

ENGL 1007: Seminar and Studio in Writing and Multimodal Composition
Section | Spring

Class Details

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Course Inquiry

How can we balance power and navigate gender oppression in the 21st century? How does sexism manifest in our world now and why do we (men, women, gender non-conforming individuals, gender-fluid individuals) find it so difficult to avoid falling into this trap? In this class, we will grapple with some

of these questions through personal narratives, theoretical works by writers such as Kimberlé Crenshaw and Michel Foucault, as well pop culture sources such as the podcast *RadioLab* and TED Talks. With the help of these and other works, we will attempt to theorize ways in which we might navigate the evolving understanding of sex and gender to create a more equitable society. In this course, you will identify an inquiry about gender and power dynamics which you will develop through your writing work as the semester progresses, culminating in a final Remix project in which you identify a problem in gender and power dynamics and suggest a solution or a different perspective to help tackle it.

Required Texts

There are no required texts for this course. You may, however, need access to Netflix and Hulu (please talk to me if you anticipate any problems with this). All other readings will be available on HuskyCT.

Grading

For the seminar portion of this course, we are using what's called a **Grading Contract/Letter Grading Schema**. Please see the Grading Contract in our shared Google Drive for a fuller description of the Grading Contract/Letter Grading Schema.

Please note that you must submit all major projects in this course and revisions in order to **pass**.

Course Components

Engagement: This is a seminar rather than a lecture course. Therefore, the class is driven by and centered on your work. Thoughtful discourse is an essential part of this class, and you will frequently work in groups of various sizes, which means you will need to be considerate of and attentive to others. It is your responsibility to keep up with the reading, to contribute to class conversation in the form of analytical comments or questions, to participate thoughtfully in peer review activities, and to attend class regularly and on time. Please check in with me, your instructor, if you are concerned about your ability to participate fully in class.

Reading: Although English 1007 is a writing course, the writing you do here has a very close relationship to reading. In fact, the process of writing begins with careful reading of a

situation, a written text, or other media. You will be reading to find ways into the conversation in which an author or text is participating. Many of these texts are multi-layered and complex. *You should expect to read most texts more than once.* You will need to read carefully, reread often, and take careful notes. Come to class prepared to share your thoughts and questions.

Writing: You will complete four major written projects in this course. In order to accomplish this, you will be doing ample writing along the way, including in-class writing, homework assignments, and drafts of these major projects. *Please note that you are not allowed to seek help with your writing outside the classroom, unless it is through the UConn Writing Center. Asking your roommates, friends, etc. for help with your work is not allowed.*

Revision: Each major writing project will go through a drafting process in which you shape your ideas and experiment with ways to best communicate this work. You should expect to put significant time and effort into the revision process and for projects to shift, change, and develop as you revise. An essay must go through a drafting and revision process in order to be considered for a grade.

Conferences and Peer Review: Conferences and peer review are integral to the goals of this course. Through the drafting process of each major writing project, we will use small group or individual conferences during, in addition to, or in place of regular class meetings. The quality of your involvement in these processes is a crucial factor in your participation, and thus final grade, in this course.

Information Literacy: English 1007 provides the first stage of the University's Information Literacy Competency, including attention to university research and digital literacy. You should expect to use outside sources and scholarly research to inform your work throughout the semester. While all assignments will provide opportunities for developing Information Literacy skills, we will have at least one assignment built with this specific purpose in mind.

Reflective Component: The reflective portion of the course includes any time spent on characterizing, reconsidering, or qualifying one's work. Reflection happens throughout the semester, usually in ways that complement writing projects by providing opportunities for a writer to imagine alternatives or trace lines of thought or activity. We will practice reflective writing (and reflective work more generally) throughout the semester.

Assignment 1: Narratives of G&PD

As we saw with the essay “When Students Harass Professors” and with our exploration into Humans of New York, narratives can be a powerful tool for framing discussions around gender and power dynamics. This assignment asks you to use narratives as a way into a conversation about gender and power dynamics that you’re interested in. Completing this project will help you begin to formulate some early ideas of what your inquiry for the final project of this class might be.

