

**HONORS 3200 Workshop: Writing in a Research University**  
FALL 2017

Honors Center 150. MW 1:25-2:45

\*Meets Upper Division Communication/Writing Requirement

Michael Gills, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor/Lecturer  
Honors College  
114 Honors Center  
MW 10:45-11:45 or by appt.  
801.587.8906  
m.gills@utah.edu

**Course Description.**

Honors 3200: Writing In A Research University is designed for undergraduates (ideally at the sophomore or junior level) who have chosen a major and completed core requirements. The class seeks to develop and employ critical thinking, inquiry and analysis, written communication and teamwork. This is accomplished by close reading, and using the writing process as a medium for learning and articulation. Analytical techniques practiced and employed include reduction, synthesis, dialectical reasoning, and systems thinking among others. Central to the course is the understanding of forms and structures found across academic disciplines and audiences from various backgrounds. Students work in peer review groups throughout the semester. Oral presentations, original innovation, taking up the role as an emerging scholar in their fields, and digital media are integrated into the curriculum as forms of writing. Risk taking and divergent thinking is encouraged, just as diverse perspectives are presented and explored. Because of the varied backgrounds and career pursuits of the students, Honors 3200 is in good position to challenge cultural paradigms that fail to consider empathy as a major way of knowing.

For our purposes, Essay 1 will be a newly written creative nonfiction essay (note that our definition of essay is to weigh, to explore, to quest as opposed to "report"). This may be personal in nature, though not necessarily so. Choose a direction and follow where it leads—be bold, risk all, let the writing teach you as a vehicle toward some truth you didn't know you knew. Go to the Academic Search Premier search engine and find scholarly material on your topic; pull such into your narrative. Essays from *The Next American Essay* will serve as guides, though not restrictively so. You will workshop this essay during weeks three or four. *Start your writing regime now.* Write daily. Embrace rough drafting. Trust the Process. Be prepared to post a draft to the Discussion Board on Canvas on the class date \*prior\* to your workshop date, 5-7 p./include a works cited page. After your workshop session you will have \*one week\* to revise, post up to Canvas and deliver a hard copy to your professor. You will be asked to attend all workshop sessions and engage thoroughly. If you complete the parameters for this process, you will earn full credit. Partial Credit will be awarded for students not meeting requested parameters.

*Audience:* us/advanced curriculum scholars in the academy

*Purpose:* to step beyond your happy/safe place; creativity/innovation/imagination—the fire therein

*Strategy:* critical reading of Essays, writing as Process

## Gills/Workshop/2

Next, writers will critique an Honors Thesis in their field and present the findings formally to workshop. The third project will delineate **seminal text(s)** in your field and what rhetorical constructs underpin the text's authority. A subsequent essay will engage an idea or methodology that has become **obsolete** in your field. Next, student writers will research and formally present a **dangerous** idea in their field. Finally, writers will **draft** a Contribution Paper that requires them to make an original contribution to their field. This last project is often a preliminary draft for the Honors Thesis, and might involve ongoing research.

Writing 3200 is a workshop wherein students come to value the support structure of their peers. It is not a class where writers work in a vacuum. For this reason, your success will, in part, hinge on your commitment to attend and **engage thoroughly** in all workshops. As well, and from the beginning, you will be asked to claim the sometimes **terrifying freedom** with which the writer must **struggle**.

### **Learning Outcomes.**

This course addresses the following Essential Learning Outcomes: Inquiry and Analysis, Written Communication and Teamwork.

**Inquiry and Analysis:** Student writers will understand a broad range of interconnecting issues and concepts that pertain to advanced academic research. Along these lines, student writers will explore reduction, dialectical thinking, deconstruction, integral analysis, systems thinking, analysis and innovation.

**Written Communication:** Student writers will analyze writing and research in their field and bring their own written discourse up to a publishable level via the workshop process. Writer Researchers will further engage this writing process in an extensive written research project that makes an original contribution to their field. Often, this project points toward (or actually is) the Honors Thesis.

