

Fall 2015

ENGL 1158

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Utopic Visions

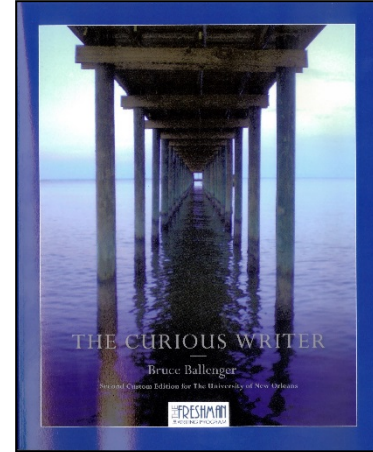
English 1158~English Composition

Fall 2015

Section 013 MWF 12- 12:50 PM, LA 356

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Steeby
Office: 296, Liberal Arts Building
Hours: MWF 1- 2:30 PM

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- *Appointments outside of regular office hours may be arranged through email.



Textbooks

- Ballenger, *The Curious Writer*, UNO's Custom Edition
ISBN: 1-269-88765-3
Wilson, *Snowbird*
ISBN: 978-0-615-82234-1

Materials

- Three manila folders
- Loose-leaf in three-ring binder
- Handouts and various websites organized in Moodle

Course Description

The goal of this course is to help you build upon the writing skills you have already developed. We are primarily concerned with persuasive writing, but other modes of expression and examination (such as description, analysis, summary, and visual conceptualization) are just as important in establishing one's own sense of voice, audience, and purpose—all those things that determine how we should write for a particular task. The process of writing your essays and projects will include a number of activities: critical reading, pre-writing, evaluating your audience, determining your purpose, developing a thesis, writing drafts, incorporating sources, refining your thesis, revising your draft, editing your prose, and proofreading. Your final projects and essays should be interesting, thoughtful, well-written pieces of college-level prose. You will complete a series of connected, scaffolded assignments leading up to each of our three major projects; each part will make up the whole of your project.

Our course has a theme: "Utopic Visions." In this course, we will examine and write about a variety of social, political, and cultural visions of the world people (and plants and animals!) want to live in; and we will, by necessity, need to consider how we address dystopic realities that hinder us. You will be given

considerable freedom to explore your own topic choices, as long as they fall under the course's umbrella topic of "Utopic Visions." You will examine the complex visions and problems being discussed in the current (and past) social discourse and even decide what underlying issues (and solutions!) you think the rest of us should consider as a society.

Social discourse—the extended conversation society has traditionally conducted through print media (such as newspapers) and television debate—has now incorporated digital media and other twenty-first century modes of communication. For example, a blog can be just as useful in making someone's opinion known as a newspaper editorial. Some may even argue that digital media is gaining prominence over traditional communication, making more writers' voices accessible to the public.

Since the composing process of the twenty-first century is a stratified one in which communicators are expected to investigate and respond through a diverse set of modes and methods, many of which utilize digital technologies in conjunction with traditional prose, we are also expected to have a larger repertoire of composition skills. Besides being good prose writers, professionals are now expected to communicate visually, orally, digitally, etc. For example, depending on the audience and purpose, a PowerPoint presentation or an e-mail can be just as vital to readers as traditional ink-and-paper communication.

By the end of this course, you will form an awareness of (and have practice in) applying these multi-layered and intersecting strategies to be effective twenty-first century thinkers and communicators. You will also learn that these skills transfer to your academic, everyday, and professional life. Traditional academic writing and research will be your central task but we will be applying those skills to various areas of communication. Our course will embrace academic inquiry and broaden its scope to include working within different kinds of textual environments and genres (including digital media), helping you build a more complex and comprehensive understanding of the purposes and applications of human discourse.

While this is a writing-intensive course, enthusiastic participation is also expected in each weekly discussion of the reading material. I will photocopy readings and post others to Moodle. Critical reading will help us develop critical thinking, and critical thinking is key to your development as a writer.

