WRTG 3020: Don’t Fence Me In
Course Description

I don't know what happens to country.¹
—John Grady Cole in Cormac McCarthy’s All the Pretty Horses

WRTG 3020: Curricular Goals

The following description outlines the curricular goals for all 3020 courses taught by the Program for Writing and Rhetoric and follow from the Colorado Commission on Higher Education standards for upper-division writing courses that can fulfill writing requirements across state campuses within and beyond the CU system. See below for Course Description particular to “Don’t Fence Me In.”

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 upon 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 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.

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.² 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.

To that end, WRTG 3020 has established goals within four key areas:
1. Critical Thinking and its Written Application
2. The Writing Process
3. Rhetorical Situation and Advanced Rhetorical Knowledge
4. Mechanics and Style

**Critical Thinking and Its Written Application**

As writers and as readers, students should leave 3020 able to:

- 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.\(^3\)
- Research: 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.

**The Writing Process**

As writers, students should be able to:

- 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.
- Perform self-assessment, with an enhanced consciousness of one’s own writing strengths and weaknesses.

**Rhetorical Situation**

Students should learn to:

- Exercise rhetorical skills through advanced rhetorical knowledge: 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.

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\(^3\) With inquiry-based instruction as the pedagogical foundation of WRTG 1150 (see Knowing Words, Pearson Custom Publishing 2004, p. 9), it follows that WRTG 3020 should build upon that foundation.
• Make decisions about form, argumentation, and style based on 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
Students in WRTG 3020 should learn to:
• 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.

The “Don’t Fence Me In” Version of 3020
The primary objective of this course is to improve your writing. That means introducing you to new techniques, concepts, and methods, while honing your abilities in every aspect of good writing with which you may already be familiar. The course is designed to develop your skills using computers with word processing software including editing features for electronic markup, D2L for asynchronous submission and editing of your work as well as for additional course materials, online databases, and judicious use of sites on the World Wide Web.

In subject, this course conducts disciplinary (literary studies) and interdisciplinary inquiry into a range of ideas and feelings. How is it that so many Americans feel entitled to open spaces? How can it also be the case that we often seem so determined to avoid social contact, that we seek out privacy in wilderness? Our inquiry may range as widely as considerations of public policy, the bloody history of manifest destiny, readings in gender studies, and criticism on literature and film. Individual essays, though, may pursue questions as confined as how one character, or poem, exhibits ambivalence about space. Essays will ultimately display a similar variety in topics: literary studies, civic rhetoric, political science, philosophy, and many other disciplines may provide scholarship for this course. In genre, successful writing for this course must at times employ advanced scholarship and diligent close reading where appropriate, but may also include Creative Nonfiction techniques and other modes of expressive evidence. Our work will follow this feeling of simultaneous desire for, and fear of, space without limits. We will consider the ambivalent feelings Americans have for towns and other urban spaces, and that many men (and some women) have for domestic enclosure and the promised safety within civilized spaces. Ultimately, however, this remains a writing workshop; ideas need not conform to the course’s regular consideration of “space” in any sense of that word; any idea successfully argued and expressed may succeed here.

Rather than regarding writing as a mode of proper conduct, where I correct your “mistakes,” we will instead develop a sense of writing as a skill, an art, and even sometimes like fashion: there’s no single correct way to dress yourself; all depends on where you’re going that day and whom you expect to see there. So, forget your worries about “who” and “whom” (just use “who,” unless you’re British or you teach writing), and get ready to learn how to write better, how to read better, and how to do scholarship that is more thorough than what you now know how to do.

Our course of study will be broken into three Progressions (or stages), the better to accomplish a larger movement (or Progression) from our preconceptions on the topic, to a wider and deeper set of ideas
by the end of the semester. Similarly, the larger progression of the course entails improvement in your ability to do research. Most of all, this is a writing class—albeit one that relies on interest in critical reading in ideas (and feelings): you will learn to blur the distinction between reading and writing, to revise radically, and probably to spend more time on your writing than you ever have before.

**Information Literacy**

Students in this version of WRTG 3020 will improve on their abilities to locate and incorporate strong evidence for their arguments:

- Go beyond argument as a matter of simply taking one side or another.
- Listen to counter-argument, and even when refuting a counter-argument to consider a shift in terminology to genuinely change opinions.
- Use both traditional paper sources, possibly including archival research, and computers for finding all sources including full-text online text and multi-modal resources.
- Bring other voices to the surface of argument (i.e. to move away from book-report citation where appropriate).
- Further develop attribution techniques appropriate to various style manuals for a variety of disciplinary requirements.
- Translate, as it were, expert sources originally created for relatively narrow discourse communities for both wider—interdisciplinary—audiences within academia, and where appropriate, for general lay audiences.
- As an Upper Division course designed to build on First Year Writing and Rhetoric (or its equivalent from other campuses), Advanced Rhetorical Knowledge, particularly through choice and evaluation of sources, will be our goal.

**Technology**

Students in this version of WRTG 3020 will use all available and appropriate technologies for their work:

- No special skill with computers is assumed, or necessary, for success in this section.
- This section makes no special claims of a focus on technology, but rather incorporates the tools students use for all their college work *inside*, as well as outside, our classroom.
- The course should nonetheless improve the computer skills of every student, including techniques for composition, revision, and peer review likely to be new to most students.
- Computers in the classroom will allow us to both model and perform work for the course, rather than merely talking about work to be done only outside the classroom.
- Overhead projection of course materials, including readings and rhetorical exercises, and also student work as examples, will supplement traditional means of visually reinforcing our work.
- When helpful to do so, we will turn off our screens and ignore computers the better to speak face to face.
- Students are allowed to bring their own laptops to use in lieu of the classroom’s computers.

**Multi-Modal Rhetorics**

Students in this version of WRTG 3020 may work on visual and multi-modal texts, in addition to poems, short stories, novels, essays, and traditional scholarly publications:
• Course texts will include at least one film, including instruction on how to close read film both visually and aurally; work on film goes beyond quoting dialogue and includes criticism of a film’s score, its general employment of sound, and its visual rhetoric.
• The final progression for the course could include composition of multi-modal rhetoric for a particular student project.

Progression I: Close Reading American Literary Spaces

We begin with the American Renaissance poets Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman, and finish with a short story by Stephen Crane. In this way, we will trace American feelings about space in poems and short fiction. The final essay for this progression will be a relatively brief close reading of one or more of the assigned works.

Progression II: Close Reading and Scholarship in Literary and Cinematic Spaces

We will continue with American fiction and film, improving your skills in close reading, while developing your research skills. The final essay for this progression will add good criticism by other writers, and some theoretical approach, to a stronger close reading of a novel or film. This essay will be the fullest and most demanding scholarly essay of the course, requiring significant research in pursuit of an idea about space that arises organically from close reading in one of our major texts. Essays may range widely between a continuation of our aesthetic concerns and investigations of larger social issues as they are occasioned by close attention to “American fictions” about space, and may ultimately include projects not at all centered on “space” in any way. (This is a writing class, more than a content class, even though we will regularly study the subject of rhetoric). This inherently interdisciplinary progression also encourages students to strengthen their writing within their major or to enjoy an excursion into another discipline.

