

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

Mark Will-Weber—Office hours: To set up an appointment with me, please arrange in advance either before/after class or by contacting me at coachwebs@aol.com

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

COURSE INFORMATION

The course will examine what happens when diverse cultures and different social classes meet “head on” and are forced to deal with conflict. Some of the writers the course will examine (and write about) will include Jared Diamond (*Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*), African-American poet Langston Hughes (*I, Too, Sing America*), Irish writers Arnold Hill (*Miss Gillespie and the Micks*) and Colum McCann (*Everything in This Country Must*). In addition, the course will explore these issues in films, such as Peter Weir’s *Gallipoli* and Spike Lee’s *Do the Right Thing*.

This course will use these topics as a vehicle to create writing that is, first and foremost, organized and readable, but also reflects the flair and “voice” of the student writer. A primary objective of the course 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 techniques and critical thought process.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The “cornerstones” of this course will be two required major papers/essays that relate to the reading material and class discussions. It is understood that students will demonstrate *reasonable* knowledge (through both writing and class discussion) of all assignments.

GRADING

The two major writing assignments will account for approximately 70 percent of the student’s grade. In addition, expect at least three or four brief in-class or over-night writing or peer-editing assignments. These exercises, along with in-class participation and class attendance, will account for approximately 30 percent of the student’s grade.

TEXT

Students are required to have the Bedford Handbook to bolster basic writing skills and techniques. The instructor will supply all other material for our class.