

Writing 100: The Slave Narrative Tradition: From Frederick Douglass to Tupac Shakur
Fall 2010

Instructor: Eileen Brumitt
Course and Section: Writing 100 (K)
Room: Memorial 303
Class Time: Tues/Thurs 1:00-2:15

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Course Description:

Slave narratives from the nineteenth century give us a picture of how the institution of American slavery affected all of the individuals who lived under it. Slavery is still a part of our cultural memory, whether the picture we now imagine is accurate or not, and slavery lives on in many parts of the world. This course will explore the effects of slavery through the explanations given by the slaves themselves; through the contemporary depictions of slavery in literature and film; through looking at hip hop culture; and through examining cases of modern slavery. How do current views of slavery differ from those presented by the narratives? What does this say about our contemporary culture? How does slavery affect us still?

Writing 100 is a course that focuses on the improvement of your writing and critical thinking skills by studying a specific topic. You will be reading, thinking, discussing, and writing about the literary and cultural tradition that finds its origins in slave narratives and our national history of racism. Even though you will do quite a bit of reading, your writing is the main topic of the course.

Required Texts:

1. Frederick Douglass, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
2. Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
3. Rosa Waters, *Hip Hop: A Short History*

Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938. American Memory site from Library of Congress.
Various other articles and films.

Course Objectives and Outcomes:

Students will:

1. Practice critical thinking and reading.
2. Use writing to communicate complex ideas.
3. Read and analyze others' ideas.
4. Understand the differences in writing styles in different disciplines and use the appropriate academic language (MLA, APA, CSE, etc.) for the specific discipline.
5. Understand and use the library to conduct research appropriate for college-level writing and investigation.
6. Understand the difference between primary and secondary sources
7. Use a process approach to writing that allows the student to transform and create knowledge through the use of prewriting, drafting and revising.
8. Prepare a manuscript of professional quality and format, and maintain a high standard of spelling and grammar.

Class Format:

This class will consist of in-class discussion, group discussion and presentations, formal and informal writing.

In-class discussion: This is the backbone of the course, so participation in these discussions is imperative to your development as a student and, of course, your grade. We will be discussing the readings and some film.

Group discussion and presentations: Learning to work in a group is important. You will be expected to perform individually in your groups to complete tasks and generate ideas. In other words, the work may be in groups, but the grades are individual. Group members who do not work as hard as the others will receive appropriately lower grades. There will be many occasions for informal group work throughout the semester, but there will also be a significant group project/presentation towards the end of the semester as well.

Informal Writing: Most class days will require you to write short, one-two page assignments. These short, informal pieces of writing help you to process the concepts of the course and prepare you for the more formal writing assignments.

Formal Writing: There will be three formal essays in this course that are based on the individual topics of inquiry we read and discuss. This type of writing is expected to be thoughtful, free of error and professionally presented.

Assignments:

Note: All assignments written outside of class are expected to be turned in **typed** and the pages **stapled** together. Assignments will only be accepted **when they are due**.

Essay 1: Your first essay will give you two options of either a traditional argumentative essay or a creative assignment where you will be asked to write a slave narrative of your own using historical texts as the inspiration.

Essay 2: The second essay will be about 4 pages long and will be persuasive in nature. You will have to make a claim (a thesis) and support that claim with evidence from the readings.

Group Project/Presentation: This project will incorporate research and some writing. You will be engaging in a debate about the use of torture in the War on Terror (even though we aren't calling that anymore). In order to do this, you will be given a specific topic within that debate and time to work on your argument and research in class.

Final Paper/Research Paper: The capstone assignment for this course is a formal research paper. You will be asked to find *scholarly* articles to provide evidence for your claim. You will have two options for this assignment of either a traditional argumentative essay or a creative assignment where you will be asked to write a slave narrative of your own using historical texts as the inspiration.

Grading: The final grades for this course will be calculated as follows:

Participation and attendance: 15%

In-class and informal writing: 15%

Essay 1: 15%

Essay 2: 15%

Group Project: 15%

Research Paper: 25%

Learning and Other Disabilities: Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with their professors during the first two weeks of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact the disabilities specialist on campus.

Writing Center: The Writing Center here at Moravian is fantastic. There are wonderful undergraduate peer tutors available to assist you with your writing needs. Even if you are just a little unsure about the assignment, you can make an appointment and spend half an hour having your fears assuaged. The tutors are trained to help at any stage of the writing process and will work with students from any course in the college that contains writing of any kind. Writing is

not an easy task, and having a second reader for your work can make all the difference! The Writing Center is located on the second floor of Zinzendorf Hall.

ESL and Multicultural Support: If you think you might need specialized English language or cultural support, see the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's ideas or words and passing them off as your own without giving credit to the source in your academic work. Since a key goal of a college education is to develop and express your own ideas, plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offense.

Other forms of plagiarism, however, may be less obvious. If a student copies a source paragraph but rearranges its sentence order and uses a thesaurus to replace some words with synonyms, it is still plagiarism. If a student borrows a classmate's essay on a similar topic, retypes it while changing a word here or there, and submits it under her own name, it is still plagiarism. If a student is writing an essay on evolution, likes the insight she finds on a Web site and includes those ideas in her essay without attributing the source, it is still plagiarism. If a student reads a sentence or two from a newspaper article, decides its detail would be useful in her essay, but fails to enclose the material in quotations marks, it is still plagiarism."

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class at any level. If you are unsure about using sources, you can ask the instructor, the library, or the tutors in the writing center to help you.

