

SYLLABUS
Interpretation and Argument

76-101 Section 0
MWF 12:30-1:20
WEH 6423 / dh 2122
Instructor: Susan Swan
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Office Hours: Monday 10-12 and by appointment
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Books/Reading materials

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Continuum, 1989.

Swan, Susan. *Clouds of Undiscussability*. Unpublished manuscript.

Slack, Jennifer Daryl. "The theory and method of articulation in cultural studies." *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. Ed. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen. London: Routledge, 1996. 112-130.

Course Objective:

This course in freshman composition is meant to help students understand work: to know it as a part of themselves personally, familialy, culturally, historically, and locally. Students must also be able to produce a rhetorical artifact about work which has the possibility of changing local conditions for the better (even in small ways). Furthermore, the course is centered on doing this inquiry both *critically* and *rhetorically* -- that is -- to be able to strategically use language both individually and collaboratively in a situated encounter with reality -- an encounter which could viably change the specific situation they are studying. Moreover, because I believe that no social justice is possible without input from those living in unjust situations, the course includes as part of the curriculum the expertise of community members actually working in the food service industry.

Attendance:

Attendance in this course is mandatory. Three unexcused absences are allowed; after this, 10 point will be subtracted from your total final points for each day missed. 25 points will be subtracted if you miss a day when we are doing group work.

Assignments:

There are several ungraded assignments (see syllabus). Although these are not graded, each undone assignment will result in 10 points taken from the final grade.

Graded assignments count towards your final grade as follows:

Three generation work history: 100 points
Observation paper: 100 points
Contribution paper: 200 points

August 28 M First day of class.
Assignment: write a personal work biography: how have you worked in your life so far?

- August 30 W Work biography due. We will discuss and map our work experience as a class. How do we represent work? What types of work do we as a class NOT represent? How are we defining work?
Assignment: Read *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, chapter 1, until you can no longer understand it. Please bring in the book with confusing terms/ ideas circled.
- September 1 F Discussion of Chapter 1.
Assignment: finish Chapter 1.
Assignment: take one term or idea from Chapter 1, and write a short (1 page) essay about how this term or idea has happened in your personal life.
- September 4 M Labor Day; No Classes
- September 6 W Finish Discussion of Chapter 1
Assignment: Read Chapter 2
- September 8 F Discussion of Chapter 2
Assignment: each student will be assigned a particular term or idea from the first two chapters. Please bring in a definition of each term or idea, along with a personal anecdote serving as a "real life" example.
- September 11 M THE CHAIR EXERCISE -- PLEASE COME TO CLASS ON THIS DAY.
- September 13 W Discussion of writings.
Assignment: Watch a TV program -- any program -- and write a 1 page essay about how the show represented work.
- September 15 F Discussion of TV assignment.
Major Paper #1: Three generation family work history (see handout). Due date: September 27.
Assignment: Chapter 3
- September 18 M Discussion of Chapter 3
Assignment: Chapter 4
- September 20 W Discussion of Chapter 4
Assignment: each student will be assigned a particular term or idea from the last two chapters. Please bring in a definition of each term or idea, along with a personal anecdote serving as a "real life" example.
- September 22 F Discussion of assignment. Introduction to articulation theory.
Assignment: Read Slack's article on articulation theory, to be handed out in class.
Assignment: Bring a print ad from a newspaper or magazine into class.
- September 25 M Discussion of articulation theory. We will break into groups to "articulate" the print ads we brought in.
- September 27 W No class, conferences. Conferences are mandatory.
- September 29 F Three generation paper due.
 Presentation of ad articulations
Assignment: Read *Clouds of Undiscussability*
- October 2 M Discuss reading.
Assignment: Find a corporate WWW page (like www.adiamondisforever.com) and write a one page essay about how the page represents work. Then draw an articulation map of the page.

- October 4 W Discuss assignment.
Group work: write a skit about two of the issues in *Clouds of Undiscussability* or in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
- October 6 F Perform the skits.
Major Paper 2: work observation (see handout) due October 30
- October 9 M Film: *Good Will Hunting*
- October 11 W Film: *Good Will Hunting*
Assignment: Draw a very detailed articulation map of how work was represented in the film. Pay particular attention to any issues discussed in our readings.
- October 13 F Discuss film.
Assignment: Find a song that speaks about work. Write down its lyrics, draw an articulation map of the song, and bring a recording of it into class (if you can).
- October 16 M Discuss film.
Question and Answer session about Paper #2
- October 18 W Boring Grammar day
- October 20 (F) Mid-Semester Break; No Classes
- October 23 (M) Mid-Semester Break; No Classes
- October 25 W Human Grammar Olympics
- October 27 F No class: conferences.
- October 30 M Major Paper #2 due.
What is a Community Problem Solving Dialogue?
Assignment: Read the Rivaling handout.
Assignment: Bring in a problem you are currently having in your life. Be prepared to discuss it in class.
- November 1 W Discuss personal issues using CPSD strategies.
Assignment: Obtain rival readings and SBS from people around you -- your family and friends -- about the problem you are having. Bring in to class a short essay about the problem, how the CPSD did or did not help you, and at least 3 Options and Outcomes for the problem.
- November 3 F Discussion: Options and Outcomes.
Begin discussion: Writing and Social Justice. How does what we do in class have anything to do with being good writers?
Assignment: Bring in a brochure with the top 5 suggestions for being a socially just writer.
- November 6 M Role Play Day: Half of you will be assigned jobs in the food service industry, the other half of you will be interviewers. Your job is to perform a mock interview, using the CPSD strategies, in order to find rivals to some of the ideas from our readings. Halfway through the class we will switch place.
- November 8 W Work Skits. We will break into small groups, and each group will compose two skits. The first skit will show a negative work situation -- take your ideas from the readings and your observation papers. The second skit will show how you fixed that situation. The class will be asked to evaluate your solution after you are done.

November 10 F Continue working on your skits.

November 13 M Skit Day.

November 15 W *Assignment: Interview and Final Paper* (see handout).
Assignment: brochure for new employees at McDonalds with your top five recommendations for being a successful worker.

November 17 F Discuss brochures.
Assignment: brochure for management at McDonalds with your top five recommendations for being a successful manager.

November 20 M Discussion: what could make a difference in Pittsburgh's food service industry?
Assignment: find a news or magazine article that talks about work (you can look on the Web as well). Bring in an articulation map for that article. Try to find 15 levels of articulation.

November 22-24 (W-F) Thanksgiving Holiday; No Classes

November 27 M Discuss assignment.

November 29 W Interviews must be completed by today. Bring in your interview data, and we will discuss your findings, and go over some possible paper topics.

December 1 F ARTICULATION QUIZ -- EVERYONE MUST COME TO CLASS TODAY

December 4 M Paper Discussion Day -- everyone must bring in a proposal for their final paper.

December 6 W Continue to discuss final papers.

December 8 F Course overview: if you could rewrite this course, what would you change? What would you keep? What did you love/hate? What was your favorite assignment? Your least favorite?

December 11 M Last Day of Class/Party!