

# English 1050: Thought & Writing

Fall Semester 2007 – Tuesday, Thursday 10-11:50 am– 2208 Dunbar

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Office: Sprau Tower 813 – Office Hours: Tuesday 12-2 pm, and by appointment

## Course Objectives

English 1050 is an introduction to writing at the college level, providing students with the skills necessary to produce exemplary writing across subject areas throughout their university careers. In order to achieve this goal, students will approach writing through the lens of genre, with special emphasis placed on the presentation of original ideas (the end result of rigorous and enthusiastic research methodologies).

## Digital Technology

This section of 1050 is unique for its integration of digital technology. Course assignments will utilize various types of writing mediated through new technologies, including LiveJournal, a course wiki, Wikipedia, and digital filming. More than simply writing across a variety of technologies, however, students will begin to negotiate generic boundaries, consider critically the intricacies of the writing process, and understand the role of tools in the creation and presentation of original thought.

## Resources

Over the course of the semester, we will read, write, and discuss a wide variety of material. Students are thus required to purchase *The Norton Field Guide to Writing With Readings* (2007), which is packaged with a pocket grammar handbook. Students should also purchase a five dollar fee card from the WMU Bookstore. In addition to these items, students will each be provided with a laptop for use in class, as well as digital video cameras for appropriate group projects.

## Film

At the beginning of the semester, each student will select a film with which to work for the entirety of the semester. These films are related through a thematic concern with political issues, and should foster interesting discussion, debate, and critical consideration. Additionally, each selected film will provide the thematic backdrop for each major project of the course.

## **Projects**

Student writing in this course will primarily consist of three major projects and a final exam:

### **(1) Genre Project**

After selecting a film, students will create a substantial text in the genre of their choice in response or reaction to this work. This project will be accompanied by a reflection piece, in which the students give their rationale for selecting the genre that they did, how they worked within the conventions of this genre (or strategically chose not to do so), and how they feel the new piece significantly interacts with the original film or album.

### **(2) Film Production Project**

Students will work in groups divided along lines of their selected film. These groups will decide how to approach the original film through a newly produced film clip; for instance, could a certain scene be re-shot? Could the ending be changed? Could a (condensed) prequel be filmed? Could a clip show “the other side” of the story? Groups will first produce a film script and later, after substantial revision, film it.

### **(3) Original Research Project**

After selecting a theme explored in their film, students will create an original piece of research that examines this theme from a local or individual perspective. Emphasis will not be placed on the film, but instead on specific treatment of the selected theme. For example, students working with *The Grapes of Wrath* could examine the reverberations of the Dustbowl felt even in western Michigan, using the themes of the film as starting point for creating meaningful, original research. Research methods could include visiting local archives, conducting interviews, and, of course, reading scholarly and other useful sources at the library.

### **(4) Final Exam**

Each session of our course will be documented by a designated ethnographer (each student will perform this task during the semester) and posted to our course wiki. After reviewing techniques for engaging in timed writing, students will be asked to complete an essay critiquing features of our compiled course history.

## **Mini-Projects**

In preparation for the larger projects, students will be asked to complete a series of shorter writing projects. These projects will allow students to begin to deal with and practice many of the same issues, techniques, and ideas as the larger projects.

## **In-Class Projects**

Students will be asked to respond to questions through writing during class sessions. These writings will be saved to a LiveJournal page, thus allowing analysis of these writings as a unique body of work.

### **Class Discussion/Participation, Peer Review, and Conferences**

Participating in a variety of ways in this course is essential. This means contributing to the group discussions, contributing valuable ideas to peer reviews, completing in-class writing assignments, and attending scheduled conferences with the instructor. If a student misses a session in which we peer review, it is up to the student to schedule a session for consultation at the writing center. If a student misses a conference with the instructor, all revision points for the project sequence will be lost (this will also be counted as an absence).

### **Grading**

The course will be based on the following percentages:

A	93-100
B/A	87-92
B	83-86
C/B	77-82
C	73-76
D/C	67-72
D	60-66
F	59 and below

Final grades will be calculated by the following distribution:

Genre Project	15 %
Film Production Project	15 %
Original Research Project	25 %
Final Exam	10 %
Mini-Projects	10 %
In-Class Writing	10 %
Participation	15 %

### **Attendance**

In order to receive the full benefits of taking this course, it is absolutely essential that you attend class. However, emergencies, illnesses, and poor weather conditions may occur. For these circumstances, three no-questions-asked absences are allowed during the course of the semester. For each absence after the third, your final grade drops by 3%. For instance, a student with 5 absences will lose 6% of the final course grade (for being two over the limit). This attendance policy will be strictly enforced when calculating final grades. If a student misses a course session, it is her or his responsibility to find out what work was missed and whether assignments are due. If you have especially difficult circumstances, please contact the instructor.

### **Late Work**

Late assignments are not accepted—each assignment must be turned in at the beginning of the session that it is due. If you have a special situation in which you must turn a paper in late, please contact the instructor BEFORE the due date.

## **Academic Honesty Policy**

WMU takes all forms of academic dishonesty seriously, including plagiarism. Plagiarism undermines academic integrity values and WMU's educational goals. Plagiarism is defined in the Student Rights and Responsibilities section of the WMU's Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs as follows:

Plagiarism: Definition: Plagiarism is intentionally, knowingly, or carelessly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). The sole exception to the requirement of acknowledging sources is when the ideas, information, etc. are common knowledge.

Students caught cheating in this course on any assignment will fail the course and be subject to disciplinary action by the appropriate WMU authorities. Additionally, each piece of writing produced for this course should be newly written specifically for the purposes of the assignment (if you would like to continue work on an already complete project, please discuss this option with the instructor well in advance of the due date). If you are confused at any time about what you need to do to avoid plagiarism and other ethical issues, please feel free to contact me to discuss your concerns.

## **Students With Disabilities**

Western Michigan University provides academic assistance for Students with Disabilities, including the technical, academic, and emotional support necessary to achieve academic and personal success. Course related assistance and academic accommodations are provided to eligible students with documented disabilities. Services may include advocacy, reader services, interpreters, alternate exam administration, and note takers. Adaptive equipment is also available. Students are encouraged to contact one of the following offices:

- Disabled Student Resources and Services (DSRS), 387-2116, serves students who have documented physical and psychiatric disabilities.
- The Office of Services for Students with Learning Disabilities (OSSLD), 387-4411, serves students who have documented learning disabilities and related emotional issues.
- The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE), 387-8880, acts affirmatively on behalf of qualified persons who have disability related compliance issues in accordance with Federal and State guidelines and regulations.

NOTE: If you have questions regarding access to the materials for this course, you should contact the instructor ([stephen.f.grandchamp@wmich.edu](mailto:stephen.f.grandchamp@wmich.edu)) immediately.