

Syllabus

Write 100 K & M The Reality Show

Professor Roberta K. Carter, MFA

Fall 2008 Moravian College

Section K: Tuesday & Thursday 12:50 – 2:00 PM

Section M: Tuesday & Thursday 2:20 – 3:30 PM

Room: Z100

Email: bmonk@verizon.net Office: Z102, office hours by appointment.

Goals of the course:

The underlying thesis of this course is that writing is the road to clear and meaningful thinking. That being able to accurately articulate a problem in writing is a pre-requisite for understanding it and/or solving it and is therefore the basis of education. With that in mind, we will try to understand, master, and be conscious of everything that goes into writing: process, form and content. In order to do this we will concentrate on the following:

- Understand the writing process:
 - Prewriting
 - Drafting
 - Writing
 - Editing
 - Rewriting
 - Publishing

- Write essays:
 - Organize writing clearly and logically
 - Structure sentences correctly
 - Identify logical fallacies
 - Evaluate sources
 - Think critically

- Write a research paper
 - Use college-level research skills
 - React to each source
 - Meet standards set by the Modern Language Association
 - Develop a synthesis after reading, writing and thinking about all aspects of a topic

- Use a library

- React to and criticize orally the writing of fellow students in their semi-weekly blogs and in class discussions and react to and criticize orally and in your blogs and in weekly writing assignments the writings selected by the professor.

Required reading/viewing

- Hacker, Diana. Bedford Handbook for Writers, 7th edition. Boston: St. Martin's Press, 2007.
- Miller, James S. (ed.), Acting Out Culture, Reading and Writing, Boston: St. Martin's Press, 2008.
- Essays and other readings selected by the professor
- The Truman Show, Dir. [Peter Weir](#), Writer. [Andrew Niccol](#), 1998
- Wag the Dog, Dir. Barry Levinson, Writers, Hilary Henkin, David Mamet, 1997
- Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, Dir. Michael Gondry, Writers, Charlie Kaufman, Pierre Bismuitz, and Michael Gondry, 2004

Course Evaluation

Academic Honesty

I assume that all work you turn into me is your own: your own words, your own ideas and your own construction. Work that you turn in that is not your own and that you have not attributed authorship to is theft, and I will treat it as such. The consequences and taint of plagiarism will haunt you for the rest of your professional life and it behooves you to think about that now. Please read your student handbook for Moravian College's policy on academic honesty.

Assessment

This class is divided into three topic sections:

- Understanding Reality,
- Artificial Realities, and
- Altered Realities.

You are responsible for turning in two polished essays, one research paper, notes on and reaction to your reading in a semi-weekly blog, participating in each class discussion and completing the in-class assignments.

You will be assessed in the following manner:

- Essay on Understanding Reality 20%
- Essay on Artificial Reality 20%
- Research paper on Altered Realities 20%
- Semi-weekly blog 20%
- Class participation (class discussion and in-class assignments) 20%

The two essays and the research paper are due on the dates listed in the syllabus. The semi-weekly blog and class participation are, of course, on-going and your grade for these will be evaluated at the end of the semester.

The *quality* of your thinking and writing will ultimately determine your grade.

F -- You have to aggressively try to fail this class.

D --Parroting what you've been told is *not thinking at all* on the college level. Even if you submit all the work, if at the end of the semester you have not advanced yourself beyond this stage, your work is below average.

C -- If you can take an argument, present it coherently and persuasively, add to it and cite sources correctly, that is average and that is C work for a college student.

B -- If you can take an argument, present it coherently and persuasively, add to it and cite sources correctly, and THEN present the counter-argument and coherently and persuasively argue against it using logic and citing sources correctly, that is B work for a college student.

A --If you can take an argument, present it coherently and persuasively, add to it and cite sources correctly, and THEN present the counter-argument, and coherently and persuasively argue against it using logic and citing sources correctly, and THEN come up with an original third idea or a synthesis, that is A work--congratulations.

Attendance

A substantial amount of the work (20%) will be done in class. If you don't attend regularly, obviously, you risk losing 20% of your grade.

Assignments

Students will write two polished essays and a research paper which he/she will present to the class. Students will involve all aspects of writing in these essays and research papers: prewriting, drafting, writing, revision, re-writing, editing and publishing. Final assignments and assignments done outside of class must be submitted on white paper, double spaced with appropriate margins, etc. Please refer to the Bedford Handbook pp 121-123 (essay) and p. 654 (research paper) for specifics. I WILL NOT LOOK AT ANY PAPER WHICH IS NOT SUBMITTED IN THE APPROPRIATE FORMAT AND ASSEMBLED PROPERLY. All of the assignments (drafts, revisions of writing, exercises etc. CLEARLY LABELED AS SUCH) will be submitted with the essays and are part of the grade.

Semi-weekly blog

To be educated, you must understand that you are entering into a conversation with all the other educated people in the world; people who have written and thought before you were born and people who are writing and thinking now. Therefore, it is important to interact with your readings (and viewings) as if you are conversing with the author: questioning, arguing, adding to the conversation.

To get in the habit of doing this, I am asking each of you to write on our semi-weekly class blog. In this blog, which TYPICALLY BUT NOT ALWAYS will be approximately 200 words, you will respond to the readings you are doing for the next class in addition to responding to class discussions. This means you will have two blogs of 200 words EACH per week. When we get to the third part of the class, when you begin your research paper, I will ask you to blog each session about EACH SOURCE you are using for your research paper. Sometimes you will find that your readings will take your ideas about the research paper in a direction different from what you originally envisioned and a discussion about the how and why of that is grist for the blog. Please use the correct MLA citation for your sources when you discuss them on your blog.

