



ENGL 492: Race and the Rhetoric of Resistance

Professor Frankie Condon

Office Hours: By appointment and Thursday 9-11AM EST via WebEx

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No texts or calls before 8AM EST and after 8PM EST;
24-hour response time for emails M-F;
48-hour response time on weekends

TERRITORIAL AND BODY ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge that we are teaching and learning 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.

Further, I offer the following body acknowledgement:

I am a citizen of the United States and a Permanent Resident of Canada, where I now teach, research, and write. I recognize that I move through the world as a raced-white subject whose body, language, and history are privileged in both the nations I call home – not by virtue of any inherent quality they might possess but through the social operations of white supremacy. I acknowledge that the idea of whiteness and materiality of white supremacy are progenitors of systemic, institutional, symbolic, and individual racism. I hear Peoples of Colour and Indigenous Peoples who are subjected to racist violence as they cry out, “I can’t breathe.” I acknowledge my culpability for white supremacy and my responsibility as a white person to oppose and resist racism enacted in my name. I commit myself to this resistance and stand ready both to hold myself and to be held accountable by others for making this commitment actionable.



Race and the Rhetoric of Resistance

In this course we will study essays, speeches, and articles written by Black, Indigenous, and other writers of colour as well as a few white anti-racist writers about race and racism in both Canada and the U.S. We will examine the array of rhetorical moves made in such writing and how writers shift and adapt rhetorically to speak to particular historical moments in the long duree of racism in both nations. You will have the opportunity to draft, workshop, revise, and finalize a significant writing project as an integral part of this course. However, we will not be composing in traditional academic prose but exploring the creative and rhetorical crafts of counterstory and narrative that are the hallmark of anti-racist composition. Your assigned readings will provide you with models for the kind of writing you may choose to do for this class and our discussions of those readings will help you discern how to do that writing well.

NOTE: This course will expose students to discussions of race, racism, and white supremacy for the purposes of our study. Some of you may find this work troubling or triggering. We will make efforts for the duration of the term to provide support to one another. **Please contact me immediately if you are struggling with the impact of your work in the course on your wellbeing.**

Course Structure

Our class is organized week by week, with each week starting on Monday morning and ending at the close of the next weekend. Every Monday morning, a new weekly module will open automatically. Once open, modules remain open so that you may go back and review content from previous weeks.

To ensure that you receive a high quality and hopefully transformative educational experience, regular participation is a requirement of this class. Typical weeks include required reading, viewing some video content, participating in discussion forums whether class discussion or small group work in a discussion forum, and weekly writing. To be successful in this class, you will need to log in at least three times per week to access course materials and to participate actively in the class.

In a face-to-face class, I would expect that you would spend 2-3 hours reading, studying, and working outside of class for every one hour you spend in class. For the purposes of this online course, I expect that you will spend eight to ten hours per week completing work for this course. Some weeks will be more labour-intensive than others so your actual time may vary. If you are spending fewer than five hours per week on this class, you are probably not doing enough to learn well and to succeed in it.

Course Readings

Books

Condon, Frankie (2013). *I Hope I Join the Band: Narrative, Affiliation, and Anti-Racist Rhetoric*. Utah State University Press.

Cooper, Brittney, Susana M. Morris, and Robin M. Boylorn, eds. (2017). *The Crunk Feminist Collective*. Feminist Press at the City University of New York.

Rodney Diverlus, Sandy Hudson, and Syrus Marcus Ware, eds. (2020). *Until We Are Free: Reflections on Black Lives Matter in Canada*. University of Regina Press.

French, Whitney (2019). *Black Writers Matter*. University of Regina Press.

Highway, Tomson (2015). *A Tale of Monstrous Extravagance*. University of Alberta Press.

Maracle, Lee (2015). *Memory Serves: Oratories*. Smaro Kamboureli, ed. NeWest Press.

Book Chapters

Anzuldua, Gloria. "How to Tame a Wild Tongue. pp 33-45. PDF available on Learn

Frye, Marilyn (1983). "On Being White: Thinking Toward a Feminist Understanding of Race and Race Supremacy" in *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Crossing Press, pp 110-127. PDF available on Learn

Young, Vershawn Ashanti (2007). Prelude and Chapter One Excerpt. *Your Average Nigga: Performing Race, Literacy, and Masculinity*. Wayne State University Press. (PP xi-8). PDF available on Learn

Articles

Baldwin, James. "Letter from a Region in my Mind". The New Yorker, November 11, 1962. Electronic resource – available on Learn - <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1962/11/17/letter-from-a-region-in-my-mind>

Baldwin, James. "The White Man's Guilt". Ebony Magazine, 1965. – PDF available on Learn.

