

Spring 1-15-2008

ENG 1001G-002: Composition and language

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English 1001: Composition and Language
Spring 2008
Instructor: Joy Pratte
email: joypratte@gmail.com
MWF 9:00-9:50

1001G-002

Pop Culture 1970 to 2000

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course is designed to help motivated students become more discerning and critical readers and thinkers, more informed citizens, and more articulate and effective speakers and writers. The course requires reading and writing expository and argumentative prose and carrying out responsible research. Designated "writing-centered," the course focuses on written expression as a major learning activity and the primary basis of evaluation. (For information on criteria, refer to "Guidelines for Evaluating Writing Assignments in EIU's English Department.")

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Television, film and music have been a main part of our culture for the past sixty years. What do the shows that we watch, the films we see and the music we listen to tell us about our society? Throughout the semester, we will watch shows and movies and read lyrics and listen to music to decide through class discussions and writing assignments what pop culture tells us about our society, history—our reality. I am not expecting you to know American or World history, however, if you are aware of events and trends of the times that we will be reviewing—that will be good information to share. I want YOU to decide what these films, television shows and music represent in these decades.

WHAT TO EXPECT: In the classroom, we will watch television shows and movies as well as listen to music. From these experiences, you will be expected to discuss what issues are apparent in what you see. The same discussion will be expected when dealing with music. At the beginning of every other week, I will expect a 500-word response on your reflections of the week. Also, as this is an English course, we will go over rules of writing and grammar each week. Additionally, you will be writing five essays throughout the semester. The final essay will be a research paper. Reading assignments are to be read before the date that they are listed. In other words, if I have assigned pages 1-15 on January 15, those pages are to be read before you come to class that day. There will be some homework assignments and, if either class discussion or attendance becomes a problem, pop quizzes will be given. I reserve the right to change the syllabus according to the class's needs and progress. There will be no responses due neither the Monday after Spring Break nor the final two weeks of school. Conferences will take place instead of class the final two weeks of school as well.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Standard I of the Eastern Illinois University Student Conduct Code reads: "Eastern students observe the highest principles of academic integrity and support a campus environment conducive to scholarship." the code lists the following as violations of this standard: a. Conduct in subversion of academic standards, such as cheating on examinations, and **plagiarism**, collusion, misrepresentation or falsification of data. b. Theft or the unauthorized possession of examinations; alteration, theft, or destruction of the academic work of others, or academic records, library materials, laboratory materials, or other University equipment or property related to instructional matters or research. c. Submitting work previously presented in another course unless specifically permitted by the instructor. d. Conduct, which disrupts the academic environment, disruption in classes, faculty offices, academic buildings, or computer facilities.

ELECTRONIC WRITING PORTFOLIO: Eastern requires all students to submit a document from 1001G OR 1002G to their Electronic Writing Portfolio. Those 1001 students who plan to

submit a paper written in this class must schedule an appointment with me to review the text as revised and corrected and to complete submission procedures. To ensure that your paper is cleared for the Portfolio, this appointment must be scheduled by November 4 and take place before the last day of classes. Students who plan to submit a paper from this class to their Portfolio will find submission forms and other information about the EWP at <http://www.eiu.edu/~assess>.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583).

GRADING: First, it is **very** important that you come to class. It will be very difficult for you to do much of the work without watching the shows. You are allowed three absences without penalty. After that, your grade will be dropped. For example, if you are getting an “A,” if you miss four classes, your grade will be dropped to an “A-.” If you miss five classes, your grade would be dropped to a “B+” and so on. So with that in mind, here is the breakdown of how you will be assessed:

Participation (this includes responses and discussion)	20%
Essay 1	15%
Essay 2	15%
Essay 3	15%
Essay 4	15%
Research Essay	20%

Schedule

1970s

Week One—

Jan 7 Introduction to the Class Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs 2-10

Jan 9 Discuss narrative essays. Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs. 11-48.

Jan 11 *M*A*S*H** Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs. 49-57

Week Two--

Jan 14 Film of the early 1970s—*Shaft*

Jan 16 Film continued. *The Blair Handbook* 60-73 and 84-92.

Jan 18 No Class—work on your narrative paper. *The Blair Handbook* 95-106.

Week Three—

Jan 21 No Class MLK Birthday

Jan 23 Response due. Peer Review-- Bring a draft of your first paper to class. Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs 511-522.

