

Syllabus

HU 300: Humanities Special Project for General Education

Fall 2005

Wednesdays, 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Room 197A

Prof. Kathy Williams

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Course Description:

This course is designed as a capstone course for the Cogswell College General Education program. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity for students to draw on all they have learned in previous General Education courses in order to complete a comprehensive oral and written project. The principal focus of the course is the initial conception, the development, and the completion of an 18-20 page paper and an oral presentation drawn from it. Students are encouraged to take an overarching approach, integrating elements from other fields and other areas of study that are of particular interest to them. The theme of the course this semester is **TERRORISM**; students are free to choose any topic within this theme. They may interpret terrorism in any way, but they must be able to explain and justify their interpretation.

The course will be based on a seminar format so group discussion, critiques, and other cooperative activities will be the most important element of each weekly class. In addition, there will be several opportunities for individual consultation and discussion with the instructor.

Course Requirements and Grading:

1. Bibliography: (5%)
2. Thesis statement: (5%)
3. Outline: (20%)
4. First draft: (10%)
5. Final paper: (35%)
6. Oral presentation: (15%)
7. Regular attendance and participation in class discussions: (10%)

Classes will begin on time and students are expected to attend all classes and to have fully prepared all assignments prior to class. Failure to do so will have negative grading consequences. Assignments must be completed on time and printed in **hard copy** for submission. Late assignments will result in an automatic reduction in grade. Grading will be on the traditional scale, i.e. A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F. Students who complete the course assignments and do so in a timely fashion can expect to receive “B” grades. “B+” and “A/A-“ are reserved for superior or excellent work.

Required reference texts:

Brenda Spatt, *Writing From Sources*, Bedford/St. Martins Press, 2003 (6th edition)

Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*, Bedford/St. Martins Press, (4th edition or 1993 and subsequent.)

These books are on reserve in the library but each student is **strongly encouraged** to purchase both. They are extremely useful works for help with writing that students will want to refer to both in college and out.

One of the best known reference texts is: William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*, Macmillan, 1979 (3rd edition). Although somewhat dry, this book can be invaluable in answering questions about grammar, syntax, and style.

On a lighter note, students may want to look at two other books, both of which are amusing as well as informative:

Bill Walsh, *Lapsing Into a Comma: A Curmudgeon’s Guide to the Many Things That Can Go Wrong in Print – and How to Avoid Them*, McGraw-Hill, 2000.

Lynne Truss, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*, Profile Books, 2003.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Aug 31 Overview of course, outline of course assignments, discussion of communication issues, and the process of topic selection.

Note: Individual conferences with instructor, September 1, 6, or 7. Sign up with instructor.

Sept 7 **Due: Oral introduction of topic chosen by each student.** How is the topic significant, relevant, and manageable? Discussion and critique of topics by group.
Reading: Spatt, pp.231-259

Note: Individual conferences with instructor, September 8, 12, 13 or 14. Sign up with instructor.

Sept. 14 Special session on research in the Internet Age to be conducted by Cogswell librarians Bruce Dahms and Michele Huie. 1:30 – 3:00pm in the library.
Reading: Spatt, pp. 271-287

Sept. 21 **Due: Preliminary bibliography (at least 20 sources)**

Sept. 28 **No Class** – Independent work on thesis statement

Oct. 5 **Due: Preliminary title and thesis statement (max. 2pp)** Focused, coherent statement of thesis for the final paper.

Oct. 12 Planning a paper: writing an outline and a preliminary draft

Oct. 19 **Due: Outline (4-5pp.)** with sufficient detail to give clear indication of flow of argument and use of sources. Additional supporting materials may be described at this point. Discussion and critique of outlines by the group.

Oct. 26 Writing the first draft. Suggestions and examples.

Nov. 2 **Due: first draft of final paper.**
Moving from the first draft to the final version.

Note: Required individual conferences with instructor, Nov. 3, 7, 8, or 9. Sign up with instructor

Nov. 9 Preparing for oral presentation

Nov. 16 **Oral presentations**

Nov. 23 NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING

Nov. 30 **Oral presentations**

Dec. 7 **Oral presentations**

Dec. 14 **Due: Final paper and supporting materials**
Wrap up and critique of class

Guidelines for the paper:

The paper must be substantive, drawing on external research materials, and having a focused topic or hypothesis. It must demonstrate the author's capacity to explore an issue, present alternative perspectives, make a well-reasoned argument, and formulate a recommendation or arrive at a persuasive conclusion. The objective is to prepare an in-depth analysis of a chosen subject that could serve as a report made in a professional setting. Clarity of language and intent and the smooth flow of ideas are crucial as is the creation of a catchy and effective title. Joint projects involving two or more students are encouraged. Such projects must be proportionate in scope and each participating student will receive the identical grade. **Choose your topic with care; you will be living with it all semester.**

Papers will be graded on organization, spelling, and grammar, as well as on research and content. Any material taken directly from a book, journal, magazine, newspaper, or Internet web site must be put in quotation marks and cited properly. If not, this constitutes plagiarism. Paraphrasing without citing sources may also constitute plagiarism. **Please familiarize yourselves with Cogswell's policy on academic integrity found on pp. 31-35 of the *Student Handbook*.**

Guidelines for oral presentations:

The purpose of oral presentations is to accustom students to communicating clearly and persuasively to a live audience. Students who prepare effectively for this exercise will have planned carefully what they wish to say and may have written prompt notes but will not rely on reading a text verbatim. Presenters may use other media to help get their message across. Each oral presentation will be followed by a question and answer session during which the presenter is expected to defend his/her argument by responding to objections or criticisms raised by other members of the class. At the same time, a prudent presenter should be open to helpful new ideas or perspectives generated by the discussion.