

Intd. 100
College Writing Seminar
Fall 2003
M,W,F, 1:30-2:20
Hoover 113

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Writing Reality: Dreamers and Dreams from Plato to the Present*

This course is designed especially for people who love good books and big ideas, who are serious about growing as writers, and who are eager to go beyond normal course requirements to participate in field trips and on-campus cultural events. It will deal with literary texts across the centuries that have embodied different human dreams, while dramatizing the conflict between those dreams and the social realities they have had to confront. We will begin--during First-Year Orientation--with an analysis of Plato's "allegory of the cave" (from *The Republic*, Book VII), a text which has been called the ideal introduction to a liberal education, and which will also introduce the themes we'll explore throughout the semester. Other texts will include Samuel Johnson's fable *Rasselas* and three terrific novels: Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Great Gatsby*, and Charles Johnson's *Dreamer*, a prize-winning fiction based on the tragic last years of the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

These texts will be accompanied by a series of four week-end field trips that will expose us to different areas and aspects of Los Angeles, a city (if there ever was one!) of dreams and dreamers. First we'll ground our Platonic, utopian reflections in the soil, architecture, and social realities of our own city, just as Prince Rasselas and his sister Nekayah seek the "choice of life" in the streets of Cairo. Then, on other week-ends, we'll visit three major Los Angeles area museums--each representing a different kind and quality of dream. At the Huntington Library, we will see Henry Huntington's dream of European nobility, grounded on monopolistic American free enterprise (a theme to be explored as well in *The Great Gatsby*). Then, at the J. Paul Getty Museum, we will both extend the notion of the aesthetic dream and ponder the *idea* of *Los Angeles* embodied in the Getty's gleaming architecture and stunning gardens. Finally, at the Museum of Tolerance, we will explore King's dream of a united and interdependent humanity, and of a world free of prejudice and injustice.

Because of the extra week-end commitments involved in this section, students choosing to take it will have the option of receiving four credits, rather than the usual three.

* Engraving by Harry Brockway (b. 1958).

Required Texts and Supplies:

Frederick Crews. *The Random House Handbook*, sixth ed. New York: Random House, 1992.

F. Scott Fitzgerald. *The Great Gatsby*. New York: Scribners, 1925.

Gustave Flaubert. *Madame Bovary*, trans. Merloyd Lawrence. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1857; 1969.

Charles Johnson. *Dreamer*. New York: Scribers, 1999.

Samuel Johnson. *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1759;1999.

John Trimble. *Writing with Style: Conversations on the Art of Writing*, second ed. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1999.

A good college dictionary. (A selection available in the bookstore.)

A notebook (loose-leaf or spiral) that you'll feel comfortable with for class and reading notes, as well as for an occasional journal entry or informal essay. (You should bring this notebook with you to class every day.)

A folder with pockets to keep your finished and revised essays in. (This folder must be handed in at the end of the course as your "portfolio.")

Required Work:

1. Reading assignments to be completed before the dates for which they are assigned (i.e. in time for class discussion). You should also take notes on each chapter; look up vocabulary words you don't know and write down their meanings; and jot down questions for class discussion. All these notes--along with your responses to any specific "prompts"--should go into your notebook, and come with you to class. If something confuses you, by all means ask about it! The rule in this class--to be followed by all: there are no stupid questions. In fact, if *you're* puzzled, probably others are too. So come prepared--and get involved.

2. Prompt and regular attendance at all class sessions (including five tutorials and five peer-review sessions, four field trips, and several on-campus evening events). Mark will take attendance at the start of each class and keep a record of all other meetings as well. You are allowed three "free absences" to cover illnesses and other unforeseen problems. Absences beyond these three will negatively affect your grade in the course, and six absences may be regarded as grounds for a failing grade. Moreover, it is essential that you arrive on time and stay for the entire class period. Thus two late arrivals or early departures will count as one absence. (It is also exceedingly bad form to wander in and out of class during a session, and anyone's doing so will be noted.)

Note: We will not penalize anyone for absences incurred because of serious illness or because of activities undertaken on behalf of Whittier College (such as games if you play on a school team, or events with the College Choir). However, these *will* count toward your three free absences; and you must give Mark or me written confirmation from your doctor, coach, or other relevant authority concerning the legitimacy of your absence. If you have more than three official absences for these legitimate reasons (although such a situation should be avoided), you will not be penalized; but proof is essential, and you must make up any missed work.