Videos and Blog Posts

Jones, Kimberley (2020). "How we can win". David Jones Media. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llci8MVh8J4>

Eddo-Lodge, Renni (2014). "Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race". <http://renieddolodge.co.uk/why-im-no-longer-talking-to-white-people-about-race/>

Smooth, Jay. "How to tell someone they sound racist". Ill Doctrine, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0Ti-gkJiXc>

Course Assignments

- **Participation (30 points):** The success of this course (and your success in it) depend upon your consistent participation. There is no doubt that having to work online will make our engagement with and care for one another

more challenging. For the purposes of the online version of this course, we'll measure participation through your demonstration of

- *Responsibility to a collective*
- *Shared responsibility for leading and learning*
- *Self-determination in learning*

To fully participate in the class you should do the following:

- Log into our Learn site a minimum of three times per week
- Listen/view course lectures and PowerPoints each week
- Complete course readings and/or watch videos for each week and write weekly. These writings should scaffold into your final project and so serve as pre-writing and/or drafting
- Engage fully in your small group work and contribute actively and meaningfully to your group's presentation
- Offer honesty, understanding, care, and generosity to your classmates

- **Provisional Project Outline (20 points):** this writing may be completed in bullet-point format, in 11 point font, using 1½ line spacing, and should be roughly one page in length. Your outline should include a concisely phrased predication (claim of a relationship between two or more issues, insights, problems, or questions) that your essay will address. You should include keywords for your project and a summary that describes why this project is important to you as well as why and how the project is significant to readers seeking to learn more about racism and, especially, anti-racism.

Your project should aid you in achieving the following learning outcomes:

- *Recognize rhetorical moves associated with ideological positioning and counter-positioning*
- *Recognize linkages between those rhetorical moves and social discourses: the production of sticky stories*
- *Craft and art of composing critical and theorized counter-narrative and/or counterstory*

- **Project Draft for Workshopping (40 points):** you will need to complete a full, rich draft of your project prior Sunday, 1 November at 11:59PM EST. Your draft will be made available to your classmates. The members of your group will read your draft and provide you with written feedback as will I. Please upload your draft to the appropriate Dropbox Folder on Learn **and** email a copy to your group members. Similarly, when providing feedback to your group members, please upload a copy of your comments to the appropriate Dropbox Folder **and** email a copy to the writer whose work you are reviewing. When providing feedback, please DO NOT comment on anything having to do with spelling, grammar, or organization. Please focus on what writers are saying, on what you hear, and how you experience the what and how of their work. Practice sayback. Let writers know where you need to hear more, where you get lost, and, especially, what moves, delights, and impresses you. **Your feedback should be emailed to your group members and uploaded to Dropbox before Sunday, 8 November at 11:59 PM.**

- *Sustained engagement with critical work*

- *Re-envisioning and revision of work that matters*
 - *The labour of preparing work that matters for publication*
- **Early term Conference with Dr. C (10 Points):** you will meet with me for a twenty-minute (minimum) conversation. During this time we can introduce ourselves to one another. I would like to know more about who you are and what your goals are for the course. You may want or need time to ask questions about the course design, assignments, expectations, and assessment. It will be your responsibility to schedule this meeting with me and you will need to communicate with me should you need to reschedule for any reason. You may arrange our meeting via email (fcondon@uwaterloo.ca) or text message (416.768.4253).
- **Midterm Conference* with Dr. C (10 Points):** you will meet with me for a twenty-minute (minimum) conversation about your work in the course and your project prior to mid-term. It will be your responsibility to schedule this meeting with me and you will need to communicate with me should you need to reschedule for any reason.
- **Final Project (40 points):** Your final project is an extended non-fiction prose essay that braids narrative and/or counterstory with critical and theorized anti-racist analysis and critique. Do not make the mistake of believing that the blended genre in which you will be composing is easier, less time consuming, or more quickly accomplished than traditional academic writing. Be prepared to dedicate significant time to this work. The informal weekly writing you do during the first half of the term should serve as scaffolding for the drafting and revising of your final project and your completion of that weekly informal writing will play a part in your grade for this course requirement. You will receive feedback from your classmates and from me on your project outline and your project draft. You may consult with me throughout the term during my office hours or by making an appointment with me. When our term is completed, if you have done well, you should be in possession of a piece of writing of which you can be very proud, an essay that addresses the most critical matter of our time, a piece that is of publishable quality. My standards will be high and I hope yours will be as well. In its finished form, your essay should run 20 – 25 pages. Your final essay should be formatted for submission to a journal appropriate to its subject matter. First lines of paragraphs should be indented and there should be no extra space between paragraphs. You should use an accessible 11 point font such as Arial or Cambria. Line spacing should be 1 ½ and margins set at 1 inch. If you use citations in your essay, you may choose between MLA or Chicago Style. Your essay should creatively address the following:
- Focused predication (claim of a relationship between two or more issues, insights, problems, or questions) relevant to the subject matter of the course
 - Historical account of your primary subject
 - Critical rhetorical/theoretical account of your subject
 - Account of the significance of the central problem or question as well as of your analysis and critique of it.

