

WBIS
Writing Based Inquiry Seminar
Adventure and survival
Fall 2009

Tuesday / Thursday 9:40am-11:10am . Section 10C . South Halsey 208

Dr. Marguerite Helmers, instructor

www.english.uwosh.edu/helmers

helmers@uwosh.edu

Facebook: www.facebook.com/margueritehelmers

Twitter: www.twitter.com/AosSidhe

Also, frequently check D2L for course links, assignments, and updates



Office: Radford 226

Office phone: 920 424-0916

Office Hours: Monday, 1:30-2:45 . Tuesday, 12-2:45 . Thursday, 9-9:30 . And by
appointment

Official Course Description

Writing-Based Inquiry Seminars 188 3 units (crs.)

Writing-Based Inquiry Seminars (WBIS) (EN)

In this course, students will develop their writing, critical reading, and critical thinking skills by exploring a single topic in depth. Students are expected to participate actively in their own learning through class discussions and group activities. The theme will vary, depending on the instructor. Students should check with their advisor or the WBIS web site to determine the theme for each section. Successful completion of this course will fulfill the Writing-Based Inquiry Seminar requirement. Students who have earned credit for English 101 may not take English 188. Students cannot earn credit for both English 101 and WBIS 188

What does WBIS offer you?

- ∞ Practice in writing process strategies. WBIS is designed to help students develop analytical writing skills and aptitudes in critical editing and proofreading.

- ∞ Training in collaborative work. WBIS courses consist largely of classroom activities other than traditional lecture, in which students develop answers to the theme-based questions through writing and discussion. The ability to work in groups is one of the highest rated skills valued by employers.

- ∞ Development of skills involving synthesis of sources. Students must develop abilities in accessing and assessing research materials and evaluating information from a variety of print and electronic sources.

- ∞ Sustained focus on critical analysis. WBIS includes discussion of writing (planning, drafting, revising, and editing) and opportunities to revise written work after receiving feedback.

- ∞ An introduction to the ethical and legal use of print and electronic information and codes of academic honesty.

WBIS Program Goals

The Writing-Based Inquiry Seminars (WBIS) will help students strengthen their writing, reading, and thinking skills within an academic context that will prepare them for their future college work. The goals and objectives of the Writing-Based Inquiry Seminar program are the following:

- ∞ Writing process strategies. Students will develop a set of strategies to generate ideas and to revise and edit their writing through successive drafts. In addition, students will engage in

critical reflections of their texts and of their writing processes. Students will also become aware of how the relationships between audience, purpose, context, and genre shape the meaning and function of any text, including their own.

∞ Synthesis of sources. Students will gain practice with analytical and argumentative writing, both of which necessitate an ability to integrate sources logically and grammatically; to use summary, paraphrase, and quotations appropriately and effectively; to use the appropriate documentation style; and to meet academic expectations of grammatical and mechanical correctness in final papers.

∞ Critical analysis. Students will develop skills in critical evaluation and decision-making. This will involve evaluating one's own writing and the writing of peers and professionals. Students will also be faced with evaluating different sources of information, which may include print media, film, and the Internet, as well as primary sources.

∞ Technology. Students will learn to use available writing technologies effectively. They will learn to efficiently locate and evaluate information found through online sources.

∞ Collaborative work. Students will learn to work cooperatively within groups to make decisions and to solve problems.

Number of Courses for Graduation: Where Next?

Students seeking a degree from UW Oshkosh must complete 6 credits of composition with an average grade of C or better. For most students, this will include WBIS (taken in the first year of studies) and Advanced Composition (taken in the third or fourth year). In order to maintain the continuity of writing instruction in our program, students' second year experience in general education literature courses will also be writing-intensive.

Amount of Writing Required in WBIS

Students in each WBIS section, regardless of theme, will compose *a minimum* of 5000 words per semester (approximately 20 typed, double-spaced pages).

Adventure and Survival Course Description

The members of the westward adventuring Donner Party were snowbound in Sierra Mountains in the 1840s. Ernest Shackleton's ship The Endurance was caught in ice in the Antarctic in 1915. These famous stories, combined with the return of veterans who have survived Afghanistan and Iraq and the popularity of television programs such as *Lost*, *Survivor*, *Man vs. Wild*, and *Survivorman* raise the question, What fascination does survival hold for contemporary Americans? What does it mean to survive? Is survival the result of luck, special knowledge, or a bit of both? Given that many adventure stories involve an element of danger and that many great adventures culminated in fights to survive, the topic

runs through history and literature. We will explore true and fictional stories of survival and adventure in this course.

