

Working-Class Studies In The Writing Classroom

Sample Major [and minor] Assignment Sequence plus Daily Schedule (three meetings per week) and Sample Syllabus

Minor Writing #1: After reading Scott Russell Sanders' "The Inheritance of Tools," think about a habit, skill, talent, habit, or trade you have learned from a family member. In addition to the ability or trait, what else have you "inherited"? How does it affect your life? Write an essay, no fewer than five paragraphs, 500-600 words, using MLA formatting as defined in your grammar handbook, describing this inheritance and its effect on you. (personal narrative)

Minor Writing #2: If colleges require students to volunteer, to "Serve or Fail" as Dave Eggers indicates in his New York Times opinion piece, should such service still be considered volunteerism? Write an essay, no fewer than five paragraphs, 500-600 words, using MLA formatting as defined in your grammar handbook, indicating whether you would suggest a much stronger support for volunteer work at universities by organizing volunteer fairs and sponsoring competitions. Should students be forced to volunteer? Should the federal government mandate a "draft" through which all students serve for 1-2 years - and this service could be military or public service? (argument)

Minor Writing #3: At the beginning of "Shooting an Elephant," George Orwell explains that during his employment as a colonial policeman in Burma many people hated him. Later in his career as a writer of nonpartisan political criticism, Orwell continued to be despised by others, albeit for different reasons. Write an essay, no fewer than five paragraphs, 500-600 words, using MLA formatting as defined in your grammar handbook, through which you examine a few other occupations the public loves to hate. Have you or someone close to you ever held such a job? (personal narrative, expository)

MAJOR ESSAY 1: After reading Lars Eighner's "On Dumpster Diving," write an essay, 1,000 to 1,200 words, in which you defend, challenge, or qualify his attitudes toward materialism and wealth. Be prepared to use evidence from your observation, experience, or previous readings to support your position. Be sure to paraphrase, attribute material, and use direct quotes from your sources. (research, argument, analysis)

Minor Writing #4: In her essay "How to Become a Writer," Lorrie Moore suggests that through failure at other vocations, one can become a writer. Using her same stream of consciousness style, write an essay, no fewer than five paragraphs, 500-600 words, using MLA formatting as defined in your grammar handbook,

responding to Moore, and provide her with some "how to" advice of your own, namely how to get into your most recent line of work. (style matching, satire)

Minor Writing #5 & 6: In her essay "Serving in Florida," writer Barbara Ehrenreich goes undercover and takes a job as a waitress in a diner-style restaurant in Key West, Florida, and finds a trailer nearby to rent. The income she receives from waiting tables is not enough to support her and to pay the next installment of rent, so, after a failed attempt to get hired as a hotel maid, she takes a second job waiting tables. Two jobs become too physically demanding for her to continue, and she quits her original position after one day of double duty. Meanwhile, in his essay "Working at McDonald's" Amitai Etzioni suggests that working at the Golden Arches is bad for teens, indicating there are few skills to be learned and suggesting teens are wasting their time, should not work, and should stay in school. Does Ehrenreich make her point by quitting her grandiose experiment? And if Etzioni is correct, if not fast food what kinds of jobs would be useful for teens? What kind of jobs would help make good choices and decisions? Write an essay, no fewer than five paragraphs, 500-600 words, using MLA formatting as defined in your grammar handbook. (Compare and contrast, analyze)

MAJOR ESSAY 2: When we read for pleasure, enjoyment is our primary goal. We might find ourselves getting caught up in exciting stories, learning about interesting times or places, or just reading to pass the time. Sometimes when we read literature for an English class, however, we need to learn to read in a different way. Through literary analysis we break down a text into smaller parts and then examine how those parts work, both individually and together. Literary analysis involves exploring all the parts of an essay, a short story, a novel, or a poem - elements such as character, setting, tone, and imagery - and then examining how the author uses those elements to create specific effects. For this assignment, you will analyze John Updike's short story "A&P." We will discuss the specifics of this task during class. (literary analysis)

Minor Writing #7: Felice Schwartz "Management Women and the New Facts of Life"; examines authority roles in the workplace, citing the differences between male and female managers. (argument, research, expository, compare/contrast, analysis). Note: The article first appeared in print 20 years ago, so it would be fascinating to assign students to test Schwartz's points over the past two decades to determine whether her findings remain valid.