Progression III: Applied Civic Rhetoric and Creative Nonfiction

Applied Civic Rhetoric Option

Students are encouraged to range widely after determining a particular problem concerning civic space. This is your chance to bring your major discipline to an editorial, proposal, familiar essay, or journalism “think piece” on space, even as you are encouraged to do research well outside that major. As civic space includes not only a common area of a city or suburb but also small towns, national parks, and even so-called wilderness areas, students will find a limitless number of possible problems to address. We will stress the importance of confining the scope of problem and its solution to a reasonable area, and we will revisit the rhetorical triangle and the elements of exigency and kairos in these rhetorical situations. “Civic space” may be less obvious, too: FCC regulations restricting access to radio transmission, or the defacto monopoly of cable companies and our subsequent lack of a true variety among cable stations, for instance, could pose interesting problems to address. We will begin with exercises that stress problems of the natural and built environment, but any rhetorical situation in which a student wishes to pose some solution can provide a worthy situation for this final progression. The importance of a finely tuned sense of audience will complete our focus on rhetorical strategies as inherent in successful public writing. Finally, the customized learning aspect of this highly self-developed project can help students working on an Honor’s Thesis (or preparing for one), students headed for graduate education, and all those students whose future careers are likely to require them to develop and accomplish their own projects.

Creative Nonfiction Option
A variety of genres will be available within this “fourth genre,” and indeed, many students opting for Civic Rhetoric will employ “Creative Nonfiction” devices. With consideration for each student’s needs, however, written projects unrelated to civic rhetoric but within the large area of Creative Nonfiction may be undertaken. Students may wish to consider how well they have demonstrated scholarship in the previous progression, and how much they may need—or not need—to continue to hone their academic writing skills. Finally, as a significant number of students may not be headed for graduate study and may be graduated soon after this course, a final Creative Nonfiction project also allows for a departure from more traditional scholarly forms.

Policies and Requirements for WRTG 3020

**Required Texts**

**Recommended Texts**
*Writer’s Help*, an online Handbook from Bedford St. Martin’s. 2 Years of Access (their minimum): $25. We may use this in class at times, so you must purchase access to this resource within the first week of class. Note: as I do not “edit” your writing for this course, but rather teach techniques and editorial skills to help you strengthen your writing (see below), students who worry about making “mistakes” in grammar, etc., are strongly advised to purchase this resource and to use it regularly in revising their work. [http://writershelp.bedfordstmartins.com](http://writershelp.bedfordstmartins.com).

Dictionary: You may use the free online edition of the *American Heritage Dictionary*, at [http://ahdictionary.com/](http://ahdictionary.com/). Be sure to bookmark this on your computer, and do not revise without having this open. If you prefer a dictionary in book form, be sure this is either the latest *American Heritage* or an equivalent college-level dictionary.

Other texts on advanced rhetorical knowledge are available online from me, either full-text or by hyperlink, as announced.

Most of your reading at the secondary (critical) and tertiary (theoretical) levels will be the result of your own research. See each Progression (Syllabus) for bibliographies and availability of all texts.

**Grading**
See the “Grading Guidelines” at the bottom of this page for explanation of letter grades. **You may schedule an appointment with me during office hours at any time for a general indication of how you are doing in the course.** Even before I’ve finished grading essays, I am happy to look over your work at any time with you during an office hour appointment and give you a clear indication—within a letter grade—of how you’re doing. Your self-assessments will also play a critical part in determining your grade.

Attendance and Active Class Participation^4^ 15%

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^4^ Discussions, presentations, and workshop in class. Note that you cannot do well in this if you do not read assigned material before class, and that I may give unannounced quizzes to determine this. If you suffer from
Critiques 15%
Progression I Close Reading Essay5 15%
Progression II Scholarly Essay (with substantial research)6 20%
Progression III Civic Rhetoric and Creative Nonfiction7 10%
Portfolio “Semester Progression” Grade8 25%

**General WRTG 3020 Course Description**
This is an advanced interdisciplinary writing seminar. You will complete three major writing projects (at least two of these being essays), informing at least one (and possibly two) of these with significant research at an advanced undergraduate level, with an acute awareness of your intended audience and an advanced sense of rhetorical awareness for each. To succeed, you must read any assigned readings before the day listed on the “schedule” part of each “progression” (our word for the schedule part of a syllabus); you must write carefully to the prompts given in each progression and come to class with your work posted online. You are not required to offer an entirely fresh understanding of the reading in class, but you should at least have formed a question about it. I may at any time give pop quizzes or call on particular students concerning assigned material, and I reserve the right to include grades on such exams in the Participation and Progression grades. A final exam to determine that you have done all the reading may be required, depending on how seriously the class takes reading assignments, and a passing grade on this would become half the overall “Progression” grade for each student. For this advanced writing seminar, you will be required to work within a writing community, giving and responding to substantial critiques within a “small group” of four to five fellow students.

See the Course Description, and the individual Progressions specific to our topic for more information on the course theme. All serious writing courses require discussion of ideas, as well as of process and technique. Your active engagement with difficult ideas is assumed.9

**Course Techniques—the Language (and Heart) of the Class**
Each Progression teaches you specific techniques for writing, editing, and research that should prove shyness, please send me an email and make an office appointment to discuss how you can still be an active participant in the class. Otherwise, you are expected to speak in class, every class.

Essay grades are on the final draft only and indicate degree of success, regardless of intent and process. Whatever you do toward that draft (exercises, early drafts, revisions, and workshop) is graded either in your Participation or your Progression Grade.

This essay grade expects success not only for a general reader, but also within an academic context: a well-written essay that lacks adequate research will not fulfill the requirement here; nor will a well-researched poorly written essay.

We will discuss in class the criteria for choosing one of these options.

This grade indicates how much you’ve moved: how hard you’ve worked, and how much your writing has changed (we hope improved) throughout the course. The Progression Grade is based on all work to be found posted online—not only final drafts, but early drafts, revisions, exercises, and critiques—as well as office hour discussions and the degree to which you put class time to good use as a writer and editor.

This course may include discussion of adult themes, such as politics, sexuality, and religion, and we assume that the learning process may include difficult subject matter that may be uncomfortable for any or all of us to discuss. Participation in the course does not mean agreement to discuss issues to which you claim special sensitivity; at the same time, the course makes no promises not to explore ideas that may be found offensive by any particular student or group of students—only to do so in a manner that is fair to all students. If you suspect that a particular reading, viewing, or lecture may offend you and you wish not to attend that day’s class, see me in advance to arrange for an alternative to your attendance.
useful to you in all writing, forever. My brief talks serve to teach you these techniques, often employing word processing tools (especially “Advanced Find”) and other computer tricks. But these mere tricks address fundamental aspects of all writing at the sentence, paragraph, and larger structural levels. These Course Techniques are the heart of this course, and you will learn what we will call “The Language of the Class,” which means you will have new vocabulary for discussing every aspect of your writing and the writing of others.

**Progressions**

Our semester will be divided into three stages, with each stage intended to help you master critical skills in the course, and each focused on a particular aspect of our topic. Our movement toward the goals of each stage is called a progression because you are expected not simply to improve by repetition, but to improve through a movement from one way of doing things to another, generally more complex, way of doing things. Our use of this as a spatial metaphor for improvement also helps us avoid the useless worry of moral language about writing (such as the concept of “errors”—a foolish and class-bound way to think about writing that doesn’t work or that is inappropriate for a particular audience or genre), and to focus instead on competency, skill, and facility. If you cannot commit to earnestly improving your writing through multiple drafts, beginning with a serious draft (more than something tossed off to meet the prompt), and working through several significant—perhaps radical—revisions, you should find another section of the course.

**Peer Review and Self-Assessment**

This particular version of 3020 Upper Division Writing and Rhetoric departs significantly from standard traditional practices in most composition classrooms. The goal of a writing class ought to be the learning of more effective techniques for writing, research, and revision, even more than it is improved final drafts for that class; otherwise, we may seem to improve the writing in your assignments, but we may have taught you nothing you use in the rest of your writing life. The goal of a class in rhetoric ought to be improved argument; this, too, is usually not arrived at by the student merely doing exactly what the teacher tells her to do on page two. In 42 years of performance, no music teacher ever took my sticks away and re-played exactly what he thought I ought to have played, and yet a similar practice pervades much writing instruction. The highest goals are often missed—not out of any lack of good intentions on the part of most writing teachers, but rather because tradition does not always arrive at best practices. Writing teachers are usually very nice people who cannot bear to see students write “mistakes.” But “correcting” those “mistakes” is not the same as teaching a writer lessons that will last a lifetime.

