

Rutgers University, Camden
Composition I, Fall 2007 – 50:350:101:05
History, Memory, and Imagination

Instructor: Sarah Byker James
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Office: Armitage 428

Office Hours: 11:15 – 12:00 M & by appt.
Class Times: 10:10 – 11:05 MWF
Location: Fine Arts 240

Required Texts and Materials

Joanne Harris, *Chocolat*

Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*

Lester Faigley, *The Brief Penguin Handbook*, 2nd Edition (Be sure to purchase this NEW at the bookstore, because it is packaged with an access code for MyCompLab, an online writing resource.)

Materials on electronic reserve – denoted (e) on syllabus and available on the library's web site by instructor last name (Byker James)

An email account you check every weekday—I will communicate with you one-on-one and as a group via a class listserv about assignments and important resources

Course Description & Objectives

In Composition I, you will develop the reading, writing, and oral communication skills that you will need for Composition II, other courses at Rutgers, and your future career. You've probably noticed that a text message looks pretty different from song lyrics or a newspaper article. This is also true for academic writing—the conventions it employs are unique and require practice. We will get our practice by forming a community within our classroom: we will ask questions of texts, read and critique each other's writing, and hone our ideas through repeated revision.

Over the course of the semester, we will investigate the often blurry distinctions between history, memory, and imagination. The readings for this course will, in various ways, question the line between actual events and their retelling, between fiction and non-fiction, between historical truth and narrative, sometimes metaphorical, truth. We will use verbal as well as visual texts to examine our major question for the course: how do stories make us and how we make ourselves through the stories we tell? This is a substantial inquiry, and necessarily so. You should be able to find, within our larger exploration, some compelling issues to engage with in your essays.

To write well, you must read well. In this course you will read for form as well as content (how a piece is written is often as important as what it is written about!). You will sharpen your critical skills by learning to ask good questions, form complex arguments, and bring a critical eye to your reading as well as your own writing. You will likely develop more questions than you will reach answers. In this way, our exploration will provide an excellent introduction to the university—good scholarship often leads future scholars toward new areas of investigation.

Most importantly, in this course, you will revise your writing over time. The writing process is sometimes described as “recursive,” meaning that it is often non-linear, multi-faceted, and tricky. This course won't give you magic formulas for writing “A” papers; however, it will build your experiences with and strategies for writing, reading, and thinking on an academic level. In other words, you will learn by doing. Through a sequence of assignments and activities you will develop three polished pieces of writing—a narrative essay, an analytical essay on a novel, and an analytical essay on a set of images.

I welcome your questions about writing in and outside of class. You will each meet with me one-on-one twice during the semester. Feel free to schedule additional conferences if you need assistance. I look forward to hearing what you have to say (in person and on the page!).

Expectations

- I. **Attendance & Participation:** You are permitted a total of five absences for the duration of the course, excused or unexcused, without penalty to your grade. **More than five absences will significantly lower your final grade.** More than nine absences will result in a failing grade for the course. You'll be asked to do more than show up, though, and you'll get more out of the course (and a better participation grade) by staying involved. The bottom line: treat your classmates, instructor, and our work together with respect. As we share our writing and examine questions about history and memory, we will touch on complicated social issues. Please be brave AND sensitive to other views.
- II. **Lateness:** This class is discussion-based, and it is crucial that you be on time. If you arrive late, I will note it on my attendance log. Repeated tardiness will add up to absences.
- III. **Assignments (due dates, formatting):** All assignments are due **in class** on the date specified on the syllabus. If you are absent, check with a fellow student or arrange with me in advance to find out about missed class activities and assignments. Unless otherwise indicated, assignments must be typed, stapled, and formatted according to MLA guidelines (double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, etc.). *You are required to submit a hard copy AND electronic file (Word or PDF) of the final drafts of your essays. You will also need to turn in your rough drafts with the hard copy of your final draft.*
- IV. **Original Work:** Plagiarism is theft—you must submit your own work. At the university level, stealing another person's ideas is as serious an offense as the theft of property. Students who plagiarize will receive a failing grade for the assignment, course, or even suspension from the university, depending on the level of offense. If you submit someone else's work as your own, you shortchange yourself and waste my time. If you are struggling with an assignment, talk to me or get help from the Rutgers Learning Center. We will discuss correct citation and plagiarism in detail in this course, and I am happy to answer individual questions about plagiarism and citation rules.
- V. **Use the resources on campus:** Ask for help when you need it. I have listed campus and internet resources on page 5.
- VI. **Turn OFF cell phones and cell phone-like creatures.**

Grading

Participation (attendance, contributions to small group and class discussions)	10%
Graded Projects (homework, drafts, peer review, presentations, quizzes)	20%
Essay 1—3-4 page narrative essay	10%
Essay 2—4-6 page literary analysis	20%
Essay 3—4-6 page image analysis	20%
Final Portfolio	20%

I will grade your essays during the semester numerically on a 100-point scale.

