COURSE TITLE: Writing as Discourse, Reflection and Reasoning: the Essay

COURSE CODE: ESPE 3038

HOURS/CREDITS: 45 hours/3 credits

PRE-REQUISITES: Basic English or its equivalent

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Using the Writing Process Approach (WPA), this course takes a critical look at dominant discourses, those uses and practices of language that hold ideological leadership and powerfully influence our perception of reality. The purpose of this analysis is to unmask the relationship between language, cognition and social practice. It is an interdisciplinary course that integrates literature, linguistics, cognitive sciences and other disciplines in order to pursue discourse analysis. The WPA leads students to reflect upon writing as a process of refining thinking through conscious awareness of the social discourses underlying their language practices. Students will be required to document all sources used (print and electronic) that are cited in their papers.

COURSE DESCRIPTION (SPANISH)
Usando el método de redacción como proceso (Writing as a Process Approach, WPA en inglés), este curso se acerca criticamente a los discursos dominantes, los usos del lenguaje y prácticas que gozan de liderato ideológico y constituyen poderosos factores en la construcción de la realidad, con el propósito de descubrir la relación entre lenguaje, pensamiento y prácticas sociales. Es un curso interdisciplinario que integra la literatura, la lingüística, las ciencias cognoscitivas y otras áreas del saber para problematizar el discurso; Los estudiantes reflexionarán sobre cómo la redacción los ayuda a refinar sus pensamientos a través del análisis de sus trabajos escritos.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES:

At the end of the course, students will write academic essays which demonstrate:

1. an awareness of the effects of dominant discourses and their power to maintain, perpetuate or challenge the status quo
2. an appreciation of the WPA as a means to construct, refine and share knowledge
3. the conviction that editing and rewriting are processes that require reflection which in tum leads to more critical and rigorous thinking
4. their ability to produce coherent and critical interdisciplinary essays on a work in their area of which sheds light on how these discourses function to reproduce or challenge dominant discourses that perpetuate inequality
5. their ability to interrogate received ideas and determine which help or hinder social justice
6. ability to foster the inclusion of classmates with disabilities
7. demonstrate their capacity to efficiently search for information and effectively and ethically use and manage information.
EXAMPLE OUTLINE AND TIME DISTRIBUTION:

Each professor will choose the particular discourse to be examined (e.g. family, school, gender, etc). Although the conceptual threads are intricately woven together, the professor will focus on teasing them apart through a critical look at the basic concepts and language that constitute the discourse. The following example focuses on the discourses of education. The same can be done with the discourses of race, gender, social class, the criminalization of the poor, etc. The purpose is to help students understand how their “reality” is constructed in social discourses (the language practices that construct knowledge) and is perpetuated through social institutions.

1. Language and cognition

A. Narrating/writing our personal worlds
B. Language, culture and power: What are naturalized concepts?
C. Cognitive sciences: Discourse and perception
D. Experience and memory
E. Discourse and the cognitive unconscious

E. Education’: What are common education metaphors? What do they mean?

   a. Education metaphors and lived experience
   b. Manufacturing consent
   c. Narrating/writing experience
   d. The academic essay on education: experience vs. official discourse

F. Discourse analysis: Do the texts challenge or reproduce of dominant discourses?

   a. Readings and analysis of fictional accounts of schooling
   b. Writing: constructing alternate worlds

The students will be instructed in and practice the WPA in units I, II and III. These constitute preparatory writing. The skills and analytical frame will be applied to a text (essay or fiction) connected to their area of interest. Therefore, they will work independently in the workshop in Unit IV and periodically give brief oral reports on their progress.

G. WPA writing workshop

   a. Essay structure and outline
   b. The central question
   c. Producing ideas: brainstorming, graphic organizers

‘By the same token, the focus could be the discourse of “criminalization” to analyze the metaphors employed to criminalize and naturalize the criminalization of the poor and construct social consensus on the need for tough crime fighting measures in these communities. An analysis of these discourses, images of the poor and their relation to law and order could demonstrate how these serve as the foundations for popular support of political repression.'
d. Sharing the first draft  

e. Revising, editing and proofreading  
   1. meaningful content  
   2. choice through grammar  
   3. academic and writing conventions  
   4. documentation skills for print and electronic sources (MLA or APA style).

f. Final essay

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES:

   a. Brief explanations/lectures  
   b. Critical readings that are nested to progressively improve critical analysis  
   c. Guided discussion  
   d. Oral collaboration/sharing  
   e. Peer evaluation  
   f. Individual conferencing on written work

LEARNING RESOURCES:

Classroom and board  
Upprp.edu data bases  
Electronic platform for communication

EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Attendance and participation 10%  
Unit I writing 20%  
Unit II writing 20%  
Oral collaboration/sharing 20%  
Critical essay in area of major 30%

Total 100%

GRADING SYSTEM:

A = 90 to 100 points  
B = 80 to 89  
C = 70 to 79  
D = 60 to 69  
F = 0 to 59

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In accordance with the recommendations of the Dean of Students’ Office (Division of Persons with Disabilities), students who are clients of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester in order to make arrangements for reasonable accommodations and for any necessary auxiliary equipment. Other students with special needs who require any kind of assistance or reasonable accommodations should also contact the professor.

ELECTRONIC REFERENCES:

http://biblioteca.uprrp.edu
SUGGESTED TEXTS:

The fiction and essays used in this course will vary according to the type of discourse chosen for analysis. For example, for the discourses of education, the following novels may be used: Erna Brodber, Myal; Charles Dickens Hard Times; Patrick Chamoiseau, School Days. The following plays may also be used in the discourse of gender: Neil LaBute’s The Shape of Things, Medea Redux, Iphigenia in Orem, A Gaggle of Saints and August Strindberg’s The Creditors. The following short stories may also be used: Kate Chopin’s “The Story of An Hour,” Joyce Carol Oates’s “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been,” Nathaniel Hawthorne's “The Birthmark,” Junot Diaz’s “Drown,” and J. D. Salinger’s “A Perfect Day for Bananafish.”


BIBLIOGRAPHY:


Mukherjee, Arun P. “Ideology in the Classroom: A Case Study in the Teaching of English Literature in


