

Kathryne Bevilacqua
English 125, Winter 2013
Syllabus, Assignments, and Materials

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English 125.042
Winter 2013
TTh 10-11:30am
2475 MH

Kathryne Bevilacqua
bevilacq@umich.edu
Office: 3043 TH
Office Hours: Wed 2-4pm
or by appointment

Writing and Academic Inquiry: Misfits, Losers, and Underdogs

Course Description:

This class is about writing and academic inquiry. Good arguments stem from good questions, and academic essays allow writers to write their way toward answers, toward figuring out what they think. In this course, students focus on the creation of complex, analytic, well-supported arguments addressing questions that matter in academic contexts. The course also hones students' critical thinking and reading skills. Working closely with their peers and the instructor, students develop their essays through workshops and extensive revision and editing. Readings cover a variety of genres and often serve as models or prompts for assigned essays; but the specific questions students pursue in essays are guided by their own interests.

Section Description:

As cultural tropes, the misfit, the loser, and the underdog have become powerful rhetorical positions that structure the way we tell stories about ourselves and our society. But who decides who counts as an underdog, or who fits the model of a freak or a “gleek”? How do we delineate and represent the margins of our society, and how do those margins represent themselves? In this course, we will read, watch, and analyze stories by and about misfits, losers, and underdogs in order to approach these issues of individualism and community; inequality and empowerment; argument, narrative, and sentiment; history, memory, and representation.

Our rhetorical analyses will directly inform the main focus of this course: your own writing in the genre of academic argument. Not only will we focus on the *mechanics of argumentation*—developing a strong thesis, supporting your claims with evidence, evaluating and incorporating outside sources, identifying your audience (all with an eye toward issues of style, voice, clarity, and concision)—but we will also consider the *mechanics of the writing process* itself, from the initial organization of thoughts and ideas, to drafting and revising, to responding to and offering critiques. As we move between reading and writing, class discussion and peer workshops, the real engine of the course will be your collective participation: responding to each other's ways of thinking and writing will provide an occasion to reflect on your own critical engagement with ideas and arguments.

Texts:

- Course pack (available at Accu Copy, 518 E William St, cash or check only)
- John Steinbeck, *Cannery Row* (1945) (Penguin, 2002)
- *Writer's Help* (www.writershelp.com)
- Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Guide* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010) [optional]

Cannery Row is available at the two main campus bookstores (Ulrich's and the Michigan Union). Please make every effort to ensure you are purchasing the edition listed above.

Course Policies

Grading:

Your final course grade will be calculated according to the following rubric:

Formal Essays	65%
1. Close reading (2-3pp/650-1000 words)	8%
2. Critical reading (4-6pp/1250-2000 words)	15%
3. Comparative analysis (6-7pp/2000-2250 words)	20%
4. Argumentative narrative (8-10pp/2500-3000 words)	22%
Reading Journal Presentation	10%
Peer Reviews (4)	8%
Short Assignments	7%
Reading Journal Posts	5%
Attendance and Participation	5%

Letter grades correspond to the following numerical scale:

94.0 - 100	A	74.0 – 76.9	C
90.0 – 93.9	A-	70.0 – 73.9	C-
87.0 – 89.9	B+	67.0 – 69.9	D+
84.0 – 86.9	B	64.0 – 66.9	D
80.0 – 83.9	B-	60.0 – 63.9	D-
77.0 – 79.9	C+	59.9 & Below	E

Note: You must receive a minimum of a C- in this class to fulfill your first-year writing requirement.

Assignments:

Formal essays:

This course is structured around five major essay assignments:

Close reading	2-3 pages	Jan 25 (draft)/Feb 2	8%
Critical analysis	4-6 pages	Feb 15 (draft) /Feb 22	15%
Comparative analysis	6-7 pages	Mar 15 (draft) /Mar 22	20%
Argumentative narrative	8-10 pages	Apr 12 (draft) /Apr 19	22%

We will use each essay to discuss the various components of the writing process, including brainstorming ideas, proposing a topic, drafting a first pass, responding to peer critiques, and revising.

Drafts and revisions are due on **Fridays at 12pm (noon)** throughout the term. Drafts should be submitted to the [CTools forum](#) for each essay, while revisions should be submitted to your [CTools dropbox](#).

