

Introduction to Academic Writing (ENGL 109)

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Office Hours: Tues: 11AM-12:30PM; Thurs: 2:30PM-4PM; I am also available by appointment; please contact me via text for a meeting outside of my regularly scheduled office hours.

Course Meeting Time and Location: Mon/Weds 2:30-3:50, SJ2 2007



This is me. It's a good idea to be able to recognize your professor and to know their name.

The University of Waterloo is located on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised and given to Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

Query: why is a territorial acknowledgement important? How does or should this history of a place like the University of Waterloo and its peoples matter to what we do here, how we do what we do, and for whose benefit or advantage?

Course Description

English 109 is designed to get you comfortable writing in an academic context. You will learn about differences between forms of academic writing as well as more widely shared ideas about what makes writing good across disciplines. Together, we will study the choices great writers make as they write and the processes they engage in order to create their best work. We will study a variety of texts to learn more about how they were written and how to improve the writing each of you produces.

Across the disciplines as well as in nearly every profession the ability not only to communicate effectively, but also to collaborate is necessary to success. The best writers, we believe, talk with one another extensively about their writing at every stage of the composing process from the development of ideas through the final polishing of prose. The production of knowledge and, indeed, all learning are inherently social activities: writers at all levels of experience and ability learn from one another. For these reasons, much of your work in this course will involve different kinds of collaboration with your peers. You will learn to give useful feedback to your classmates, as well as to receive feedback and put it to use in the revision of your writing. We believe that learning to write and read rhetorically takes place over time with meaningful support. In this course, you will receive feedback at multiple stages of the writing process and will have many opportunities to revise your work.

Course Learning Outcomes

- To help you to think critically and communicate effectively
- To learn and practice a variety of strategies for inventing, drafting, and editing texts
- To learn and practice writing in a variety of academic genres
- To learn to read critically
- To learn to write persuasively by effectively employing elements of formal argumentation
- To help you give and receive useful feedback on writing for the purposes of revision
- To learn and practice communicating to a variety of academic audiences

Accommodations

We will all need some accommodations in this class, because we all learn differently. If you need specific accommodations in addition to any I might learn about from Accessibility Services, let me know. You don't need a piece of paper from AS or your doctor or anyone else to get my help in accommodating the course to your learning needs. I will work with you to ensure that you have means of accessing class information, ways to take part in class

activities, and avenues for fair assessment of your coursework. All students who have a permanent disability as well as those with temporary disabilities have the right to what UW calls "Accessibility Services." To register for these services, you must provide documentation from a qualified professional to verify your disability. You don't need to be registered to get my support, but if you need or want to register for other courses, please contact them at 519-888-4567 ext. 35082 or drop into Needles Hall 1132 to book an appointment to meet with an advisor to discuss their services and supports.

Keys to Success

I will grade your work in this course by marking your commitment to your own learning, your willingness to help others learn and so learn more yourself, by your dedication, hard work, and, ultimately, the progress you make as a writer. Every one of you should be able not only to pass this course, but also to learn well and deeply. Effort will matter: I will reward you for effort and your effort will also result in better writing. Take these simple steps to ensure your success in this course:

