
HPCC Honors Seminar: Section 005
Spring Semester 2019
Tu & Th 2:00-3:15
AV-B 110

Professor C. Elkins
Office: AVB B108
Phone [cell]: 970-402-2016
OH: 9:00-9:30, 11-12 & with appt.
Email: clelkins@comcast.net
And on Canvas

Required Texts:

Gioia, Dana and R.S. Gwynn, The Art of the Short Story. Pearson/Longman. 0321363639
Martel, Yann. Life of Pi. Mariner. 0156027328
Sprague, Jo and Douglas Start. The Speaker’s Handbook. 8th Ed. Thomson 0534638805 (or any edition)

Additional Reading and Viewing

There will be several handouts and lots of material to research on the internet and required films. (All students must have access to computer, printer, email and internet every day.)

Also: For your Fourth Writing Assignment, you must chose and read a novel, a “bestseller.”

Supplemental Reading (optional):

Booker, Christopher. The Seven Basic Plots. Continuum.
Brooks, Peter. Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative. Harvard UP
Loy, David. The World is Made of Stories. Wisdom
McAdams, Dan. The Stories We Live By. Guildford
Polti, Georges. The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations. The Editor Company.
Schank, Roger. Tell Me A Story: Narrative and Intelligence. Northwestern UP
Turner, Mark. *The Literary Mind*. Oxford UP
Zunshine, Lisa. *Why We Read Fiction*. Ohio State UP

**Description of the Course:**

Listening to and creating stories appears natural and universal. There is no culture, however “primitive” without its stories about nature and themselves: where they come from, how to behave, and where they are going. As children, we hear stories and learn to repeat them; as adults, we hear, read, write, see and tell stories constantly from others, television, books, films, advertising, and even in our sleep. In stories we order our experiences and create ourselves. In this seminar, we explore the nature and function of stories in various mediums as they are manifested in such narratives as: myths, dreams, tragedy and comedy, autobiography, and politics. In doing so, we will focus on three general questions: Why do we need stories at all? Why do we need the “same” story over and over? Why do we always need more stories?

**Reading and Viewing:**

The reading requirements are substantial! There will be a variety of readings and viewings: non-fiction prose, fiction as well as some films. In addition, you will be given handouts to read, use the internet to do research, and read your email on Canvas everyday for information given from the instructor. Unless otherwise indicated, reading assignments should be finished on the day the title first appears on the “Schedule of Topics and Assignments.” Students are expected to be in class and will get credit for viewing the films and participating in class activities. Students should come to class prepared to discuss each assignment. You need to read and prepare for class discussion on your own. You will do much of this in your Study Groups. Notice that there are several longer texts. Students should start reading these texts immediately, making notes and questions in preparation for class discussion. In addition to the specific texts and handouts indicated in the Schedule, you are also required to read a “bestseller” of your own choosing.

**Writing:**

In taking the HPCC 192 and HPCC 193, sequence, Honors Students satisfy the University’s composition requirement. Consequently, there is an extensive writing component to this course. You will have four out-side-of- class writing assignments. Students will write at least 20 pages, 6-8 pages of which are part of the final, argumentative, essay. These assignments are included in your syllabus. In addition, you will be asked to write several short assignments, developing extemporaneously out of the class discussion on a day-to-day basis. To obtain full credit for this course, all written assignments must be completed and submitted on time. Although it is not required, students are strongly recommended to keep a journal reporting the reading and discussions and making summaries, questions, important ideas, etc.; in addition, ideas and impressions of more personal entries can be helpful in clarifying issues relevant to your formal speech and writing your final project. To get full credit, writing assignments must be submitted on the day they are due. Unless one gets less than a C, revisions are not permitted;
however, the instructor is always available to answer questions and review drafts before they are submitted, either on conference or through email.

In addition, I will create cohorts (4 in each group) which will function as a support group to share writing assignments to elicit responses and suggestions to improve the writing assignment. Get to know your cohorts and use them! Show them your drafts and ask for responses.

**Oral Component:**

Each student will be required to give an extemporaneous, persuasive speech lasting 6-7 minutes. The topic of the speech will be taken from the short story you have chosen. Suggestions and guidelines will be furnished. In addition, students are required to demonstrate oral skills in class over the length of the semester. If you are not willing to speak in class and take responsibility for advancing the argument, do not take this class!

**Grading:**

The oral presentation will be graded according to clearly stated criteria which will be distributed to the class prior to the speech. The speech will be worth 15 per cent of the final grade. The final paper will be worth 20 per cent of the grade, while other writing assignments will be averaged together and will be worth 30 per cent of the final grade. Class preparation and participation will be worth 25 per cent of the grade.