Reading Journal:

English 125 is a *writing* class, but one of the best ways to improve your writing is to *read* widely and critically. Over the course of the semester, we will read a collection of texts that I have chosen, but these assigned texts will not be our only reading. As a class, I am asking *you* to produce an archive of articles that are of interest to *you* and that might prompt responses from your fellow classmates, so that by the end of the term we have a written record of some of our conversations together.

Each week, four students will read an article of interest (selected from a list of websites) and post both a link to the article and a 500-word response to it in our [CTools forum](#). Everyone will be required to submit four 200-word responses to four different posts over the course of the semester, including one shorter response to the comments left on one of your original posts. At the end of the term, you will present in class on the discussion that develops around one of your original posts. (See separate reading journal handout for further instructions.)

Peer Reviews:

Reading and responding to others' writing is an invaluable way to improve your own writing. As such, our workshop days should be among the highlights of our course calendar. You will be working with two other students in groups of three for each workshop. To prepare for workshop, you will provide marginal notes and longer responses (in the form of a letter) to your classmates' drafts and participate in a small group discussion of these drafts. Your peer review documents should be submitted to the appropriate [CTools forum](#) before class on workshop days. (See separate peer review handout for further instructions.)

Short assignments:

Between the major essay assignments in this course, I will also ask you to complete smaller writing assignments, usually one per week, to be submitted via CTools. These assignments will be graded on a 1-5 point scale, with 3 serving as the average grade and 4s and 5s reserved for truly exceptional work.

Attendance and Daily Participation:

The success of a seminar-style class such as this depends on your consistent attendance and daily participation.

- I expect you to attend every class.
- You may miss two classes without penalty. Each unexcused absence beyond the first two will lower your overall final grade by two points.
- Your absence will count as "excused" if you bring me a note from a doctor or health professional, a signed letter from a University team or program, or clear documentation of a family emergency.
- You may not miss workshop days.
- Missing more than five classes will likely result in you failing the course, regardless of work completed.
- Please arrive on time. Three tardies will count as one unexcused absence.

I will also expect that you arrive prepared to participate. This means completing the day's reading assignments, taking notes on them, and bringing them with you to class. In class, participation can take many forms—offering comments and observations, asking questions about the reading, responding to your classmates' comments, listening respectfully and alertly.

Late Work:

Due dates for drafts, peer review letters, and revised essays are marked in bold throughout the reading schedule below. Please take note of them now, and if you anticipate any difficulties in meeting deadlines, contact me within the first week of the course. Late policies for specific graded assignments are as follows:

- *Peer review:* Any late peer reviews will result in a zero for participation for the day as well as a zero on the assignment. I have made this penalty more substantial than some of the other late work penalties because your peers are relying on you to help them think about and improve their writing. Therefore, it is in everyone's best interest for you to complete your formal peer reviews on time.
- *Revised papers:* I will deduct 5% from your paper's final grade for every 24-hour period that the paper is late. Papers more than a week late will receive a failing grade.
- *Short assignments:* I will not accept late short assignments, unless they are late due to an emergency or otherwise excused absence.

Cell Phone Policy:

Cell phones and other electronic devices should also be silenced before you enter the classroom. If I see any cell phone use in class (eg. texting), you will receive a zero in participation for the day.

Laptop Policy:

Because our class activities revolve around discussion and close engagement with texts, laptop use in class can be incredibly distracting and detrimental to the goals of our classroom. However, I also realize that most of us compose and revise in digital environments. As a compromise, I will not allow laptops in the classroom for most class days, but I will allow laptops for workshop days and certain other course meetings whose focus is on composition and revision.

Email Policy:

Your @umich.edu email accounts will be my primary point of contact with you, so please be sure to check this account regularly. I am also most easily reached via email (bevilacq@umich.edu) and invite you to send me any questions or concerns that may arise during the term. I make every effort to respond to emails within 24 hours of receiving them.

Plagiarism:

The University of Michigan is built around intellectual and academic integrity, and plagiarism (stealing/borrowing/not citing the work and/or ideas of another person and presenting them as your own) is not treated lightly. If you are caught plagiarizing—regardless of whether it's a few lines or an entire paper—you will automatically fail the assignment and, under most circumstances, will also fail the course, regardless of how much work you've completed in the class. In addition, the case will be forwarded to the Dean of Student Affairs for disciplinary action and permanent notation in your academic record. If you ever have any questions about

what might count as plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask! For more information, also see: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/english/undergraduate/advising/plagNote.asp>

Sweetland Writing Center:

If you would like additional feedback or assistance with your writing, the Sweetland Writing Center is a fabulous resource. Staff members and peer tutors from the Center can work with you as you draft and revise your assignments. Visit the website for more information: www.lsa.umich.edu/swc

Disability Accommodations:

I am happy to provide accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability that requires special accommodations, please let me know so that we can make any necessary arrangements. For more information, please consult the university's Services for Students with Disabilities (<http://ssd.umich.edu/>).

