

English 2 Reading, Writing and Teaching/Learning Spring 2009

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Office hours: Tues & Thursday 10-11:00 at **Schwemm**
Writing workshops in Frost A-31

Class: Tu & Th 8:30-9:50 am
Room: Webster 217
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In this somewhat unusual course you will write intensively in conversation with a good deal of reading. In addition, each student will work one afternoon each week either as a classroom assistant at Holyoke High School or as a tutor at an Adult Basic Education Center in Holyoke or Ware. We will discuss and evaluate your writing in individual 20-25 minute weekly meetings with me. We will consider from many perspectives what it means to read and write and learn and teach both for ourselves and for others. We will meet some of these learners and teachers through the readings in the course, others through our weekly work in the community. Although we hope you will reflect a great deal about teaching, this course does not teach how to teach. It leads the group through an exploration about education, its contexts and processes of learning—both yours and others’.

The writing in the course ranges across many genres. You will be asked to draw upon aspects of your own experience, and to engage someone else’s experience. You will read and write poems, closely observed descriptions, critical analyses, and a few somewhat extended essays. You will develop your writer’s voice in the ongoing conversation about learning.

To take this course you must consider carefully the commitments involved:

1. Two meetings a week as a class to discuss the course reading and the writing assigned. In these discussions we expect each of you to draw on your own experiences as students, as readers, as writers, and on what you do as a classroom assistant or tutor.
2. Each student will spend time each week at **Holyoke High School** or offering GED tutoring in Holyoke or Ware—a commitment of about four hours each week including transportation.
3. There will be a number of extra activities to support your work in Holyoke or Ware:
 - a. a GED tutor training
 - b. an orientation in the high school
 - c. a tour of the city including visits to a number of community organizations.
4. Your writing will be discussed and evaluated in a weekly session with peers and professor. Adding all its components this will be a humanities course with the equivalent of a lab section – the time committed to teaching.

Once you have a teaching assignment this should be treated as an obligation so important that only serious illness can be an excuse. Please remember that many of the students have had too many experiences of adults letting them down; don’t add to this history. As soon as you have a classroom assignment get the phone number of the teacher or contact person so you can let him/her know if something unavoidable has come up that prevents you from meeting your responsibility.

Marie Mew is our liaison at Holyoke High, the general phone number at HHS is 534-2020. Emily Fox coordinates the Holyoke Tutor/Mentor Program, you can reach her by phone 534-3376 or e-mail holyoketutor@holycham.com. Margaret Anderson coordinates the Literacy Project in Ware, her phone is 774-3934 and her e-mail is margaret@literacyproject.org. Do contact us or Emily Bularzik about any problems you are having with your placement.

Book List

Roberto Santiago ed.	<i>Boricuas</i>
Miguel Algarin and Bob Holman eds.	<i>Aloud</i>
Jonathan Kozol	<i>The Shame of the Nation</i>
Patrick Chamoiseau	<i>School Days</i>
David Mamet	<i>Oleanna</i>
Sylvia Ashton-Warner	<i>Teacher</i>
John Stuart Mill	<i>The Autobiography</i>
Judy Frank	<i>Crybaby Butch</i>

The books required for the course are available at Amherst Books. Because we will be working so closely with these books it is important, whenever possible, that each student has her or his own copy. This course is taught often, so you may well be able to find used copies at The Option. There is also a Course Reader to be obtained in the English Office. Each student in the course will have \$9 charged to their term bill to cover the cost of this volume and other photocopying costs for the course. Five College students will be billed by the College.

Writing: expect a weekly writing assignment. These will vary in length but none will be longer than 5 pages. **Essays are generally due early on Friday morning** but occasionally other due times are marked on the syllabus. Please e-mail clearly identified WORD attachment to brsanchezepp@amherst.edu, and the other member of your workshop cluster. Since you write every week, and since writing to a deadline is an important discipline, **I will evaluate only what I receive by the posted deadline.**

Course Readings, Writing and Activities

Week One

Tuesday, Jan. 27

Introduction to the course—

Teaching/Learning
Reading/Writing

Reading for Writing
“...the whole why world...”
Kozol, *Shame...*, (39-40)

If we have it
– why not *them*?
If *they don't*
– why do *we*...?