- **Formal Speech** 15
- **Long Paper** 20
- **Other Writing** 30
- **Reading Exam** 5
- **Oral class participation and viewing films and writing for in-class discussion, including:**
  - a) **Attendance** 10*
  - b) **Quality and quantity of contribution to class discussion & Study Group contribution** 15 *
- **Self-Assessment** 5

Total= 100 points

**Grading Scale:** 100-94=A, 93-90=A-, 89-87=B+, 86-83=B, 82-80=B-, 79-77=C+, 76-73=C, 72-70=C-, 69-67=D+, 66-63=D, 62-60=D-, 59-0=F. **Notice:** This grading scale differs from the system in Canvas. I will use my scale.
Attendance and Participation

Attendance will be taken and students will be given credit for being in class, participating in the discussion, working on group assignments, and viewing the films and listening actively to the speeches. (You will earn 0.4 points each day for attendance.) If a student brings an official excuse, assignments, quizzes, etc. be made up. With an official excuse and with a reasonable deadline a student can meet with the instructor to arrange an alternative due date for assignments. In short, students are responsible for everything covered in class. Tardiness and leaving early are disruptive and annoying and can become a factor in computing the final grade. Please note: We meet two (rather than 3) days a week, so each meeting is equivalent to one and one-half credits toward a three semester credit course. No matter how well you do in the other requirements of this class, if you miss 4 classes, you cannot get better than a B; if you miss 6 classes, you cannot get better than a C. If you are not submitting an official excuse for an absence, you need not contact the instructor.

It is not enough to merely come to class. As described below, this is a seminar not a lecture. After the first few classes, I expect to talk less and leave the discussion to the students. I will record both the quantity and quality of each class session (see form “Seminar Participation and Discussion” and the “Participation Rubric”)

Format:

This is a seminar, not a lecture course. Ideally, this is a conversation. Although, given the size of the class, it may be the case that not everyone will participate in every meeting, everyone should be prepared to participate. No one, including the instructor, should dominate the conversation. The challenge for keeping the conversation going falls on everyone. It is your responsibility to speak up in class and be recognized by your fellow students and me. If the same people are carrying most of the conversational load, the instructor will feel free to call on those who have not contributed. You will do the research and formulate questions and positions with others in the class. Much of this work will be done in your Study Groups. I will also ask questions, challenge your ideas, ask you to clarify and justify your comments, and generally try to facilitate the conversation. The old cliché, “nature abhors a vacuum,” applies to this class. If you do not participate and speak, I will fill up the void!

To a significant degree, the value of this class will be determined by the quality of the class discussion. Much of the material and ideas covered will be controversial: reactions and interpretations will differ. Indeed, disagreement and debate are not only tolerated but encouraged. However, this activity must take place in a non-threatening and civil environment. Non-threatening means that one disputes the ideas not the person holding the idea (argumentum ad hominem). Civil environment means that one observes social etiquette by listening attentively, not talking when someone else is talking, not interrupting, etc., in other words treating others as we would have them treat us. No cross talk! Everyone taking this course must agree to these principles.
Review of Grading and Record Keeping

In the event that an assignment gets misplaced, students should make two copies of every out-of-class writing assignment. Keep all assignments until the end of the course to review progress. The instructor is always willing to discuss any grade and progress in the class.

Plagiarism

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the concept of plagiarism in all its manifestations. Penalties for plagiarism can range from an “F” for an assignment to expulsion from CSU. In addition, each student must agree to comply with the Honor Pledge:

HONOR PLEDGE: I will not give, receive, or use any unauthorized assistance.

Examples of items to address include, but are not limited to, the use of class notes, study sheets, and solution manuals; appropriate uses of sources, Internet or otherwise; receiving assistance from others; and the use of prior work. Examples of other wordings may be found on the TILT Academic Integrity website.

Miscellaneous Policies and Observations:

Drinks but no food may be brought into class. Turn off all cell phones before entering the classroom! I mean it! If your cell phone rings during class, I will say something to you, and you will be embarrassed. If it happens more than once, I will ask you to leave the class. If you read, send a text-message, or “tweet” during the class or anything else that disturbs me or the class, I will ask you to leave. Unless specifically authorized, smart phones and laptops are prohibited.

About the use of computers: I allow students to use their laptops in class; however, if I have any indication that one is using her/his computer to do anything other than what we are doing in class, I will ask that person to turn the machine off, and I will forbid he/she to use his/her machine for the rest of the semester.

