:: wra 135-04 :: public life in america ::

:: communities and public rhetoric(s):: spring 2013 ::

:: tth 10:30-12:10 :: bessey 203 ::

According to the course catalog, WRA 135 is a foray into drafting, revising, and editing compositions derived from readings on American civic tradition and community service-learning experiences to develop skills in narration, persuasion, analysis, and documentation. In the context of the first land-grant university in the U.S., which sought to democratize higher education by creating more openness and accessibility, we will spend this semester of WRA 135 exploring communities and inquiring about openness, accessibility, and public rhetorics. We will inquire, write, and research about public rhetoric(s) surrounding various communities and the impact those rhetorics have on communities. We'll situate ourselves in particular communities and examine the way class, gender, race, national origin, language, and other axes of identity intersect and impact those communities.

Because this is a service-learning course, you can expect to work with community organizations throughout the semester. You will find (research!) one or more Lansing-area nonprofit organization whose work aligns with your values and has need of on-site volunteers. You will spend *at least* 8 hours (hopefully, more) over the course of the semester doing direct volunteer work; four classes will be "canceled" this term to free up these hours in your schedule. We will reflect and analyze these experiences and discuss what they teach us of public rhetorics.

:: our goals ::

- o to **participate / engage in communities** in the places you live, work, and go to school

- o to **develop a language** to talk about writing and to rhetorically analyze public rhetoric(s) about communities

- o to **reflect on your own position** in these communities and connect experiences of local communities to public rhetoric(s)

- o to **read, research, and write** in multiple genres for various audiences, purposes, and contexts in and outside the classroom

:: these questions will be the starting points for our inquiries ::

- o What is a community? How and why do we build them? How do we know if we belong? What does participation look and feel like? Why participate / engage?

- o What is public rhetoric? How are public rhetoric(s) created, sustained, circulated, modified, and challenged? How are public rhetoric(s) connected to issues of access and power within communities?

- o What can communities and the public rhetorics circulating about them teach us? What can conflict between local communities and dominant public rhetorics teach us?

:: course outcomes ::
As part of the general education requirement, Tier I Writing contributes to the Michigan State University mission by focusing on inquiry-based teaching and learning that encourages students to begin to understand themselves as:
- contributing members of MSU's community of scholars
- committed to asking important questions and to seeking rich responses to those questions
- developing skills, knowledge, and attitudes that improve the quality of life for self and others through scholarly, social, and professional activities.

In pursuit of these goals, Tier I Writing courses engage students in writing and reflection activities that make overt the ways that invention, arrangement, and revision activities:
- can be engaged across inquiry situations (scholarly, social, and professional)
- require the development of knowledge about the importance of contextual factors that affect the application of these methods of inquiry

first-year writing shared learning outcomes support inquiry-based learning that transfers across writing situations in relation to three major issues:

writing
- Use writing for purposes of reflection, action, and participation in academic inquiry.
- Work within a repertoire of genres and modes to meet appropriate rhetorical purposes.
- Exercise a flexible repertoire of invention, arrangement, and revision strategies.
- Demonstrate an understanding of writing as an epistemic and recursive process and effectively apply a variety of knowledge-making strategies in writing.
- Understand diction, usage, voice, and style, including standard edited English, as conventional and rhetorical features of writing.

reading
- Engage in reading for the purposes of reflection, critical analysis, decision-making, and inquiry.
- Understand that various academic disciplines and fields employ varied genre, voice, syntactical choices, use of evidence, and citation styles.
- Read in ways that improve writing, especially by demonstrating an ability to analyze invention, arrangement, and revision strategies at work in a variety of texts.
- Demonstrate an understanding of reading as an epistemic and recursive meaning making process.
- Understand that academic disciplines and fields employ varied genre, styles, syntactical patterns, uses of evidence, and documentation practices that call for a variety of reading strategies.

researching
- Apply methods of inquiry and conventions to generate new understanding.
- Demonstrate the ability to locate, critically evaluate, and employ a variety of sources for a range of purposes.
- Demonstrate the ability to generate and apply research strategies that are purposeful, ethical, and balanced.
- Demonstrate an understanding of research as epistemic and recursive processes that arise from and respond back to various communities.
- Understand the logics and uses of citation systems and documentation styles and display competence with one citation system/documentation style.

:: course materials ::
- Aaron, Jane E. *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook—MSU Edition*. Seventh Edition. Boston: Pearson Learning Solutions. 2010.
- Readings distributed in class or posted on Angel. I expect you to bring a paper or electronic copy to class.