The uselessness of guilt.
Woolman's twist

Writing 0: In class. **First just read these questions:**

If my life is a journey, why and how have I ended up enrolling in this course? Where am I headed that I have thought I should come through this course?

Do I trust my writing to say what I mean and what I am becoming? Do I trust my reading to help me listen to the voices I need to hear, and talk to?

Do I trust my education to make me what I want to become? Can the education most children are getting in these United States be trusted to bring forth the people the Nation may want to become? Why?

Is this too much to ask?

Then write legibly, but without stopping for 20 minutes on whatever you have to say to these provocations.

Respond to the provocation, more than dutifully answer the questions. This piece will not be graded, but it will set down a base line of how much you can say in 20 minutes of writing, and with how much energy.

Thursday, Jan. 29

**Literacy Workshop
with Emily Fox, Aliza Ansell
and Margaret Anderson**

- ❖ Jonathan Kozol,
The Shame of the Nation,
1-37; 327-332.
- ❖ Michael Jacobsen-Hardy,
*Facing Education:
Portraits of Holyoke School Children*
in the Reading Notebook.

Assignment I: Take the handout of the Kozol fragment, and read it to write. Look for ways to enter in through that passage to come out through your own short piece. Beyond note taking—when you are confronted with a piece of writing, what’s in it that makes you want to write? Once the reading is in you—What can you say? What must you say?

Due IN WORKSHOP CLUSTER

Week Two

Tour of Holyoke High School
(Stand by for day. Leaving Vans Parking Area by 2:00pm TBA)

Tuesday, Feb. 3

Please return all Placement Forms

- ❖ Abraham Rodríguez, “The Boy Without a Flag” in *Boricuas* 30-46.
- ❖ Esmeralda Santiago, “The American Invasion of Macún,” in *Boricuas* 159-177.

Thursday, Feb. 5

- ❖ Sara Lightfoot, “Highland Park High School” from *The Good Highschool*; &
- ❖ Laurie Olsen, “Maps of Madison High” from *Made in America: Immigrant Students in Our Public Schools* in the Reading Notebook.

Writing II: 2-3 pages, & haiku

Write an essay about a school experience (it may be anything, from in or outside of the classroom).

Then use one element of the same experience and create a 17 syllable haiku about it (review definition).

In both exercises, make the experience as detailed and vivid as possible for someone else, within the constraints of three lines or three pages.

Due 8:30 am Friday Feb. 6.

Week Three

Tuesday, Feb. 10

**Literacy Workshop with Emily Fox,
Aliza Ansell and Margaret Anderson**

- ❖ Jonathan Kozol, *Shame of the Nation*,
39-135.

Thursday, Feb. 12

- ❖ Jonathan Kozol, *Shame of the Nation*,
135-317; ¡321-324!.

Writing III: 2-3 pages, plus 1 page

1) After reviewing Lightfoot's, Olsen's and Kozol's descriptions of schools write a description of your high school that focuses on objective information, emphasizing its socio-economic profile and the relationship of its curricular offerings (class size, kinds of subjects, which students are in what grouping or track, etc.) to the demographic characteristics of the student body. You may add a map of the school if you like.

2) When you have finished the writing above, on a separate page, discuss the difference for you between writing in this fashion about your school and the way you wrote and what you chose to write about in the essay and haiku versions of your previous assignment.

Due Friday Feb 13 at 8:30am

Week Four

Tuesday, Feb. 17

- ❖ Browse through the poems in *Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Café*, then pick 10 to read carefully, prepare one of these to perform "aloud" in class, and be ready to talk about what you find interesting in this poem.

Thursday, Feb. 19

Poetry Reading –Assignment IV

Week Five

Tuesday, Feb. 24

Poetry Reading (Collages/Dialogues)

Working with a partner pick 10-15 poems in *Aloud* that "talk to one another" (perhaps they share a theme, or certain formal characteristics, or a quality of voice) and read them carefully. Together you should prepare to perform two of these poems (or a collage of fragments) "aloud" in class in a way that lets us see them in dialogue (3 minutes per pair). Be ready to discuss the rationale for your grouping.

