GSTR 110: Writing Seminar I: Critical Thinking in the Liberal Arts; Section H: You Are What You Eat
Monday and Friday, 12:00-12:50; Wednesday, 12:00-1:50. Frost, 8.
Eric Pearson; Office: Draper 204A; x-3588; home: 925-9687

Office Hours—I will fairly reliably be in my office and available to talk with students on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 until 11:00. If these times are not convenient for you, talk with me and we’ll arrange a time for a meeting; I am very flexible.

Course description—The College Catalog describes this course as follows:

This course is designed to help students with transitions from their past experiences to the challenges of college academic life and culture, also emphasizing writing, reasoning, and learning as foundations for continuing academic success in General Education and beyond. Each section of the course involves explicit, continuing attention to writing, research, and reflective engagement with various texts, written and non-written. All sections initially address with students questions about the nature of education, liberal arts, and links to lifelong learning and living. Offered in multiple sections each year.
Taken in the first term of the freshman year.

The description of this specific section is as follows:

You Are What You Eat—This section will address many question about food, including food’s scientific, medical, ethical, and aesthetic dimensions. We will read, write, and think carefully about such issues as the origins of domesticated plants and animals, the morality of killing and eating animals, and the difficult question of what makes some food better than other food.

Student learning outcomes—Successful students will learn:

1. To develop, compose, and complete college-level essays that are documented, that engage and use various kinds of texts, and that are expository (i.e., develop reasons, evidence, support for a thesis);
2. To identify and use properly some common modes of reasoning (e.g., analogy, argument), patterns of reasoning, and basic critical thinking concepts such as consistency, ambiguity and vagueness, and general criteria in thinking well about a variety of topics and texts;
3. To use the Hutchins Library facility and its resources, including the Library Home Page and library web resources;
4. To research, read, and evaluate a variety of sources, to assemble an appropriately diverse bibliography, and to appreciate [how] different types of sources can work together;
5. To understand how preparation, engaged attentiveness, reflection, and thinking with appropriate criteria leads to learning from experiences beyond the formal classroom.

Readings—Please purchase the following books:

Dinesen, Isak. “Babette’s Feast.” [Any English translation is acceptable.]


I will also occasionally ask you to print out reading material in PDF form located on the Moodle site for this class.

Grading—You are required to compose five essays of increasing length and complexity; they will be worth 20, 30, 40, 50, and 60 points respectively. Class participation will also be worth 50 points. “Class participation” means that you are in class on time, awake, alert, and exhibiting evidence that you have read and understood the reading assignment for each day of the term. Occasional unannounced quizzes will also contribute to the class participation component of the grade. A grade of between 90% and 100% of the 250 points will constitute an “A;” between 80% and 90% will constitute a “B;” between 70% and 80% will constitute a “C;” between 60% and 70% will constitute a “D;” less than 60% will constitute an “F.”

The quality of a student’s academic achievement in each Berea College course is reported through final course grades as follows:

A: Excellent work
B: Good work
C: Competent work (Please note that a C- does not count for sequenced courses requiring a C or better in a previous course (e.g. FRN 102 requires a C or better in FRN 101); a C- also falls below the standard of a C in order to be removed from Academic Probation.)
D: Poor work which is still worthy of credit (*Raises serious concern about the readiness of a student to continue in related course work.*)
F: Failing work which is unworthy of credit

In addition, the course grades A, B, C, and D may be modified by a plus (+) or minus (-) suffix, indicating achievement which is respectively at the higher of lower segment of each of these grade ranges.

Academic Honesty—We will address this topic explicitly in class, and I will enforce the policy as stated in the *Berea College Student Handbook:*

Students are expected to be *scrupulous* in their observance of high standards of honesty in regard to tests, assignments, term papers, and all other procedures relating to class work. Academic dishonesty as used here includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on examinations, theft of examinations or other materials from an instructor’s files or office or from a room in which these are being copied, copying of an instructor’s
test material without the permission of an instructor, theft of computer files from another person, or attributing to one’s self the work of others, with or without the other’s permission. Falsification of an academic record with intent to improve one’s academic standing shall also be considered to be academic dishonesty. (109)

Attendance policy—Prompt class attendance is required. There is no such thing as an “excused absence” in this class; you are either attending or you are not. Your attendance and tardiness record will be incorporated into the “class participation” grade as explained above.

Disability Statement-- Students who have a disability that may prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should contact the Disability Services Coordinator, Cindy Reed at (859) 985-3212, or e-mail cynthia_reed@berea.edu, to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation in this course. Upon request, this syllabus can be made available in alternative forms.

Electronic equipment—Except for explicitly selected days, no student’s electronic equipment will be allowed to be on in the classroom; this includes computers, telephones, personal stereo devices, and every other piece of electronic equipment.

Meeting dates and assignments:

August 27—Introduction
30—diagnostic writing exercise (bring computer, if desired)

September 1—read Edmundson
3—read Barnet and Bedau: pp. 15, 21, 25-37, 43
6—read Barnet and Bedau: pp. 45-61
8—read Barnet and Bedau: pp. 61-80
9—required convo—3:00
10—read Barnet and Bedau: 116-122, 131-132
13—read Cooper
15— paper #1 due; movie: Big Night
17—no class; individual meetings about paper #1
20—read Diamond; pp. 104-130
22—read Diamond; pp. 131-175
24—read Schlosser; pp.1-57
27—read Schlosser; pp. 59-107
29—paper #2 due; movie: Eat, Drink, Man, Woman

October 1—no class; individual meetings about paper #2
4—read Schlosser; pp.111-147
6—no class; Mountain Day
8—read Schlosser; pp. 149-190
11—no class; mid-term reading period
13—read Schlosser; pp. 193-252
15—read Schlosser; pp. 255-288
18—read Rachels
20—read Scruton
22—read Barnet and Bedau; pp. 133-148
25—read Barnet and Bedau; pp. 148-166
27—paper #3 due; trip to farm
29—read Thorne, #1

November 1—no class; individual meetings about paper #3
3—read Pollan; pp. 1-40
5—read Pollan; pp. 40-81
8—read Pollan; pp. 85-136
10—read Pollan; pp.139-161
12—read Pollan; pp. 161-201
15—read Babette’s Feast; sections I-VI
17—paper #4 due; movie: Babette’s Feast
19—read Babette’s Feast; sections VI-XII
22—visit library
24—no class; Thanksgiving break
26—no class; thanksgiving break
29—read Barnet and Bedau; pp. 175-200; 224
1—no class; individual meetings about paper #4
2—required convo—3:00
3—read Behr
6—read Thorne, #2
8—movie: Tampopo
10—read Trillin

Thursday, December 16; 1:00 p.m.—final paper due