Religious Observances:

If a class session or due date conflicts with your religious holidays, please notify me ahead of time so that we can make alternative arrangements. In most cases, I will ask you to turn in your assignment ahead of your scheduled absence, but your absence will not affect your grade.

Office Hours:

I will hold weekly office hours, during which you are invited to drop in to discuss assignments, readings, your thoughts on the course, or any difficulties you might be having. If my regular office hours conflict with your own schedule, do not fret—I am happy to arrange other times to meet if need be.

Class and Reading Schedule

Jan 10, Th	Introductions
Jan 15, Tu Close reading	Bunn, “How to Read Like a Writer” (CP) Steinbeck, <i>Cannery Row</i> , 1-55 <i>receive essay 1 assignment</i>
Jan 17, Th Arguments in fiction	Steinbeck, <i>Cannery Row</i> , 56-99
Jan 22, Tu Working with quotations	Steinbeck, <i>Cannery Row</i> , 100-142 Chamberlin, “Workshop is Not for You” (CP)
Jan 24, Th	<i>no class: individual conferences during class time</i>
Jan 25, F	<i>essay 1 draft due online by 12pm</i>
Jan 29, Tu	WORKSHOP: essay 1 <i>peer review letters due online before class</i>
Jan 31, Th Reflecting on peer review	Steinbeck, <i>Cannery Row</i> , 143-181
Feb 1, F	<i>essay 1 revision due online by 12pm</i>
Feb 5, Tu Other forms of reading	Super Bowl ads (TBD) Bunn, “How to Read Like a Writer” (CP) <i>receive essay 2 assignment</i>
Feb 7, Th Casual vs Critical	Weiner, “The Improbable, Unstoppable Success of Rihanna” (CP)
Feb 12, Tu Stakes	Bawarshi, “The Syllabus” (CP) Gaipa, “Breaking into the Conversation” (CP)
Feb 14, Th Asking questions	Menand, “Cat People” (CP) “Motivating Moves” (CP)

Feb 15, F	<i>essay 2 draft due online by 12pm</i>
Feb 19, Tu	WORKSHOP: essay 2 <i>peer review letters due online before class</i>
Feb 21, Th Structuring comparisons	Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story” (CT) <i>receive essay 3 assignment</i>
Feb 22, F	<i>essay 2 revision due online by 12pm</i>
Feb 26, Tu Audience	Reid, “My Body, My Weapon, My Shame” (CP)
Feb 28, Th Genre	Steinberg, “The Spelling Bee” (CP) Jordan, selections from <i>M-A-C-N-O-L-I-A</i> (CP)
Mar 5, 7	<i>no class: spring break</i>
Mar 12, Tu Visual analysis	Leary, “Detroitism” (CP) Eminem, “Beautiful” (CT)
Mar 14, Th Point of view	Orlean, “The American Man, Age Ten” (CP)
Mar 15, F	<i>essay 3 draft due online by 12pm</i>
Mar 19, Tu	WORKSHOP: essay 3 <i>peer review letters due online before class</i>
Mar 21, Th Clarity and concision	Revision exercises (CT)
Mar 22, F	<i>essay 3 revision due online by 12pm</i>
Mar 26, Tu	<i>Library Day</i>
Mar 28, Th Sources	Hitt, “Toxic Dreams” (CP)
Apr 2, Tu	Culver, “Escape to Alcatraz” (CP)
Apr 4, Th	Paterniti, “XXXXL” (CP)

Apr 9, Tu Introductions Finding Sources	WORKSHOP: introductions post your introduction and outline for the rest of the essay in Google Drive folder before class
Apr 11, Th Presentations Mechanics	Reading journal presentations 1-8
Apr 15, M	essay 4 draft due online by 5pm
Apr 16, Tu Presentations Mechanics	Reading journal presentations 9-17
Apr 18, Th	WORKSHOP: essay 4 <i>peer review letters due before class</i>
Apr 23, Tu Reflection/Transfer	Lehrer, “Groupthink: The Brainstorming Myth” (CP) DSP essay
Apr 29, M	essay 4 revision due online by 5pm

Peer Review Guidelines

Reading and responding to others' writing is an invaluable way to improve your own writing. As such, our workshop days should be among the highlights of our course calendar. You will be working with two other students in groups of three for each workshop. To prepare for workshop, you will provide marginal notes and longer responses (in the form of a letter) to your classmates' drafts and participate in a small group discussion of these drafts. Your peer review documents should be submitted to the appropriate CTools forum before class on workshop days. (See separate peer review handout for further instructions.)