Thursday, Feb. 26

Literacy Workshop with Emily Fox, Aliza Ansell and Margaret Anderson

Week Six

Tuesday, March 3

10 presentations of Writing V.

Evening Performance**Assignment IV:****Poetry in Performance.**

Bring the poem from *Aloud* you chose to read in an enlarged photocopy. Develop your own markings or color highlighting patterns of stage directions for reading with emphasis, pauses, speed changes, etc. This is your first chance to reconstitute the voice from the page. You are primarily the reader-performer, but you are also your own director and stage manager.

Adapt the poem and rehearse your reading so it fits in 3 minutes—about the length of a song.

Due IN CLASS, Thursday Feb. 19**Due IN CLASS, Thursday Feb. 26****Writing V: Your poem.**

Write a poem of your own about a memory, a place, childhood, parents, a teacher, a school friend--using a poem in the book as your model.

Writing VI: Lesson plan

Then pick a piece from *Aloud* or *Boricuas* that you think would be useful or interesting to your Holyoke students and prepare a lesson plan laying out your goals for teaching this piece and how you would implement them. What are the problems with which your students might wrestle? You may want to look at the Educational Resource Information Center www.eric.ed.gov or at the somewhat more user-friendly The Educator's Reference Desk www.eduref.org for model lesson plans. You don't have to follow their forms, but you can get ideas about the things you should be attending to.

Due IN CLASS, Thursday Feb. 26

Thursday, March 5

- ❖ Lisa Delpit, "The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other Peoples' Children" from *Harvard Educational Review* (1998) &
- ❖ Sonia Nieto, "Who Does the Accommodating? Institutional Transformations to Promote Learning" from *The Light in their Eyes* in the Reading Notebook.

NO CLUSTER WORKSHOPS 3/6-3/24

Week Seven

Tuesday, March 10

- ❖ Beverly Tatum, "Identity Development in Adolescence," and "The Development of White Identity" from *Why Are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* in the Reading Notebook
- ❖ Jan Dizard, "Achieving Place: Teaching Social Stratification to Tomorrow's Elite," from *Teaching: What We Do* in the Reading Notebook
- ❖ Elizabeth Aries, "Relationships Across Race and Class," *Race and Class Matters in an Elite College*, pp.64-86.

Writing VII: 3 pages

Kozol, Delpit, Nieto and Tatum all write about the ways in which racism pervades and structures American education. Dizard & Kozol talk explicitly about class. In a 3 page essay explore the commonalities and the tensions between their positions. What does Tatum's psychological analysis understand that Kozol and Delpit miss, and what does Kozol's economic and political account reveal that the others ignore? How do Nieto's and Delpit's attention to pedagogy complicate these psychological and economic understandings? What does Dizard's discussion of "social reproduction" add to this mix?

Due Friday, March 13 at 8:30am

NO CLUSTER WORKSHOP FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

Thursday, March 12

- ❖ David Mamet, *Oleanna*

Spring Break March 14-22 Don't forget to remind your students!

Week Eight

Tuesday, March 24

- ❖ Patrick Chamoiseau, "Longing," *School Days*

Thursday, March 26

- ❖ Patrick Chamoiseau, "Survival," *School Days*

Writing VIII: Imitation re-writing.

- 1) Pick a passage you find powerful, of no more than a page, from *School Days*. Copy your passage so that you have to pay attention to every word and comma and write down all the observations you can about its (English) style.
- 2) Then, rewrite your first essay (Longing? Survival?) in Chamoiseau's style. If you need to embellish or fictionalize or head in a slightly different direction, go ahead and do so.
- 3) Finally, write 1-2 pages about how imitating his style affected the meaning of your experience. The more general question here: what impact does style have upon meaning, and what might this have to do with the little boy's, or any child's, experience of school.

—E-mail your imitation, and observations. Bring your copied passage to conference.

