

Writing 122

"The Politics of Education"

Spring 2003

RC 7/107 (CRN 22537, 3 credits)

MWF 11-11:50

Portland Community College

17705 N.W. Springville Rd.

Portland, Oregon

Instructor: Melissa Gregory Rue

Voicemail: 503/614-7344

Email: mgregory@pcc.edu

Office: RC 3/216b (inside the Business/Humanities Office 3/201)

Office Hours: MWF 12-1 and by appointment.

Required Materials

The Aims of Argument (4th Edition), ed. Crusius and Channell

A Writer's Reference, 5th edition by Diana Hacker

Course Objectives

This class will help you develop and refine your capabilities for persuasive and argumentative communication. Through reading, writing, group work, and class discussions, you will develop your ability to

- use writing as a means of analyzing, convincing, and persuading
- compose essays that strongly support a thesis and use clear and appropriate writing styles
- Recognize the difference between effective and ineffective arguments
- determine the most effective ways to write for a variety of rhetorical situations and audiences.
- Correctly document sources using MLA Style

Overall Course Requirements

- Regular attendance and participation
- Completion of assigned exercises in your Writer's Notebook
- 4 Drafts (Only 3 if you do Service Learning)
- Participation in writing response groups
- Participation in class discussions
- Participation in group work and in-class writing exercises
- Two conferences to discuss your writing
- Final Portfolio - a compilation of the best writing you've produced this term

Attendance

This class is highly interactive. You need to be here on a regular basis, and you must complete the assigned readings *before* coming to class. **I reserve the right to drop your final grade an entire letter for missing more than 3 classes. Missing more than two weeks of classes will result in a failing grade or me asking you to drop the class.** Chronic tardiness or early departures from class will also lower your final grade. See the attached grading criteria for class participation/attendance for more details.

Writer's Notebook

You will need to keep A Writer's Notebook for this class. Read page 18-21 in *The Aims of Argument* carefully. These pages explain what you should include in your notebook and how keeping a notebook can make writing your essays easier. I will give you some specific assignments to include in your notebook and you will need to turn these exercises in on the days that they are due; however, I will not assess your entire notebook. The other additions you make are up to you. You may want to keep everything in a 3 ring binder so that you don't have to tear your exercise pages out when they are due. See the schedule of readings and due dates for specific assignments. Bring your notebook to every class.

Writing Response Groups

You will meet in writing response groups with your classmates (3-4 people per group) to give and receive feedback on rough drafts. On days marked "Response groups," make sure you bring three copies of your paper. You will be reading (or having someone else read) your work aloud, but your group members will need a written copy to follow along with.

Final Portfolio

The Friday prior to finals week you will turn in a Portfolio consisting of a reflective essay about your writing development over the course of the term, the two essays you have chosen as your strongest pieces and revised a third time, an in-class writing sample, and a letter that you've written to another student in class to help them with their revision of an essay. The final portfolio counts for 60% of your final grade and takes the place of a final exam.

Essays

You have 4 main writing assignments for this class. I will assign specific topics; however, I welcome you to propose a different approach to the assignments. **Alternative approaches must be approved by me in advance; otherwise, they will not be accepted.** Proposed topics must be in keeping with the type of writing we are doing for the assignment (narrative essay, persuasive essay, etc.) and must be relevant to what we are reading and discussing in class. Your first essay will be a narrative about your educational experience up until now and

what, if any, impact your socio-economic background, race, ethnicity, and gender may have had on it. For the second essay you will explore and attempt to define the concept of an “education gap” which has been documented by numerous educational researchers. Your third essay will require outside research into the causes of the “education gap.” You will use your research to write an essay to convince readers of the causes of the “education gap.” Students who elect the service learning option for the course will be able to use their volunteer experience as one of the required outside sources for this essay. Your final writing assignment may take many different forms. For the final assignment you will write an argument in which you persuade a specific audience in the community to take some kind of action that will benefit schools in general, or specifically the school where you are volunteering if you are doing the service learning option. Your writing may take the form of a letter to a government official, an article for our school newspaper, a grant proposal, or any other writing project that attempts to persuade an audience to help improve education in your community (or your organization if you are volunteering). You may also add a visual component to the written portion of your project such as a poster to put on display for a specific group of people, or a video that targets a specific audience.

Essay Assessment

You will receive a grading criteria sheet which explains the strengths and weaknesses of your rough draft and a *tentative grade*. The grade will not be recorded, as it is simply an indication of where your essay stands at that point in the writing process. **I will only use the grade that you receive for the final portfolio when I average your final grade for the course.** You will also get ideas for revision from your classmates when you meet in writing response groups in class. Remember that you will choose only two of your essays to revise a third time for the portfolio, and it is up to you to bring those essays into conference to get more feedback on them. Also, please understand that even though two of the essays will not count towards your final grade, failing to complete all of the essays will have a seriously negative impact on your attendance and participation grade which counts as 20% of the final grade.

Late Work

I will allow you one time to turn in a late paper draft for credit and comments. **This means you will not receive credit, or written comments from me for any late drafts thereafter.** Please be aware that turning drafts and homework in late does affect your final participation/attendance grade. Remember that it is much better to turn in an incomplete draft than no draft at all.

