

Syllabus - ENG 202 - **Research Writing** - Spring 2004

031 MWF 1:00pm-2:00pm Leonard 202

032 MWF 2:15pm-3:15pm Leonard 202

Dr. Kenneth Sherwood

Sherwood@iup.edu www.chss.iup.edu/sherwood

724-357-2981/messages x2261

Office: Leonard 201F; Hours: M 12-1, 3:15-4:45, 9-9:30; W 12-1; F 12-1



Description

"Teaches students to read, analyze, and evaluate nonfiction sources and to present the results of their analysis in clear, organized, carefully documented research papers. The focus of reading and research in each section will be determined by the instructor."

Objectives

- "1. locating and taking notes from sources: collecting secondary sources (such as books, journals, newspaper/magazine articles, and audio-visual equipment) and primary sources (such as interviews and observations) to find information pertaining to your topic.
2. analyzing and evaluating information: deciding which information is most important and relevant to your topic by comparing all information found.
3. documenting sources properly: citing the information you decide to use (both throughout your work and in creating a works cited page).
4. communicating your information in a clear and logical manner: drafting, revising, and presenting a final copy of your text in an orderly and coherent way."

The "Everyday" as a Theme

The handful of readings and documentary films we will consider together this semester will serve several purposes. You will learn something about the working lives of maids, waitresses, and Wal-Mart clerks from Barbara Ehrenreich. With Eric Schlosser, you'll explore the history and consequences of the rise of Fast Food. Along with Michael Moore, you'll tour schools and ponder gun violence. As models of investigation, discovery, and reporting, they will help us think about gathering, assimilating and presenting ideas and information. They will also help to establish a "zone of interest" and basic vocabulary for our class discussions and your individual research projects. Avoiding the usual "research topics" that send too many students first to Google and then WorldBook, we will start closer to home--scanning our daily lives for what at first seems too ordinary, normal, unproblematic to research. We'll think about the systems, routines, institutions, habits, and games that we play each day. Dorm life, intramural sports, text-messaging, deer season, summer jobs, rushing. Directly through fieldwork as well as traditional research, you will investigate the everyday.

Texts

The Bedford Researcher: An Integrated Text, CD-Rom, and Website, Mike Palmquist; Nickel and Dimed, Barbara Ehrenrich; Fast Food Nation, Eric Schlosser; (several handouts or electronic reserves)

Other Materials

Two 3-1/2" disks with case; two large envelope folders for sources and process materials.

Other Resources

Regular computer access will be required so that you can make use of the Class Web Page (www.chss.iup.edu/sherwood), library resources, WebLog, and WebCT discussion list. I will provide basic instruction, but it will be your job to use technology responsibly: including obtaining and keeping track of your passwords, saving back-up copies of work on disks, etc. IUP computer help is available in Gordon Hall.

Requirements and Grading

Research Process Milestone assignments in the development of your research, such as the Topic Statement, Research Proposal, Field Report, or Literature Review. Paper-copies must also be turned in at the close of the semester, in a folder accompanying the research essay.	20%
Progress Blog Regular, informal postings to your personal web log (at blogger.com) that discusses the steps you're taking as well as discoveries, road-blocks, and changes of course in your position and approach.	20%
Participation and Preparation Completion of readings, marginal notation; engagement in class discussion; contribution to group activities; may also include announced or unannounced reading quizzes, in-class writing, WebCT posts or exercises, and miscellaneous assignments.	20%
Research Essay A well-developed, 12-20 page document investigating a research question of your choice.	35%
Final Exam Brief, in-class conclusion to research Blog; in-class essay questions on readings and films.	5%

Expectations

Research Essay - (more...) The specific topic and purpose of this project will be yours to decide as you work through the research process. However, it may help you to consider that I will grade essays holistically on the basis of four broad categories: 1) Content - degree of thoughtfulness, richness of information provided or strength of claims made; 2) Organization - effective presentation, including thesis, detail or

support, paragraph form, transitions, and coherence; 3) Mechanics - essay format and such sentence-level elements as punctuation, spelling, and word choice; and 4) Revision - evidence of effort and quality of changes made to preliminary drafts, especially in response to peer-critique.

I will collect your rough drafts several weeks in advance and quickly rate the four areas above on a 10-point scale to give students an idea of those areas in which I judge the paper to be stronger/weaker. Generally, an "A" paper should be strong in all four areas; a "B" paper is strong in at least three areas and not poor in any; a "C" paper should be adequate in at least three areas; a "D" paper is inadequate in two areas; and "F" paper is inadequate in three or more areas.

Attendance - Presence in class is assumed. Each student is allowed four absences, beyond which the student's final average will be reduced 5% points per absence. On announced peer-revision days, students must arrive with the requisite number of typed-copies of their own draft, or they will not be credited with attending. Students who anticipate missing more than five classes for health, family, or other personal reasons should consider taking the class at another time. Students attending IUP sponsored events (eg. athletes) should notify the professor in advance via email; a typed, 350-word discussion of any assigned reading will be expected within one week of such absences; any pre-scheduled assignments should be submitted in advance. Fairness requires that no exceptions be made.

Preparedness - It will be crucial that you consistently complete readings and assignments throughout the semester. I don't particularly like the phrase "project management," but it describes part of what this course aims to teach: avoid skipping steps along the way.

Cheating, Plagiarism, and Collusion

Scholastic Dishonesty is a serious matter. I am savvy and vigilant in detecting students who use unattributed web sources, "collaborate" with fellow students, or utilize other "clever" methods to enhance their grades. Take the grade you honestly earn on an assignment. Should a classmate attempt to use your work, refuse; I make no distinction between cheaters and those who aid them. A plagiarized assignment will earn you a zero for the assignment.

Expectations, Workload, and Help

I hope you will find this to be an enjoyable but challenging course. We will discuss major readings during class, but I will expect that you have closely read and reflected upon them in advance. Your ability to participate in class discussion depends on this. Unlike some other courses, writing classes at IUP tend to require significant group-work, including peer-critique; your contribution to group activities will not only benefit your classmates but also help you to become a better thinker, editor, and writer.

I have carefully planned a calendar that distributes the work as evenly as possible, but you should be aware that each essay is revised (as the calendar sometimes

is). Observing the writing "process" is nearly as important as the quality of the product, so please do not plan to skip steps in the process!

Make-up Work, Computer Breakdown, and Other Exigencies

Successful mastery of course material requires students to complete assignments in a timely fashion. Make-up work does not serve the learning process and so will not generally be permitted. Writing assignments should be handed in at the beginning of class on the day due; the grade of a late paper will be reduced by a 1/2-letter-grade for each day or portion of a day it is late; after one week, a grade of F will pertain, though the student should still submit a paper in order to avoid getting a zero. Should you unavoidably miss a class, be sure to convey any assignment to me: leave it in my English-office mailbox; use a classmate as courier or email it (sherwood@iup.edu).

Computers have not saved us from Murphy's Law: anything that can go wrong will. Make paper and back-up copies of work done on computers on at least two different disks (learn how to do this today if you're not computer literate). Keep written notes, but also print and save intermediate drafts (c:/comp-essay1-draft-001, c:/comp-essay2-draft-002, etc.) If you begin work in advance of deadlines, you will have more time to troubleshoot disk errors, virus alerts, and printer problems. I know intimately how unreliable technology can be, but you are responsible for submitting work despite the gremlins.

Cell Phones

Please silence cell phones and beepers during class time.