ENGL 101002, First Year Writing: Writing Popular Culture  
Summer Session II: June 22 – July 31, 2015; 3 Credits

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Office hours:  
Course Time: MW 8:15-11:30 a.m.  
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Boston College Mission Statement
Strengthened by more than a century and a half of dedication to academic excellence, Boston College commits itself to the highest standards of teaching and research in undergraduate, graduate and professional programs and to the pursuit of a just society through its own accomplishments, the work of its faculty and staff, and the achievements of its graduates. It seeks both to advance its place among the nation’s finest universities and to bring to the company of its distinguished peers and to contemporary society the richness of the Catholic intellectual ideal of a mutually illuminating relationship between religious faith and free intellectual inquiry.

Boston College draws inspiration for its academic societal mission from its distinctive religious tradition. As a Catholic and Jesuit university, it is rooted in a world view that encounters spirituality in all creation and through all human activity, especially in the search for truth in every discipline, in the desire to learn, and in the call to live justly together. In this spirit, the University regards the contribution of different religious traditions and value systems as essential to the fullness of its intellectual life and to the continuous development of its distinctive intellectual heritage.

Course Description
What does it mean to “write” popular culture? What does “popular” mean and what is popular culture? How does popular writing differ from popular culture and what forms can it take? In this course, we’ll explore various ways to answer these and related questions by looking at a number of kinds of writing that deal in someway with the popular. Through these readings, not only will you gain a better grasp of and appreciation for popular writing, but you will also strengthen your own writing. In addition to our readings, in class we will cover writing style, composition issues, and grammar.

Course Objectives
Students will:
1. Develop creative capacity: Though this is a writing course, it will ask you to think about analysis creatively and imagine new ways of writing and reading, especially in context of writing form. Creativity is a crucial element to not only composition and rhetoric, but high level thinking and work in any field. Your written and oral work for our course will reflect the creativity you nurture by expressing original ideas supported by unique and out of the box insights into our course texts. My commentary on your work will take your use of original and creative ideas into consideration.
2. Gain a broader understanding and appreciation of writing and writing as a process: This course will introduce you to a variety of narratives that will help deepen your awareness of composition and rhetoric. In addition, our discussions and your written work will ask you to turn that awareness into active thinking that grapples with our course inquiries. The drafting
and revision you do of your work for this course will help you develop a writing process that works on improving your work through steady progress rethinking and reevaluating your ideas and words. You will be measured on how well you implement these skills and execute the writing process through my assessment of multiple drafts and in class workshops.

3. Demonstrate knowledge of writing and skill in writing across cultural settings: The texts in our course will, in sum, help you explore and learn about the impact of culture, gender, and age in narrative. Our course texts will also provide models for your own writing. In your work for this course, you will reflect this knowledge by meditating on the cultures and cultural differences we cover in this course. How well you bring that knowledge to your writing will be measured by your willingness to grapple with these ideas in your papers and class discussion.

4. Demonstrate ethical knowledge pertaining to the topics covered in our course texts: At the heart of every great piece of writing is an ethical story or a set of ethics; our responsibility to one another demands we study the humanities with an eye on these stories and what they mean. Your work for this course will attend to these ethics by writing and thinking about their implications in the context of your assignments and our class discussions, which I will gauge by the attention you pay to how ethics play a role in the texts we discuss and your own arguments.

5. Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view: Through our course texts, discussions, and online and written work, you will learn the basic rubrics of composition and rhetoric and how to apply them productively to your own analysis. Your writing and contribution to discussion in our class will be measured by how well you can critically interrogate different points of view using references to outside sources and developing critical arguments with strong examples and support.

Grading
Every student is expected to attend class regularly, actively participate in class, complete required readings and projects on time, and respectfully engage with other students. Based on these requirements, grade breakdown is as follows:

Attendance and participation (20%)
Short responses (10% each, for a total of 40%)
Midterm and final (15% each, for a total of 30%)
Contribution to our class wiki (10%).

Late short assignments are not accepted; late papers lose a third of a letter grade each day late (for instance, an A would become an A-) and are not accepted after a week.

WCAS Grading System
The undergraduate grading system consists of twelve categories: A (4.00), A- (3.67), excellent; B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.67), good; C+ (2.33), C (2.00), C- (1.67), satisfactory; D+ (1.33), D (1.00), D- (.67), passing but unsatisfactory; F (.00), failure; I (.00), incomplete; F (.00), course dropped without notifying office; W (.00), official withdrawal from course.

Grade Reports
All students are required to log into the web through Agora to access their semester grades. Students must utilize their BC username and password to log on. If you don’t know your username or password, the HELP Desk located in the Campus Technology Resource Center (CTRC) in O’Neill Library will issue you a new one. The CTRC requires a valid picture ID (a BC ID, driver’s license or passport) to obtain your password.
Texts/Readings/Sources/Media

Required

Recommended
Serial (podcast)
TedTalks (online media & podcast)
ThugNotes (youtube channel)
Vsauce (youtube channel)
David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky, Ways of Reading
John Berger, Ways of Seeing
Augusten Burroughs, Dry
Donald McQuade and Robert Atwan, The Writer’s Presence
Virginia Postrel, The Substance of Style
Oliver Sacks, The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat
John Storey, Inventing Popular Culture
Marcia Stubbs and Sylvan Barnet, The Little, Brown Reader, 12th ed.