- Show up for class! Attendance is required and you will lose marks for absences. Additionally, while class PowerPoints and handouts will be available on Learn, you will not be able to recover the in-class work you miss. I will not be able or willing to "fill you in on what you've missed."
- Do the reading! We will be discussing every reading assignment in class. You will be drawing from each course reading in both your formal and informal writing assignments. Take notes on the readings. Come to class with questions about each reading. Be ready to talk with me and with your fellow students: to exchange ideas, debate, explore, and learn.
- Participate in class! Participation means showing up for class on time, staying for the full class period, and being intellectually as well as physically present for each class discussion. This is not a class in which you can or should seek to remain invisible. You will know if you are participating well (enough) if I know your name by the end of the second week of classes. It is always a good idea to learn the name of your professor. You should be able to call me by name by the second week of class as well. You may call me Professor Condon, Dr. Condon, or Dr. F. Please do not call me Miss Condon, Ms. Condon, or Mrs. Condon. I earned my PhD through hard work and prefer not to be identified by my marital status or gender.
- Choose to be interested! My commitment to you is that I will work very hard to make this course not only useful to you, but enjoyable as well. No amount of good teaching can compensate for bored or boring students, however, as enjoyment is a two-way street. If you look bored, I will notice. If you act bored, I will be offended. If you are bored, not only will your work also be boring, it will also be badly done and your grades will suffer.
- Here's a little secret: students who sit closer to the front of the room receive better grades than those who sit closer to the back of the room. Choose where you sit carefully and make your choice based not on how invisible you will be to me, but rather on how well I will be able to see and hear you. If you must sit closer to the back of the room, make extra sure you participate vocally in class. Extra participation will help to compensate for your location in the classroom.
- Here's another little secret: whether you are doing informal or formal group work in the classroom, stay on task and ask for my advice if your group runs out of things to discuss. If you or your group appear to be bored or disengaged, your work and your marks will suffer.
- Stay off your phone and social media in class. I do not ban laptops, cell phones, and other electronic devices from my classrooms, in fact, you will use these devices regularly as part of the work you do in this class. I do recognize that there are legitimate reasons for having such devices at hand, such as family obligations or emergencies. Using your electronic devices for purposes other than those related to our class or to these special circumstances while we are in class discussion, while I am talking, or during times when you have been asked to write or to do group work in class will result in lowered marks.
- Hand your assignments in on time! This term, I am not accepting late assignments. Every writing assignment should be uploaded to Dropbox by class time on the due date. You have a grace period until midnight and then your window of opportunity to turn in your work closes.
- Visit my office hours! Invest in your own success by spending some time talking with me one-with-one. Our conversations will help me get to know your work better and to help you more effectively and you will be able to ask me questions specific to your needs and interests.
- Ask for my help if you need it! I like talking with my students and enjoy being able provide support for them. If you need help – if you get stuck or overwhelmed, suffer from writer's block, aren't sure how to start, aren't sure how to finish, aren't sure what to do – talk with me without delay. Do not wait until the last moment to tell me you need my assistance!

Course Readings

2019. Crampton, Linda. "Serendipity: The Role of Chance in Making Scientific Discoveries". Owlcation:

<https://owlcation.com/stem/Serendipity-The-Role-of-Chance-in-Making-Scientific-Discoveries>

2017. Raab, Diana. "Calming the Monkey Mind." Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/the-empowerment-diary/201709/calming-the-monkey-mind>

2010. Young, Vershawn. "Should writers use they own English?" Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies.

2005. Frankfurt, Harry. "On Bullshit." Electronic resource, retrieved 1 July, 2019.

1994. Lamott, Anne. "Shitty First Drafts." Excerpted from *Bird by Bird*. Anchor Press.

1985. Corder, Jim W. "Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love". Rhetoric Review, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp 14-32.

1981. Williams, Joseph. "The phenomenology of error." College Composition and Communication, Vol. 32, No. 2, Language Studies and Composing, pp. 152-168.

"If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time (or the tools) to write. Simple as that."
— Stephen King

Assignments

"Work on a good piece of writing proceeds on three levels: a musical one, where it is composed; an architectural one, where it is constructed; and finally, a textile one, where it is woven."

— Walter Benjamin, *One Way Street and Other Writings*

Each of our assignments will proceed in three stages:

1. Shitty first draft: you and I will discuss this draft in class (and outside of it, if you come to my office hours or set up an alternative time to meet)
2. Workshop Draft: following revision, a new draft will be workshopped with written feedback from five peers
3. Final draft with author's note; graded with commentary from me
4. For each of four workshops respondents should provide one copy of written feedback to each writer in their group and one copy to me via Dropbox

In order to receive full marks for each assignment, you must turn in all three drafts (shitty (-10), workshop (-20), and final (-40)). In order to receive full marks for participation and attendance, you must provide evidence of written feedback to each of your workshop group members and attend each workshop (-5).

Assignment One: Audience and Story

Write a series of four dialogues, each of which stands alone, revealing some new aspect of who you are. Taken together, your four dialogues should reveal to your reader something of the complexity and nuance of your character. Dialogue One: you and a police officer; Dialogue Two: you and a prospective employer; Dialogue Three: you and a small child; Dialogue Four: you and your best friend.

Assignment One: Learning Goals

- Recognize and write responsively to the variety of demands or pressures different kinds of audiences may make on the writer/speaker in order to be credible, persuasive, or even heard, as it were, at all
- Recognize and represent the variety of strategies a writer/speaker may employ (either deceptive or ethical, reasonable, and moving – or both) to exercise agency in responses, adaptations, or resistance to audience demands or pressures
- Recognize and represent the variety of voices each of us possesses as a rhetorical repertoire from which to choose as we address different audiences
- Tell a story/craft a narrative in successive iterations, each of which captures some dimension(s) of your character, personality, and point of view such as personal history, personal flaws, humor, intelligence, integrity, etc.