Some of the readings and discussions in this course deal with controversial issues. Some of the content in these narratives contains explicit language and explicit sexual situations. Any student who believes that he or she may be offended by controversial issues, offensive words or/and explicit sexual narratives for whatever reason should withdraw from the course immediately.
**Example**

**Seminar Participation and Discussion**

**Date:** April 12  
**Text and Topic(s):** *Life of Pi*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Quantity of Participation</th>
<th>Quality=1-4</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>///</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Good observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Good question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Didn’t say much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cody</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Absent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Brilliant summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Etc., etc</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student and Instructor Self-Assessment  
(5 points by the 4th week)

*EVALUATION OF INTELLECTUAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (Fall 2014)*

1. CRITICAL THINKING:  
   a. Assessment Tools:  
      i. Papers  
      ii. Speech  
      iii. Class Discussion  
   b. Measurement Criteria:  
      i. INTELLECTUAL COHERENCE: Ability to clearly state and develop a coherent argument based on logic and evidence.  
      ii. INTELLECTUAL COMPLEXITY: Acknowledgement of the complexity of issues and solutions.  
      iii. INTELLECTUAL HONESTY: Willingness to acknowledge weaknesses in one's own argument/belief system.  
      iv. INTELLECTUAL CLARITY: Ability to express one's ideas in a clear and concise manner.  
      v. INTELLECTUAL FLEXIBILITY: Willingness to move beyond strict ideological/philosophical arguments.  
      vi. INTELLECTUAL SELF-CONFIDENCE: Comfort level discussing complex social/philosophical issues.

2. INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING W/ GLOBAL/CULTURAL VIEWPOINTS:  
   a. Assessment Tools:  
      i. Papers  
      ii. Speech  
   b. Measurement Criteria:  
      i. ACADEMIC BREADTH: Addresses viewpoints/arguments from a diversity of academic disciplines.  
      ii. SOCIOLOGICAL/CULTURAL AWARENESS: Addresses viewpoints/arguments from a diversity of socioeconomic, political and cultural perspectives.  
      iii. HISTORICAL DEPTH: Ability to place current social/political events in historical perspective.

3. CREATIVITY AND PROBLEM SOLVING:  
   a. Assessment Tools:  
      i. Papers  
      ii. Speech  
   b. Measurement Criteria:  
      i. PROBLEM SYNTHESIS: Ability to identify, decipher and synthesize the core arguments under discussion.
ii. **MENTAL CREATIVITY**: Ability to organize arguments/ideas in innovative and interesting ways.

iii. **INTELLECTUAL INNOVATION**: Willingness to go beyond the extant literature and develop new arguments.

4. **PROFESSIONALISM, INTERPERSONAL SKILLS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**:
   
   a. **Assessment Tools**:
      
      i. Seminar Participation
   
   b. **Measurement Criteria**:
      
      i. **SOCIAL CONFIDENCE**: Willingness to voice one's opinions/ideas to further group goals.
      
      ii. **PROFESSIONALISM**: Attendance and punctuality (shows up for class on time and turns in assignments by due dates).
      
      iii. **RESPECT FOR OTHERS**: Classroom demeanor (bored vs. engaged; combative vs. tolerant, etc).

*Created by Professor Keith Jaggers*
Tentative Schedule of Reading, Discussion and Assignments for Spring 2019

Tu/1/22: First class: housekeeping; review of the Syllabus

Th/1/24: Review Syllabus (cont.); collect 3 x 5 cards

Tu/1/29: Discussion of “Notes on Meaning;” create First Study Groups; begin reading The Storytelling Animal

Th/1/31: Notes on Meaning (continued); Discussion of First Writing Assignment

Tu/2/5: Film: Listening is a Act of Love; work in Study Groups

Th/2/7: Due First Writing Assignment: Your Story; sharing your story

Tu/2/12: Sharing your story (cont.); Self-Assessment Due

Th/2/14: Discussion: “ Notes on Theses;” discussion of Second Writing Assignment Various kinds of narrative

Tu/2/19: Discussion on The Storytelling Animal; report by Study Groups

Th/2/21: Discussion of The Storytelling Animal (continued); create Second Study Groups; begin reading Life of Pi

Tu/2/26: Discussion of elements of narrative; Burke’s Pentad; due Short Story for Speech

Th/2/28: Due: Second Writing Assignment: The Story in the Poem

Tu/3/5: History as Narrative; Hayden White and the relations between history and narrative

Th/3/7: Discussion of novel, The Life of Pi; report of Study Groups

Tu/3/12: Film: Life of Pi

Th/3/14: Film: Life of Pi (cont.); create Study Groups; discussion of Third Writing Assignment

Tu/3/19: Spring Break

Th/3/21: Spring Break:

Tu/3/26: Speeches (1-2); Popular literature vs the Canon; due: Selecting Best Seller; Due Third Writing Assignment: The Written World
Th/3/28: Speeches (3-4); Popular literature vs the Canon (cont.); discussion of the Fourth Writing Assignment

Tu/4/2: Speeches (5-6); “Notes of Myth;” discussion of Fourth Writing Assignment

Th/4/4: Speeches (7-8); “Notes of Myth;” other sub-genres of myth (e.g. folk tales, fairy tales, legends, etc