Student Learning Objectives

After successful completion of English 1158, you will be able to display proficiency in the following areas:

Rhetorical Knowledge

Students should be able to

- Determine purpose and audience in their own and others' writing.
- Understand how purpose, audience, and context affect writing style, voice, and tone.
- Apply appropriate rhetorical strategies for diverse writing situations.
- Demonstrate familiarity with and/or compose in different genres (such as editorial writing, personal narratives, reviews, satires, dialogues, letters, or profile essays).
- Demonstrate familiarity with and/or incorporate different media (such as PowerPoint presentations, web pages, pod casts, or visual essays)

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing

Students should be able to

- Analyze and/or interpret texts and other forms of discourse in multiple genres.
- Use logical reasoning.
- Summarize, analyze, evaluate, and respond to the ideas of others.
- Understand writing as a process that involves invention, drafting, collaboration, and revision.
- Identify and incorporate persuasive techniques.
- Write informative, analytical, and persuasive essays.
- Incorporate the ideas and texts of others.
- Use library and non-library research methods.
- Evaluate sources.

Knowledge of Conventions

Students should be able to

- Use standard grammar.
- Follow conventions for word choice, syntax, spelling, and punctuation.
- Follow conventions appropriate for the given genre and/or medium, such as style, diction, and format.
- Use a variety of sentence structures.
- Document sources in MLA style.

Course Writing

The work in this class will be comprised of three projects, each culminating in a **Long Composition (LC)**. To prepare you to compose each project's LC successfully, you will compose a **Short Composition (SC)** designed to help you understand the genre in which you'll be writing.

These major assignments will be supported with a number of activities, called **Process Work (PW)**, which we will complete both in class and as homework (including fast writing, brainstorming, group work, sketches, drafts, peer review, workshops, research, and more). At the end of each project, you will turn in a project packet that includes the final draft of your LC, your previously graded SC, all of your PW, *and* a **letter of reflection** in which you discuss your writing experience and address what revisions you would or would not make if you had more time.

At the very end of the course, you will compose a final **letter of reflection** in which you look back at your experience over the course. This reflection will serve as an introduction to your portfolio.

Assignments and Grading

- **Three long projects/essays (Long Compositions)**
60% of the final grade
- **Three "mini-essays" (Short Compositions)**

25% of final grade

- **Process work: journals, annotated bibliographies (when assigned), essay outlines (when assigned), assignments in visual rhetoric, and smaller in-class writing assignments**

10% of final grade

- **Final reflective essay**

5% of final grade

I reserve the right to alter or modify these weighted percentages.

An “A” paper establishes a successful argument while simultaneously employing careful organization and development, which ultimately makes the paper free of irrelevant detail, inappropriate diction, faulty logic, clichés, and errors in grammar, usage, or punctuation. Source material/research is incorporated throughout the essay but does not overshadow the student’s own point of view. I am as concerned with the quality of thought you express on paper as I am with the quality of the prose itself. An A paper does not have any mechanical or proofreading errors.

A “B” paper has many of the same qualities of an “A” paper, but it usually lacks at least one of the elements of an “A” paper. A “B” paper, though articulate and logical, usually arises from a lack of organization and incorrect grammar.

A “C” paper usually comes near to establishing a successful argument, but it commonly lacks depth and often states the obvious. It also lacks the appropriate tone and voice for academic writing and employs a writing style that is more verbal and vague with an over-reliance on sources to establish the student’s argument.

A “D” paper displays a lack of interest on the author’s part. The writing is choppy, simplistic, and uninspired. “D” papers usually lack a thesis and make no real attempt at organization. They are also plagued by grammatical errors and faulty logic.

An “F” paper fails to address many of the concepts presented on the rubric. This paper also tends to be hastily written, made evident by its lack of thesis and organization and by the frequency of grammatical and proofreading errors.

Scale for final grades: 90-100=A, 80-89=B, 70-79=C, 60-69=D, below 60=F

Papers will be evaluated based on their effectiveness as persuasive writing. The grade indicates the combined success of all the elements of writing in achieving this goal (content, organization, style and tone, use of Standard English grammar, effectiveness of sentence structures and word choices, etc.). Each draft of every essay is assessed by the same standard: papers written at the beginning of the semester are graded with the same standards as papers written at the end of the semester, and a final draft is graded with the same standards as the first draft of an essay. Because of this, grades on drafts at the beginning of the semester will almost always be low, and the goal should be to improve the writing so that the grades improve throughout the semester as you become more adept at incorporating the approaches being learned into your writing.

You are expected to attend class every day and to arrive on-time. UNO's attendance policy is that students are allowed to be excused from approximately 225 minutes of class time over the course of the semester, which translates to **five** MWF class periods. Beyond that, your final course grade will be lowered one letter grade for every day you are absent. Please note that students who are consistently tardy will be counted absent.

