

RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Salameno School of Humanities and Global Studies

Critical Reading and Writing 102-04

“How Do You Figure?” Exploring the Limits of Reading and Writing

Professor: Dr. Todd Landon Barnes
Assistant Professor of Literature
E-mail: toddbarnes@ramapo.edu
Office: B-141
Office Hours: R 1-2pm, MR 5:30-6:30 &
by appt.

Term: Spring 2014
Class Hours: MR 3:45-5:15
Location: A220
Mailbox: SSHGS Office
Phone: 201.684.7500x7241

Catalog Course Description:

Students will be expected to interpret a selection of primarily non-fiction texts and to demonstrate logic, clarity, organization, and support in expository essays that reflect on these readings. The course will focus on the writing process, on revisions and peer critiquing. Individual faculty student conferences are included. A portion of the course will be devoted to research techniques and to conventional MLA formatting and the development of a research paper.

Section Description:

This course aims to prepare students for the critical thinking, reading, and writing challenges they will face at Ramapo and beyond. In this course, we will explore the idea of the “figuration.” What does it mean to construct a “figure of speech,” and how is this related to “figuring” something out? What is the relationship between “composing” an essay and “composing” oneself? How do we, as authors, represent a world that—simultaneously—composes and figures us? We will read historical texts written by authors who, through various rhetorical strategies, *figure* the truths of their times. By exploring a range of philosophic, literary, scientific and sociological texts, we will survey how various thinkers (and their respective disciplines) have struggled with the limits of our ability to “figure.”

We will examine and discuss a host of attempts to figure truth within a variety of representational contexts. In high school, you may have learned one way to write, but in college there are many. We will look at scientific, sociological, literary, psychological and political modes of figuring truth within these respective disciplines. This course will teach you how to read and write differently in different courses.

Required Texts:

- *Writing Analytically*. Ed. Rosenwasser and Stephen. Cengage. Fifth edition.
- *Several Short Sentences About Writing*, Verlyn Klinkenborg.
- *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in a Hybrid Economy*, Lawrence Lessig
- *Rules for Writers*. Dianna Hacker. Sixth Edition.
- *The New York Times*, online
- *The Historic New York Times*, online via Proquest
- A course reader, which includes work by the following writers: Plato, F. Nietzsche, E. Carpenter, E. Martin, G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, D. Bartholomae, and others.

Writing Intensive (WI) Course:

Writing will be integrated into the life of this course. You will receive comments, direction, and support as you work on strengthening your writing skills. Your writing will be evaluated and returned in a timely fashion, allowing you to incorporate my comments into your future work. You will be able to draft, revise, and resubmit a minimum of two papers. For help outside the classroom, please see me during my office hours and/or work with a writing tutor in the Center for Reading and Writing, located in the library on the second floor.

Course Enrichment Component:

This course will include a minimum of five (5) hours of unmonitored appropriate experience outside of the classroom. You are expected to spend at least **five hours** in the Center for Reading and Writing. You may attend their workshops, or you may schedule individual appointments with their consultants. If you attend a workshop, you will have to give me a one-page write-up summarizing what you learned at the event. If you meet with a consultant, you will need him or her to file the paperwork needed to notify me of your meeting.

Course Goals and Measurable Student Learning Outcomes:

Though this course, students will acquire the skills required to think and write analytically about a variety of fiction and non-fictional texts. Students will learn techniques for performing critical analysis, and they will illustrate these techniques by composing thoroughly revised essays. Students will learn and beware of common mistakes made in analysis and composition. Students will learn the difference between a summary, an observation, and an argument. Students will be able to (according to the MLA guidelines), support their ideas and arguments using textual evidence drawn from appropriate (primary and secondary) sources. Students will learn about the social aspects of writing and thought, and they will use this knowledge to better critique their own writing and the work of others. Students will acquire familiarity with a variety of rhetorical tropes and figures of speech. Students will be able to illustrate, in revised prose, the role these figures play in shaping culture. Finally, students will learn principles of digital literacy and how to best navigate the Internet and the library's digital and analog collections.

Students analytical skills will be measured through regular essay writing. Students will also analyze and respond to readings via Moodle. Essays and assignments will illustrate various isolated and combined skills (using primary and secondary sources, composing an annotated bibliography, summarizing a writer's rhetorical moves, isolating oppositions, strands, repetitions, and support in reading assignments; composing a thesis; evolving that thesis). A final research paper (and its various draft stages) will allow peers and the instructor to assess students learning outcomes. Class discussion will also provide a means of assessing student comprehension.

