

Part 8. Sample Course Syllabus and Calendar for a First-Year Composition  
Class

**GWRIT 102D Sec. 4 & 9 Reading and Composition—Spring 2003**

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Ofc Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 12:30-1:30 p.m., Mon. or Wed. 9:00-11:00  
a.m., and by arrangement

**Blackboard URL:** <http://blackboard.jmu.edu>

**Writing Program Web Site:** <http://web.jmu.edu/writing/>

**Reading and Writing Support:**

***FYI Writing Center:*** A100 Huffman Hall x 3598 Hrs. 4:00-10:00 p.m.

Sun-Thurs

***Textbook Publisher's Website:***

[www.bedfordstmartins.com/waysofreading](http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/waysofreading)

***REQUIRED TEXTS:***

- Bartholomae, David and Anthony Petrosky. Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.
- Lunsford, Andrea and Robert Connors. The Everyday Writer: A Brief Reference.

- A dictionary

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES (a required inclusion on *all* GWRIT 102 syllabi):**

Building on the experience of GENG 101, 102 continues the development of the critical mind by introducing the writer to the methods of research-based writing. Writers learn to build and defend reasonable, intellectual positions based upon close readings of texts. The course

- reinforces the understanding of writing as a **process**, including the practices of invention, arrangement, and revision;
- refines the writer's awareness of **audience, occasion, organization, and style**;
- strengthens the ability to craft a defensible **argumentative thesis** and to develop a thorough, logically organized, and well-**supported** essay;
- develops the ability to use **research** to inform and advance a thesis; and
- refines the ability to edit for **clarity** and grammatical/mechanical correctness.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

As part of General Education's Cluster One Package D, the major theme in this course is *Critical Skills and Historical Inquiry*. The word "history" derives from the Greek word for "learning by inquiry, narrative...to see or know" (Webster's New World Dictionary). As such, our course is rooted in work that draws on narratives, accounts or tales--sometimes personal and sometimes public--of events that happened and the knowledge that can be drawn from these recollections.

Reading and writing are the inseparable partners for the work we'll engage in this semester. Bartholomae and Petrosky write, "Reading involves a fair measure of push and shove. You make your mark on a book and it makes its mark on you. . . . We'd like you to imagine that when you read the works we've collected here, somebody is saying something to you, and we'd like you to imagine that you are in a position to speak back, to say something of your own in turn" (1). And, the authors argue, "There is no better place to work on reading than in a writing course" (vi). The readings are rich, provocative, and complex and they will move you to think critically about the ideas they present.

What we will be after in the course, among other things, is to polish our close reading skills and organize and present our own responses to the ideas of others in writing. Don't think of the reading and writing assignments as "exercises." Think of them more as "conversations"

involving you, the authors, and the members of our class. Think of these conversations as means through which you might "see" or "know" something about yourself or our culture a little better. Additionally, the course will encourage you to become a better reader of your own writing, to understand your own strengths and weaknesses better, and to more clearly see your writing from the perspective of your readers.

### **COURSE METHOD:**

Expect reading, drafting, writing workshops, revising, class discussion, and conferences. We'll use our Blackboard course site for handouts and homework assignments. Be sure to consult it often. We'll also use the Internet and Carrier Library regularly to find information.

### **PERFORMANCE AND GRADING:**

10 % Blackboard Discussion Board Postings (informal writing assignments, etc.)

50 % Reading Response Papers (Papers #1 through #3)

25 % Paper #4—Research Paper (6-8 pages)

5 % Reading Presentation in Group

10 % Participation/Attendance (0-1 absence = 95; 2 absences = 85;

3 absences = 75

4 absences = 55; 5+ absences =

0)

Details about paper assignments will be available in Blackboard under "Assignments." Grading criteria for each assignment are included with the assignment sheets. Also, a "**Course Style Sheet**" will be available with information applicable to writing produced in the class. You will be expected to follow this sheet for all final drafts of formal written assignments.

\*\* Because this course emphasizes writing, all final paper drafts should reflect a concentrated effort to produce high quality standard English. This is the kind of writing you'll want to produce for your future employers, writing that exhibits your ability to use the conventions of writing expected of a college student. In addition, part of paper evaluation takes into consideration the Course Style Sheet's writing conventions. Be sure to follow the Style Sheet for paper assignments.

Short, informal weekly reading and writing assignments will be posted to **Blackboard's Discussion Board Forums** (information in class). Your responses should follow forum instructions, and they should be clear, original, and reflective of the material covered. Bring your printed responses to class on paper and each week's responses will be graded as follows: A

for an exceptionally strong, original, and clear; B for strong and clear; C for responses that follow the assignment well but may lack some clarity or originality; and D for incomplete responses or those that do not follow the assignment instructions. Forum responses should be legible, but grammar will not be as major a consideration on these assignments as it will be on formal paper assignments.

## **POLICIES:**

**E-Mail:** Use e-mail selectively to communicate with me. Look for information first in handouts and course information. If possible, talk to me directly before or after class. However, if you have a pressing question that demands a quick response, do send me an e-mail. I'll respond to e-mails as soon as possible, but e-mail sent later in the day or evening may not be read until the following day. As a rule, do not send e-mail attachments. I cannot open attachments unless previously approved.