Be assured that our methods are not new to your teacher, as I have developed them over 20 years of teaching composition, rhetoric, and literature at three major universities—as well as through my experience as a lifelong professional musician and sometime bad painter. Many of our practices, such as writing and revising in class, are indeed firmly established means of learning to play music, or to paint. As we are primarily concerned with improving your skills in writing beyond our classroom, we therefore copy those practices that, by analogy, most fit that goal. Other aspects of our class, such as handing work in to each other rather than to me, and learning probably more from peer critiques than from me editing your writing, are designed to echo practices in the real world of writers (such as blind peer review in academia). I am your teacher, not your editor. That said, **any student who feels the need for more traditional responses from me may request an electronic critique for any project.** My regular email address is fine for this, as it is for requesting a meeting.
Critiques
We will work on specific computer tricks tied to specific writing, research, and editing skills in the classroom. You will also learn how to perform a thorough critique of anything your fellow students write. Because we need peer critiques to carry most of the weight in helping with revision, a substantial portion of your grade will be determined by how seriously you take this crucial editing and advising process.

Put Another Way . . .
Here is a brief outline of how we will do things differently:
Some Traditional Writing Classes\(^{10}\) | This Section of 1\(^{st}\) Year Writing and Rhetoric

- **Students hand all work, usually printed, to the teacher at class time, who essentially edits it.**
- **Students may perform peer critiques, but most students understandably cannot pay much attention to these when compared to the teacher’s comments.**
- **The prevailing metaphor is moral: we “correct” “bad” writing to “good;” the course reinforces class distinctions through phony ideas about “proper” usage.**
- **Almost no writing takes place in the classroom. Instead, the teacher talks (and talks and talks) about writing, and perhaps even most of the time about the subjects for writing (i.e. novels and films and other texts). Even peer review consists mostly of talking about writing.**
- **Students may fall into a quasi-legal expectation: tell me exactly what to do to get a ___ grade. Grades arrive almost mysteriously, perhaps with confusing justifications, and there’s often no meeting with the teacher except to protest a grade—or to be told exactly what to do.**
- **By end of semester, projects have been changed mostly for the teacher’s eyes, even if assignments “pretend” other audiences.**
- **Individual projects may win awards within a program (because they’d been carefully edited—i.e. nearly rewritten—by faculty).**
- **After the class is over, writing habits of most students may not have changed much.**

- **All work is posted to a small group online, where the whole class has easy access to it at any time.**
- **Student peer critiques are all-important—and therefore earn part of the grade. The Writing Center, as well as meetings with me, becomes supplemental help.**
- **The prevailing metaphor is one of “progression:” you “progress,” but we will avoid useless moralizing assumptions about language that merely defend class divisions.**
- **Students spend significant time on writing and research outside the classroom, but we model techniques inside our class. Students also regularly conduct research, write, and revise inside the classroom. I keep lectures brief, and you help keep them interactive.**
- **Students learn specific techniques and habits, develop conscious awareness of their degree of success, and reflect on this in regular self-assessments that put grades in a meaningful context. You may meet with me at any time to receive and discuss your grades. Otherwise, I simply respond to your self-assessments to confirm grades; if we significantly disagree, we meet.**
- **By end of semester, projects are developed in response to several peer critiques, as well as in response to in-class help from me.**
- **Some of my students win awards! But not by pretending to be me; rather, they develop their own voice (and learn to write for an award audience).**
- **After the class is over, most students report using course techniques**

\(^{10}\) Certainly not most classes in the Program for Writing and Rhetoric
Attendance and Participation
Because this is a workshop, and because of the above emphasis on students working together to improve each other’s writing, you must regularly attend class fully prepared.

The Rules on Absences:
In general, I make no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences, so save your doctor’s notes and explanations. Miss only if you must. If you must miss a class, read on.

1. After any absence, contact your fellow students, not me, to find out what you missed.
2. If you miss two classes in the first week, I will drop you from the course.
3. If you miss two classes in the first two weeks, I will drop you from the course.
4. If you miss any four classes in a row, I will drop you from the course, barring religious observance reasons or special arrangements with the Dean’s office; see #4 below.
5. All absences negatively affect your grade. One or two may have little effect, assuming you are very active and engaged in class. (If you’re really sick, we want you to rest!) More than that will hamper the Participation and Progression Grades you’re earning. Any absence entails catch-up work—just as for personal relationships, jobs, family duties, sports, and art.
6. If you miss more than six classes total, for any reason, I will give you a failing final grade for the course.
7. The only exceptions to these rules are in cases of religious observance or of serious illness. I will make every effort to accommodate different levels of observance for any recognized faith. See the CU website for the policy on this: [http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html). In the rare case of a serious illness (including, of course, mental health problems), you should go ahead and contact me during office hours, or by email, regarding the problem. We can then decide whether it will be possible for you to do well enough in the course—including in your all-important peer critiques—to allow extra absences. “Serious illness” does not include the usual nasty bugs we all must endure. If you do not waste an allowable number of absences on something frivolous, you can miss as much as a week and a half to recover from a bad case of the flu, etc. In cases of allowable exceptions for serious illness, I may still decide that it would be unreasonable to allow you to remain in the course, in which case I will then argue for a late drop on your behalf. Because this is a workshop relying on active participation and collaborative editing, your ability to catch up in your own work is not a sufficient measure of your ability to remain in the course. To remain in the course with extra absences, my determination of the effect of your absences on other students will provide the ultimate measure.
8. University policy requires school athletes to “notify each instructor, in the first week of the semester and in writing, about any known conflicts between academic requirements and athletic events.” I will try to work with any such conflicts within reason, but the university emphasizes that instructors retain “full authority” in such conflicts. Let me know right away of any schedule conflicts with your sports, and we can do our best to resolve them. See [http://www.colorado.edu/BFA/committees/IAC.html](http://www.colorado.edu/BFA/committees/IAC.html) for intercollegiate athletics policy and [http://www.colorado.edu/BFA/committees/studentaffairs.html](http://www.colorado.edu/BFA/committees/studentaffairs.html) for policy on club sports.
9. After any absence, you should return to class with all missed work completed as soon as possible—preferably by that class meeting (see #1 above). Any exceptions to this must be
approved by me during office hours, or, in cases of serious illness only, email.

10. Special circumstances regarding illness: if you have symptoms of any particularly contagious disease (well beyond the common cold), you are encouraged to miss class and go to Wardenburg Health Center. See the following for more information on CU’s latest initiatives to prevent the spread of infectious disease: http://healthcenter.colorado.edu.

Special Circumstances

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. In this class, I will make every effort to respect the needs of some students to reschedule attendance and work in order to observe religious holidays. Because even movable religious holidays are scheduled far enough in advance for us to plan ahead, I require that you meet with me at the beginning of the semester to discuss schedule conflicts between a particular holiday and any day that CU has not scheduled as a holiday, so we can determine a reasonable means of avoiding conflicts between course requirements and your religious observance. Other observance will of course be respected within the bounds of CU policy. See full details at:

http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

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 may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities.