4-5 pages polished final draft; 12 point, Times New Roman font; 1 inch margins; 1 ½ line spacing; no citations necessary unless you are quoting, summarizing, or synthesizing another scholar/writer.

Assignment One: Rubric

CATEGORY	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Each dialogue clearly represents the particular expectations, pressures of the person to whom you are speaking				
Each dialogue clearly shows the different strategies you might employ in order to represent yourself well to your interlocutor				
Each dialogue demonstrates your ability to shift voice, tone, style both to adapt to a distinct audience and to move them in some way				
Each dialogue reveals some new aspect of who you are				
Taken together, the four dialogues provide the reader with a sense of a multi-faceted you				

Assignment Two: On Ethos

Write an essay about an ethical problem in your field. Your essay should articulate values and principles that are or should be shared by peers in your field and should describe and explain a failure to manifest those values and principles that is not an individual but a collective or systemic failure. You should make a well-crafted argument (claims, supports, sustainable warrants) using story, example, and demonstration for an ethical or principled practice that to remedy (or begin to remedy) to problem you have identified. You must demonstrate to your audience the importance of the problem you have identified and of acting to address that problem.

Learning Goals:

- Establish credibility and authority to speak persuasively to an audience of peers in your field about an ethical issue or problem
- Name values and/or principles of ethics that are or should be shared by members of your field
- Describe and explain a gap, absence, or failure to manifest those values and/or principles
- Using knowledge in your field, example, story, and reason (claims, supports, sustainable warrants) argue for an ethical or principled practice (conclusions) to address the issue or problem you have identified
- Demonstrate to your audience the importance of the problem (why it matters) and the relevance of your approach to its resolution

4-5 pages polished final draft; 12 point, Times New Roman font; 1 inch margins; 1 ½ line spacing; APA citation style (more information about APA, guidelines, examples can be found here:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

Assignment Two: Rubric

CATEGORY	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Credibility/authority				
Clear articulation of values/principles				
Clear description, explanation of problem				
Reasoned argument for an ethical address of problem				
Demonstration of significance of values/principles, problem, and solution to audience of peers in field				

Assignment Three: Argument from the field to a non-specialist audience

You will form groups of five in order to prepare a panel presentation in which each individual member will present a short paper. In your small group, choose one of the following problems about which you will collectively craft a presentation (each speaker may address the audience for 6 – 8 minutes (3 – 4 page paper; 12 point, Times New Roman font; 1 ½ line spacing; APA citation style). Note that papers must be written to be read aloud, to be performed, as it were.

The Boeing 737 Disaster: Causes and Remedies
Facebook and the Cambridge Analytica Data Privacy Scandal
Vancouver's Housing Problem: from Bubble to Threat of Market Decline
Social Media Trolling and Political Interference
Proofiness: using fake math to influence public perception (choose your own example)

Together you should decide upon and distribute well-defined topics for each of your individual talks. The first talk should provide context to your audience about the problem you have chosen to address (tell the story). Each following talk should address an aspect of the problem or address of the causal problem(s) that follows from the preceding talk and lays groundwork for the talk to follow. The final talk on your panel should summarize the group's findings and recommendations, providing a call for action. Most importantly, each speaker should draw on the specialized knowledge of their field in order to craft their story/argument, but must represent that knowledge to an audience of non-specialists. Individually and collectively, you must write/speak to a non-specialist audience without reducing or overstating the complexity of the problem you are addressing, without patronizing your audience. Individually and collectively, you must provide your non-specialist audience with the understanding they need in order to participate (civically, politically, socially, economically) in the address, redress, or solution for which you are arguing. Note that papers should be written to be read aloud – to be performed. You should rehearse individually and as a group until you are satisfied that your individual and collective performances – how you speak as well as what you say – will be understandable, persuasive, and compelling to your audience.