3. Attendance at least four evening events on campus, including at least one poetry or fiction reading and at least one Whittier College theater production (schedule pending).

4. Five out-of-class essays (ranging in length from three to eight pages)--all of which will involve drafting and consultation with Mark and me. As John Trimble argues in *Writing with Style*, all good writing is *rewriting*. In other words, the process is just as important as the final product, so we'll be focusing on both. Thus all essays must be turned in--on the date due *and* at the end of the course as part of your portfolio--for a passing grade in the course. Each essay must also have a typed cover letter--addressed to Mark and me, and signed by you--describing your process (and the approximate time spent on each stage), as well as an evaluation of your success. Your portfolio will include a longer cover letter, in which you describe your development and evaluate your progress over the course of the semester.

5. Occasional in- and out-of-class writing assignments, including the keeping of a class notebook to be handed in periodically and at the end of the course.

6. An in-class essay exam.

Grading Factors:

(1) Attendance, preparation and discussion	15
(2) Five out-of- class essays (one final grade given on total portfolio, with some extra weight on final paper)	65
(3) Notebook (including class notes and brief assignments)	10
(4) In-class final exam (Dec. 10)	<u>10</u>
	100%

Policy on Late Work:

Note: Late work will be accepted, but will be marked down one half grade for each day (not each class session) after the due date. Under extraordinary circumstances, I will consider an extension without penalty--provided that I am consulted in advance and that the circumstances seem serious enough to warrant such an extension. Even if a paper becomes so late as to receive a failing grade, you still must turn in all written work to receive a passing grade in the course.

Manuscript Style:

Papers are to be typed, double-space, in a 12-point font (this syllabus serves as an example), and printed on a laser-quality printer. They should be handed in on separate sheets of 8 1/2 X 11 bond paper, stapled in the upper left-hand corner. Margins should be one inch; paragraphs are to be indented five spaces. Spaces should not be skipped between paragraphs. Any documentation must follow Alternative *MLA* style, which is described in your *Random House Handbook* (Crews), 207-213.

Always keep hard-copies of all your work. Documents can get lost--both from my desk and from your disk, whether hard, floppy, or c.d. Should this occur, I will expect you to be able to produce a copy immediately; otherwise, I will be forced to count the paper as late beginning with the day of your failure to do so. (See above for general policy on late papers.)

Note: Electronically submitted work will not be accepted. It is your responsibility to produce and submit a clean hard copy.

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism occurs whenever the true author of a piece of prose, of an idea, or of a line of thought is not the person who claims to be the author. Plagiarism can occur in varying degrees, and will be penalized--in this class as in all others at the College--in proportion to its severity. Papers in which plagiarism is sufficiently serious will receive an F, and student's name will be turned in to the Dean of Students. A repeated act of plagiarism will result in an automatic F in the entire course, in addition to any action taken by the Office of Student Life (which can include suspension from the College). A number of such serious sanctions have been imposed in recent years.

A particularly common and egregious form of plagiarism is the down-loading of materials from various websites. Please be aware that faculty have the tools to identify any work unfairly borrowed from the web--as well as other sources.

If you are in doubt about the need for documentation of borrowed material, please feel free to consult me or any other professor on campus. Also be sure that you have mastered the material in the 2003-2004 College Catalog, 25-28. Ignorance of this material will not be regarded as an excuse.

ADA Policy:

If you have any disabling condition that may require some special arrangements in order to meet course requirements, please begin by contacting Disability Services in Center for Academic Success (extension 4840, located in Science 105). I will be happy to provide any accommodations regarded by the Director as appropriate, but am not in a position to offer such accommodations independently. Short of actual accommodations, however, please feel welcome to talk with me about anything I can do to help you succeed in the course.

The Final Exam:

The final examination will be given only at the published time (Wednesday, December 10, 1:00-3:00), so plan your departure for winter vacation accordingly. Plane tickets purchased by students not consulting the schedule (or not informing their families of the schedule) will not be accepted as an excuse for missing (or rescheduling) the exam. If you should find yourself scheduled for three final exams on a single day, you are (as the catalogue notes) entitled to request an adjustment from your professors.