Participation/Attendance:

I have a strict attendance policy. This class will not be possible without your participation. Unlike some courses, the success of this course depends on your contributions, your labor, and your perspective. In addition to the authors we read together, your work will form a central focus of our attempts to understand what it means to figure the world around us. Students should come to class having printed out, read and annotated all required reading. Students should take notes while actively and courteously listening to and engaging with the professor and their peers. **Any student discovered to be off-task (as determined by the professor) will be *marked absent*.** **Using technology to virtually exit the class will always constitute an *absence*.** Coming to class

after I've taken role or leaving before the class is over will constitute an *absence*. Students can miss two classes with no questions asked. A third absence lowers the student's grade (by 1/2 a grade, 5%). **A student absent four times in one semester cannot earn higher than a C+ (79%). If a student is absent five times, s/he automatically fails the course.** College policy states that students must notify faculty within the first three weeks of the semester if they anticipate missing any classes due to religious observance.

Papers:

Your essays need not be perfect, but I do expect them to be on time. Papers will be written, reviewed and returned in accordance with a shared schedule. Late papers threaten to jam what I hope will be the smooth machinery of the review process. **Late papers will be accepted at the professor's discretion, meaning, I do not have to accept late papers at all.** If I do, they will be **marked down one letter grade for each day they're late.** All papers are to be typed and formatted according to the most recent MLA guidelines. Refer to Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* for help with these guidelines. For additional help in writing papers, I encourage you to visit our Center for Reading and Writing. The Center for Reading and Writing is one of the very best resources on campus. **Monika Lasocha, Dana Lobenberg, Val Kaba, Brian Potts, and Shayna Reed** have all taken my courses and done well. I encourage you to see them if possible.

Their website: <http://www.ramapo.edu/crw/>

Plagiarism: Plagiarism, etymologically, means *kidnapping*. Do not steal the brainchildren of others. This is often a difficult terrain to navigate, as there is sometime a fine line between borrowing, citing, using and mentioning. Students who engage in plagiarism, as it is defined by the professor and the school, will suffer the consequences set forth by the college. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, see one of the instructors or the university's guidelines at: <http://library.ramapo.edu/plagiarism.html>. We will be discussing plagiarism extensively in this class, both theoretically and practically.

“This course follows standard Ramapo College policy for Electronic Forms of Communication, Academic Integrity and Students with Disabilities. For details, please refer to the Academic Review Committee Website at <http://ww2.ramapo.edu/arc/>.” (Ramapo College of New Jersey | Academic and Curricular Guidelines Manual)

Disabilities/Accommodations:

All students need accommodations, and those accommodations vary from student to student. If you feel like you would like additional or different accommodations, please contact me, either by e-mail or in person.

Also, feel free to contact the Office of Specialized Services:

201.684.7514 (voice),
201.684.7092 (TTY), or
oss@ramapo.edu (email).

Their website: <http://www.ramapo.edu/students/oss/index.html>.

Requirements/Grades:

Your *weighted grade* in the course will be determined according to the following schema:

55% Compositions (Essay 1= 10%; Essay 2 = 15%; Final Research Paper= 30%)

5% *Writing Analytically* Group Presentations

5% CEC: Work in the Center for Reading and Writing

20% Short Assignments/Essays/Forum Posts (Rhetorical Summaries, Reading Responses, *Style* Exercises, Quizzes, etc.)

05% Peer Review Exercises

10% Engaged Participation and Classroom Citizenship

Course Website: The virtual component of this course is substantial. This semester, we will be using Moodle extensively. The class's Moodle site is the virtual home of the course: it is where you will go to get assignments, download some of the readings, share ideas with peers, turn in assignments, and receive announcements.

You can access Moodle here: <http://moodle.ramapo.edu>. Students are required to regularly post comments and feedback through this site's message board.