Assignment Three Learning Goals (group)

- Work collaboratively and cooperatively in a scholarly/professional context
- Share leadership and labour, encouraging, challenging, and supporting one another as you draft, give and receive feedback, revise, polish, and perform in a professional setting
- Organize individual and collective work in a timely way so that your individual papers and collective performances are clearly not last-minute endeavors but demonstrate your respect for your field, your audience, and your own work by being well researched, well argued, well composed, and well performed (drawing cumulatively on the work we have done together in class throughout the term)
- Perform publicly with increasing courage, confidence, and intellectual and rhetorical integrity

Assignment Three: Group Rubric

CATEGORY	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Evidence of collaborative and cooperative work within the group				
Evidence of shared leadership and labour, of full commitment to a writing process that includes drafting, feedback, revision, and polishing				
Panel as a whole well-crafted and well performed				
Each individual paper demonstrates understanding of rhetorical concepts – and each paper speaks to the papers that precede and follow				
Each speaker represents specialist knowledge to a non-specialist audience effectively and without prejudice				

Assignment Three Learning Goals (individual)

- Communicate specialized knowledge effectively to a non-specialist audience
- Effectively and with integrity use all three rhetorical appeals and draw on a rich repertoire of rhetorical strategies to educate, demonstrate, argue, and persuade an audience
- Craft a well-reasoned argument addressing a specific problem, gap, or absence in knowledge/practice
- Demonstrate the relevance and importance of that argument to your audience
- Demonstrate individual commitment to collective success

Assignment Three: Individual Rubric

CATEGORY	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Credibility/authority				
Effective use of rhetorical appeals and strategies				
Well-reasoned argument that educates, demonstrates, argues, persuades a non-specialist audience to act on specialized knowledge in a particular way				
Demonstrates the importance and relevance of the argument and its conclusions to audience				
Demonstrates commitment to excellence both in individual writing and performance and collective success of the group				

Assignment Four: Funk it up!

This is your opportunity to revise/rewrite either Assignments Three or Four. Your goal in this revision/rewriting is to experiment and to play with the "rules" of academic and professional writing. Using multiple languages, discourses, word play, humor, personal narrative, emotional appeal, funk up your prose. You should experiment with "non-standard" sentence structure, multiple Englishes, language and translation, paying particular attention to making these moves rhetorically powerful and savvy as persuasive strategies. You may play, also, with citation styles (using elaborate or funny or otherwise nonconforming footnotes or end-notes) so long as you continue to recognize and honor those prior scholars upon whose intellectual shoulders you stand. This assignment will require you not only to reconceive of your audience as adaptive and open, of yourself as a writer as agentful and powerful, and of the demands of scholarly and professional discourse as fluid and malleable rather than conservative, conventional, and static. Be brave, test your rhetorical, grammatical, and linguistic limits. Be playful as well as smart.

Your finished essay should conform to the requirements of the original assignment in terms of length, margins, font style and size, line spacing, and citation style (see description above for variations).

Learning Goals

- Skill and creativity in using language, grammatical structure, word play, and structural variety to educate, demonstrate, persuade, and entertain an audience
- Recognition of "rules" as enabling constraints rather than absolutes in the composing of scholarly and professional genres of prose
- Ability to sustain the intellectual integrity of an argument while experimenting or playing with language and genre conventions
- Recognition and ability to engage writerly agency in the address of any audience
- Ability to re-envision and significantly revise an existing piece of writing at every level from form and structure to rhetorical appeals and strategies, to content (claims, supports, sustaining warrants), to conclusions

Assignment Four: Rubric

CATEGORY	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Demonstrated skill playing with language, grammar, purpose, structure				
Demonstrated ability to play with rather than by rules				
Sustain argument's integrity while playing with/against convention				
Play with audience expectations to enhance quality of argument as well as experience of reading				
Demonstrated ability to re-envision prior writing and revise deeply for new or adapted purposes				

Grading

Attendance and participation are both critical to your success in this course. As a reminder, there will be no make-up days nor make-up work for workshops absent extraordinary circumstances (these do not include vacations – an issue that has come up in the past. Please plan to remain at school and in class throughout the term). You should communicate with me BEFORE you miss a class via text message. Two or more absences will result in a lowered attendance mark (absent extraordinary circumstances, which must be communicated with me for an emergency absence as soon after the event as is possible). *Each of you may have one free mental health day, should you choose or need to use that option for an absence. Please communicate with Dr. F BEFORE you take your mental health day. You may not exercise the mental health day option on any workshop day or on any presentation day (your group's or anyone else's group).*

ELEMENT	Shitty first draft	Workshop Draft/Participation	Final Draft	TOTAL POINTS
Attendance/Participation		No attendance per workshop - 5 No feedback per workshop -5		20
Assignment One	No draft -10	No draft -20	No draft -40	40
Assignment Two	No draft -10	No draft -20	No draft -40	40
Assignment Three I	No collab. -10	No workshop -10	No present. -20	20
Assignment Three II	No draft -10	No draft -20	No draft -40 (individual)	40
Assignment Four	No draft -10	No draft -20	40	40
				200

Note that final grades will be calculated as a percentage of the total points available.