Required Book Purchases

Into Thin Air, Jon Krakauer

Where the Mountain Casts its Shadow, Maria Coffey

A Complicated Kindness, Miriam Toews (this is the required first-year reading of all WBIS sections)

A Writer's Resource (this is the required handbook for all WBIS sections)

Additional Reading and Screening. No purchase necessary:

Tim Cahill. "And Jaguars Ripped my Flesh" (see D2L)

Survivorman: The Arctic

Man Versus Wild: The Arctic

Grizzly Man

Writing Assignments

All writing assignments receive separate instruction sheets, distributed in class and posted to D2L. In addition, we discuss how to approach each assignment during class hours and hold peer review sessions on them prior to the due date. Please also consider the University Writing Center a resource for questions and help in drafting.

Due Dates & Grading Weights

1. Critical Response to *Survivorman* (due September 17). 3 typed, double-spaced pages. **5%**
2. Critical Response to *Man v. Wild* (due September 22). 3 typed, double-spaced pages. **5%**
3. Précis (due September 24). 2 typed, double-spaced pages. **5%**
4. Definition Essay (draft due September 29; final copy due October 6). 5 typed, double-spaced pages. **15%**
5. Persuasive Essay (draft due October 22; final copy due October 27). 7 typed, double-spaced pages drawing on outside research. **15%**
6. Narrative Essay (draft due November 12; final copy due November 17). 5 typed, double-spaced pages. **15%**
7. Critical Thinking Oral Presentation (due November 24). **10%**
8. Critical Response to *Grizzly Man* (due November 24). 3 typed, double-spaced pages. **5%**
9. Responding to Literature (draft due December 15; final copy due December 17). 7 typed, double-spaced pages drawing on outside research. **15%**
10. Class participation: Participation in class includes contributing to discussions, bringing books and other materials, and taking part in any online discussions. **10%**

Peer Workshopping

Peer editing workshops are designed to allow you to learn strategies for providing feedback to others and improve your own writing by responding to feedback. You will join groups with two to three other members of class this semester and these peers will read and respond to your work, just as you will read and respond to their work.

On workshop days, you are responsible for bringing a paper copy of your draft to class. Any group member who does not workshop a full draft during the session will receive one full grade lowered on the final paper.

D2L

Vital information goes onto our D2L site daily, so please get in the habit of including a check of D2L in your daily electronic excursions. I add course materials, background research ideas, updates, changes, contact information, etc.

Electronic Resources

Saving essays: Please save your work in MSWord (file extensions .doc, .docx, or .rtf).

Universal Borrowing (Library): This service allows you to get any book from any UW system library in 3 days. You will need your campus ID number and your email username and password.

Email: Please make sure that you check your campus email account (username@uwosh.edu). I use it to communicate with you. Also, you will receive information about scholarships, study abroad, career fairs, and safety on campus.

A few words on form and language in email: If you email me or another professor, please keep in mind that your email is a professional communication. Make sure you include:

- A subject line. We receive, sadly, many scams and spam, so a subject helps sort the mail.
- A proper salutation. “Dear Professor X” is a nice way to begin, rather than “Hey.”
- A text completely worded in non-IM style.
- An indication of your full name, preferably in a signature line.

Here is an example of a message that you should not send:

To: helmers@uwosh.edu

From: deathmasque666@hotmail.com

Subject:

hey
RU gonna hev class 2day?
CU l8r

Response Time

Please allow me 24 hours to return your message during the workweek. I attend meetings on campus and meet with students during office hours and don't always see email messages sent right before class. I also may be traveling, in which case, I will post an away message to my email letting you know when you may receive a response.

Attendance

I expect you to attend all class sessions. If you are unable to attend, I ask that you explain to me why you will not be in class. For medical absences, please supply a dated, signed excuse from a doctor. After 3 missed hours of class (one full class period), your final grade will be lowered on a percentage basis: number of class hours missed divided by 42 class hours per semester (and this will include all absences).

Flu Epidemic Preparation

In the case of the flu epidemic, I will follow procedures outlined by the UW Oshkosh Emergency Response team. In individual cases, I have prepared assignments for affected students so that they maintain their coursework and grades; I will require a documented, dated contact from a medical professional.

Late Papers

All assignments are due, printed, in class on the date specified. If, for some reason, you do not have the printed copy at that time, please speak to me and put it in the D2L dropbox by midnight on the due date. In exceptional circumstances, such as documented illness, I will accept a late paper.

➤ I will not accept papers through email attachment.

