

Syllabus for English Composition

Syllabus Rationale

Overview

English Composition is a course which can be taught from a wide variety of angles and emphasizing a myriad of assignment types and writing forms. When planning this course, I wanted to consider both aspects—the angle to approach the readings and discussions for the greatest benefit of the students and the types of assignments which will provide the best learning opportunities. For the first, I decided to use a textbook which focuses on popular culture. I believe that popular culture can provide a rich backdrop of topics for students to cut their analytical and argumentative teeth on in an area which they already have some experience. Popular culture is a good starting point for students just beginning their college career because it does not require them to be experts in an academic subject matter but writing about it will require them to think “like” scholars because they will have to find ways to back up their assumptions about why popular culture looks and functions the way it does. It also helps novice college students consider the concept of identity and possibly even figure out how they see their own identities within the university and greater communities they live in. The study of popular culture also lends itself to a variety of writing assignments and explorations which the students will be invested in because they can more readily see the relevance to their lives. The assignments can be structured in a manner which assures the student that they are getting the necessary writing skills in analyzing “texts” which help their academic careers in future classes.

The class will be structured around a mix of activities. Whole class activities including: mini-lectures on analytical and writing topics, viewings of popular culture texts, discussions on both popular culture and writing topics, and orientations to Purdue Owl and the ODU Library. These activities will be largely instructor directed and will serve to keep the whole class informed and on pace with the goals and objectives of the course. Small groups will be used frequently to encourage wider class participation and so students can sharpen their ideas before they are discussed in a whole class setting. Small groups will: begin class reading and responding to their peers’ reflective writing, discuss topics of writing and popular culture prior to whole class discussions, informally gather to work out issues within their own writing and concurrent with their writing, and conduct peer review sessions to aid in the development of effectively articulated and argued texts. Individually, students will be expected to conduct work both in and outside of class by: reading instructor and student selected texts from the textbook, writing reflectively based on instructor or student chosen questions in response to readings and other class generated topics, brainstorming and exploring best practices for writing and research conducting, and drafting assignments in accordance with the assignment parameters. The objectives for the course and the types of activities I believe will support them are listed below.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Identify the role they play as audience through readings, class discussion, reflective writing, and completion of the first analytical paper.
2. Utilize their understanding of audience to generalize about their own audiences by clearly articulating who the audience is and what relevant techniques are used in their writing assignment cover sheets and the cover letter for their final portfolios.
3. Explain how invention and audience will influence the purpose of their writing through class discussion, reflective writing, and articulating their methods of invention in their writing assignment cover sheet.
4. Identify the three basic appeals (Ethos, pathos, logos) in their readings and their own writing through class discussion, reflective writing, and articulation of the appeals they use in their writing assignment cover sheets.

5. Synthesize the connections between invention, purpose, use of appeals and audience by producing writing assignments which clearly demonstrate cohesiveness among these elements and including their most successful examples in their final portfolios.
6. Utilize a recursive writing process to produce writing which evolves to meet student identified purposes and the course expectations of effective writing through in class writing time, multiple draft opportunities, peer review and explanation for selections into the students' final portfolios.
7. Explore an author's use of voice and style to create effective writing which suits his/ her purpose and audience through readings, reflective writing and class discussion.
8. Demonstrate an understanding of the role voice and style play in creating cohesive writing by constructing writing which is consistent and mechanically effective with regards to the purpose of the assignment and through their writing assignment cover sheets and the cover letter for their final portfolios.
9. Design and execute a basic research plan to further investigate a popular culture topic of their own choosing through the completion of the research steps assigned in-class and the successful creation of an effective research paper for inclusion into their portfolios.

Individual Assignments:

The assignments outlined below seek to provide students with a well rounded and robust series of writing activities which use the writing tools/ topics taught throughout the course. In each assignment, the instructor and their peers function as audience creating a hopefully authentic writing experience. Cover sheets will be utilized to give students an opportunity to articulate what writing tools and conventions they are using in their writing and to convey why they believe their topic is of relevance. Peer review will be used after the student has turned in a first draft, but because students will be given in class time to work on each of these assignments collaboration and informal conferencing with instructor and peers will be encouraged. Following the Cultural Analysis paper, which is carefully constructed and outlined for students, all remaining assignments will build on each other towards the creation of the Final Research paper. It is my hope that in doing so, topics can be refined and developed in a way which helps students write at their most effective as well as exposes them to the importance of developing writing in steps rather than sitting down the night before it's due and writing whatever comes to mind in the moment.

- *Cultural Analysis of a Website:* This assignment (4-6 double spaced pages) will concentrate on the student's ability to assess a text for its use of audience and appeals to send a message to its desired users/ consumers. See attached Assignment Sheet for further details.
- *Initial Proposal for Research:* This assignment will be a short paper (2-3 double spaced pages) designed to further the student's concept of invention, purpose and the recursive writing process to determine which area of popular culture the student will be exploring individually this semester. It will include why the student is choosing the particular topic, the student's current knowledge of the topic area and a section on the particular avenues s/he will need to research in order to gain a fuller picture of the proposed exigency. Possible topics might be: NASCAR: Fastest Growing Sport in America; *MySpace* and its Place in Youth Culture; "The Daily Show:" The (Post) Modern News Spectacular, etc.
- *Annotated Bibliography:* Students will be expected to collect five critical sources from outside the class assigned readings to support their research topic. Four of these should be found through the ODU Library (though it may be in electronic format), one should be from a reputable (instructor discretion) on-line source. (NOTE: if MySpace or other website is part of the primary source it will not count towards the Bibliography). The write-up of these sources should consistently use MLA, APA or other standard citation methodology and should contain a brief (one to two paragraph) summary of the key points from each critical source. The product should not exceed 3 pages, typed and double spaced.
- *Argumentative Paper:* This topic (4-6 pages, typed, double spaced) is designed to give students practice in writing for an audience, with a purpose, using relevant and interesting appeals and appropriate voice & style. Additionally, because it hinges on the presentation of a specific argument, it will bring the concept of arrangement to the student's decision making process in

writing. It will focus in on a specific issue in the student's research and will not require him/ her to present all sides of a specific issue, but rather to present gathered information in a way which will convince the audience that s/he is "right" about the issue at hand. Thesis development will be emphasized and possible topics might be: NASCAR is gaining popularity because it appeals to the lowest common denominator; *MySpace* is a place which allows young people to express their true selves without censure; "The Daily Show" is more accurate in its world news portrayal than traditional news casts; etc.

