

ENG 202-01/02: Expository Writing

Spring semester, 2008

Meetings: Tue & Thu 8:00 – 9:45 am / 2:00 – 3:45 pm

Office: Parker 4

Office Hours: Tue & Thu 10:00 – 11:00 am

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Who will teach me to write? a reader wanted to know.

The page, the page, that eternal blankness, the blankness of eternity which you cover slowly, affirming time's scrawl as a right and your daring as necessity; the page, which you cover woodenly, ruining it, but asserting your freedom and power to act, acknowledging that you ruin everything you touch but touching it nevertheless, because acting is better than being here in mere opacity; the page, which you cover slowly with the crabbed thread of your gut; the page in the purity of its possibilities; the page of your death, against which you pit such flawed excellences as you can muster with all your life's strength: that page will teach you to write.

--Annie Dillard, from *The Writing Life*

Description:

Just as Annie Dillard suggests above, the only way to learn how to write well is to write. This semester will afford you many opportunities to flex your writing muscles, try a variety of approaches to getting words on paper, and receive (as well as give) writing feedback.

The theme for this semester is "food for thought." Food is something we all have firsthand experience with; food is something we all (presumably) enjoy. Although we've each spent a lifetime eating food, we probably don't spend much time *thinking* about food. By reading two popular books that explore particularly American foods—chocolate bars and fast food—we will explore the way in which we are (or aren't) what we eat. Through writing food-related essays and a semester-long research project, you will explore your own relationship with and curiosity about food.

Required texts:

- Steve Almond, *Candy Freak: A Journey Through the Chocolate Underbelly of America*
- Morgan Spurlock, *Don't Eat This Book: Fast Food and the Supersizing of America*

Requirements:

Attendance and active participation in class sessions

- You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings.
- Come to class on time! I will count three late arrivals as one absence.
- Perpetually unprepared students may be counted absent.
- I expect you to show respect for others' opinions. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated; you will be asked to leave and marked absent.

Timely completion of drafts and assignments

- Due dates are listed on the syllabus, so plan accordingly. Essay drafts and other writing assignments are due at the BEGINNING of class. **I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE DRAFTS OR ASSIGNMENTS.**

- If you are going to miss a class, arrange to have your work delivered to me or turn it in early. You may also email your assignment if you are going to be absent (see next point).
- In the case of absence or printer malfunction, you may submit your assignment via email as long as I receive your emailed assignment by 5:00 pm on the day it is due. If you perpetually submit assignments via email, I reserve the right to deduct 1 point per emailed assignment.
- You will not receive credit for a final revised (portfolio) essay if I have not seen and commented on at least one prior draft.

Paper format:

- All POPs, mini-essays, and essay drafts must be word-processed (or typed). Print hard copies of all work you word-process; save and backup your work every 15 minutes. **Computer mishap is not an acceptable excuse for late or “disappeared” papers.**
- All assignments must be double-spaced, in standard (10 or 12 point) font size, and with one-inch margins.
- Essays must follow MLA documentation guidelines

Point values:

10 POPs, 5 points each	50 pts
5 current event (CE) essays, 5 points each	25 pts
5 mini-essays, 5 points each.....	25 pts
4 peer review drafts, 20 points each	80 pts
quizzes & in-class grammar workshops (averaged).....	10 pts
portfolio cover letter	10 pts
final portfolio of revised essays.....	200 pts

Grading:

Out of a total 400 points, your semester grade will be calculated according to the following scale:

360-400 points.....	A
340-359 points.....	AB
320-339 points.....	B
300-319 points.....	BC
280-299 points.....	C
260-279 points.....	CD
240-259 points.....	D
239 or fewer points	F

POPs:

- “POP” stands for “page on a page.” A POP is a short, informal paper that discusses a single page from an assigned reading. Instead of making global generalizations about what a particular essay is about, your POPs will point to what you think is interesting or intriguing about a *specific passage* (i.e. a single page) in that assignment.
- Since we will use POPs to generate class discussion, you should focus on whatever passage you think is the most interesting, intriguing, or problematic. If you are particularly confused by one page of a given reading, for instance, you might write a POP which points out why this passage is confusing or contradictory.
- Your POPs can be informal in tone, as if you were writing a casual-but-thoughtful letter to a friend discussing your impressions. You are permitted and even encouraged to refer to yourself in the first person.

POPs are for recording your thoughts on what you've read; BE PREPARED TO SHARE.

- Length: 1-2 typed (double-spaced) pages
- Point value: 10 POPs worth 5 pts each (semester total 50 points).

CE Essays:

- "CE" stands for "Current Event." On the dates listed below, you are to bring to class a photocopy or print-out of a newspaper, magazine, or online article on a CURRENT food-related news story. This news story might (but doesn't have to) relate to your semester-long research topic; it simply has to be a current news story that relates to food. (Be sure to write on your photocopy the author, source, and date of the article.)
- To accompany this article, you are to write a 1-2 page (typed, double-spaced) essay discussing your response to this food-related news story. Your CE paper should be documented according to MLA guidelines.
- Length: 2-3 typed (double-spaced) pages
- Point value: 5 CE essays worth 5 pts each (semester total 25 points).