MAJOR ESSAY 3: Stephanie Coontz, "A Nation of Welfare Families" and Jonathan Kozol, "The Human Cost of an Illiterate Society": Using these two essays as foundational arguing points, students will perform research and formulate an

argument discussing public assistance and illiteracy in 21st-century America.
(research, argument, compare/contrast, analysis)

Minor Writing #8: Curtis Chang: "Streets of Gold: The Myth of the Model Minority"; What does Chang mean by the "model minority" and why is it a myth? Discuss several examples of minority models - who best (or worst) represents a group - then examine Chang's concept of myth. (analysis, argument, compare/contrast)

Minor Writing #9: In her essay "No Logo" author Naomi Kline examines the "brand bullies," the companies whose logos you pay to wear emblazoned on your chests, butts, and sneakers. From Aeropostale to Old Navy, we pay for the privilege to use our bodies as free advertisements for these companies - so what's in it for us? If this marketing scheme truly worked, why wouldn't we be wearing the logos of the world's largest companies (Wal-Mart, Exxon) instead? These are the places we spend most of our money - so do we just want others to think we're more Abercrombie and Fitch than Target? Have fun with this assignment - personal narrative. If you think Kline is dead wrong, tell her so, but be sure to explain why.

Minor Writing #10: After reading Bill McKibben's "Pie in the Sky," in which the author asks: "Should anyone who requires a 'revolutionary new laser technology system' in order to figure out if they're parking in the right spot inside their own garage really be allowed behind the wheel in the first place?" Think of some other extraneous technologies we could live without, then examine what was most useful about this course and what we could have left off the curriculum. What aspects of "work" did we neglect to examine that you wish we had? (course analysis)

English 1550 - CRN: *****
MWF **: to **:** a.m.**

Instructor:

e-mail:

webspace:

Class Location: DBH.; Lab

Phone: 330-941-XXXX

Office Hours:

MW XXX

DeBartolo Hall, Room xxx

Textbooks:

Writing (as) Work
Bedford/St. Martin's Custom Publishing
Easy Writer 3rd Ed.
Bedford/St. Martin's

Materials:

USB Jump drive
Notebook/portfolio
YSU e-mail account

Please turn off your cell phones. There will be no text messaging during class.
If your phone rings, I will answer it.
There will be no wearing of headphones, earbuds or Bluetooth headsets.
Students who violate these rules will be asked to leave the classroom.

Course description:

This course is designed to facilitate conversation and critical debate by examining various vocations and a wide variety of workplaces. Through this intellectual and political approach to scholarship, you will study several examples of writing that actively involve and serve the interests of working-class people. Subsequently through your writing, you will engage in critical discussions about labor, including but not limited to the relationships among class, race, gender, sexuality, nationality, and other structures of workplace inequality while encouraging multi-disciplinary approaches to studying and writing about the experiences of the working class.

The course emphasizes the writing process - including, but not limited to, brainstorming, freewriting, organizing ideas, drafting, voice, proofreading, revision, editing, audience, and determining the caliber of the final product. The writing process addresses high and low order concerns from matters of thesis to the basics of spelling and punctuation through the drafting process.

English 1550: Writing 1

Throughout our course there will be three essays, ten in-class writings, and ten reading response assignments offering you the opportunity to summarize, paraphrase, quote directly and cite material from readings.

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|---------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| 10 Reading Responses @ 20 points each | 200 pts. | 20% |
| 10 In-class Writings @ 20 points each | 200 pts. | 20% |
| Essay One | 150 pts. | 10% |
| Essay Two | 150 pts. | 10% |
| Essay Three | 200 pts. | 10% |
| Portfolio | <u>100 pts.</u> | <u>10%</u> |

TOTAL

1000 pts. 100%

Grades: A: 90-100% B: 80-89% C: 70-79%

NC: Less than 70 percent of the total points accumulated during the semester.

Your grade is based on your grasp of the material - *not* on your negotiating skills.

Basic Expectations: Each college course presupposes you will work outside of class. The general expectation is that students work three hours outside of class for every hour spent in class. Since English 1550 meets three hours per week, it is assumed you will put in at least nine hours of effort outside of class each week toward your reading and writing assignments.

You will follow all University regulations and policies and conduct yourselves in a manner which helps to create and maintain a learning atmosphere. You will respect the rights, dignity, and worth of every individual in our classroom, in the YSU Writing Center, and within the entire YSU community.

Revision Policy: Drafting, proofreading, revision and editing are the essence of the writing process and therefore are the heart of this course. Each essay will undergo this process before it can be submitted for a grade. Papers that do not go through the drafting/revision process will not be graded. *Length matters* - and so does the format. Your work must be word-processed and easy to read, so you will use one-inch margins, Times New Roman 12-pt. font, double-spacing and the basic formatting rules of the Modern Language Association (MLA) whose many rules are in your *Easy Writer 3rd Edition* which we will cover extensively in class.

