

WEBSTER UNIVERSITY

COURSE SYLLABUS

COMM 5280.02
COURSE NUMBER and SECTION

Dr. Marlene Birkman
INSTRUCTOR

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION
COURSE TITLE

Term: Spring II 2003

Site: 50

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION: (Student focus, rationale, scope, prerequisites)

This is a required course for all students seeking a degree in Communications.

This workshop is offered so that students can refine their writing skills and experience the writing process.

This workshop will involve a close look at the writing process: pre-writing, writing, re-writing, editing and evaluating. Lectures, readings, speakers, videos, films, and activities will spotlight writing as a process of discovery.

2. LEARNING OUTCOMES: (Goals, objectives, course outcomes, etc.)

Students will discover their strengths and weaknesses as writers as they read the writings of peers and professionals.

Students will view writing as a means of shaping their perceptions and exercising their intellectual skills.

3. SCHEDULE of required readings, class preparations and assignments, lectures, discussions, student presentations, and exams:

SEE SCHEDULE ATTACHED

E. L. DOCTOROW SAID IT. "Writing is an exploration. You start from nothing and learn as you go. If you do it right, you're coming up out of yourself in a way that's not entirely governable by intellect. That's why the most important lesson I've learned is that planning to write a book is not writing. Outlining a book is not writing. Researching is not writing. Talking to people about what you're doing; none of that is writing. WRITING IS WRITING."

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WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS: A CALENDAR

"the circle of the seasons returning without fail..."

Henry David Thoreau

"Writers aren't born; they're made."

- WEEK 1:** Introductions, Expectations, Warm-ups
Personal Writing
- WEEK 2:** Bring object and special journal. Read text prefaces, A Note to Student, and 3-53. Bring revised writing with copies.
- WEEK 3:** Description
Read 95-133
Place Papers
- WEEK 4:** Read 55-94
Character Description
- WEEK 5:** Event
Read 135-167
- WEEK 6:** Name Paper Due
Read 307-455
- WEEK 7:** Style: A Closer Look. Strunk and White reading
Beginnings and Closings
Read 457-500; 593-652
Revision Due
- WEEK 8:** Journals
Synthesis

In order to receive credit, you must attend all classes and submit all work on due dates according to described guidelines. All work must be satisfactorily completed.

If you have any questions, please call me at 968-7094. I hope that each of you will stop (at least once) in my office WH 238 to visit.

Marlene Ann Birkman

"What's best in me lives underground - Rooting, and digging, itching for wings."
Stanley Kunitz

"Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man."
Francis Bacon

"Writing is a dog's life, but the only life worth living."
Gustave Flaubert

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"I am a writer who came of a sheltered life. A sheltered life can be a daring life as well. For all serious daring starts from within."

Eudora Welty, One Writer's Beginnings

"Avoid the use of adjectives, especially such extravagant ones as splendid, gorgeous, grand, magnificent, etc.," and enjoined "short sentences," "short first paragraphs," and "vigorous English"; Hemingway later called these "the best rules I ever learned for the business of writing." Quoted by Fenton, The Apprenticeship of Ernest Hemingway, pp. 31-34.

"If the writing is honest it cannot be separated from the man who wrote it. It isn't so much his mirror as it is the distillation, the essence, of what is strongest and purest in his nature, whether that be gentleness or anger, serenity or torment, light or dark. This makes it deeper than the surface likeness of a mirror and that much more truthful." -- Tennessee Williams

4. RESOURCES:

Text Used: Kane, T. & Peters, L. (Comps.). (1986). Writing prose: Techniques and purposes. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hacker, D. (1997). A pocket style manual. (2nd ed.). Boston: Bedford Books.

Strunk, W. & White, E.B. (1979). The elements of style. New York: Macmillan.

Supplemental Readings: Numerous Handouts, Donald Murray et. al.

Visual Aids: Videotape, Film, Folder, Filmstrip

Other: Professional and lay writers

5. EVALUATION:

- a) Class participation
- b) Weekly papers
- c) Daily journals
- d) Conference

6. FINAL PROJECTS:

Projects/Papers will be returned during the last meeting period.

NOTE: Papers will not be available for pick up from the School of Education - M.A.T. office.

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Therefore, regular attendance is required.