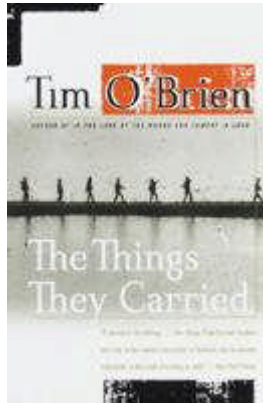


First-Year Seminars in the Writing Program
Course Guide Fall 2007

Composition 1 Writing Seminars: 50:350:101*

Section 01 History, Memory, and Imagination
MWF 8:00-8:55

Instructor: Sarah Byker James



Do you ever wonder how much you can trust your memories? Do you have questions about the reliability of conventional versions of history? In this course, we will examine how stories make us and how we make ourselves through the stories we tell. In addition to the summer novel *Chocolat*, all of the readings for this course will, in some way, question the line between events and their retelling, between fiction and non-fiction, between historical truth and narrative, sometimes metaphorical, truth. One of our texts for the semester will be Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*, which places its readers not only in the no man's land of the Vietnam War, but also in an uncertain narrative zone where stories are shared, later dismantled as lies, and then often shakily retold yet again. We will also explore essays, poems, images, and songs that demonstrate and interrogate the slippery borders between what we remember and what we create. Finally, and most importantly, the development of your writing will be the focus of our work together. During the semester, you will write a personal narrative (wrestling with and shaping your own memories) and two analytical essays.

Section 02 Reflections of Culture: Superheroes and
MWF 8:00-8:55 Their Representation of America

Instructor: Peter Bryant

This course will involve the tracking of cultural and political reflections throughout various superhero collections. We will explore how comics have evolved throughout the last 50 years, and what they say about the culture in which they were written. We will look closely at how superheroes reflect concerns about race, gender, disability, political instability, consumer culture, and religion. Some of the texts we will use will include *Chocolat*, *Watchmen*, *The Dark Knight Returns*, *Preacher*, *X-Men*, and *The X-Statix*. The course requirements will include two 6-8 page papers and one 10-12 page paper.



* Summer novel for all sections: Joanne Harris, *Chocolat*

Section 03 Exploring the Holocaust through
MWF 9:05-10:00 Academic Writing

Instructor: Jason Cash

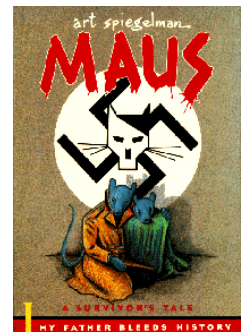


This course seeks to establish foundational skills in academic writing by exploring the Holocaust and its impact from the 1930s through today. After we discuss the summer novel, we will study first hand accounts, including Anne Frank's *The Diary of a Young Girl*, Elie Wiesel's *Night*, and Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*. Also, historical texts such as *The Cunning of History* by Richard Rubenstein will be studied. The course will incorporate short fiction and poetry, as well as films such as *Schindler's List* and *Cabaret* in an effort to understand history as reflected in art. Finally, students will read Doug Wright's play *I Am My Own Wife*, in an aim to grasp the full breadth of the Holocaust's cultural relevance. Students will use the material to build well-reasoned arguments, displaying an understanding of English grammar and the ability to defend a thesis. Writings will range from journal responses to five-page papers, undergoing multiple, thorough revisions.

Section 04 Not Just Capes and Tights: The Graphic Novel
MWF 9:05-10:00 as a Literary Medium

Instructor: Peter Bryant

This course will involve looking at a spectrum of graphic novels that do not fall into the common perception of "super-hero books." After reading the summer novel, we will explore the ways that graphic novels can complicate our notions of "literariness" and challenge our perceptions of what designates literature. We will examine how these works upset conventional terms like memoir, journalism and literature. Some of the texts we use will include *Chocolat*, *Maus*, *Persepolis*, *Black Hole*, and *Sandman*. The course requirements will include two 6-8 page papers and one 10-12 page paper.



Section 05 Fairy Tales through Time
MWF 10:10-11:05

Instructor: Erica Maxwell



Just who is Little Red Riding Hood anyway, and why is a wolf eating her grandmother? Why does Bluebeard have a closet-full of dead wives? If the Little Mermaid commits suicide, then where does that talking crab come in? Who is telling whom what, and why? How do the stories change over time and by place? We'll talk and write about the answers to these questions and more as we read tales about little girls in peril, pirates, and the nasties that go bump in the night. This course will function as a bridge into academic writing, requiring writings throughout the semester, and a final five-page portfolio paper.