Attendance: Class attendance is extremely important, particularly in the summer. In-class writing helps track your attendance and comprises 200 points, or 20 percent of your overall grade, so excessive absences obviously will have severe consequences on your final grade. You cannot make up these points. If you are tardy, which is ten (10) or more minutes late for class, you will be counted absent for the day. If you miss two classes, your final grade will be reduced by one letter grade. If you miss more than three classes, you will not pass this course.

Late Papers and Assignments: Late papers will not be tolerated. Communication is absolutely critical and I need to know *in advance* if you are having a problem. This means *before* class begins the day the paper is due. You have my e-mail address - I check my e-mail several times each day, so I *need* to hear from you. Papers submitted one day late automatically lose one letter grade. After that, papers will be accepted only on a case by case basis, so be certain to notify me of any emergencies.

Plagiarism: Passing off the work of others as your own original work is a serious matter. While it may be tempting to download papers from the Internet or to recycle the work of others, the consequences of cheating are devastating. If you are caught plagiarizing, the minimum penalty is an "F" on that particular assignment, and a

disciplinary action report will be placed in your permanent University file. The maximum penalty for plagiarism is dismissal from Youngstown State University.

Daily Schedule

Week 1 (Subject to Change):

Mon: Introductions; Syllabus review: Read for Wednesday: Levine, "What Work Is"

Wed: Class Discussion: "What Work Is"

Fri: Lab Day: **In-Class #1**; Syllabus agreement; Assign Reading Response 1: Scott Russell Sanders' "The Inheritance of Tools"; due Monday

Week 2:

Mon: Reading Response #1 due; Discuss Reading Response 2: Eggers, "Serve or Fail"; due Wednesday

Wed: Reading Response #2 due; Introduce Essay 1: Eighner, "On Dumpster Diving"; Reading Response 3: Orwell "Shooting an Elephant"; due Monday

Fri: Lab Day: **In-Class #2**

Week 3:

Mon: Reading Response #3 due; Video TBA

Wed: Workshop Essay 1; Peer Review: Bring 3 copies of your essay draft to class; Schedule conferences

Fri: Lab Day: **In-Class #3**; Schedule conferences

Week 4:

MWF: **Conferences**

Week 5:

Mon: **Essay #1 Due**; Assign Reading Response 4: Moore "How to Become a Writer," due Wednesday

Wed: Reading Response #4 due; Video TBA

Fri: Lab Day: **In-Class #4**; Assign Reading Response 5: Ehrenreich, "Serving in Florida"; due Monday

Week 6:

Mon: Reading Response #5 due; Introduce Essay 2: Updike "A&P"

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Wed: Discuss Literary Analysis methods; Assign Reading Response 6: Etzioni, "Working at McDonald's due Monday

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Fri: Lab Day: **In-Class #5**

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Week 7:

Mon: Reading Response #6 due; Video TBA

YSU Writing Center: Maag Library, Room 171
Monday through Thursday: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Friday: 10 a.m. to 1p.m.

May 18 through August 7
(330) 941-3055

SCHEDULE ONLINE @

www.rich36.com/ysu

Wed: Workshop Essay 2; Peer Review: Bring 3 copies of your essay draft to class; Schedule conferences

Fri: Lab Day: **In-Class #6**; Schedule conferences

Week 8:

MWF: **Conferences**

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Week 9:

Mon: **Essay #2 Due**; Assign Reading Response 7: Schwartz "Management Women and the New Facts of Life," due Friday

Wed: Video TBA

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Fri: Lab Day: **In-Class #7**; Reading Response #7 due

Week 10:

Mon: Introduce Essay 3: Coontz, "A Nation of Welfare Families" & Kozol, "The Human Cost of an Illiterate Society"; Assign Reading Response 8: Chang: "Streets of Gold: The Myth of the Model Minority"; due Friday

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Wed: Discuss myth; Discuss methods of argument

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Fri: Lab Day: **In-Class #8**; Reading Response #8 due

Week 11:

Mon: Guest speaker (labor, minority issues)

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Wed: Discuss method of argument

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Fri: Maag Library tour: New research methods

Week 12:

Mon: Discuss Reading Response 9: Klein, "No Logo"; due Friday; Read for Wednesday: Pinsky, "Shirt"

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Wed: Discuss Pinsky

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Fri: Lab Day: **In-Class #9**; Reading Response #9 due

Week 13:

Mon: Video TBA

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Wed: Workshop Essay 2; Peer Review: Bring 3 copies of your essay draft to class; Schedule conferences

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Fri: Lab Day: **In-Class #10**; Schedule conferences

Week 14:

MWF: **Conferences**

Week 15:

Mon: **Essay #3 Due**; Assign Reading Response 10: McKibben "Pie in the Sky," due Wednesday

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Wed: Reading Response #10 due; Video TBA

Fri: Portfolios due; Loose Ends Day