Mini-Essays:

- A mini-essay is a short, informal paper on a given topic, a raw rendition of your first impressions. Your mini-essays give you a chance to explore a variety of topics, writing styles, and methods of getting words on paper; you are permitted and even encouraged to refer to yourself in the first person. Feel free to explore and be creative: mini-essays are designed to exercise your writing muscles, so they do not have to be perfect. All I ask is that you genuinely try to engage one of suggested topics and BE PREPARED TO SHARE.
- Length: 2-3 typed (double-spaced) pages
- Point value: 5 mini-essays worth 5 pts each (semester total 25 points).

Suggested topics:

The best meal I've ever eaten; family feasts; feast or famine; hunger; nausea; sweet treats; what I ate as a child; what I refused to eat as a child; my favorite food; my least favorite food; cooking; food-shopping; food fights; food for thought; food snobbery; eating like a bird; slow food; fast food; cravings; favorite snacks; midnight snacks; festive food; my favorite restaurant; junk food; my least favorite restaurant; best food memory; worst food memory; cafeteria food; playing with your food; sack lunch; last supper; the most disgusting thing I ever ate; food dares; cooking disasters; eating like a horse; holiday meals; dinner dates; breaking bread; obey your thirst; baking; dream desserts; the last time I stuffed myself; comfort foods; carnival food; dinner parties; leftovers; you are what you eat; eating on a budget; picnic or tail-gate food; cook-outs; cook-offs; cookies, cake, or pie; my best birthday cake; wine and dine; fresh picked; family recipes; home cooking; freaky foods; food obsessions; ANY other food-related topic.

Peer Review drafts:

In addition to your POPs, mini-essays, and current event essays, you will write four Peer Review drafts as outlined on the Course Calendar below. These drafts will be aspects or segments of your semester-long research project. You will receive peer and instructor feedback on each of these Peer Review drafts; this feedback is intended to help you revise for your final portfolio, which is worth half of your semester grade.

Research project: Both *Candyfreak* and *Don't Eat This Book* are research-based; Steve Almond and Morgan Spurlock each chose a topic that interests them, and they spent a substantial amount of time learning about that topic. Both Almond and Spurlock get personally involved in their research: Almond travels the country interviewing candy manufacturers, and Spurlock eats an all-McDonald's diet to see what effects it will have. In their books, Almond and Spurlock combine their personal investigations with library and online research. The result is writing that is both informative and entertaining: readers learn a great deal about candy and fast food while enjoying Almond's and Spurlock's escapades.

For your semester-long project, I want you to choose a food-related topic you are genuinely interested in. Your topic should be something you can research in the library and online; it should also be a topic you can personally investigate. Your end result will be a 10- to 15-page typed, double-spaced essay, so you should choose a topic you are genuinely curious about: either an aspect of food you have personally experienced or an aspect you're willing to experience firsthand.

We'll brainstorm potential topics in class. In the meantime, you should start thinking about the role food plays in your life, food-related news items or articles you've noticed, foods or food-related phenomenon you'd like to learn more about, etc. If you start with a food topic you are genuinely interested in, your eventual essay will offer more "food for thought" than if you crank out a paper on a topic that bores you.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the act of claiming someone else's words and ideas as your own. Penalties for plagiarism range from a failing grade on the paper to possible expulsion from the course and/or college.

Please note that instances of "intentional" and "unintentional" plagiarism carry the same penalty. In ALL your papers, you must properly cite and document ANY material that is not your own original idea, including information from books, articles, websites, etc. Any phrase, sentence, or passage copied verbatim from a published source must be enclosed in quotation marks and followed by an identifying parenthetical citation. Likewise, if you paraphrase an idea from a published source, you must cite that source parenthetically. All parenthetical references to quoted and paraphrased material must correspond to citations on an MLA-style Works Cited page. **If you have questions about how or whether to cite specific material, PLEASE ASK ME.**

Incident Weather: To find out whether class has been cancelled, check my voicemail message. Dial 8-8888 (from campus) or (603) 358-8888 (from off-campus), then dial my voice-mailbox number (4167) and the # key. A voicemail message will announce if class has been cancelled; if there is no such message, we will have class.

Course Calendar

Wk 1: Jan 22, 24

Tue: Course Introduction; explanation of syllabus & class policies

Thu: **Mini-essay 1:** Write a two- to three-page (typed, double-spaced) mini-essay on ANY of the “Suggested topics” listed above. Be prepared to share!

Also for class, write a typed letter explaining what grade you deserve in this class and why. This letter should be in a SEALED envelope with your name on the outside, and it should be dated May, 2008 (the end of the semester, which is when I'll open and read it). Imagine yourself at the end of the semester, then write a letter to me explaining what letter grade you deserve, supporting your claim with the SPECIFIC goals you did (or didn't) accomplish in the class. For instance, “Doctor D, I deserve an A in this class because I wrote three articles worthy of publication in *The New Yorker* magazine,” etc. Or, “Doctor D, I deserve a B in this class because I've never been a very good writer, but I put in a lot of effort and improved the level of detail in my writing,” etc. Or, “Doctor D, I deserve a C in this class because I'm not a very creative person, I hate to write, and I spent the semester focused on my other classes,” etc. Although there is no specific length requirement for this letter, you need to “sell” me on the grade you select: if you're arguing for an A, you need to convince me that you're capable of doing (and have done) outstanding work this semester.