Jan 25 Lyrics—Look up lyrics to 3 popular songs (any genre) from 1970-1975. Bring the titles to class—we'll look them up online and discuss. Read *The Blair Handbook* 523-536.

First Paper Due January 25th

Week Four—

Jan 28 Film—*Annie Hall*. Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs. 537-549.

Jan 30 Film cont. Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs. 550-557.

Feb 1 Discuss Descriptive Essays and film discussion. Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs 563-574.

Week Five—

Feb 4 Response due. Sentence structure workshop. Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs. 577-588.

Feb 6 *Welcome Back Kotter*. Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs. 610-613.

Feb 8 Lyrics—Look up lyrics to 3 popular songs (any genre) from 1975-1979. Bring the titles to class—we'll look them up online and discuss. Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs. 632-647 (review 651-654).

1980s

Week Six—

Feb 11 Peer Review—Bring draft of second paper to class today. Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs. 655-684.

Feb 13 *Bosom Buddies*. Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs. 685-699.

Feb 15 No class (Lincoln's birthday)

Second Paper Due February 18th

Week Seven—

Feb 18 Response due. Lyrics—Look up lyrics to 3 popular songs (any genre) from 1980-1985. Bring the titles to class—we'll look them up online and discuss. Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs. 703-730.

Feb 20 *Perfect Strangers* Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs. 744-771.

Feb 22 Editing Workshop.

Week Eight—

Feb 25 Film—*Sixteen Candles*

Feb 27 Film cont. Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs 772-790.

Feb 29 Film discussion and Peer Review—Bring your Compare and Contrast drafts.

Week Nine—

Mar 3 Response due. Film-*Who Framed Roger Rabbit* Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs. 791-812.

Mar 5 Film cont. Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs. 376-410.

Mar 7 Film discussion and Plagiarism workshop. Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs. 347-368.

Third Paper Due March 5th

Spring Break (March 10-14)

1990s

Week Ten—

Mar 17 Discuss Persuasive essays. Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs 136-163.

Mar 19 Lyrics—Look up lyrics to 3 popular songs (any genre) from 1990-1999. Bring the titles to class—we'll look them up online and discuss.

Mar 21 Read *The Blair Handbook* pgs 282-320. Begin discussing Research papers.

Week Eleven—

Mar 24 Response due. Film- *City Slickers*

Mar 26 Film cont.

Mar 28 Film discussion. Peer Review—Bring your Persuasive Essay draft to class today.

Week Twelve—

Mar 31 Work Cited workshop.

Apr 2 *Ellen*

Apr 4 *The Simpsons*

Fourth Paper Due April 4th

Week Thirteen—

Apr 7 Response due. Film- *Men in Black*

Apr 9 Film cont.

Apr 11 Film discussion. Wrap up loose ends in class.

Week Fourteen—

Apr 14 No class, conferences

Apr 16 No class conferences

Apr 18 No class, conferences

Week Fifteen—

Apr 21 No class conferences

Apr 23 No class conferences

Apr 25 Final Paper Due

Responses

Responses should be thoughtful writing that reflects on what you have learned in class that week. Since we are focusing on pop culture as well as writing, you may discuss both—but make sure that your writing is organized. This is strictly an exercise to keep you reflecting and writing. Your responses are to be at least 500 words long, type-written and double-spaced. I will accept them via email, but they must be sent to me by noon the day they are due and in rtf or Word format. Do not send a response in docx. I cannot open that file type. The following is an example of an acceptable response:

Sheila Nicholl
ENG 1001
Ms. Pratte
November 15, 2007

Response #3

In class this week we watched “The Cosby Show,” talked about lyrics from the 1980s and discussed sentence structure. The discussion gave me insight into the culture of the time period. I had never thought about the position of Blacks in our society prior to the 1980s. Plus, the Sentence Structure workshop really helped me to think about how to improve my writing for future papers. Even though I am not an English major, I know that the information will be useful to me in other classes and maybe in my career.

When watching “The Cosby Show,” I noticed that even though the show is about a Black family, that many of the issues were universal. For example, Denise was going out on date with an older guy and her father had to come to terms with trusting her and him to do what is right. Cliff noticed that the boy is wearing an earring and is obviously worried about his intentions toward Denise. All Denise can see is that her date is cute and cool. She does not worry about what kind of money he makes or his ability to be a parent in the future. This is no different from today. Rachel talked about this in class. She said that it didn’t seem that anything had changed from the 1980s to today except for the style of clothing. I am not sure I agree with her. It seems that kids in the 1980s were more shallow than they are now. When I went to high school, girls were already thinking about how their choices affected their future. Of course, this is a generalization. there were teen pregnancies and all kinds of problems in my high school, but

most of the kids were more aware of consequences than what it seemed in the one show we watched.