Th/4/11: Speeches (11-12); Myths of Origin: Study Group Work on Genesis: 1-3

Tu/4/16: Speeches (13-14); Study Groups discussion of Big Bang Theory

Th/4/18: Speeches (15-16); discussion of Myths of Ending

Tu/4/23: Speeches (17-18)); Myths of Endings: Film: Taking Chance

Th/4/25: Speeches (19-20); Taking Chance (cont.); Due: Fourth Writing Assignment

Tu/4/30: Reading Exam on The Art of the Short Story

Th/5/2: Modes of Narrative: Tragedy and Comedy

Tu/5/7: Modes of Narrative: Romance and Satire

Th/5/9: Last class
Study Groups for Preparing Discussions

As I indicated in the Syllabus under “Format,” this is a seminar, not a lecture course. Moreover, I am not here to tell you how to study or prepare yourself to discuss the reading or the films. For the films, I may give you some possible questions to consider. As for the reading, especially the two major texts—*The Storytelling Animal, Life of Pi* and *The Written World*—you and your classmates must prepare yourself for the class discussions on these texts.

To help you prepare, you will be put into Study Groups that will meet occasionally in the first fifteen (15) minutes of the class to decide how to study for the discussion. However, most of the Study Group preparation must be done out of class. Each group must contact members and discuss how they are going to prepare their report to the rest of the class. I will also try to format Canvas to facilitate your discussions outside of class. Things to consider:

- How to study this book
- How to decide the workload (e.g. Who takes notes on what chapters? Who takes what chapters? What format will each person use to make his/her notes? What kind of outline?)
- How to create a schedule of dates and deadlines for completing work
- How to share everyone’s notes?
- How to evaluate each other’s notes? How to create useful feedback?
- How will you present your material when the time comes to discuss the book? [Everyone needs to participate.]
- Some of these tasks you can do during class time, but you need to exchange email addresses so that you can communicate out of class.

Some things to consider:

- What is the thesis of the book (chapter, article, etc.)?
- Is there relevant and enough evidence to defend the author’s thesis?
- What are the most important ideas in the book?
- What are the weaknesses in the book?

The main task of each Study Group is to explain to the class the salient elements which the author uses to respond to the situation that created the text. What strategies does the author use to deal with the issues he/she raises?

In any case, each one in the group should write some summary (a paragraph) of what she or he is going to say which will guide her or he in the discussion. (Having something written down will help one to organize her/his thoughts when it is time for his/her contribution to the conversation.)

After we finish one book, we will shuffle the deck and create new Study Groups for the next book.
First Writing Assignment: Tell Me a Story—About You
(5 points)

Due: Thursday, February 7
Length: 1-2 pages (double-spaced, computer printed, with title page [see “Notes of Writing”])
Presentation Time: no more than 5 minutes (18 students x 5 minutes=90 minutes)
Audience: Classmates and instructor

Instructions: Write a one or two-page story about an incident in your experience that you believe is significance to you and may be a clue for how others see you. The story can be serious, humorous, ironic, sad, happy, goofy, etc. If you do not do it in your narrative, be prepared to explain why this particular story is important for you.

Discussion: The object of this assignment is to get you to think about the elements of narrative and story (time, causality, action, beginnings, conflict, endings, etc.) and how these things order our experience and create meaning in our lives.

Style: The style should be informal, not academic.

Format: Always have a title page for your outside writing assignments.

This assignment will be shared with others in class.
Second Writing Assignment: The Story in the Poem  
(10 points)

Not all poems use narrative or (at least explicitly) tell a story (e.g., lyrics, haikus. Imagistic poems, etc.) However, many poems do tell a story. Read the following poem (again, and again).

Those Winter Sundays

by Robert Hayden

Sundays too my father got up early and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold, then with cracked hands that ached from labor in the weekday weather made banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking. When the rooms were warm, he'd call, and slowly I would rise and dress, fearing the chronic angers of that house, speaking indifferently to him, who had driven out the cold and polished my good shoes as well. What did I know, what did I know of love's austere and lonely offices?

Write an essay analyzing the poem by: a) explaining the symbolic act (the tension/conflict/issue) in the poem; b) how the conflict gets resolved; and c) the significance of the poem (i.e. how the story functions as “equipment for living”).

What you will be writing is your interpretation of this poem. Hence, it is your opinion which uses facts (the words of the poem) to attempt to persuade your reader that your interpretation is reasonable. Referring to the “Notes on Theses,” it is clear that it is a “Why” topic.

Remember: Create a title page; edit and proofread your essay before submitting it.
Third Writing Assignment: Book Review of *The Written World*  
(15 points)

Due: Thursday, March, 26  
Length: 5-7 pages [in addition to your title page] (double –spaced)  
Audience: Readers Who Read Books Reviews (e.g. NYT Sunday Book Review, TLS, New York Review of Books, etc.)

Background: We have discussed Puchnier’s book.

Instructions: Write an in-depth, well-organized book review for a publication that emphases book reviews. (If you have not read such a publication, find one and read it.)

