

SYLLABUS—Writing 100, Fall 2008 (“Culture Clash & Working Class Conflict”)

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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 pitted against Great Britain’s Thatcher government in the 1980s.)

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 two 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 two major writing assignments will account for approximately 70 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 “smaller” writing and/or editing assignments. These smaller writings, along with class participation (discussion of all material, plus participations in peer editing sessions) and class attendance, will account for approximately 30 percent of the student’s grade.

Text: Students will use the Bedford Handbook to bolster basic writing skills and techniques. Writers we will read and examine in our course will include Irish writers James Joyce (an excerpt from “Ulysses”), Ernest Hemingway (a journalistic essay on bullfighting); the late Polish correspondent/journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski, a specialist on Africa/Latin America (“The Burning Road Blocks” and “Salim”). The course may include selected films, such as Neil Jordan’s “The Crying Game” and Spike Lee’s “Do The Right Thing.”