**ENGLISH 1000: ARGUMENT AND EXPOSITION**

**Summer 2016 | MTWRF 11:00 – 12:00 | Strickland 315**

**Contact Information**

Instructor: Eric Scott

Office: Tate 004

Office Hours: 10:00 – 10:50 MWF

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**Course Description**

When we think of “a writer,” what image comes to mind? A solitary figure hunched over a desk, pecking out words on a typewriter or a laptop? The work of writing seems to be an individual effort, the work of a single person who transforms the thoughts in her head into words on the page. This image, however, is little more than a myth, for all writers participate in a lineage of writing that stretches both into the past and future. Writers draw upon those who came before them, responding to the ideas previous authors set forth in their work, expanding and challenging those ideas to create new works that will, in time, be the basis for responses from the next generation of writers.

In this course, we will be framing our efforts to improve our own argumentative writing by examining one particular tradition of essays. James Baldwin’s 1963 book *The Fire Next Time* set the intellectual tone for much of the Civil Rights Movement throughout the 1960s. Baldwin’s examination of race in America – and the varied responses to the problem of white racism, including the black nationalism of the Nation of Islam – made him one of the foremost intellectuals in American letters, and influenced the writing and politics of scores of other writers of his period. In the modern era, with a renewed national conversation about race focused on issues of discriminatory policing, Baldwin’s essays have been taken up by a new generation of black writers, who have updated his thoughts to reflect the present day – sometimes by challenging the very foundations of Baldwin’s ideas.

We will examine this tradition of writing in order to work on our own essays. In the process, we will learn how to effectively work with sources, make clear arguments that build on evidence, and create work that is both argumentatively sound and stylistically pleasing.

**Course Goals**

•Improve your ability to think critically and write in thoughtful, clear, and probing ways.

•Learn to analyze texts and communicate that analysis in a compelling manner.

•Use writing to participate in conversations throughout the academic and social world.

**Required Texts**

* Cathy Birkenstein and Gerald Graff, *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing,* New York: WW Norton, 2014. ISBN 978-0393933611.
* James Baldwin, *Collected Essays,* New York: Library of America, 1998. ISBN 978-1883011529.
* Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me,* New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015. ISBN 978-0812993547.
* *The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks About Race,* ed. Jesmyn Ward, New York: Scribner, 2016. ISBN 978-1501126345.

**Grading and Evaluation**

This course will be graded under a method called *contract grading.* The premise is simple: at the beginning of the course, you will sign a contract, which is attached to this syllabus. The contract explains all of the course requirements. If you fulfill those requirements, you are guaranteed a grade of B in the class. (Higher grades are given at the instructor's discretion to students who produce high-quality work and otherwise exceed the requirements.) If you fail to fulfill the requirements, you cannot receive a grade higher than B-.

The purpose of this system is to remove some of the stress from the writing process. If you think you are a "bad writer," don't worry: so long as you follow the guidelines in the contract, you will at least get a B. Conversely, if you are confident in your writing abilities, the contract means you can't just dazzle your way to an A – you will still need to fulfill the requirements. Even if you write flawless essays, if you miss 12 classes, you will not get an A in the course.

I am willing to consider amending the contract on a case-by-case basis, though I do not promise I will change the contract just to make your life easier.

**Plagiarism, Cheating, and Otherwise Being a Bad Sport**

Don't do it. Cite your sources. Own your opinions and analysis. The point of this class is to engage in conversations with one another and with the world around us. Plagiarism is considered an immediate breach of contract and is grounds for failure of the course.

**Diversity**

This class is meant to be a safe space for all students. I will make every effort to respect each student's preferred name, pronouns, and gender identity. Students should respect each other's identities; if another student's words or actions make you feel threatened or diminished, please let me know.

Much of the material in this class deals with race and gender relations in the United States. This can, and probably should, be uncomfortable material. (It certainly is for me!) Be respectful of other students and how their experiences may be different from yours, and try to be aware of how your own experiences may influence the arguments you make in class.

**University of Missouri Notice of Nondiscrimination**

The University of Missouri System is an Equal Opportunity/ Affirmative Action institution and is nondiscriminatory relative to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability or status as a Vietnam-era veteran. Any person having inquiries concerning the University of Missouri-Columbia's compliance with implementing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, or other civil rights laws should contact the Assistant Vice Chancellor, Human Resource Services, University of Missouri-Columbia, 130 Heinkel Building, Columbia, Mo. 65211, (573) 882-4256, or the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education

**ADA Statement**

If you need accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform me immediately. Please see me privately after class, or at my office (Tate 1, office hours TBD).