I also found the discussion of lyrics really interesting in Wednesday's class. Justin brought the lyrics from a few Duran Duran songs and I was really surprised to hear how sexy they were. And, when Ms. Pratte showed us the video that went along with the song, I could not believe that people my parents' age were watching this stuff! Of course, there are a lot of sexy videos out there now—look at Fergie! But, I assumed that these things have just gotten worse over time. Now, I think that sex is the norm in the teenage world of music. I did, however, really enjoy listening to Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'." It was one of my mother's favorite songs when she was young and she used to sing it when she would clean the house or cook. It made me really nostalgic. I really did not like the lyrics, music or video of Metallica. I guess that it is a "guy thing."

It seems like not much changed in pop culture from the 1980s to today. Actually, I think that most of the television shows and music show us that we are a consumer culture. Sex sells. Even on "The Cosby Show," Claire and Cliff got sexy with each other at the end of the show. And, the music we listened to and videos we watch suggest the same thing. I'm not sure if family values are thing of the past or if we as a society have had them at all—at least since the invention of the mass media.

Papers 1-4

Remember for all papers, you should have your audience in mind. In all cases for the first four papers, your audience is your classmates. Therefore, think about what language you want to use and what your audience would be interested in reading. However, do not oversimplify or use inappropriate language—these are still formal essays.

All papers and presentations must follow the following criteria:

I want to see critical thinking and writing. Although sources are not needed for any of these papers, MLA documentation needs to be used for both in-text citations and a Works Cited page if ANY sources are used. If you do not cite your sources, it is considered plagiarism and can be grounds for failing the assignment and the class. Please ask me if you have questions about proper documentation.

All written work must be in 12 pt Times New Roman font with one-inch margins on all four sides, paginated, double-spaced, stapled and neat.

Remember, you have the Writing Center at your disposal to help with ideas, organization or general writing issues. To make an appointment call 217-581-5929.

Paper Length: 3-4 pages (Any less and points will be deducted.)

Writing Assignment One—Narrative

Option #1:

Reflect on an experience in which an element of pop culture affected your life. For an example, discuss the first concert you ever attended. What happened? Why was the experience meaningful to you?

Other experiences you can discuss are how your favorite film changed your life or why is your favorite song your favorite. In other words, did you join Greenpeace after watching *An Inconvenient Truth*? Was a song playing on the radio when you found out that you got into Eastern?

Example:

The first concert I ever went to was when the Foo Fighters came to Champaign in 2005. At the time, I did not think my parents would let me go because I was so young. However, after a family discussion, my big brother said that he would take me. My parents felt more comfortable and I was able to have the experience of my life. And, my brother and I became really close because of all that happened that night.

Option #2:

This is for the creative at heart. Write a fictitious account of you as a character in a film or television show. For example, let's say that you are a member of the Scooby Gang on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Write yourself into an episode (either an existing episode or make one up.)

Example:

In Mrs. Thomas's third grade classroom, I met Buffy Summers for the first time. We did everything together from tumbling at the YMCA to hide and seek with the neighborhood boys. Then she moved to Sunnydale our freshman year of high school and I never thought I'd see her again. As chance would have it, I moved to Sunnydale, too, my junior year of high school. We became friends again. At first, things were a little strained between us. I did not understand the changes in her. But, it did not take long for me to figure out there was something different about her. The night that I was attacked by a vampire I learned her secret. It was on that night that I became a part of the Scooby Gang.

Option #3:

Come up with your own idea for a narrative that involves pop culture. If you choose to do this option, you MUST pass the idea by me first.

Due Date: January 25, 2008

Writing Assignment Two—Descriptive Essay

Option #1:

Describe your favorite movie. You can write about the characters, the setting, the music, etc. Describe how they affect the film overall. Do NOT describe the plot—that will end up in a summary instead of a descriptive essay.

Example: (This is just an introductory paragraph. It is used to set up paragraphs to do the actual description of each element to be discussed.)

In *Moulin Rouge!*, the music, colorscape, and settings all create a visual masterpiece. The music in the movie is a montage of pop culture classic songs from the past thirty years. The songs are used to express love between the characters and draw the viewer into the action and feelings between the characters. The colors used in the film are bright, and surreal. Cobalt blue, red and green are utilized from one scene to the next to express the mood of the film or to describe a character. And, the settings are used very much so in the same way that color is used. The enormity of the dancehall, its structure and props within describe an historic time in which these establishments were popular.