**Late Work:** You will be allowed one late forum response during the semester and it won't be penalized if it is handed in within a week of the original due date. Also, you may hand in one late final draft of a paper without penalty as long as it is handed in within a week of the original due date. Subsequent late papers will be penalized. If you don't have a rough draft of a paper on the draft due date, you will forfeit the opportunity to have

the draft peer and instructor reviewed. **Also, please be advised that unless otherwise noted, all written work is due on paper, in class, at the beginning of class. Do not e-mail papers unless previously approved.**

**Conferences:** A draft review conference and a grading conference for paper #1 are required. Subsequent conferences on papers #2-4 are optional. If you sign up for a conference, consider it a commitment and do attend it.

**Attendance:** Attendance will count toward the Participation grade, 10% of the course total. Excellent attendance will be rewarded. Roll will be taken at the beginning of class. If you are late, **it is your responsibility** to check with me to correct your status on roll that day.

**Portfolio Assessment:** *You must keep final copies of papers on disk* for possible selection at the end of the semester. Student papers will be randomly selected for participation in an end of year assessment of first year writing. Details to follow in class.

**Honor Code:** Class members need to comply with JMU's Honor Code which prohibits plagiarism and falsifying information to avoid penalties to paper and/or course grades. Violations will have consequences.

**Special Needs:** If you have a physical or learning disability that you believe may affect your performance in the class, please consult with me as soon as possible so that we can determine reasonable accommodations.

**GRADES:**

Following are letter grades and equivalent points for assignments and the final grade:

A = 94-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	
D+ = 65-69			
A- = 90-93	B = 83-86	C = 73-76	D =
60-64			
	B- = 80-82	C- = 70-72	F =
below 60			

***SORRY--FINAL COURSE GRADE AVERAGES WILL NOT BE***

***“BUMPED”***

***AND FINAL COURSE GRADES WILL NOT BE E-MAILED***

## **Course Calendar (subject to change)**

For complete reading and response assignments, consult our Blackboard site's Discussion Board Forums.

**Jan. 14**                    **Course Overview**

**Jan. 16**                    Read Ways "Preface" v-ix and "Introduction" 1-18  
Writing DUE--assignment TBA in class on 1/14

**Jan. 21**                    Read John Edgar Wideman "Our Time" in Ways 750-789  
Writing DUE--assignment posted in Blackboard on Discussion  
Board Forum

**Jan. 23**                    Read Wideman again  
Writing DUE--assignment posted in Blackboard on Discussion  
Board Forum

**Jan. 28**                    Paper #1--Conferences and in class review of Group #1

**Jan. 30**                    Paper #1--Conferences and in class review of Group #2

- Feb. 4** In class workshop on Paper #1 final draft
- Feb. 6** Paper #1 Final DUE--**grading conferences Paper #1**
- Feb. 11** **Grading Conferences Paper #1**
- Feb. 13** Read Patricia Nelson Limerick's "Haunted America," pp.  
469-504
- Group Reading Presentations DUE--Groups 5 & 6
- Writing DUE--assignment posted in Blackboard on Discussion  
Board Forum
- Feb. 20** Read Limerick's "Haunted America" again
- Writing DUE--assignment posted in Blackboard on Discussion  
Board Forum
- Feb. 25** Paper #2--Conferences and in class review of Group #3
- Feb. 27** Paper #2--Conferences and in class review of Group #4

**Mar. 4** In class workshop on Paper #2 final draft

**Mar. 6** Paper #2 Final DUE

***March 8 through 16--SPRING BREAK--NO CLASSES***

**Mar. 18** Read Susan Griffin "Our Secret" in Ways 343-392  
Group Reading Presentations DUE--Groups 1 & 2  
Writing DUE--assignment posted in Blackboard on Discussion  
Board Forum

**Mar. 20** Read Susan Griffin again  
Writing DUE--assignment posted in Blackboard on Discussion  
Board Forum

**Mar. 25** Paper #3--Conferences and in class review of Group #5

**Mar. 27** Paper #3--Conferences

**Apr. 1** In class workshop on Paper #3 final draft

**Apr. 3** Paper #3 Final DUE

**Apr. 8** Read Michel Foucault "Panopticism" in Ways 223-253  
Writing DUE--assignment posted in Blackboard on Discussion  
Board Forum

**Apr. 10** Read Michel Foucault again  
Group Reading Presentations DUE--Groups 3 & 4  
Writing DUE--assignment posted in Blackboard on Discussion  
Board Forum

**Apr. 15** Discuss Paper #4 and Foucault reading

**Apr. 17** Discuss Paper #4 and Foucault reading

**Apr. 22** Paper #4--Conferences and in class review of Group #6

**Apr. 24** Paper #4--Conferences

**Apr. 29**

In class workshop on Paper #4 final draft

**May 1**

**Paper #4 Final DUE**

Semester Wrap-Up

***May 5 through 9--FINAL EXAMS***