*A book review is a description, critical analysis, and an evaluation on the quality, meaning, and significance of a book, not a retelling. It should focus on the book's purpose, content, and authority. A critical book review is *not a book report or a summary*. **It is a reaction paper** in which strengths and weaknesses of the material are analyzed. It should include a statement of what the author has tried to do, evaluates how well (in the opinion of the reviewer) the author has succeeded, and presents evidence to support this evaluation.

There is no right way to write a book review. Book reviews are highly personal and reflect the opinions of the reviewer. A review can be as short as 50-100 words, or as long as 1500 words, depending on the purpose of the review.

The following are standard procedures for writing book reviews; they are suggestions, not formulae that must be used.

**How to Write A Book Review**

1. Write a statement giving essential information about the book: title, author, first copyright date, type of book, general subject matter, special features (maps, color plates, etc.), price and ISBN.

2. State the author’s purpose in writing the book. Sometimes authors state their purpose in the preface or the first chapter. When they do not, you may arrive at an understanding of the book’s purpose by asking yourself these questions:

   a. Why did the author write on this subject rather than on some other subject?  
   b. From what point of view is the work written?  
   c. Was the author trying to give information, to explain something technical, to convince the reader of a belief’s validity by dramatizing it in action?  
   d. What is the general field or genre, and how does the book fit into it? (Use outside sources to familiarize yourself with the field, if necessary.) Knowledge of the genre means understanding the art form, and how it functions.  
   e. Who is the intended audience?
f. What is the author's style? Is it formal or informal? Evaluate the quality of the writing style by using some of the following standards: coherence, clarity, originality, forcefulness, correct use of technical words, conciseness, fullness of development, fluidity. Does it suit the intended audience?
g. Scan the Table of Contents, it can help understand how the book is organized and will aid in determining the author's main ideas and how they are developed - chronologically, topically, etc.
h. How did the book affect you? Were any previous ideas you had on the subject changed, abandoned, or reinforced due to this book? How is the book related to your own course or personal agenda? What personal experiences you've had relate to the subject?
i. How well has the book achieved its goal?
j. Would you recommend this book or article to others? Why?


a. Theme: The theme is the subject or topic. It is not necessarily the title, and it is usually not expressed in a complete sentence. It expresses a specific phase of the general subject matter

b. Thesis: The thesis is an author’s generalization about the theme, the author’s beliefs about something important, the book’s philosophical conclusion, or the proposition the author means to prove. Express it without metaphor or other figurative language, in one declarative sentence. This is a “Why” thesis!

Example

Title: We Had it Made
General Subject Matter: Religious Intolerance
Theme: The effects of religious intolerance on a small town
Thesis: Religious intolerance, a sickness of individuals, contaminates an entire social Group [P] because . . . . [1. 2. . . . n]

4. Explain the method of development-the way the author supports the thesis. Illustrate your remarks with specific references and quotations.

5. Evaluate the book for interest, accuracy, objectivity, importance, thoroughness, and usefulness to its intended audience. Show whether the author's main arguments are true. Respond to the author's opinions. What do you agree or disagree with? And why? Illustrate whether or not any conclusions drawn are derived logically from the evidence. Explore issues the book raises. What possibilities does the book suggest? What has the author omitted or what problems were left unsolved? What specific points are not convincing? Compare it with other books on similar subjects or other books by the same as well as different authors. Is it only a reworking of earlier books; a refutation of previous positions? Have newly uncovered sources justified a new approach by the author? Comment on parts of particular interest, and point out anything that seems to give the book literary merit. Relate the book to larger issues.

6. Try to find further information about the author - reputation, qualifications, influences, biographical, etc. - any information that is relevant to the book being reviewed and that would
help to establish the author's authority. Can you discern any connections between the author's philosophy, life experience and the reviewed book?

7. If relevant, make note of the book's format - layout, binding, typography, etc. Are there maps, illustrations? Do they aid understanding?

8. Check the back matter. Is the index accurate? Check any end notes or footnotes as you read from chapter to chapter. Do they provide important additional information? Do they clarify or extend points made in the body of the text? Check any bibliography the author may provide. What kinds of sources, primary or secondary, appear in the bibliography? How does the author make use of them? Make note of important omissions.

9. Summarize (briefly), analyze, and comment on the book’s content. State your general conclusions. Pay particular attention to the author's concluding chapter. Is the summary convincing? List the principal topics, and briefly summarize the author’s ideas about these topics, main points, and conclusions. Use specific references and quotations to support your statements. If your thesis has been well argued, the conclusion should follow naturally. It can include a final assessment or simply restate your thesis. Do not introduce new material at this point.

10. Structure your review; do not let the book structure your review. For example: do not slavish the order of the chapters in the text (e.g. “In the First Chapter the author says . . . In the Second Chapter the author observes . . . In the Last Chapter . . .”). A review is not a summary!

