

WRI 100 05 2: College Writing Spring 2009

“HOW THE WORD GETS OUT”

MWF 10-10:50 a.m.

Cedar Crest College

BHA 4

Professor Mary H. Snyder

Hartzel Hall 220

Office hours: T 1-3 p.m., or by appointment

Phone: 610-437-4471, x4483 (office)

Email: mhsnyder@cedarcrest.edu or
merre727@aol.com

Course Description: The goal of WRI 100: College Writing is to understand and produce thoughtful writing, prose that expresses and develops, explores and sustains ideas and their justifications. We'll pay particular attention to the style of writing common to the academic community: writing that presents and develops an insightful claim about the world and supports that claim with sound reasoning and good evidence. As such, this course will ask you to read, learn, and think about cultural issues relevant to us today.

Cedar Crest College emphasizes a process approach to writing, a process by which you read and learn about a subject, develop your ideas about it through prewriting and drafting, and refine those ideas and language by revising earlier drafts. Intensive practice will be given in writing clear, logical, and persuasive prose that stresses focus, content, organization, style, and conventions in argument.

WRI 100: College Writing is designed to meet the following educational outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate the ability to engage in critical analysis.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly and effectively through the written word.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to discriminate among sources of information and their appropriate uses.

In order to attain these outcomes, WRI 100 has the following course objectives:

- Thinking critically requires you to recognize and analyze patterns of argument. To analyze arguments, you will locate and evaluate writers' claims, the supports for these claims, and their counterarguments. You will also assess the credentials and authority of the writer. You will apply these skills of analysis to various sources of information, in both print and electronic forms, in order to evaluate the legitimacy and applicability of this information.
- In order to learn to communicate effectively in writing, you will be asked both to examine and to practice the uses and effects of various types of writing, noticing how different contexts for writing call for changes in tone, syntax, rhetorical mode, and genre. Feedback from your teacher and classmates will guide you as you write and revise your work.

WRI 100 meets its educational outcomes through the following forms of assessment:

- Students will demonstrate the ability to engage in critical analysis through class discussion of assigned reading and through informal and formal written assignments.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in writing in the prewriting, drafting, and revising of their papers for the course.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to practice information literacy through assigned research tasks.

College Writing Studio: WRI 001 College Writing Studio is a supplemental writing lab for WRI-1 courses, providing extended workshop time and basic writing instruction in grammar, sentence and paragraph structures, and essay coherence. Students are placed in the studio based upon college entrance examination scores and WRI-1 writing samples.

Honor Philosophy: The Cedar Crest Honor Philosophy states that students shall uphold community standards for academic and social behavior to preserve a learning environment dedicated to personal and academic excellence. It is based upon the principle that, as a self-governing body, students have the ability to create an atmosphere of trust and support. Within this environment, individuals are empowered to make their own decisions, develop personal regard for the system under which they live, and achieve a sense of integrity and judgment that will guide them through life.

Classroom Protocol: Appropriate classroom behavior is implicit in the Cedar Crest Honor Philosophy. Such behavior is defined and guided by complete protection for the rights of all students and faculty to a courteous, respectful classroom environment. That environment is free from distractions such as late arrivals, early departures, inappropriate conversations, and any other behaviors that might disrupt instruction or compromise students' access to their Cedar Crest College education.

A special note is appropriate here regarding the tone of our classroom discussions. An important strategy for producing more thoughtful writing is to approach ideas with an attitude of skepticism, whether those ideas come from readings, professors, or classmates. In order to better understand a way of fashioning the world, we must probe the basis for that point of view and examine what reasons and evidence may or may not support it. This is especially critical when it comes to our most closely held beliefs, beliefs that we might feel uncomfortable with placing them under too much scrutiny. As we engage in this process of inquiry, please remember that, while we should question and challenge each other's opinions, a sign of intellectual maturity is that we do so respectfully.

As we live in an age of increasing technological diversion—the call of cell phones, the click of mice, ringing in our ear—it becomes easy to forget the good manners of paying attention to those immediately around us. Please remember to shut cell phones off and refrain from checking your email or any wayward browsing of the Internet during class. ***Let me reiterate this: no cell phone, laptop, or Internet use – or any technological item use for that matter – during class, or I will ask you to leave.***

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's ideas or words and passing them off as your own without giving credit to the original source. Since a key goal of a college education is to develop and express your own ideas, plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offense.

