

WRIT 201: College Composition II

Reframing Identity through Film and Media



Instructor Information

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Course Description

“Be the first to see what you see as you see it.” – Robert Bresson, from *Notes on the Cinematographer*

In this section of College Writing 201, we will strive to think critically about how we, as viewers and consumers, relate to ideas of film, media, and “entertainment.” We will locate arguments, opinions, and ideas that movies, songs, and television shows communicate to us as an audience. We will learn to craft articulate essays and hone our skills as effective communicators in order to become more efficient writers and conversationalists. Our essays will explore the roles that film, music, and television play in our identities as writers, students, and individuals. We’ll ask vital questions about how our various understandings have been shaped by the cultural and social biases that contribute to what we consume and how we consume it. Our intention, as a class, will be to craft curious and attentive minds that respond to our peers, our surroundings, and our own inner voices in ways that are productive to our writing and to our scholastic journey. This will include:

- becoming dynamic viewers, listeners, and responders that strive to reflect on familiar material (such as film/music/media) in a new light, not just as sources of entertainment but as opportunities for lively and intimate conversations,
- shedding habits of passive absorption in order to meet the stories, images, and voices contained in various mediums with inquisitive minds,
- being active and engaged readers of written texts in order to gain new perspectives on our writing,
- toning rhetorical muscles that will be useful both in and outside the classroom in written and verbal communication
- placing ourselves, through research, in the interactive roles of becoming our own educators in the language of media,
- participating in lively classroom discussion and striving always to communicate with clarity, purpose, and mindfulness,
- engaging actively in the analysis of media, drawing conclusions about its social and cultural repercussions, and applying this knowledge to the production of confidently-constructed personal and academic essays.

This course intends to challenge you as you acquire the skills you’ll need to excel as a scholar. It will aid you in thinking critically and communicating effectively. You will read writing samples and compose essays in a variety of genres (personal, academic, journalistic) as well as honing your skills as a researcher. For each essay you write, you will be able to select a topic that is relevant to you and your interests and use it as a jumping off point to examine more thoroughly the thinking that surrounds your topic and its various influences. When we meet as a class, we will begin to discover what aspects of media engage your interest, inspire your concern, or arouse your curiosity. We will watch films and video clips, listen to music, and debate current issues. We will discuss reading assignments, do writing exercises together, investigate our strengths and challenges as writers, and comment constructively on each other’s work in small group workshops. At the end of the semester, you will submit a final portfolio of polished work.

Course Texts

John Belton, *Alfred Hitchcock's Rear Window*
Shea Serrano and Arturo Torres, *The Rap Year Book*
Jean Philippe Toussaint, *Television*

Other Requirements

- working folder
- notebook for in-class writing
- journal for daily observations outside of class
- binder/folder for final portfolio

Major Inquiry Projects

Expect to write and revise three different projects and one reflective introduction over the course of this class, in addition to other informal writing in and out of class. I will give you a detailed assignment sheet as we begin each of these major assignments.

1. Seeing the Invisible: Accessing the Narrative Imagery of Self (due September 29)
2. Stranded: Writing a Convincing Music Review (due October 20)
3. Talking Back to Your TV Set: Conducting Cultural Research (due November 22)
4. Portfolio and Portfolio Introduction (due December 8)

Your three major inquiry projects will give you the opportunity to compose in a range of genres for a range of academic and civic situations. You'll have opportunities to use observations and experience as evidence, as well as learn strategies for composing effective arguments and conducting academic research.

You will have the chance to develop all of your major projects through a process of inquiry and drafting. You'll compose papers in and out of class, alone and with your small group. For some of your writings, I'll ask you to bring enough draft copies to share with your group or ask you to email your papers to group members for an online workshop. ***All inquiry projects must be completed for you to pass the course.*** I will respond to these projects with written comments focused on suggestions for revision, but I will also mark them using a check system to help you know where you stand on a specific project.

Common Policies and Procedures

General Class Expectations

- ★ All reading assignments will be completed by the assigned date.
- ★ All writing assignments must be turned in on time.
- ★ **All homework must be typed.**
- ★ Attend class.
- ★ Actively, vocally, and appropriately participate in class discussions.
- ★ Any individual assignments (including requests for conferences) will be completed by the assigned date

Grading

I encourage you to talk with me at any time to better understand my comments or to discuss your overall progress and success in the class.

