

## YOURS TO KEEP

### Course Description

This course is designed to develop your ability to analyze, evaluate, and form a critical response to primary and secondary works from a range of academic and cultural contexts. You will be expected to develop the critical methods of inquiry and evaluation that are widely used in written analysis and argument in research-based writing across disciplines, and you will be asked to apply these methods of analysis and argument in two analytical papers and in a research paper of your own.

Brookfield's Components of Critical Thinking is a helpful guide to understanding the process:

- Identifying and challenging assumptions
- Recognizing the importance of context
- Reflective skepticism
- Imagining and exploring alternatives
- Revising assumptions

By the end of this course students should be able to (Student Learning Outcomes):

- Apply active reading strategies in order to identify main ideas and critically analyze and explain ideas in texts.
- Evaluate the pattern of reasoning present in an argument and related critical evaluation, including induction, deduction and the logical fallacies.
- Apply fundamentals of critical thinking to writing well organized, well developed, effective, well edited, cited, logically sound essays and a research paper.

### Required Texts:

- *A People's History of the United States*, Howard Zim
- *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, James Lowen
- We will be reading excerpts from *Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky*, Noam Chomsky (supplied by instructor)

**Recommended Text:** *From Archetype to Zeitgeist: Powerful Ideas for Powerful Thinking*, Herbert Kohl

### FYI

Reading extensively, actively and critically are an important parts of this course. To be successful in this class, you will need to be willing to commit a considerable amount of time to reading and annotating the assignments and responding to them thoughtfully and thoroughly. I will assign daily written responses to help you think about the implications in the reading, make connections to previous readings and the present, and to prepare you to write your essays. There will also be announced and unannounced reading quizzes. Each time you come to class you should be prepared to discuss the assigned reading with a question or thoughtful comment about some aspect of the material. The combination of all these elements will comprise **30% of your final grade**. I like to have an open classroom, one that enhances discussion and the exchange of ideas as long as they are not offensive to any group or person, present or not.

### ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Because attendance and participation are essential to your success in this class, I follow the college attendance policy.

**Students absent more than 4 class sessions may be dropped.**

(equivalent of 2 weeks of classes)

You may have a very good reason to miss a class, but the reason you are absent is not the issue. Research shows that attendance is a critical key to success in English classes. So all absences count towards the total regardless of why you are absent.

**Tardiness:** Please come to class on time as coming in late disrupts everyone. **Two tardies equals an absence**, and if for some reason I do not mark you present because of your tardiness, that counts as an absence as well. Tardy means coming after I take the roll.

### **ESSAYS:**

Essays are always due at the beginning of class on the assigned due date. All essays must be typed and double spaced on 8&1/2 X 11 inch standard weight paper with 1 inch margins on all sides and normal double space between the paragraphs **in MLA format**. (see my website) On my website I have a handout that explains how I assign letter grades to essays (Class Docs page). If an essay has more the 3 or 4 proofreading grammar errors on a page, I will stop reading and give the essay back to the writer to proofread up to the level of an English 5 class.

#### **Late Essays**

If you are having difficulty with an assignment, come to see me **before the essay is due**, explain to me your problem, and I will consider extending the due date to give you an opportunity to do the best job possible. You will be allowed to turn in one essay late **if you obtain advance approval**. While late papers are not penalized in terms of the grade, you run the risk of getting your paper back late, and of receiving **no written comments** on it.

#### **Revisions:**

Generally you get just one revision per semester. But if I see you are doing your best, working with me, and need more revisions, then I will allow more. A revision is not simply the correction of errors, but a real rewriting, which may involve clarification of the central idea, further development of your ideas, reorganization of ideas, either within paragraphs or within the essay as a whole, or both, and /or work at the sentence level for proofreading or sentence maturity. I strongly advise that we have a conference to determine how best to revise the essay. Rewrites are due one week after you have had your essay returned to you or one week after our conference.

**Hand in your original essay with the revision.**

#### **Academic Integrity:**

Plagiarism is both ethically and legally unacceptable. It is the equivalent of theft. If a paper, or any part of it, is plagiarized, the student will receive a zero for that assignment. The second offense will be reported to the Dean of Student Services. Never submit work that is not yours or does not have a source citation where required.

### **EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

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|------------------------------------|-----|
| • Group Presentations              | 10% |
| • Argument and Fallacy Exam        | 10% |
| • Participation, journals, quizzes | 30% |
| • 2 Essays                         | 40% |
| • Research Paper                   | 10% |

**ALL ESSAYS MUST BE TURNED IN TO PASS THE COURSE**

#### **A Final Note:**

As long as I see that you are committed to this class, I will do my best to answer your questions, offer suggestions, meet you during office hours, and encourage you, but if I see that you are not taking the class seriously, I will not be as sympathetic to your needs. You are responsible for your success in this class, and the best way to ensure that success is to come to class every day, to come to class prepared, and to come see me as soon as you have a question or a problem. I look forward to working with you this semester!