

# Writing: American Radical Thought

## Course Information

Monday and Wednesday  
10:20am - 12:10pm  
Bessey Hall, Room 311

Website: <http://goo.gl/yBwuVn>

## Instructor Information

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Office: Olds Hall, Room 3D  
Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 12:10 - 1:00pm

## Description

American Radical Thought provides a theme for the content of our course, but my goals as a writing teacher are not specifically related to American Radical Thought. To that end, I want this course to be fun and interesting, and I look forward to discussing radical leaders, radical communities, and all manner of radical writing. However, this is not a seminar in American Radical Thought: you will not be sitting back and taking notes while I lecture.

Expect to do:

- most of the knowledge work around the theme of American Radical Thought
- a lot of writing

Expect to learn:

- how to assess the writing you encounter in different contexts
- how to write effectively for the different contexts you encounter
- how to use writing to develop your ideas and make knowledge
- useful writing habits and skills

I will hold you to high standards of engagement, participation, and production. You should hold me to those same standards.

## Materials

### Texts

Texts for this course will be provided online in digital formats. You don't need to purchase any texts. You do need to come to class prepared to discuss the readings in detail and with the ability to cite passages of text. This means either printing copies of our readings and bringing them to class with you or bringing a laptop (or tablet, or similar device) to access our readings online.

### Technology

You need a laptop. You need internet access. You need an MSU NetID and a preferred email address. Reliable access to a printer is helpful.

## Other Materials

Bring pens and a notebook to class every day. A small stapler is often helpful, as are paperclips. You will also need five (5) file folders, one for each project.

# Projects & Grading

## Projects

There are five major projects in this course, and each is worth 20% of your final course grade:

- Project I: Learning Memoir
- Project II: Cultural Artifact Analysis
- Project III: Disciplinary Literacies
- Project IV: Remix
- Project V: Re-Vision

We will discuss these projects and their respective goals, requirements, and aspirations as they come up during the semester.

## Portfolios

You will submit projects as a portfolio of your work, with each of the following portfolio items representing 25% of the final project grade:

- developmental materials
- response draft
- response work
- evaluation draft or presentation

Another way to think of this: each individual component of a project portfolio represents 5% of your final overall course grade.

## Grading Scale

Grading follows a standard 4.0 scale with increments of 0.5 points (4.0, 3.5, 3.0, etc.). In the event of fractional grades, I use the following convention for rounding:

- \*.75 or higher rounds up to the nearest whole point (3.75 becomes 4.0)
- \*.24 or lower rounds down to the nearest whole point (3.24 becomes 3.0)
- between \*.74 and \*.25 rounds to the nearest half-point (3.25 or 3.74 become 3.5)

# Policies

## Classroom Culture

A neat thing about writing courses is that we get to know each other in ways that aren't possible in other coursework: we'll learn each other's names, discuss each other's writing, share points of view, disagree,

struggle, create, and learn together for sixteen weeks this semester. We may have some fun, we will sometimes be very uncomfortable, and we're likely to be tired of each other by mid-November. A writing course isn't magic, and it's not some made-for-TV movie, but it is an opportunity you won't have every semester. Make the most of it.

A good rule of thumb: always assume that the person sitting next you is implicated by what you want to say. Be respectful. Be mindful. Be peaceful. Speak your mind, but think before you speak. Think before you write. How you make a point is often more important than the point itself, and if you're in doubt about how to proceed? Ask questions instead of making statements.

## **Attendance**

Short version: I mostly don't track attendance, but you'll find it difficult to do well in this course if you don't come to class every day ready to work.

Longer version: shit happens, so be prepared. If you're going to miss a class, act professionally: let me know as soon as soon as possible, and get notes, materials, and updates from a classmate.

Official version: you can miss up to three class meetings without impacting your grade, and every absence beyond three lowers your overall course grade by 0.5 point (for example from a 4.0 to a 3.5).

## **Late Work**

I will not accept late work. As such, it is always better to submit whatever you have when an assignment is due--no matter how partial or incomplete--than to submit nothing at all.

## **Revisions**

While I will not accept late work, I will gladly accept revisions to the final or evaluation drafts of your major projects. In fact, you are welcome to revise and resubmit the final draft of any project at any time during the semester, as many times as you like.

If you revise and resubmit a project, include a brief note describing the following: the original grade received on your final or evaluation draft, a summary of your revisions, a description of how your revisions improved the project, and your recommendation for a revised grade. Submit revised projects along with all their accompanying portfolio material.

## **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

Short version: don't willingly cheat. Don't pass off someone else's work as your own. Don't copy/paste from the internet. Don't resubmit work from past courses. Just don't. Don't cut corners. Instead, do the work to the best of your ability, submit your own original writing, and make a good faith effort to cite your sources when you use someone else's idea.

Longer version: plagiarism is complicated, often unintentional, and we'll talk about it when we need to talk about it. A lot.

Official version: see the MSU Office of the Ombudsperson page on Academic Honesty and Integrity (<https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/academic-integrity/index.html>). The gist: instructors are to penalize any student suspected of academic dishonesty and report the incident to the university where it becomes part of the student's academic record.