:: other supplies ::
- something to write *with*
- something to write *on (*i.e. a laptop, a tablet, a notebook or loose leaf paper)
- a folder or binder to organize handouts and other resources and materials
- You may also want a digital memory device (e.g. USB or jump drive) to save your work

:: participation :: Because inquiry and mean-making are social practices, I will keep "lecturing" to a minimum, which means the rest of our classroom community must participate. Participation includes, but is not limited to: attendance, quality of peer reviews, preparation for class, engaged discussion in small and large groups, in-class writing, good community practices, and attentiveness to class (i.e. no texting, facebook, games, etc). I expect you to have completed all previous readings/assignments/etc. by class time, and, at all times, I expect us to treat each other with respect and civility. No disrespectful or discriminatory behavior directed toward a person's race, national origin, age, gender, affectional preference, or dis/ability will be tolerated in our classroom community. Be careful with sarcasm, "jokes," stereotypes, or innuendo—especially online, since the lack of "paralinguistic" cues (verbal inflection, body language, facial expressions, etc.) can contribute to misunderstandings. The classroom—both physical and virtual—is no place for personal attacks or similar tactics. Everyone is responsible for creating a climate that's conducive to their own learning and that of their fellow writers.

Here are a few more ideas about discussion, respect for others, and building and sustaining community that you may want to keep in mind:

- *Conflict: is good. We are passionate; conflict shows that we care. Seek out and talk with those with whom you disagree as well as those with whom you agree. Seeking out people shows your respect for the person. Respect builds community.*
- *Civil discourse: Use words that do not insult, inflame, or otherwise exacerbate what may already be a tense situation. Speak your mind, but remember that alienating people prevents persuasion, while being civil builds community.*
- *Reason: Focus on ideas, not people. Don't tell someone they're wrong; instead, explain why you disagree with their idea. Using reason builds community.*

A further note about my role: I will often tell you my opinions on issues. However, please be assured that there are no "politically correct" positions in this class, and I don't want you sucking up to me politically or ideologically. Though I may express my opinion, I do not expect, or even want, you to share it; in fact, I appreciate and respect diverse opinions. Your grades and those of other class members will be based on the effective use of appropriate rhetorical strategies, not on your adherence to any particular position. –from Seth Kahn's blog, "Here Comes Trouble."

:: attendance policy :: All courses in the Tier I Writing Program are interactive and require high levels of participation. Attendance at all class sessions is expected. You may miss 2 classes without affecting your grade. Reserve these absences to address the observance of religious holidays not acknowledged by the University calendar, family events, serious illness, etc. **If you miss more than two classes, your final grade for the course will be lowered .25 letter grades for each absence**. Please see your student handbook or the university Ombudsman's web page (http://www.msu.edu/~ombud/) for procedures for obtaining an excused absence at MSU. Contact me *immediately*, if an emergency arises causing you to miss more than two classes. When you miss class, you are responsible for getting notes from a classmate, checking the Angel website, and for fulfilling any assignments that are due. If you come to class late, it's your responsibility to check with me after class to ensure I marked you present.

:: special needs :: This is an inclusive classroom, and I am committed to supporting everyone's ability to fully participate. Please let me know as soon as possible if I can make the classroom or any of our activities more suited to your abilities or if you have questions related to any accommodation (e.g. note takers, readers, etc.). I may ask you to provide certification from the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD), 120 Bessey Hall, 517/353-9642 or TTY 517/355-1293.

:: academic honesty :: Michigan State University has adopted the following statement about academic policy: The principles of truth and honesty are fundamental to the educational process and the academic integrity of the University; therefore, no student shall: **1.01** claim or submit the academic work of another as one's own. **1.02** procure, provide, accept or use any materials containing questions or answers to any examination or assignment without proper authorization. **1.03** complete or attempt to complete any assignment or examination for another individual without proper authorization. **1.04** allow any examination or assignment to be completed for oneself, in part or in total, by another without proper authorization. **1.05** alter, tamper with, appropriate, destroy or otherwise interfere with the research, resources, or other academic work of another person. **1.06** fabricate or falsify data or results. Procedures for responding to cases of academic honesty and possible repercussions are outlined in Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide or at http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html.

:: major projects ::
You must complete all major projects (and accompanying documents such as drafts, peer response, etc. and your community work) to fulfill the Tier I Writing requirement and receive a passing grade in this course.
**due dates are *tentative* and may change slightly.

project 1: rhetorical analysis: 4-6 pgs. 150 points

writing workshop draft: T 1.22; co-assessment draft: week of 1.29, optional final: TBD as a class.

> During this individual project, you will analyze popular media articles or representations or a space related to the community you are interested in working with this semester. The purpose of this project is to analyze how public rhetoric(s) shape your communities and the communities you'll be working with. This project will help you articulate a context for the rest of the semester's projects.

project 2: community stance and reflection: 3-5 pages. 150 points

writing workshop draft: Th 2.14; co-assessment draft: week of 2.21, optional final: TBD as a class.