- *Peer Surveys*: Students will create a 1 to 2 page survey designed to be given to their college peers which relates to their research topic. This assignment is designed to give students practice with dealing with real data and the results of the survey will be turned in a 1 to 2 page typed paper with initial thoughts on what the data may mean for their exigency. It also provides practice for the students in dealing with real audiences and consideration for their methods of delivery. Students will be given time in class to administer their surveys to classmates, but will also be expected to administer it to 10 other peers because their classmates may (or may not) have a different opinion on aspects of popular culture as a result of class discussions. Comparing the differences between the two surveyed groups will be a part of the data write-up.
- *Final Research Report*: This will be the synthesis of all of the writing assignments, post Cultural Analysis and should exemplify the student's use of a recursive writing process by using all the materials gathered in previous assignments. This report should be 8 to 10 pages typed and double spaced. It should demonstrate a clear understanding of audience, purpose, appeals, style & voice, and arrangement. The topics of the paper should reflect back on the topic initially proposed in the second assignment unless the student has discussed a topic change with the instructor. Unlike the Argumentative Paper, the complete context of the exigency should be presented to the best of the student's ability and resource availability. It is not necessary for the student to present definitive conclusions about his/ her topic's place in popular culture, but it should offer educated theories as "why things are the way they are."

Final Portfolio Elements

The students' final assessment will take the form of a portfolio of the "best" examples of writing the student has completed. This will be more informative to the instructor than a final exam because it will allow student demonstrate their growth in both the effectiveness of their writing and their understanding of popular culture. The included reflective writings will show how the students' thinking changed and/ or learning through writing took place. A completed cycle of a short paper (4-6 pages) will show that the student can grow with a topic over time and incorporate the comments and opinions of others while still maintaining their own focus. A completed cycle of the Final Research Paper should show how the student came to understand their own chosen subject matter by using the steps of the writing process and established and taught research methods. A Portfolio cover letter gives students a chance to articulate plainly how they felt they grew over the course and provides a key moment for self-analysis. By allowing students to include any additional elements they find relevant, the instructor leaves control in the hands of the students for showing what and how they learned over the course of a semester.

- At least 10 reflective writings which signify "a-ha!" moments regarding popular culture or writing, led to invention or exploration of topics selected for portfolio inclusion, etc.
- All elements of one of the two assigned papers, Cultural Analysis or Argumentative—pre-writing, assignment cover sheet, rough draft, peer review comments, and at least one subsequent draft
- All elements of the final research paper—pre-writing (Topic Proposal), Annotated Bibliography, Survey Results, Research Paper cover sheet, first draft, peer review comments, and one subsequent draft
- Cover letter which details lessons learned in the course and explains how the chosen materials supports the student's view of his/ her own progress
- Any other elements a student feels demonstrates a growth in his/ her writing over the past semester

Resources

This textbook was chosen because it provides a wide range of readings on a multitude of topics. The variety should help catch all students' interests, at least at some points. In addition, it is structured to allow for approaching popular culture first through the variety of genres students are most often exposed to and then closer analysis of how various groups benefit or are harmed by the manner in which they typically get portrayed. No writing handbook is included because the cost would likely be prohibitive for many students, instead The Perdue Owl Family of sites is considered more than sufficient to support student writing needs both inside and outside the classroom and is a free resource.

Massik, Sonia and Jack Solomon. Signs of Life in the USA: Readings on Popular Culture for Writers. 4th Ed. Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 2003.

The Purdue OWL Family of Sites. 2006. The Writing Lab and OWL at Purdue and Purdue University. 6 November 2006 <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>>.

Syllabus Plan

| Week One | Tuesday | Thursday |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| In Class Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor Introduction and student survey and introductions • Overview of course • Discussion: What is popular culture? • In-class writing: “Who are you? Writing about yourself and popular culture” • Small group: Share writing and come to an initial definition of how popular culture relates to self identification • Discussion: Attempt to create an initial class definition of popular culture and selfhood <p><i>Collected: In-class writing and small group writing</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity: Spend the first 10 minutes reading other students’ responses to “Popular Culture,” Either respond to one other student or update your own entry with what you have learned from your peers • Student questions/ issues? • Mini-lecture—<i>Semiology and Popular Culture</i> • Viewing: Yahoo.com • Small group: What signs do you see? How do they relate to each other? • Discussion: What do we see? <p><i>Collected: small group writing</i></p> |
| Assignments (Due next class) | <p><i>Reading: “Popular Culture” p. 1- 19</i></p> <p><i>Reflective Writing (post to BB prior to class):</i> What do Maasik and Solomon mean by the terms “sign” and “sign system”? Can you give examples?</p> | <p><i>Reading: “Writing about Popular Culture” p. 21 – 41</i></p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> Why is popular culture an important area for writers to explore? What do you want to investigate?</p> |

Week One Rationale:

Tues: All courses should begin with a round of introductions led by the instructor because a class needs to function as a team in order to accomplish the varied objectives in the course, not only do students need to have a basic understanding of who their professor is they need to have a basic understanding of who their classmates are if they are expected to work together. The goals of the course should be given in overview to alert students to the amount and type of work the class will entail and this will help them anticipate their own needs later on. The initial open forum discussion will give the instructor a chance to feel out who her “talkers” and “listeners” are on the first day. In-class writing on the first day on popular culture and identity will give the student a chance to think about his/her own thoughts about the major themes of the course and is a quick and easy way for the instructor to get an idea for the existing knowledge, mood and interests of her students. For small group work, the instructor will allow students to choose their own groups and again this will give the instructor some information about how groups may be most effectively set up for later group work. The small group work is designed here to further the thoughts the students put to paper during in-class writing and also may encourage quieter students to share with their peers in this smaller format. The ending discussion will synthesize what the small groups worked on and function as a class closing activity. The reading and reflective writing assigned is designed to introduce students to popular culture and semiology as our main topics and familiarize them with the course text. The reflective readings will be posted to Blackboard for two reasons: it will keep a record of their thoughts on the readings in a manner which both students and the instructor can access easily and it sets up the opening activity for the following class.

Thurs: The opening activity will encourage students to read and react to their fellow students ideas about popular culture as the course progresses. Due to the split nature of the course—college writing skills and a study of popular culture, all aspects of the readings may not get discussed in class. This activity will allow students to determine some of the course content by interacting rather than reacting only to the

instructor. It should also widen the students' interaction with each other by using electronic rather than face-to-face interactions, hopefully breaking down some barriers students inevitably have when getting to know new classmates. It will also provide a self check to see if what s/he took from the reading is on par with what other students saw. Following the opening activity, the instructor will always check in with her students to determine if there are any housekeeping issues or common problems the students seem to be having with the reading and assignments. An instructor should be able to react to these concerns in real time if they are brought up early enough. A mini-lecture on popular culture and semiology will provide an opportunity for the instructor to highlight the material most relevant in the reading to the work students will be doing throughout the semester, since this is the main area of inquiry for all of their writing. The instructor will highlight the most important tools that semiology has for analyzing popular culture and our place in relation to it. The whole class viewing of Yahoo.com will introduce the methods students will use to complete the first paper, Cultural Analysis of a Website, and give them a chance to put the ideas of semiology and popular culture into action. The small group work will function to get students' ideas flowing in a manner which will (hopefully) encourage a full participation, while the whole class discussion to follow will give the instructor the opportunity to help students synthesize what they see and think and guide them to look more deeply when needed. Small group writing for this and the previous class will be collected by the instructor so she can attempt to monitor the progress and participation of the small group work. The Reading and Reflective Writing assignment is another introductory type reading which is designed to get students thinking about why we are using popular culture as our main topic and what kinds of writing they will be able to explore.

| Week Two | Tuesday | Thursday |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| In Class Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Discussion: What writing about popular culture teaches us... • Mini-lecture: Audience and Advertising • Orientation: Purdue Owl <p><i>Collected: Purdue Owl Orientation Sheet</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Mini-lecture: Types of Appeals • Small group: Go back to Yahoo.com, identify two ads and determine who the intended audience is and what kind of appeals are being used. • Discussion: What did we find? How are signs used on the web to make appeals to the audience? <p><i>Collected: small group writing</i></p> |
| Assignments (Due next class) | <p>Reading: Introduction: "Consuming Passion" p. 45-54, "What's in a Package?" p. 69-79</p> <p>Reflective Writing: What did you find most interesting/ surprising in the editors' introduction remarks?</p> <p>According to Hine, what assumptions do advertisers make about their audience when they create packaging?</p> | <p>Reading: Introduction: "Brought to You B(u)y" p. 117-128, "Web of Deceit" p.194-201</p> <p>Reflective Writing: What did you find most interesting/ surprising in the editors' introduction remarks?</p> <p>According to Chapman, what assumptions do commercial web designers make about their audiences? What kind of appeals?</p> |

Week Two Rationale:

Tues: Following the opening activities, the first discussion for this class will attempt to sum up their past two reading/ writing assignments and allow students to express both enthusiasm and skepticism as to what writing about popular culture has to teach them at the university level. Hopefully, this can bring the

class to a common understanding of the course goals. The mini-lecture is designed to introduce the writing concept of audience in conjunction with advertising because all students will have experience being the audience for advertisements and will hopefully be able to use their prior knowledge to understand the importance audience plays in all writing, especially their own. The class will close with an orientation to the Purdue Owl family of web sites to show students what tools are available to them to help with their writing. This orientation is necessary because though students are largely familiar with Internet sites, there is always a learning curve when it comes to using a site as complex as Purdue Owl effectively. The reading/ writing assignment for the next class is designed to jump start further discussions on audience and consumerism which will continue to prepare students for their first major writing assignment.