For this project, you will have to find someone to conduct a short (10-15min) interview with. This can be a roommate, a teammate, a family member, etc. Be aware, though, that this interview must be *recorded*, so make sure it’s someone you can connect with in a way that allows for this (in other words, email conversations won’t do).

Scaffolding:

Initial Questions. Create an initial list of 5 questions to ask your subject. These questions should not be yes/no questions, but ones which encourage the interviewee to talk at length about a topic. While these questions do not all have to be directly related to gender and power dynamics, at least some of these should address our course inquiry so you have a wealth of material to work with.

1a. **Revised Questions.** After reviewing your questions with other members of the class, revise these and submit your final set of 5 questions you plan to ask in your interview.

1b. **Consent Form and Transcript of Recording.** After conducting your interview, please upload a copy of the consent form that the participant has signed (photos are fine, so long as they are JPG or GIF; I can’t access Apple HEIC images), along with the transcript of the interview.

How to generate transcripts:

- Use the Otter app when recording
- Upload your recording/video to YouTube and have it generated automatically.

In both cases, you will need to clean up this transcription and fix the errors.

1c. **Submission of Narrative Slide with Interviewee.** You will create a single narrative slide, similar to the ones we examined with Humans of New York, with an excerpt from your interview. You should select the excerpt from the interview that you feel is the most powerful and include an appropriate photo of your subject. You do not have to take this photo yourself, but it should be appropriate (adequately reflect the subject matter of the excerpt and the interviewee). Pet photos will not be accepted in lieu of photos of your subject.

Final Submission of Narratives of G&PD. For the final step in this project, you will comb through the slides that the class has collected and select three that exemplify a particular theme in gender and power dynamics that interests you (you do not have to use your own

if you don't want to). You will combine these into a single slideshow. IN ADDITION to the slideshow, you will need to submit a short Statement of Goals and Choices that explains:

- The theme you are exploring
- Why you chose the slides you did
- Why you arranged them in the order that you did
- The SG&C is a reflective piece of writing; you should take the time to consider your process here and why you made the choices you did. Why did these slides stand out to you? How do they connect, in your mind?

Your response should run 200-250 words.

Evaluation Criteria

For the assignment to be considered complete:

- ✓ The link you submit must be set so that anyone with a UConn email can view it
- ✓ The chosen slides must reflect a theme concerning gender and power dynamics
- ✓ You must also submit a Statement of Goals and Choices (no more than 250 words)

Assignment 2: Theoretical Lens Essay

As we saw with readings by Julia Serano and Sara Ahmed, some texts can provide useful lenses through which to view a topic, showing us different perspectives and leading us to new insights. In this project, you will choose a concept from either Serano or Ahmed which you will use to “read” a text in a different way. You will then apply this lens to a text of your choice (remember, almost anything can be read as a text!) to demonstrate how the use of Serano or Ahmed illuminates something new for us.

The temptation with this project is to choose a secondary text which merely functions as an example of the concept you have chosen. You should dig a little deeper here to find something that, combined with Serano or Ahmed, tells us something *new* or leads us down a different path than one might expect.

Scaffolding:

2a. Perusal Activity. Using Perusal on HuskyCT, annotate Ahmed’s “Feminist Killjoys.” You will be responsible for adding three comments:

1. Highlight and comment on at least one place where you had a question about what Ahmed.
2. Highlight and comment on at least one place where you see Ahmed bringing in materials, or other voices (like a guest), examples, etc. that she’s using in order to establish her aims.
3. Highlight and comment on at least one place where you agree or disagree with Ahmed and explain why.

2b. Summary of Intriguing Concept. What really jumped out at you from Serano’s or Ahmed’s texts? What do you think you could explore further and apply in a different way? Write a summary of this concept.

