

## **Reading and Writing II**

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**Course Description:** The purpose of the course is two-fold: (1) to help students with the different writing strategies (such as narration description process cause and effect definition classification comparison and contrast and argument) and (2) to familiarize students with the writing and research process. The course is divided into several cycles and each cycle starts with readings and discussion on a specified theme and ends with the actual writing and revision of essays. In addition to leading discussions and actively participating in classroom discussion students are required to write essays that demonstrate their ability in writing purposeful compositions: organizing and analyzing ideas to show stance, choosing diction, exploring alternative structures, and writing mechanics such as punctuation.

**Requirements:** faithful attendance, class participation, weekly drafts/essays with approximately 700-1000 words each.

**Grading:** Participation 15% Midterm 15%  
Draft 20% Revised Essay 50%

### **Textbook:**

Linda H. Peterson, and John C. Brereton. The Norton Reader, Shorter 12th Edition.  
New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company.

### **Schedule**

#### **First Week (9/15): Introduction—Interpreting Personal Experience**

**Assignment:** Write an essay, based on personal experience, in which you both narrate and interpret the significance of a personal experience. Focus your essay on a single story or event and aim to make a single point. You should not only tell your story, but you should seek to affect the way your readers will think about the specific problem or issue you raise in the story.

**Second week (9/22):** Reading and draft of an essay.

#### **Reading:**

Joan Didion, “On Going Home” (p. 1)

E. B. White, "Once More to the Lake" (p. 53)

Alice Walker, Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self" (p. 47)

**Writing assignment (draft):** Draft an essay based on an experience that will affect the reader to think about the specific problem/issue.

**Third Week (9/29):** Additional readings and writing workshops and peer-review sessions.

### **Portraying a Person**

#### **Reading:**

Brent Staples, "Black Men and Public Space" (p. 221)

Andre Aciman: "In a Double Exile" (p. 685)

Maya Angelou: "Graduation" (p. 12)

**Writing assignment (revision):** Divide into groups for peer review of drafts; revised drafts to be handed in at the next class.

**Assignment:** Write an essay that portrays a person in his or her typical context. You could write about a person you know well or someone you know only slightly or through the media. Gather new and additional information, through interviews or research, about that person and incorporate into your account. If you write about a family member, interview other family members who know the person. If you write about a public figure, find ways to gather information and interpret it in a new way. If you write about someone local, interview your subject and others who know or work with him or her.

**Fourth week (106):** Reading and draft of an essay.

#### **Reading:**

Annie Dillard: from American Childhood (p. 70)

Toni Morrison, "Strangers" (p. 75)

Judith Ortiz Cofer, "More Room" (p. 85)

**Writing assignment (draft):** Draft an essay about a person incorporating as much information as you can gather.

### **Fifth Week (10/13): Understanding a Place**

#### **Reading:**

Scott Russell Sander, "Under the Influence" (p. 59)

World War II: Victims, Villains, Heroes

    Matt Bai: "He Said No to Internment" (p. 503)

    Sara Corbett: "Saved by Strangers" (p. 506)

    Daniel Bergner: "Chasing Evil" (p. 509)

**Writing assignment (revision):** Divide into groups for peer review of drafts; revised drafts to be handed in at the next class.

**Assignment:** Write an essay for a wide audience that describes, creates the essence of, and interprets the meaning of a place. The place may be as small as a room, the size of a campus building, or as large as a town. Choose a place you can observe as you write this essay or that you know so well you need not observe it. Incorporate not only observations from the present or memories from the past, but information about the place that will help you convey its “meaning” to your readers.

### **Sixth Week (10/20):**

#### **Reading:**

N. Scott Momaday, “The Way to Rainy Mountain” (p. 88)

John Muir, “A Wind-Storm in the Forests” (p. 346)

Aldo Leopold, “Marshland Elegy” (p. 377)

### **Seventh Week (10/27): Education**

#### **Reading:**

William Zinsser, “College Pressures” (p. 245)

Caroline Bird, “College Is a Waste of Time and Money” (p. 251)

Benjamin Franklin, “Learning to write” (p. 233)

**Writing assignment:** What are the pressures on college students today? Write an essay in which you describe and analyze them, using evidence from Zinsser’s essay to suggest that some pressures remain the same.

