

SYLLABUS—Writing 100 (“Culture Clash & Working Class Conflict”)

Mark Will-Weber--Office hours: Monday, 9 to 10 & 11:45 to 1; Wednesday, 9 to 10 & 11:45 to 1 at my office in the ARC. E-mail me in ADVANCE (or feel free to contact me before class or immediately after class) to set up an appointment at: coachwebs@aol.com

Instructor: Background/experience includes 10 years of newspaper experience, 13 years of magazine (writer/editor) experience, and various freelance projects; two books. I also have an interest in poetry and fiction writing.

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Objective: This course will use the theme (“Culture Clash & Working Class Conflict”) as a vehicle to create writing that is, first and foremost, organized and readable, but also reflects the flair and “voice” of the student. A primary objective will be to *improve* the student’s writing over the length of the course. In addition, the instructor will attempt to impress upon the students the importance of reading works of quality and creativity in order to improve their own writing and critical thought process. The major themes of the course will involve an exploration of “Culture and Class Conflict” as exhibited in a variety of situations/scenarios. (For example, sectarian violence in Northern Ireland; racial tensions in Brooklyn; striking coal miners verses Great Britain’s Thatcher government.)

Teaching Method: The primary method of teaching this course will be to start with several “warm-up” (some “in-class”, some “over-night”) writings and then—after providing critical feedback on these initial efforts—progress to graded assignments. Writing “tip sheets” on basic techniques (“action verbs” and “transition sentences”) and peer-editing, in-class sessions will be introduced and re-visited through out the course. The class will use non-fiction essays/articles; fiction and poetry; film and music to explore the topic.

REQUIREMENTS

Course Requirements: The “cornerstones” of the course will be three required papers/essays that relate to the reading material and/or class discussions. It is understood that students will demonstrate *reasonable* knowledge (through both writing and class discussion) of all assigned readings/films.

Grading: The three major writing assignments will account for approximately 75 percent of the student’s grade for the course. All of the major writing assignments will relate, in some way, to the assigned readings and/or the course topic. In addition, expect three to four brief, in-class writing and/or editing assignments. These in-class writings, along with class participation (discussion of all material, plus participations in peer-editing sessions) and class attendance, will account for approximately 25 percent of the student’s grade.

Text: Students will use the Bedford Handbook to bolster basic writing skills and techniques. In addition, all students will read Alan Sillitoe's novelette, "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner." (The protagonist in Sillitoe's story is one of literature's classic working class "rebels.") Other writers we will read and examine in our course will include Irish writers James Joyce (an excerpt from "Ulysses"), Colum McCann ("Everything In This Country Must"), and Padrig Fiagg (various poems); Ernest Hemingway (a journalistic essay on bullfighting); the Polish correspondent/journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski, a specialist on Africa. The course will also include selected films, such as Neil Jordan's "The Crying Game" and Spike Lee's "Do The Right Thing"