2c. Secondary Text Options. Choose three secondary texts which you think might be useful to view through the lens of your chosen concept from 2a, along with a 1-2 sentence describing each text and why it might be interesting to write about it. You **MAY NOT** use news articles as your secondary texts (they don’t work well with this project, trust me!).

2d. Proposed Lens and Text. Write a short paragraph about the lens (concept) you are using for this essay and the secondary text you have settled on. How do you plan on using these together?

2e. First 500 words of your essay. Start drafting your essay to see how your ideas are working together. This is your chance to test out whether your lens works with your secondary text. Draft 500 words.

Submission Info: Please upload/paste your proposed lens and text description to HuskyCT under the Assignment 2e thread on the HuskyCT discussion board.

2f. Rough Draft of Theoretical Lens Essay. Prepare a rough draft of your lens essay. Be sure to: summarize/explain the concept you are using and describe the secondary text you are using (in other words, don't assume that everyone knows what you are talking about). Rough draft should be the equivalent of at least 4 pages. Please add in-text comments that explain areas where you are struggling or have questions for your peer reviewers.

Final Submission of Theoretical Lens Essay. For the final step of this project you will submit a revision of your theoretical lens essay. Please be aware that revisions must be significant – not just fixing commas here and there. Essays which are not thoroughly revised will be sent back for more work and marked as late. In addition, please write a short “cover letter” which explains:

- What theme you were trying to investigate in this essay
- Anything you may have struggled with
- How you feel about the choices you made –would you do anything differently if you had to do this again?
- What you did with the feedback you received
- What you might do if you had more time to revise

Evaluation Criteria

For the assignment to be considered complete:

- ✓ You must adequately summarize Serano or Ahmed and describe the lens you are using from them
- ✓ Explain your secondary text to readers who may not be familiar with it
- ✓ Explain how your lens helps illuminate something in/show us a different perspective of the secondary text
- ✓ Write around 4-7pgs (this just a guideline, but please be aware that anything less than 4 will not be accepted)
- ✓ Must be in proper MLA format
- ✓ Must include a cover letter

Assignment 3: Annotated Bibliography and Funding Letter

In this assignment we take a deep dive into research. First, you will identify an inquiry that you wish to explore. Then, you will create an annotated bibliography of your research. Finally, you will combine these two and write a funding letter that describes the kind of inquiry you are interested in and how your research informs that inquiry. The research you complete here will form the basis of your final project.

An annotated bibliography is a list of research items with a summary of each, sorted alphabetically by author and, in this case, using MLA citation. Your annotated bibliography should represent a careful curation and not be comprised of just the first articles you stumble upon. This means that you must read, digest, and assess each piece of research. For this assignment you will create an annotated bibliography of 8 total items, 2 of which must be from peer-reviewed sources.

The funding letter is a formal document of 300-500 words. Here, you will pretend that you are requesting funding for your research. This means that you will need to explain your inquiry and research, as well as how these, together, represent a contribution to a conversation (what are you adding here? Why is this important?). See “Funding Letter Guidelines” sheet for more information.

Scaffolding:

3a. Identification of Inquiry. Write a short description of your inquiry. This should not be something along the lines of “I want to know more about...”, but grounded in questions that may or may not be answerable. Think about gray areas and ideas that are difficult to reconcile. Some student examples:

- Why is female armor in video games scantier than male armor and what can we do to fix the hypersexualization of female characters?
- Why are women so objectified in the media? Who *is* the media and how can we change the way it works?

Criteria:

- ✓ A short description of your research inquiry along with questions you might have (~100 words). You will be able to refine this later, but what idea(s) are you looking to explore?

3b. Rough draft of your annotated bibliography. You should generate a list of at least 6 entries this draft.

Criteria:

- ✓ 6 entries
- ✓ Use of proper MLA citation for each text
- ✓ A summary of each piece of research, along with an assessment as to its reliability as a source, and how you might use it in your project

Final submission of your complete annotated bibliography and funding letter. For this, you will finish your bibliography. Keep in mind that you will be expected to use these in your final project so be particular here!

