

SCLA 102 Transformative Texts: Critical Thinking & Communication II: Modern World
Focus - Connections -- The Ties That Bind

Purdue University – Spring 2020 SCLA 102 Class held in UNIV 301 FOUR SECTIONS: MWF 10:30-11:20,
MWF 11:30-12:20 MWF 2:30-3:20 MWF 3:30-4:20

Professor William White UNIV 110 Office Hours: MWF 9:45-10:15 and 1:20-2:15 and by appointment
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“If you’re an inch off on landing, no big deal. If you’re an inch off on takeoff, you miss the moon by a million miles.” Neil Armstrong, quoted in *ESPN The Magazine*, page 31, July 2019

“But our everyday exchanges, and indeed the life of our republic, would be greatly improved by the more common utterance of those three magical little words: *I was wrong.*” Mitch Daniels, op. ed. in *The Washington Post*, 12/6/17

“...you are going to come up against people who challenge your ideas and who challenge you. That’s a good thing. Disagreements can lead to diversity of thinking, improvements in products and services and greater productivity.” Deborah Grayson Riegel, quoted in *Chicago Tribune*, 2/22/18

“The world is messy. There are ambiguities. People who do really good stuff have flaws. People who you are fighting may love their kids and share certain things with you.” Barack Obama, speech on 10/29/19, quoted by Clarence Page, *Chicago Tribune*, 11/3/19

“If there’s so many people here, then why am I so lonely? Can I get a connection?” OneRepublic

- 1) COURSE DESCRIPTION:** OUR class will ask us to reflect, discuss, and occasionally disagree about issues raised in 5 texts (ranging from August Wilson’s challenging play about gentrification, *Radio Golf*, to a futuristic novel, *Feed*, which explores the opportunities and problems when a cell phone is attached to our brains (rather than our eyes). The best way to discuss our books, pod casts, speeches, etc. is to actually read/listen to them rather than getting a shorthand version from *Spark Notes*. We will focus on oral communication. Sometimes I will ask you to simply summarize; other times you will be giving formal thesis/debate presentations. Of course part of speaking is listening. We will often meet in small groups of 5-7 as we discuss the assigned reading for the day. I hope that our readings keep you questioning what you believe in – not to change your values but to make sure you truly understand why you believe what you do. Many Supreme Court cases have involved Justices arguing that the best way to support your side is to have it challenged.

SCLA 102 is based on the fundamental premise that great texts -- whether books, essays, poetry, speeches, film or digital media -- inform and inspire students, encouraging their creative and imaginative capacities, helping students see the world from different perspectives and broadening their worldview. In this class, we will examine a series of texts, speeches, videos etc. and **TRY TO RELATE THEM TO US TODAY!!**

SCLA 102 is part of Level I of the *Cornerstone Certificate Program*. It fulfills the Oral Communication requirement in the University Core Curriculum. It is dedicated to developing and enhancing the ability of students to convey information through oral presentations, advancing their understanding of the importance of rhetorical situations and choices; analyzing and constructing presentations for different audiences; gathering and evaluating sources for presentations and using visual aids effectively.

2) LEARNING OUTCOMES: Oral Communication

By the end of the semester, students will:

1. Demonstrate effective, professional delivery, designing and adapting appropriate verbal appeals through vocal intonation and non-verbal cues.
2. Distinguish and apply appropriate informative, persuasive, explanatory, interrogatory and argumentative strategies and techniques in the discussions and in formal presentations
3. Organize presentations with effective supporting materials.
4. Locate and evaluate effective sources of information.
5. Engage critically with transformative texts, drawing on multiple perspectives, including the individual, the historical, and the contemporary.

3) REQUIRED TEXTS

I suggest that you get the specific editions in the following list. Additional reading will be something you can access online or through Blackboard. Always bring what we are reading to class on the date that it is assigned. ***No make-up of missed quizzes! And no extra credit projects!***

Sherman Alexie, *Flight*, (Grover Press)

M. T. Anderson, *Feed*, (Candlewick Press Reprint Edition)

August Wilson, *Radio Golf*, (Theatre Communications Group)

Jeannette Walls, *The Glass Castle*, (Scribner, Reprint Edition)

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, (Penguin Books)

4) GRADING IN SCLA 102

First class presentation – Informative speech – 30 points – **SPEECH # 1**

Second class presentation -- Persuasive speech -- debate – 50 points – **SPEECH # 2**