- Account of the implications of your analysis and critique for future scholar-activists.
- Narrative or counterstory that situates you – the writer – in the text as well as providing your readers with new ways of seeing your subject and of affiliating with you and others around the work of anti-racism
 - ❖ *Participating mindfully in high-stakes political discourse*
 - ❖ *Moving with fluency between narrative and/or counterstory and conceptual or theoretical knowledge, analyses and critique, future imagining or hope-writing (active resistance)*
- **Final Conference* with Dr. C (10 points):** you will meet with me for a twenty-minute (minimum) conversation about your work in the course and your project prior to the final project due date. It will be your responsibility to schedule this meeting with me and you will need to communicate with me should you need to reschedule for any reason. **If for any reason we cannot schedule either a mid-term or final conference as a synchronous conversation using web-ex or telephone, we can make alternative arrangements. I will depend upon you, however, to let me know if this is that case and to take charge of scheduling.**
- **Teach-In (40 points):** working with a small group, you will produce course materials discussing one of our books or two-three (in total) essays, book chapters, and/or videos/blogs. Your materials should be designed to lay the historical, theoretical, critical, and/or rhetorical groundwork in which the work under discussion may be situated. You and your group may choose any constellation of readings to produce materials for and decide together when you will post those materials for the class. Once a group has posted their materials, however, you may not duplicate the readings they have addressed. When completed, you should **both** upload one set of materials to the appropriate Dropbox folder and post one set of materials to the Learn Activity Feed.
 - Your course materials might include but are not limited to a PowerPoint Presentation, video, audio recording, vlog, podcast, handout of questions for discussion
 - You may choose to record a group discussion of the reading and share that with the class or you might choose to record (with permission) an interview of an expert. Your aim should be to achieve the following learning outcomes:
 - ❖ *Collaboration and leadership skills*
 - ❖ *Communication in politically and ideologically charged contexts*
 - ❖ *Creating conditions for rhetorical listening and productive difficult dialogue*

Course Grading

In this course, you and I will jointly grade all of your work. You will assign yourself a use-value grade for each assignment. Your use-value grade should signify the value of the learning you have accomplished to your needs, interests, and aims. I will assign an exchange-value grade for each of your assignments. This mark will signify the value of your

work relative to the learning goals of the assignment, the content of the course, and the effectiveness of your work in a public sense; in other words, I will speak for readers or audiences in the assignation of exchange-value. You will not need to mark your work for conferences with me; in the case of conferences, you will receive full marks for scheduling and attending your conferences and zero marks if you do not schedule and attend your conferences.

For each assignment, you will need to compose a use-value reflection in which you discuss the following:

- ❖ What you did
- ❖ What worked well
- ❖ What you struggled with
- ❖ What you learned
- ❖ What you take away with you from the work you accomplished: the learning that will last and serve you beyond the bounds of this course

Your reflective essay should be at least one paragraph and no longer than a page, single spaced. Please use 11 point font. You should upload your use-value statement to the designated Dropbox folder on the course Learn site for your assignment.