In accordance with UNO policy, "A student who is not present to answer roll call is marked absent." You are responsible for being in class, being on time, and having all writing, reading, or other assigned work completed. If you are absent, you are responsible for finding out what you missed and for having all assignments completed for the next class, regardless of the reason you were not present. If you wish to find out what was covered in the class in your absence, you must come to my office to see me. Do not e-mail me or call to ask about missed material. Your grade will be lowered by a letter for every day an assignment is late. **Any failure to have an assigned draft for a peer review workshop will also be counted as an absence, since you will not be able to participate.**

In addition to writing essays and major projects, you will read and respond to the writing of others (both professional writers and your classmates). You will complete grammar assignments, take quizzes on reading, writing, grammar, etc., participate in peer group workshops, write drafts, and complete other assigned work. Failure to participate in or satisfactorily complete any significant portion of this work is serious enough to result in an F for the course.

Not only is attendance required, but so is your attention and engagement. Be present; be prepared; be respectful. (Note: It is not respectful to attempt to send or read text or e-mail messages when the instructor's eye is turned).

Academic Integrity

We all share the responsibility of protecting the free exchange of ideas that is fundamental to the college experience. If we fail to safeguard the academic integrity of our institution, severe disciplinary action is taken. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, plagiarism, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty.

This class is a place where the intellectual property of others is consulted in order for us to form our own opinions through insightful, intelligent prose that adds to the academic dialogue. If we fail to credit the ideas of these other authors, we are committing the act of plagiarism, which is an egregious ethical violation that is dealt with harshly. Acts of plagiarism undermine the entire process of academic inquiry. Using papers from other classes, passing someone's writing off as your own, or failing to credit sources come with serious consequences. If I discover solid evidence of plagiarism, I will follow the University guidelines and file an Academic Dishonesty Report. If you think you may be crossing the line in how you use sources, ask me.

Completion of all major projects is required to pass the course. A plagiarized project constitutes an incomplete project and results in failing the course.

Refer to the UNO Judicial Code for additional information. The Code is available online at www.studentaffairs.uno.edu.

Being Part of a Classroom Community

In a writing class, all participants must behave with civility and respect at all times. Writing—and especially sharing writing—can be an at-times frightening endeavor. Moreover, what’s said and/or written about may sometimes be provocative. That’s a good thing; good writers take risks, and you should all feel comfortable enough to do so. Having said that, I expect that even when you disagree with the opinions of anyone in the class (including me), you will respect the right of each individual to *have* those opinions and you will behave with civility and respect at all times. No one in our class should ever feel belittled or undermined by anyone else in the class. Any actions that purposefully undermine or belittle either another person or a classroom activity will not be tolerated.

What can you expect from me, as your facilitator? I will be respectful and thoughtful in my response to your comments and ideas. Our classroom is—and I hope, always will be—a place where we, as writers, explore ourselves and our world in a safe and supportive environment. Course policies like this one are designed to make sure that happens.

The Public Nature of Writing

Since academic writing (and most writing) is directed toward an audience, you should consider the writing that you do in this course “public,” that is, writing that others will read.

I will be the primary reader for what you write. But, in the case of Peer Review, other students will also read your work. This provides a great learning opportunity for both reader and writer, but also needs to be considered when picking topics and when writing. If there is a personal subject that you don’t feel comfortable sharing, it would probably be best to write about something else in class. Also, I will periodically use stellar examples of student writing in class. I will use your writing **ONLY** to demonstrate fantastic examples of what we’re doing, however. If there is writing that you would rather I not use for this purpose, you can note it on the paper and/or send me an email.

Project, Essay, and Journal Formats

I do not accept late assignments. You cannot make up quizzes or in-class work except in certain situations.

Completion of all major projects and process work (smaller writing assignments) is required to pass the course. A plagiarized essay constitutes an incomplete essay and subsequent failure in the course.

Students must type (double-space) all essays and journals in MLA format, which includes using Times New Roman—12 pt. font. Guidelines can be found in your textbook. Pages must be stapled. Before turning in the final draft, students should also put all early drafts, journals, freewrites, outlines, and peer review comments (anything that contributed to the writing of the essay or project) in the manila folder. Journals should be at least one typed page and written under the same considerations of style, grammatical correctness, and inquiry as a formal essay.

Emails and Instructor-Student Correspondence

Just as you should take care to behave professionally in the classroom, so too should you take care before sending emails—particularly if you are feeling upset or frustrated by a grade. In your emails to me, I ask that you refer to the course in the subject line of your message, before your message’s specific subject (e.g., Subject: English 1158: Question about Essay 1). Remember: tone of voice and body language—aspects of communication that help clarify a writer’s intent—do not come across in emails. Please read your email carefully and critically before clicking on “Send.”