- ★ Participation/Presentations 35%
- ★ Final Portfolio 65%

**you must earn a C- in this class to be awarded credit

You must turn in your portfolio and complete **all major papers by their deadlines in order to receive credit for this course.

Grading Policy

Students enrolled in WRIT 201 are graded by the traditional letter grade A, B, C, D, F or are given NC for no credit. The NC grade does not affect grade point average. It is reserved for students who have worked unusually hard, attended class regularly and completed all assignments but whose skills are not at a passing level at the end of the semester.

Attendance

If you miss the first two classes, you will need to drop the course on Cyberbear and enroll in another semester. This is university policy and the reasoning behind it is that important groundwork for the semester is put in place in the first few class meetings. Students without that foundational framework are better served by taking the course when they can give it the attention it deserves.

TTH classes

More than two absences from a T/Th class will compromise your grade. 5 or more absences from a T-Th class will result in a failing grade. Here's the breakdown:

- ★ 3rd absence: final grade drops one letter grade
- ★ 4th absence: final grade drops one letter grade
- ★ 5th absence: final grade is an F

Here's the reasoning behind the attendance policy. Without attending class, you cannot perform your role as a student involved in learning, planning, inventing, drafting; discussing reading and writing; learning and practicing rhetorical moves and concepts; or collaborating with your instructor and classmates. Personal situations and required university events may arise that, on a rare occasion, make it impossible for you to be in class. Remember, however, that's why a few absences are allowed; please reserve those for emergencies.

I reserve the right to adjust the policy in cases of significant, documented illness or emergency. Please note that instances of poor time management on your part do not constitute extenuating circumstances. If you must miss class, you are responsible for obtaining any handouts or assignments for the class from a classmate. Make sure you talk with me in advance if you are worried about meeting a deadline or missing a class.

If you must miss class, *you are responsible* for obtaining any handouts or assignments for the class. Make sure you talk with me in *advance* if you are worried about meeting a deadline or missing a class.

Participation

Participation includes coming to class prepared and on time, taking part in class discussions, asking questions, contributing your knowledge and insights in whatever form is appropriate, and striving to make all your contributions excellent. It also includes doing the required reading and writing for each class. Each student will be expected to participate in two informal presentations during the course of the semester. Students will arrive on the day of these presentations prepared and ready to lead a brief class discussion. Note: Please come to class on time. Lateness will hurt your grade because it is an unnecessary interruption and because latecomers are likely to miss valuable information. Please see *Participation Grade Descriptors* for more information.

Late Work

Your work needs to be typed, printed, and in class with you to be considered "on time".

- * Late homework does not receive credit.
- * Late formal essays are unacceptable. They will receive no revision comments from me.
- * If you miss class, the homework is due the next class period.
- * You are always welcome to complete assignments early if you will be missing class.

Academic Conduct

You must abide by the rules for academic conduct described in the Student Conduct Code. If you have any questions about when and how to avoid academic dishonesty, particularly plagiarism, please review the Conduct Code and talk with your instructor. The Council of Writing Program Administrators describes plagiarism as follows: "plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source." Academic honesty is highly valued in the University community and acts of plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Students with Disabilities

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please speak with me privately after class or in my office. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator.

Daily Short Assignments

You will receive credit for completing informal writing submissions, but no letter grade. Short assignments play an important part in your overall participation grade.

Major Inquiry Projects

To give you a sense of the check system I'll be using, please refer to the following descriptors.

- * *Check*: A project with a check generally meets its rhetorical goals in terms of purpose, genre, and writing situation without need for extensive revision. Written comments will elaborate on strengths, weaknesses, and strategies for focused revision.
- * *Check minus*: A project with a check minus meets the basic requirements, but would benefit from significant revision and a stronger understanding of rhetorical decision-making. Written comments will elaborate on strengths, weaknesses, and strategies for revision.
- * *Unsatisfactory*: A project with a U does not meet basic standards, and requires extensive development and attention. An unsatisfactory submission may be incomplete or inappropriate to the assignment. Such a submission may receive a request to rewrite within a week in order to receive teacher comments.