Conferences and Peer Review: This course relies heavily on conferences and writing workshops. You have the opportunity to meet with me individually before handing in the final draft of your papers. You will also get feedback from your classmates in pairs or in groups. We will also spend time in class talking about your papers and together we will workshop student papers so we can talk together about what works, what does not, what could be improved, etc. In these conferences and workshops, neither your classmates nor I will tell you how to write. Think of them, instead, as opportunities to recognize the strength and weakness of your writing through the feedback the rest of us provide. The only way peer review and conferencing can work is if you have completed a full draft of your paper before coming to class.

Classroom Behavior: As college students you will be expected to maintain a proper amount of classroom decorum. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and could result in an absence for the offender. The types of behaviors that are considered disruptive are: using a cell phone to do anything, including texting and going on the internet; eating full meals (snacks and beverages are ok); sleeping; private conversations in class; coming into class late; and acting in a threatening manner to other students or the instructor.

Verbal Communication:

Faculty members are not part of your social circle or peer group and should not be addressed as such. On the first day of class, faculty members will introduce themselves and express how you should address them. Addressing a faculty member by his or her first name is not acceptable unless the faculty member invites you to do so.

When addressing a faculty member in person, use a positive, respectful approach. Ideally, you should meet with faculty members during their scheduled office hours and not at the beginning or end of class unless the interaction will be brief.

When using the telephone, be sure to identify yourself at the beginning of the conversation. Be brief and concise, particularly when leaving a voice mail message.

Written Communication:

When sending email, remember that your writing conveys an image of you and demonstrates respect for the recipient. Treat email as you would any other written correspondence: Begin with the appropriate greeting (“Dear Professor Brumitt”), use complete sentences with good grammar and spelling, use a friendly and polite tone, and expect that faculty members will return your correspondence when they are able. Expecting an “instant response” is not realistic.

Class Cancellation: If Moravian's campus is open, you should expect our class meetings to be held. If troublesome weather threatens to close the campus and thus cancel class, however, you should check the Moravian website for updates on campus closings. You can also sign up for e2Campus, an emergency notification system that sends a text message in the case of college closings or emergencies. You can sign up for e2Campus at www.moravian.edu. Of course, you should always use common sense and place your safety first when determining whether or not it's appropriate for you to drive to campus under such conditions. If I cancel class independently of the campus closing, due to weather or for other reasons, I will send a class-wide email to your Moravian account via Blackboard.

Writing 100 Fall 2009: The Slave Narrative Tradition

Schedule of Assignments

*Reading assignments are due on the date they are listed

Note: Subject to change at the discretion of the instructor

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| WEEK 1 Unit 1: Men and Violence | Tues | Aug 31 | Intro to class |
| | Thurs | Sept 2 | The Declaration of Independence, and “Notes on the State of Virginia” by T. Jefferson |
| WEEK 2 | Tues | Sept 7 | Begin <i>The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> —Preface by Garrison and Letter from Wendell Phillips, Chapters I-V. |
| | Thurs | Sept 9 | Chapters VII, IX, X; 1st Microtheme Due. |
| WEEK 3 | Tues | Sept 14 | Tricia Rose, <i>Hip Hop Wars</i> (33-44) “Hip Hop Causes Violence.” |
| | Thurs | Sept 16 | Tricia Rose, <i>Hip Hop Wars</i> (44-60) Blackboard Question #1 |
| WEEK 4 | Tues | Sept 21 | Song explication due! |
| | Thurs | Sept 23 | Writing Workshop; Paper 1 Assigned; <i>Bedford Handbook</i> (1c, 1d, 1e) |
| WEEK 5 | Tues | Sept 28 | Rough Draft Due |
| | Thurs | Sept 30 | Conferences |
| WEEK 6 Unit 2: Women in Hip Hop? | Tues | Oct 5 | Final Draft Due; Begin <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> —Preface and Introduction |
| | Thurs | Oct 7 | <i>Incidents</i> Chapters 1, 2 |
| WEEK 7 | Tues | Oct 12 | FALL RECESS NO CLASS |
| | Thurs | Oct 14 | <i>Incidents</i> Chapters 5, 6 |
| WEEK 8 | Tues | Oct 19 | <i>Incidents</i> Chapters 7-10, 30. |
| | Thurs | Oct 21 | Tricia Rose, <i>Hip Hop Wars</i> (113-131) “Hip Hop Demeans Women” Blackboard Question #2 |
| WEEK 9 | Tues | Oct 26 | Tricia Rose, <i>Hip Hop Wars</i> (167-185) “There are Bitches and Hoes” |
| | Thurs | Oct 28 | Song explication 2 due! |
| WEEK 10 | Tues | Nov 2 | Writing Workshop <i>Bedford Handbook</i> (TBA) |
| | Thurs | Nov 4 | <i>Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes</i> (film) |
| WEEK 11 Unit 3: Autobiography | Tues | Nov 9 | <i>Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes</i> ; Discussion; Blackboard Question #3 |
| | Thurs | Nov 11 | Rough Draft Paper #2 Due; Peer Review |
| WEEK 12 | Tues | Nov 16 | Final Draft Paper #2 Due; Watch <i>Tupac Resurrection</i> |
| | Thurs | Nov 18 | Discuss <i>Tupac Resurrection</i> in class |
| WEEK 13 | Tues | Nov 23 | Paper 3 Assigned |
| | Thurs | Nov 25 | NO CLASS THANKSGIVING RECESS |
| WEEK 14 | Tues | Nov 30 | <i>Unchained Memories</i> Slave Interviews on American Memory site. |
| | Thurs | Dec 2 | Rough Draft of Research Paper Due |
| WEEK 15 | Tues | Dec 7 | Conferences |
| | Thurs | Dec 9 | Class Wrap up. Final Draft of Research Paper Due |
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