

LSC # 75
 Action 10-10-91
Approved

COVER SHEET: Request for Approval to Use W-Designation

TYPE I. PROFESSOR COMMITMENT

- Professor Cecilia Rodriguez Milanes Phone Ext. 7832
 Writing Workshop? (If not at IUP, where? when? *See below _____)
 Proposal for one W-course (see instructions below)
 Agree to forward syllabi for subsequently offered W-courses?

TYPE II. DEPARTMENTAL COURSE

- Department Contact Person _____ Phone _____
 Course Number/Title _____
 Statement concerning departmental responsibility
 Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

TYPE III. SPECIFIC COURSE AND SPECIFIC PROFESSOR(S)

- Professor(s) _____ Phone _____
 Course Number/Title _____
 Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

SIGNATURES:

Professor(s) *Cecilia Rodriguez Milanes*
 Department Chairperson *Jama L. Gray*
 College Dean *Richard Jones*
 Director of Liberal Studies *Chad Ashburn*

COMPONENTS OF A PROPOSAL FOR A WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSE:

I. "Writing Summary"--one or two pages explaining how writing is used in the course. First, explain any distinctive characteristics of the content or students which would help the Liberal Studies Committee understand your summary. Second, list and explain the types of writing activities; be especially careful to explain (1) what each writing activity is intended to accomplish as well as the (2) amount of writing, (3) frequency and number of assignments, and (4) whether there are opportunities for revision. If the activity is to be graded, indicate (5) evaluation standards and (6) percentage contribution to the student's final grade.

II. Copy of the course syllabus.

III. Samples of assignment sheets, instructions, or criteria concerning writing that are given to students.

one copy
 Provide ~~12 copies~~ to the Liberal Studies Committee.
 Please number all pages.

*I participated in several Writing Workshops directed by Lilian Brannon, Cy Knoblach, and Steve North at SUNY-Albany. I was also a Writing Consultant in the Writing Center at SUNYA and ran workshops for the Women's Studies Department at SUNYA.

Cecilia Rodríguez Milanés
September 30, 1991

Writing Summary for EN 347

Modern American Fiction requires a large amount of reading but because I feel such a strong commitment to writing, it too, will play a major role in the class. I will use **writing to stimulate thought or provoke reactions** from the students at the beginning of discussions on the novels. Sometimes I may ask the students to **freewrite** for five minutes simply to allow them an opportunity to write about whatever they want. These short pieces will not be graded and may or may not be collected.

I will require the students to write weekly on each different novel or collection discussed. These one to two page typed papers will focus on a **reader's response** to the material. These papers will **enhance the students' reading**. Perhaps some readers will respond with a creation of fiction or maybe even an angry letter; I am open to form but the content should be based on that week's reading.

The writing that will be done for evaluation will begin early enough in the semester so that students may have many opportunities for revision which is integral to my philosophy of writing. Revision will begin in the classroom with writing workshops and may move out of the class to The Writing Center. **Memo writing** will help students become better writers as a result of more effective revision and reading. Memos also will help students clarify their purpose in writing.

There will be a midterm essay examination written in class or at home in order to evaluate students' retention of selected novels' themes, plots, issues, political agendas and so on. The test will be drawn from in class discussion and any quizzes given prior to midterm.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

EN 347 covers major American writers of fiction since 1945. This section will give students an opportunity to study a broad scope of novels and short story collections from writers such as John Irving, William Kennedy, Marilyn Robinson and Ray Carver, to Toni Morrison, Amy Tan, Oscar Hijuelos and Leslie Silko. Attention to class, race, gender and ethnicity will be pivotal in class discussion and in our written critiques.

READING AND WRITING IN EN 347

Writing is, for me, a way of learning and so students will be required to do a great deal of it in this class. There will be writing to stimulate discussion, free-writing (to get the juices flowing or just for fun), on-going reader's responses to the novels, an essay examination sometime around mid-term and a longer paper dealing with one work or writer or combination of works or writers covered in class.