Office Hours and Writing Center:

A huge component of growth in writing is having a sympathetic and critical audience for our work. Mark and I are dedicating ourselves to act in that role for each of you this semester, and will be able to help you to the extent that you take advantage of our expertise. Both of us will hold required tutorial sessions with each of you, to see drafts of virtually every paper, and to offer suggestions for revision. Mark will also lead five peer-review sessions on the days I offer tutorials. In addition, we both will be available for consultation outside these scheduled times.

My office hours (listed at the top of your syllabus as well as on my office door) are set aside for the express purpose of seeing students. So please come by to talk about your work in the course--or anything else you'd like to discuss. (I hope the fact that you're also my mentees will give you double encouragement to do that.) If you want to talk to me but can't come by at one of my scheduled hours, see me after class to make an appointment. (That's what "and by appointment" means.)

Mark will also be available during the week to help you with every phase of your writing process--or to talk with you about any problems you may be having in the course.

Another resource--for this course and for all your courses--is the Writing Center, located in the basement of Hoover Hall. Not only is the center equipped with computers (both Macs and PCs); it is also staffed with friendly, skilled, and experienced writing tutors, whose purpose--like ours--is to help you with every stage of the writing process. Mark, as this class's co-instructor, will be able to help you the most. But if you need additional assistance--or can't find Mark--Writing Center tutors are also qualified and ready to help.

You will gain the most from their expertise, however, (1) if you go to the center well before an assignment is due; (2) if you take a copy of the assignment with you to show the tutor what is expected, as well as relevant texts and whatever notes or drafts you have made so far; and (3) if you do not expect him or her to serve as either a ghostwriter or a proofreader. Like your instructors, tutors are there to help you; but ultimately you are responsible for your own work.

Field Trips:

This course will require four field trips, around which class members must plan their schedules:

Saturday, September 20 Los Angeles Dreams and Realities (by bus and on foot).

Saturday, October 11 Estate Tour, Galleries and Gardens at the Huntington Library.

Saturday, November 1 The J. Paul Getty Museum, Brentwood.

Sunday, November 16 The Museum of Tolerance.

Special Presentation:

Monday, November 17 Lecture/Discussion led by Dr. Terrence Roberts, sharing his fight against virulent racism as one of the "Little Rock Nine."

A final note:

Mark and I hope that being a part of a small first-year seminar--one on a topic you have (more or less) chosen--will (1) help you become part of a small community of fellow learners; (2) give you many opportunities for reflection, analysis, and inquiry; and (3) embody and underline the crucial fact that students are finally responsible for their own education. As faculty and peer mentor we can provide experiences and share our knowledge. But only *you*, finally, can free yourself from "the cave"--can construct a viable reality or realize *your* dreams. And that task can only be accomplished within a *community* for which *all* take responsibility. That is the simple principle that lies behind every rule noted above.

The Schedule (subject to change as necessary):

Orientation/ Day 1

Sept. 5 Dreaming Reality: Discussion of Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" (handed out during Orientation). First writing assignment (Draft due Sept. 12).

Week 1

8 First Principles (1): Writing as product--the elements of a successful college essay. Read Trimble, chapters 1 and 2, pp. v-24 and Crews, Introduction, pp. 1-6. Make a brief outline of the two writers' key points in your notebook. Continue this practice for all assigned readings.

10 First Principles (2): Writing as process. Read Crews, pp. 53-91 and Trimble, chapters 3-5, pp. 25-52. (Outline as above.)

12 Read (and outline) Trimble, chapters 6-7, pp. 53-81. Paper #1 (on Plato's Allegory) due.

Week 2

15 Dreaming the Choice of Life: *Rasselas*.

- 17 Finding something to say: Invention. The Pentad and *Rasselas*.
- 19 *Rasselas*. Last day of discussion. Final draft of Paper #1 due. Second assignment handed out.
- Sat. 20 Field Trip: Dreaming Los Angeles. Meet bus at 9:30 a.m. in Mendenhall parking lot. Bring: water, snacks, and \$10.00 for lunch and incidentals.

Week 3

- 22 The Choice of Life: Reading Downtown L.A. with Plato and Johnson's (very different) eyes.
- 24 Tutorial # 1 (Group 1): Bring drafts of Paper # 2 to work individually with me in my office (Hoover 211). Peer review #1 (Group 2): Bring drafts of your second paper to work on with Mark and your fellow group members. Read Crews, pp. 115-49 (peer editing and revision).
- 26 Tutorial # 1 (Group 2): Bring drafts of Paper # 2 to work individually with me in my office (Hoover 211). Peer review #1 (Group 1): Bring drafts of your second paper to work on with Mark and your fellow group members. Read Crews, pp. 115-49 (peer editing and revision).

