

Kutztown University

ENG 230 Advanced Composition

Spring 2005

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Hours: Tuesday: 11:30am–12:30pm

Wednesday: 1:00pm–4:00pm

Thursday: 11:30am–12:30pm

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Writing Democracy: Public Discourse and Citizenship Participation in American Culture

As all of you know, last year brought us a media-saturated election year. An unprecedented amount of money was spent by the two political parties, the United States was (and is) at war in Iraq, and the issue of 9/11 and military experience very much dominated how the campaign discourse was framed. It seems worthwhile to reflect upon how public discourse is framed in American culture at this time. For all the discussion about the “public” during the last election period, both campaigns sought to “manage” the public, or use the “public,” to gain votes. For example, when President Bush came to Kutztown University last summer for a “town hall meeting” the majority of tickets were issued by the local Republican Party to ensure there would be a “friendly audience.” While this kind of “managing” of a campaign event did gain some attention in the media, for the most part the “town hall” label was not generally questioned, despite the fact that all questions had to be approved ahead of time and many people were excluded from the forum. Such managing of public opinion is not limited to the Republican Party. There is a long history of “managing” public opinion and limiting the scope of democratic participation in American culture.

In this course, we will consider how public discourse is managed or “framed,” as linguist George Lakoff terms it. However, we will not investigate American public discourse simply on a theoretical level. The purpose of such an investigation is to better understand the limits and possibility of speaking, writing, acting, or, more generally, participating in our democracy. You might be asking why I am talking about democracy and public discourse. I mean, this course is “Advanced Composition,” not “American Political Theory,” right? True. This course is not a

course on the American political system. However, the study of writing and communication in American higher education has always had a relationship with American democracy. Way back in the 18th and early 19th Centuries, American colleges and universities had required courses in “rhetoric,” charged with educating students in the skills necessary to participate as effective citizens. In the early 20th Century, Composition courses blossomed across the country in order to “democratize” literacy for broader segments of the population—often students from the working classes who were entering higher education for the first time. In the 1960s and 70s, as more women, minorities, and working class students entered the university, they began to make their own arguments for the *kinds* of literacies and knowledges that should be taught. In each case, previously excluded groups sought an expansion of educational institutions as a key component of democracy.

Yet, this story is not complete. As Composition and Rhetoric scholar David Russell notes, the expansion of higher education also saw an increased specialization of knowledge in disciplines and a withering of teaching democratic literacies and citizenship education. In his book, *Writing in the Academic Disciplines, 1870-1990*, he writes:

The systematic teaching of rhetoric as public discourse—the heart of the classical liberal arts curriculum for centuries—almost passed out of the curriculum entirely, as academia increasingly valued the pursuit of specialized matters of disciplinary import over the teaching of persuasive discourse on matters of broad civic import (15).

Other scholars and writing and rhetoric teachers have noted the increased focus on higher education as vocational training—that is, education to get a job—is eclipsing teaching for democracy.

However, recently, more and more scholars, teachers, and civic leaders are becoming concerned about the lack of participation in the daily workings of democracy. Some argue that mass media has watered down our public discourse to such a degree that we do not have the information we need to be effective citizens. Others argue that the role of “consumer” has replaced that of “citizen” and all that people care about anymore is buying more stuff. Still others look to the decline of stable, good-paying jobs as forcing more and more people to focus solely on making ends meet. People simply don’t have the time to participate. On the flip side, the emergence of non-governmental organizations, civil society institutes, academic disciplines focusing on rhetoric and critical literacy, and new social movements, seem to suggest that issues of democracy seem to be on a lot of people’s minds.

This course will be a collaborative inquiry into state of public discourse, the role of literacy education in cultivating democratic participation, and the constraints and possibilities of writing and speaking effectively in today’s culture. Traditions of rhetoric are concerned with being able to investigate a particular context, evaluate the values of an audience, and arrange a text to be as effective and persuasive as possible given the “available means” at one’s disposal. I hope this course will follow in this tradition.

Required Texts:

- Angus, Ian. Emergent Publics: An Essay on Social Movements and Democracy. Winnepeg: Arbeiter Ring Pub., 2001.
- Glassner, Barry. The Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong Things. New York: Basic Books, 1999.
- Klein, Naomi. No Logo. New York: Picador, 2002.
- *In addition to the required texts listed above, several articles have been placed on eReserve in the KU Library. These are also required texts. To access these articles, follow the instructions attached to the end of this syllabus.*

Major Writing Assignments and Grading:

Your grade in this class will be based on the following projects. I will give you more specific information on each of the assignments in the next couple of weeks.