The evaluation of writing will vary from simply checking, to extensive memos on returned papers and a holistic approach of evaluating content, mechanics and organization of papers. Count on discussing the problematic nature of evaluating writing in the beginning of the semester; which for me, is related to reading and literary criticism in general.

Since I believe that criticism is any given reader's story, I will pay careful attention to the students' readings/stories /responses to the texts. These will be elicited through small and large group discussions and weekly response papers to the novels read in class. These weekly assignments will also serve to enhance their reading experience since these will be shared within small groups at the beginning of class.

Revision is integral to the writing process for scholars and students alike therefore, the final, longest paper will be revised at least twice during the semester. Students will meet in writing groups to workshop their papers and exchange feedback. The Writing Center may serve as another outlet for students seeking a larger audience for their work. Also, I will meet with students in conference during the last stages of revision to fine-tune and polish their papers.

REQUIRED TEXTS include Morrison's *Beloved*, Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*, Hijuelos' *The Mambo Kings Sing Songs of Love*, Charles Johnson's *Middle Passage*, Silko's *Ceremony*, Irving's *The World According to Garp*, Kennedy's *Ironweed*, Robinson's *Housekeeping* and two or three other novels to be announced. Two or three collections of short fiction will also be required, one of which will be fiction published by small or alternative presses.

Cecilia Rodríguez Milanés
EN 347, Spring 1992

On Memo Writing

In their book, Texts and Contexts, composition researchers Judith and Jeffery Summerfield describe the use of memo writing in the process of evaluating writing. Following their example, and my own success with this technique, whenever you turn in a paper written out of class, I will ask you to attach a memo to it. The first thing I want you to address in these memos is a brief description of what you were hoping to accomplish in the paper. Tell me if you think you accomplished this--even if you're not sure. After the short summary, there are some questions I want you to consider about your writing:

Does it reflect the effort you put into it?

Do you think that it needs another revision or two?

How do you feel about this paper--hate it? like it?

Most importantly, I want you to tell me, specifically, how I can help you make it better. Use the memo to point out the sections or areas where you think you could use an extensive reader's response or critique. Where and on what do you want me to focus my attention? You should also ask your writing group members the same questions in order to receive constructive feedback on your paper.

Cecilia Rodríguez Milanés
EN 348 (African American Writers)
Tuesday/Thursday 11:30-1:00
Leonard 218

Office Sutton 345, #7832
Office hours: 9:30-11:30
on Tues/Thurs and also
by appt. Mon & Wed

Course description:

This section of EN 348 will focus on twentieth century African American fiction. Beginning with Jean Toomer's *Cane* in the Harlem Renaissance through the second Renaissance in the 1960's to the 1987 Pulitzer Prize winner *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and the 1990 National Book Award winner *Middle Passage* by Charles Johnson. We will read the texts with context in mind, making note of the historical conditions under which they were written. An Afrocentric approach will also be used to analyze the works in class discussions and in written critiques.

Course conduct:

Class and group participation will be essential for the success of the course. All papers, except those written in class and/or specified by me, must be typed using the style of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 3rd edition, by Joseph Gibaldi and Walter S. Achtert (1988). Selected pages on the mechanics of writing as well as sample pages of a research paper will be on reserve in the library.

When using a computer printer, the print must be near letter quality; likewise, typewriter ribbon must be dark. All papers must have their topics approved by me. No papers are to be left with the English Department staff or in my office or mailbox unless you have arranged it with me. Students are expected to read all the assignments/books/stories before the class meeting even if the previous day's reading was not covered at the last meeting.

Plagiarism, for example, cheating, copying material and passing it off as one's own and failing to attribute/cite sources etc. will not be tolerated and will result in failure.

Required Texts:

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. New York: Signet/New American Library, 1987.

Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. New York: Feminist Press, 1937.

Toomer, Jean. *Cane*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company,

Baldwin, James. *Giovanni's Room*. New York: Dell, 1956.

