

**Critical Reading and Writing:
Forms of Writing
in Literature, Psychology, Society, and Law**
English 102, Spring 2008
Section 35: Tu Th 11:00-12:15 (REND 104)

Dr. Thomas Klein
LA 226, 282-4272, kleithom@isu.edu
Office hours: M W 10:30-12:00;
T 12:30-1:30 (Rendezvous Court)

Required Texts:

Behrens & Rosen, *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum*, 10th ed. (Longman, 2008).
Norman Maclean, *A River Runs Through It, and Other Stories* (U of Chicago, 1979).
Barbara Ehrenreich, *Bait and Switch: The (Futile) Pursuit of the American Dream*
(Metropolitan Books, 2005).

Suggested:

Maimon and Peritz, * *A Writer's Resource*, 2nd ed. (McGraw-Hill, 2007).

Course Description:

One student, on reviewing the requirements for this course, once remarked: "There's a b___ load of reading, isn't there?" I suppose it depends on your standards for that particular unit of measurement, but, yes, English 102 is a course in critical reading and writing, and as such its primary emphasis is on working with written sources.

The course is designed to introduce you to the kinds of academic writing you will encounter throughout your university career. Thus the readings include material from sociology, law, journalism, and literature. It will emphasize the type of analysis and synthesis of written sources you will likely be doing in later courses. Among the other skills that will be especially be emphasized are handling written sources; using one author to illuminate another; employing logical argument; documenting sources; and identifying underlying attitudes of authors.

To this end, you will writing four different kinds of formal papers, including a review of a novel, a critique of an experiment, a legal argument, and a fact-checking essay. Each essay will build on the one that preceded it. In addition, there will be secondary writings that lead to the larger papers, including a scientific synthesis and a legal brief, as well as more informal web forums.

Our particular focus of the course will be to explore the different modes that various disciplines use in their writing. As we look at what makes, for instance, a literature paper different from a psychology paper, we will be thinking about what these various disciplines particularly focus on in terms of knowledge and presentation.

* This handbook is the standard for English courses at ISU. It is full of information and easy to use. However, because the Behrens and Rosen textbook duplicates some of the information there, it is here only suggested, not required. It is also suggested that you obtain a good college dictionary.

Course Grade Components:

Book Review	10%
Explanatory Synthesis	10%
Fact-Checking Essay	10%
Critique of Experiment	15%
Legal Argument	15%
Short Assignments A & B	10%
Forum Postings	10%
Final Exam	10%
<u>Participation</u>	<u>10%</u>
	100%

Papers & Assignments:

Papers and other assignments are due on the day listed on the syllabus or assignment sheet. For late papers, a half of a letter grade (5%) will be deducted for every week day late. Papers will not normally be accepted more than a week after the due date. If you do anticipate having difficulty completing a particular assignment on time, let me know ahead of time, and we'll try to work out an alternative date. However, no late work can be accepted after the semester's end.

Please give late work to me directly, or have the English secretary date it and put it in my box. I would prefer to get hard copies rather than e-mailed attachments; if you do e-mail a paper to me, print a hard copy as well, and bring it to the next class. Be sure to save your work frequently.

Papers are assigned number grades out of 100. The normal scale is this: 99=A+, 95=A, 92=A-, 89=B+, 85=B, 82=B-, and so on; it is also possible to receive a mark between these numbers. A failing paper normally receives a 50; assignments not turned in receive a zero.

I will do my best to return graded papers to you within two weeks.

Forum Postings:

Part of the course grade (10%) will come from less formal postings to forum questions on the course Moodle website. Many of these will simply be for credit—respond as prompted and you will get full credit. Once each forum is closed according to the schedule, it will not be possible to make up that particular posting. Also, you will be expected to use the same decorum in responding to each other's posting you would in class.

E-mail accounts:

I will have occasion to contact the class regarding assignments, changes in the schedule, and so on. You therefore ought to maintain and check regularly an ISU e-mail account, or at least have messages forwarded to your other account.

Participation:

Informed interaction—talking together—is an essential aspect of the course experience. That's why participation is an important component of the final grade. You may not need to speak at every class meeting, but you do need to convey engagement and preparation. This latter means having finished the reading assigned for a particular class meeting, and having done it carefully.

Attendance:

This course emphasizes sequenced assignments which build on previous assignments. In order to be successful in the course, you need to keep up with the readings and attend class regularly. Since the class meets only 30 times, missing more than 3 classes will affect your participation grade (see above; 10% per missed class) and **missing more than 6 classes will be grounds for failure**. Coming to class late or leaving early may be counted as a partial absence.

There are always tragedies, upsets, and unique circumstances, and I am willing to work with people who have missed a number of classes for personal reasons. However, I am apt to be more sympathetic if you keep me informed of what's going on, rather than approaching me after the fact. If work or other obligations keep you away from class frequently, you should ask yourself whether you are able to maintain this schedule—something may have to go.