Drafts

Workshop drafts are due the Friday before workshop by 12pm (noon) in the CTools forum. To upload your draft, open the forum thread for the essay, then click "Start a New Conversation." Be sure to put your full name in the title of your conversation, then use the "Add Attachments" button to upload your draft to the thread. This way, everyone in our class will have access to each other's drafts. Make sure your name is in the file name of your draft (e.g., "Kathryne essay 1.doc").

Drafts can be "rough," but they should be complete. That means that your drafts should be at least the minimum page requirement, have a clearly stated thesis, and give the reader the general shape of the argument you intend to make and the evidence you will use to support it.

Peer Review Marginal Comments and Endnotes

Peer review margin notes and letters are due the day of workshop by 10am (i.e., *before* class) on the CTools forum. To comment on a classmate's draft, open the original essay file in Word, go to File-->Save As..., and rename the file with your name and the original author's name in this format: *Kathryne to Steve essay 1.doc*.

To leave **marginal comments** on the essay, use the "Track Changes" function in Word. This will allow you to correct the text of the essay and leave "Comments" in the margins.

In addition to marginal notes, please compose an **endnote** to the author (type this directly onto the end of the author's essay). This note should be 300-400 words in length, and while bullet points are okay, please address your note like a letter, and sign it like a letter, too!

To upload your peer review document, open the forum, then find the conversation started by the author of the draft to which you are responding. Click on the "Reply" button, then click on "Add attachments" to upload a copy of your letter to the thread. Make sure your name is in the file name of the letter, as well as the original author's name (e.g., "Kathryne to Steve essay 1.doc").

How to Read Like a Peer Reviewer

Former students say that peer review is one of the most useful aspects of English 125, but it can also be the most frustrating, especially when your peers provide vague, nonspecific feedback. To make peer review as useful as possible, please take the following to heart:

- Read the writer’s entire essay before you begin to take notes or mark in the margins.
- Focus on thesis, organization, topic sentences, use of evidence, and persuasiveness.
- Do not focus on proofreading/copy-editing, but do flag awkward, wordy, or repetitive phrasing that the author should revise.

More specifically, your comments are most helpful when they address the following aspects of each essay:

- *Title and Introduction:* How effectively does the writer set up her topic? How effectively does the introduction set up the “stakes” or “so what?” question of the essay? How well does it convince you to keep on reading? How well does the title capture the spirit of the overall essay?
- *Thesis:* Write down the specific sentence or sentences that you identify as the thesis. Does the thesis clearly articulate the essay’s central claim? offer a nuanced perspective (“gray area”) rather than an all-or-nothing claim? provide a “roadmap” or “signposts” for the argument that follows in the essay without sounding rote or mechanical?
- *Body Paragraphs:* How well does each paragraph connect to and help support the essay’s central claim? How well does each topic sentence frame each paragraph? How well does the evidence in each paragraph support and develop the topic sentence?
- *Evidence:* How well does the author set up and analyze quotations? How does the author balance summary and analysis?
- *Transitions:* How well does the essay develop from one paragraph to the next? Are there any specific places where you thought the author could do more to connect her thoughts in a logical way?
- *Conclusion:* How effectively does the conclusion recall the essay’s central claim? Has this claim changed or developed in unexpected ways from the beginning of the essay? How well does the author recall the stakes of the essay?

Technology Use:

Because nothing will eat through your printing budget like the peer review process, I will allow you to bring laptops to class on workshop days. This way, you will be able to access each other’s drafts *and* each other’s feedback letters. However, if I notice any off-task laptop usage, I will change this policy.

Evaluation:

Each batch of peer review responses is worth 2% of your final grade in the course. I will mark them using the 1-5 point scale that I use for short assignments.