Due 8:30 am Friday, March 27

Week Nine

Tuesday, March 31

- ❖ Sylvia Ashton Warner's *Teacher*. —discussion

Thursday, April 2

Keywords - Presentations

Monday, April 7, 7:30pm

Dessert @ the Sánchez-Eppler (317 South Pleasant Street)

Keywords IX:

Take a list of your own "keywords." --20 or so words that come to your mind quickly as being especially powerful or important to you, including those generated in class-- and make something out of them in any way you like.

Due Monday, April 7.

Week Ten

Tuesday, April 7

- ❖ John Stuart Mill, *The Autobiography*, chapters 1-3

Thursday, April 9

- ❖ Mill, *The Autobiography* chapters 4-6 and pages 181-185

No-Writing X:

Pay attention to how it feels to not have a writing assignment for this course during this week. Just reflect, without having to write, on the effect of this course and your tutoring experience on your other courses

Writing XI: 3 pages.

John Stuart Mill, Patricia Williams and James Baldwin construct accounts of becoming "educated." Neither of these writers thinks of the process as a matter of formal learning. They portray what they learn from books and instruction as essential, and yet each describes periods of uncertainty, and each makes vivid the importance of certain experiences to dramatize what proved most valuable in their formal instruction and what had to be revised or reformulated.

Address this simple question: How and what do they learn? You will not do justice to Mill, Williams and Baldwin in just 3 pages, so you should focus primarily on any one of these authors, but feel encouraged to draw on the others as their ideas or ways of writing help you to think about learning.

Due 8:30 am. Friday April 17

Week Eleven

Tuesday, April 14

- ❖ Patricia Williams, "Crimes without Passion" from the Reading Notebook.

Thursday, April 16

- ❖ James Baldwin, "Congo Square" from *The Devil Finds Work* in the Reading Notebook

Week Twelve

Tuesday, April 21

- ❖ Shoshana Felman,
“Psychoanalysis and Education:
Teaching Terminable and Interminable” &
- ❖ Herbert Kohl “I Won’t Learn from You”
in the Reading Notebook

Thursday, April 23

- ❖ Dione Brand “Madame Alaird’s Breasts”
in the Reading Notebook
- ❖ Henry James,
“The Pupil”
in the Reading Notebook
- ❖ View On-line:
The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie

Writing XII: 3-page

With these past few weeks of reading and your previous essay in mind, write about an instance of resistance to learning: either your own resistance or that of one of your students at Holyoke. This essay can be as narrative or as analytical as you'd like, but either way, it should be richly detailed.

Due 8:30 am Friday April 24.**Week Thirteen**

Tuesday, April 28

- ❖ Judith Frank,
Crybaby Butch,
Part I, pp.8-174

Thursday, April 30

- ❖ Judith Frank,
Crybaby Butch,
Part II, pp. 176-330.

Writing XIII: 3 pages

The verbs “seduce” and “educate” both have their roots in the Latin verb, *duco/ducare*, meaning “to lead,” and in the classroom, the distinctions between the actions they define can become blurred. These films and stories use that blurring to help us re-evaluate what both activities share. Think about the different strategies that the writers and film-makers use to make their cases and draw upon these to write 3 pages about a situation you have experienced as a teacher or a student in which the distinction between seduction and education became blurred. Keep in mind that the best situations to write about are unlikely to be those in which a student or a teacher definitely “crosses the line” but, rather, those in which the ambiguities remain unresolved.

Due 8:30 am Friday, May 1.**Week Fourteen**

Tuesday, May 5

- ❖ Judith Frank,
Crybaby Butch,
Part I, pp. 331-416.

Thursday, May 7

Endings

Writing XIV: 5 pages

Write a new 5-page essay in which you reflect on your experience in and through the course this term. Focus on one or more of the texts that we have read as a way of organizing the essay. Do bring insights from your own educational autobiography and from your tutoring experiences to your discussion of these texts. Feel free to use whatever materials and whatever written form will make this essay as searching and meaningful as possible both for you and for whatever audience your writing addresses.

Due Friday May 8 at 8:30 am**Cluster workshop at usual times during Reading/Examination Period**