Wk 2: Jan 29, 31

Tue: *Candyfreak*: Prologue and Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. xv – 50)
POP 1 on *Candyfreak*

Thu: **CE Essay 1**

Wk 3: Feb 5, 7

Tue: *Candyfreak*: Chapters 3, 4, & 5 (pp. 51 – 107)
POP 2 on *Candyfreak*

Thu: **Mini-essay 2:** Write a two- to three-page (typed, double-spaced) mini-essay on ANY of the “Suggested topics” listed above. Be prepared to share!

Also for Thursday, bring to class a list of potential research topics for your semester-long project.

Wk 4: Feb 12, 14

Tue: *Candyfreak*: Chapters 6, 7, & 8 (pp. 108 – 167)
POP 3 on *Candyfreak*

Thu: **Essay Peer Review 1.** Bring THREE COPIES of a five-page (typed, double-spaced) narrative describing your personal connection with the topic you plan to explore for your semester-long project. How did you become interested in this

topic? What relevant memories or personal anecdotes can you share? What questions continue to intrigue you: what are you curious to learn or explore?

Wk 5: Feb 19, 21

Tue: *Candyfreak*: Chapters 9 & 10 (pp. 168 – 223)
POP 4 on *Candyfreak*

Thu: **CE Essay 2**

Also for Thursday, use EBSCOhost to find at least 3 full-text articles relating to the question(s) you are exploring in your semester-long project; please print out these articles and bring them to class. In addition, use a reliable Internet search engine to find at least 3 websites on this same research question; please print these web-pages and bring them to class along with your EBSCOhost articles.

Wk 6: Feb 26, 28

Tue: *Candyfreak*: Chapters 11 & 12 (pp. 224 – 251)
POP 5 on *Candyfreak*

Thu: **Essay Peer Review 2.** Bring THREE COPIES of a five-page (typed, double-spaced) “brain dump” summarizing what you’ve learned so far about the topic of your semester-long project. Be prepared to share!

Wk 7: Mar 4, 6

Tue: *Don't Eat This Book*: Chapters 1, 2, 3, & 4 (pp. 1 – 58)
POP 6 on *Don't Eat This Book*

Thu: **Mini-essay 3:** Write a two- to three-page (typed, double-spaced) mini-essay on ANY of the “Suggested topics” listed above. Be prepared to share!

Wk 8: Mar 11, 13

Tue: *Don't Eat This Book*: Chapters 5, 6, & 7 (pp. 59 – 118)
POP 7 on *Don't Eat This Book*

Thu: **Essay Peer Review 3.** Write five more (typed, double-spaced) “brain dump” pages relating to your semester-long project; bring three copies to share.

Wk 9: Mar 18, 20

Spring Break; no classes

Wk 10: Mar 25, 27

Tue: *Don't Eat This Book*: Chapters 8, 9, & 10 (119 – 170)
POP 8 on *Don't Eat This Book*

Thu: **CE Essay 3**

Wk 11: Apr 1, 3

Tue: *Don't Eat This Book*: Chapters 11, 12, & 13 (pp. 171 – 223)
POP 9 on *Don't Eat This Book*

Thu: **Essay Peer Review 4**. Bring THREE COPIES of a “fat-free/combined” draft of your semester-long project. This draft should incorporate, re-order, and revise the best bits from the fifteen pages you’ve already written (one five-page narrative plus two five-page “brain dumps”); depending on how much “fat” you cut, this draft will be anywhere between five and fifteen (typed, double-spaced) pages. Be prepared to share!

Wk 12: Apr 8, 10

Essay conferences; details to be announced

Wk 13: Apr 15, 17

Tue: *Don't Eat This Book*: Chapters 14, 15, & 16 (pp. 225 – 268)
POP 10 on *Don't Eat This Book*

Thu: **CE essay 4**

Wk 14: Apr 22, 24

Tue: **Mini-essay 4**: Write a two- to three-page (typed, double-spaced) mini-essay on ANY of the “Suggested topics” listed above. Be prepared to share!

Thu: **CE essay 5**

Wk 15: Apr 29, May 1

Tue: **Mini-essay 5**: Write a two- to three-page (typed, double-spaced) mini-essay on ANY of the “Suggested topics” listed above. Be prepared to share!

Thu: **In-class portfolio conferences; details to be announced.**

Finals' Week Schedule:

Reading Day: Monday, May 5 (office hours to be announced)
Portfolio due: 8:00 am section: Tuesday, May 6 from 8:00 – 10:00 am
2:00 pm section: Thursday, May 8 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm

—SYLLABUS SUBJECT TO CHANGE BY THE INSTRUCTOR—