Prospective Schedule:

Week Zero: Introduction/s

01/23 Th: Introductions

Week One: Introduction: Metaphoricity

Lakoff, G./Johnson, H. Excerpt from *Metaphors We Live By*
Brooks, D. "Poetry for Everyday Life"

01/27 M: Metaphoricity and Figuration

01/30 Th: Metaphoricity/**Paper 1.1** Assigned

Week Two: Metaphors: Ordinary and Extraordinary

Rosenwasser, D./Stephen J. Chapter 1: "Analysis: What It Is and What It Does" &
Chapter 2: "Counterproductive Habits of Mind"

Carpenter, E. "Rhetorical Analysis & Close Reading"

Potaro, A. "Art is Speech"

Reed, S. "Crime as Games"

02/03 M: Discuss student essays/*WA* Chapters 1 & 2

02/06 Th: *WA* 1 & 2/Discuss Carpenter

Week Three: Figuring Truth and Lies

Nietzsche, F. "On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense"
Rosenwasser/Stephen Chapter 3: "Analysis: What It Is, What It Does"

02/10 M: Discuss Nietzsche/**Paper 1.1 Due**

02/13 Th: Discuss Nietzsche/*WA* Ch. 3

Week Four: Words, Things, Ideas: Figuring the Physical & the Metaphysical

Nietzsche, F. "On Truth and Lies in a Non-moral Sense"
Rosenwasser/Stephen Chapter 4: "A Toolkit of Analytical Methods II: Going Deeper"
Williams, J. *Style*

02/17 M: Discuss Nietzsche/*WA* Ch. 4/**Style Exercises Due**/Screen "Revising Prose"

02/20 Th: Discuss *Style*

Week Five: A History of the Remix

Lessig, L. *Remix: Making Art and Culture Thrive in a Hybrid Economy*
Rosenwasser/Stephen Chapter 5: Writing about Reading...with Written Texts

02/24 M: Discuss Lessig/**Paper 1.2 Due**

02/27 Th: Discuss Lessig/Discuss *WA* Ch. 5

Week Six: Remixing Culture, Remixing Ourselves

03/03 M: Film Screening: *Downloaded*

03/06 Th: Film Screening: *Everything is a Remix*

Week Seven: Figuring Composition

Klinkenborg, V. *Several Short Sentences About Writing*
Rosenwasser/Stephen Chapter 11: "Making a Thesis Evolve"/Chapter 12:
"Recognizing and Fixing Weak Thesis Statements"

03/10 M: Discuss Klinkenborg/*WA* Chapters 11 & 12

03/13 Th: Discuss Klinkenborg/*WA* Chapters 11 & 12/**Paper 2 Assigned**

Week Eight: SPRING BREAK (3/17-22)

Week Nine: Evolving Theses

Klinkenbork, V. *Several Short Sentences About Writing*
Rosenwasser/Stephen Chapter 8: Reasoning from Evidence to Claims
Chapter 10: Using Evidence to Build a Paper: 10 on 1/1 on 10"

03/24 M: Discuss Klinkenborg/ **Paper 2 Due**/Peer Review

03/27 Th: Discuss *WA* Chapters 8 & 10

Week Ten: Figuring Gender in Scientific Discourse

Martin, E. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles"
Rossenwasser/Stephen Chapter 13: Using Sources Analytically: The Conversation Model"

03/31 M: Discuss Martin/"Writing a Rhetorical Summary"
04/03 Th: Discuss Martin/ **Post Research Objects/Questions**

Week Eleven: Figuring the Shapes of Knowledge

Rossenwasser/Stephen Chapter 14: "Finding, Citing, and Integrating Sources"

04/07 M: Library Tour
04/10 Th: Writing Workshop/Discuss *WA* Ch. 14

Week Twelve: Figuring the University

Bartholomae, D. "Inventing the University"
Rossenwasser/Stephen Chapter 16: "Introductions and Conclusions across the Curriculum"

04/14 M: Discuss Bartholomae/*WA* Ch. 16/**Prospectus Worksheets Due**
04/17 Th: Individual Conferences

Week Thirteen: Student Figurations

Wertheim, J. "So Fresh, So Clean: An Analysis of the Bathtub and Its Figuring from Past to Present"

04/21 M: Individual Conferences
04/24 Th: Writing Workshop/ Discuss Wertheim/**Annotated Bibliographies Due**

Week Fourteen: Shaping and Organizing Research

Rosenwassen/Stephen Chapter 15: "Organizing and Revising the Research Paper"

04/28 M: Discuss *WA* Ch. 15
05/01 Th: Writing Workshop

Week Fifteen: Research Workshop

05/05 M: Writing Workshop

Week Sixteen: Final Week

05/12 M: 3-6pm, Final Presentations