Thurs: Following the opening activities, the class will begin with another mini-lecture, this time on how appeals are used to communicate specific messages and ideas to the audience in advertising and writing. It should help students be able to both identify appeals used in texts and use appeals in their own writing after they are comfortable with them. Small group work will be used here to retrace the class steps back to Yahoo.com to consider how Yahoo.com uses appeals to convince their web audience to use their site in Yahoo's best interest. This practical activity should help solidify the material presented in the mini-lecture. The final discussion here will be used to synthesize and close the discussion, allowing the instructor a chance to check student's progress. The reading/ writing assignment here will build on the previous readings and discussions by getting more specific about both advertising and the World Wide Web. "Web of Deceit" will be one of the students' main resources for writing their first paper.

| Week Three | Tuesday | Thursday |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| In Class Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Introduce: Cultural Analysis Paper • Reading: Cultural Analysis Sample • Small Group: What is the author's use of appeals? Semiology? Sense of audience? • Discussion: Initial student thoughts on web sites they wish to explore <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: small group writing</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Small Group: Can advertisers be trusted? • Discussion: Thoughts on American consumption and the role of advertising • Mini-lecture: <i>voice & style</i> • Discussion: What makes a "voice" a "style" choice? What arenas of popular culture are particularly "stylized"? <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: small group writing</i></p> |
| Assignments (Due next class) | <p><i>Reading:</i> "Sex, Lies, and Advertising" p. 160 – 180</p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> Is Steinem correct to say that most women's magazines are nothing but advertisements? Could the same be said for magazines focused on men?</p> | <p><i>Reading:</i> Introduction, "Video Dreams" p. 223- 235, "Bad Sistas" p.279- 287</p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> What did you find most interesting/ surprising in the editors' introduction remarks?</p> <p>Is Rose's assessment of female rappers consistent with all or most female rappers/ R&B performers today? Why or why not?</p> |

Week Three Rationale:

Tues: Following opening activities, the instructor will introduce the first major assignment, the Cultural Analysis Paper. The introduction will include going over the assignment sheet in detail, along with a

rubric, and entertaining any student questions in real time. For the first paper, a sample paper will be provided to all students and be read in-class so students have a clear model of what is expected. Small groups will be used to go back over the sample paper, this time looking specifically for the elements of texts we have already used in mini-lecture, small group work and discussion. Once again, it gives students a chance to practice their analytical skills with help from their peers. The final discussion will serve to close the class, this time letting them begin to explore what aspects and areas of popular culture they are most interested in. The reading/ writing assignment will be the final assigned reading on advertising and should help illuminate how advertising seeks to convince people of “needs” they may or may not have as well as begin to delve into the social and political ramifications of advertising.

Thurs: Following opening activities, the first small group session will work to consider everything they have read about consumerism and advertising and attempt to make coherent sense of how it all ties together by asking themselves about trust and advertising. The following discussion will open those ideas up to the wider class and will hopefully produce a debate on advertising’s merits. The mini-lecture on voice and style here is introduced to get students thinking about the way others and they present themselves in texts. The instructor will stress that there is no one “right” way to express yourself, but there may be more “effective” ways to make your points depending on your audience and your use of appeals. This mini-lecture will segue into a discussion that considers how voice and style affect an audience’s interpretation of one’s message. The reading/ writing assignment for the following class will build on this by considering how television and music videos are presented and perceived.

| Week Four | Tuesday | Thursday |
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| In Class Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Viewing: Selection of Music Videos • Discussion: Music Videos—Do they just perpetuate stereotypes? • Issues and questions regarding Cultural Analysis • Individual: Writing for Cultural Analysis <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: None</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Small Group: Is television supposed to be an accurate reflection of American life? • Viewing: Seinfeld, “The Cigar Store Indian” • Discussion: What does the episode say about gender in middle class America? Race? Class? <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: small group writing</i></p> |
| Assignments (Due next class) | <p><i>Reading:</i> “A Tale of Two Sitcoms” p. 236-240, “The Oprah Winfrey Show and the Talk-Show Furor” p. 241-248</p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> How do the sitcoms discussed reflect, “What does it mean to be a man in a <i>post-feminist</i> age?”?</p> <p>How does the Oprah Winfrey Show function in this supposed <i>post-feminist</i> age?</p> | <p><i>Reading:</i> Introduction, “The Hollywood Sign” p.289-298, “Creating the Myth” p. 308-316</p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> What did you find most interesting/ surprising in the editors’ introduction remarks?</p> <p>Choose one of the myths described in the article and explain it in your own words.</p> |

Week Four Rationale:

Tues: Following opening activities, students will view an instructor chosen selection of music videos (they may need to be re-chosen each time the course is taught to assure their continued relevance to the students—the instructor may want to ask students prior to this session about videos they particularly enjoy or are getting a lot of attention to ensure their interest) The discussion which follows will build on the reading they have done to analyze these videos for any stereotypical portrayals—the instructor should encourage students to particularly evaluate them for instance of gender, race and class based

stereotyping. This will be one of the first times these concepts will explicitly discussed, a theme which will be discussed regularly through the remainder of the course. Students may resist analyzing things they enjoy, especially looking at the negative aspects, but they should be encouraged to realize that though they may not internalize the messages implicit (or explicit) in these videos, it is important to acknowledge their presence in order to use the students' developing analytical skills when making their own popular culture choices. It can also lead to an interesting discussion/ debate regarding whether or not something has to be "politically correct" to be enjoyed and what the resulting implications might be about fans/ consumers. The class time will spend approximately 45 minutes discussion music videos, and the remaining 30 minutes should be devoted to allowing students to write in class for their first paper. This will help the student gain easy access to their instructor and peers while working through their own writing process as well as provide the instructor an opportunity to monitor student progress.