Your contribution to the blog is worth 20% of your grade.

Understanding the topic essay

Based on the assigned readings in Miller, viewing the movie *The Truman Show*, information from the website www.gallupol.com about what constitutes a “normal” American, and on your understanding of how people form their idea of reality (Spinoza vs. Hume), please address the problem of how people from different realities (religions, cultures, families, circumstances, political parties, etc.) can co-exist and in fact live and work together either in one school, one workplace, one community. Please consider whether the majority view of reality must accommodate the minority view of reality or if the minority reality is obliged to fit into the majority reality, and please discuss the consequences if people from different realities cannot resolve their differences.

This assignment will start you on the writing process: pre-writing, drafting, writing, revision, re-writing, and editing. You will present this essay to the Writing Center for tutorial help before submitting it. All versions of the essay along with support materials will be submitted with the final draft, which is due September 16.

Critical thinking essay

Based on readings in Miller and other readings supplied by the teacher, viewing the movie *Wag the Dog*, and class discussions on the nature of created realities in the media, in art, and on the internet, please address the issue of whether these realities (define the specific realities you choose to discuss), created by other people are valid, i.e. meaningful to you. Please consider whether it is possible to enter someone else's view of reality without losing your own, keeping in mind Spinoza's and Hume's view of how reality is created.

You will present this essay to the Writing Center for tutorial help before submitting it. Please submit all versions of the essay along with support materials with the final draft. This paper will be due October 14.

Research paper

In the final third of the class, we will read and discuss "altered realities", i.e. personal realities changed by drugs (legal or illegal), memory, fame, and drastic body changes. The topic of the research paper should be about one of the following subjects and how it relates to reality as defined by either Spinoza and/or Hume:

- Memory: either autobiographical or narrative (memoirs), or loss of memory as the result of Alzheimers, brain injury or some other event
- Fame: public self/private self, using fame to sell products or make endorsements
- Drugs: by athletes, for mental health, in advertising
- Drastic body changes: weight loss or gain, plastic surgery, age, disease

I will not give you a specific topic to address, because a large part of this section will deal with defining a topic and writing a thesis statement.

You must have at least six original sources for the research paper:

- At least one must be a statistical source,
- At least one must be a book,
- At least four must be peer-reviewed journals.

You may use other popular sources if you have satisfied these requirements.

Assignment Schedule

Date	In class	Assignment for next class
August 26	Overview of class; definition of reality as defined by Spinoza and Hume; syllabus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miller, pp 4-38 (Intro, Igo, Twitchell) • Bedford, XXV-XXXIV • Blog
August 28	Discussion on readings/in class writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog • Segal, pp 301-304 • Bedford, pp 467-486
September 2	View <i>Truman Show</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog • Bedford, pp 1-42
September 4	Discussion on <i>Truman Show</i> /class writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miller, pp 39-59 (Frazier, Then and Now, Saxe) • Blog
September 9	Discussion on readings/in class writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View www.gallupoll.com • Miller, pp 60-82 Newman, Brooks, Dickerson • First draft essay • Bedford pp 42-65 • Blog
September 11	Discussion on readings/in class writing/questions on essay?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take draft to writing center. Complete first essay
September 16	FIRST ESSAY DUE/Lecture on artificial realities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog • Bruce Bower, pp 199-207 • Jessi Hemple, pp 208-218 • Sandra Baron, pp 219-225 • Mattathias Schwartz, "Malwebolence" NYTimes Magazine, August 3, 2008 (please find this article on line)
September 18	Discussion on readings/in class writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog • Miller, pp 380-396, Vine • Joinson Pp 272-307, Reading in depth
September 23	First essays returned/debrief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog

	in conjunction with Joinson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bedford pp 76-99
September 25	View <i>Wag the Dog</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog
September 30	Discuss <i>Wag the Dog</i> /in class writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miller, pp 86-133 (Intro, Johnson, Cusac, Klein, Dyson) • Blog
October 2	Discussion on readings/in class writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miller, pp. 134- 164 (Harris, Levy, Then and Now, Knight, Scenes and Unscenes) • Blog • First draft of second essay
October 9	Discussion on readings/in class writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog • Second essay to writing center • Complete second essay
October 14	Second essay due/discuss research papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog • Bedford, pp 527-554 • Complete a schedule for your research paper (see page 529 Bedford)
October 16	Library (Intro to the library Writing 100)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog on source • Bedford, pp 587-591 • Pick topic for research paper—Prepare thesis statement
October 21	Second essays returned/feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog on source • Bedford pp 555-571
October 23	Library (statistics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog on source
October 28	Honing the thesis statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prewriting on research paper • Blog on source
October 30	Library (specific help with topics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin drafting research paper • Bedford pp 572-576 and • Bedford pp 592-605 • Blog on source
November 4	View <i>Eternal Sunshine of the Sportless Mind</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog on source • Bedford pp 609-657
November 6	Discuss ESSM/in-class writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miller, pp 217-231, Knapp • Blog on source
November 11	Discuss reading/In class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miller, pp 644-653, Elliott

	writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog on source
November 13	Discuss reading/In class writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog on source • Research paper to Writing Center
November 18	In class writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog on source
November 20	In class writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog
November 25	Research papers due	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog
December 2	Presentation and critique of Research Papers/process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog
December 4	Presentation and critique of Research Papers/process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog
December 9	Presentation and critique of Research Papers/process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog

If I change the information in this syllabus, I will give students and the Academic Affairs Office written notice.