**Teamwork:** Student writers will use the input of peers via the writing workshop to develop their own critical thinking about issues and problems crucial to being an engaged scholar and citizen. As workshop participants, student writer/researchers will participate as team members in the evaluation, critique and revision strategies of peer work.

### **Texts.**

Student Research/Scholar/Writer essays composed for our ongoing Writers Workshop.

Reserve/Marriott Library. Essays from *The Next American Essay*, ed. by John D'Agata.

Marriott Research Library. Orientation. Writing in the Field of, Seminal, Dangerous and Obsolete Texts and Methodologies in the student writer's field of scholarship.

## Gills/Workshop/3

\*Suggested. Hult, Christine and Huckin, Thomas. *The New Century Handbook*. (any issue)

**Assignments and Grades:** the total number of percentage points is 100.

1. *Creative Nonfiction Essay*. This may be personal in nature, though not necessarily so. Essays from the D'Agata text *The Next American Essay* will serve as models. 5-7 pages (10%).

2. *Honors Thesis Analysis* (10%)

This assignment will require you to locate Honors Theses for your discipline in the Marriott Library. You'll then choose one, study it thoroughly and write a two page analysis to be presented formally to the class. (500 words).

3. *Seminal Text Analysis* (20%)

For this essay, determine the seminal texts (ie., creative original. foundational) of your discipline. Analyze these texts, determining the strategies by which they posit information in such a way as to be pivotal. In what ways are these text necessary? A single thesis could serve as an avenue of inquiry. (1200 words).

4. *Obsolete Theory Essay* (20%)

Over time, some theories and methodologies in your field have become obsolete. They have been (or are in the process of being) discarded, while new ones have taken on more value. The purpose of this assignment is to have you analyze such a "discarded theory" while postulating how or why another idea has risen to prevalence. The critical review will be completed in two steps: Part One--summary of the theory or methodology and Part Two--commentary on why such is no longer the case and what has replaced it. (1500 words).

5. *Dangerous Idea in your Field Presentation* (5%)

The assignment is to come up with a dangerous idea, present it orally, and be challenged/questioned by the class to tease out nuances. The student presenter's main job: create discussion while addressing issues of our day. Five students present each class for four days. This will take place as we research/construct our Contribution Papers and might very well inform such work in surprising ways.

6. *Contribution Paper* (25%)

This assignment asks you to take on authority by conducting your own research (in your field), constructing a position and sharing it with others. Think of this as the capstone writing project for the course, an opportunity to operate as the full-fledged writer you've become. (3000 words).

7. *Participation/Peer Engagement*: we will be holding an ongoing conversation/dialogue on our

## Gills/Workshop/4

writing and research process on canvas and you are **required** to log in, if only briefly, by our class time daily—missing more than three log ins will count as an absence. Attendance in a writing workshop is required. Being in class, engaging the writing process, peer editing, class discussion, leadership, teamwork, engaging the research process—these are critical to the writing workshop. (10%)

### **Grades.**

Initial evaluation grades are in accord with the University of Utah Registrar: A/Exceptional, B/Good, C/Average for the class, D/Below Average, E/Failing. That said, I am not hesitant to award an A to every student writer who earns the exceptional grade. As a writer who depends heavily on the process of revision, I offer you the opportunity to revise all manuscripts and hand them in near the end of the term for an improved evaluation score, though the important role of such is that your writing sharpens—along with your self-confidence as a writer. Over the course of the semester, your demonstrated commitment to learning and support of your peers (ie., your work as a peer editor) will all play into your evaluation.

\*Note. Please be sure that I believe that your best friend as a writer is someone with both the ability and the willingness to thoroughly engage with and **critique** your prose. **Don't confuse criticism of your manuscript with criticism of yourself as a person.** Evaluation and critique will be rigorous. Revision is requisite. Ask questions. Risk will be rewarded.