### **Eighth Week (11/3):** Reading on literacy and education and draft of an essay.

#### **Reading**

John Holt, “How Teachers Make Children Hate Reading” (p. 237)

Wayne C. Booth, “Boring from Within: The Art of the Freshman Essay” (PDF file)

Adrienne Rich, “Taking Women Students Seriously” (p. 272)

**Writing assignment (draft):** Does Booth’s essay offend you? Does it offer ideas that may help you to write better, more interesting essays? Write a well-argued response to Booth’s assessment of student writing in “Boring from Within.”

### **Ninth Week (11/10):** Writing workshops and peer review.

#### **Reading:**

Frederick Douglass, “Learning to Read” (p. 228)

Eudora Welty, “One Writer’s Beginnings” (p. 625)

Maxine Hong Kingston, “Tongue-Tied” (p. 282)

**Writing Assignment:** Write a personal essay about an educational experience. Compare Welty's description of her teachers with Adrienne Rich's description of hers (p. 272). Pay attention to gender stereotyping. According to Welty, the people of Jackson, Mississippi, believed in "the value of doing well in school." Write an essay in which you consider how much emphasis your own community puts on doing well. Compare your community and Jackson in this respect.

**Tenth week (11/17):** Midterm

### **Race, Ethnicity, and Language**

**Eleventh Week (11/24):** Reading and draft of a writing assignment

#### **Reading:**

Gloria Anzaldua, "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" (p. 294)

Richard Rodriguez, "Aria" (p. 286)

Maxine Hong Kingston, "Tongue-Tied" (p. 282)

**Assignment:** Draft an essay about "language" in Taiwan society. Use examples from your own experience, this week's readings, and perspectives of people you know.

**Twelfth Week (12/1):** Writing workshops and additional drafts of last week's writing assignment)

#### **Reading:**

Patricia Williams, "The Death of the Profane" (p.311)

Marjorie Agosin, "Always Living in Spanish" (p. 292)

**Writing Assignment:** Write about a time when you needed to translate from one language to another. What challenges did you face? Were there some words or ideas that were impossible to translate?

### **Gender: Women's and Men's Perspectives**

**Thirteenth Week (12/8)**

#### **Reading:**

Anna Quindlen, "Between the Sexes, a Great Divide" (p. 128)

Scott Russell Sanders, "Looking at Women" (p. 118)

John McMurtry, "Kill 'Em! Crush 'Em! Eat 'Em Raw!" (p. 193)

Alice Walker, Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self" (p. 47)

**Assignment:** Draft an essay about whether people consider the differences in men's and women's attitudes inherent in human nature or the product of society. Base your essay on the beliefs of those you know and of these writers.

**Fourteenth Week (12/15)****Reading:**

E. S. Maduro, "Excuse me While I Explode: My Mother, Myself, My Anger" (p. 142)

Amy Cunningham, "Why Women Smile" (p. 149)

**Assignment:** Writing workshop or peer review, revision of draft.

**Gender: Women, Language, and Schooling****Fifteenth Week (12/22)****Reading:**

Adrienne Rich, "Taking Women Students Seriously" (p. 272)

Jennifer Britz, "The Dean's Daughter Gets Thin Envelope" (p. 264)

**Assignment:** Using your own experience and the works you have read, describe the particular difficulties women have faced in schools. Then speculate on what it will take to overcome these obstacles.

**Persuasion and Argument****Sixteenth Week (12/29)****Reading:**

Molly Ivins, "Get a Knife, Get a Dog, but Get Rid of Guns" (p. 198)

Brent Staples, "Why Colleges Shower Their Students with A's" (p. 260)

**In Class:** Analyze the author's purpose and evidence, the kind of persona the author creates, and for what audience.

**Seventeenth Week (1/5)****Reading:**

Michael Levin, "The Case for Torture" (p. 400)

Katha Pollitt, "Does a Literary Canon Matter?" (p. 636)

**Assignment:** Profile Due

**Eighteenth Week (1/12): Conference**