Course Schedule
(schedule may change as desirable or necessary; readings and assignments listed on date due)
M June 22 – short readings in class
W June 24 – David Grazian, Mix it Up; response
M June 29 – David Foster Wallace, A Supposedly Fun Thing I’ll Never Do Again; selection from Joseph Harris, Rewriting
W July 1 – Malcolm Gladwell, The Tipping Point; response
M July 6 – Joan Didion, The Year of Magical Thinking; selection from Joseph Harris, Rewriting,
W July 8 – Haruki Murakami, Underground
M July 13 – Steven D Levitt, Freakonomics, midterm
M July 20 – Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction*, selection from Joseph Harris, *Rewriting*
W July 22 – Chuck Klosterman, *Eating the Dinosaur*, response
M July 27 – Neil deGrasse Tyson, *Space Chronicles*, selection from Joseph Harris, *Rewriting*
W July 29 – Marisa Acocella Marchetto, *Cancer Vixen*, final

**Course Assignments** (readings, exercises and/or experiences)

*Expectations*
Readings and media should be reviewed, as well as annotated and/or analyzed, prior to the class during which they are to be discussed. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the specified dates. Late assignments will be graded accordingly (see above on grading) and if you skip reviewing the material for class, it will be apparent and will negatively affect your grade.

*Short Responses:* During the semester, you will write 4 short responses of 2 pages each that comment on one or more of the readings that we have completed; these cannot be made up if missed. In these, you must connect the work(s) you choose to composition and rhetoric techniques we have covered in class; linking two or more readings is a very good tactic. These are meant to be analytic papers that look closely at a theme or motif of class reflected in the reading(s) you choose. A specific form for each response will be assigned and discussed in class, as well as posted on our course website.

*Wiki:* After each class, you are expected to visit our wiki classroom page at [https://fwswritingpopularculture.wikispaces.com/](https://fwswritingpopularculture.wikispaces.com/) and do one of the following: post a meaningful and thoughtful post on our Discussion Page (at least one in depth paragraph on the day's work) and respond to at least one other student; contribute to one of our Pages with at least a paragraph of text and one link, uploaded feature, or outside reference and an explanation of whichever you chose and how it relates to our class; upload at least 3 files, along with a short explanation of the file and why they are relevant to our class; or create your own page with at least 3 links and/or files and a brief explanations of each.

*Midterm & Final:* Your midterm and final are extended close readings of one of the texts we read for the course (of your choosing). As in the short responses, you are expected to have an argument that you support through close readings germane to your argument; you are additionally expected to find and use two outside sources in each paper. These can come from the “Recommended Reading” list on this syllabus or found through the MLA Bibliography or any other academic resource. The midterm is to be 4-6 pages; the final 8-10 pages.

*Work Ethic:* It is expected that 8 hours per week of your study time out will be spent on class assignments, readings, and exercises as listed. Please note that some weeks will require more time and some weeks less time, but the average is approximately 8 hours per week over the semester. Because much of this time will be on reading that is tightly packed in the semester, I recommend you begin reading each text, especially those assigned close to another text, early. Through those 8 hours of work, as well as work on our class wiki, you will maximize your 4 credit hours required of this class. Without completing one of these components, you will miss out on the benefits of learning in a dense academic environment.
Important Policies
see: http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/advstudies/guide/academicinteg.html

Written Work
Graduate and undergraduate students are expected to prepare professional, polished written work. Written materials must be typed in the format required by your instructor. Strive for a thorough, yet concise style. Cite literature appropriately using MLA format. Develop your thoughts fully, clearly, logically and specifically. Proofread all materials to ensure the use of proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. You are encouraged to make use of campus resources for refining writing skills as needed [http://www.bc.edu/libraries/help/tutoring.html].

Scholarship and Academic Integrity
It is expected that students will produce original work and cite references appropriately. Failure to reference properly is plagiarism. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, cheating on examinations or assignments, and submitting the same paper or substantially similar papers to meet the requirements of more than one course without seeking permission of all instructors concerned. Scholastic misconduct may involve, but is not limited to, acts that violate the rights of other students, such as depriving another student of course materials or interfering with another student’s work, or acts that interrupt the course.

Request for Accommodations
If you have a disability and will be requesting accommodations for this course, please register with either Dr. Kathy Duggan (dugganka@bc.edu), Associate Director, Connors Family Learning Center (learning disabilities or AHD) or Dean Paulette Durrett, (paulette.durrett@bc.edu), Assistant Dean for students with disabilities, (all other disabilities). Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations. For further information, you can locate the disability resources on the web at http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/libraries/help/tutoring/specialservices.html.

Attendance & Participation
Class attendance and participation are important components of learning. Students are expected to attend all classes, arrive by the beginning of and remain for the entire class period, and actively participate in discussion. If you fail to actively participate in group work or discussion, that choice will negatively affect your grade. When an occasion occurs that prevents a student from attending class, it is the student’s obligation to inform the instructor of the conflict before the class meets. The student is still expected to meet all assignment deadlines. If a student knows that he or she will be absent on a particular day, the student is responsible for seeing the instructor beforehand to obtain the assignments for that day. If a student misses a class, he or she is responsible for making up the work by obtaining a classmate’s notes and handouts and turning in any assignments due. I permit 1 excused absence, barring extenuating circumstances of which I am made aware. If circumstances necessitate excessive absence from class, the student should consider withdrawing from the class. If you are absent more than once, your attendance and participation grade will be deducted 2% for each absence.
Consistent with our commitment of creating an academic community that is respectful of and welcoming to persons of differing backgrounds, we believe that every reasonable effort should be made to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without jeopardizing the fulfillment of their academic obligations. It is the responsibility of students to review course syllabi as soon as they are distributed and to consult the faculty member promptly regarding any possible conflicts with observed religious holidays. If asked, the student should provide accurate information about the obligations entailed in the observance of that particular holiday. However, it is the responsibility of the student to complete any and all class requirements for days that are missed due to conflicts due to religious holidays.