Evaluation Criteria

For the assignment to be considered complete it must:

- ✓ Be 300-500 words
- ✓ Written in the genre of a professional letter
- ✓ Have an explanation of your inquiry and what you hope to contribute to the conversation through your research (a beginning theory)
- ✓ Include references to your key sources
- ✓ Have a descriptive title
- ✓ Have your final annotated bibliography attached at the end
- ✓ Use of proper MLA citation for each text
- ✓ 8 pieces of research, 2 of which are from peer-reviewed sources
- ✓ A summary of each piece of research, along with an assessment as to its reliability as a source and how you might use it in your project

*****Opportunity to earn engagement points*****

The Unbibliography (2 points): A list of five sources that you considered for your Annotated Bibliography but ultimately rejected with annotations indicating why you considered each item and why you decided not to use it. At least one of these rejected sources must be scholarly. You will also write ~200 words on how this assignment shaped your thinking about your Annotated Bibliography. This assignment must be turned in with your Annotated Bibliography.

Assignment 4: The Remix

Throughout this semester, you've learned how to collect and curate material, engage in conversations, and collect and contextualize information. For this project, we will use these skills to develop a theory. Theorizing can involve:

- ✓ Seeing something from a new perspective (*Wide Sargasso Sea* vs. *Jane Eyre*, for example)
- ✓ Demonstrating how using a different modality/technology can result in new ideas ("The Problem with a Poo" vs. *The Problem with Apu*, for example)
- ✓ Pointing out an important issue that has been overlooked/undervalued/trivialized (Crenshaw's "The Urgency of Intersectionality," for example)
- ✓ Creating new connections among seemingly different texts/issues

Hopefully, you've been exploring an inquiry which speaks to your interests and/or discipline. This project asks you to formulate a theory around this inquiry. You have three choices for modality (see details on "Remix Multimodal Project Details" sheet for each of these):

- A 10-15 minute podcast
- A 5-10 min video essay
- A web essay

You may work in groups (no more than 3 people per group) or individually if you like.

Scaffolding:

4a. Identification of Revised Inquiry and Project Proposal. Write a short description of your revised inquiry. Provide a short description of how you're going to explore your inquiry in this project, including what modality you will be using (podcast, video essay, website portfolio). If you're working in a group, please tell me who else is in it.

Criteria:

- ✓ What will be the inquiry you explore for the final project? You will be able to refine this later, but what ideas are you looking to explore?
- ✓ How are these tied together?
- ✓ Which research contexts would be most appropriate for developing this inquiry and why?

4b. Remix Prototype and Works Cited Page. On our final day of class, we will view each other's prototypes and give feedback. Bring what you have and be prepared to talk about how you will see this project through to revision.

Final submission of Remix. This is it! The outcome of your semester-long inquiry. Based on the feedback from our final class, revise your remix project. Remember, though, that these are still prototypes; there will always be something you can improve upon so don't expect perfection. In addition to your project, you will need to submit a Statement of Goals and Choices which addresses the following questions:

- What was the goal of your project? What are you hoping viewers/listeners/readers will get from it?
- What obstacles did you face in exploring your inquiry? How did you manage these?
- How might you explore this inquiry further if you had more time?
- (If in a group) What role did you play in this collaboration? Would you have done something differently if you had a chance to collaborate once more?
- How might this have looked differently if you had chosen a different modality? Be specific.

Evaluation Criteria

For the assignment to be considered complete it must:

- ✓ Meet the criteria for your modality, as outlined in the “Remix Multimodal Project Details” sheet
- ✓ Use at least five sources from your annotated bibliograph(ies), 2 of which must be from peer-reviewed sources
- ✓ Explicitly gesture to your sources (this depends on your modality so please talk to me once you decide; it could be through a works cited, footnotes; subtitles, vocal recognition, etc.)
- ✓ Include a *detailed* Statement of Goals and Choices (from each individual if in a group)