Portfolio Letter Grade Descriptors for WRIT 201

A

Superior portfolios will demonstrate initiative and rhetorical sophistication that go beyond the requirements. A portfolio at this level is composed of well-edited texts representing different writing situations and genres that consistently show a clear, connected sense of audience, purpose and development. The writer is able to analyze his or her own writing, reflect on it, and revise accordingly. The portfolio takes risks that work.

B

Strong portfolios meet their rhetorical goals in terms of purpose, genre, and writing situation without need for further major revisions of purpose, evidence, audience, or style/ mechanics. The writer is able to reflect on his or her own writing and make some choices about revision. The writer takes risks, although they may not all be successful.

C

Consistent portfolios meet the basic requirements, yet the writing would benefit from further revisions of purpose, evidence, audience, or writing style/mechanics (or some combination) and a stronger understanding of rhetorical decision-making involved in different writing situations and genres. The writer composes across tasks at varying levels of success with some superficial revision. The writer has taken some risks in writing and exhibits some style.

D

Weak portfolios do not fully meet the basic evaluative standards. Most texts are brief and underdeveloped. These texts show a composing process that is not yet elaborated or reflective of rhetorical understanding related to composing in different genres and for a range of writing situations. Texts generally require extensive revisions to purpose, development, audience, and/ or style and mechanics.

F

Unacceptable portfolios exhibit pervasive problems with purpose, development, audience, or style/ mechanics that interfere with meaning and readers' understanding. Unacceptable portfolios are often incomplete. A portfolio will also earn an F if it does not represent the writer's original work.

Participation Letter Grade Descriptors for WRIT 201

A

Superior participation shows initiative and excellence in written and verbal work. The student helps to create more effective discussions and workshops through his/her verbal, electronic, and written contributions. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful, thorough, specific, and often provide other student writers with a new perspective or insight.

B

Strong participation demonstrates active engagement in written and verbal work. The student plays an active role in the classroom but does not always add new insight to the discussion at hand. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful, specific, and helpful.

C

Satisfactory participation demonstrates consistent, satisfactory written and verbal work. Overall, the student is prepared for class, completes assigned readings and writings, and contributes to small group workshops and large class discussions. Reading and writing assignments are completed on time. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful and prompt, but could benefit from more attentive reading and/or specific detail when giving comments.

D

Weak participation demonstrates inconsistent written and verbal work. The student may be late to class, unprepared for class, and may contribute infrequently or unproductively to classroom discussions or small group workshops. Reading and writing assignments are not turned in or are insufficient. In workshops or conferences, suggestions to group members may be missing, disrespectful, or far too brief and general to be of help.

F

Unacceptable participation shows ineffectual written and verbal work. The student may be excessively late to class, regularly unprepared, and not able to contribute to classroom discussions or small group workshops. This student may be disruptive in class. Reading and writing assignments are regularly not turned in or are insufficient. In workshops or conferences, the student has a pattern of missing, being completely unprepared, or being disruptive.

Composition Program Plagiarism Policy for WRIT 101/201

According to the University of Montana Student Conduct Code, plagiarism is “representing another person's words, ideas, data, or materials as one's own.” The Composition program recognizes that plagiarism is a serious academic offense, but also understands that some misuse of information can occur in the process of learning information literacy skills. Therefore, if student writing appears to have been plagiarized, in full or in part, intentionally or unintentionally, or due to poor citation, the following will procedure will take place:

- The student will be made aware of areas in the text that are not properly integrated or cited.
- The student will receive no credit on the paper; it is up to him/her to prove that he/she turned in original work.
- The student will be asked to provide the teacher with copies of the research she/he used in writing the paper.
- The student and teacher will meet to discuss research integration.
- *If the student cannot provide documentation of her/his research, further disciplinary action will be taken.*

In the case that the student is unable to provide evidence of his/her original work or in the case that the teacher has evidence that the student has repeatedly plagiarized his/her work, the teacher will consult with the Director of Composition for direction with further disciplinary action.

In the case of blatant or egregious offenses, or in the case of repeated plagiarism, the Director of Composition will work with the Dean of Students to determine further disciplinary action.

Students should review the Student Conduct Code so that they understand their rights in academic disciplinary situations. The Student Conduct Code can be found here: http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php