Two papers – 30 points each

6-10 quizzes on the day's **assigned reading or what we watch, hear, or read in class** – 5-10 points each --Excused quizzes, (documented illness, school trips, etc.) will be made up by inserting your subsequent quiz % into the excused slot

GRADING SCALE: %

Excellent: A (94-100), A- (90-93)

Above Average: B+ (87-89), B (84-86), B- (80-83)

Average: C+ (77-79), C (74-76), C- (70-73)

Below Average: D+ (67-69), D (64-66), D- (60-63)

Below 60 is failing

For Papers #1 and #2 use 12 font, double-spaced, with just your name and class time on the 1st page (no cover page or filler). Turn each paper in as a hard copy at the start of class on the date due. You will lose 2 points for every increment of 8 hours late I will be happy to help you with your papers. The best way to do so is for you to send me a hard copy and then meet me during my office hours 1-2 days later. Or bring a hard copy to my office. I will work with you on your paper up to 48 hours in advance of its due date.

Paper #1 – Paper # 1 is a brief research paper using primarily newspapers and magazine articles. It should be a minimum of 3 full pages plus a Works Cited page – MLA, APA, or Chicago style citations. What is Thomas Hobbes's conception of how we relate to one another in a state of nature and even inside a society with government? Use examples within the past 3 years from newspapers, magazines, etc. to either refute or corroborate his idea. You may also use examples that you have personally seen or been involved with in this essay but not in place of documented events. You must use two direct quotes from Hobbes's handout and **underline your topic sentence in each paragraph**. Do not over quote from your sources-- paraphrase, (1-2 brief quotes per page is about right). For citations use Purdue OWL and/or see me for help on what and how to cite). Hard copy due at the start of class on Friday, February 14, 2020.

Paper #2 – Examine a city anywhere in the world undergoing “revitalization/gentrification” over the past 10 years. What arguments are made for and against such projects and how do they echo discussions raised in August Wilson’s *Radio Golf*? You must use at least two direct quotes from Wilson’s play in your paper and **underline your topic sentence in each paragraph.** Citations same as paper # 1. **Minimum of 3 FULL pages.** Hard copy due at the start of class on Monday, March 30, 2020.

Please consider making an appointment to use the Purdue Presentation Center in Beering 2294 in the Lamb School of Communication to practice your 2 graded speeches. You will receive 1-on-1 help from trained tutors and a video recording of your speech to assist you in delivering complex information.

Formal Presentation – SPEECH #1 – Brief informative presentation --Your first graded speech is about a topic of your choice from your reading of *Flight* or *Feed*. **(5 minutes minimum.-7 minutes maximum).**

Formal Presentation -- SPEECH #2-- Persuasive “debate” – teams of 2 – Each graded separately --Each of you defends a position on a policy issue. Begin by introducing the topic, the sides, and why it is important, e.g. should there be a free market for human organs? Each of you does research, submits a bibliography of 6-10 sources that you will use in your speech and persuasively defends your position. I will provide a wide variety of policy issues. If your team has a different topic, talk to me and get written approval for your topic. Time -- **10 minutes minimum-12 minutes maximum per person.** One minute video clips per person during the debate are OK. **Give me your bibliographies at least 48 hours in advance of your debate.**

5) Class Policies – I expect you to attend every class, reading done and reading in hand. All papers and oral presentations are due on the assigned dates – grade = 0 if you do not deliver your speech. Reason will prevail in enforcing this policy – e. g. car wreck, family emergency, etc. – you must notify me in a timely fashion if you miss a graded assignment. **“Ultimately students are responsible for all required coursework and bear full responsibility for any academic consequences that may result due to absences.”**

You may leave your cell phones and tablets on during class in the event that a Purdue ALERT text message is sent, but use them only for class discussion when appropriate.

Daily Schedule:

