Instructor: John Vanderpot, M.A., M.F.A.

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Office Hours: 5:30-6:30, M, T, W; Starbucks, Main Campus Location

Required Texts: Born to Run (C. McDougall), Empire of Illusion (C. Hedges), Generation Me (J. M. Twenge), Stranger Than Fiction (C. Palahniuk)

Prerequisite: Successful completion of 60 units (by the end of the semester); successful completion of G. E. composition classes; fulfillment of the writing Competency requirement (meaning, you have passed the Lower division Writing Competency Exam).

Students with Disabilities: If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Course Description: This class is designed to continue learning about the writing process though analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of various texts. The following Learning Goals are provided by the Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies for RWS 305W students, and we will focus on achieving them this semester:

Rhetorical Knowledge will help students identify, analyze, and respond in writing to various rhetorical situations. Students will learn to:

1. Identify individual discourse communities and find and analyze their characteristic texts, evaluate their credibility and principles, and apply relevant aspects of their information to other contexts and arguments.
2. Analyze the details of a wide variety of writing situations according to the author’s purpose as well as the audience’s needs and tastes.
3. Respond effectively in writing to issues and arguments raised in a variety of disciplinary, popular, and professional texts and/or contexts.
4. Produce effective arguments from a variety of disciplinary, popular, and professional contexts.

Critical Thinking and Reading Strategies will provide students with strategies to understand the function of reading and writing in cultural, academic, and professional communities. Students will learn to:
1. Actively read texts using a variety of reading strategies such as annotation, questioning, and discussion.
2. Identify how a writer uses rhetorical strategies in various genres of writing.
3. Interpret, analyze, and evaluate demanding texts.
4. Apply critical thinking skills and reading strategies to evaluate their own writing and the writing of fellow students.
5. Reflect on their own progress as a working writer in relation to critical thinking and reading strategies.

Writing Processes will strengthen students’ awareness of and abilities to use writing processes effectively. Students will learn how to:

1. Develop flexible strategies for creating, revising, and editing texts.
2. Critique their own and others’ texts.
3. Write with an awareness of audience and purpose.

Knowledge of Conventions will provide students with strategies to identify, analyze, and apply the writing conventions to different discourse communities and to write effectively within those communities. Students will learn to:

1. Identify how discourse communities employ particular strategies for conveying, researching, evaluating, and presenting information.
2. Analyze and choose the appropriate conventions for a range of audience expectations.
3. Integrate a variety of appropriate sources into their writings in a way that accurately reflects the writer’s meaning and purpose.
5. Sustain reasonable correctness in grammar and mechanics to perform well in a variety of writing contexts and professional settings.

Attitudes, Values, and Preparation for Life Beyond the University reflects the values of a liberal arts education, namely, to:

1. Work collaboratively and cooperatively to achieve defined goals.
2. Respect the diverse points of view that characterize our multi-cultural classroom community.
3. Critically analyze a variety of texts produced for public and individual readers.
4. Participate confidently in public discussion on issues of importance to the workplace and the community.
5. Address issues in writing.

Course Requirements: All assignments (both reading and writing) should be completed prior to the start of class and competent participation is expected. There will be discussion/presentation groups, minor in-class writing assignments, and workshop/peer-review sessions. Also, reading response questions are required for the various reading assignments (accepted only at the start of class). It is assumed that students will conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to a
university setting (including, but not limited to, turning off their phones during class), and it is expected that they will be actively engaged in, and are ultimately responsible for, their education.

Grading: Specific criteria will be handed out and discussed in advance of each assignment. However, overall and in general grades will be determined using the following criteria: Does your paper directly address the assignment’s requirements? Is the paper organized in a logical and appropriate manner? Does the writing conform to the basic guidelines of the English language? Grades go down a ‘notch’ for each day papers are late and remember to attach your draft (no draft, no A, no exceptions) to the final copy. Final grades will be calculated as follows: Five short papers at 10% each; two full-length essays at 15% each; 15% for participation and minor assignments (combined); and the final is worth 5%. (Students taking the course Credit/No Credit must turn in all major assignments at a C level to pass…)

Attendance: It will be very difficult for students to pass the course if they miss more than three classes; excessive lateness or leaving early will count as half and absence. Students are responsible for finding out what occurred on days they miss and use of the ‘buddy system’ is therefore encouraged. (This is seriously encouraged: The instructor simply cannot ‘reteach’ the class several times a week at the random convenience of those who were absent…so, please, make some reliable friends and keep in contact with them!)

Tentative Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction
Week 2: McDougall
Week 3: Short Paper #1
Week 4: Hedges
Week 5: Short Paper #2
Week 6: Hedges
Week 7: Short Paper #3
Week 8: Twenge
Week 9: Twenge
Week 10 Letter (Short Paper #4)
Week 11: McDougall
Week 12: Short Paper #5
Week 13: Palahniuk
Week 14: Essay #1
Week 15: Essay #2
Week 16: Final (All work due!)