It is dishonest to present oral or written work that is not entirely the student's own, except as may be approved by the instructor. Students must follow the requirements of the instructor regarding when and how much collaboration with other students is permitted. Any language taken from another source, whether individual words or entire paragraphs, must be placed in quotation marks and attributed to the source, following the citation format specified. Paraphrased material from an outside source must also be attributed. In addition, if the student is indebted to another source for a specific perspective or a line of argument—regardless of whether the student has directly quoted the source or not—that debt must be acknowledged.

In this class, the penalty for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty is a grade of F either on the individual assignment or for the entire course, to be determined by the instructor based upon the severity of the offense.

For an extended description of what constitutes plagiarism, please consult *Writing at Cedar Crest College: A Student's Guide*.

Attendance: Simply put, you are expected to attend and participate in each class meeting. Improving your college writing skills requires sustained practice in class-to-class discussions and exercises, and missing class means that you're

missing activities that cannot easily be made up. There is no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. If you miss a class, you remain responsible for the material covered. Missing more than 1/4 of the class meetings (10 classes in a semester) will result in a final grade of F.

Class Cancellation: If Cedar Crest’s campus is open, you should expect our class meetings to be held. If troublesome weather threatens to close the campus and thus cancel class, however, you should refer to Cedar Crest’s Inclement Weather Hotline at 610-606-4629 for notification. If I cancel class independently of the campus closing, due to weather or for other reasons, I will send a class-wide email to your Cedar Crest account.

College Policy Regarding Learning Disabilities: Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with their professors during the first two weeks of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact the Learning Center.

My Policy Regarding Late Assignments: I DO NOT accept late assignments. If you experience extenuating circumstances that prevent you from completing an assignment on time, you will need to have documentation of that circumstance and I reserve the right to make my decision. If it is an extenuating circumstance, you have 24 hours past the due date to hand in the assignment, both through email and a hard copy. Thus, no late assignments will be accepted unless proper documentation of an extenuating circumstance is provided and approved by me, and then only by getting the late assignment to me, both through email and hard copy, within 24 hours of the due date. A penalty for lateness will apply.

My Policy Regarding Email: I will not accept writing assignments over email, especially due to the new version of Microsoft. Also, I will only respond to emails that I deem necessary to do so. I recommend that you bring any concerns or questions to me before/after class or during my office hours.

Course Content and Purpose

In this course, we will be exploring and examining “how the word gets out,” and we will also be attempting different means to get our own words out. We will be narrowing our focus to “how the word gets out” about the future. Our discussion of the future will be divided into the following three sections:

- **Where are we?** What is being written, studied, and filmed, about our society today? What are currently the most pressing issues, i.e. those issues that will affect the future or be affected in and/or by the future?
- **Where have we been?** We will study a text written in the past that can be interpreted as a warning and view this warning from our vantage point in the present.
- **Where are we going?** We will study a text written recently, and adapted to film, that portrays a dark vision of the future. We will make informed determinations about whether or not we believe this fiction could become true.

The goal of this course is to understand and produce thoughtful writing, prose that expresses and develops, explores and sustains ideas and their justifications. We’ll be using our study of the future, and the dissemination of information through both nonfiction and fiction genres by way of a variety of media, to achieve this goal. We’ll pay particular attention to the style of writing common to the academic community: writing that presents and develops an insightful claim about the world and supports that claim with sound reasoning and good evidence.

Texts/Films

An Inconvenient Truth
God Grew Tired of Us
Frankenstein (1818 version)
The Children of Men (film and text)
The Bedford Handbook
Handouts given in class

Grading

Remember, writing is a process, not merely a product. We will be focusing on various stages of writing, not only the final piece.

Your work will be evaluated as follows:

Informal writing –	200 points total, or 20% of your final grade
Formal writing –	Assignment 1 (A1) – 150 points Assignment 2 (A2) – 150 points Assignment 3 (A3) – 200 points Assignment 4 (A4) – 100 points
Participation in class –	200 points total, or 20% of your final grade

Total points = 1000

Informal writing will include responses to readings, quizzes, and in-class exercises.

