

SCLA 102 Transformative Texts: Critical Thinking & Communication II: Modern World

Purdue University – Spring 2021 **FOUR SECTIONS:**

MWF 10:30-11:20 (124) in WALC B091

MWF 11:30-12:20 (125) in WALC 3090

MWF 2:30-3:20 (123) in WALC 3122

MWF 3:30-4:20 (122) in WALC 2124

*Professor William White: Office: UNIV 110 Office Hours: MWF 12:45-2:00 and by appointment
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“When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’” Mr. Rogers...

“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

“I think mediocrity is too well hidden by parents who hire private tutors.” Lead character Harper, a state school grad, in her job interview at a big investment firm in the new HBO series *Industry*. Quoted by Judy Berman in her review of the series in *Time*, November 23, 2020.

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

“...human beings are 90% chimp and 10% bee. Like chimpanzees we are deeply concerned with our own welfare, tribal, and sometimes unafraid to resort to violence to get our own way. But at the same time we also have a more communal, beelike side to our nature. We can be groupish.... One of the saddest and most beautiful things you sometimes see in the spring is that if the (honey)bees run out of food, their cluster is intact ... because they all die at the same time. They share every bit of food right up until the end.” Sarah Rose Cavanagh, *Hivemind*, pages 6 and 19.

- 1) **COURSE DESCRIPTION:** OUR class will ask us to reflect, discuss, and occasionally disagree about issues raised in 5 texts (ranging from Bertolt Brecht's challenging play *Mother Courage and Her Children* 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. Part of speaking is listening. We will often meet in small groups 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**

If you choose to read online editions or editions other than those listed below, please check with me in advance on the pages due for each day. The pages listed in my syllabus may not correspond to the pages in your edition. Additional reading will be something you can access online or through Brightspace. Always bring what we are reading to class on the date that it is assigned. **Make-up procedure for missed/EXCUSED quizzes is outlined below.**

Sherman Alexie, *Flight*, (Grover Press)

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

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Penguin Classics)

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

Bertolt Brecht, *Mother Courage and Her Children* (Grove Press)

READING PROVIDED by Professor White

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, excerpt

4) **GRADING IN SCLA 102**

First class presentation – **Impromptu speech** – 10 points – **SPEECH # 1**

Second class presentation – **Informative speech** – 30 points – **SPEECH # 2**

Third class presentation -- **Persuasive speech** -- debate – 50 points – **SPEECH # 3**

One essay/paper – 30 points

6-12 quizzes on the day's assigned reading or what we watch, hear, or read in class – 3-10 points each -- **Excused quizzes, (documented illness, Purdue Quarantine, family emergency, etc.) will be made up by inserting your subsequent quiz % into the excused slot. There are no class participation points.**

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

*****Note – I round up from .5, thus 86.5 = B+; 89.5 = A-; etc. When you realize what your final grade is**

going to be, please do not ask me for an extra credit project. **MAKE HULK ANGRY!!**

5) Class Policies – Our class is face-to face 3 days a week for the entire (hopefully) semester. I expect you to attend every class, wear a mask, and have your reading done and reading in hand. Obviously if you are ill and have symptoms associated with COVID-19 or suspect that you have been exposed to the virus, you should stay home and contact the Purdue Health Center. 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, Purdue Quarantine, etc. – you must notify me in a timely fashion if you miss a graded assignment. If you have special scheduling needs for religious observances see me during the first two weeks of class so that we can find alternative times for you to fulfill your course obligations. “Ultimately students are responsible for all required coursework and bear full responsibility for any academic consequences that may result due to absences.” (Purdue University Senate Document 6-5, March 19, 2007

You may leave your cell phones and tablets on during class in the event that a Purdue ALERT text or other urgent message is sent, but use them only for class discussion when appropriate. We will follow the syllabus as closely as feasible given the pandemic. I will often give you verbal reminders of what is coming up and how to prepare during class.

Formal Presentation – SPEECH # 1 – IMPROMPTU – VALUE 10 POINTS – I will give you 2-3 prompts and a minute to think. (**3 minutes maximum**). Fill your impromptu with examples.

Formal Presentation – SPEECH # 2 – VALUE 30 POINTS – 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 # 3-- VALUE 50 POINTS – **Persuasive** “debate” – teams of 2 – *Each graded separately* --Each of you defends a different 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?** 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 –**8 minutes minimum-11 minutes maximum per person**. One minute video clips per person during the debate are OK.

Please consider making an appointment to use the Purdue Presentation Center in Beering 2294 in the Lamb School of Communication to practice your informative and persuasive 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.

ESSAY/PAPER – VALUE 30 POINTS

Watch **either** PBS, Frontline, *Amazon: The Rise and Reign of Jeff Bezos* or the 2004 movie, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* or the 1998 movie, *The Truman Show*. Your essay will use specific examples from a minimum **5 different things we either read or watched during the semester**: What seemed “familiar” and why/how? Your grade will be based on your insights and the variety of examples that you pull from both the documentary/movie and FIVE of our class assignments. The paper is due at the start of class on Wednesday, April 21. You will lose 3 points for every increment of 4 hours late.