University of Waterloo Undergraduate Grading Scheme

Assigned Letter	Value	Assigned Letter	Value	Assigned Letter	Value	Assigned Letter	Value
A+	95	B	75	C-	62	F+	46
A	89	B-	72	D+	58	F	38
A-	83	C+	68	D	55	F-	32
B+	78	C	62	D-	52		

Course Calendar (Tentative)

DATE	TOPIC	ACTIVITY	ASSIGNMENT	NOTES
SEPT 4	Introductions	Syllabus Overview	Read Monkey Mind	
SEPT 9	Getting out of our own way	Freewriting Discussion of academic writing and monkey-minded folks	Read Shitty First Drafts	
SEPT 11	Writing to learn/writing as process	Freewriting Discussion of difference between shitty writing as process and shitty writing as product	Shitty first draft Assignment One Due	
SEPT 16		Freewriting Discussion of rhetorical features of academic writing	Read Argument as Emergence	
SEPT 18		Freewriting Discussion of story and argument in academic writing	Workshop Draft Due for Distribution to Group	
SEPT 23	WORKSHOP	WORKSHOP	WORKSHOP	
SEPT 25	What academic writing is and isn't		Read On Bullshit	
SEPT 30	Research for writing	Library Presentation	Shitty first draft Assignment Two Due Read Serendipity	
OCT 2	Prepare to be surprised!	Freewriting Discussion of serendipity, finite and infinite games		
OCT 7	Opinion, Theory, and Objectivity		Workshop draft Assignment Two Due for distribution to group	
OCT 9	WORKSHOP	WORKSHOP	WORKSHOP	
OCT 14	XXX	XXX	REST YOUR BONES	Thanksgiving
OCT 16	XXX	XXX	REVISE ASSIGNMENTS ONE AND TWO	Reading Week
OCT 21	XXX	XXX	REVISE ASSIGNMENTS ONE AND TWO	Dr. F traveling
OCT 23	XXX	XXX	FINAL DRAFTS ASSIGNMENTS ONE AND TWO DUE TO DR. F VIA DROPBOX	Dr. F traveling
OCT 28	Group Project Work	Group Project Work		
OCT 30	Group Project Work	Group Project Work	Shitty first drafts of Assignment Three due	
NOV 4	Group Project Work	Group Project Work	Group Project Work – workshop drafts due to group	
NOV 6	WORKSHOP	WORKSHOP	WORKSHOP Revise Drafts	
NOV 11	GROUP PANELS	GROUP PANELS	GROUP PANELS	
NOV 13	GROUP PANELS	GROUP PANELS	GROUP PANELS Read Phenomenology	
NOV 18	Errors and Expectations in academic writing	Freewriting and discussion of Phenomenology	Read Young	
NOV 20	Experimentalism and play in formal writing	Freewriting and discussion of Young	Shitty first draft Assignment Four due	
NOV 25	Writing and Revising	Writing and Revising	Workshop Draft Due	
NOV 27	WORKSHOP	WORKSHOP	WORKSHOP	
DEC 2	Writing and Revising and Celebrations	Writing and Revising and Celebrations	Writing and Revising and Celebrations	Last day of class
DEC 9	XXX	XXX	FINAL DRAFTS OF ASSIGNMENT THREE AND FOUR DUE TO DR. F VIA DROPBOX	DR. F will be available between the 2 nd and 9 th of December for individual and group consultations

University Mandated Course Policies

Attendance: Your presence in this class is required. In order to be excused, every absence must be documented with a doctor's note (or other appropriate authority). Missing four or more classes will result in a failing grade for the course. If you must miss a class due to illness, you may mitigate the consequences of your absence by emailing me *in advance of the class you will be missing*. A class missed in order to finish an assignment for another class will not be excused.

