

# Rhetoric 102: College Writing II

## *Race and the University*

**Instructor:** Elaine Wood  
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### **Required Materials :**

- Electronic Readings (available at <http://www.library.uiuc.edu/>)
- Text *What's Language Got to Do With It?* (available at university bookstores)

### **Additional Resources :**

- MLA Style Guide : <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>
- The Writer's Workshop: <http://www.cws.uiuc.edu/workshop/>
- University of Illinois Code of Policies and Regulations: <http://www.admin.uiuc.edu/policy/code/>
- Illinois Digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship: <http://www.ideals.uiuc.edu/>
- Moodle: <http://moodle.atlas.uiuc.edu>

### **Rhetoric 102 :**

This course will engage issues of race, diversity and representation at the university. Its aim is for students to learn basic techniques for critically engaging with academic texts, structuring argumentative essays, and critiquing their own work. This will be achieved by a series of writing assignments, which will prepare you to look at various aspects of campus culture with a critical eye. From these assignments you will develop a larger research project that brings you into conversation with your environment and other scholars, and the research of previous students. This course is taught in coordination with the Ethnography of the University Initiative (EUI), and you'll be doing research on the IDEALS digital archive (the web address is listed above). There will be an opportunity for you to archive your research on IDEALS as well as present your research at the EUI Student Conference in April.

### **Classroom Environment :**

It is our responsibility as a class to create an environment where everybody feels they can participate and succeed. Language or action that shows disrespect for the gender, race, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, beliefs, or ideas of any member of this class is unacceptable. For this reason, it is important to be conscious of your language and actions and try to give others the respect that you would like to receive.

### **Moodle :**

We will be using the course management software called Moodle. Moodle will provide us with a means of accessing course content and interacting with each other online. In addition, your projects will be built throughout the semester on Moodle.

### **Grading :**

The following is a breakdown of how you will be graded for your work in this class:

- **Final Research Project (30%):** Develop a question based on an issue of race and the university (past, present, future) that you find particularly relevant/compelling and respond to your question in an essay of approximately **10 pages**. This research paper is to be based upon qualitative research methods of inquiry developed in this class, such as interviewing, observation, library research, and analysis of artifacts. Use texts from this class and also from your library research to support your argument. This project brings together all of your research work from this semester. As part of the research project, please include a **1 to 2 page reflection** on your research process over the course of the semester. **This assignment will be due on the final day of class (5/6/09)**. Note: **1 page research proposal due (4/20)**

- **Four Research Reports (20%):** You will be asked to show four stages of work on your research for the final project. One of these stages will be an annotated bibliography of published articles and previous EUI research that you're drawing from; the other three will be your choice of ethnographic research results—archive findings, text analysis, survey data, or observation notes (you must do at least two different types). **Annotated bibliography** (due 3/11). Other reports due 3/2, 4/1, 4/13
- **Interview Essay (10%):** Interview someone with an interesting story to tell about race and write a paper about his/her experiences in conjunction with our class readings. I would encourage you to incorporate considerations of race that you've begun to develop during class discussions. This essay is to be approximately **4 pages** in length.  
Guidance: prepare a list of questions in preparation for the interview. Conduct the interview and take notes. Be sure to record relevant dates and names. Write an essay that directly cites quotations from the interview. Discuss issues of race that you find particularly relevant and/or ones discussed in class. Document the interview as well as works cited in MLA style (due 2/20).
- **Friday Updates (10%):** Each Friday, you will be responsible for handing in **1 to 2 typed paragraphs** that chronicles your plans and progress for your research project. These “updates” may take the form of a journal. The idea is for you to be thinking and writing about your final project each week. Use this space to ask questions, keep notes, and make plans for your project.
- **Participation (30%):** I expect all students to participate actively and regularly in class discussion. Participation can take the form of making observations, offering information, asking questions, and many other types of contributions—all are welcomed and valued. I should emphasize that simply being present and awake does not constitute active participation. And by the way, I take attendance.

#### **Academic Responsibility:**

All work you submit must be your own. Plagiarism is completely unacceptable. You must understand the University's policies concerning plagiarism, which I define as the unacknowledged use, *either intentional or unintentional*, of material first expressed by another person. Whether you use the words or ideas of another, you must in both cases cite the source. A citation should include the author's name and the page number. You should also be meticulous in your class notes so that you can easily cite the professor or your classmates should you wish to reference an idea from discussion in your writing. If, at any time, you have questions about academic responsibility in this class, please come and talk to me.

#### **Essay Format:**

All essays are expected to be written in clear prose, spell-checked and type-written with 1 inch page margins and Times New Roman 12-point font. **All essays should have page numbers and titles.** If you make use of any secondary material, you should have a bibliography. I expect all students to be competent in Word (know how to format titles, insert page numbers, etc.). If you feel you need help in this area, contact The Undergraduate Library (<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/ugl/>) for assistance.