Late Persons

While there are no bells in college, class begins at the time listed in the timetable. You may be late once due to weather; however, repeatedly walking into class late will affect your final grade: it is not constructive, it is disrespectful, and it interferes with students' ability to learn in a conducive and positive environment. Announcements, such as changes to the schedule, clarification of essay assignments, and announcements of English Department and campus events, are made in the first 10 minutes of class. Missing these will impair your ability to

succeed.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a punishable offence, covered by the university rules. I can tell when your writing is not your own and the university now subscribes to Turnitin, which is an authentication tool for all essays. In addition, all essays must be original, which means that, even if you work with someone in class, you should ensure that you turn in individual writing and research. Even duplicated sentences between essays are considered an infringement of the academic honesty codes. We will discuss writing and plagiarism in this class. In the meantime, if you have any doubts about how to properly cite research, talk to me before you write.

Writing Center

The Writing Center will help you conceptualize your essays (for this class and others). The Writing Center is not a proofreading or editing service. All Writing Center services are free, but you need to schedule an appointment. The Writing Center is located in the basement of Radford Hall. The phone number is 424-1152; you may also email them at wcenter@uwosh.edu.

Daily syllabus

Not everything that we do during this semester is represented on this syllabus! The major reading and writing assignments are listed here. All assignments should be completed on the date that they are listed on this syllabus. Dates may change slightly to accommodate our progress during the semester.

Week One

Thursday, September 10 . Welcome! Introduction and short writing assignment.

Week Two

Tuesday, September 15

Screening: *Survivorman*, with notetaking

We will discuss taking notes and how to write a response

Thursday, September 17

Screening: *Man v. Wild*, with notetaking

➤ *Survivorman* Critical Response due, with notes from screening attached

Week Three

Monday, September 21

Evening performance: *Picasso at the Lapin Agile*

Tuesday, September 22

Reading due: Cahill, “And Jaguars Ripped my Flesh”

We will discuss how to mark a page and how to compose a précis

- *Man v. Wild* Critical Response due, with notes from screening attached

Thursday, September 24

- Précis due (based on “And Jaguars Ripped my Flesh”

Introduction to writing an essay of definition and to assessment rubrics for WBIS

Week Four

Tuesday, September 29

- Peer Editing: Draft of definition essay due for collaborative review.

Thursday, October 1

Library Orientation: Dr. Helmers at a professional rhetoric conference in Minneapolis. Meet your assigned librarian in the foyer of library.

Week Five

Tuesday, October 6

Reading: *Into Thin Air*. Page numbers will be announced.

- Definition Essay due.

Thursday, October 8

Reading: *Into Thin Air*

Week Six

Tuesday, October 13

Reading: *Into Thin Air*

Introduction to Persuasive Essay

Thursday, October 15

Reading: *Into Thin Air*

Week Seven

Tuesday, October 20

Reading: *Into Thin Air*

Thursday, October 22

- Peer Editing: Draft of persuasive essay due for collaborative review.

Week Eight

Tuesday, October 27

Reading: *Where the Mountain Casts its Shadow*. Page numbers will be announced.

- Persuasive essay due

Thursday, October 29

Reading: *Where the Mountain Casts its Shadow*

Week Nine

Tuesday November 3

Reading: *Where the Mountain Casts its Shadow*

Introduction to narrative essay

Thursday, November 5

Reading: *Where the Mountain Casts its Shadow*

Week Ten

Tuesday, November 10

Reading: *Where the Mountain Casts its Shadow*

Thursday, November 12

- Peer Editing: Draft of narrative essay due for collaborative review.

Week Eleven

Tuesday, November 17

Screening: *Grizzly Man*, with note taking.

Prior to screening: Introduction to Critical Thinking Presentation.

- Narrative essay due.

Thursday, November 19

Screening: *Grizzly Man*, with note taking.

Week Twelve

Tuesday, November 24

- Critical Thinking Presentations. There will be 6 groups (4-5 people); each will have 12-15 minutes to present.

- Critical response to *Grizzly Man* due, with notes attached

Week Thirteen

Tuesday, December 1

Reading: *A Complicated Kindness*. Page numbers will be announced.

Thursday, December 3

Reading: *A Complicated Kindness*

Introduction to Responding to Literature Essay

Week Fourteen

Tuesday, December 8

Reading: *A Complicated Kindness*

Thursday, December 10

Reading: *A Complicated Kindness*

Week Fifteen

Tuesday, December 15

➤ Peer Editing: Draft of Responding to Literature Essay due for collaborative review.

Thursday, December 17

➤ Responding to Literature Essay due