Grading Rubric for Short Assignments

5: extraordinary

- thoroughly addresses all aspects of the assignment and may include analysis that exceeds the requirements of the assignment
- offers thoughtful and insightful analysis
- provides sufficient textual evidence to support its claims
- shows consistent attention to detail and an effort to create work of superior quality

4: excellent

- thoroughly addresses all aspects of the assignment
- offers thoughtful and insightful analysis
- provides sufficient textual evidence to support its claims
- shows consistent attention to detail

3: good [I assign this rating most frequently]

- addresses all aspects of the assignment, but some portions of the response may be less thorough than others
- offers some thoughtful analysis but includes arguments that require further development or clarification
- provides textual evidence to support its claims, but that evidence may not be sufficient or persuasive
- shows some attention to detail but may include a few careless errors

2: fair

- does not address all aspects of the assignment
- offers very little analysis or analysis that is significantly underdeveloped or unclear
- provides insufficient textual evidence to support its claims
- shows a lack of attention to detail and includes several careless errors

1: poor

- does not address all aspects of the assignment
- offers little or no analysis
- provides little or no textual evidence to support its claims
- shows minimal effort

Reading Journal

English 125 is a *writing* class, but one of the best ways to improve your writing is to *read* widely and critically. Over the course of the semester, we will read a collection of texts that I have chosen, but these assigned texts will not be our only reading. As a class, I am asking *you* to produce an archive of articles that are of interest to *you* and that might prompt responses from your fellow classmates, so that by the end of the term we have a written record of some of our conversations together.

The Reading Journal project will consist of three distinct tasks over the course of the semester: posts, responses, and a presentation.

Posts:

Twice during the semester, you will be responsible for finding a well-written article that interests you, composing a 500-word post about the article, and publishing both your comments and a link to your article on our CTools forum.

Responses:

Eight times during the semester, you will be responsible for reading another student's article and post, reviewing any comments already left to the author of the original post, and composing a 200-word response of your own, published on our CTools forum. Two of these shorter responses must be in response to the comments left on one of your original posts.

Revision/Reflection assignment:

At the end of the term, you will take one of your original posts and its thread of comments and write a reflective essay of 1200-1600 words in which you analyze the conversation that emerged from your post, consider how the comments of others have influenced your initial thoughts of the article, and generate new questions from both the article and your classmates' responses. (More detailed assignment instructions to follow.)

Deadlines:

Posts: You will sign up for two posting slots on the first day of class, one in the first half of the term and one in the second.

Responses: You may post your eight short responses any time in the semester, but these responses must appear in at least six different calendar weeks. That is to say, this will be an ongoing project – you cannot do all your posts at once!

Presentation assignment: The final presentation assignment will be explained toward the end of the term.

Evaluation:***Posts and responses (5%):***

The main purpose of the Reading Journal is to spark interesting conversations among members of our class; as such, I do not see any benefit in strictly “grading” your posts and responses. Instead, I will mark your posts and responses credit/no-credit, as long as you make genuine attempts to foster and engage in critical conversations. That said, I do expect posts and responses to be well-composed, both conceptually and mechanically, and if I notice a decline in the written quality of posts or responses, I may begin to grade these components on a 1-5 point scale.

Revision/Reflection assignment (10%):

Your final presenting of your Reading Journal experience will be evaluated according to a separate rubric.

Tips and suggestions:***For creating successful posts:***

- Engage with specific themes and/or issues that emerge in your article.
- Analyze a specific passage or passages from your article in terms of style or argumentation.
- Grapple with a difficult or confusing question or argument posed by your article.
- Discuss links between our course materials and your article.

For creating successful responses:

- Engage thoughtfully and respectfully with the original poster’s questions and/or ideas.
- Discuss how the original poster’s analysis has influenced or altered your own understanding of the article or another issue.
- Extend, complicate, or respectfully challenge the original poster’s analysis.
- Respond to a question that the original post explicitly or implicitly raises.
- Grapple with an insight, contradiction, or conundrum that emerges from the original post.

Essay #1: Close Reading
Length: 2-3 pages/650-1000 words

Workshop draft due: Jan 25 (Fri)
Workshop date: Jan 29 (Tues)
Revision due: Feb 2 (Fri)

Assignment:

Select one chapter from *Cannery Row* and offer a “close reading” of the chapter. Start with a (very brief) introduction to the chapter you have chosen, then spend the bulk of your paper discussing the text itself. End with a brief concluding reflection on how your chosen chapter fits into the work as a whole.

