English 1374.01: Language, Power, and Society
Maes 108

M/W 1:25-2:40

Spring 2007

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Course Description and Goals:

This course will focus on how language shapes culture and how we use it in a variety of contexts to both oppress and empower. There will be thematic units such as language and society, language and ethnicity, language and gender, and language and disability. The course will also incorporate a variety of media to engage students in critiquing how our use of language shapes society (i.e. questions such as “What is ‘politically correct’ speech?” and “What hidden and obvious prejudices can we locate in every day language use?”) The readings for the course span several different genres--narratives, scholarly articles, poetry, and essays. Students in this course will become more aware of how language influences society, and they will develop the skills to talk/write critically about how this happens. Students will complete a series of essays related to the course content, as well as a major research project based on a research question they develop over the last third of the course. Throughout the semester, I will bring in various media examples to correspond with the concepts we go over from the text. Through writing assignments, students will also develop their skills in argumentation and research.

Required Texts:


Major Assignments:

There will be four major written projects along with smaller in class assignments, peer reviews, conferences, and class discussions. Whenever an assignment for a major project is distributed, it will be in writing with specific guidelines and evaluation criteria.

The in-class assignments we do will contribute to the overall grade for each major project. Therefore, attendance is crucial.
Student Learning Outcomes:

Communication

1. Writing
   a. Using their reading and/or research, students will compose critical/analytical essays with a clear thesis and introduction.
   b. Using their reading and/or research, students will compose critical/analytical essays with organized supporting paragraphs.
   c. Students will use the standard conventions of English grammar and punctuation and write clear and efficient sentences.
   d. Students will maintain a style and persona appropriate for a particular purpose and audience.
   f. In their essays, students will use research and correct documentation from a variety of sources, to include electronic sources.

Oral or visual communication
Students will present clear, salient, and supported oral/visual speeches/demonstrations. And/or Students will participate in class or group discussions.

Critical Thinking  (Note: We measure critical thinking through students’ analysis of their reading).
Using their reading and/or research, students will compose essays that analyze literary, rhetorical, or thematic elements in their reading.

Personal Responsibility
Any rhetorical act is both personal and social. In written responses (preferably complete essays), presentations, discussions (online or face to face) based on their reading or research, students show and understanding of the complexities and dynamics of personal (the self) and social responsibilities (one’s family, culture, country, politics, society, etc.). They also reveal their consideration through appropriate integrations of audience, purpose, and persona.

Teamwork
In group projects, team presentations, peer reviews/grading/editing, or in-class discussions; students should actively contribute to the progress of the group or class as a whole.

Course Grades:

Major Project #1: 15%
Major Project #2: 15%
Major Project #3: 15%
Major Project #4: 20%
In-Class Assignments: 20%
Final Exam: 10%
Grammar Test: 5%

Computation of Grades

I use the following scale when computing grades:

- **A**: 4.0 Superior
- **A-**: 3.67
- **B+**: 3.33
- **B**: 3.00 Good
- **B-**: 2.67
- **C+**: 2.33
- **C**: 2.00 Average
- **C-**: 1.67
- **D+**: 1.33
- **D**: 1.00 Minimum passing
- **F**: Failure

“A” grades denote superior work and, as such, are not handed out like candy. They are the result of hard work and are something to be proud of in an advanced writing course.

**Classroom Civility**: Cell phones and all electronic devices must be turned off during class time. Do not play around with electronic devices in this class. I do not allow taping of my class in any format, audio or visual, unless you provide documentation from student services that says that such taping is a necessary accommodation. I also do not allow food and drink in class. Please be a thoughtful listener (i.e. don’t carry on conversations with other students while someone is talking). Also, do not dominate class discussions. It is also necessary to respect the views of other classmates during discussion. Also, one of my pet peeves is students who pack up their materials before class has ended. And finally, do not give me endless excuses for why work is late. If you turn in late work, you will receive the penalty for that lateness. This is fair for all students.