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| Paper #1: Public Discourse, Rhetoric, and Democracy [due 2/22] | 20% |
| Paper #2: Archive of Fear (Group Project) [due 3/22] | 20% |
| Paper #3: Standpoints, Positions, and Critiques [due 4/28] | 30% |
| Reading Responses [due 1/27, 3/3, & 4/7] | 20% |
| Class participation | 10% |
| | 100% |

Note on Grading:

You will be graded on a plus/minus system on each paper. However, Kutztown University does not currently use a plus/minus grading system for calculating your GPA. I use the plus/minus system throughout the semester to provide you with a better sense of your performance in the class.

General Guidelines for Papers:

- All papers must be word-processed or typed, double-spaced, stapled (not paper-clipped or folded), and follow MLA style guidelines. I will not accept papers that are not stapled.
- **Reading Response papers:** You should try and limit Reading Response papers to a maximum of two (2) pages. I would prefer reading responses to be single-spaced. Reading Responses papers should demonstrate a substantial engagement with the **arguments** of the texts. While these papers do not have to be as formal as the major papers, they should demonstrate your grasp of the reading and that you have thought through the claims and implications of the texts.

- For each paper you hand in you should include a **title page** or **header** with the following information:
 - your name
 - the assignment name/paper number
 - the date you are handing in the paper
 - a title
 - course name and section number
 - my name
- **Save all your work!** I can't stress this point enough.

Late Papers and Email Copies:

- To receive full-credit you **must** hand in your papers in class on the due date. If you hand in your paper late, you will be graded down for that paper. For each day your paper is late, you will be graded down by a third of a letter grade. In other words, an "A" becomes an "A-;" an "A-" becomes a "B+," and so on. If you do not hand in a paper, you will receive a zero (0) for that assignment.
- **Emailing papers.** If you cannot make it to class on the date a paper is due, or if you need to hand in a paper on a non-class day, you may email me your paper. To be accepted, you must send your paper as an attached **Microsoft Word** file. **DO NOT** copy your paper in the body of an email message, and **DO NOT** send your paper as a Microsoft Works file. Make sure your name is on your paper and you "sign" your email. Never send an email copy of your paper without a short message telling me what you are sending. Papers received by 5pm on the due date will not be marked late.
 - **YOU MUST PROVIDE ME WITH A HARD COPY OF YOUR PAPER THE NEXT CLASS PERIOD.** I will not consider your paper handed in until I receive a hard copy from you in the format outlined above.
 - **The only purpose of emailing me the paper is to avoid any additional late penalties.** I will not read your paper until you give me a hard copy.

Class Policies:

- It is crucial that you attend every class to do well. Unlike a lecture class, this course depends on active discussion and in-class work. If you need to be absent, it is your responsibility to find out what happened in class from another student.
- If you are not in class when I hand out paper assignments you will need to go to the course website (will be active by the second week of class) to download a copy of the assignment or come to my office to pick up a hard copy of the assignment. I WILL NOT carry extra copies of assignment sheets around with me. To download assignment sheets, go to the course website at: <http://faculty.kutztown.edu/mahoney/Courses/ENG230.htm>.
- If you are not in class when I hand back your papers, you must pick up your paper in my office, 237 Lytle Hall.
- You should be prepared for each class. This includes **completing all the reading and writing assignments** due on that day. **Reading is NOT optional.** Active reading entails taking notes on the reading, reflecting on the reading, and coming to class prepared to have something to say about what you have read. If I notice that people are coming to class without reading, I will begin giving quizzes at the beginning of each class.

- Turn off or set to silent all cell phones prior to class.
- Respect your classmates.

Special needs:

If you have any special needs including physical or mental disabilities, please let me know and contact the Disabilities Services located in the Office of Human Diversity, Room 115 in the Stratton Administration Building. We will make any necessary accommodations. To get further information about Disability Services visit their website at:

<http://www.kutztown.edu/admin/humandiversity/disabilityservices/>

Special Note on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. Plagiarizing one of your papers or a significant portion of one of your papers will result in **failure of the course**. In addition to failing the course, I will notify the University of the violation. If you have not already, please review the University's Academic Dishonesty policy at the following web address: <http://www.kutztown.edu/admin/conduct/>. The university subscribes to an anti-plagiarism service for checking student papers against material posted on the Internet—this includes websites that require payment to download papers.

Academic Dishonesty as defined in the student handbook, *The Key*.

Definitions of Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty involves any attempt to obtain academic credit or influence the grading process by means unauthorized by the course instructor. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to the following situations and examples.

1. Providing or receiving unauthorized assistance in course work and lab work, or unauthorized assistance during examinations or quizzes.
2. Using unauthorized notes, materials, and devices during examinations or quizzes.
3. Plagiarizing the work of others and presenting it as one's own without properly acknowledging the source or sources. At its worst extreme, plagiarism is exact copying, but it is also the inclusion of a paraphrased version of the opinions and work of others without giving credit. It is not limited to written materials. It includes the wrongful appropriation in whole or in part of someone else's literary, artistic, musical, mechanical, or computer-based work.
4. Presenting material to fulfill course requirements that was researched or prepared by others (such as commercial services) without the knowledge of the instructor.
5. Falsifying or inventing data to be presented as part of an academic endeavor.
6. Gaining unauthorized access to another person's or the University's computer system. Violations include tampering with or copying programs or data or access codes associated with coursework.
7. Possessing or arranging for someone else to possess course examination or quiz materials at any time without the consent of the instructor.
8. Altering or adding answers on exercises, exams, or quizzes after the work has been graded.
9. Making fraudulent statements, excuses, or claims to gain academic credit or influence testing or grading.
10. Taking examinations or quizzes for someone else or arranging to have someone take examinations or quizzes in place of the person registered for the course.