Computer Workshop and our Learning Management System

We will use a Learning Management System (aka LMS, such as Microsoft One Drive, Google Drive, or D2L) throughout the course, in class and outside of class, as a virtual extension of our classroom space. If you are in a traditional classroom, you will be expected to bring a laptop to class: this does not mean you have to buy one if you do not already own one; you may check out a laptop before class (see http://www.colorado.edu/oit/laptop-checkout), bring it to class, and return it after class—for free. No advanced knowledge of computers is required for the course. If you can type, we can teach you the rest within the course. Further help with your computer use is available from CU’S Office of Information Technology, at http://oit.colorado.edu/. All work for the course must be handed in online—not by email—and of course, I will teach you how to do this. If you have any computer problems, call OIT at 5-HELP for technical support.

You will be assigned a “small group” where you will hand in that work within our Learning Management System, and you are required to read all the posts of your fellow four to five students in this group within half a week. Unless otherwise stated in class, do not hand in any assignments to me in

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11 The fact that we are capable of contacting each other at any time, night and day, does not mean that we should do so; certainly, it does not mean that we should expect immediate answers to every communication. Please, use email only to make an appointment with me. Then come see me during office hours with your questions. All minor questions can always be answered by a rereading of the prompt, of this document, of other material online, or by asking a fellow student who may have better notes. If not, the fault is mine and will be so critical that I will address the matter in class. In particular: please do not send emails regarding absences, excuses, etc. Contact your small group instead. I reserve the right to refuse to answer all inappropriate contact by email.
paper form, and please, use my email address only to contact me to arrange office hour meetings, or in case of serious illness (as in something requiring notification of the Dean’s Office).

For discussion of the course in general, your progress in it, or a particularly interesting reading or writing problem, please see me during office hours. If you have another class during the exact time that I hold office hours, send me an email with all of your available meeting times for the coming week, and I will schedule an alternative time to meet with you. I highly value discussing the course during office hours, and I will be happy to help you during that time. Please feel free to make an appointment as late as that day (though it helps to make appointments earlier) and come talk.

Information Literacy
This level of course assumes you are somewhat adept at research, but we will improve your research skills through workshop and individual direction. You must make use of many research resources outside of class. Norlin library has an excellent research staff. Make use of whatever open tours there are of the library, and become well acquainted with the resources of Subject Specialists, beginning at http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/services/bibliographers.htm. Special workshops are announced at http://libpress.colorado.edu/?cat=10. It is assumed that you will conduct a reasonable level of research beyond explicit requirements. Increasingly, solid research may be conducted online without a physical visit to the library, but for this course, you should learn your way around Norlin library as well. There’s no substitute for the help of a good librarian, and many sources remain in physical media alone. Help with research may also be found from the PWR’s Research and Writing Center, located in Norlin near the cafe. See http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/pwr/index.htm.

Protocols for Assignments
The format for all major drafts is either MLA or APA style (see appropriate guides), depending on the favored format for your major. Otherwise, I prefer MLA format with parenthetical citation, a proper header, double-spaced throughout, 12-point type throughout, with appropriate indentation for extended quotes, name and page number on every page in the upper right-hand corner, and 1” to 1¼” margins. Formal drafts are complete only if they include a Works Cited or Works Consulted page in the same document (but not to be included for the required page count as assigned). Except for inclusion of your name, format is not important on informal exercises. On all drafts of essays: peer editors and I may refuse assignments that do not conform to all formal requirements.¹² Late essays, if accepted, will be docked approximately 1 step of a letter grade each class they are late; i.e. from 80 to 78 to 75 to 70, etc. We may only accept drafts in class as meeting a due date—not on days we do not meet. (The ability to post online at any time does not eliminate the need for us to keep a reasonable schedule). If you have problems with “block,” see me early on during office hours; I can help. I may refuse to give written comments on any project if you fail to hand in a full first draft on time and therefore miss peer critiques.

Keep copies of your work in at least three places: 1) on a main storage drive, 2) on a backup flash drive or other drive, 3) and in our Learning Management System (One Drive, Google Drive, or D2L as announced). After one week, we may accept no computer-related excuses. I therefore urge you to visit CU’s Office of Information Technology for any help you need.

Late and incomplete drafts compromise your fellow students’ schedule for commenting on papers. This means that if you fail to turn in a complete draft on time, you are negatively affecting the teaching and learning for the entire course and even in my other courses. Accordingly, I will

¹² A peer editor in this situation should critique another writer’s draft instead.
dock final grades on any project—no matter how impressive—if earlier drafts were not complete and on time.

Classroom Behavior, the Honor Code, Plagiarism, and Sexual Harassment Policies

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity, and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html.

The Honor Code

All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member 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/

Plagiarism

We assume that the work you hand in as your own was in fact written by you. If you have any questions about how to quote or paraphrase material so as not to be mistaken for a plagiarist, this course should answer those questions; in any case, I will be happy to meet with you to avoid a misunderstanding. Note that your work may be evaluated through TurnItIn.com, a plagiarism service provided to all faculty at CU-Boulder; and that this service retains a copy of the submitted work for future comparisons. If I find that you have plagiarized, I will give you a failing grade (between 0 and an “F”—50 points on a hundred) for that project (essay or presentation), report you for an Honor Code violation, and submit a letter to be placed in your file. I may fail you for the course for a first offense that is egregious, and I will certainly do so for a second offense even of unintentional plagiarism. If you are worried about unintentional plagiarism (when to use quotes, how to cite paraphrase, or what can be regarded as common knowledge), remember that these subjects are part of our study. No well-intentioned student should fail to benefit from our discussion of standard academic protocols for recognizing intellectual property.

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

http://www.colorado.edu/odh

and at

http://www.colorado.edu/policies/discrimination.html

Grading

Grade Protests and Other Conflicts
If you feel that a grade you have received is unfair, you should make an appointment to see me during office hours and make your case. If you are not satisfied after that, you may request that I print a copy of the assignment and give it to another reader in the Program for Writing and Rhetoric. The grade for your paper may be adjusted up or down in light of the comments given by the additional reader.

The Program for Writing and Rhetoric Bylaws include the following procedures for any conflict between students and instructors:

Section VII C. [Conflicts] Between a student and a faculty member
1. If a student wishes to challenge a grade, s/he shall follow the relevant procedure on file in the PWR office.
2. If a student and a faculty member have a conflict,
   a. They should first meet with one another and attempt to resolve the issue.
   b. If this fails, one or both may meet with the PWR Conflict Resolution Coordinator to attempt to resolve the issue(s).
   c. If this fails, either party may meet with the director, who will consult with the faculty member and student at the earliest appropriate stage of the process, to attempt to resolve the grievance.

This means that the Program in Writing and Rhetoric has a Conflict Resolution Coordinator to help you resolve any concerns or conflicts you may have after you meet with me. Please contact the main office, at 303-492-8188, for more information.

Grading Guidelines
Each letter has a range from + to -. The following are guidelines for the range within each letter. When thinking about grades, remember:

- Students who regularly apply the Course Techniques are highly unlikely to earn a final grade of B- or below—because those techniques work.
- Students who regularly fail to apply those techniques are highly unlikely to earn a final grade higher than a C+.
- Focusing merely on minimum requirements will not help you rise above the “C” level; focusing on extras: writing extra critiques, drafts, more application of techniques, more use of resources (trading extra critiques of your work; the Writing Center; walk-in Peer Tutoring; walk-in, texting, phone, email, and other Research help from Norlin librarians; and meetings with me) will help.