**Assessment of Written Work and Exams:**

“**A**” Paper: This is an **Excellent** paper that demonstrates excellence in development, organization, style and tone, and mechanics. The “A” paper is also marked by stylistic finesse: the title and opening paragraph are engaging; the transitions are artful; the phrasing is tight, fresh, and highly specific. **There is clear evidence of the writing process** (invention, drafting, revision, editing, and proofreading).

“**B**” Paper: This is a **Good** paper. The “B” paper delivers substantial information—that is, substantial in both quantity and interest-value. It is well-developed and unified around a clear organizing principle that is apparent early in the paper. The opening paragraph draws the reader in;
the closing paragraph is both conclusive and thematically related to the opening. Transitions between paragraphs are for the most part smooth; sentence structure is pleasingly varied. **There is evidence of the writing process.**

"C" Paper: This is an **Average** paper that is generally competent in its development, organization, style and tone, and mechanics. It meets the needs for the assignment, has few mechanical errors, and is reasonably organized and developed. The actual information it delivers, however, seems thin and commonplace. The transitions between the paragraphs are often choppy; the sentences tend to follow a predictable subject-verb-object pattern; diction is occasionally marred by unconscious repetitions, redundancy, and imprecision. **This paper also shows some evidence of the writing process.**

“D” Paper: This is a **Below-Average** paper that lacks develop and/or is not effectively organized to facilitate reader’s understanding. The introduction may not have a clearly defined thesis statement and the discussion sections may not clearly identify and develop its point. The discussion sections might also fail to provide adequate specificity. The style may be choppy and too informal for the genre of the academic paper. The sentence structure may have numerous and distracting usage problems that impair the paper’s purpose and coherency. **The paper also shows little or no evidence of the writing process.**

“F” Paper: This paper fails in all aspects of the evaluation criteria. It may not answer the assigned topic, may not develop its introduction, discussion sections, or may not be effectively organized. The style is inappropriate for the genre of the academic paper, and the grammatical usage is overwhelmingly distracting and prevents the paper’s comprehension. **There is no evidence of the writing process** and the paper fails in all aspects of development, organization, style, and mechanics.

**Attendance Requirements:** The Lamar University 2006-2008 General Catalog states that regular class attendance is expected. I expect regular punctual attendance, and you should know that the more you miss (generally more than 3 classes), the less likely it is that you will pass the course or produce work that is up to the standards I expect. You will not be able to make up class discussions or in class activities related to the completion of larger assignments. Attendance will be taken at 1:25 each class period. Tardiness is disruptive and should be avoided except in **extreme** emergencies.

**Writing Center Statement:** Lamar provides students with a writing center facility (Maes 08) to help with the various stages of the writing process (please understand that this is not an editing or proofreading service.) Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are preferred at certain busy times during the semester. Nancy Staub is our current director.

**Students with Disabilities:** Every effort will be made in coordination with the Director of SFSWD or this course to become a meaningful component of a student’s individualized education plan. You may access the website for Lamar’s Services for Students with Disabilities at this site [http://dept.lamar.edu/sfswd/](http://dept.lamar.edu/sfswd/). **Documentation of disability is required to receive accommodations/academic adjustments/services.** Persons with disabilities should notify the coordinator of SFSWD prior to registration in any university program. A meeting between the student (SWD) and SFSWD coordinator will be arranged in order to assign appropriate
Plagiarism and Cheating:

Students are specifically warned against all forms of cheating and plagiarism. The Lamar University Student Handbook states:

Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. Punishable offenses include, but are not limited to, cheating on an examination or academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. (81) One aspect of the handbook’s definition of cheating is, “purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one’s own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm” (82). Plagiarism is defined as, “the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another’s work or ideas into one’s own offered for credit” (82). Students seeking to avoid plagiarism should consult with the course instructor, recent handbooks like The Little, Brown Handbook and the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, consultants in the Writing Center, or websites such as http://www.utexas.edu/depts/doc/sjs/academicintegrity2.html. Members in the of English and Modern Languages investigate all cases of suspected plagiarism. Anyone who submits plagiarized work in ENGL-3360 will fail the course.

