Spring 1-15-2004

ENG 3001-002: Advanced Composition

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Eastern Illinois University

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Before long, each of you will embark on your career as a professional writer. I don’t mean that you’re necessarily going to make a living writing novels, poems, or essays, though you may. I certainly don’t mean that you’re going to make a living writing essays about novels, poems, or essays (though if you follow a path like mine, you may do that as well). What I mean is that each of you is going to conduct your day-to-day life through various modes of written expression, and in many cases you’ll do this more than you’ll do anything else. You’re going to write e-mails, memoranda, progress reports, grants, press releases, proposals, affidavits, web sites, op/eds, notes to the principle, letters to the editor, letters to your boss. And since you’ll do this so much, the esteem with which others view you, as well as the level of professional success you enjoy, will have much to do with your powers of written expression.

And so this is a course that is intended to help you grow as a writer and a thinker. We’re going to do a lot of writing together, and in order to keep us all on the same approximate page, we’ll situate our writing around a larger topic that lends itself to a broad field of perspectives. That topic might be best named in the title of one work from which we will read, The McDonaldization of Society. Reading the works of professional writers who describe themselves as journalists, sociologists, intellectual historians, literary scholars, nutritionists, and film critics (among others), we will meditate over, discuss, and (most often and most importantly) write about the effects of mass-production, mass-consumption, and mass-marketing on some of the most basic features of our everyday lives. Since, as the adage goes, we are what we eat, we will begin our exploration of this subject by reading and writing about fast food, something with which we all have experience and which provides perhaps most powerful symbol of convenience, uniformity, and predictability of our era. The ideas, ideals, and ideologies we will find at stake in the Big Mac and the Whopper will then help us to investigate other facets of our fast food nation: higher education, entertainment, and other subjects of more specific interest to you personally and professionally (Sports? Religion? Music? Architecture? Fashion? Business?). Thus, it is my hope that this course will allow you to develop your skills as a writer by drawing upon your experience of contemporary American life — even as it helps you to ponder questions about your own potential for self-determination and self-invention in this our brave new McWorld.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

In addition to keeping apace with the assigned readings, writing exercises, and writing projects, students should come to class prepared to participate. This means that you should come to class with questions to ask each other, ideas to present, examples to present, texts to read aloud, and observations to make, and it also means that you should be courteous to every other member of the class as they offer their own ideas and questions. In short, I expect everyone to engage in this course as a strong class citizen. I will become annoyed with students who never offer anything or who seem feckless. By now you have enough university experience to know that a course such as this can be unappealing if “discussion” is conducted mainly between the professor and a small nucleus of students; for this reason, I place a significant portion of final grades under the category of “Participation.” Observe that in the grading formula printed below, for instance, a student who does not participate (but who nevertheless fulfills all other areas in a virtually flawless manner) cannot earn a final average higher than 90.

While much of our activity in this course will involve reading and then trading ideas concerning those readings, our primary activity this semester will be writing. Outside of class, you will be asked to complete research and to write drafts of your essay projects for other class members to read and then (constructively) critique, and our time in class will often be conducted as writing workshops. I will never – or only very rarely and as succinctly as possible – lecture, though I will often promote discussion. This is because as a professional writer, I believe that writers develop their craft by writing. The more time we commit to actually writing, and the more time we commit to discussing that writing with other writers, the more we will develop and hone our individual talents and perspectives.

Four major assignments will determine the bulk of your grade this semester. The due dates for the final drafts of four essay assignments appear on the course syllabus, as do the due dates for preliminary drafts you will make available for your peers to review. In addition to these written assignments, each member of this class will complete a series of in-class assignments I will bring to our meetings from time to time.

Grading Formula:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class assignments</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay #1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay #2</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay #3</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay #4</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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COURSE POLICIES:

Academic Honesty:
Please note the English Department’s statement on plagiarism (that is, the intentional or unintentional use of another writer’s intellectual property without proper acknowledgment):

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism – “The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s own original work” (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) – has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, feel free to ask me. Also, please make a point of noting the following: I will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty in this course. If I come to suspect misconduct of any kind, I will become dogged about rooting it out, and if my suspicions are confirmed, I will dispense appropriate penalties.

Attendance:
Students are allowed to miss three scheduled class meetings without excuse. After this, every additional unexcused absence incurs a deduction of one-half letter grade from the student’s final grade. In the case of an excused absence (as defined by EIU policy), students must make their excuse in writing, accompanied by the appropriate written documentation, and submit the excuse to me no later than the first class following the absence(s). In no case will a student be allowed to miss six or more class meetings for any reason, excused or unexcused, and the reason for this is that after missing six classes, one cannot claim to have met the same obligations as other in the class. So in short, here’s my attendance policy: don’t miss class.

Also, being in attendance means showing up with assigned work, prepared to participate and with the materials necessary to participate. During weeks when we meet in the computer lab, it also means having your work available to work with on-screen, whether through disk, back-up disk, or e-mail attachment. If you show up to class but without the materials you need to participate actively, I will mark you absent.

Students who habitually show up for class a few minutes after it’s started should find a professor who’s into that and take that course instead. This professor takes such behavior as an affront and tends to react accordingly.