13 CU’s final grades do not include an “A+.” If you reach an “A” for your final grade, that’s as good as an “A+” during the semester.
**A- to A to A+ (90-95-100); Excellent to Superb Work.**

Work that is superior in style, form, and content. Not necessarily perfect, but approaching perfection. The work is ambitious in conception and successful in revision. Research approaches at least introductory Graduate work in number, quality, and engagement with sources; displaying deep Information Literacy. You must regularly post more than the minimum number of critiques to earn these grades for that portion of the final grade. To earn this as a Participation grade requires remarkable hard work on the drafts of fellow students, earnest and interesting contributions to class discussions, and no more than two or three absences total. Overall Progression grades in this range display a high degree of consciousness of what the student learned throughout the course, and likely include taking chances and trying things they were not already good at doing.

**B- to B to B+ (80-85-88); Good to Very Good (Above Average) Work.** Most commonly mistaken for “I deserve an ‘A’ because I tried hard.”

The work is superior in one, but average in another of the following: thought, form, and style. There are a few mistakes, but not many. The work may be ambitious and fail—though not too badly. Or the work may be good—but not superior—in thought, but very well executed. There may be one significant but not major fault in thought, form, or style. Work that fails to at least attempt to apply key course techniques may not reach this range and certainly cannot rise above it. Research at this level is solid for Upper Division expectations. To reach this range or above work usually employs more than the minimum number of references where required, and will engage references in more than “hit and run” manner (i.e. one single quote or paraphrase per source throughout). In Critiques, you cannot miss critiques or contribute below-average substance and earn these grades. In Participation, these grades require work that stands out above the class average. You absolutely cannot earn this, or a higher grade in Participation, if you do not regularly, with enthusiasm, participate in class discussions—or, if you are shy, make arrangements for alternative participation. Not missing a single class merely guarantees you a C+ in Participation. To earn more, you must be present, prepared, and engaged with the class. Overall Progression grades in this range reflect adequate understanding of the course techniques and concepts, but probably without regular full employment of all of those techniques, or deep understanding of all the course concepts. You are unlikely to earn a Progression grade in this range or above if your drafts display mere “correction” without significant revision.

**C- to C to C+ (70-75-78); Average Work.**

The work exhibits strengths but weaknesses. The writing is readable at the surface level, and has an idea, but it will have significant, unresolved problems in more than one key area: quality of idea, reasoning, and evidence; or word choice, stance, and structure. The work may fulfill basic requirements yet say little of importance or significance—or well-written work that does not satisfy a significant part of the assignment. Some students may also work very hard and yet earn an “average grade” in this range (for the same reason that working very hard would never have guaranteed me a spot on even a Minor League team in baseball); if this applies to you, please remember the other portions of the final grade, especially Overall Progression, which rewards effort. In this range, Research is present but closer to First Year than Upper Division level. In Critiques, these grades reflect “getting them done” with no extra effort or insight. Regular failure to post timely and complete critiques will earn a grade in this range for that portion of the final grade. In Participation, these grades reflect showing up, surface reading, and average or below-average contribution to discussions and workshop. Students who continue to assume that grades are “marked down” or “deserved” (rather than earned) are usually headed
for these grades, as are those who complain about lack of specificity in assignments but never come to office hours for clarification. Overall Progression grades remaining in this range reflect some, but partial, understanding of course concepts, and spotty application of techniques in drafting, research, and revision. Beyond average effort may not guarantee a grade above this range, but it will earn you at least an Overall Progression grade above this range.

**D- to D to D+ (60-65-68); Inferior Work.**
Work that is seriously underdeveloped and deficient in content, form, style, or mechanics. It may be disorganized, illogical, confusing, unfocused, or contain pervasive errors that impair readability. Work that does not come close to meeting the basic expectations of the assignment—including length and number of sources where required. In Participation and Critiques, these grades reflect a lack of contribution to the class effort, missed readings, texting or surfing the web in class, failure to critique the work of fellow students, and generally insufficient attention to the workshop. Overall Progression itself becomes, in this range, a lost concept.

**F; Failing Work.**
Work that is incoherent, disastrously flawed, unacceptably late, plagiarized, or non-existent. Any work that fails to meet basic requirements of page length, number of sources, and genre (for instance, a “book report” when a “close reading” was required by the prompt) can earn work an “F.” In Participation, these grades reflect the attendance and contributions of a student unable to adequately participate in the course, or one indifferent—or hostile—to fellow students or the goals of the course.

**Don’t Fence Me In**
**Progression I:**
**Dimensional American Fictions**

*I don’t know what happens to country.*
—John Grady Cole in *All the Pretty Horses*  

*Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with the absolute truth.*
—Simone de Beauvoir.

**Schedule**

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<td>Transparency and Opacity; The Critical Spectrum; Tropes and Rhetorical Figures Review</td>
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<td>Peer Essays</td>
<td>2nd Draft of Essay:</td>
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16 All texts for this Progression are located in (or linked to from) the “Readings” section of our Learning Management System (Google Drive, One Drive, or D2L).
17 It is critical that you begin to read the novel assigned for the next Progression as soon as you can. See Progression II for specific page assignments, but be sure you read through at least a few pages of this difficult novel before you decide you can breeze through it; many find the style and the depth of the ideas in the book require a little more time. Most will want to stay ahead of the class schedule for finishing chapters, lest they fall behind in Prog II.
18 Example: JayProgI-1.doc would be my first draft of the Prog I essay.
19 Example: GeorgiaCritJayProgI-2.doc would be her critique of my second draft of the Prog I essay. Students may post more than the minimum number of revised drafts. In this example, I’ve posted a revision before the first official critique was due.
Progression I Exercises and Essay Prompt

A Note on All Reading Assignments:
Because we must have reliable evidence on which to base everything we write (even feelings and personal experience cannot be counterfeited without paying a high price before Oprah), you must finish all readings before the class date on which they are due. You will receive a failing grade for the Participation and Overall Progression portions of the final grade—regardless of how good your essays prove to be (based, we would then assume, on catch-up reading)—if you regularly fail to read assignments on time.

The assignment of “Marginalia” simply means that you should come to class with a reading printed out (if I provide it on D2L), and marked up by you. Throw away the highlighter, and use a pen or pencil instead. We need more than underlining—though that’s helpful. We need notes, questions, even frustrations, written in your margins as you read, or at least when you reread, an assignment. Engage with the text, and come to class prepared with at least one comment or question for every reading.

Rhetorical Analysis of the “Policies and Requirements” document:
What are the claims (arguments), assumptions, warrants (reasons), and the rhetorical framework behind the syllabus for this course? What is the exigency behind it? The kairos? Have some fun with ethos (who, really, is behind the document) and by all means, get beyond simple assumptions about the intended audience for the thing. Don’t worry about achieving a polished essay here—without revision, that would not fit the nature of this course! But try on these new terms in describing what you see in the syllabus; you should, of course, either extend or begin a habit of looking up words you do not know. (Try Wikipedia when your dictionary doesn’t include a word from a specialized discourse community—such as the strange folk who study rhetoric.) Length: about one page double spaced. Bullets or enumeration are okay. Just be sure and practice using these terms, even if you’re not sure you yet understand them.

Noticing Dickinson:
For this assignment, simply make a list of things you “notice” in two Dickinson poems (reading is on D2L). We will discuss in class briefly how to do this, but your main reminder here is that you should do your best to forego all interpretation. Rather than telling us what something “means,” simply indicate it. (For example, “I notice that Wallace Stevens has a lot of prepositions in his poem titles.”) This list should consist of at least a dozen items, total. Be prepared to comment in class without me calling on you; any
student who does not speak up in class during discussion of a reading should schedule a meeting with me to discuss either strategies to successfully participate in class discussion, or alternative means of contributing to the class.

Tropes Exercise, Parts I, II, and III

Please refer to the Tropes Exercise in “Notes on Composition.” For a reference, follow the “Web Link” for “Silva Rhetoricae.”

