not mine." In the sports world, we know that nobody "gets away" with anything because, if sports teach anything, it is that our ultimate levels of achievement are determined by our weaknesses, not our strengths. The championships of any sport (Super Bowl, NBA Finals, World Series, etc.) ruthlessly expose weakness generated by those who try to get away with it and why, in fact, most of these final contests are so lopsided. Know the idea in Latin: Nullum Gratuitum Prandium ("There's No Free Lunch").

Although my expectation is that every one of you will do fine in this course, my best advice is that you consider dropping this very instant if the following characteristics predominantly apply to you. I am as serious as a heart attack. Indeed, if the following characteristics do apply to you, you will be wasting your time and money, and your education will in no way "empower" (a word loved by teachers) your future efforts--that you fail with your language skills will not be a question of whether but when.
* You are not "into" email from your teachers, finding yourself inattentive to it.
* You are not a careful reader. For instance, you do not read instructions carefully. When you buy an electronic product, for instance, you expect it to work "out of the box." Then, you get frustrated when, in fact, you must follow a detailed procedure.
* You do not read in a sustained way. For instance, you have rarely--if ever--read a novel that was not part of a class (and even if then!). You find your mind wandering constantly when you attempt to read, so you shrug your shoulders, give up, and do not attend to your problem with concentration.
* You find yourself repeatedly attempting to "catch up" with a classes as you go, generally proceeding in a lurching fashion.
* You are more interested in grades than what you actually learn in a course. You have even written to a teacher, "I really need a good grade in this course . . . ."
* You believe that in a writing course you "deserve" a good grade because you "worked really hard." See, especially, the Wooden quotation at the top of Section Nine.
* You believe that you already know the "nuts-and-bolts" of argumentation.
* When asked to contribute to a D2L Discussions for other courses, you post just before the deadline.
* You think that you can digest a 10-page lecture by scrolling through a computer screen, rationalizing to yourself that printing is expensive and a paper copy will not do you any good.
* You consider writing a profoundly personal experience. "As long as you understand me," you like to say to about your writing, "then it's OK, right?"
* In classes, you do not generally ask questions when you do not truly understand an idea, instead thinking that you will get away with it, doing whatever you have done previously because it has "worked just fine."
* You think on-line courses are an easy "slide" for a quick three credits of core requirements.
* You think that 3020 about sports will center, mainly, on chatting about sports.
* You have written to a professor of an on-line course, "I had test in other classes last week, so I didn't do the homework."
* Punctuality is a problem for you. (You think that an on-line course is an at-your-own-pace independent study.)
* Let me iterate: punctuality is a problem for you. (You think that "11:00 am on Thursday" means "when I get around to it on Thursday").
* Let me reiterate: punctuality is a problem for you. (You think that an on-line community is less deserving of your attention than an on-campus one).

... And so forth. Call me what you wish--"old school" is a good term--but you need to know something about me before moving forward. The decision is yours. If, as I hope, you decide to stay, dig in, and have fun, all I can say is, in those happiest of words,

"Play ball!"