Course Description

Catalog description: “Directed investigation of advanced rhetorical and composition practices within a selected field or mode. May be repeated when topic varies. Prerequisite: 12 hours of English or permission of instructor. Three lecture hours a week. Credit: Three hours.”

This section of ENG 4473 is a hybrid course; we will hold face-to-face meetings on Tuesdays, and you will be expected to complete the remainder online/out of the classroom. Our focus is Cultural Rhetorics. We will work to explore two big questions: What are cultural rhetorics, and why are they important? The course is designed for English majors on the Writing and Rhetoric track, and it is intended to provide broad general knowledge about the theories and methodologies that support the study of cultural rhetorics, and the creation of texts that work in culturally thoughtful ways.

Student Learning Outcomes

- understand the constellated historical and global perspectives of culture, community, and what constitutes intellectual knowledge
- explore how the discipline understands/engages with cultural rhetorics
- learn how to listen to, work with, and translate local knowledges in service of using these knowledges within academic contexts and for the communities we work with and for
- consider one’s relationship to western knowledge while learning about the goals and objectives of decolonial and decolonial thinking
- identify one’s goals and relationship to and with cultural rhetorics

Required Text and Materials

- We have one required text for this class. It is *Acting Out Culture: Readings for Critical Inquiry* (4th ed.), by James S. Miller (ISBN: 9781319056742). Supplemental readings will be made available on our course website.

- In addition to this text (which you should bring to each class), you will need: access, outside of class, to a computer with an internet connection, access to your TWU email account, the ability to back up your work for safekeeping, and adequate time to pursue advanced (and hybrid) study.
Regarding Hybrid Courses

We meet face to face only on Tuesdays; however, as this is a hybrid class, it's just a regular-length class session. It is therefore expected that you'll be working from elsewhere for the other half of the contact hours required for a three-credit hour course. For this reason, success in online and/or hybrid classes requires conscientiousness, and quite a bit of self-motivation.

I’ll post the “hybrid day” tasks I’d like you to work on as separate “class plans” posts, and link them on the schedule page, just as I do for f2f class days. You'll spend the bulk of this time researching, reading, thinking, and writing/creating a series of writing projects (which will allow us to spend our class time in conversation on our readings, and your writing).

Don’t expect to get things done (or done well) in an hour and a half (the small amount of time you’d be in the classroom for a second class day). The tasks we’ll request of you will require more effort, thinking, and time than that. Remember, studies show that A students spend 2-3 hours preparing/studying for each 1 credit hour they are enrolled in, weekly. As this is a 3 hour class, that means you should be spending 6-9 hours on preparation for this class—plus the 3 hours in-class time—each week. (And we all know that 6-9 hours thing increases when major assignments are due. So: plan ahead, and put in the work it takes to learn and succeed!) I’d expect you need to find about 3-4 hours each week to do your “second class day” work.

All this “hybrid work” serves as scaffolding for later work; therefore, it must be addressed before you move into readings or projects for the next week’s F2F class. Be thoughtful about how you approach this. You don’t want to wind up doing both sets of homework at once. You need some thinking/development time between the two.

Our Course Website(s)

We will make use of an online space for sharing ideas, files, and resources. Our course website is located at:

http://crpioneers.wordpress.com

This site is mirrored in Blackboard, so you may access it by going directly to the site, or through Blackboard. Otherwise, we'll basically use Blackboard to hand things in.

Our Wordpress.com site can quickly become a private site, accessible only to members of our class, if we choose to make it so. In the first week of the term, I’ll ask you to make this decision. If you choose to close it, I’ll send you each an invitation, and assist in you setting up the (free) Wordpress.com account that would then be necessary to log on to the site.
Your Course Grade

Your grade will be earned mostly through writing (but don’t underestimate the discussion and other activities we have designed to support you in your writing and learning). You will post in a (shared) reading response notebook weekly. You will also complete six bi-weekly writing projects (one of which is a group project), and one group presentation. You will choose, from the single-authored pieces, two you’d like to revise for inclusion in your final portfolio; this portfolio will also include one piece, and a reflective document.

Each of these writing tasks will ask you to consider culture and communication in critical, analytical ways. We hope, too, that you will find ways to explore your own personal, intellectual, and professional interests within the guidelines of each required assignment.

Your course grade will be the sum of:

25% Bi-weekly Writing Projects: Six @ 30 points each, worth 25% of course grade. Due weeks 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 14.

In this class, you’ll regularly be asked to think-in-writing, drafting a paper on a new prompt about every two weeks. These will be handed in at the end of each theme/unit, and graded (as drafts—essentially as homework grades). Each is worth 30 points. ONE of these pieces (WP 5) will be group authored. You will receive information about each project in class and on our website as we proceed.