* Summer novel for all sections: Joanne Harris, *Chocolat*

Section 06 Children's Myths, Journeys and Quests

Instructor: Erica Maxwell

MWF 11:15-12:10

Peter Pan doesn't have to grow up, but most other children eventually will. And as they do, adults from Barrie to Baum to Neil Gaiman write for them stories telling them how they should be doing it. Some stories are odes to the majority adult "because I said so" school, and others a bit devious. The class will discuss a variety of children's passages into adult thinking, responsibility, and sexuality, over time and cultural space.

This course will function as a bridge into academic writing, requiring writings throughout the semester, and a final five-page portfolio paper.



Section 07 Achilles to Anakin: Reflections on the Hero

Instructor: David Solomon

TTh 8:00-9:20



In recent years, many of our most popular films and television shows have been about heroes. Be it Jack Bauer defying all odds on *24* or Spider-Man swinging back across movie screens in this summer's *Spider-Man 3*, heroes continue to command our attention. However, this "hero worship" is not a new or unique phenomenon. Tales of heroes have inspired and entertained people in countless societies long before television and motion pictures. In this course, we will examine our fascination with heroes: why are we drawn to them as much as we are and what does this attraction tell us about ourselves? Through our study of a variety of heroes both ancient and modern, we hope to uncover some fundamental truths about who we are and what we value. But beyond that, quite simply, heroes are fun, and we'll also examine why they are box office blockbusters time and time again. Our study includes heroes both in text and in film. After discussing the summer novel, we will focus on heroic epics, beginning with Homer's *The Iliad* and moving forward to such works as Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and our most popular modern-day epic, *Star Wars*. Along the way, we will also address medieval hero lore and modern superheroes. Our study of heroes provides a fun and interesting backdrop for our primary focus, which is to prepare students for the level and quality of writing expected at the college level and beyond. Students will be responsible for three major essays which will prepare students for various forms of college writing, as well as a group presentation.

Section 08 Myth, Magic, and Imagination

Instructor: David Solomon

TTh 9:30-10:50

"Everything old is new again." We can apply this sentiment to many aspects of popular culture. In pop music, artists make new hits by sampling old ones. Many blockbusters at movie box offices are remakes of movies that were originally made at least twenty years earlier. Even auto makers have called on the past in recent years with cars such as the PT Cruiser and the re-invention of the VW Beetle. When it comes to what is popular, sticking to an old formula is a key to

* Summer novel for all sections: Joanne Harris, *Chocolat*

success. In many ways, this holds true in myths, legends and magical tales as well. No matter how different they may seem, mythic and magical tales written in recent years owe a great deal to age-old tales from thousands of years ago. This course will attempt a comparative mythology and look at modern retellings of ancient myths; for example, how is *Star Wars*' Anakin Skywalker related to the ancient Greeks' Oedipus? We'll also consider modern renditions of ancient classics. Writing in the academy is based on building upon knowledge and work that has come before; in this course, we will look at the ways in which writing in literature and other media does the same. Major readings and viewings include *Chocolat*, *Oedipus the King*, *The Iliad*, *The Hobbit* and *Star Wars*, as well as a consideration of Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* and several other shorter works. The primary goal for this course is to prepare students for the level and quality of writing expected at the college level and beyond. Students are responsible for three major essays as well as a group presentation.



Section 11 Mad Love
TTh 11:00-12:20

Instructor: Mike Miller



In this writing seminar, we'll explore the darker side of romance with the temptations of *Chocolat*, the bunny boiler *Fatal Attraction*, the twisted dramatic monologues of Robert Browning, and the disturbingly erotic *Wuthering Heights*. When love goes wrong, it can go seriously wrong. As we channel the dead spirits of some of love's most famous martyrs, we'll also learn how to do writing that isn't boring—that says something—and that really matters. The focus is on mad love. The process is writing.

Section 12 Films of the 70s
TTh 1:30-2:50

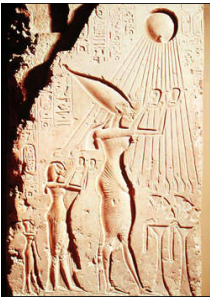
Instructor: Mike Miller

For one shining decade—the 1970s—the American movie industry took enormous risks and broke barriers in giving film audiences what television could not: mature themes, frankly explored. As we learn how to write academic essays, we'll examine the work of auteur directors like Francis Ford Coppola, Milos Forman, and Roman Polanski. As we read critical literature on film and film-making, we'll develop a richer appreciation of this medium.