Further directions for those of us bad at figuring out directions:
1. Open the “Tropes Exercise” in “Notes on Composition” in D2L. You can block and copy this into Word and save it for future reference.
2. Go to “Web Links” in D2L, and click on the “Silva Rhetoricae” link. This is one of many good sites for tropes and rhetorical figures, and you can easily use this site to find most of the terms I list in the exercise; others you can find using Google or one of the references I cite at the bottom of the exercise.
3. To begin Part I, simply write out or copy the definitions you find. Of course, to really get anything out of this, it will help if you can translate the definition you find into your own words—showing that you truly understand the trope or rhetorical device in question.
4. Essentially, this exercise begins as an Easter egg hunt: you simply have to look up some terms and become familiar with them. Then, you put this vocabulary into play in the beginnings of close reading toward your eventual essay. For example, one of the ten terms you define might be “kenning,” which you might go on to “notice” as a device used by Crane, which then leads you to close reading for insights about the gender space in that story (what, after all, does “he of the six guns” mean?). Part III of the exercise does not have to be done with a text you will write on, but of course, it wouldn’t hurt to be working in the direction of your essay.

250-Word Abstract

Simply indicate what text or texts you will be examining in your close reading essay, and on what you intend to focus. This will probably be a progression from your Tropes exercise, but if you prefer, you may choose a different text or texts for your essay. In 250 words, tell us where you’re looking, how you plan on reading the text (what feature of it will you focus on), and (less importantly for now) what you expect to find.

Close Reading Essay

In four to six pages, write an interpretive essay that focuses on one or two of the texts we’ve read in an examination of space (in whatever form)—or any other line of inquiry (doesn’t have to be “about space”)—in that work, perhaps drawing on your own personal narrative as well as on close reading. We will go over various types of space in these texts, both in aesthetic and semantic terms, but again, topics may range beyond this. Your primary evidence for your interpretation must be the primary text: close reading is the focus; other voices are not required. (You’ll do a lot of research next essay!) For practice, include a Works Cited that simply lists the primary work or works under consideration.

As optional evidence for your argument, you may also incorporate personal narrative that connects to your reading of the primary text(s) with which you’re working. We will begin with Creative Nonfiction exercises in class for this option.
Critiques

Critique at least one student essay from your small group for each class you see that a critique is due. All members of each group are responsible for determining who critiques which essay so that everyone does a critique, and everyone receives a critique. Round robin is preferable to pairing off. (Ex: instead of Anne and Simon trading essays, while Alberto and Sarah trade papers; Anne critiques Simon’s, who critiques Alberto’s, who critiques Sarah’s, who critiques Anne’s.) Obviously, it will be all the more important for an student unavoidably absent to stay in touch with his or her group, so that no one gets missed. We will go over Word commenting tools so that all critiques will be electronic, posted to D2L, in Microsoft Word. If you expect any problems with Word documents, get help sooner, rather than later.

Briefly, all serious critiques will consist of a least one substantive paragraph of overall reaction, and will also employ various commenting techniques (at least the “comment” sticky-note feature) throughout the essay. A good critique, including reading time, should take at least half an hour to an hour or two per essay.

“2nd,” and subsequent critiques should usually be on a different student’s paper. The minimum requirement for this progression, for instance, is two critiques, or two different student’s papers. Better students will of course informally continue to work together throughout a progression, and would therefore in this progression end up doing at least three critiques: one on a first draft, one on a second draft but also a follow-up on the first essay they critiqued. Failure of fellow students within a group to post a full draft in Word is no excuse for not doing critiques; you can always roam into other groups and do volunteer critiques—even in sections other than yours.

Final Revision of Progression I Essay

Remember to review the Requirements and Policies Sheet, the Progression Checklist (in “Notes on Composition”), and the above prompt before handing in your final draft. Also be sure to read aloud, and if possible to listen to someone else read your work aloud, to catch things the eye—and spell check—misses.

Don’t Fence Me In
Progression II:
Violence and Rhetorical Violence out of Western Spaces

I ain’t like that no more.
Unforgiven

What kind of Indians was they?
Blood Meridian

I don't deserve this. […] I was building a house.
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20 You must have seen the film by this date. It’s widely available, but you’ll find it best to plan ahead—perhaps even seeing the film with your small group or at least another student outside class. You may view the film at Norlin (call to make sure they have it available and not on hold for another class). And, of course, these days a film like this costs less than a book to purchase used on the internet.

21 Remember that for a non-literature and film focus, you’ll want just one or two secondary sources but several
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<td>Individual Research</td>
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22 Remember that you may post more than the minimum required number of drafts—and critiques; simply keep the numbering up to match how many you’ve posted of each.
Progression II Exercises and Essay Prompt

Noticing and Responses

Special Note: Please be careful to label all posts that might contain “spoilers” with the words “possible spoilers” in the subject line of your post. This only refers, of course, to posts that “drift” into the reading assigned for a future class. In other words, if you’re posting for the first day and you mention something that happens beyond page 54, you want to warn your group that your post might spoil something in the plot beyond that page.

First, make sure you get down lists of things you notice in the viewing and reading for the progression. Second, write brief responses (at least) to the texts. Remembering that one part of your evidence for this essay will consist of close reading, you’ll most likely be writing something useful for the first draft of the essay, and you’ll have the opportunity to think ahead toward an abstract.

Alternative Responses

You do not need to read the following prompts. But for those students who benefit from a more structured prompt for responses, here are prompts for each day’s reading or viewing. You may choose any of the following prompts to guide your “responses,” or you may write on some other aspect of the primary text that interests you.

Blood Meridian: 3 Responses Total are Required; I’m providing several prompts to encourage variety—some are easy, some much more difficult—and you may post more than three times, of course. Again, you may instead skip the following prompts and go your own way in the text.

For the reading up to page 54:
- Choose one of the epigraphs (see the unnumbered first page following the title page) and venture some reasonable inferences as to how one or more epigraphs function as textual doorways into this novel. Without (necessarily) performing any research, can you “notice” and then begin to “close read” the likely rhetorical or aesthetic purpose of a particular epigraph?
- What might we make of the word, “clay” at the top of page 5?
- What might be the judge’s rhetorical purpose in the Reverend Green’s tent? In the bar?
- How do the kid and Toadvine bond?
- Comment on the longest sentence you’ve found to this point.
- For the reading up to page 108:
  - What’s wrong with Sproule?
  - Which Jackson wins? How and why (perhaps)?
  - Compare the first description of Indians with the first description of the Glanton gang.
- For the reading up to page 204:
  - Why does the judge discuss geology?
  - How do you make gunpowder (on the run)?
  - Who complains about the Tiguas?
  - Why does the judge tell the parable of the harnessmaker?
  - Discuss the final paragraph of Chapter XIII. What change is indicated in this single paragraph?
  - Discuss the problem of epistemology raised by Holden.
- For the reading up to page 304:
  - What, exactly, does the kid do regarding Shelby? Why?
• Discuss the description of animals in the kid’s absence from the gang.
• Discuss Holden’s second discourse on epistemology.
• What should we make of the phrase, “neuter austerity,” on page 247?
• What is the function of the chapter concerning James Robert and “The Borginnis?”
• What goes wrong when the gang settles down? Go beyond what merely happens—why do you think this happens—or why does the book include this turn of events?
• For the reading through the end:
  • What is the kid charged with by a significant character? Do you think he’s guilty?
  • What does the kid do with the woman in the mountains?
  • What is Elrod’s problem?
  • What happens at the very end (not including the Epilogue)?
  • What happens in the Epilogue?