#### **Due Dates:**

All work is due on the assigned day. If you believe your circumstances are extenuating, you may request an extension, but you must do so in advance and **in writing** (e-mail is fine). If I grant you an extension, I will assign a new due date, which must be honored. Without an extension, late work will be downgraded a half-letter grade for each day it is late.

#### **Attendance:**

Attendance is essential. I expect that you will not be absent (or tardy). However, I understand that you cannot always control the circumstances that affect your academic life, so every student is entitled to five absences for any reason, including illness or going to Tahiti or anything else. Nevertheless, please note that you will not receive participation credit for the day if you are not in class (this includes credit for class discussion, in-class written work, and group work!). After your sixth absence, you will drop 1/3 of a letter grade for every subsequent absence. Exceptions to this policy will be made only through the intervention of the Emergency Dean.

A word about punctuality: It is disruptive to have students traipsing into class after we have begun. Out of respect for the professor and your classmates, you should come to class on time. However, I would far rather have you arrive late and attend part of a class than not come at all. Be aware that tardiness will affect your participation grade.

In case of absence or tardiness, it would be both considerate and helpful to notify me in advance, so I can plan accordingly. We will sometimes work in small groups or begin class with a brief writing assignment, and it is important to know how many students will be in the room.

**Cell Phones:**

Of course, you should turn off your cell phone when you are in class.

**Resources:**

The Writer's Workshop offers tutoring appointments with a writing consultant. It is located in The Undergraduate Library, room 251. Tutor sessions are offered free of charge. I am encouraging you to call 217-333-8796 to schedule an appointment for each paper you write for this class.

Students with disabilities should discuss their situation with me if those students require alternate arrangements in order to complete the course requirements and assignments.

**Grading:**

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| A | 90-100% |
| B | 80-89%  |
| C | 70-79%  |
| D | 60-69%  |
| F | 50-59%  |

What follows is an informal overview of what I look for when I grade. It is by no means a map to buried treasure where "A" marks the spot; rather, you should think of it as advice to keep in mind as you begin writing and revising your paper. There are three major categories I consider when grading your essay: Focus and Content, Development and Analysis, and Style and Mechanics. The relative importance of each category may vary slightly according to the writing assignment, but the basic criteria remain the same.

An "A" essay would have most of the following characteristics:

**Focus and Content**

- ✦ A clearly stated, insightful, interesting thesis
- ✦ All paragraphs relate to the thesis
- ✦ The paper does what the writing assignment asks
- ✦ The paper's content is appropriate for the required length
- ✦ It ACCOMPLISHES something, i.e. fulfills the thesis, makes a point (or points)

**Development and Analysis**

- ✦ Ample, detailed and well-explicated support for the thesis
- ✦ Avoids generalizations, uses concrete examples
- ✦ Clear relationship between evidence and claims
- ✦ Arguments clearly and logically developed
- ✦ Transitions and other verbal cues guide the reader between paragraphs smoothly

**Style and Mechanics**

- ✦ Essay demonstrates awareness of audience in tone and word choice
- ✦ Word choice is specific and erudite
- ✦ Prose employs a variety of sentence structures
- ✦ Prose is free of distracting spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors
- ✦ Sources are consistently documented in accordance with MLA rules for citation

A "B" essay generally has a clear, insightful thesis and solid support. It shows good analysis and exploration but may fail to consider all issues in detail. The argument may have holes, there may be some style errors, the paper

may not quite accomplish what it sets out to do. But for the most part, this is a good essay, falling just short of meeting the above criteria.

A “C” essay usually has a main idea and some evidence but has unexplained shifts in focus or direction. Evidence may not be sufficiently analyzed; it may read more like a report, description, or opinion-based rather than an analytical paper. There may be many style or grammar errors. There are often many generalizations which undermine the paper’s claim.

A “D” essay generally has an unclear main idea and may fall short of meeting the assignment’s basic requirements. There is probably poor organization, limited evidence, and distracting grammar and usage errors.

Again, these breakdowns are meant as examples only. Your grade is based on a combination of what you do well and what could use more work.

### **Class Schedule:**

Please note that this is a tentative schedule. Changes to the dates or activities may be made during the semester if we discover that we need more or less time on something. If this does happen, I will give you ample warning.