Course Calendar

Tue 1/11

Introductions and explanation of course.

Handout: Syllabus and Reading for Thursday

Thurs 1/13**Read:**

- Kuypers and King, "What is Rhetoric?" (Handout)

Tue 1/18**Read:**

- Angus, "Introduction" and "What is Democratic Debate?," pp. 9-37

**Thurs 1/20 *NO CLASS—FOLLOW MONDAY SCHEDULE
(CALENDAR ADJUSTMENT DAY)*****Tue 1/25****Read:**

- Angus, "Democracy has Always been a Radical Idea" and "Always Beginning Again," pp. 39-69

Thurs 1/27**Read:**

- Angus, "Emergent Publics," 71-86

Due: 1-2 page response paper to Ian Angus, *Emergent Publics*. *While response papers are more informal than the major papers you will write in this class, you should respond closely to the arguments and claims raised in Angus's text. Keep in mind that you will be using this text as one of your sources for the first paper. It is to your benefit if you use the response paper as part of the process of writing your first paper.*

Tue 2/1**Read:**

- Bernays, "Manipulating Public Opinion: The Why and the How (1928)" (eReserve)
- Lippmann, "The Disenchanted Man (1925)" (eReserve).

Thurs 2/3

Read:

- Snow, "Truth and Consequences" (eReserve)
- Snow, "Bermuda Mind Triangle" (eReserve)

Tue 2/8

Read:

- Lakoff, "Framing 101: How to Take Back Public Discourse" (eReserve)

Thurs 2/10

Due: Draft of Paper #1

Tue 2/15 No Class—Sign up for a Conference

In lieu of our class meeting today, we will have individual conferences to discuss your first draft of Paper #1. Come prepared to discuss your rhetorical strategies, your argument, and any questions you may have. You should bring the course readings and any notes you have with you in case we will need to consult them.

My Conference Time: _____ **in Lytle 237**

Thurs 2/17

Strategies for Revision, Citation, and Effectiveness

Tue 2/22

Paper #1 Due: Presentation of Selected Papers

Thurs 2/24

Read:

- Glassner, "Introduction: Why Americans Fear the Wrong Things," pp. *xi-xxviii*

Tue 3/1

Read:

- Glassner, "Dubious Dangers on Roadways and Campuses" and "Crime in the News," pp. 3-49

Thurs 3/3 *SPRING BREAK BEGINS AT 6PM—CLASS WILL BE HELD*

Read:

- Glassner, “Monster Moms” and “Black Men,” pp. 87-127

Due: Response Paper to Barry Glassner, The Culture of Fear (what we have read so far).

Tue 3/8 & Thurs 3/10—*NO CLASSES—SPRING BREAK!!!*

Tue 3/15

Read:

- Glassner, “Metaphoric Illness,” pp. 153-179
- Glassner, “Final Thoughts,” pp. 205-210

Thurs 3/17

Workshop on “Archive of Fear” project

Fri 3/18—*LAST DAY TO MAKE UP INCOMPLETES FROM FALL 2004*

Tue 3/22

Due: Archive of Fear: Use of Fear as Rhetorical Strategy in American Culture

Thurs 3/24

Read:

- Klein, “Introduction: A Web of Brands,” pp. xv-xxiii

Tue 3/29

Read:

- Klein, “New Branded World” and “The Brand Expands,” pp. 3-61

Thurs 3/31

Read:

- Klein, “Alt.Everything,” pp. 63-85

Tue 4/5

Read:

- Klein, "The Branding of Learning" and "Patriarchy Gets Funky," pp. 87-124

Thurs 4/7

Read:

- Klein, "Breeding Disloyalty," pp. 259-275

Due: Response Paper to Klein, No Logo (what we have read so far)

Tue 4/12 NO CLASS—SPRING RECESS

Thurs 4/14

Read:

- Klein, "Reclaim the Streets" and "Bad Moon Rising," pp. 311-343
- Klein, "Consumerism Versus Citizenship" and "Afterword," pp. 439-458

Tue 4/19

Presentation of paper proposals

Due: Draft of Paper #3

Thurs 4/21

TBA

Tue 4/26

TBA

Thurs 4/28 LAST DAY OF CLASS

Due: Paper #3

FINAL EXAM WEEK—5/2-5/6

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!!