As we have been discussing in class, close reading is an intensive engagement with the mechanics of a text. Your writing should capture the “closeness” of your reading by both quoting from the text itself and taking the time to explain the significance of what you have quoted. What words, sentences, or paragraphs stand out in your reading? Why? How does reading the text your way (focusing on the details you have noticed) affect your understanding of the work as a whole?

Please follow MLA formatting throughout your essay for setting up your document and citing from the text.

Evaluation:

As your essay’s reader, I want to see what *you* see when you read the chapter you have selected: how well does your writing guide your reader through the text? Specifically, I will be evaluating how effectively you:

- capture and state the main idea of the chapter you have chosen
- select, introduce, and discuss quotations from the text
- “unpack”/explain the significance of specific words, phrases, and sentences
- negotiate a balance between cited text and your own words
- relate your passage to the work as a whole

I will also comment on the overall effectiveness of your essay in terms of style, usage, and mechanics.

Submission:

Workshop drafts should be uploaded to the CTools Forum by 12pm (noon) on Friday, Jan. 25.

Along with your revised essay, I ask that you turn in a **cover letter** of *no more than a page single-spaced*. In your letter, please reflect briefly on how you approached the assignment, what you found challenging about the process, where you feel you really triumphed, what you think you did most effectively in your essay, and where you still wish to practice and improve. I will not grade your cover letter, but will use it to give you more targeted feedback on your writing, so please be thoughtful.

Please submit an electronic copy of your essay and cover letter to your CTools Drop Box by 12pm (noon) on Friday, February 2. I will accept either Microsoft Word formats (.doc or .docx).

This essay is worth 8% of your final grade.

Essay #2: Critical Reading
Length: 4-6pp/1250-2000 words

Workshop draft due: Feb 15 (Fri)
Workshop date: Feb 18 (Mon)
Revision due: Feb 22 (Fri)

Assignment:

Select a “text”¹ of any medium or genre (print, web, film, photo, drawing, physical object, etc.) and perform a motivated “reading” of it. Your essay should use at least one outside source to situate your “text” in a larger conversation, then critically “read” your text in order to make a contribution to your chosen conversation.

The aim of this assignment is *not* to label your text “good” or “bad” according to some objective standard. Rather, this assignment asks that you use a non-traditional “text” to “think through” a larger issue that matters to *you*. To do so successfully, your essay should demonstrate an analytical understanding of your text’s genre, audience, purpose, and form in order to argue for how it makes (or perhaps complicates) meaning in the world. This will require a careful (even “close”) reading of your text, and you will be responsible for articulating and following the criteria by which you are able to perform this reading.

Please follow MLA formatting throughout your essay for setting up your document and citing from your sources. I do expect a Works Cited page for this essay.

Evaluation:

As your essay’s reader, I am looking to be amazed at the creative ways in which you are able to create meaning from something seemingly meaningless. Specifically, I will be evaluating how effectively you:

- situate your text within a “conversation”
- stake a claim that contributes in a clear way to this conversation
- articulate the criteria by which you can “read” your text
- analyze your “text” in order to make meaning
- present a compelling case for reading your text

I will also comment on the overall effectiveness of your essay in terms of style, usage, and mechanics.

Submission:

Please submit your workshop drafts to the CTools forums by 12pm (noon) on Friday, Feb 15. Peer review letters will be due in the CTools forums before class on Monday, Feb 18. If you hand-write your comments, please either scan them in as pdfs or submit photocopied hard copies to me.

Please submit an electronic copy of your essay and cover letter to your CTools Drop Box by 12pm (noon) on Friday, February 22. I will accept either Microsoft Word formats (.doc or .docx).

This essay is worth 15% of your final grade.

¹ I use this term loosely; however, I do want your “text” to be a material thing that you can point to in the world (e.g., not a memory or an anecdote) and bring into class to share (e.g., not your cat or the dining hall).

Essay #3: Comparative Analysis
Length: 6-7pp/2000-2250 words

Second source proposal due: Mar 11 (Mon)
Workshop draft due: Mar 15 (Fri)
Workshop date: Mar 19 (Tues)
Revision due: Mar 22 (Fri)

Assignment:

Select one of the following articles (Reid, Steinberg, Leary, or Orlean) and one outside source of your own choosing. Your second source can be of any medium or genre (print, web, film, photo, drawing, physical object, etc.), and while it should relate to the article that you choose in some way (subject matter, genre, etc.), it does not necessarily have to directly address it. Then, write an essay in which you argue for reading your two sources together.