#### WEEK 1: Introductions

**Wednesday 1/21** Welcome; Syllabus and Course Policies

**Friday 1/23** Handout: “Ten Things Everyone Should Know About Race”  
**Diagnostic Essay**

#### WEEK 2: What’s Language Got to Do With It?

**Monday 1/26** Reading: Michael Erard, “Can You Be Discriminated Against Because of the Way You Speak?” (textbook, pp. 294-299)

**Wednesday 1/28** Reading: Michiko Kakutani, “Debate? Dissent? Discussion? Oh, Don’t Go There?” (textbook, pp. 59-63)

**Friday 1/30** Reading: Mike Wise, “The Squabbling Illini,” (textbook, pp. 457-461)  
**Friday Update due**

#### WEEK 3: Contextualizing Race & Racism

**Monday 2/2** Reading: Michael Omi and Howard Winant, “Racial Formation”

**Wednesday 2/4** Reading: George Fredrickson, “Models of American Ethnic Relations”

**Friday 2/6** Reading: George Frederickson, “The Historical Origins and Development of Racism” **Friday Update due**

#### WEEK 4: Entering the Conversation

**Monday 2/9** Reading: Paul Wachtel, “Talking about Racism: How Our Dialogue Gets Short-Circuited”

**Wednesday 2/11** Reading: Interview with Evelyn Hammonds, “What do people conventionally think of as race?”

**Friday 2/13** Reading: Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, “Stepping In and Stepping Out: Understanding Cultures” **Friday Update due**

#### WEEK 5: Speaking about Race

**Monday 2/16** Reading: Arif Dirlik, "Race Talk, Race, and Contemporary Racism"

**Wednesday 2/18** Reading: Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, "Researching People: The Collaborative Listener"

**Friday 2/20** **Interview Essay due**

WEEK 6: Representing Racial Difference

**Monday 2/23** Reading: W.T. Lhamon, "Racial Stereotypes"

**Wednesday 2/25** Reading: Harlon Dalton, "Failing to See"

**Friday 2/27** Reading: Tamara M. Valentine, ed. "Guidelines for Avoiding Racist Language" **Friday Update due**

WEEK 7: Constructing Race

**Monday 3/2** Reading: Melissa Stein, "Race as a Social Construction" **Research Report due**

**Wednesday 3/4** Reading: Interview with Beverly Daniel Tatum, "What is white privilege?"

**Friday 3/6** Reading: Waldo Martin, "Black Consciousness in the United States" **Friday Update due**

WEEK 8: Segregating People

**Monday 3/9** Reading: Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, "Researching Language: The Cultural Translator"

**Wednesday 3/11** Reading: Vincent Harding, "So Much History, So Much Future: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Second Coming of America" **Annotated Bibliography due**

**Friday 3/13** Reading: Jonathan Kozol, "Still Separate, Still Unequal" **Friday Update due**

WEEK 9: Documenting Action

**Monday 3/16** Reading: Supreme Court of the United States, Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

**Wednesday 3/18** Reading: Black Panther Party, "What We Want, What We Believe" (1966)

**Friday 3/20** Reading: Students for a Democratic Society, "The Port Huron Statement" (1962) **Friday Update due**

WEEK 10: Taking a Break

**Monday 3/23** no class

**Wednesday 3/25** no class

**Friday 3/27** no class

WEEK 11: Acknowledging Race and the University

**Monday 3/30** Reading: Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, "Writing Self, Writing Cultures: Understanding Fieldwriting"

**Wednesday 4/1** Reading: Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater, "Research Place: The Spatial Gaze" **Research Report due**

**Friday 4/3** Reading: Amoja Three Rivers, "Cultural Etiquette: A Guide for the Well-Intentioned" **Friday Update due**

WEEK 12: Race and American Presidency

**Monday 4/6** Reading: Barack Obama, "A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education"

**Wednesday 4/8** Reading: Brent Staples, "Decoding the Debate Over the Blackness of Barack Obama"

**Friday 4/10** Reading: Kenneth O'Reilly, "Race and the American Presidency" **Friday Update due**

WEEK 13: Researching Race

**Monday 4/13** Library Research Instruction

**Wednesday 4/15** Reading: Fletcher Blanchard, "Combating Intentional Bigotry and Inadvertently Racist Acts" **Research Report due**  
*{application deadline for EUI Spring Student Mini-Conference}*

**Friday 4/17** **Friday Update due**, discuss research progress

WEEK 14: Reporting Findings

**Monday 4/20** **Research Proposal due**, discussion

**Wednesday 4/22** **Peer Review of proposals**

**Friday 4/24** **Library Research day**, meet in Undergraduate Library, **Friday Update due**

WEEK 15: Sharing Research

**Monday 4/27** **Bring in a piece of text to share in relation to your research** (this may be an article, poem, interview, statistical findings)

**Wednesday 4/29** **Bring in a piece of text to share in relation to your research**

*{Thursday 4/30* **EUI Spring Student Mini-Conference}**

**Friday 5/1** **Library Research day**, meet in Undergraduate Library, **Friday Update Due**

WEEK 16: "Concluding"

**Monday 5/4** **Peer Review of Final Research Paper**

**Wednesday 5/6** **Final Research Paper and Reflection due**