11. If you do not like the text you are reviewing, say so, but use words and phrases that are accurate and reasonable, not exaggerated or intolerant. A mean spirited, over-the-top review says more about the reviewer than the book being reviewed. Be charitable!

   - Excerpts from http://www.lavc.edu/library/bookreview.htm from Los Angeles Valley College

Style: The style should be formal but not academic, somewhere between an informal letter and an academic essay. This is journalism. The Associate Press describes journalistic style as:

   - Consistency
   - Clarity
   - Accuracy
   - Brevity

The style must grab the reader and make him/her want to continue reading the review.
Fourth Writing Assignment: Analyzing a Bestseller
(20 points)

Due: Thursday, April 25
Length (6-8 pages)
Audience: A college-level seminar on the Role of Popular Culture

There will be a fair amount of writing in this course at least 6-8 pages of which will be devoted to your final writing project, an argumentative essay.

Assign a final argumentative writing project of sufficient length (approximately 8 pages) and complexity that includes research and writing for an audience, real or imagined, that is other than the seminar instructor. This essay should synthesize a significant number of secondary sources in keeping with the goal of joining a conversation amongst scholars/citizens engaged in the topic of the writing project.

An argument presents and supports a thesis or proposition; traditionally it has been classed as one of the four forms of discourse (the others being description, narration, and exposition); it may employ these other three forms, but it subordinates them to its own purpose, to convince. Generally, since an argument must support a proposition, its method is chiefly logical. On the other hand, since its audience is other, human minds and not simply a computer, argumentation often benefits from emotional warmth, imaginative power, sophistication, sincerity, and even such strategies as humor. In one sense, all writing is argument; your purpose is to convince your audience to share your world view. To that end, a writer may use whatever legitimate strategies he or she has at his or her disposal.

Background:

Several years ago, I got into a dialogue with one of my colleagues, Professor James Hall, about the distinctions between elite literature and popular literature. Subsequently, Jim wrote a book, Hit Lit: Cracking the Code of the Twentieth Century’s Biggest Bestseller (NY: Random House, 2012). In his book, Jim analyzes twelve 20th century bestsellers:

- Margaret Mitchell. Gone With the Wind (1936)
- Grace Metalious. Peyton Place (1956)
- Harper Lee. To Kill a Mockingbird (1960)
- William Peter Blatty. The Exorcist (1971)
- Stephen King. The Dead Zone (1979)

I am giving you a handout explaining why he chose these books and a three page chapter, “Once Again, Quickly” which summarizes his findings. (If you want to read the whole book, I have three copies of the book, and I would be willing to lend you a copy.) Now, it is your task to test your ideas on a bestseller you will read and analyze. Here are the parameters:

- You must select an American novel (not nonfiction), published first in America
- The novel must have been published between 1900-2019.
- The novel must have sold at least 10,000,000 (ten million) copies.
- You cannot use any of the 12 books Jim Hall uses.
- You need to consult at least 10 secondary sources (e.g. other reviews of the bestseller, biographies of the author, other works by the same author, books discussing the nature and function of popular literature, etc.) in preparing your essay and documenting these sources.


**The question: What makes this novel a bestseller?** Do I and others like this novel because of its: setting, characters, plot, language, and purpose(s)? Does it act like Gottschall’s airplane simulator? Does it inspire you? Are you partial to a particular genre, e.g. science fiction, fantasy, gothic, romance, etc.? Is it an escape literature you like? Etc. . . .

**Instructions:** Write a well-organized essay (with a clear thesis) developed through relevant evidence (facts, logic, research, quotes, etc.) persuading your readers that the elements you analyzed are the crucial elements of making the novel a bestseller.

The Structure of the Essay:
- Create a Title page
- Create a clear thesis in the first paragraph of your introduction.
- Create a one-paragraph summarizing the novel.
- Develop your thesis.
- Create a Works Cited page, (Remember: At least ten (10) additional sources.)

Your thesis should be a Why Topic [P because 1,2,3]; for example:

*Life of Pie* is justified as a bestseller [P] because of the archetypal plot (survival and man versus nature)[1], the character Pi[2], and the serious issues of religion facing the protagonist and the readers[3].

**Style:** Write in SAE (Standard American English, no slang or jargon). Keep your style informal and strive for concision, clarity; be specific and concrete.
Notes on Persuasive Speech on Your Short Story

One of the requirements of HPCC193 is that you give a 5-7 minute persuasive speech. This speech will count for 15 percent of your final grade. **The subject matter of your speech should be your reading of a short story.**

Discussion: In general, approach your story as “equipment for living.” That is to say, look at your story as the writer’s response to a particular situation, with aspects that are both individual and universal.