This paper is *not* a “compare and contrast” essay: I do not want you to list the ways your two sources are similar to or different from each other. Likewise, your essay should *not* read like two separate readings of your two sources. Instead, I want you to explain *why* you chose to bring your second source into contact with your first. How does your second source enrich your understanding of the first? What arguments does it confront, what assumptions does it underline or challenge, or what new information or perspective does it bring?

Please follow MLA formatting throughout your essay for setting up your document and citing from your sources.

Evaluation:

As your essay’s reader, I will need some convincing as to why you have chosen to read your two sources together. Why should I read these two things together? What am I missing by only having access to one? On what grounds are you staging this confrontation? Another major component of the paper will be positioning your sources in relation to each other. How do they relate? What do they ask of each other? Where do they position *you* in relation to the larger context of the subject matter they engage?

Specifically, I will be evaluating how effectively you:

- select a second source and explain your choice
- analyze each of your sources
- describe and analyze the relationship of your sources to each other
- position yourself among the conversation between your two sources
- stake and defend a position within the larger conversation

I will also comment on the overall effectiveness of your essay in terms of style, usage, and mechanics.

Submission:

Second source proposal: By 8pm on Monday, Mar 11, please post in the CTools forum the article you plan to write on as well as a brief description of your second source. Workshop drafts are due on the CTools forums by 12pm (noon) on Friday, Mar 15. Peer review letters are due before class on Tuesday, Mar 19 on the CTools forums. Revisions and cover letters are due to your CTools Dropbox by 12pm (noon) on Friday, Mar 22.

This essay is worth 20% of your final grade.

Description of Articles:

Reid, Elwood. "My Body, My Weapon, My Shame." *GQ* (1998): 360-366. Print.

Reid is a novelist and short story writer with a colorful past, and this is a personal essay in which he reflects on his experiences as a freshman football player on a Big Ten university team.

Steinberg, Neil. "The Spelling Bee." *Granta* 47 (1994): 51-72. Print.

Steinberg is a reporter for the Chicago Sun-Times, and this essay is an investigation into the process of losing the 1993 National Spelling Bee.

Leary, John Patrick. "Detroitism." *Guernica*, 15 Jan. 2011. Web. 1 Sep. 2012.

Leary is a professor of literature at Wayne State University, and this essay provides critical commentary on "ruin porn" photographs of Detroit.

Orlean, Susan. "The American Man, Age Ten." *The New Kings of Nonfiction*. Ed. Ira Glass. New York: Riverhead, 2007. 144-159. Print

Orlean is a well-known American writer, and this essay offers a subtle and serious account of the life of an average American 10-year-old named Colin Duffy.

Essay #4: Argumentative Narrative
Length: 8-10pp/2500-3000 words

Proposal/Guiding Question due: Apr 1 (Mon)
Workshop draft due: Apr 12 (Fri)
Workshop date: Apr 16 (Tues)
Revision due: Apr 19 (Fri)

Assignment:

Select a person, (sub)culture, or community on the University of Michigan campus that you think is often a victim of “single story syndrome.” Conduct research that shows how your topic is usually perceived, drawing on at least three sources, including at least one interview and at least one peer-reviewed academic article. After analyzing the stories told by your sources, develop a genuine question about your topic that you think no existing work on your topic has answered. Then, write an essay in which you answer this question while telling a different story about your topic.

Over the second half of this semester, we have entered the world of Big Ten football, explored the “ruins” of Detroit, traveled to Alcatraz and the Ukraine, and lost at the National Spelling Bee. Though our readings have come from different genres and sources, all of them might be classified as “argumentative narratives,” that is, stories that seek not only to inform or entertain the reader, but also to act on the reader’s ethics, logic, and sympathy in order to make a larger point. In this assignment, I am asking you to do the same type of work. What stories are usually told about your topic? How are they incomplete or biased? What questions do they raise? How can you tell a different story? What type of larger argument might develop out of a multiplicity of stories?

Please follow MLA formatting throughout your essay for setting up your document and citing from your sources.

Evaluation:

As your essay’s reader, I will represent the “single story” school of thought, which means I will be skeptical about your chosen topic. Why should I care about *your* version of the story? What’s wrong with the usual story? On the other hand, I will also be genuinely interested in what I might learn from a different perspective on your chosen topic. What new questions does your approach open up? What can I learn from your take on your topic? What larger points can you argue from your version of the story?