Formal writing includes four paper assignments. Each paper grade will be based on any combination or all of the following components leading up to each of the formal writing assignments that will develop from written exercises, reading, film-viewing, class discussion, group work, and class workshops:

1. A first draft – 20 points
2. Peer review (of a partner or group member's paper) – 20 points
3. A neat and correctly formatted final draft – 100 points
4. A self-evaluation of the final draft of your paper – 10 points

I will provide a list of the required pieces to be handed in with the final draft. This list will depend on the formal assignment. Regardless of the items required, they must be paper-clipped together or put in a folder. If these specifications are not satisfied, I will not accept your assignment. Your name must be on each piece of the assignment, and each piece must be labeled (e.g., first draft should be labeled as such, etc.).

I will hold conferences with you at mid-semester and you can meet with me any time during the semester. Talk to me about setting up an appointment.

You will receive a participation grade for each day of class, 5 points per class dependent upon your involvement in class. This point system totals 200 points for all classes, excluding the last day of class (in-class essay). If you do not attend class, it does follow that your participation grade will be a zero for that day. Also, as you would expect, poor attendance will negatively affect your grade for the course.

Assignment Schedule

Have assignments ready for specified day. I reserve the right to change the schedule should I feel it necessary for any reason, including both additions and/or subtractions. Also, further details will be given in class for all assignments listed; this is a general guide.

M	1/19:	Introduction, syllabus
W	1/21:	Sample essay
F	1/23:	Newspaper work – bring a newspaper to class

- M 1/26: Letter to the Editor due – read in class and hand in
W 1/28: Op Ed reading assignment - response
F 1/30: Op Ed writing assignment
- M 2/2: Essay on global warming - outline
W 2/4: Climate crisis research – website evaluation
F 2/6: Climate crisis research
- M 2/9: *An Inconvenient Truth* – climate crisis research due
W 2/11: *An Inconvenient Truth*
F 2/13: *AIT* questions due/discussion
Discuss A1 (first formal writing assignment)
- M 2/16: A1 thesis statement/outline due
W 2/18: A1 first draft due/peer review
F 2/20: A1 final draft due / introduction to documentary filmmaking
- M 2/23: Informal assignment on Africa
W 2/25: *God Grew Tired of Us*
F 2/27: *God Grew Tired of Us*
- M 3/2: Documentary discussion/A2 (documentary proposal assignment)
Examples of documentary proposals – proposing your own documentary
W 3/4: A2 writing workshop: How to Write a Documentary Proposal
F 3/6: A2 outline due
- Week of 3/9 to 3/13 – Spring Break
- M 3/16: A2 first draft due/peer review
W 3/18: A2 final draft due
Frankenstein – Preface, Introduction/Background on Mary Shelley
F 3/20: *Frankenstein*, Vol. I
- M 3/23: *Frankenstein*, Vol. II - QUIZ
W 3/25: *Frankenstein*, Vol. III - discuss
F 3/27: “The Score” – outline and response questions due
- M 3/30: “Merced” – outline and response questions due
W 4/1: A3 handout – freewriting questions
F 4/3: A3 research – working bibliography
- M 4/6: A3 working bibliography, thesis statement, and outline due
W 4/8: A3 first draft/peer review
F 4/10: Easter Break
- M 4/13: Easter Break
W 4/15: A3 final draft/presentations
F 4/17: *The Children of Men* – Book One, Chapters 1-8, outline due

M	4/20:	No Class
W	4/22:	<i>The Children of Men</i> – finish, outline due, QUIZ
F	4/24:	Discuss <i>The Children of Men</i>
M	4/27:	Film adaptation essay – response
W	4/29:	<i>Children of Men</i> film – “what to be looking for” assignment due
F	5/1:	Film
M	5/4:	Finish film – discuss
T	5/5:	Take-home essay assignment (A4) handed out and discussed

**Take-home essay assignment (A4) will be due in my office (Hartzel 220) on
Friday, May 8th, by 5:00 p.m.**

Grades for this course will be issued according to the following percentages:

94-100%	A
90-93.99%	A-
87-89.99%	B+
84-86.99%	B
80-83.99%	B-
77-79.99%	C+
74-76.99%	C
70-73.99%	C-
67-69.99%	D+
64-66.99%	D
60-63.99%	D-
0-59.99%	F

Please note: A D- cannot be given as a final grade according to university policy. If your final quantitative grade falls in the D- range, I will make a decision as to your letter grade based on my judgment of your work and effort in the class.