

Composition & Rhetoric

Course Syllabus

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TEXTS

- *Franny and Zooey*, J. D. Salinger
- *An American Childhood*, Annie Dillard
- *Nine Stories*, J. D. Salinger
- *Writing With Sources*, Gordon Harvey

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This Composition and Rhetoric class is designed to introduce you to the kinds of writing tasks and skills that college courses require. It will challenge you to think about the papers you write in a new way: regurgitation and papers-as-busy-work are now things of the past. In this class you'll learn to understand the college paper as an argument—both an opportunity and a responsibility to *think*, to build a case that shows insight into the text discussed. You'll learn to mine texts for the insight that lies below the surface.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Four papers. You'll write three short (five-to-seven page) papers and one medium-length (ten-to-twelve page) paper. These four essays carry most of the weight in your final grade, though the process of reaching an essay's final form may also be considered. They'll be *expository* essays—academic essays that examine topics not necessarily related to personal experience and that address a designated audience—and *arguments*. These are the writing and thinking tasks most relevant to a successful liberal-arts education.

Reading agenda journal. In addition to essay writing, you must maintain a journal of supplementary writing. (See additional handout.)

Composition portfolio. You must keep much of your written work in a portfolio that will be evaluated separately at the semester's end. The portfolio lets you track your progress as a writer, revise older pieces as your skills and opinions evolve, and practice the specific kind of writing demanded by your major; once the course is over, it can serve as a source of models and ideas for other classes. In general, portfolios consist of final copies of essays (with preliminary drafts and/or other preparatory material), journals, and, perhaps, writing completed in other courses.

GRADING

Papers: 70% · Class participation: 30%

ATTENDANCE

Fordham University requires (and I expect) that students attend class regularly and arrive on time. You need not provide written excuses for absences, though as a courtesy I'd appreciate a brief email if you know in advance you'll miss a class, or afterward if you had to miss for reasons beyond your control. Miss more than two classes without good reason and your participation grade will be penalized. Students who are excessively late or leave early (arriving more than fifteen minutes late, or leaving early without prior arrangement) will be counted absent for that day.

LATE PAPERS

Adherence to deadlines—especially in a class designed to prepare you to write papers in college—is critical. Late papers are penalized half a letter grade for every day past the deadline. (A paper turned in on the day it's due but after class is considered one day late.) Deadlines are announced well in advance; plan and budget your time accordingly.

THE WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center, staffed by trained writing tutors, is located in Lowenstein 302E (ext. 6471). It is an excellent resource, particularly if you find the required work for this class challenging.

DISABILITY SERVICES

If you believe you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please schedule an appointment to speak with me immediately, or go directly to the Office of Disability Services (Lowenstein 402, ext. 6282). Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of Fordham University.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Because writing in the real world is recursive and collaborative, you may avail yourself of a variety of resources—classmates, myself, Writing Center tutors—to assist you in your out-of-class writing. You may use your colleagues for feedback and support in generating the writing, but the ideas and language must be solely yours, or else properly cited, in all cases without exception. Penalties for violations of the university's academic-integrity code range from failure for a particular paper or course to expulsion from the university.