These will be treated as drafts because we fully intend for you to come back to these. Towards the end of the term, you’ll be asked to choose the best two of your (single-authored) drafts and revise/expand up on them. You’ll then create a final portfolio presenting this revised work, alongside one new piece, and a reflective overview. It is imperative, then, that you do your best on each as we move through the term, so you’ll have lots of good stuff to choose from at the end of things!

We will read generously, and mostly for the purposes of offering feedback; however, we want to set some standards for these, so you don’t pay them short shrift as we go.

Here, then, is the grade scale for the bi-weekly writing projects:

- If you handed nothing in, you will receive no credit.
- If you handed something in, but it was clearly thrown together with little thought, and/or it doesn’t address the prompt, you’ll receive 5 points.
- If you handed something in, and it’s on topic, but it’s hard to read or barely scratches the surface while still showing that you understand some of the course material, you’ll receive 1/3 credit (10 points).
- If you handed something in, it’s on topic, it’s a reasonably well-developed and coherent draft, and it demonstrates that you understand the course materials thoroughly and are beginning to synthesize the material and develop your own ideas, you will receive half credit (15 points).
- If you handed something in, it’s on topic, and shows that you understand course materials thoroughly, and you have synthesized across course assigned materials and your own research to develop and express your own well-developed, reader friendly viewpoint? THAT’S full credit (30 points).
Collaborative Reading Notebook (weekly) + Collaborative Notebook Management (once during the semester). 25%  
Using this Google document, the entire class will contribute to building a notebook from and for our class. This will include reading notes, questions, and class discussion. You may also include links, images, and other resources found on your own, so long as they appropriate and useful.

Each of you will sign up to be responsible for managing the notebook once during the term. We’ll talk, at that time, about what you all want to get out of this, what that means “managing the notebook” should mean, and how you might go about this work, as writers AND “notebook managers”.

You will receive a grade on this process. Mr. Cook and I will keep track of your posts, but your grade will be more than just a simple tally of whether or not you’ve posted each week. Twice this term, your classmates (and your instructors) will evaluate the quality of your contributions to the notebook, judging your work as a manager, your entries as an author, and your interactions with your colleagues both as reader and a co-author/co-conversant. Make an effort, then, to make critical, thoughtful, high quality contributions to the notebook, and engage thoughtfully and generously with your colleagues in this shared space.

Group Project Presentation (5%, Week 12)  
Your group will give a short presentation on your collaborative writing project (WP 5).

Discussion, Participation, and Collegiality (throughout, 10%)  
Mr. Cook and I will award this piece of your grade. We will take into account your performance with regard to the following types of activities:

- preparation for class (being on time, having done the readings, with all required materials, etc.)
- completion of any minor assignments (quizzes, proposals, responses to blog posts, etc.) that may be requested
- engaging in discussion with your colleagues to explore and develop ideas
- participation in peer review and revision workshops
- participation in individual and/or group conferences
- responsible contribution to all group/collaborative projects

Final Portfolio (35%, due digitally during our final exam period)  
You’ll revise two of your earlier works, and create one new one, to show off what you have learned, about cultural rhetorics, research, and writing. (We’ll give you a list of suggestions for the new one, but you may also pitch a project of your own.) This portfolio will also include a reflection, much like those you will have written with each writing project all term. You will receive more details on this project, and all others, as we progress.
Course Policies and Procedures

Expectations

Seminars are community efforts. You will benefit academically by participating fully in the community, and the experience will ready you for the kind of interaction that is required in the professional world. When you enroll in a seminar you make a commitment to others as well as to yourself that you will be actively engaged in the work of the group. Excessive absences or failure to engage fully in the activities of the class, for whatever reason, may affect your grade negatively.

Read all assigned texts (and your writing assignments, and resources provided to assist you with these) carefully, actively, critically, and on time. Come to class prepared to discuss the readings and to write about them. You are expected to attend always, participate intensely, and contribute substantively to the intellectual community.

Your participation will be graded on your understanding of the material, the depth of your engagement with the topic and with your colleagues, and your contributions to the overall learning of the community.

Your weekly notebook entries and bi-weekly writing projects should demonstrate that you understand the course material (including both readings and discussions); that you are familiar with major topics and issues relevant to your work, that you are doing original thinking and innovative work; that you can write clearly, fluently, and ethically; and that you are developing your own intellectual viewpoint on the materials presented.

Attendance

TWU Attendance Policy: “Consistent attendance is vital to academic success and is expected of all students. Grades are determined by academic performance, and instructors may give students written notice that attendance related to specific classroom activities is required. Absences do not exempt students from academic requirements. Excessive absences, even if documented, may result in a student’s failing the course. Excused absences are within the purview of the instructor. Students must consult with instructors regarding make-up work.”