Running the class:

The course belongs to everyone. You should thus try to avoid distracting your co-participants when class is in progress. If you arrive late, enter quietly. Avoid, if possible, leaving during the middle. **Remember to turn off your cell phone**. If you must take a call during class, it might be better not to come that day. Students sometimes bring friends or children to class. If you do, please ensure that they will not be disruptive. I appreciate being informed ahead of time.

You are strongly encouraged to express your views in class (relevant ones anyway). You should expect to have these occasionally challenged by me or by other students. Discussion can get heated, but mutual respect should accompany disagreement.

Office Hours:

I hope you'll take advantage of these. The work of the course promises to be wide-ranging and challenging, and I strongly encourage you to stop by if you have questions or concerns—I'll be glad to see you, and will do my best to help. These are the times I will do my best to be in my office; I am happy to meet at other times, preferably by appointment. Since my office is far from the classroom, I will also be sitting in the central court of Rendezvous for an hour on Tuesdays, and hope you'll stop by.

Writing Center, Tutoring, Work outside of class:

It doesn't seem fair, but some people seem to get better grades on papers while putting in less effort. If you are one of the rest of us who has to sweat blood, I encourage you to get lots of feedback on your work before handing it in. I am happy to talk over assignments with you, especially if you come with specific questions. Consider trading papers with someone else in the class. It is useful to have the contact information of other students in case you have to miss class.

The Writing Center is the place to go to get one-on-one, detailed help with all aspects of preparing an assignment, including development, specific writing issues, polishing, and so on. It is located in the Center for Teaching and Learning (top floor of the Museum Building) and you must call ahead of time to schedule an appointment (282-3662). Please consider using this resource which helps many different students.

Plagiarism:

Obviously, plagiarism—the deliberate representation of someone else’s work as your own—is a major academic offense. The penalty for plagiarism is up to the instructor, but in my classes usually the first offense will lead to an F (0%) for that particular paper, and the second failure in the class, depending on the severity and the importance of the paper. Please consider that it is possible, under duress, to write an unoriginal and derivative paper that fully credits its sources.

If I encounter a plagiarized passage or paper, I will usually attempt to contact you to discuss what happened (see “E-mail accounts”). If I am not able to contact you, I will simply proceed with the grading scheme described above. If you have questions, let me know.

Message from ADA Disabilities & Resource Center:

This program is committed to helping all students achieve their potential. If you have a disability or think you may have (learning, psychiatric, hearing, visual, or other physical) which may need a reasonable accommodation, contact them in Gravelly Hall 123, 282-3599, as soon as possible.

About me: I am relatively new to Idaho, having come here in 2000. I grew up in Ohio. I got my Ph.D. in 1998 from the University of Toronto; my particular specialty is Old English literature (as in Beowulf). I now live in a 1930’s house in Old Town Pocatello with my wife. We are avid skiers, so you might see us on the slopes at Pebble Creek.

English 102 Schedule

Readings and papers are due on the day listed. Questions for forum discussions on Moodle will be available on the course site by the preceding Thursday, if not sooner.

Part 1—Literature: “Writing the West”

As we begin this semester, we’ll look at ways that personal essays and literature can explore our surroundings and environment. We’ll begin with some local authors who have written about what Idaho and the West means to them; this will lead up to our reading of the short novel by Norman Maclean, *A River Runs Through It*, set in western Montana. You will get your first practice of summarizing, quoting, and assessing another piece of writing in the form of a book review.

Week 1

- T Jan 15 Introduction
- R Jan 17 Read Michael Sowder, poem, “Former Attorney” (course handout)

Week 2

by noon on Monday—post response to Forum 1 on Moodle

- T Jan 22 Read Susan Swetnam, essay, “Home Mountains” (course handout); also read Behrens & Rosen, *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum* (10th ed.), “How to Write Summaries,” pp. 3-8
- R Jan 24 read John Rember, essay, “Coming Home to Sawtooth Valley”
due: Short Assignment A: Summary of Rember’s Essay (2 pages) (using Behrens and Rosen’s guidelines, p. 7)

Week 3

by noon on Monday—post response to Forum 2 on Moodle

- T Jan 29 read Norman Maclean, *A River Runs Through It*, forward and acknowledgments, pp. ix-9 (up to “It is true that we didn’t often fish together anymore”); also read Behrens & Rosen, “Summarizing a Narrative,” pp. 22-29
- R Jan 31 read Maclean, *A River Runs Through It*, pp 9-78 (up to “So he made the arrangements”); also Behrens & Rosen, “Paraphrase,” “Quotation,” pp. 34-47

Week 4

by noon on Monday—post part of First Section of Book Review on Moodle

- T Feb 5 read Maclean, *A River Runs Through It*, to end: also read Behrens and Rosen, “Avoiding Plagiarism,” pp. 47-49
- R Feb 7 **due: Book Review of *A River Runs Through It* (4 pages)**

Part 2—Psychology: “Obedience to Authority”

In this section, we’ll explore scientific ways of writing about our human environments, as we look at an unfolding debate. A series of controversial experiments, beginning in the 1950’s, produced results that seemed to suggest that none of us are as free as we like to think ourselves. In looking at this debate, you will write an explanatory synthesis of a series of articles, and then write a critique of one of the most notorious experiments.