- Jan. 13 M Introduction to the course and each other – read/discuss President Mitch Daniels's op. ed. “Is anyone ever wrong anymore?” (handed out in class)
- 15 W Discuss Lon Fuller’s **Harvard Law Review** article, *The Case of the Speluncean Explorers*, **read online before class and pick two Justices that you will paraphrase.** Pick 2-3 Malcolm Gladwell podcasts, *Revisionist History* to summarize Wednesday and Friday (22&24) – You will only summarize one but come to class with 2nd and 3rd choices in case someone else takes your 1st choice.
- 17 F Discuss an excerpt from **Thomas Hobbes** – **handed out in class**
- 20 M **** **MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY – NO CLASSES******
- 22 W 5 minute summaries of Gladwell – **NOT GRADED** ---- **RELAX**
- 24 F 5 minute Gladwell summaries cont.
- 27 M Read Alexie, *Flight*, pages 1-65
- 29 W Alexie, pages 66-130 and discuss PAPER # 1
- 31 F Alexie, pages 131-end
- Feb. 3 M Anderson, *Feed*, pages 3-72
- 5 W Anderson, pages 75-150 - **Choose/draw dates for SPEECH #1**
- 7 F Watch **in class** PBS, **Frontline**, *In the Age of AI*
- 10 M Anderson, pages 151-236 -**Discuss *Feed* and *Flight* and expectations of Speech # 1**
- 12 W Anderson, pages 237-299 and watch (**in class**) Nicholas Carr’s speech at 2018 *Dawn or Doom*
- 14 F **IMPROMPTU SPEECHES -- MAY EARN 0-3 BONUS POINTS** and **Paper #1 due at the start of class**
- 17 M **IMPROMPTU SPEECHES** cont.

- 19 W Watch **in class** PBS, **Frontline**, *The Facebook Dilemma*, part 1
 21 F SPEECH # 1 – 7 students
 24 M SPEECH # 1 – 7 students
 26 W SPEECH # 1 – 5 students and discuss Eli Saslow, “Breaking America: Nothing on This Page is Real” read in our class management system (BLACKBOARD) **before class**
 28 F SPEECH # 1 – 7 STUDENTS
 Mar 2 M SPEECH #1 – 4 students, watch **in class** Mary Fischer, “A Whisper of Aids” speech and review Debate Topics list for Speech # 2
 4 W Wilson, *Radio Golf* – ACT ONE
 6 F Wilson, *Radio Golf* – ACT TWO
 9 M Discussion of Robert Frost's poem “The Road Not Taken” **handed out in class** and practice Speech on Cornerstone and *Choose/draw Dates for SPEECH # 2 – DEBATE*
 11 W PBS, *Medicine Woman* – **watch in class**
 13 F Gary Smith, “Lying in Wait” *Sports Illustrated*, April 8, 2002 **read online before class**

MARCH 16-21 – SPRING VACATION

- 23 M Walls, *The Glass Castle*, pages, 3-72
 25 W Walls, pages, 73-125
 27 F Walls, pages, 129-217
 30 M DEBATE – 2 TEAMS and **Paper #2 due at the start of class**
 Apr. 1 W Walls, pages, 218-288
 3 F DEBATE – 2 TEAMS
 6 M DEBATE – 2 TEAMS
 8 W DEBATE – 2 TEAMS
 10 F Malcolm Gladwell – “Small Change” – *New Yorker*, Oct. 4, 2010 **read online before class**
 13 M DEBATE – 2 TEAMS
 15 W DEBATE – 1 TEAM and watch/read in class ... (to be chosen)
 17 F DEBATE – 2 TEAMS
 20 M DEABTE – 2 TEAMS
 22 W Achebe, pages 3-86
 24 F Achebe, pages 87-167
 27 M Achebe, pages 171-209
 29 W Gary Smith “Higher Education” *Sports Illustrated* first published March 5, 2001 reprinted Dec. 12, 2014 – **read online before class** and watch a Ronald Reagan speech
 May. 1 F Concluding Observations

“Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, National origin or ancestry, genetic information, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, or status as a veteran.” (See Purdue “Nondiscrimination Policy Statement” – please familiarize yourself with this policy. See https://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.php). We will conduct class based on the precept of universal human dignity.

**** Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. Please provide me with a “letter of accommodation” at your earliest opportunity. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: drc@purdue.edu or by phone: 765-494-1247.

**** If you have special scheduling needs for religious observances see me in 1st two weeks of class so that we can find alternative times for you to fulfill your course obligations.

Academic Integrity – It's really pretty simple – do your own work. Read the Purdue Honor Pledge and University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972 which reads, in part, “cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest.... Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest.” **Any dishonest behavior will result in a 0 for that assignment and, at my discretion, may result in a failing grade for the course and referral to the Office of the Dean of Students for further action. Students can report issues of academic integrity that they observe either through the Office of the dean of Students, call 765-494-8778 or email: integrity@purdue.edu**

If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 765-494-6995 and <http://www.purdue.edu/caps/> during and after hours, weekends and holidays. Counselors are available during business hours in the Purdue University Student Health Center on the second floor of Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH).