The Texas State University System has established the following Disciplinary Procedures for Academic Dishonesty:

1. Academic Process. All academic dishonesty cases may be first considered and reviewed by the faculty member. If the faculty member believes that an academic penalty is necessary, he/she may assign a penalty but must notify the student of his/her right to appeal to the department chair, the dean, and eventually, to the vice president for academic affairs (whose decision shall be final) before imposition of the penalty. At each step in the process, the student shall be entitled to written notice of the offense and/or of the administrative decision, and opportunity to respond, and an impartial disposition as to the merits of his/her case. After completion of the academic process, the academic officer making final disposition of the case shall refer the matter to the chief student affairs officer for any additional discipline that may be appropriate.

2. Disciplinary Process. In the case of flagrant or repeated violations, the chief student affairs officer may take such additional disciplinary action as he/she deems appropriate. No disciplinary action shall become effective against the student until the student has received procedural due process under Subsection 5.6 and following exception as provided under Subsection 5.15 of the Texas State University System Board of Regents Handbook.

Schedule (This schedule is tentative and subject to change—I will present any
changes in advance. Any assignment sheet for a major project that I distribute will have a more accurate schedule of readings and activities that you should follow.

January 17: Class Introduction, Syllabus, In-Class Writing

January 22: Have read “Foreward” through page 24 in Language. Consider the “about the text” questions as you read the essays. Assignment for Major Project #1 distributed. Class discussion.

January 24: Have read 25-49 in Language. Consider the “about the text” questions. Further discussion of Major Project #1. Have also read half of Chapter 8 in Little Brown.

January 29: Have read 50-79 in Language. Consider the “about the text” questions. Class discussion. Have also read the rest of Chapter 8 in Little Brown.


February 5: Have read 101-127 in Language. Consider the “about the text” questions. Have also read half of Chapter 9 in Little Brown.

February 7: Have read 128-151. Consider the “about the text” questions. Conferences over Major Project #1. Have also read the rest of Chapter 9 in Little Brown. Discussion of old/new contract. **Bring a complete draft of Major Project 1 with you to class.**

February 12: Peer review of Major Project #1—Bring with you 3 copies of the full draft of Major Project #1. If you do not attend or do not come with your complete drafts, you will receive a grade penalty specified on the assignment sheet for this project.

February 14: Video: What I Want My Words to do to You—**Major Project #1 due.** Assignment for Major Project #2 and questions concerning the video distributed.

February 19: Discussion of video. Have also read pages 151-167 in Language

February 21: Have read 180-199 in Language and half of Chapter 10 in Little Brown.

February 26: Have read the second half of Chapter 10 in Little Brown. Further discussion of argumentation strategies.

February 28: Have read 200-229 in Language.

March 5: Peer review over Major Project #2. Have read 109-119 in Little Brown.

March 7: **Major Project #2 due.** Assignment for Major Project #3 distributed. Have read 230-248 in Language and half of Chapter 11 in Little Brown.
March 12: SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

March 14: SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

March 19: Have read 249-272 in Language and the second half of chapter 11 in Little Brown.

March 21: Have read 273-293 in Language—CLASS ACTIVITY TBA

March 26: Have read 294-329 in Language.


April 2: Major Project #3 due. Assignment sheet for Major Project #4 distributed. Have read 361-383 in Language

April 4: 384-407 in Language

April 9: 408-423 in Language

April 11: 424-446 in Language

April 16: 447-465 in Language

April 18: 500-525 in Language

April 23: Peer review over Major project #4

April 25: Conferences over Major Project #4

April 30: Major Project #4 due. Class Reports over Major Project #4

5/1—Finals Prep day—No classes

Final Exam: May 2, 11-1:30 pm