Option #2:

If you were to create a film or television show, describe the features of the production. Again, do NOT write a plot summary. You should say what genre the production is and write a general (maybe 2 or 3 sentences) description of the plot, however, do not focus on it in the main body. Sometimes, just the title will describe the film or show. Instead, once you've given a quick plot summary, describe the kind of set you would use, the music, camera angles, costuming, choice of actors, etc., to create your masterpiece. If you want to get really snazzy, you can write it as a proposal to a studio or as a response by a studio to the film you've created.

Example: (This is from a studio's perspective. And again, it is an introductory paragraph that is setting up the features of the film to be described.)

Congratulations on being accepted into the Twentieth Century Fox family. The film under consideration, *Gone With the Wind: A Parody*, has some intriguing features. First the cast you have chosen is quite good. We will work to obtain contracts with each suggested actor. We also approve of using John Williams as the composer for the musical score. He will be able to create the kind of epic sound that will rival that of the original sound as you described. We are, however, concerned that shooting on location in Atlanta, Georgia may prove to be difficult. Please review the following comments to make changes accordingly so that we may move forward with the production.

Option #3:

Come up with your own idea for a descriptive essay that involves pop culture. If you choose to do this option, you MUST pass the idea by me first.

Writing Assignment Three—Compare and Contrast

Option #1:

Compare and contrast one film or television show we watched in class to another. You can compare plots, how each film or show represents the time period in which it was produced, the differences in costuming, language, scenery, props, etc. If you choose to compare and contrast the plots of two movies/shows, do not spend much time on summarizing each one. Spend more time on the similarities and differences.

Example:

Walt Disney Pictures has been a mainstay in America cinema since Mickey Mouse's very first cartoon. In the 1980s and 1990s, Disney began to release movies such as *The Little Mermaid* and *The Lion King*. Although there are five years between the release of each movie, there are many ways to compare the two films. Also, it is easy to see how just a few years saw differences in the productions as well.

Option #2:

Compare and contrast the entertainment industry from one decade to another. For this essay, you would need to do some research and cite your sources accordingly. Issues that can be discussed are advertisement, censorship, race, gender, etc. This could be a very juicy topic if done well.

Example:

In the 1970s, the issue of race seemed to be very prominent on television shows such as *All in the Family* and *The Jeffersons*. Even though race continued to be an issue into the 1980s and beyond, writers and producers of many of the shows popular approached the issue differently during each time period.

Option #3

Come up with your own topic, but check with me first.

Writing Assignment #4—Persuasion

Option #1:

Persuade your reader that television has become more or less “immoral” or if it has stayed the same across the decades. Do NOT use words such as “I believe”. Instead, use proof from sources (make sure you cite) and from the television shows themselves.

Example:

Groups and individuals have complained over the years that television has become increasingly immoral and less family-oriented. However, when one analyzes shows from the 1970s to now, there is really not much change in the way that writers and producers approached the subjects of sex and alcohol. As a matter of fact, it seems that alcohol use was discussed more freely in the earlier decades of television.

Option #2:

Persuade your reader that television and film mimic society or that society mimics television and film. In other words, which came first with certain trends? Has television and film dictated style, language and the way humanity deals with itself? Or, is it the other way around?

Example:

Television has set trends in style in language over the years in the clothing that the characters wear and the things they say. For the sake of argument, this discussion will begin with the television show *Mork & Mindy* in the late 1970s, *Family Ties* in the 1980s and end with *The Simpsons* in the twenty-first century. Each of these shows guided the United States and the rest of the world in either fashion or language and caused a consumer circus for children and adults alike.

Option #3:

Ditto—if you think of another topic, come and see me to have it approved.

Final Paper—Research

You may research any topic having to do with pop culture over the past forty years. For this paper, I am expecting you to have at least five sources-- NONE OF THEM WIKIPEDIA. You may use Wikipedia as a jumping off point (i.e. get basic information or other sources. Acceptable sources include e-journals found on Booth Library’s website (use JSTOR, EBSCO, etc.), books, or documentaries. I do not want to see any web sources for this paper unless you check with me first. A rough draft (at least a few pages of the paper) is due at the time of your conference with me. This is to be a 7-8 page research paper and will be due the last day of class. We will discuss this further in class.