Thurs: Following opening activities, students will convene their small groups to further hash out what effects they believe television has in determining what "real" life should or could look like on television. Before discussing their findings, students will view an episode of "Seinfeld," one of the programs discussed in their reading. The episode has been chosen specifically because it deals with issues of race and gender in a seemingly "funny" way and questions whether or not people should be offended by "accidentally" racist behavior. The following discussion will continue or inquiry into portrayals of gender, race and class both in the specific episode viewed and in other television shows students have watched. The reading/ writing assignment will continue the students' journey through the major genres of popular culture by looking at how films are created and what myths become implicit within them.

| Week Five | Tuesday | Thursday |
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| <p>In Class Activities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Discussion: What is the purpose of the myths described in Seger's article? • Review: <i>Semiology, Audience, Appeals and Voice & Style</i> • Issues and questions regarding Cultural Analysis • Individual: Writing time for Cultural Analysis <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: None</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student questions/ issues? • Collect: Cultural Analysis Papers • Viewing: Film Selections from "Crash," "Gladiator," "Hustle & Flow," & "Kill Bill" • Small Group: What kinds of myths/ representations are we seeing in these "top rated" movies? • Discussion: Compare and contrast the myths and stereotypes presented in these films • Introduce: Topic Proposal Assignment <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: small group writing</i></p> |
| <p>Assignments (Due next class)</p> | <p><i>Assignment:</i> Cultural Analysis Paper</p> | <p><i>Reading:</i> "So You Wanna Be a Gangsta?" p. 337-348, "Class and Virtue" p. 366-369</p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> What does the term "gangsta" mean today? Why do you think Hollywood glorifies criminal behavior especially as it relates to race?</p> <p>What is "class bigotry," as described by Parenti? Can you think of other films which present "class bigotry"?</p> |

Week Five Rationale:

Tues: Following opening activities, the class will discuss the myths described in their reading, because it is important for students to gain a full appreciation for the formulas used in popular culture and that this does not denigrate popular culture but it does expose the assumptions popular culture makes about the people it seeks to entertain. The instructor will then take the opportunity to review any of the major writing concepts which have been discussed to this point to ensure that students feel comfortable with these terms as they will be expected to identify both their own intended uses of these elements (in their Cultural Analysis Cover Sheets) and those of their texts for the paper due the following class session. The instructor will also check-in with students as a class to any major or problems to see if they can not be cleared up efficiently. This should leave about 45 minutes of in-class writing time. The students' only assignment is to complete their papers because it is likely that any assigned reading at this point (if done at all) will be cursory at best due to the students' likely focus on the major assignment.

Thurs: In place opening activities, the students' papers will be collected in hard copy and the class will be questioned as to how successful they feel their papers were. The class will then view instructor selected scenes from four recent critically acclaimed films, "Crash," "Gladiator," "Hustle & Flow," and "Kill Bill." Small groups will work on identifying the various myths and stereotypes they see in the films and the following discussion will take these identifications and begin to place them in context with each other. This should serve to help students see the bigger picture and how each movie uses myths and stereotypes to get across their message. The class will end with an introduction to the major research they will conduct for the remainder of the course and help them get started on choosing an area by going over the Topic Proposal assignment sheet. The reading/ writing assignment will continue our discussion of stereotypes, myths and the roles race and class play within those areas.

| Week Six | Tuesday | Thursday |
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| <p>In Class Activities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Mini-lecture: <i>Peer Review</i> • Peer Review: Anonymous Peer Review of Selected Papers • Discussion: Success of sample papers—audience, semiology, appeals, voice & style • Return: Cultural Analysis • Mini-lecture: <i>Purpose & Invention</i> • Individual: Writing for Topic Proposal <p><i>Collected: Peer Review Write-ups</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student questions/ issues? • Collect: Topic Proposal • Discussion: Problems in the Topic Proposal? • Small Group: Choose one of the articles from last week—identify a film which seems to prove the argument wrong and explain • Discussion: Race and class in American films • Mini-lecture: <i>The Writing Process and Research Methods</i> • Introduce: Annotated Bibliography <p><i>Collected: small group writing</i></p> |
| <p>Assignments (Due next class)</p> | <p><i>Assignment:</i> Topic Proposal</p> | <p><i>Reading:</i> Introduction, "We've Come a Long Way, Maybe" p. 437-446, "The Gender Blur: Where Does Biology End and Society Take Over?" p. 453-460</p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> What did you find most interesting/ surprising in the editors' introduction remarks?</p> <p>Do you believe biology or society creates the major differences between genders?</p> |

Week Six Rationale:

Tues: Following opening activities, the instructor will give a lecture and handout a peer review write-up sheet to introduce how one is to critically and sensitively review a paper by a peer. Ground rules will be clearly established in order to ensure effective communication. For the first set of papers, the instructor will choose papers to be evaluated anonymously with the chosen authors' permission. After students have used the handout to guide them in their peer reviewing, the whole class will discuss examples of successful use of the writing elements we have studied thus far—discussion here should help the students feel as if they understand why some papers were more effective at particular elements than others rather than the instructor merely telling them. A mini-lecture on purpose and invention will follow to help guide students through their upcoming Topic Proposals. Hopefully this will leave a minimum of 25 minutes remaining in class for students to work on their Topic Proposals. The only assignment for the following class will be the Topic Proposal for the same reasons as stated before the turning in of the Cultural Analysis papers.

Thurs: Topic Proposals will be collected at the start of class in hard copy and students will be given a chance to voice how they feel they did on these small papers. Small groups will be convened to return to looking at the articles we have read regarding films and help students refresh their memories by concentrating on one article each and then identifying scenes from the films we watched and other films they have seen which support or refute the arguments presented. Following small group work, a larger class discussion will go over what the students have decided on and take a broader look at race and class (as well as gender where appropriate) in American films. Class will wrap-up with a mini-lecture on the writing process and its relationship to research methodology and the instructor will introduce the Annotated Bibliography assignment by going over the assignment sheet. The reading/ writing assignment will move our discussion from looking at popular culture through genre to looking at how popular culture affects various types of people, and the first area of inquiry will be gender.

