

UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO RIO
PIEDRAS CAMPUS
COLLEGE OF GENERAL STUDIES
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

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

COURSE CODE: ESGE 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 críticamente a los discursos dominantes, los usos del lenguaje y prácticas que gozan de liderazgo 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 turn 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 10hrs.
 - 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? 10 hrs
 - 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? 10 hrs.
 - a. Readings and analysis of fictional accounts of schooling
 - b. Writing: constructing alternate worlds

- G. WPA writing workshop 15 hrs
 - 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
 Uprrp.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

Law 51

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>

<http://www.discourses.org>
<http://www.discourses-analysis.de>
une.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/transitions.html
kcmetro.cc.mo.us/maplewoods/writeplace/conclusions.html
paragraphpunch.com
tendenciaspr.com
umbral.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."

Booth, Wayne C. and Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams. The Craft of Research. 2/e. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1995.

Fernstein, Linda A. "Writer Identity and ESL Learners: Critical Discourse Analysis Provides a Way to Study Power Relations and the Embedded Ideologies that Shape How Second Language Students Come to Understand Who They are as Writers." Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy 52, 1 (2008):44-56

Lakoff, George. Don't Think of an Elephant. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green, 2004.

McClanahan, Lauren G. "Practicing What We Preach: Using Reflective Writing as an Indicator of Learning." Studying Teacher Education 4,2 (2008).

Schnitzer, Marc and Mark Pedreira. "A neuropsychological theory of metaphor". Language Sciences 27 (2005):31-49

Turner, Mark. Cognitive Dimensions of Social Sciences. NY: Oxford UP, 2001.

Willis, Paul. Learning to Labour: How working class kids get working class jobs. Hants, England: Ashgate, 1997.

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- and Phil Graham, Jay Lemke, Ruth Wodak (eds. Critical Discourse Studies 1 (2004) + subsequent issues. Federici, Silvia. Enduring Western Civilization: The Construction of Western Civilization and its "Others". Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995.
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- Graham, Linda J. "Speaking of 'Disorderly' Objects: A Poetics of Pedagogical Discourse." Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education 28, 1 (2007):1-20
- hooks, bell. Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenges to Western Thought. New York: Basic, 1999.
- and Mark Turner. More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor. U of Chicago P, 1989.
- Liasidou, Anastasia. "Critical Discourse Analysis and Inclusive Educational Policies: The Power to Exclude." Journal of Education Policy 23, 5 (2008):
- McClanahan, Lauren G. "Practicing What We Preach: Using Reflective Writing as an Indicator of Learning." Studying Teacher Education 4,2 (2008).
- Michael-Luna, Sara. "Todos Somos Blancos / We are All White: Constructing Racial Identities Through Texts." Journal of Language, Identity and Education. 7,3/4 (2008):272-293.
- Miller, Charles William. "Post-colonial Educational Practices and the Problem of Epistemic Authority: Review of Rethinking Indigenous Education: Culturalism, Colonialism and the Politics of Knowing. By Cathryn McConaghy. Joverit 5 (Summer 2001)
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Canadian Universities” The PostColonial Studies Reader. Eds. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. London:Routledge, 1995.

Musprat, Sandy, Allan Luke and Peter Freebody (eds). Constructing Critical Literacies: Teaching and Learning Textual Practices. Cresskill, NH: Hampton, 1997.

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Roy, Arundhati. Power Politics. Cambridge, MA: South End, 2001.

Scalfani, Jennifer. “The Intertextual Origins of Public Opinion: Constructing Ebonics in The New York Times.” Discourse and Society 19,4 (2008): 507

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Van Dijk, Teun A. Elite Discourse and Racism. London: Sage, 1993.

Van Goor, Roel and Frieda Heyting. “Negotiating the World: Some Philosophical Considerations on Dealing with Differential Academic Language Proficiency in Schools. Educational Philosophy and Theory 40,5 (2008): 652-665.