As Narratives, stories (and all art) explore through the imagination the possibilities of human action, inspire action or inhibit action. They are responses to particular situations, situations which may have been confronted in the past, in the present or in the future. They are strategic responses (i.e. stylized answers) to a situation which the group, story teller, or writer confronts. These responses create meanings (using symbols that must be interpreted) and attitudes within those that create them and can be accessed by those who hear or read these narratives. Meanings and attitudes are incipient acts that allow action to go forward.

Given the situation (explicit or implied), what is the central idea or thesis—what is the conflict?—and how is it answered or resolved? Is there interesting information in the writer’s background or biography that give the reader some clues about the writer’s handling of the story? What have others have to say about this story? Do some research! Are there elements of the story (scene, characters, plot, theme, language, purpose, etc.) that you can use to provide interesting and significant information about thinking of this story as “equipment for living” for the writer and for us?

**Your job is to make the case that the short story you have chosen is successful (unsuccessful) in given the readers some important (influential, significant, essential, valuable, decisive, critical, etc.) equipment for living.**

An argument presents and supports a thesis (see Notes on Theses) or proposition; traditionally it has been classed as one of the four forms of discourse (the others being description, narration, and exposition); it may employ these other three forms, but it subordinates them to its own purpose, to convince. Generally, since an argument must support a proposition, its method is chiefly logical. On the other hand, since its audience is other, human minds, and not simply a computer, argumentation often benefits from emotional warmth, imaginative power, sophistication, sincerity, and even such strategies as humor. A writer may use whatever legitimate strategies he or she has at his or her disposal.

In choosing your short story you need to consider the following questions: **Is your short story substantial enough and complex enough and well-known enough to find relevant secondary material on it?** Before you have to submit your two choices, do some research; you do not want to find out after the fact that you cannot find information on your choices.
You will make a **detailed complete sentence outline** (see *The Speaker’s Handbook*) of your speech, but the speech itself is to be *extemporaneous*; that is, carefully planned and organized but not memorized or read as a paper. Work from a “bare bones” outline, with key words and phrases, but the precise wording of the speech should arise “spontaneously” as you give the speech. For at least 80 per cent of the time, you should be looking at your audience, not your notes. Use 3 x 5 cards to list your main points. You can use any visual aids or props that you think would help you. You can use any visual aids or props that you think would help you; however, **if you need to use a computer or some other technology from the Honors Office, it is your responsibility to see me to reserve this equipment in advance with the staff in the Honors Office and have it brought to classroom.** Also, if you technology fails, or if it takes too long to set it up, you need to have a back-up plan that does not need this technology. It will be almost impossible to reschedule your speech.

Your speech will emphasize:

1. A thesis, a well-developed introduction, main points and conclusion
2. Logical, clear organization including appropriate use of subordination in your outline
   a. **One simple (not compound) sentence for each division and subdivision.**
   b. The **full-sentence outline** is a tool to ensure coherent development of your speech.
   c. Your thesis statement, the main points, and at least the first level of sub points should be stated as **declarative sentences.**
3. A declarative sentence is, in effect, a proposition that can be proved or disproved, accepted or rejected.
   i. “Secondhand smoke harms nonsmokers.” [one complete sentence]
   ii. This sentence can be responded to by True or False.
   iii. But, “Nonsmokers’ rights” is neither True or False [a fragment, not a complete sentence]
4. **Each element (I, a, 1, a), etc.) must have at least two divisions; if I, then II; if a, then b; if 1, then 2, if a) then b), etc. . For example:**
   i. **There are 20 students in Honors 193**
      1. Seventeen students are female
         i. Fourteen females are freshmen
         ii. Three females are sophomores
      2. Three students are male
         i. One male is a freshman
         ii. Two males are sophomores
         iii. There are 19 students in Honors 392
         iii. Etc. . . .

3. **Appropriate use of supporting materials, including thorough research** (at least five citations with full documentation)
4. Adapting speech to your audience, making your points meaningful
5. Originality
6. Eye contact
Remember: You have no more than 7 minutes; I will signal when you have one minute left; I will cut you off after 7 minutes. We will have 3-5 minutes for questions and comments.

To help you prepare, I have attached a “Critique Sheet: Persuasive Speech” which outlines the criteria I will use in evaluating your speech. Read it over to see what I will be using to evaluate your speech. Use The Speaker’s Handbook! For example, there is an informative section on “Overcoming Fear of Speaking” and sections on making your presentation. For any of you that have not had much public speaking experience, there is a wealth of information and suggestions in this manual. Also, I have attached a sample speech demonstrating how a complete sentence outline is constructed and its documentation.

After you have given your speech, give the instructor two copies of your outline. One copy will be graded and returned; one will be put in your permanent dossier.

**Audience Requirements for Reading and Listening to the Speeches**

1. You—all of you--must have read the stories before coming to class. I reserve the right to test your knowledge of the reading. You will be tested on this on the Reading Exam.