Unforgiven: 2 Responses Total are Required. Again, I’m providing several possibilities and you do not need to consider these prompts at all. For those wanting more guidance, choose what you like from this list—or write about some other aspect of the film. You’ll note that I’ve included no prompts here concerning dialogue. This does not rule out discussion of the dialogue, of course, but I rather hope to encourage students unaccustomed to writing about film also to see (and hear) other aspects of this film.
• Comment on the use of sound in the film (perhaps including music).
• What might we make of the character names?
• Discuss the sets used in the film. (Buildings were constructed completely—as stand-alone buildings, unlike the usual false-fronts often used for films.) What might we notice about the various interior shots in this film? Why might that prove important?
• Discuss the blocking (where people are standing, when and where they move, etc.) of the “delivery of the ponies” scene. You might also include some comment on the sound effects in this scene.
• What trope or tropes are employed around the word, “gun?” Try to cite at least two examples of this (there are more).
• Discuss lighting in the film. Which scenes are dark, which light, and why?
• Discuss camera placement, and perhaps movement, or perhaps edits (cutting) in one scene. How does the combination of shots reinforce—or, perhaps, add contrast to—the primary effect of a scene?
• What is the function of W. W. Beauchamp in this film? (And why is he called “W. W.?“)
• What similarities and differences do you see between the film’s climactic confrontation and the way such encounters were described earlier by Little Bill?
• What is the difference between the opening and closing shots (the prologue and epilogue shots, as it were)?

300-Word Abstract

First, indicate not only what primary text or texts you will be examining, but some key passages or scenes that you might want to focus on. In 300 words, tell us where you’re looking, how you plan on reading the text (what feature of it will you focus on), and what you expect to find. Second, indicate what disciplinary, or interdisciplinary, research you plan for this essay. Most likely you will not have done much, if any, research at this point. But what do you need for this project, and where do you expect to look for it? Of course, you’ll want to look ahead to the essay prompt to get a good sense of the project requirements in the final revision.
Remember that the focus of this essay need not be on or in the novel and or film (though that remains an option); interdisciplinary projects inquiring into “the Rhetorics of ______ [anything occasioned by consideration of these works]” are encouraged.

**Preliminary Bibliography**

This part of the progression is not required as a specific item to be posted by a certain date. Rather, think of this as a helpful step in the progression toward your first draft, and through your revision process. *Note:* your final draft’s bibliography should not contain notations.

Your preliminary bibliography is the working draft of your future “Works Cited.” Look ahead to the research requirements given in the prompt below. List your primary source(s), *at least* one or two significant secondary sources, and at least one tertiary source. Be sure to get help from research librarians in Norlin, and see the many links to sources given here in WebCT—in Web Links but also from the Progression II Extensions page. Make judicious use of Google and, if you know how, online article access through Chinook (we’ll cover this last resource in class). This is a working document, and for reasons of format it’s easiest at first to keep it a separate document. Note, however, that once you begin drafts of the essay, I need you to at least cut and paste all your bibliographic information into the bottom of the same document as your essay (so I can open it all at once). Finally, to do well on this part of the progression, you need to make some notes beneath each entry. For example:

Sepich, John. *Notes on Blood Meridian*. Louisville, KY: Bellarmine College P., 1993. Print. This early book-length volume was the first full treatment of the McCarthy novel and consists of notes on likely sources for the book’s many (surprisingly many) historical references. Beginning with lists of character and place names, Sepich’s *Notes* grew to encompass more in-depth arguments about several passages in the novel, including non-historical literary references.

For more help on how to do this bibliography, google the term “annotated bibliography.” And remember, a serious essay will likely begin with more than a quick cut and paste of easy sources.

**Scholarly Essay**

*This prompt is merely for the first draft. Read on through for advanced requirements of the final.*

In five to seven pages, write a scholarly essay on some problem of violence, identity, or space in the West, or on any other subject that arises from your experience with either or both of our common primary texts. My first, merely suggested, terms are large, of course, and might also be combined for a topic. To make any topic, you’ll want to narrow at least one term. Example:

“Senseless and Sensible: Varieties of Retributive Violence from *Blood Meridian* to 9/11”

A tough example! But one that could work using both the McCarthy text and arguments supporting retributive violence. Such an essay (admittedly ambitious) would necessarily also address issues of identity. To make this example work, one would need to narrow the question of identity, such as a focus on the question (paraphrasing McCarthy), “What kind of Indians [or highjackers] was them?” Here’s a more narrow example:

“*Unforgiven* Domestic Violence Inside Out”

This one would naturally close read the scenes of violence against women, as well as their mud (and horse manure) attack outside Greely’s, and could draw on sociological and psychological research on domestic violence, as well as film studies of same, and of course, secondary material directly on the film.
As always, the general territory of “space” of any kind is merely a conceit of the course. As the most important goal of the course is to help you improve your skills in writing and rhetoric, please do not feel you must force an otherwise interesting topic under the rubric of “space.” Similarly, primary texts other than those assigned for the whole class are allowed, with specific permission. That said, we will have to make sure your workload is fair, so no “double-dipping” without special permission, which generally includes a more extensive project. Note that as always, you absolutely must have a full five to seven page first draft to request any direct comments from me and for me not to dock your grade. Yet, this draft can be formative, and we expect radical revision before your final draft.

**Minimum sources for the first draft: four.**

This essay may include your voice as you see fit, provided that strategy works within what we will call a *familiar scholarly essay*. In any case, your close reading of one or more of the texts for this progression should be put in conversation with relevant scholarship at both the secondary and tertiary levels.

- Secondary scholarship simply means something written directly about your primary text(s).
- Tertiary scholarship means at least one item from a particular disciplinary angle on your idea—one that is not particularly—or at all—geared toward your primary text, but one that helps you make your argument about that text. (An essay on guns as synecdoche in both texts, for instance, might draw on the work of Jacques Lacan; one on changing ideas of “the West” in either primary text, on the other hand, could draw on a famous essay by Fredrick Jackson Turner.) Initially, you may have all electronic sources—but not in the final draft.

In subject, you may now range more widely than a purely “literary” or “film studies” essay. But, while your essay may address a particular (not too universal!) problem of space in American life, you should at the very least use your primary text as a perfect occasion (more than a mere excuse) in which to view that problem. So, you have a spectrum along which you may work: from a purely aesthetic consideration of the primary text, to an essay that is very much about some problem in the world, and yet that seems to require at least a little attention to that text in order for us to understand that problem; this will root your argument in the particularity of art, even as many (most?) of you will then spend more time on a disciplinary or inter-disciplinary question at issue well outside literature and film studies.

**Final Revision of Essay**

**In seven to ten pages, write a scholarly essay** on following the above prompt. Remember to review the Requirements and Policies Sheet, the Progression Checklist (in “Notes on Composition”), and the above prompt before handing in your final draft. Also be sure to read aloud, and if possible to listen to someone else read your work aloud, to catch things the eye—and spell check—misses. Be sure that your evidence comes in

1. **Close Reading** in the primary text(s),
2. **Secondary Research:** solid scholarship on that text,
3. and **Tertiary Research:** scholarly sources on whatever disciplinary (or inter-disciplinary) angle you choose.

While your personal evidence might also work at some point, you will always want to avoid faulty generalization, hypothetical arguments, etc. *Be specific*, and work your way up from the details to the larger idea.

**Minimum sources: five**, including your primary text (if one; if you use both primary texts, you will need four secondary and / or tertiary sources). Without a waiver from me, at least one of your secondary or tertiary sources must be in paper form, i.e., not available as full text online; at least one of your sources must be a peer-reviewed journal article. *Most, though not all, successful essays will
employ more than the minimum number of sources. Finally, with permission from me, you may work on some text other than the two primary texts we have used in class. All essays must be in correct format, MLA style unless you use another for your discipline, in which case APA, etc., are allowed.