Academic Integrity: Take the time to familiarize yourself with the summary of Policy #71. In order to avoid offences such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, consult "How to Avoid Plagiarism and Other Written Offences: A Guide for Students and Instructors". Consult [Academic Integrity at UW](#) for more information. Visit [this link](#) to learn about the University of Waterloo's expectations and policies regarding Academic Integrity.

Accommodations: The University of Waterloo (claims to have) a long-standing commitment to support the participation and access to university programs, services, and facilities by persons with disabilities. Students who have a permanent disability as well as those with a temporary disability get [AccessAbility Services](#). To register for services, you must provide [documentation from a qualified professional](#) to verify your disability. Please contact them at 519-888-4567 ext. 35082 or drop into Needles Hall 1132 to book an appointment to meet with an advisor to discuss their services and supports. Let's acknowledge that historically students have sometimes struggled to get the support they need from the services offered by the University. From my perspective, you don't need any documentation; you need only ask and I will do my best to give you whatever accommodations or additional support you may need in order to thrive in this class.

Grievances: In case that a decision affecting some aspect of a student's university life has been unfair or unreasonable, they may have grounds for initiating a grievance according to Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, <https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70>. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: Familiarize yourself with "[academic integrity](#)" to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for your actions. Consult Policy 71 for all categories of offences and types of penalties.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) (other than a petition) or Policy 71 (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Frankie Condon
Fall 2016

For many years, I have been both moved and inspired by a question posed to Mary Rose O'Reilly by one of her professors, Ihab Hassan: "Is it possible to teach English so that people stop killing each other?" (*The Peaceable Classroom* 9). Removed from the social and educational context in which the question was originally posed, however - a widespread, collective recognition of the brutality and senselessness of war during the Vietnam era - the pairing of the teaching of English with peacemaking is more likely to provoke confusion than insight among readers of a statement of teaching philosophy such as this one. To understand whether or how there might be any sort of intersection between the study of English - of rhetoric and writing in particular - and the transformation of human relations requires something more than allowing the query to stand, functionally, as a rhetorical question.

In his book, *The Geometry of Violence*, criminologist Harold Pepinsky, argues that violence plays out along a spectrum of human relations ranging from the least affiliative and most violent to the most affiliative and least violent. Societies and cultures with expansive definitions of affiliation and higher valuations of affinity, care, contingency and mutuality are less likely to be riven by either systemic violence (e.g. political or social violence) or by widespread patterns of individual violence. The study of rhetoric and writing, it seems to me, constitutes one means by which we may examine, engage, and extend the critical, analytical, interpretive, performative and communicative means by which we have historically made and continue to make our relations: preserving and reproducing conditions produced by existing or inherited relations or, alternatively, creatively resisting and shifting or transforming those relations. That the process of insertion into existing social relations and, by extension, into particular perspectival horizons begins at birth and continues throughout our lives is true. It does not necessarily follow, however, that we possess no agency within those relations; we can, in fact, shift, alter or even transform those relations. How we do this work, by what means, within what limits, for what purposes, and to what effect are questions with which I am most concerned both as a scholar and as a teacher.

There are, Linda Alcoff notes, two aspects to what we might understand as social identity: "our socially perceived self within the systems of perception and classification and the networks of community in which we live;" and our *lived subjectivity* or who we understand and experiences ourselves as being (*Visible Identities* 93). Rather than representing these two aspects of social identity in binary terms (exterior and interior or embodied and felt, for example), Alcoff asks us to consider the ways and degrees to which disparate experiences of being a self and of being called to perform as if one is a particular sort of self fail to map neatly onto one another. She asks readers to notice and make sense of the discontinuities among and between the range of experiences that constitute our being in and of the world. While we cannot possess objective understanding of our lives as we live them, as Gadamer points out, our situatedness in place, time, and experience do enable ways of knowing. We are capable of what Gadamer terms *effective historical consciousness*: capable, in other words, of "reflective awareness of the horizon of our situation." We are capable of recognizing that horizon as fluid and dynamic rather than static and given, and capable of recognizing that this horizon is not the only determinant of our understanding and our ability to make meaning. (Alcoff 95)

