

English 301 Section 38349/38364
Fall 1997
MWF 8.30-9.25/9.35-10.30
313 State Hall/1114 Old Main
Office Hours 1.00-2.00 Monday & by appt.

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Course Objectives

English 301 is designed to build, expand and refine the writing skills learned in earlier courses in preparation for advanced undergraduate work. Specifically, knowledge of writing as a process, revision and methods of research is assumed. The course emphasizes intensive reading, writing, revision and discussion of various topics all moving toward the production of finished writing and the development of a personal style.

Course Design

The context for the work described above can be loosely described as "American Culture." The course will present a variety of productions of the culture of the United States and ask you to respond to them. These "productions" range from writing to film to music to television to visual arts. Your task as a student is to examine, analyze, and compare these productions along with your own knowledge and experience in order to find or establish articulations. In other words, you will be asked to describe how various productions of American culture are used or can be used to giving meaning to the idea of America.

Course Work

The work for this course consists of regular reading assignments, most of which are contained in the coursepack. The writing is made up of fifteen reaction papers based on various prompts found in the class material. Three longer, researched papers will describe the various specific articulations you discover. A fourth paper will draw the ideas together in a more extensive document. You will then create a final project based on the four papers which you will present to the class. In addition to the writing you will be asked to keep an editing journal. Equally important is class participation and interaction. The creation of meaning is a function of a group.

15 Reaction Papers	150
3 Papers	75
Paper 4	50
Final Project	100
Editing Journal	50
Participation	50
Total	475

Textbooks

On the Road by Jack Kerouac

A Pocket Style Manual by Diana Hacker

Both of these are available at Marwil Bookshop on the corner of Cass and Warren.

Coursepack, available at University Printing, on Warren two doors down from Marwil.

NB: *On the Road*, a copy of the coursepack, and Robert Hughes' *American Visions* are all on reserve at the Purdy Library. A copy of *Thelma and Louise*, and "Different Trains" are on reserve in the Media library of the new Undergraduate Library.

Recommended:

American Heritage Dictionary

Attendance

Prompt attendance is very important to this course. Much of the coursework will be class discussion. You are responsible for all information discussed in class, whether you are there or not.

Late Papers

All papers are due at the beginning of class. Any paper turned in after will lose five points per day. Any paper not turned in will result in an incomplete grade for the course.

Paper Format

All papers are to be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins in a ten or twelve point font. Be certain your name, date, and the assignment are on all papers. Please number all pages. Always keep an extra copy of your work on disk or paper. Any serious grammar, spelling or typographical errors will cause a paper to be returned unmarked for revision and resubmission.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's work. Do not plagiarize.

Editing Journal

This is to be kept in a blue book. After you receive a paper back from myself or a peer, make an entry for that paper in the blue book. The entry should describe any mechanical errors and their corrections. Second, it should note any content-based comments. The goal of the editing journal is to create a critical record of your own writing so that you can better address your strengths and weaknesses. I will check the journals periodically.

Reaction Papers

These are to be at least one page, but not more than two. You will, essentially, respond to a prompt, a piece of writing, music, or visual art. The response should be analytical. It should explore the ways you make meaning out of what you have just experienced. Think about how it represents American culture or how it can be articulated with other productions of American culture. I do not want a simple positive, negative or neutral reaction, nor do I want a summary. These reaction papers will form a record of your responses to a variety of prompts and will ideally form the basis of your longer papers.

Calendar

3 September	Introductions
5 September	
8 September	"Civil Disobedience" Reaction Paper 1
10 September	Discussion
12 September	"Everyday Use" Reaction Paper 2
15 September	Poetry Reaction Paper 3
17 September	"The Remarkable Journey of Willie Edward Gary" Reaction Paper 4
19 September	"The Cult of Busyness" Reaction Paper 5
22 September	Paper workshop
24 September	Paper workshop
26 September	Paper 1 due
29 September	<i>American Visions</i> pp. 3-4; 543-620
1 October	TBA
3 October	TBA Reaction Paper 6
6 October	"Different Trains" cassette on reserve Reaction Paper 7
8 October	"Unsettling the Old West" & <i>Zen and the Art...</i> Reaction Paper 8 & 9
10 October	"Black Men and Public Space" Reaction Paper 10
13 October	Paper workshop
15 October	Paper workshop
17 October	Paper 2 due
20 October	"Masters of Desire" Reaction Paper 11
22 October	"Madonna" Reaction Paper 12
24 October	"Television Viewing as Ritual"
27 October	Paper workshop
29 October	Paper workshop
31 October	Paper 3 due

3 November	Conferences
5 November	Conferences
7 November	Conferences
10 November	<i>On the Road</i> Reaction Paper 13
12 November	<i>On the Road</i> continued
14 November	"Where I'm Calling From" Reaction Paper 14
17 November	<i>Thelma and Louise</i>
19 November	<i>Thelma and Louise</i>
21 November	<i>Thelma and Louise</i> Reaction Paper 15
24 November	Paper workshop
26 November	Paper 4 due
28 November	Thanksgiving: No class
1 December	Presentation workshop
3 December	Presentations
5 December	Presentations
8 December	Presentations
10 December	Presentations

English 301 Fall 1997 Paper Descriptions

The papers describe below are to be formal, written essays following the format described in the syllabus. They are to draw on three sources: your own experience and ideas, your research, class discussion and reading. I expect you to draw heavily on outside sources, that is research, to write these papers. All research must be documented in MLA style in a "works cited" page.

Paper 1

In differing ways Thoreau, Walker, the poets, Haygood and Ehrenreich all describe what it is to be an American on an individual level. Do you see any part of yourself reflected in these works? How are these writings related to each other? How are they related to products of American culture you are familiar with?

In a three to five page paper, work with the idea of identity as manifested in the works we've read and discussed. Use other works you are aware of or can locate through your research. Find and express an articulation between yourself as an American, the culture you dwell in and the products of that culture.

Paper 2

What makes a space American? How do you, as an American, alter space? How does the space of America alter you? In this section we've concentrated primarily on the visual and the public. In a three to five page paper continue your search for articulations between the public visual manifestations of American and your own experience in America. Where is America?

Paper 3

Madonna, Louis Armstrong, Robert Hughes, the Simpsons, all rely on cultural productions which have preceded them. Is the process of "re-using" the past, appropriating products of the past, itself American? Does it occur constantly? Where does it go on around you? How do you participate in it? Is it creative or destructive? In a three to five page paper draw on these products and using additional material discuss one of these ideas.

Paper 4

The works we've read and seen in the last part of the course all express ideas we've encountered before. What do they say about America that is different than what has come before? Or do they say the same things? Is American culture ever original or does it simply recycle the past in a slightly new form and try to sell it?

This paper will be longer than the previous three. In it I want you to attempt to come to some sort of conclusion about the products and issues we've discussed this semester. Feel free to draw on earlier papers. Think of this paper as your written statement about American culture.

Final Project/Presentation

Whereas Paper 4 was your final written statement about American culture the Final Project is to be your statement presented to the public. You, along with members of your group need to put together a twenty-minute presentation which you will give to the class. The presentation may take any form you desire. The only restriction is that all group members must participate. Draw on the ideas of your papers, particularly the last one. Feel free to use music, video, film, drama, visual art, anything that will help illustrate your ideas. This presentation will be your formal cultural production.

Please prepare a written description, script, or essay describing what your project is to do and how.