2. After each speech, there will a 4-5 minute response to allow questions and comments on the speech.

3. You must have at least one written question for each speaker about her/his short story.

4. One student in the class will be a designated Respondent for each speech.

5. The Respondent is responsible for 1) asking the first question, and 2) soliciting other questions and comments from the rest of the class.
Sample Outline for a Speech on Edgar Allan Poe’s Use of Setting to Create a Mood of Horror and Repulsion in “The Cask of Amontillado”

http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext00/poe2v10.txt

Thesis: Poe creates a mood of horror and repulsion in the short story, “The Cask of Amontillado” because he supplements the characters in the story with his description of underground rooms, space, and sound.

I. This short story was published in *Godey’s Lady’s Book* in 1846 (Oxford)
   A. It is set in an Italian city during a carnival. (Benton)
   B. The first person narrator is named Montresor.
   C. Montresor is out for revenge.
   D. His victim is Fortunato.
      1. Fortunato has offended Montresor.
      2. Montresor does not specify what Fortunato has done.
   E. Fortunato is an expert on wine.
   F. Montresor lures Fortunato to Montresor’s wine vault to authenticate a bottle of wine.
      1. Fortunato is already drunk.
      2. The wine is amontillado.
         i. Amontillado is a pale, dry sherry.
         ii. Amontillado is made in Montilla, Spain.
   G. Fortunato has a bad cough worsened by the damp air and nitre (potassium nitrate) on the walls.
      1. Fortunato refuses to go turn around and go back.
      2. Fortunato thinks that his rival, Luchresi, may taste the wine first.
   H. Coming to the end of the vault, Montresor chains Fortunato to the wall.
   I. Montresor then walls Fortunato in with bricks and mortar.
   J. Fortunato cries to help.
   K. Fortunato’s last sound comes from the bells on his carnival hat.

II. The story is a narrative of premeditated and horrific vengeance (Quinn)
III. The reader is fascinated and repulsed by the story’s ghastliness and heartlessness.

IV. Poe uses many details of setting to create a mood of horror and repulsion.
   A. Poe evokes claustrophobia, gloom and death in the wine vault.
      1. The “catacombs” are dark and damp.
      2. The rooms are airless and suffocating.
      3. The human bones on the floor indicated generations of death.
      4. The catacomb rooms are increasingly covered and shrouded by spiderlike white and ghostly films of nitre.
   B. The scariest catacomb is the last one.
      1. The room is ominous in its dimensions.
      2. The Montresor gives the exact size of the room.
3. It is exactly the size of large coffin standing on end.
C. The failing torches suggest the ending of light and the beginning of death.
D. To get to the final catacomb, Montresor and Fortunato must descend a winding stair.
   1. The downward suggests inevitable journey to the grave.
   2. It suggests a journey into a bleak, cold, dark and damp hell.
E. Within the last catacomb, Poe adds disturbing and fearsounds.
   1. Fortunato has a awful rasping cough.
   2. Fortunato’s attempt to get free causes loud clanking from his chains.
   3. Fortunato screams and moans.
F. The description of the catacombs and the sounds create mood of uneasiness, anxiety, repulsion and horror.
V. Poe responded to what seems to be almost universal situation—revenge (Silverman)
   A. Revenge seems to be a universal emotion.
   B. Some of the most famous narratives in history deal with revenge.
   C. One thinks of “sweet” revenge.
   D. Yet, revenge goes against the general, accepted social order.
      1. Turn the other cheek.
      2. Forgiveness is a virtue
E. Poe’s story creates repulsion and horror in the reader.
F. Perhaps Poe’s story is a cautionary tale.
   1. Do not give in to unworthy emotions.
   2. Respond proportionally to other’s actions.
   3. Be compassionate and forgiving to others.
Bibliography

http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/~dmiall/Projects/Project_1a.htm./April 12, 2011.

Benton, Richard P. "Poe's 'The Cask of Amontillado': Its Cultural and Historical Backgrounds."  


Critique Sheet: Persuasive Speech

Name: __________________________________________

INTRODUCTION
   Captured attention/interest
   Adapted subject to audience
   Established credibility
   Announced thesis (specific purpose)
   Previewed main points (central idea)

BODY
   Main points clear
   Main points supported
   Organization logical
   Sources cited
   Connectives
   Audience adaptation
   Clarity of visual aids
   Managed visual aids

CONCLUSION
   Focused on thesis
   Summarized main points
   Closed decisively

DELIVERY
   Volume
   Rate
   Articulation
   Time: ________________
   Eye Contact
   Spontaneity/enthusiasm

TOPIC SELECTION
   Originality
   Intellectual content
   Interest value
   Grade: ____________
   +=15-13=A
   ✔=12-10=B
   --- = 9-7=C
   X=6.9-5.0=needs work can revise
   R= must revise
   0= Failed to complete

OUTLINE
   Complete-sentence form
   Logical subordination
   Bibliography