

WRT 105a: A Sense of Place

Formal Class Meeting: Monday-Thursday—1:00 to 3:15 Robbins Library

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Office: Robbins Library

Office Hours: TBD. Individual appointments available on request, in person and on Skype (ProfONeil)

Course Description:

What is "space"? Is it limited to the physical world in which we interact? How do objects and people connect with and define space? How does space influence and/or define people and objects? What does all of this have to do with the University of Rochester and writing? In this course, we will explore these questions by analyzing, interacting with, and even visiting several different kinds of spaces. These experiences will be the focus of our work with writing, and we will utilize class discussion, pre-writing, peer review, self-assessment and the revision process to produce two well-organized essays. Our work will culminate with a look ahead towards 105b, and the research papers you will begin in that class.

Objectives:

Regardless of your chosen major or profession, writing will be an important part of your academic and professional life. Becoming a *good* writer is not about mastering a particular pattern or technique. It isn't about five-paragraph structures or the dutiful avoidance of the first person pronoun. Becoming a *good* writer is about understanding that your approach to writing must perpetually change depending on topic, audience and the ultimate impact that you want your writing to have. This notion of writing as a skill in constant flux is at the heart of our study of performance, as we will discuss and practice ways in which argumentative writing can be viewed as a performative process.

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Read deeply—It is impossible to create good writing without starting with good reading.
- Ask engaging questions about the texts that you read.
- Locate and synthesize professional discourse on a given topic, and find openings for you to participate in those conversations.
- Develop a debatable thesis about a text or issue that grows out of your questions and participates in the academic discourse.
- Support your ideas with multiple and various kinds of evidence.

- Identify different audiences for your thesis, and adapt your writing in order to more effectively convey your thoughts to those different audiences.

Primary Writing Requirement:

This course partially fulfills the University of Rochester's primary writing requirement. Please be aware that you must earn a grade of "C" or better in this course to successfully fulfill that requirement.

Grading:

Your final grade for the course will be determined as follows:

- **15 %** Participation (including HW, Peer Review and Self-Assessment)
- **20 %** Final exhibit/presentation
- **25 %** Essay #1 (2-3 pages)
- **40 %** Essay #2 (3-5 pages)

Final drafts of formal essays will be assigned a letter grade (A, A-, B+, B, etc). Informal assignments will be graded with a check, check minus, or incomplete.

Required Reading/Viewing:

Required readings and film viewings may be listed in the course schedule below. I reserve the right to alter this schedule as the course progresses, but I will only do so if absolutely necessary for our work. The majority of course readings will be available in digital format on Blackboard. Whether you print these readings or have an e-reader, I will expect everyone to have access to the readings during class meetings. If you bring a digital device (e-reader, laptop, etc), the **only** appropriate use for that device in class is accessing our readings. Surfing the web is not something that needs to be done during our class meetings.

Attendance and Class Participation:

Please be in class, on time, with your homework (readings and writings) completed. Attendance is crucial for success in this course. We need you here to offer your own unique observations and feedback. Further, we will be engaging in an approach to writing, editing and revision that you have likely never encountered before. If you accrue too many absences, it will be very difficult for you to catch up with the rest of the class. **If you need to miss class for any reason, please talk to me beforehand.** Being in class is only half of the battle—please come prepared to

work collaboratively. We're here to learn from each other and (ideally) have some fun.

Late or Missed Homework/Classwork:

I do not accept late homework for any reason. Stick to the course calendar. If you need to miss class for any reason, consult the course calendar and continue on with the reading. Missing the previous class meeting is not a valid reason for being unprepared for the next course meeting. Take advantage of my office hours if you need help getting caught up.

Short Written Work:

There will be regular writing assignments in this class including short prompts in class (such as journals and self-evaluative writing) as well as writing to be completed for homework (such as short research-related assignments and Blackboard discussion prompts). These assignments will be assessed in a variety of ways, and they should ultimately help you in both constructing and revising your larger, more formal written work.

Essays:

Final drafts of all essays should be submitted via e-mail. These final drafts should follow standard MLA formatting requirements (1 inch margins, double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, etc). Late papers will lose one third of a letter grade for every day that they are late—(this policy refers to calendar days, including weekends and holidays); if you are having trouble completing your paper before deadline, please speak to me **before** the paper is due.

Peer Review, Self-Assessment, and Revision:

Peer Review, Self-Assessment and Revision will be built into the structure of the course. All of our work should be done in the spirit of constant revision—You should always be thinking about how new information, opinions and audiences will influence your overall argument.

The Writing Center:

The Writing Center (located on the ground floor of Rush Rhees Library, near Connections) is an invaluable resource available to you. I encourage you to visit the writing center at least once for this course to get support at any stage of your

writing process—from choosing a topic to revising your final draft. Nobody writes in a vacuum. My colleagues and I frequently get together to offer feedback on each other's writing and professional writers have been doing the same thing for hundreds of years. The Writing Center provides you with just such an outlet. Use it.