In face-to-face classes, the ESFL department standard states that missing more than two full weeks of a class may result in a failing grade in the course. In this section, then, you are allowed two absences FOR ANY REASON. There are no "excused" absences. (This is because each seemingly "informal" activity helps lead you into each writing project, and each of those projects builds up to help you plan and complete the final portfolio. All the steps along the way are important.) Should you miss more than two classes, you may fail this course. Please use your absences wisely and plan accordingly.

If a real emergency occurs which will require you to miss more than that, please contact me so we can figure out what options we might have to help you succeed! Please don’t just disappear.
Diversity, Academic Freedom, and Civil Discourse

In a diverse setting such as a college campus, we come into contact, perhaps for the first time, with people who may be different from ourselves in terms of their identities, whether that be defined by their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and/or religion. This is a tremendous opportunity for us to learn from and about each other.

However, because of our diverse backgrounds and life experiences, because writing is our thoughts made public, and because so much of our course will be discussion (and culture) based, it is quite possible that we will disagree from time to time with other members of our community. I ask that we treat all members of our community, and their ideas, with respects. We should approach our disagreements as chances to learn logic, argumentation, critical thinking skills, and people skills. Respecting and accepting difference is vital to your success in this class, on this campus, and in the global community.

In sum: everyone in the course is a member of the intellectual community of this classroom. We all have to consistently find ways to be helpful, engaging, productive, and decent to one another. This doesn't mean not asking hard questions, or not disagreeing with one another—it means doing so in a way that opens and furthers the discussion

Late Work

As a rule, I do not accept late assignments. Absence is not an excuse for late work (especially as you may hand in written work electronically). If you must miss class when an assignment is due, turn it in prior to the due date. I may accept a late assignment, but only in extremely extraordinary circumstances and (generally) with prior approval.

However, even with approval, your grade on the work may be reduced half a letter-grade for each day the assignment is late. (This is true of work graded on less traditional scales, as well. Late bi-weekly writing projects will move down that scale one half step for each day the work is late, just as other items of work graded on an A-F scale will.) Missed presentations may not be made up.

Please note that you cannot earn a passing grade in the class without at least attempting all written work (so even if you are very late, you should complete and hand in the assignment. This is because each project builds upon the last, so skipping one puts you at a disadvantage.)

Academic Integrity

Honesty in completing assignments is essential to the mission of the university and to the development of the personal integrity of the student. Cheating, plagiarism, or other kinds of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in appropriate sanctions that may include failing an assignment, failing the class, or being suspended or expelled. Suspected cases in this course may be reported to Student Life. The specific disciplinary process for academic dishonesty is found in the TWU Student Handbook.

Plagiarism can become fuzzy when you begin pushing at the boundaries of digital rhetoric, so pay particular attention to what constitutes “best practices” in the new spaces and forms you’ll have the opportunity to work in.
The Temptations of Technology

We will be meeting in a very well equipped lab with lots of tools, which I'll encourage you to use in your work. Access to technology greatly benefits our work, as this allows us to write in the ways that mirror our "real" work practices. Access to a variety of meaning-making and information tools help us explore the boundaries of what is necessary, expected, and possible.

The beauty of the lab (and the other technological tools you likely carry on your person, like cell phones, iPods, and more) is that you CAN multitask, reading and writing and researching and publishing and (etc!) right there at your computer. These items, though, can easily slip from the status of tools to that of toys, and distract you from the work of this class. I expect that you will spend your class time on task, and engaged in the work of our class. You are welcome to use whatever tools you have to accomplish this as long as the tools stay tools.

Access and Accommodations

If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must register with the Office of Disability Support Services (CFO 106, 940-898-3835, dss@twu.edu) in order to obtain the required official notification of your accommodation needs.

Please plan to meet with me to discuss approved accommodations, and how we may reconfigure learning experiences and spaces to meet your needs.

The Write Site

Writers (especially those working in new genres and modes, and with new programs or platforms, as we'll encourage you to do this term) need readers. While Mr. Cook and I are happy to assist, we also encourage you to visit TWU's writing center, The Write Site. Write Site services are free to TWU students. Any student can schedule up to two hours of appointments per week to work one-on-one with a writing consultant, who can assist you with any phase of the writing process. As you meet with a consultant, you'll discover ways not only to improve the assignment you're currently working on, but also realize how to improve as a writer.

To make an appointment, go online, call 940-898-2341, or visit them on the 2nd floor of our library. Keep in mind that the entire university uses the center, so it is best to schedule your appointments as early as possible in your writing process.