* Summer novel for all sections: Joanne Harris, *Chocolat*

Section 40 Big Words, Big Ideas: You Are What you Speak
 Instructor: Joe Barbarese
 MW 6:00-7:20 pm



We tend to assume that our vocabularies, like oxygen and weather, comes to us free of charge. But not everything that is culture-sent is either good, real, useful or permanent. Each week the course will look at one word, phrase, or idea that is connected with how we think about the culture that supplies it and interprets us to ourselves. Beginning with *Chocolat*, the course will draw on American culture for its texts, from fiction (short and long), essays, newspapers and whatever else is out there.

About the Composition Writing Seminar Staff

Joe Barbarese is an Associate Professor of English at Rutgers-Camden and director of the First-Year Seminar Program. He specializes in creative writing, English and American Romantic literature, Children's Literature and literature of American and British Modernism. He is the author of four books of poetry, most recently *The Black Beach* (University of North Texas Press, 2005), and writes short fiction, scholarly essays and newspaper journalism.

Peter Bryant is completing his MA in English at Rutgers-Camden and has previous taught Composition and Basic Writing at Camden County College. His interests include Renaissance Literature, Graphic Novels, and Popular Culture. He is particularly interested in the way that class, gender, race, and politics are reflected and hidden in cultural texts; and in the way that we classify artistic mediums into "high" and "low" categories and how those categories intersect and communicate. He developed his first-year seminar courses while writing scholarship about *Maus* and theorizing the complexity of communication in the graphic novel. He holds an undergraduate degree in English from The George Washington University.

Jason Cash is a graduate of the English program of Bridgewater College in Virginia, with a minor in Theatre. In addition to three years working for the Writing Center, he was also actively involved with campus life as a Resident Assistant and later as a Resident Director, where he developed academic study programs in the Holocaust. His interests include medieval and modern literature, Irish Studies, and theatre in its many forms.

Sarah Byker James completed Rutgers Camden's MA program in May 2006, and will begin studies at New York University's MFA program in Poetry this coming fall. Her poems have been published in *MARGIE: The American Journal of Poetry*, and are forthcoming in *42opus* and *caesura*. Her own writing fuels her interest in developing writing skills and strategies in her students. She has been an instructor with Rutgers Camden's writing program since Fall 2005, and has designed first-year writing courses with themes such as "Language & Identity," "Roots & Routes," and "American Dreams, American Nightmares." Prior to teaching at Rutgers, Sarah worked with high school and college students through non-profit education foundations, and she continues to be particularly interested in access and retention issues faced by low income and first-generation college students. This spring, she taught The Art of Writing, and she looks forward to teaching additional writing intensive courses in the future. In addition to her courses at Rutgers, she has also instructed courses at Moore College of Art and Design. She is annually involved with the spring and summer writers' conferences at Rutgers-Camden.

* Summer novel for all sections: Joanne Harris, *Chocolat*

Erica Maxwell joins Rutgers-Camden's English department as an MFA candidate in creative writing. She has a special interest in youth fiction. She earned her BA in English from Temple University. Before coming to Rutgers-Camden, she had worked as a cook, a counselor, a copy-editor, and an Overnight Front Desk Hotel Slave.

Mike Miller set out to earn a law degree and found himself, after one 17th century literary course, devoted to John Milton and post-Civil War England. He is currently completing his graduate degree in English at Rutgers-Camden. For two years he has taught literature and media-based composition skills while focusing on popular culture, introductory literary theory, Victorian fiction and poetry, and of course, John Milton. As an undergraduate, he received the The John C. Wentz Memorial Prize for his essay titled, "Is Macheath the Object of John Gay's Desire?" He also won the Gloria H. Moffatt Scholarship Award for demonstrated commitment to public or community service. This year he won James L. Sanderson Graduate Award for his essay "'Vittoria Wears Blue Velvet: A Cross Discipline Study of John Webster and David Lynch.'" After teaching Composition, Shakespeare, and Literatures in English at Rutgers and Rowan this year, he plans to pursue a doctorate in Early Modern literary studies.

David Solomon is a graduate of Rutgers University-Camden and began teaching composition in 2006. In addition to teaching, he has several years of Writing Center experience and believes in a personal approach to writing instruction. As an undergraduate, he won the Rutgers Alumni Association Award. He is a 24 fan, comic book collector and self-admitted *Star Wars* geek. His interest in heroes stems from a childhood fascination with mythology and Spider-Man cartoons. As an area of academic interest, Solomon's attraction to heroes relates to a belief that the study of literature is the study of ourselves; our heroes reflect our values, and their presence in literature and pop culture has much to tell us. Solomon has also taught writing courses addressing themes such as social responsibility, debate and argumentation, and race relations. He plans to pursue an MFA in Creative Writing.

* Summer novel for all sections: Joanne Harris, *Chocolat*