To request academic accommodations (for example, a note-taker), students must also register with the Office of Disability Services, (http://disabilityservices.missouri.edu), S5 Memorial Union, 882-4696. It is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students requesting academic accommodations, and for accommodations planning in cooperation with students and instructors, as needed and consistent with course requirements. For other MU resources for students with disabilities, click on “Disability Resources” on the MU homepage.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

*(Note: Schedule is subject to change based on the needs of the class.)*

6/5 - Introduction; the syllabus; the contract; the material.

6/6 - TSIS 1-49.

6/7 - TSIS 53-77.

6/8 - TSIS 78-104.

6/9 – Library Day.

6/12 - TSIS 105-128.

6/13 - TSIS 129-162.

6/14 - Baldwin, 11-18 (“Everybody’s Protest Novel”)

6/15 – Peer review.

DUE: First draft of essay #1.

6/16 – NO CLASS, but make your appointments.

6/19 – NO CLASS, but make your appointments.

6/20 – Baldwin 291-5 (“My Dungeon Shook”)

6/21 – Baldwin, 296 – 314 (“Down at the Cross,” part I).

6/22 – Baldwin 314 – 333 (“Down at the Cross,” part II)

6/23 – Baldwin 333 – 347 (“Down at the Cross,” part III)

DUE: Revision of essay #1.

6/26 – Special Collections visit.

6/27 - Ward TBD

6/28 – Ward TBD

6/29 – Ward TBD

6/30 – State Historical Society visit.

7/3 – Peer review.

DUE: First draft of essay #2.

7/4 - NO CLASS.

7/5 – NO CLASS, but make your appointments.

7/6 – NO CLASS, but make your appointments.

7/7 – Art museum visit.

7/10 – Introduction to Unit Three. Coates 1—39.

DUE: Revision of essay #2.

7/11 - Coates 39—71.

7/12 - Coates 73—91.

7/13 - Coates 92—132.

DUE: Group proposal.

7/14 - Coates 133-52.

7/17 – *I Am Not Your Negro* viewing.

7/18 – *I Am Not Your Negro* discussion.

DUE: Conference papers.

7/19 – Library day.

7/20 - NO CLASS, but make your group appointment.

7/21 – NO CLASS, but make your group appointment.

7/24 - Presentations

7/25 – Presentations

7/26 – Presentations

7/27 – Presentations

7/28 – Final thoughts.

DUE: Final portfolio.

**ENGLISH 1000 CONTRACT**

**Instructor: Eric Scott**

**MTWRF, 11:00 – 12:00, Strickland 315**

You are guaranteed a final letter grade of B in this course if you fulfill the following requirements. Final letter grades higher than B may be earned by completing all of this contract's requirements and by demonstrating superior skill, development, and/or contribution to the course, as determined by the instructor. (Suggestions for the standards of an A paper will be given for each assignment.) Should you fail to fulfill the requirements of this contract, your grade will be assessed according to how well you attempted to fulfill the requirements, as determined by the instructor; however, no grade above B- will be assigned to a student who fails to fulfill all terms of this contract.

•Miss no more than five class sessions. (Missing more than five may lead me to drop you from the course.)

•Regularly contribute to class discussion. You should be prepared to speak about the readings. I understand some students are less outgoing than others, but please make the attempt.

•Miss no more than one blog post over the course of the semester.

•Participate in class exercises in good faith, including peer review, discussion, and other collaborative tasks. Your peers learn as much or more from you as they do from me. Sleeping, playing with your phone, or talking about Greek life is not participating in good faith.

•Actively collaborate with the other students in your permanent groups. There will be a mid-semester feedback form to check in on this.

•Complete all major assignments by their due dates, including drafts and revisions.

•Show real effort in revising the major assignments. Don't just shuffle words around – experiment and stretch yourself. Be ready to make mistakes.

•Copy-edit your major assignments to ensure they match the conventions of formal, academic English.

•Attend all scheduled conferences.

•Participate in your scheduled panel discussion.

•Turn in your final portfolio on time, properly organized, with no missing work.

These criteria do no mention a qualitative judgment of your writing. If you follow these guidelines, you will get at least a B. The point is the process; if you engage in the writing and revision process with good intent, you will do well.

*Student's signature and date*

*Student's name (please print)*

*Instructor's signature and date*

*This contract has been modeled after the contract presented by Danielewicz and Elbow, "A Unilaterial Grading Contract to Improve Learning and Teaching," University of Massachusetts –Amherst, 2008.*