Mechanics for the Paper --- 12 font, double-spaced, with just your name and class time on the 1st page (no cover page or filler). Turn the paper in as a hard copy or e-mail attachment by the start of class on the date due – Wednesday, April 21. It should be a minimum of **4 full pages**.

Daily Schedule:

- Jan.** 20 W Introduction to the course and each other – watch/discuss Todd Rose: *The Myth of Average* at TedxSonomaCounty
- 22 F Discuss Lon Fuller’s **Harvard Law Review** article, *The Case of the Speluncean Explorers*, **read online or in Brightspace before class and pick two Justices that you will paraphrase.** Pick 2-3 Malcolm Gladwell podcasts, *Revisionist History* to summarize Monday and Wednesday You will only summarize one but come to class with 3 choices in case your 1st choice is taken.
- 25 M 5-minute summaries of Gladwell – **NOT GRADED** ---- **RELAX**
- 27 W 5-minute Gladwell summaries cont.
- 29 F Alexie, *Flight*, pages 1-65
- Feb.** 1 M Alexie, pages 66-130
- 3 W Alexie, pages 131-end
- 5 F Discuss an excerpt from Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* **handed out this day in class**
- 8 M **SPEECH # 1 – IMPROMPTU SPEECHES**
- 10 W **SPEECH # 1 --IMPROMPTU SPEECHES** continued
- 12 F Anderson, *Feed*, pages 3-72 **Choose/draw dates for SPEECH # 2**
- 15 M Anderson, pages 75-150 - **Discuss *Feed* and *Flight* and expectations for SPEECH # 2**
- 17 W **READING DAY – NO CLASS**
- 19 F Anderson, pages 151-236
- 22 M Watch **in class** and discuss PBS – **Frontline**, *In the Age of AI*
- 24 W Anderson, pages 237-299 and watch (**in class**) Nicholas Carr’s speech at 2018 *Dawn or Doom*
- 26 F **SPEECH # 2** – 5 students and Gary Smith, “Higher Education,” *Sports Illustrated*, first published March 5, 2001 and reprinted December 12, 2014 – **read online before class**
- Mar.** 1 M **SPEECH # 2** – 5 students and review *Debate Topics list for SPEECH # 3*
- 3 W **SPEECH # 2** – 5 students and watch **in class** Mary Fischer, “A Whisper of Aids” speech
- 5 F **SPEECH # 2** – 5 students and Malcolm Gladwell – “Small Change” – *New Yorker*, Oct. 4, 2010 **read online or in Brightspace before class**
- 8 M **SPEECH # 2** – 5 students and discuss Eli Saslow, “Breaking America: Nothing on This Page is Real” **read in Brightspace or online before class**
- 10 W **SPEECH # 2** – 5 students and **read online before class** -- Gary Smith, “Lying in Wait” *Sports Illustrated*, April 8, 2002
- 12 F Walls, *The Glass Castle*, pages, 3-72 and **Choose/draw for dates for SPEECH # 3– Debate**
- 15 M Walls, pages, 73-125
- 17 W Watch **in class** and discuss, PBS – **Frontline**, *The Facebook Dilemma, Part 1*
- 19 F Walls, pages, 129-217
- 22 M Walls, pages, 218-288 -- Last day to Withdraw from a course with a W or WF
- 24 W **SPEECH # 3** – DEBATE – 2 TEAMS
- 26 F **SPEECH # 3** – DEBATE – 1 TEAM and watch/discuss TBD
- 29 M **SPEECH # 3** – DEBATE – 2 TEAMS
- 31 W **SPEECH # 3** – DEBATE – 2 TEAMS
- Apr.** 2 F Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Letter 1-end of VOLUME I, pp. 1-77
- 5 M Shelley, VOLUME II, pp. 81-141
- 7 W **SPEECH # 3** – DEBATE – 2 TEAMS
- 9 F Shelley, VOLUME III, pp.145-216 – end
- 12 M **SPEECH # 3** – DEBATE – 2 TEAMS
- 14 W Brecht, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, Page 1 to the end of Scene 3

The play, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, will be staged at Purdue April 16-18 and you are required to attend in whatever format is available in April. Send a copy of your e-ticket to Brightspace so that I can confirm that you watched the performance. We will have a 5 point quiz based on

that performance on Monday, April 19.

- 16 F Brecht, Scene 4 to the end of the play
- 19 M **SPEECH # 3** – DEBATE – 1 TEAM and quiz on *Mother Courage performance*
- 21 W **SPEECH # 3** – DEBATE – 1 TEAM and ******PAPER DUE******
- 23 F **SPEECH # 3** -- DEBATE-- 2 TEAMS
- 26 M **Read online in class** and discuss Robert Frost’s poem *The Road Not Taken* and Gwendolyn Brooks’s poem, *Sadie & Maud*
- 28 W Watch **in class** and discuss, PBS – **Frontline**, *A Class Divided*
- 30 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.

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).