I check my UNO email account frequently during regular business hours. Because I have so many students, though, I ask that you allow a 24 hr. response-time for any reply.

Presentations

You are also required to give/produce oral and/or digital presentations in this course (using PowerPoint or other software if you wish). These presentations will be part of the sequenced/scaffolded assignments leading up to your major projects/essays. Giving presentations will not only help you work through your ideas before you complete any high-stakes writing assignments; they will also help you refine a valued skill that should belong in the repertoire of any professional.

Revision of Essays and Projects

You will choose which projects or essays you will revise for an improved grade. I will assign due dates from which you can pick. I will not grade your revision unless the original essay or project (with my comments and annotations) accompanies the revised version in a pocket folder.

I also want to stress that revision constitutes rewriting (and possibly rethinking) the entire essay or project, not just making surface changes or correcting my editorial suggestions. The revision will replace the grade you received on the original essay or project. The most effective way to revise is to come to my office to discuss the revisions as you are working on them.

Revision of at least one project or essay is a requirement, not an option.

Portfolio Review and Final Grade

Students must keep ALL the work (graded and ungraded) they produce for each project, and at the end of the semester, they must submit this writing as their portfolio of work from the semester.

In each of your three manila folders, you will collect final, graded drafts of your major projects and ALL the other writing (formal and informal, high stakes and low stakes, in-class and out-of-class) contributing to the completion of these projects. Your portfolio MUST include graded work that incorporates outside sources with correct MLA citations.

A **final essay** will be written in the final exam period, the topic of which will be the student’s own writing and/or progress during the semester. Students should bring copies of the papers they have written during the semester to the exam, so they can refer to specific elements of their work as they write this final essay.

You must submit your complete portfolio to me at the end of the course or you will receive an F. I will keep the portfolio for one year. After that time, you may pick it up in my office.

Conferences

You will meet with me for a private conference at least once during the semester. However, I commonly call students in for conferences more often. This time will enable us to discuss specific issues in your writing in a one-on-one setting.

Moodle

This course will use Moodle extensively. Supplementary readings, assignments, and digital content will be posted regularly, so you are responsible for checking Moodle on a regular basis and for completing all assignments, quizzes, or other work I assign on it. Also, check your UNO e-mail account daily.

You can gain Moodle access by following this link: <http://uno.mrooms3.net/login/index.php>

Writing Center

I have posted my office hours. Please feel free to stop by if you need help with your essays. If I am not available, the Writing Center is another option. Tutors are available to help you with your writing in LA 334 (280-7054). I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity, but remember that it is not their function to correct, revise, or edit your essays, only to help you learn strategies and skills to help you strengthen and improve your writing on your own. <http://www.uno.edu/lrc/writingcenter>

Computer Labs

Out-of-class essays and journal entries must be typed and double-spaced. If you do not have a computer at home, utilize one of the many labs around the main campus.

Deadlines

All work submitted must be typed and on time. No late work will be accepted without prior permission or valid excuse. Should I agree to accept work late, it will be docked by one letter grade (10 points) for every day it is late.

Any in-class essays written after the scheduled date must be made up during my next available office hours. Each out-of-class paper **will be penalized a full letter grade** for each class period it is late, without any exception, unless you contact me before said paper is due to explain your reason for failing to come to class.

I do not accept late low-stakes assignments, such as quizzes, journals, and blog entries.

Cell Phones and Social Media Use

I understand that we are all having close relationships with our cell phones. However, **in this class, you should turn off your phone and put it out of sight.** If I see you text messaging during class, or anything of that nature, I will deduct credit from your participation grade or ask you to leave class.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students who qualify for services will receive the academic modifications for which they are legally entitled. It is the responsibility of the student to register with the Office of Disability Services each semester and follow ODS procedures for obtaining assistance.

<http://www.uno.edu/disability-services/>

Course Schedule

Assigned Texts/ Reading Schedule:

Week 1: 8/19- 8/21

Wed: Course introduction and syllabus

Fri: *The Curious Researcher*: Introduction; 1 paragraph response to Gina Phillips' artwork: "Fats Got Out" (2013)

Week 2: 8/24- 8/28

Mon-Fri: *The Curious Researcher*: Chapter 1 (The First Week)