My aim in the classroom is to invite students to notice, wonder at, and engage critically the power not only of language, itself, but of particular rhetorical modes and strategies for communicating (and performing) the known and the production of new knowledge. I challenge students to question and critique representations of social relations as natural and given and to recognize the ways and degrees to which these relations are, in fact, the products of human labour. I want students to recognize the ways in which they are always, already knowledge producers and rhetorical agents in the construction of meaning. I want also to support and sustain students as they recognize the degree to which as they exercise rhetorical agency they are in fact participating in the reproduction or potentially at least the struggle to transform social relations. I want to support and sustain students, providing them with appropriate conceptual and practical scaffolding as they acquire broader and deeper fluencies in the range of analytical, interpretive, performative and communicative modes of engagement or acts that constitute the means by which individual and collective perspectival horizons are recognized and shifted for themselves and others. I hope to teach my students also to recognize the degree to which these modes of engagement are constituted by complex, ongoing processes of affiliation and disaffiliation or the making and unmaking, creating, inhabiting, and destroying or transforming of human relations. In other words, the study of rhetoric is also necessarily the study of how human relations are forged in and through language: shaped, enabled, and constrained through our representations of ourselves, of others, and of that which constitutes knowledge within particular contexts or communities. The study of rhetoric should engage all of us in the study not only of what is said and how, but also toward what ends and for whose benefit. We make and claim our relations as we compose across a wide variety of contexts asserting the legitimacy of our presence as rhetors and knowledge producers within communities to which we do or hope to belong. We may pass on the ideological as well as the intellectual legacies of our forebears, but we may also transform those legacies as we compose. I hope students leave my courses with an expanded sense of their intellectual and rhetorical antecedents as well as with a much greater sense of their own contingency, their interdependence and the mutuality of their needs and interests across disparate visible and invisible identities and social and lived subjectivities. Furthermore, I hope that students leave my courses with

a greatly enlarged sense of their capability and responsibility as scholars, rhetoricians and writers, as citizens of the world, to those who will come after us.

I recognize the political and hence contested nature of the work I aim to do as a teacher. I believe that the purpose of critical theory is not only to explain the world, but also to change it. By extension, I believe that the purpose of writing as an activity central to higher education curricula is not merely to prove that one has learned, but to contribute meaningfully to the conditions in which learning is possible: to participate in the collective creation and sustenance of learningful relations as well as in the making of meaning and the production of new and usable knowledge.

Often, I believe, critical pedagogy is misunderstood and misrepresented as being inherently coercive and critical teachers as being engaged in the political inculcation of their students. These misconstruals are, I believe, an effect of an inadequate understanding of the range of conceptions of change and change-agency that inform the theory and practice of critical pedagogy. While I am not dismissive of the power of the *agon* in the cultivation of rhetorical agency or of oppositional pedagogy (a praxis distinct from the tradition of critical pedagogy) per se, these are not modes or approaches that play a significant role in my own teaching. I tend to see both oppositional pedagogy and the *agon* as being tactically useful on occasion, but more generally ineffective (and often dishonest) in argument, persuasion, as well as in teaching and learning. Neither am I terribly interested in the pedagogical potential of traditional practices of negotiation, which I believe preserve the status quo by, in effect, purchasing or manufacturing consent. Instead, as a teacher I labour to both enact and teach an array of interconnected intellectual and rhetorical processes that, taken together, constitute both a rhetorical appeal and a rhetorical means by which shifts in perspectival horizon and, consequently, in the character and quality of human relations might be initiated.

In brief, these processes might be categorized into four types: those associated with *decentering*; those associated with *nuancing*; those associated with *kairotic engagement*; and those associated with *readiness*. *Decentering* is the ongoing process of listening (recognizing and acknowledging) to the meaning-making practices of others while, simultaneously recognizing and honouring difference by dis-placing one's self (social and lived subjectivities) from the center of meaning. I understand the process of *decentering* as a continuous revising of the quality of one's presence with/for and attentiveness to the other. *Nuancing* is the ongoing process of transmemoration and witness: of situating one's own story of being and becoming - of social and lived subjectivity - in relationship to the histories, epistemologies, and rhetorical traditions of others without privileging one's own story or using that story to overwrite, subvert, or appropriate the stories others might tell. *Kairotic engagement* is the ongoing process of recognizing, articulating, revising, and re-articulating the rhetorical exigence that attends analysis, interpretation, critique, creative intervention, and the making of meaning or new knowledge; that is, of continual engagement with the ways and degrees to which problems, contradictions, or questions are amenable to address (or redress) through discourse. *Readiness* is the ongoing process of cultivating and sustaining a mindscape capable of wonderment: capable of being surprised by and interested in the world, in why the world is as it is and how it came to be so, and in the marvellous variety of ways in which the world might be created, inhabited, and represented by others. Here I understand "interest" in the double sense of being both intrigued by others - by what others say and know and do - and being needful of affiliation and of the recognition and care co-created through affiliative relationships with others. Finally, however, none of these processes taken singly or together nor the variety of in-class discussions and activities and writing assignments that I might engage in any given course seem sufficient to me to justify a claim that mine is a critical praxis absent an ongoing, reflective consciousness of the constancy of failure to the endeavours of teaching and learning and a shared commitment to learn from failure. That is, *humility* is central to any meaningful practice of critical pedagogy and integral to *humility* is the recognition that failure is inevitable. I strive for willingness to learn from failure and, when appropriate and ethical, to make pedagogical failures visible to students such that they might engage reflectively and learningfully with them as well.