Week 5

by noon on Monday—post response to Forum 3 on Moodle

- T Feb 12 read Solomon Asch, “Opinions and Social Pressure,” in Behrens & Rosen, pp. 349-357
- R Feb 14 read Stanley Milgram, “The Perils of Obedience,” pp. 358-370; also read Behrens and Rosen, “Explanatory Synthesis,” pp. 99-107

Week 6

by noon on Monday—post response to Forum 4 on Moodle

- T Feb 19 read Diana Baumrind, “Review of Stanley Milgram’s Experiments on Obedience” (and Milgram’s response), pp. 371-377
- R Feb 21 read Ian Parker, “Obedience,” pp. 378-387

Week 7

- T Feb 26 **due: Explanatory Synthesis of Experiments on Obedience (4 pages)**
- R Feb 28 read Philip Zimbardo, “The Stanford Prison Experiment,” pp. 389-400; also read Behrens and Rosen, “Critique,” pp. 50-52, and “Writing Introductions,” pp. 76-81

Week 8

by noon on Monday—post Introduction (using one of Behrens and Rosen’s suggested techniques) to Zimbardo Critique on Moodle

- T Mar 4 read Behrens and Rosen, “Writing a Thesis” and “Writing Conclusions,” pp. 82-98
- by noon on Wednesday*—post Conclusion to Zimbardo Critique (using one of Behrens and Rosen’s techniques)
- R Mar 6 bring Rough Draft of Zimbardo Critique

Week 9

- T Mar 11 **due: Critique of Zimbardo’s Experiment (4-5 pages)**

Part 3—Law and Legal Argument: “You, The Jury”

In this section, we will explore the highly analytical and inductive language of the law and legal writing. We'll be reviewing actual court cases and placing ourselves in the roles of judges, lawyers and juries to give our own rulings on them, using logical argumentation and application of general principles. You will write first a short legal essay and then a longer legal argument, using the precedents of earlier case outcomes to decide on others.

R Mar 13 read Behrens and Rosen, “A Note on the American Legal System”; Leonard Tourney, “Incident at the Airport”; Tourney & Genova, “IRAC: How to Argue Your Case,” (pp. 752-764)

Week 10

by noon on Monday—post response to Forum 5 on Moodle

T Mar 18 read “Outrageous Conduct? Some Cases of Emotional Distress” (up through “Spelling Bee,” pp. 766-772)

R Mar 20 finish “Outrageous Conduct? Some Cases of Emotional Distress,” pp. 772-777

Spring Break Mar 20-28

Week 11

T Apr 1 **due: Short Assignment B: IRAC Essay on “The Ridiculed Employee” (3-4 pages)**

R Apr 3 read “The Felled Stop Signs: Two Cases of Homicide,” pp. 801-811 (look especially at precedent); also read “Argument Synthesis,” pp. 146-153

Week 12

by noon on Monday—post response to Forum 6 on Moodle

T Apr 8 read “Who Gets the Kids? Some Cases of Child Custody,” pp. 788-800

R Apr 10 bring rough draft of Legal Argument Essay

Week 13

T Apr 15 **due: Legal Argument Essay (4-5 pages)**
also begin Barbara Ehrenreich, *Bait and Switch: the (futile) pursuit of the American Dream*, pp. 1-13

Part 4—Investigative Journalism: What Work Awaits After College?

In this brief concluding section, we will encounter the more accessible language of investigative reporting, by reading Barbara Ehrenreich's undercover look into the status of the middle class job world. You will do your own research by fact-checking a number of her assertions, and the final exam will have you showing what you've learned by doing an explanatory synthesis of three articles written in response to her book.

R Apr 17 read Ehrenreich, *Bait and Switch*, pp. 15-64; also read Behrens and Rosen, *Critical Reading and Critique*, pp. 56-61

Week 14

by noon on Monday—post response to Forum 7 on Moodle

T Apr 22 read Ehrenreich, *Bait and Switch*, pp. 65-148
Library Session

R Apr 24 read Ehrenreich, *Bait and Switch*, pp. 149 to end

Week 15

T Apr 29 **due: Ehrenreich Fact-Checking Essay (3-4 pages)**

R May 1 Review

T May 6 3:00-5:00 Final Exam—Explanatory Synthesis of Three Articles