From the Writing Center's website: *"At the University of Rochester, we are all writers, and every writer needs a reader. The College Writing Center is a place where you can find readers who can provide critical feedback at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming for a topic to polishing a final draft. To learn more about the College Writing Center services and/or to find a tutor, please visit <http://writing.rochester.edu>*

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty should never be an issue in this course. Early in the semester, we will discuss the reasons and methods for avoiding plagiarism. After that point, this course will have a zero-tolerance policy regarding plagiarism, up to and including receiving a zero for the assignment and a referral to the Academic Honesty Board. Please read, internalize and be aware of the following information (this page is official university policy):

<http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/policy.html>

Support Services (CETL)

Please know that this classroom respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities, and that I invite you to talk with me about any concern or situation that affects your ability to complete your academic work successfully. Further, I encourage you to make use of the resources available to you on campus, particularly the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. The following information is from CETL's website: "CETL is a resource available to all students in the College. All kinds of students with all kinds of GPAs and academic records make use of our programs. We work with strong students who wish to become even better, as well as with students who have not yet tapped into the strategies needed to succeed in college, and everyone in between. We offer an extensive study group and Workshop program, individual study skills counseling, study skills workshops and a study skills course, and disability support. We are located in 107 Lattimore Hall on the River Campus. To make an appointment or to learn more, stop by our offices, call us at (585) 275-9049, or send an email: cetl@rochester.edu "

Community Contacts

Alternatives for Battered Women Crisis Line	232-7353
Deaf Hotline TTY	232-2854
Family Court Domestic Violence Hotline	428-5787
Gay Alliance Victim Resource	244-8640
Lifeline	275-5151 or 211
Monroe County	
Domestic Violence Consortium	428-2215
Health Dept. STD/HIV Clinic	753-5375
Sheriff's Victim Assistance Office	753-4389
Rape Crisis Service	546-2777
Rochester Police Department	
Emergency	911
Victim Assistance	428-6630
SAATHI	234-1050

All phone numbers Area Code 585

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Campus Support

University Counseling Center (UCC)	275-3113
University Health Service (UHS)	
Eastman School	274-1230
Health Promotion Office	273-5775
Medical Center	275-2662
River Campus	275-2662
www.rochester.edu/uhs	
Center for Student Conflict Management	
Title IX Coordinator	275-4085
University Director of Spiritual Life	275-8422
University Intercessor	275-9125
University Security	275-3333
www.rochester.edu/CARE	
<i>All phone numbers Area Code 585</i>	

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Course Calendar:

Calendar for 105A		
<u>WEEK ONE: Welcome, Rhetoric, and Close Reading</u>		
Date	Block 1	Block 2
7/2	Syllabus, Welcome, and Getting Acquainted Diagnostic (\$20)	Gorgias and Rhetorical Triangle Read Rawlins for Tuesday
7/3	Wayside and V.A.T. Former student & GoT Discussion of Rawlins	Re-visiting the diagnostic for two audiences.

7/4	No Class	University Closed
7/5	Paper Workshop: Topic Generation -Intro to Close Reading (Avatar video & worksheet)	
<u>WEEK TWO: Rhetorical Spaces, Audience, and Code-Switching</u>		
7/9	Aunt Betty, Kids React, and Code Switching	Cultural code-switching: How-to guide you need vs. How-to guide you can write
7/10	Museum space and the broken statue	Discussion/debate: What creates value?
7/11	Social Media as rhetorical space	Images as rhetoric in a meme-based world.
7/12	Paper Workshop: Full draft of Paper one due for peer & professor review	
7/13	FIRST DRAFT OF PAPER 1 IS DUE VIA E-MAIL SUBMISSION	
<u>WEEK THREE—Domestic Spaces, Subtext, and Tone</u>		
7/16	Subtext and Tone (PP)	Language, culture, dialect and geographical space—cultures of communication.
7/17	Home vs. Visitor: <i>Frasier</i> episode	Reading domestic space: What can someone's home tell you about that person? -Realty photos -Space and the family -Pets -Multi-generational cultures - Urban vs. Suburban domestic space

7/18	Guided work on Paper One—this is where we paint the shed.	
7/19	Field Trip: MAG—Meet in the bus lane outside of the library.	
7/20	FINAL DRAFT OF PAPER 1 IS DUE VIA E-MAIL SUBMISSION	
<u>WEEK FOUR—Campus Spaces: Arriving and What Baggage to Bring</u>		
7/23	High School throwbacks (letter jacket diagnostic, high school cultures)	Seth Letter (Bring your own college admissions essays to class today)
7/24	Kinds of Research: Primary Context, Historical, Factual Highlight the Library's physical and digital resources—Camelot, Blake Archive, Lazarus, etc.	Field trip: Rare Books and Special collections HW: Find out what sorts of physical and digital resources we have that connect to your majors/interests. Be ready to report.
7/25	LIBRARY DAY: Kinds of Research: Secondary (fact-based, like context, historical, and factual AND argument-based— Burke's Parlor)	Library Tour (of physical and digital resources)
7/26	Paper Workshop: Putting Together our Conversations	

<u>WEEK FIVE—Campus Spaces: How to read a campus</u>		
7/30	Dorm culture: Opulent vs. spartan	Discussion: Halsband reading
7/31	Study Spaces: Distractions and learning styles	Discussion: Rader reading
8/1	Dining Spaces: “A Birthday Party” Starbucks debate, Kid Policies, etc.	Using Quotations effectively (re-visit Burke, Halsband, Rader, Seth, Rawlins, etc). -Introduction of the Exhibit assignment.
8/2	Paper Workshop: Full draft of paper due for peer & professor review.	
8/3	FIRST DRAFT OF PAPER 2 IS DUE VIA E-MAIL SUBMISSION	
<u>WEEK SIX—Campus Spaces: Symbolic Spaces (statuary, art, etc)</u>		
8/6	Citation and Revising for Content, Concision, and Mechanics (in that order). -Purdue OWL	Statuary, Naming, and morality -Article discussion -Field trip to visit George Eastman HW: Find a statue or a named building on campus. Find out about it be ready to report.
8/7	Campus history/campus lore: a discussion of the history of the modern university Citation Workshop	Workshop on how to craft and construct an exhibit

8/8	Full Class to prep the exhibit
8/9	Exhibit hosts/presentations and end of semester joyousness
8/10	FINAL DRAFT OF PAPER 2 DUE VIA E-MAIL