Specifically, I will be evaluating how effectively you:

- use outside sources to provide background for your topic
- analyze the information you gather on your topic
- position yourself among the “stories” that are usually told about your topic
- combine narrative, research, and analysis into a coherent, well-developed essay
- advance an argument that has stakes beyond your topic

I will also comment on the overall effectiveness of your essay in terms of style, usage, and mechanics.

Submission:

Proposal/Guiding question: By 8pm on Monday, Apr 1, please compose a paragraph that describes the group you are planning to research and posits a question about the group that you hope to answer in writing your essay. Post your proposal in the CTools assignment section and bring a copy of your proposal to class.

Workshop draft: By 12pm (noon) on Friday, Apr 12, please submit your draft for workshop on the CTools forums.

Peer review letters will be due before class on Tuesday, Apr 16 on the CTools forums.

Revision: By 12pm (noon) on Friday, Apr 19, please submit your revision, along with a cover letter, to your CTools dropbox.

This essay is worth 22% of your final grade.

Reading Journal Presentations

Dates: April 11, 16

Length: 5-8 minutes

Assignment:

Select one of the articles that you posted on a weekly reading journal assignment. Then, in a brief presentation, present the following information to the class:

- a summary of the article, including its main argument
- your original reaction to the article
- an overview of the subsequent reaction posts that notes any trends (expected or surprising) in reactions
- one question that you would pose to the rest of the class based on your thinking about the article

After presenting your article and posing your question, you will have a few minutes to field questions and lead discussion on your chosen topic.

Evaluation:

I will evaluate your presentation according to the following rubric:

Required components (40 points):

Summary of article is clear and concise (15pts)

Reactions to the article are presented in a clear, logical way (10 pts)

Question posed is relevant and thoughtful (10 pts)

5-8min time limit is followed (5 pts)

Style and presentation (10 points):

Do you speak clearly and confidently? (5pts)

Do you engage your audience? (2pts)

Do you field questions and discussion well? (2pts)

Does it look like you are having fun? (1pt)

Formal Essay Grading Rubric

	A	B	C	D	E
Conceptual structure: -overall organization -development of ideas -motive	Contains a convincing argument with a compelling motive; responsive to demands of the assignment and audience; cogent analysis develops according to a logical structure	Addresses audience with a thoughtful argument; responds to the prompt; motive is clearly stated, but perhaps slightly underdeveloped or obstructed by minor structural errors	Presents adequate response to the prompt; motive may be unstated or missing; structure of essay does not help develop ideas	Shows serious weakness in addressing the prompt; weak organizational sense or motive	Does not address the prompt
Rhetorical structure: -topic sentences -paragraph transitions	Well-constructed paragraphs; appropriate, clear, and smooth transitions; uses signposts to guide the reader through the paper	Paragraphs are distinct and follow clear topic sentences; transitions are logical and coherent; may have some organizational issues	Some awkward transitions; some weakly unified or undeveloped paragraphs; unnatural arrangement of ideas	Wanders from topic to topic with no clear logic	No transitions; incoherent paragraphs
Argument: -thesis statement -key terms	Essay controlled by clear, precise, well-defined thesis; is sophisticated in both statement and insight; key terms well-defined and deployed	Clear, specific, arguable thesis central to the essay; may have some key terms undefined	General thesis that states the obvious; may leave many key terms undefined	Thesis is vague or not central to argument	No discernible thesis or controlling idea
Evidence/Analysis: -quotations -summary vs analysis	Well-chosen examples, thoughtfully presented and explained; analysis always connects back to central thesis; quotations cited correctly and artfully incorporated into prose	Supports thesis with appropriate details; may leave some analysis implicit rather than explicit; incorporates quotes into prose well	Shallow analysis that veers more toward summary; quotes not fully explained or unpacked; generalizations rather than specific quotations; awkward use of quotes	Insufficient or awkward use of textual evidence	Fails to cite sources
Mechanics -grammar -style	Uses sophisticated sentences and appropriate vocabulary; follows conventions of written English; makes few errors in formatting	May contain a few stylistic or mechanical problems (awkward sentences, word choice); few spelling/punctuation errors; uses appropriate format	Frequent awkwardness, wordiness, passive voice, grammatical errors	Some major grammatical or proofreading errors (subject-verb agreement, sentence fragments, word form errors)	Numerous major and minor grammatical errors