

English 100
Reading/assignment schedule
Fall 2008

Required texts:

Buscemi and Smith: *75 Readings: An Anthology*
Harris, Marvin: *Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches*
Marquez, Gabriel Garcia: *100 Years of Solitude*
Hacker, Diana: *A Writer's Reference* (grammar/composition text for all 100, 1A, 1B classes—a good investment) There is a special edition designed for PCC—available only in the campus bookstore. This is an excellent resource for all issues in writing.

Download from website harry@harrysmallenburg.com/student

Grammar Hit List
Survival Guide to College Writing

All texts are available at Bookmart (across the street on Colorado) or the campus bookstore. Bookmart prices are likely to be better. Except for Buscemi and Smith, and the composition/grammar text, you can probably find used/lower priced copies of texts on Amazon.com. Order at least two weeks ahead of when we're scheduled to use them in class. If you're going to get books at local stores, get them early. The stores order fewer than the number of students in any given class, and people who wait to purchase books often can't find them and have to order them online after all.

This is a writing course, but writing involves ideas. College writing, especially, cannot simply be about your own feelings and experiences. It is by definition, formal, objective, and often analytic in its approach.

Week

1. 9/3: Introduction and in-class diagnostic essay
2. 9/8: For this class: download assignment syllabus and English 100 General Syllabus for in-class review. Review of potential writing problems.

Basic issues in reading and writing: organization, thesis, supporting points, carrying on a coherent discussion; grammar and mechanics. Use downloadable materials on the website for reference.

9/10: read the following essays in B/S (Buscemi/Smith):
Brady (366)
Kozol (302)
Staples (206)

Be prepared for a quiz and discussion.

3. 9/15: Discussion: essay format, basic punctuation (be sure to have *Writer's Reference* with you.)
9/17: Issues in basic grammar—again, have *Writer's Reference* with you.
4. 9/22: Issues in basic grammar: *Writer's Reference*.
9/24: In-class essay, to be assigned.
5. 9/29: Class does not meet. Use this as a reading period.
10/1: For this class: essays in the “Science and Technology” section
6. 10/6: Class discussion: mistakes to avoid (bring *Writer's Reference*)
10/8: “Science and Technology” essays: discussion; discussion of upcoming paper assignment on the science and technology essays
7. 10/13: Quiz: science and tech essays, discussion as necessary
10/15: pre-submission conferences—have thesis statement and outline ready
8. 10/20: Science and Technology essays due. Preliminary discussion of next readings.

Introduction to critical thinking: *Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches*, Marvin Harris

10/22: reading period—class does not meet: use this to read the “Prologue,” “Phantom Cargo,” “Messiahs,” “The Secret of the Prince of Peace” in *Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches*. (Note: this is not easy material. Be prepared for content questions on quizzes, as well as vocabulary. Here you definitely need to be reading with a dictionary.)

Overall: in each chapter, Harris starts with a conventional or common idea, then, though a process of analysis, arrives at a much more factually-based conclusion about the “problem” or question with which he began. Be able to discuss, for each chapter, what the commonly-accepted idea is, what kind of analysis Harris brings to the issue, and what his new conclusion is. His overall thesis is that an analytic, objective approach to various kinds of problems works; a mythologically-based approach explains nothing, though it might be poetic. It also leads to disaster.

9. 10/27: reading period: “Broomsticks and Sabbats,” “The Great Witch Craze”
10/29: class meets: quiz, discussion.

Assignment for the next paper: “Critical thinking” has been defined in class as looking at a problem or issue and determining, based on analysis of available evidence, whether conventional or traditional explanations are valid. Stephen Jay Gould’s essay “Sex, Drugs, Violence, and the Extinction of Dinosaurs” represents this kind of approach: he examines three reasons that have been proposed for the extinction of dinosaurs and,

analyzing the evidence for each, concludes that a giant meteor is the most likely explanation. This is, he explains, how science works—by objective analysis of evidence.

Marvin Harris, similarly, characterizes his investigations as “scientific,” and they exemplify his own critical thinking. Discuss two of the assigned chapters in *Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches*, explaining how Harris proceeds in each chapter: state the issue he takes up, the kind of analysis he does, the new conclusion he reaches, and how that conclusion differs from accepted or traditional explanations.

10. 11/3: pre-submission conferences
11/5: Paper on Harris due

Assignment for the next paper: We like to think of childhood as a time of blissful innocence, when there are no problems and we exist in a state of purity. This is why we say we’d like to keep our children “innocent” as long as possible. Yet, the essays and films suggest that the process of growing up brings many obstacles, difficulties, and dangers. Using the assigned readings in “Rites of Passage” and the films, discuss the kinds of life realities that are likely to affect them, both for the better and the worse.

11. 11/10: Film: *Small Change*, Francois Truffaut.
11/12: For this class, read the essays in the “Rites of Passage” section of 75 *Readings*. Quiz, discussion.
12. 11/17: Film: *Promises* (kids in Israel and Palestine)
11/19: Film: *The Last Picture Show*
13. 11/24: Pre-submission conferences
11/26: Paper due.

Final paper topic: From the films and readings for the previous paper, it was clear that childhood is not always the innocent, blissful time we imagine when we see kids on the playground. These final works focus particularly on a specific kind of social/political trauma. Discuss the impact of war on innocent in *100 Years of Solitude*, *Pan’s Labyrinth*, and *Gunner Palace*.

14. 12/1: class meets: *100 Years of Solitude*, 1st half. Quiz, discussion.
12/3: Film: *Pan’s Labyrinth*
15. 12/8: *100 Years of Solitude*, 2nd half. Quiz, discussion.
12/10: Paper due.
16. 12/15-12/19: finals week