Assignments and Points Value

Assignment	Use-Value	Exchange Value	Total Points
Participation	15	15	30
Project Outline	10	10	20
Project Draft	20	20	40
Final Project	20	20	40
Teach-In	20	20	40
First Conference			10
Midterm Conference	Do the conference, get the points	Do the conference, get the points	10
Final Conference	Do the conference, get the points	Do the conference, get the points	10
TOTAL POINTS	100	100	200

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF COURSE MODULES

FIRST DAY OF CLASS	Tuesday, 8 September
Lecture	Course Orientation
Assignments	Read – for next week’s discussion (see below) Write: See Learn Week One Description Other: schedule your first meeting with Dr. C
WEEK TWO BEGINS	Monday, 14 September
Lecture	Rhetorics of Black Resistance and White Resentment
Assignments	Reading to be Discussed Baldwin, Letter; Baldwin, Guilt; Frye, White; Eddo Lodge Blog Write: See Learn Week Two Description Other: meet your group members, exchange contact information; begin discussing the readings, possibilities for your teach-in, and your thoughts about a final project; read for next week’s discussion (see below)
WEEK THREE BEGINS	Monday, 21 September
Lecture	Language and Identity
Assignments	Reading to be Discussed Young, Excerpt; Anzuldua, Wild Tongue; Tomson Highway Write: See Learn Week Three Description Other: discuss reading and lecture in your group; agree on teach-in topic, identify a date for distribution of materials, discuss materials; read for next week’s discussion (see below)
WEEK FOUR BEGINS	Monday, 28 September
Lecture	Decentering, Nuancing, Future Imagining
Assignments	Reading to be Discussed Condon, Band Write: See Learn Week Four Description Other: discuss readings and lecture in your group; work on your project outline; gather feedback from your group on your outline draft; read for next week’s discussion (see below)
WEEK FIVE BEGINS	Monday, 5 October
Lecture	The Intellectual Labour of Making Knowledge through Story-telling
Assignments	Reading to be Discussed Condon, Band Write: See Learn Week Five Description DUE: Project Outline; Don’t forget to schedule your midterm conference with Dr. C

WEEK SIX BEGINS

Lecture
Assignments

Reading Week

None
Reading Maracle, Memory Serves
Write: None

WEEK SEVEN BEGINS

Lecture
Assignments

Monday, 19 October

TBA
Reading to be Discussed Maracle Memory
Write: work on project draft
Other: discuss reading with your group; work on teach-in materials; post materials if complete; read for next week's discussion (see below)

WEEK EIGHT BEGINS

Lecture
Assignments

Monday, 26 October

TBA
Reading to be Discussed French, Black Writers
Write: work on project draft
Other: workshop project drafts with your group; read for next week's discussion (see below)
DUE: Project Draft (Sunday, November 1 by 11:59 PM EST)

WEEK NINE BEGINS

Lecture
Assignments

Monday, 2 November

TBA
Reading to be Discussed French, Black Writers
Write: Feedback on Project Drafts written by your group members
Other: read for next week's discussion (see below)

WEEK TEN BEGINS

Lecture
Assignments

Monday, 9 November

TBA
Reading to be Discussed Diverlus et al, Until We Are Free
Write: Deep Revision of Draft
Other: work toward completion of teach-in materials if not already submitted; read for next week's discussion (see below)

WEEK ELEVEN BEGINS

Lecture
Assignments

Monday, 16 November

TBA
Reading to be Discussed Diverlus et al, Until We Are Free; Jay Smooth video
Write: Deep Revision of Draft

Other: work toward completion of teach-in materials if not already submitted; read for next week's discussion (see below)

WEEK TWELVE BEGINS	Monday, 23 November
Lecture	TBA
Assignments	Reading to be Discussed Crunk Feminist Collective Write: Deep Revision of Draft Other: work toward completion of teach-in materials if not already submitted; read for next week's discussion (see below). Don't forget to schedule your final conference with Dr. C
LAST WEEK OF CLASS	Monday, 30 November
Lecture	TBA
Assignments	Reading to be Discussed Crunk Feminist Collective; Kimberley Jones video Write: Finishing Final Projects Other: All teach-in materials if not already uploaded, must be submitted by Sunday, 6 December 11:59 PM EST ; no reading assignment for next week
LAST DAY OF CLASSES	Monday, 7 December
Lecture	TBA
Assignments	No Reading Finishing Final Projects
FINAL PROJECTS DUE	MONDAY, 14 DECEMBER by 11:59 PM EST

Course Policies

Participation: Your presence in this class is required. Weekly lectures and assignments should be completed during the week they become available on Learn. This policy begins on the first day of class. If you transfer into the class after the first week, you should complete the work you have missed as quickly as you can so that you are caught up. If you must miss a week due to illness, please email me to let me know what is happening and complete your missed work as quickly as you can. **If you do miss a week, please do not ask me if you have missed anything. Assume that you have missed important material. Go back and do the work you have missed. Once you have taken these steps, you are most welcome to visit my office hours to follow up on any questions or to share your insights and ideas.**

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 has 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.

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

Revised 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 revisioning 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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