Due Dates:
Papers and drafts are due on the dates indicated in the course schedule included below. I am sometimes willing to grant extensions if (1) students provide a persuasive reason for me to do so, and (2) the request is submitted in writing at least two class meetings in advance of the paper’s due date.
You are not welcome to e-mail me while you are a student in this course. When you have a question, problem, or concern, I want to sit down with you and talk. That's why I keep office hours. I also want to talk with you about interesting ideas you have this semester, just as I want to talk with you—personally—about the readings we take on. But too many students these days use e-mail as a way to avoid their professors, a practice I resist obstinately. When you need to communicate with me, attend my office hours, call me at my office (581.6302), or if it's very important and the other avenues have not worked, call me at home (348.6144). We'll talk.
## Reading Schedule

### Week 1
Class meets in Coleman 3120

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Monday, 12 January</th>
<th>Wednesday, 14 January</th>
<th>Friday, 16 January</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>Read Emerson, “Self-Reliance” (handout)</td>
<td>Continue Emerson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Outline</td>
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### Week 2
Class meets in Coleman 3130

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Monday, 19 January</th>
<th>Wednesday, 21 January</th>
<th>Friday, 23 January</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Day; no class meeting</td>
<td>George Ritzer, <em>The McDonaldization of Society</em>, pp. 1-17</td>
<td>Ritzer, pp. 18-34</td>
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### Week 3
Class meets in Coleman 3120

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Monday, 26 January</th>
<th>Wednesday, 28 January</th>
<th>Friday, 30 January</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Conferences in my office, 9-10 am, 11am-1pm</td>
<td>Conferences in my office, 9-10 am, 11am-1pm</td>
<td>Essay #1 due, beginning of class</td>
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### Week 4
Class meets in Coleman 3130

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Monday, 2 February</th>
<th>Wednesday, 4 February</th>
<th>Friday, 6 February</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Read Schlosser, <em>Fast Food Nation</em>, chaps. 1, 2, 3</td>
<td>Read Schlosser, chaps. 7, 8, 9, Epilogue</td>
<td>Continue Schlosser discussion</td>
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**WEEK 5**
Class meets in Coleman 3120

Monday, 9 February
Group reports:
- "Adolescent Occupational Injuries in Fast Food Restaurants"
- "Epidemic Obesity in the US"
- "Minimum Wages and Employment"

Wednesday, 11 February
Group reports:
- "Intrametropolitan Variation in Wage Rates"
- "Minimum Wage and Employment"
- "Halting the Obesity Epidemic"

Friday, 13 February
- Lincoln's birthday: No class meeting

**WEEK 6**
Class meets in Coleman 3130

Monday, 16 February
Group Reports:
- "Food Consumption and Buying Patterns of Students from a Philippine University Fastfood Mall"
- Radio transcript from Talk of the Nation: "Fast Food on Trial"

Wednesday, 18 February
- Read Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed*, pp. TBA

Friday, 20 February
- Ehrenreich, pp. TBA

**WEEK 7**
Class meets in Coleman 3120

Monday, 23 February
- Read Anthony Bourdain, *Kitchen Confidential*, pp. TBA

Wednesday, 25 February
- Bourdain, pp. TBA

Friday, 27 February
- Bourdain, pp. TBA

**WEEK 8**
Class meets in Coleman 3130

Monday, 1 March
- Independent writing, no class meeting

Wednesday, 3 March
- Independent writing, no class meeting

Friday, 5 March
- Independent writing, no class meeting
**WEEK 9**
Class meets in Coleman 3120

Monday, 8 March
- peer review, Essay #2

Wednesday, 10 March
- peer review, Essay #2

Friday, 12 March
- Essay #2 due

**WEEK 10**

Monday, 15 March - Friday, 19 March

*Spring Break – no class meetings*

**WEEK 11**
Class meets in Coleman 3130

Monday, 22 March
- Evening Screening: *Big Night*, no class meeting

Wednesday, 24 March
- Discussion of *Big Night*

Friday, 26 March
- Independent Research; no class meeting

**WEEK 12**
Class meets in Coleman 3120

Monday, 29 March
- Peer Review

Wednesday, 31 March
- Peer Review

Friday, 2 April
- Essay #3 due

**WEEK 13**
Class meets in Coleman 3130

Monday, 5 April
- Read David Nobles, "Digital Diploma Mills"

Wednesday, 7 April
- Read Nick Bromell, "Welcome To Princeton, Inc."

Friday, 9 April
- Read e-mails, Hanlon & Bromell, et al.
WEEK 14
Class meets in Coleman 3120

Monday, 12 April
• Research Strategy Meeting,
  Group assignments

Wednesday, 14 April
• Group research, no class
  meeting

Friday, 16 April
• Group research, no class
  meeting

WEEK 15
Class meets in Coleman 3130

Monday, 19 April
• Reports

Wednesday, 21 April
• Reports

Friday, 23 April
• Reports
  • Information Swap

WEEK 16
Class meets in Coleman 3120

Monday, 26 April
• Independent Writing;
  no class meeting

Wednesday, 28 April
• Independent Writing;
  no class meeting

Friday, 30 April
• Essay #4 due