> In this project, you will work individually to recount and analyze your own experiences and identities in relation the communities you will work with this semester. You might consider Project 2 a space to think through one or more of our questions for class discussion by using your personal experiences. The purpose of this project is to start developing questions and theories related to the issues we work through in class that you might follow through the rest of the semester.

project 3: public rhetoric(s): 5-7 pages. 200 points

writing workshop draft: T 3.12; co-assessment draft: week of 3.19; optional final: TBD as a class.

> In this individual project, you will use your participation in your community work to develop a research question, choose research methods, and develop tentative theories from your research. This project invites you to think about issues of public rhetoric(s), access, and power in communities.

> #### project 3a: annotated bibliography. approximately 7 substantial paragraphs. 25 points
>
> writing workshop draft: DUE. Final: T 3.12
>
> A brief introduction and *at least* three entries (an MLA citation and two substantial paragraphs each) submitted for Project 3. This supplemental assignment asks you to locate, summarize, and analyze *at least* three relevant sources for your third project.

project 4: remix and reflection varied lengths and mediums. 150 points

workshop draft: Th 4.11 final presentation version: 4.16-4.25

> In Project 4, you will use found media in order to speak to a new intended audience about public rhetorics surrounding issues and communities you've inquired into this semester. This project should have a life outside of and after this course.

project 5: revising rhetorics: 5-7 pages. 125 points

writing workshop draft: T 4.23. final draft due: W 5.1

> In this individual project, you will reflect on how your understandings of communities, public rhetoric(s), and access have changed over the semester. You might return to Project 1 or 2 and their initial question(s) and reconsider them. Project 5 also asks you to imagine how the issues/tensions we talked about in class might translate to other contexts.

small writing assignments: **100 points.** Includes daily writing, on-line discussion posts, and writing workshop letters.

participation: **100 points.** Includes preparation, attendance, and, especially, engagement in your community work and in-class discussion and writing workshops.

grade	points
4.0	900-1000
3.5	850-899
3.0	800-849
2.5	750-799
2.0	700-749
1.5	650-699
1.0	600-649
0.0	0-599

:: the writing and revision process ::

1. writing workshop draft: For Projects 1, 2, 3, and 5, you will turn in a draft to workshop in a small group during class. You must be in class and bring two hard copies of the draft—or, in the case of an emergency, make prior arrangements with me and submit the draft early—to receive points for participation. You'll revise your project based on the feedback you receive from the other writers in our class.

2. co-assessment draft: For Projects 1, 2, and 3, you will bring *two copies* of your revised draft to a half-hour conference with me in my office, Olds Hall 5A. During your conference, we'll discuss and assess your project together. If you miss your conference, your grade drops by half a grade for each day the paper is late. The first grade drop happens at the end of your scheduled conference time. I will still give you written feedback, but it will be far less substantive than that we would have developed during your conference.

3. optional revised draft: After your conference, you may revise your paper based on our assessment during your conference. As a class, we'll decide how and when these revisions are due. When you resubmit your revised draft, you must include your previous drafts and a reflective memo that incorporates a discussion of the following questions: 1) What did you revise? 1) What were the benefits of revision? 2) How do you understand the assignment differently now that you've revised it? 3) What *in particular* would you like me to comment on?

:: late work :: Your work is due at the beginning of the class period it's due. Plan for printer malfunctions, hungry canines, and last minute stomach flus, and get your work in on time. Major assignments handed in after class or the conference time during which they were due will be reduced half a grade per day unless prior arrangements are made with me. Daily work, such as discussion posts, and in-class work, including peer reviews and peer review drafts, may not be submitted after the class period they are due (i.e. they receive a zero).

:: formatting :: Unless specified otherwise, all assignments must:
> :: be typed and double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around.
> **::** use a standard, 12-point font (I recommend Times New Roman)
> **::** be stapled
> :: use a heading that includes your name, the date, the title of your work, and any draft information.
> **::** use a header that includes your last name and page numbers.
> **::** include works cited, citations, and "help received" statements as necessary (check your handbook or a reliable online resource for citation conventions). You may use MLA or the citation system used in your discipline.

:: resources ::
- Angel: http://www.angel.msu.edu
- The MSU Writing Center: www.writing.msu.edu
- MSU Library: http://www.lib.msu.edu
- University Ombudsman: http://www.msu.edu/~ombud
- Counseling Center: http://www.counseling.msu.edu
- Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities: http://www.rcpd.msu.edu, (517) 335-6004 or (877) 499-6232 (toll-free)
- Purdue OWL: http://www.owlenglish.purdue.edu/owl
- The Learning Resource Center: http://www.lrc.msu.edu