| Week Seven | Tuesday | Thursday |
|--|--|--|
| <p>In Class Activities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Orientation: ODU Library • Individual: Search & Writing Time for Annotated Bibliography <p><i>Collected: Library Orientation Worksheet</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Discussion: How do our recent articles on gender account for the gender portrayals we have discussed previously? Is gender still an issue in this supposed “post-feminist” age? • Peer Review: Topic Proposals • Review: <i>The Writing Process & Research Methods</i> • Return: Topic Proposals <p><i>Collected: Peer Review Write-ups</i></p> |
| <p>Assignments (Due next class)</p> | <p><i>Reading:</i> “Power at Play: Sports and Gender Relations” p.460-471, “The Beauty Myth” p. 481-490</p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> In your opinion, why are male professional sports events more popular than female professional sports?</p> <p>Summarize what “the beauty myth” is.</p> | <p><i>Assignment:</i> Annotated Bibliography</p> |

Week Seven Rationale:

Tues: Following opening activities, students will be given an ODU Library orientation sheet prepared by the instructor and will take a field trip to the campus library to meet with a librarian and get an overview of what sources are available to them on campus and how they might access these. This is very important at the start of the Annotated Bibliography project as most students will be unaware of how the specifics of the campus library may work, as well as clearly demonstrating to them how to locate the types of sources described on their assignment sheet. The orientation sheet will serve as a guide to the most important sections a student needs to consider for this particular course. Any time remaining in the class session will be given to the students to begin their search for sources. The reading/ writing assignment is designed to continue the students' exploration of popular culture portrayals of gender, by this time in the course they should be sufficiently versed in popular culture to be able to make connections for themselves with the Blackboard opening exercise, so that they do not need to be discussed every class, but can be discussed as a body of work in later classes.

Thurs: Following opening activities, the instructor will lead a discussion which should synthesize the students' readings on gender. At this point problems, conflicts and agreements with the messages of the text will hopefully surface and we can begin to place our view of gender in popular culture against what we have discussed in the genre sections of our readings. Particularly, we will return to Stark's assertion of a "post-feminist" age and determine where each stands in relation to that idea. Additionally, Topic Proposals will be peer-reviewed in an instructor chosen one-to-one format, grouped by similarity of topic. A review of last weeks mini-lecture on the writing process and research methods should help bolster students before class ends, and the assignment for the weekend is to work on their Annotated Bibliographies, due the next class.

| Week Eight | Tuesday | Thursday |
|--|---|--|
| <p>In Class Activities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student questions/ issues? • Collect: Annotated Bibliography • Discussion: Problems encountered in Annotated Bibliography? • Introduce: Argumentative Paper • Mini-lecture: <i>Arrangement</i> • Individual: Writing for Argumentative Paper <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: None</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Small Group: Can "women" be warriors without becoming "men" in the eyes of society? • Discussion: Attempts to synthesize what we have learned about gender roles and their existence/ usefulness in popular culture. • Peer Review: Annotated Bibliography • Return: Annotated Bibliographies <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: small group writing, Peer Review Write-ups</i></p> |
| <p>Assignments (Due next class)</p> | <p><i>Reading:</i> "Warrior Dreams" p. 496-505, "Women and Children First: Gender and the Electronic Frontier" p. 505-513</p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> According to Gibson, how did the women's movement affect the construction of the "warrior" identity?</p> <p>Do Miller's assertions about women on the Internet ring true with your own Internet experiences? Explain.</p> | <p><i>Reading:</i> Introduction, "Constructing Race" p. 515-525, "The Haves and the Have Nots" p. 593-597</p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> What did you find most interesting/ surprising in the editors' introduction remarks?</p> <p>How is the Internet creating a culture of "haves and have nots"? How is this related to race?</p> |

Week Eight Rationale:

Tues: Annotated Bibliographies will be collected at the start of class, and the instructor will lead a whole class discussion of problems encountered, the assumption being that many students will have had the same problems and they may be able to work out strategies for improving their source list before the final research paper is due. At this point, students should have a sufficient enough grasp of their topic to do some further writing in their chosen research area, therefore the Argumentative Paper will be assigned and the assignment sheet gone over with the class in detail. Since arguments hinge on many of the writing aspects we have discussed prior, the instructor will take the students one step further by giving a mini-lecture on arrangement, paying particular attention to how arrangement of materials will affect the authors' use of appeals and ability to reach his/ her audience. Ideally, this will leave about 45 minutes of class time for students to use the knowledge they have gained to begin their Argumentative Paper in class. The reading/ writing assignment will conclude the class investigation of gender roles by considering male gender roles as well as how gender roles continue to exist even in "new" media such as the World Wide Web.

Thurs: Following opening activities, small groups will be used again to go back and look at an article in some depth—specifically how does "Warrior Dreams" illuminate the limitations gender roles place on both women and men. The larger class discussion will attempt to synthesize our discussions of gender roles and allow students the opportunity to voice how convinced they are that "gender" is a category constructed by society. Class will wrap up with a peer review that will once again be one-to-one in format and chosen by the instructor based on similarity of topic—hopefully these will be different one-to-one pairings, however, to ensure a range of opinions. The reading/ writing assignment will move our considerations from gender to race in popular culture. Students should be able to make connections between the constructed nature of "gender" with the similarly constructed nature of "race."

****Week Nine—Spring Break****

| Week Ten | Tuesday | Thursday |
|--|---|--|
| <p>In Class Activities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Discussion: How does the idea of "haves and have nots" affect race and class on the Internet? • Review: <i>Arrangement & other topics as needed</i> • Individual: Writing for Argumentative Paper <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: None</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student questions/ issues? • Collect: Argumentative Papers • Introduce: Peer Surveys • Mini-lecture: <i>Delivery</i> • Small Groups: What types of questions will get the best results in a survey? • Discussion: Approaches to creating surveys <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: small group writing</i></p> |
| <p>Assignments (Due next class)</p> | <p><i>Assignment:</i> Argumentative Paper</p> | <p><i>Reading:</i> "In Living Color: Race and American Culture" p. 526-538, "Going' Gangsta, Choosin' Cholita" p. 562-568</p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> According to Omi, what is the difference between "overt" and "inferential racism"?</p> <p>Is it legitimate to "claim" someone else's ethnicity? Why or why not?</p> |

Week Ten Rationale:

Tues: Following opening activities, the whole class discussion will be used to open the debate on race and Internet access because it gives the instructor greater control over a topic that is very likely to be sensitive and based significantly in personal experience. The instructor should bring up prior discussion of race and class portrayals as a jumping off point for discerning between stereotype and reality while also allowing personal experience to be presented as valid but also open to interpretation as with our previous discussion topics. By having this discussion in Week Ten, it is the instructor’s goal that classroom discussion dynamics will be both established and appropriate. After the discussion, a quick review of arrangement and other writing topics will be presented, as needed by the students. The remaining 45 minutes will be used for students to work on their Argumentative Papers, the only assignment due for the next class.

Thurs: After collecting the Argumentative Papers, the last assignment before the Final Research Paper, Peer Surveys, will be introduced with assignment sheet. These surveys follow the Argumentative Paper because the Argumentative Paper should demonstrate to students where they need additional “back-up” to present their final research and tentative conclusions. A mini-lecture on Delivery will help students format surveys in a way which will (hopefully) produce the best results from their survey audience. Small group work will provide a peer setting for students to think about the types of questions they need to be asking their peers and the closing discussion will allow the instructor the opportunity to guide students in the best directions depending on what types of information they are looking to gather. The reading/ writing assignment will continue to look a race constructions and will also extend into questions of “claiming” identities, something which has not been directly addressed in the course to this point but is an important aspect of popular culture.

| Week Eleven | Tuesday | Thursday |
|--|---|--|
| <p>In Class Activities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Small Groups: What does it mean to “claim” an identity? When is it legitimate? When is it not? • Discussion: The claiming of identity and American Popular culture • Review: <i>Delivery & other writing topics as needed</i> • Whole Class: Conduct Peer Surveys <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: small group writing</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Discussion: Is the English classroom a race-friendly place? • Return: Argumentative Papers • Peer Review: Argumentative Papers • Whole Class: Conduct Peer Surveys <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: Peer Review Write-ups</i></p> |
| <p>Assignments (Due next class)</p> | <p><i>Reading:</i> “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” p. 575- 583, “The Classroom and the Wider Culture: Identity as a Key to Learning English Composition” p. 583- 593</p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> How does Anzaldua’s use of Spanish claim her identity as a writer?</p> <p>Summarize how Shen “learns” English Composition.</p> | <p><i>Assignment:</i> Surveys with results</p> |

Week Eleven Rationale:

Tues: Following opening activities, small groups will discuss the idea of identity “claiming” and make tentative value judgments about how identity is and/ or should be formed. The instructor should form groups based on students identifications as whether or not “claiming” is legitimate or not and then be prepared to referee a debate when those two groups present their reasons in the larger class discussion on identity and American popular culture. Breaking students up according to shared ideas will mean that small group work is less likely to be derailed and that all opinions have a place to be voiced, while the larger class discussion should purposely put those opinions into opposition so students can consider how the other side of the debate supports an opposing view point. Again, it is hoped that prior positive discussions will help guide the class appropriately in this area. When discussing popular culture it is necessary to discuss the controversial, but this should be a safe forum to do so. Students should be expected to use examples from their readings as well as personal experience to make their arguments. The instructor should also review Delivery and other necessary writing topics because the surveys will be conducted in the following class and the Final Research Paper will begin immediately following to ensure students have an understanding of the major writing topics. The remaining 30 minutes should be left for students to conduct their surveys. These surveys will partially be conducted in-class to aid students in finding willing participants, though they will be expected to gather some data from outside class.

Thurs: Following opening activities, there will be a whole class discussion of politics, race and the English classroom, this will provide an opportunity for students to not only discuss the ideas of the previous readings but again to bring in their own experiences in English classrooms and academic writing. This discussion may be short due to other class activities, but should end with a call from the instructor to reflect on these ideas and possibly plan to re-convene this discussion the following class period. Students will then be placed in relevant pairs for a peer review of their Argumentative Papers. The remaining time will be used for students to complete conducting their surveys.

| Week Twelve | Tuesday | Thursday |
|--|--|---|
| <p>In Class Activities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student questions/ issues? • Collect: Surveys • Introduce: Open Reading Choice/ Open Reflective Writing • Introduce/ Review: Research Paper • Review: Any previous topics as necessary • Individual: Writing for Research Paper <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: None</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Informal Presentations: Individual articles • Discussion: “Other” in America • Return: Surveys • Discussion: How helpful were the surveys? Problems encountered? <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: None</i></p> |
| <p>Assignments (Due next class)</p> | <p><i>Reading:</i> Choose any two essays from Chapter Eight, “Life on the Margins”</p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> Briefly summarize your chosen articles and respond to any aspect you found surprising or interesting</p> | <p><i>Reading:</i> Choose any two essays from Chapter Ten, “Popular Spaces”</p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> Briefly summarize your chosen articles and respond to any aspect you found surprising or interesting</p> <p><i>Assignments:</i> Any Re-writes you wish to have commented before your final portfolio are due by today at the latest</p> |

Week Twelve Rationale:

Tues: After collecting student surveys with collected data, the instructor will introduce and review a number of procedural issues which will guide the class through the handful of remaining class sessions. First, students will now be given the opportunity to choose their own readings from specific sections of the textbook. This is to both allow them to find articles which may relate in some way to their research topics in addition to encouraging students to learn from each other by listening to the informal presentations each student will make on one of the articles they read. In addition, the Final Research Paper, which will have been discussed throughout the assignments of Topic Proposal, etc., will be formally introduced and student questions will be gathered to make sure that everyone is on the same page. Also, the instructor should once again take the opportunity to review whatever writing topics students still seem to struggle with as well as take questions from students about the Final Research Paper. Hopefully, there will be at least 45 minutes remaining in class at this time, so students will be allowed to work on their research papers in class.