### **Habits of Being: notes on attendance, punctuality, and manners.**

If you have a cell phone, turn it off. Put it in your pocket. Don't text in class or you will be asked to leave. You are asked to commit to attending **every** class, and are allowed **two absences** from workshop before losing participation credit. If you need to schedule dates that you know you'll miss, do so *now*. If sick, let me know and I'll set up work for you on canvas. Being late (arriving *after* class begins...) more than three times results in loss of participation credit. Plan on being responsible for *all* work. Late assignments will not be accepted. If you are having a problem with an assignment, come see me. I am committed to seeing you flourish in this writing workshop... If you don't understand the above attendance policy, please inquire now.

Writers--what you are now--require **thick skins: Criticism is your best friend.** We require honesty and integrity and the willingness to self and peer critique. All discourse between students, peers, and the professor should be conducted with the respect requisite of the academic discourse community--no exceptions. *Remaining in the class beyond the second day means that you agree to the preceding request.* Regarding cell phones, *turn them off while in class.* A sense of humor is requisite in day-to-day activities; please practice such, often.

You must do your own original work. Plagiarism is against university standards; it will result in your failure of the course. (See sections II and V of the Student Code for details.)

### **Students with Disabilities/Nondiscrimination Statement.**

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

#### Accommodation Policy.

No content accommodations will be made for this course. It is the student's obligation to determine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, if the requirements of this course conflict with the student's sincerely-held core beliefs. If there is such a conflict, the student should consider dropping the class. Please visit the Administration Policy and Procedures Website (<http://www.admin.utah.edu/facdev/index.html>) and look under Accommodations Policy for complete details.

#### Addressing Sexual Misconduct

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

### **Course Schedule.**

The following schedule is subject to change. Like any decent map, it allows for spontaneous diversions (note the Rand McNally strategy against those who'd plagiarize their maps) and the anticipation of unforeseen splendors. Please be sure to pay attention in class for announcements of additions, deletions, or substitutions. Stay tuned and alert, writers.

#### **Week One**

Introduction to Course. Sign up for Creative Nonfiction Essay. Begin writing regime. Be prepared to post your essay online to Canvas on the class date prior to your workshop date. Ask questions as/when needed.

In the meantime, to provoke thought, please find the following creative essays under my name/The Next American Essay on reserve in the Marriott Library and read thoroughly—ie., close

## Gills/Workshop/6

read...

Assigned reading (NAE, to be covered in roughly this order):

Dillard, "Total Eclipse"

Weinberger, "The Dream of India"

Mathews, "Country Cooking From Central France"

Griffin, "Red Shoes"

### **Week Two**

Essay discussions.

\*\*\*Make sure you're signed up for Workshops\*\*\*

Out of class, read. Draft your essay.

### **Week Three**

*Creative Nonfiction* Workshops.

### **Week Four**

*Creative Nonfiction* Workshops/finish. Assign Thesis Analysis.

### **Week Five**

Honors Thesis Analysis due for in class presentation.

Research/Drafting: Honors Thesis Analysis.

### **Week Six**

Honors Thesis Analysis due for in class presentation.

Assign Rhetorical Analysis

Wed., 2/15, Research Library Orientation with Donna Z. ML 1120

### **Week Seven**

Conferences/All Week. Honors Center 114

Ongoing Research & Development/Rhetorical Analysis/Seminal Text.

### **Week Eight**

Fall Break.

**Week Nine**

Rough draft of Rhetorical Analysis due. Writers Workshops.  
Revise. Rhetorical Analysis due  
Assign Critical Review/Obsolete Theory Essay

**Week Ten**

Research and Development/Critical Review  
Due, Working Draft/Critical Review. Writers Workshops.

**Week Eleven**

Critical Review Due.  
Catch up  
Assign Contribution Essay  
Library/ Research and Development/Contribution Essay

**Week Twelve**

Dangerous Idea Presentations/Discussions.  
Research and Development/Drafting Contribution Essay

**Week Thirteen**

Dangerous Idea Presentations/Discussions.  
Research/Drafting Contribution Essay

**Week Fourteen**

Contribution Workshops

**Week Fifteen**

Contribution Workshops  
*All revisions due*

**Week Sixteen**

Contribution Essay Due.  
Celebratory Class.