Conferences

You are required to meet with me twice during the term to go over an essay that you are in the process of revising and plan to include in your final portfolio. I

ask that you come to the conferences prepared to talk about the essay's strengths and weaknesses and to discuss ideas for revising the essay. The more thinking about your essay you do prior to the conference, the more beneficial our time together will be. Bring specific ideas and questions. I expect you to be on time and prepared for the conferences. **I will not reschedule conferences unless you have called in advance to tell me that you cannot make it due to an emergency.** Please take the conferences seriously, as they are a required part of the course. **Missing a conference counts as an absence from class.**

The Final Course Grade

60% of your grade will be based on your Final Portfolio

20% will be based on completion of required exercises for your Writer's Notebook

20% will be based on class participation and attendance which includes the following: in-class writing, participation in discussions about the readings, writing response groups and other group work, completion of drafts on time, and conferences. See the attached grading criteria for a detailed explanation of how your attendance/participation will be assessed.

Student Withdrawals and Tuition Refunds

Please understand that if you decide not to complete the course, you are responsible for withdrawing from or dropping the class even if you do not attend. You must request a refund within the time allowed by the college in order to receive a refund. See the fall schedule or PCC's website for the time table. I do reserve the right to deny access to students who miss more than two weeks of classes, and students who miss more than two weeks will not receive a passing grade for this course (See "Attendance"). To see the full text of PCC's policy on student withdrawals and refunds, go to <http://www.pcc.edu/edserv/acadpol/acad24.htm>.

Communication: Please let me know if you have special needs that might affect your ability to fulfill the course requirements. We can make arrangements for alternatives if they are needed. I can also help you coordinate assistance with the Office for Students with Disabilities.

PCC's Policy on Nonharassment

Everyone should feel safe and respected in this classroom. This class focuses on argument and persuasion, so we should expect that our opinions will differ at times. Imagine how boring it would be if we agreed on every issue in every discussion. I want you to feel free to express your views in this class, but I also expect you to respect the views and feelings of others. There is a vast difference between freedom of speech and hateful speech. As your instructor, it is my responsibility to inform you about PCC's Nonharassment Policy and to uphold this policy in our classroom. The full text of this policy is available at

<http://www.pcc.edu/pcc/abt/rights/boardpol/b207.htm>

Americans with Disabilities Act

It is PCC's policy that no qualified person shall, solely by reason of disability, be denied access to, participation in, or the benefits of, any program or activity by the College. Each qualified person shall receive reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to employment, educational opportunities, programs and activities, in the most appropriate setting. Contact the Office for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible for information regarding eligibility and deadlines to receive services at 977-4341.

Policy on Cheating and/or Plagiarism

Academic cheating or plagiarism or aiding or abetting cheating or plagiarism may result in disciplinary action. Plagiarism is the act of stealing ideas, passages, or writings of others and using them as one's own, without acknowledgment or documentation. Intentional plagiarism on the part of a student is a very serious offense and may result in a failing grade for the paper and/or course or other disciplinary measures.

Service Learning Option

"Not until I volunteered at the Boys and Girls Club did I realize that I could help counteract the negative forces that face the youth in my community...Community service is an excellent way to combat social deterioration. Through volunteering in a youth program, I have gained hope for the children in my community." --Alyssa Black, PCC Service Learning Student

Service-learning allows you to bridge classroom learning with "real world" experience by volunteering in your community. The service experience enhances understanding of course subject matter and gives you the opportunity to see how writing has a real function and serves real purposes in the world. Since the goal of writing for a service-learning project is to assist community organizations, students have the opportunity to create a written document for more than just an instructor's grade.

In this course you have the option of expanding your understanding of the issues we are discussing and gathering research for your essays by volunteering at a low-income elementary school or educational program in your community. Choosing this option will enhance your learning experience in the class by helping you to

- explain in greater depth the causes of the “education gap” that exists between poor children and more advantaged children
- explain why such a high percentage of minority children fall into this “gap”
- contribute to community education by volunteering
- develop citizenship skills by serving in your community

Why Volunteer?

Sure volunteering takes some time outside of class, but in return I will reduce your paper load this term. If you choose this option, you may opt out of one of the first three essay assignments with no penalty to your final grade. Rather than writing four essays for this class, you will write three in addition to completing 10 hours of volunteer service at a low-income school. You may skip either the first or second essay assignment. You must write essay 3, and you must complete a final project. You will also be required to include your final project in your portfolio.

More importantly, participation in Service Learning is beneficial because it

- increases motivation to learn
- enhances understanding of course material
- improves retention of key concepts discussed in the course
- improves critical thinking skills
- gives you the opportunity to write for an audience beyond the classroom
- gives you work experience
- enhances your resume and scholarship potential!
- helps you develop leadership skills
- allows you to explore career options
- helps you share and appreciate cultural differences
- gives you the chance to make a difference in your community

Requirements for the Service Learning Option:

- **10 hours of volunteer service at one of the designated sites.** You must choose one of the designated sites so that your volunteer experience will put you in contact with a school or schools that serve high numbers of economically disadvantaged children. Please refer to the Learn and Serve Opportunity List (attached) for locations.
- You must have the Service Learning Agreement form signed by the supervisor at your placement site and returned to me by Mon. April 14
- You must begin your service by the third week of class.
- Your 10 hours of community service time must be completed by the 8th week of the term.

- YOU MUST COMPLETE AT LEAST 7 HOURS OF SERVICE IN ORDER TO PASS THIS COURSE IF YOU ELECT THIS OPTION

Service Learning Conduct

Please remember that you are a representative of PCC serving in the community. The college and I expect you to represent the school well by being on time for volunteer work and demonstrating respect for the teachers, students, and other community members that you come into contact with. If you have an emergency and cannot make your scheduled tutoring time, you need to get in touch with your supervisor and let him/her know. Please remember that the teachers you are helping are very busy and that you are there to help them help the children, not to add to their workload or worries. If a problem arises at your site, please come talk to me during my office hours.