Frequently, critics of critical pedagogy assert that the greatest risks associated with this approach to teaching are that students will feel pressured to adopt the politics of their teachers in order to succeed in the course or, alternatively, be so alienated by the fact of their political differences with their teacher that learning becomes impossible. My own experience suggests a different kind of risk or challenge altogether. To engage - to really engage - critically in the study of writing as a communicative act requires that we study the epistemological and rhetorical means by which knowledge is produced and disseminated. To engage - to really engage - critically in the study of writing as a communicative act requires that we study public rhetorics that, by design, shape how we think, perform our selves, and act in relation to others. But to engage - to really engage - at all in any of these studies requires both interest and a sense of need for learning. The greatest challenge I face in the classroom is the extent to which students tend to confuse exchange-value and use-value or, more frequently, to believe that the only thing to be gained from any given writing assignment or any writing course is the exchange-value represented by a grade. My challenge is not that students adopt my politics in service of achieving a good grade; they just don't nor do I require or expect them to. My challenge is that some of my students have learned too well the lesson that school is boring; that the subjects about which one might write as well as the activity of writing are boring; that being curious is boring; that the only knowledge worth acquiring in school are the usable skills that might be associated with workplace competencies and that learning those is boring. Too many of my students have been schooled for years by the ringing of bells that not only tell them it's time to move from one classroom to another, but also to shut off the past moment from the current one--that there are no integral or fruitful intersections, continuities, or intriguing discontinuities between the subjects that they study (Gatto 1-5). The interferences of an audit culture in public education seem to have had the prevailing effect of teaching students

that the value of learning and the quality of one's education is measured by the number and range of information bytes emptied of nuance and complexity one might acquire that can be easily and quickly performed and judged.

And so perhaps it is most accurate to say that my greatest challenge as a teacher is to create and sustain conditions in which joy is possible in the classrooms I share with students and to help students recognize the necessity of joy to learning well and deeply. I am speaking less here of fun - though, of course, I think having fun is good - than of the affective dimensions of learning at the conjoinment of interest and pleasure, seriousness and absurdity. These are the intellectual and creative intersections where learners discover in themselves and one another the strange and unfamiliar and find it good; where laughter fractures totalities; where the possibility exists for both gentle and exuberant celebrations of the miracle of our collective presence on this earth, at this place - together at the interstices of learning and knowing, being and becoming, of self and other (Ehrenreich 261). The value of joy to learning is not the degree to which momentary pleasure releases us from labour, from pressure, anxiety, or loss. I do not think of joy as a safety valve, for example (Ehrenreich 257). Rather, I think the value of joy derives from the ways in which the experience of joy releases us from bondage to the expected and the familiar - from rigid adherence to rules and compulsive adherence to social constraints. To experience joy in learning is to experience, even momentarily and provisionally, a release into creative intellectualism - into the as-if, the what-if, and the whys of matters that viewed without joy seem either exceptionally mundane or so permanent, so fixed as to be beyond question. In some sense, I suppose I am suggesting that learning - really learning - constitutes an act of misbehaviour in relation to the familiar and the known and that, similarly, writing well demands a certain mischievousness - the willingness to play the trickster as well as an openness to being tricked and making sense of that. I am interested and, I'll admit, invested as a teacher, a co-learner, and as a writer in the ebullient joy that erupts among students as they learn to collude in the making of mischief as well as in the gentler joy that emerges in moments of recognition and acknowledgement of mutuality, contingency, interdependence, for it is in such moments that I am most convinced that not only are we all learning, but that our lives as learners and as writers are and will be changed for the better by having learned together.

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