McMillan, Terry ed. *Breaking Ice: An Anthology of Contemporary African-American Fiction*. New York: Penguin Books, 1990.

Johnson, Charles. *Middle Passage*. New York: Plume Book/Penguin Group, 1990.

Rodríguez Milanés
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Semester Grading System:

Grading of written assignments will be determined by a holistic grading rubric (see attached). In addition to two graded papers with required revisions constituting 40% of student's total grade, there will be a comprehensive mid-term essay exam making up 20% of final course grade. No makeup exams will be given. Since writing is central to my pedagogy and teaching philosophy, there will be a great deal of it in this class and much of it will be ungraded but read and checked. Some will go uncollected. Active class participation will make up the remaining percentage points. Students will also have opportunities to earn points by attending various extra curricular events and writing short reports on these. Finally, all students will prepare and present an oral report on a contemporary African American poet to be delivered during finals week.

two papers with revisions---one conference with me/another in writing center	40%
oral presentation (10-15 minutes)	5-10%
pop quizzes (3 to 5)--one short essay question (15 minutes)	15-25%
midterm exam (one class period or perhaps take home)	20%
class participation	variable (can be up to 20%)

Cecilia Rodríguez Milanés
September 5, 1991
African American Writers

Assignment No. 1

Your first assignment is to devise a grading/scoring rubric for the letter grades of A through to F. This is to be a holistic set of guidelines used to evaluate your writing. Ask yourself what you would consider an A paper. Write down what you would expect of such a paper. Obviously, you will ascribe the highest standard to the A paper and then lower that standard as you go down the hierarchy of letter grades. Is a C paper merely mediocre? Does a D on a paper mean that no thought or preparation went into it? Elaborate in a memo to me why you chose such criterion.

The 1991-92 Undergraduate Catalog has very little to say about grades:

In the grading system, the following grades are used in reporting the standing of students at the end of each semester or summer term: A, excellent; B, good; C, average; D, passed; F, failed; I, incomplete; R, deferred; P, pass/fail (option). (24)

What do you think about these one-word descriptions and do you believe that the evaluation and grading of writing can be summarized in such terms?

You should not write more than 5 sentences for the description of each letter grade. When you come back to class, be prepared to work in a large group in order to consolidate your criterion. Your guidelines will be taken very seriously.

Holistic Scoring Rubric for
the evaluation of writing

Written by the class members
and agreed upon by consensus

For the grade of A:

Both papers must be typed according to the MLA format. They are to be turned in on time; including revisions resulting from in-class writing groups. Papers will be revised no more than three times. If there are any errors, they do not distract the reader in the least.

The A paper is an excellent piece of work; it adheres to the topic, with good organization, insight, and/or creativity. There is also fluent use of language and grasp of conventions and mechanics of Standard American English.

For the grade of B:

Both papers must be typed according to the MLA format. One will be revised as a result of in-class writing groups while the other will be revised in the Writing Center. If there are any errors in this piece, but no more than six, they do not significantly affect the reader's enjoyment of the writing.

The B paper is a good paper which demonstrates adequate handling of subject in terms of content, organization and grasp of conventions and mechanics. The B paper will have less impact, development and power in expression or language, style or insight.

For the grade of C:

The revision of both papers will be optional; i.e., the student will revise with the help of the Writing Center or other. These papers will also be typed and follow the general guidelines of the MLA form. The errors in this paper distract from its content, quality and form.

The C paper is less mature in thought, organization, conventions, mechanics or use of language. It is an acceptable paper.

For the grade of D:

First drafts turned in; no revisions. Barely follows any form or guidelines. Faulty reasoning presented in a poor fashion. There are so many errors in this paper that it prohibits the reader from engaging its ideas.

For the grade of F:

Skeleton of assignment; not adhering to any guidelines.

Notes:

Students must have three copies of their papers to workshop in class the day they are due. Memos should be attached also.

One of the papers will be written drawing on research done outside of class. Students will meet with me beforehand to discuss this assignment and receive approval on a topic.