Week 4

- 29 Arrangement: Supporting a Thesis and Dealing with a Text. Read (and outline) Crews, pp. 92-114. Paper #2 (on *Rasselas*) due.
- Oct. 1 Dreaming Happiness: *Madame Bovary*. Read Part I, pp. 1-56.
- 3 *Madame Bovary*, Part II, pp. 57-193.

Week 5

- 6 *Madame Bovary*, Part III, pp. 195-297. Final draft of Paper #2 due.
- 8 Tutorial #2 (Group 2); Peer review # 2 (Group 1). Note: order is reversed from first tutorial/peer review. Bring drafts of your third paper as noted above. Read Crews, pp. 9-32 (Description and Narration).
- 10 Tutorial #2 (Group 1); Peer review # 2 (Group 2). Note: order is reversed from first tutorial/peer review. Bring drafts of your third paper as noted above. Read Crews, pp. 9-32 (Description and Narration).

Sat. 11 Huntington Library Estate Tour. Gather in Mendenhall parking lot at 9:30 a.m. (Bring water, snacks, lunch money.)

Week 6

13 Emma's Dream: Discussion of the Huntington Treasure Hunt. Paper # 3 (on *Madame Bovary* and Happiness) due.

15 Dreaming America: *The Great Gatsby*.

17 Mid-semester break.

Week 7

20 *Gatsby*.

22 *Gatsby*. Final draft of Paper #3 due.

24 Writing with Style (1): Diction. Read Trimble, pp. 99-132 and Crews, pp 333-79.

Week 8

27 Writing with Style (2): Syntax. Read Crews, 283-328 and Trimble, 133-61.

29 Tutorial # 3 (Group 1); Peer review #3 (Group 2). Bring drafts of your fourth paper as noted above. Read Crews, pp. 33-50 (Analysis and Argument).

31 Tutorial # 3 (Group 2); Peer review #3 (Group 1). Bring drafts of your fourth paper as noted above. Read Crews, pp. 33-50 (Analysis and Argument).

Nov. 1 (Saturday) Field Trip to the J. Paul Getty Center. Gather in Mendenhall parking lot at 1:00 p.m. (Bring water, snacks, dinner money, and a sweater for evening.)

Week 9

3 Argument and persuasion. Read King's March on Washington "Dream" speech (hand-out). Paper # 4 (on *Gatsby*) due.

5 Dreaming Justice: *Dreamer*.

7 *Dreamer*.

Week 10

- 10 *Dreamer*. Final draft of Paper #4 due.
- 12 Tutorial # 4 (Group 2); Peer review #4 (Group 1). Bring bibliography and notes toward your final paper.
- 14 Tutorial # 4 (Group 1); Peer review #4 (Group 2). Bring bibliography and notes toward your final paper.
- Sun. 16 Visit to the Museum of Tolerance. Meet in Mendenhall parking lot at 12:30 p.m. (Bring water and a snack if you like.)

Week 11

- Rock 17 Lecture by Dr. Terrence Roberts (of the Little Rock Nine) on his own historic role in the American Civil Rights Movement. Read hand-out materials on the Little Nine.
- 19 Tutorial #5 (Group 1); Peer review #4 (Group 2). Bring a nearly completed draft of your final paper. Read Trimble, pp. 81-98.
- 21 Tutorial #5 (Group 2); Peer review #4 (Group 1). Bring a nearly completed draft of your final paper. Read Trimble, pp. 81-98.

Week 12

- Shop." 24 Style and purpose--summing up: Read Trimble, 165-189: "Writers Talking
- 26 Paper # 5 (on *Dreamer*) due.
- 28 Thanksgiving break.

Week 13

- Dec. 2 Day for Reflection and Review.
- 4 Day for Reflection and Review.

6 Last day of class. Portfolio (with papers 1-5--originals and revisions and further revisions as desired--and a letter evaluating your progress over the semester) due. Any materials not returned at the final will be returned to you by campus mail.

Final Exam

Dec. 10 In-class final exam.

The Cartoons: