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English 1091 Fall 98

Stephen Swords Coleman 339I
581-6984
Office hours: 10-12 TR, and by appt.

Books for the class:

The Prentice Hall Reader, ed. George Miller
Substance, Style, and Strategy, Lee A. Jacobus
any good dictionary

You write the best you can, and you take your chances.

Raymond Carver

Course description

In this course, you'll be working on making the transition from High school to college level writing, developing the expressive, explorative, and analytic skills you'll need in your other classes, and deepening your understanding of just what it means to write. Why writing is a critical part of one's education, what different effects writers can achieve, what opportunities it provides for communication and understanding—these are the sorts of questions that I hope we'll be asking, along with more down to earth questions about matters of technique and style.

During the course of the semester, you'll be doing a lot of writing in various modes, including keeping a notebook, doing in-class writing, responding to others' work, along with a series of formal papers, probably six or seven in all. At least one of these will be a research based essay, and I will ask you in some cases to make copies of your work for the rest of the class to read. We'll be working fairly closely with the two texts for the course for approaches and ideas, but the topics for these papers you'll develop as we go along; one of the most important goals for this class is helping everyone discover the things they want to explore for themselves and then write about.

Evaluation for this class will be based on the quality of your written work and your overall performance in the class. Probably twice during the semester, there will be a round of conferences to discuss your work in detail and figure out the appropriate grade; I will also grade individual papers as we go along when it seems appropriate. My sense of your overall performance in the class will be based on things like attendance, participation in discussions, work ethic, degree of improvement, and general involvement in the work of the class. If you want an A, you have to come to class very regularly, and participate actively and consistently in discussion.