Thurs: Following opening activities, the instructor will go around the room and have each student briefly (3 min or less) summarize and/ or discuss important aspects from the “other” articles they read for today. These informal presentations will then segue into a larger class discussion which should synthesize an understanding of what it means to be “other” tying it in with our previous discussions of gender, race and class. Surveys will be returned at the end of class and some time will be allotted to discuss how students may best use this data in their Final Research Papers.

| Week Thirteen | Tuesday | Thursday |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| In Class Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Informal Presentations: Individual articles • Discussion: Public Spaces—how do Americans view the use of public vs. private space • Review: Any previous topics as necessary • Individual: Writing for Research Paper <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: None</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Informal Presentations: Individual articles • Discussion: How do American “icons” relate to American childhood? • Individual: Writing for Research Paper <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: None</i></p> |
| Assignments (Due next class) | <p><i>Reading:</i> Choose any two essays from Chapter Nine, “American Icons”</p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> Briefly summarize your chosen articles and respond to any aspect you found surprising or interesting</p> | <p><i>Reading:</i> Choose any two essays from Chapter Five, “It Was a Dark and Stormy Night”</p> <p><i>Reflective Writing:</i> Briefly summarize your chosen articles and respond to any aspect you found surprising or interesting</p> |

Week Thirteen Rationale:

Tues: Following opening activities and informal presentations, the whole class will discuss issues of public space and its uses in American society. Students will be asked to think particularly how the right to privacy is or is not relevant when discussing the use of public space. This discussion will be most effective for students if they consider the World Wide Web as a space and understand the implications of the Web being a public rather than a private space. The instructor may continue to review necessary writing topics at this time, but for the remaining class time of approximately 45 minutes, students will be allowed to work on their Final Research Papers in class.

Thurs: Following opening activities and informal presentations, the whole class will discuss their favorite childhood icons and attempt to answer the question of how “icons” relate to childhood in American popular culture. The discussion should extend to consider the role of iconic figures in myths which are created in media such as television, music video, and film. For the remaining class time of approximately 30- 45 minutes, students will be allowed to work on their Final Research Papers in class.

| Week Fourteen | Tuesday | Thursday |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| In Class Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Informal Presentations: Individual articles • Discussion: What is the difference between “popular” literature and “real” literature? • Review: Any previous topics as necessary • Individual: Writing for Research Paper <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: None</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student questions/ issues? • Collect: Research Papers • Viewing: “She’s the Man” <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Collected: None</i></p> |
| Assignments (Due next class) | <i>Assignment:</i> Research Paper | <i>Reflective Writing:</i> How does “She’s the Man” read in light of our prior discussions |

Week Fourteen Rationale:

Tues: Following opening activities and informal presentations, the whole class will discuss what makes literature “popular” vs. “real” by discussing things like the growing fascination with children’s literature and comic books, as well as old stand bys like romance and horror novels. Students will be asked to consider if popular literature is “less” than the literature they are typically assigned in English classes and why. Hopefully, students will begin to consider their own interests and the interests of others when participating in this debate. The instructor may continue to review necessary writing topics at this time, but for the remaining class time of approximately 45 minutes, students will be allowed to work on their Final Research Papers in class.

Thurs: After collecting the Final Research Papers, students will be rewarded for their hard work with popcorn and other treats. They will be asked however to critically view the teen comedy “She’s the Man” and respond to it, briefly, in writing for the next class. This film, based on Shakespeare’s “Twelfth Night,” will serve as a capstone analysis text for the class to consider and assess together during the penultimate class period.

| Week Fifteen | Tuesday | Thursday |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| In Class Activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening Activity on BB • Student questions/ issues? • Small group: how does “She’s the Man” read in light of our prior discussions? • Discussion: The Immortal Bard and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student questions/ issues? • Return: Research Papers • Peer Review: Research Papers |

| Week Fifteen | Tuesday | Thursday |
|---|---|--|
| | American Popular Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion: Problems encountered in Research Papers? • Review: Final Portfolio elements <i>Collected: small group writing</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual: Work on Final Portfolios <i>Collected: Peer Review Write-ups</i> |
| Assignments (Due next class) | <i>Assignment:</i> Final Portfolios | <i>Assignment:</i> Final Portfolios |

Week Fifteen Rationale:

Tues: Following opening activities, students will work in small groups to construct a reading of “She’s the Man” in light of what they have learned this semester. The discussion that will follow will further consider their readings in light of the fact that the basic plot originates in a Shakespeare play. Other Shakespeare based films may be brought into the discussion and we will attempt to figure out why Shakespeare keeps popping up in American popular films. This discussion should help further blur the lines set between high and low fiction. The instructor will also review the elements necessary for the final portfolio and encourage students to begin it before the close of the semester.

Thurs: Students’ Final Research Papers will be returned and peer reviewed in instructor chosen pairs. If there are no questions or concerns from the students the remainder of class will be devoted to working on their Final Portfolios.

****Week Sixteen—Final Portfolio Due****