Progression II Primary Source Bibliography


Progression III:

Civic Scholarly Rhetoric

Or

Creative Nonfiction

I'm happy when the revisions are big.
I'm not speaking of stylistic revisions,
but of revisions in my own understanding.
—Saul Bellow

I believe more in the scissors than I do in the pencil.
—Truman Capote

This Progression has two options: you will write a proposal, essay, think piece, or editorial devoted to civic rhetoric (an argument about some problem in the world), or a significant piece of Creative Nonfiction. As we will see in class, civic rhetoric is simply rhetoric—argument—that attempts to address a problem in the real world. There are two options for a civic rhetoric essay (one essentially brings your previous essay to a different audience, while of course improving on that essay; the other is a new essay or editorial). See the prompts below the

Note that if you write on the film, you may need to list other aspects of the film depending on your focus. A paper that focused on the character of Ned, for instance, would include “Morgan Freeman” as an actor. See the MLA guide (or link) for more details.
Schedule for more guidance.

Students wishing to take the Creative Nonfiction option must meet with me or post a convincing argument during the first week of the progression to make sure you have done well enough at the previous research essay, and to discuss the kind of writing you would like to do. The workload, difficulty, and grading standards for creative work will be as difficult—but no more so—as for the essay option. No previous experience at Creative Nonfiction is necessary, and as usual, very hard work at something a student wants to learn—yet may not have had much experience in—is rewarded in the overall “Progression through the Semester” grade.

For all options, students are encouraged to seek publication of their final revision, where the success of that revision merits it. Office hours would be the best way for me to help with this, but I can also simply give quick advice on where and how to submit your writing for publication.

### Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Reading Due</th>
<th>Civic Option Writing Due</th>
<th>Creative Nonfiction Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4/14</td>
<td>Progression Review: Civic Rhetoric; Creative Options</td>
<td>(Peer Essays)</td>
<td>[Final Prog II Essay]</td>
<td>[Final Prog II Essay]</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4/16</td>
<td>Extension of Prog III Workshop; Finding a Civic Focus; CNF Options</td>
<td>Civic: Samples within Genres; CNF: Mentor Author</td>
<td>[In-Class] Begin Rough Draft</td>
<td>[In-Class] Begin Mentor/Author Profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4/21</td>
<td>Civic: Genres and Topics; CNF: Process and Genres within the “Fifth Genre;” PWR “Exit Survey”</td>
<td>Civic: Samples within Genres; CNF: Mentor Author</td>
<td>Draft ProgIII-1</td>
<td>Rough Draft of Short Work or 900 Words of Longer Work</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4/23</td>
<td>Civic Class: Workshop to Final Choice of Genre; CNF: Workshop on Process to “Rough Draft” or Selection of Shorts; FCQ’s</td>
<td>Civic: Samples within Genres; CNF: Mentor Author</td>
<td>Revision: ProgIII-2 or later</td>
<td>Significant Revision; In-Class Critiques</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4/28</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
<td>Civic: Individual Research; CNF: Critical</td>
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Mentor/Author Work (for Creative Nonfiction Options)

You cannot write fiction or poetry without reading it—indeed, without reading a lot of it. Although much of your choice of reading will be a self-study, I will advise you on whose work you might study in order to either model your work on theirs, or at least in order to employ some of the technical aspects of their work. To begin with, you’ll do some research on authors, then choose one and write a one-page “Profile,” including a brief close reading of some of their work. Biographical information is fine, but the place of an author within a movement, etc., is even better. Best of all would be to recognize some technical aspect of the author’s work and to discuss that. I’ll be helping you with this as necessary, of course. And we’ll remember that this is a crash course in CNF.

Civic Options Project Requirements

Written Projects: First Draft
Choose one option for a written project:

1) Write a three to five page Proposal (four pages minimum if graphics of any kind—spreadsheet, pie chart, graph, etc—are included). The proposal must have a clearly defined audience that is in a position to effect specific changes. After reading your proposal, you should have reasonable expectations that you can influence a majority of your audience to act on your plan. Minimum of six sources for this option.

2) Write a four to six page Familiar Essay. While you may draw on personal experience, and or, some Creative Nonfiction techniques, you must at some point seriously consider more than one position on the particular problem you address. While your audience may be general, you should attempt to create an impetus to action on the part of your readers. This is more than an editorial, and should include at least three textual sources of evidence (albeit translated for a general audience). For examples, see well-written general magazines (The Atlantic Monthly, The New Yorker, The Utne Reader, The Nation). After reading this essay, your readers will either agree with you or not—but they should all respect the structure and style of your argument.

3) Write a five to six page “Think Piece” Article. For this piece, you should imagine you are a reporter who has been given more space to address a particular problem than you would get in the regular part of a newspaper. You will use at least four—though likely several more—sources of textual
evidence, but these will be embedded in your writing for a general audience. Your stance should attempt objectivity. For examples, see the Sunday magazines in newspapers of record (The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times) and longer articles in magazines such as those mentioned in option 2. This option allows you to spread out and make a clear argument without avoiding complexities, with room to acknowledge complications and several points of view. After reading this article, your readers might have several different points of view, but they will be much more informed about your topic.

4) **Write an Editorial.** For this option, you need to be clear about the size of your audience: where, exactly, would you submit this editorial? The Daily Camera has a smaller readership and would of course be more likely to concern itself with local issues. The editorial page of The Washington Post, by contrast, concerns itself with more national issues. Editorials are counted by words, rather than pages, and the difficulty in writing a good one is in staying within, rather than going beyond, the form. Go online to a reputable newspaper in which you would want to publish the piece, and copy and paste an editorial there into Word. Do a word count, and that gives you your word limit. Also read through several editorial pages, and note the differences between editorials without bylines and those with. You may write a “letter to the editor,” but we would prefer a longer editorial, such as those written by regular writers for that page, or those written by guest editorial writers.

**Creative Nonfiction Option Project Requirements**

Creative Nonfiction encompasses many genres within its own “Fourth Genre,” (a name assuming that fiction, poetry, and drama represent all other forms of creative writing). Indeed, creative nonfiction arguably includes all other genres of writing—including scholarship within academia (if creatively expressed), and certainly well-research “serious nonfiction” (as editors call it) intended for a wider audience outside academia. Writers choosing this option should speak with me about readings and exercises to help with particular projects. Please see the folder “CNF” in “Readings” within D2L, as well as the document “Creative Nonfiction” in “Notes on Composition.” Then begin what you will do quite a lot of: creative searching on the web and in bookstores and libraries for more on, and in, the “Fourth Genre.”

*Note: process is all-important in doing well with this option. You cannot hope to complete your best effort if you start late, fail to write regularly, etc. I will provide some guidance on the writing process, and will then expect you to stick to the schedule on which we agree. The word “creative” does not allow for missing deadlines.*

**Final Submission of Progression III Projects:**

**Civic and Creative Nonfiction**

- All Final Revisions should be posted to small groups
- Then add Reflective Writing to a page added to the top of your final project and save as either, “Graded[your name goes here—and don’t include these brackets!]ProgIII-Civic” or “Graded[your name goes here—and don’t include these brackets!]ProgIII-CNF”
- In your Reflective Writing, be sure to speak to matters of process, particularly how much you undertook a progression in a short span of time; how might the progression process work for you in future writing projects, where you often will not have more than a week or two before deadline? As
always, also speak “the language of the class.” Finish with an argument for 1. the grade this final project earned, 2. the Progression III portion of your portfolio grade: how did you do with an altered schedule leaving less time for this progression? and 3. an argument for your Overall Progression grade.

• One page should be enough room for your Reflective Writing is you single space just that. If not, don’t worry if you go over into a second page.