A = 92-100	B+ = 86-91	B = 80-85	C+ = 76-79	C = 70-75
D = 60-69	F = under 60			

Course Outline

Reading assignments are due on the dates listed on the syllabus and will often be accompanied by short writing assignments (to be announced). If I choose to add, subtract, or substitute reading assignments, I will be sure to give you sufficient notice.

Wednesday 9/5:	Introduction to the course; in-class writing
Friday 9/7:	<i>Chocolat</i>
Monday 9/10:	<i>Chocolat</i> ; Hampl, “Memory and Imagination” (e); MyCompLab training
Wednesday 9/12:	<i>Chocolat</i> ; Strand, “Where are the Waters of Childhood?” (e)
Friday 9/14:	<i>Chocolat</i> ; Ortiz Cofer, “Silent Dancing” (e)
Monday 9/17:	Essay 1 rough draft due ; self-evaluation
Wednesday 9/19:	<i>Chocolat</i> wrap-up
Friday 9/21:	Writing workshop
Monday 9/24:	Essay 1 final draft due ; introduction to literary analysis
Wednesday 9/26:	Read flash fiction pieces (e)
Friday 9/28:	Flash fiction presentations; Searchpath modules 1, 3, and 4 (http://searchpath.libraries.rutgers.edu) due via email to elibrary@camden.rutgers.edu and sarahbj@camden.rutgers.edu
Monday 10/1:	<i>The Things They Carried</i> to 38
Wednesday 10/3:	<i>The Things They Carried</i> 39-64; library orientation
Friday 10/5:	<i>The Things They Carried</i> 65-88
Monday 10/8:	<i>The Things They Carried</i> 89-123; Essay 2 guidelines
Wednesday 10/10:	<i>The Things They Carried</i> 123-154
Friday 10/12:	<i>The Things They Carried</i> 155-180
Monday 10/15:	<i>The Things They Carried</i> 181-224; topic proposals due

Wednesday 10/17:	<i>The Things They Carried</i> 225-246
Friday 10/19:	Three pages of draft or detailed outline due
Monday 10/22:	Essay 2 rough draft due (2 copies) ; peer review guidelines; sign up for conferences
Wednesday 10/24:	Individual conferences—NO CLASS
Friday 10/26:	Individual conferences—NO CLASS
Monday 10/29:	Peer review & writing workshop
Wednesday 10/31:	Writing workshop
Friday 11/2:	Essay 2 final draft due
Monday 11/5:	Sontag, “In Plato’s Cave” (e)
Wednesday 11/7:	Stephens, “By Means of the Visible” (e)
Friday 11/9:	Brower, “A Flock of Golden Retrievers”; Betts, “The Man Who Makes the Pictures Perfect” (e)
Monday 11/12:	Jacobson, “In Brochures, What You See Isn’t Necessarily What You Get”; Goldberg, “Even Scientific Images Have Trouble Telling the Truth” (e)
Wednesday 11/14:	Brooks, “Oversimulated Suburbia”; Quammen, “The Boilerplate Rhino” (e)
Friday 11/16:	Topic proposals due
Monday 11/19:	Writing workshop
Wednesday 11/21:	Three pages of draft or detailed outline due
Friday 11/23:	Thanksgiving Recess—NO CLASS
Monday 11/26:	Essay 3 rough draft due (2 copies)
Wednesday 11/28:	Writing workshop
Friday 11/30:	Individual conferences—NO CLASS
Monday 12/3:	Individual conferences—NO CLASS
Wednesday 12/5:	Peer review; presentations
Friday 12/7:	Presentations
Monday 12/10:	Presentations
Wednesday 12/12:	Essay 3 final draft due ; presentations

**Final Portfolios are due during the exam period for our course:
Monday, December 17, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm**

Additional Resources

On Campus

The **Rutgers Learning Center**, located in 231 Armitage Hall, offers free one-to-one assistance with trained academic coaches. They can help you organize, develop, and revise your ideas in writing. Please take advantage of this resource!

Phone: (856) 225-6442

Web: <http://learn.camden.rutgers.edu>

Disability Services assists with and provides services such as readers, special equipment, and note takers. It is located in the Student Affairs Office, 2nd floor Armitage Hall.

Phone: (856) 225-6043

Health Services provides medical care, pharmacy services, physical exams, counseling, and other psychological services for Rutgers students. BASIC health care services are included in tuition for full time students. Part time students can elect to receive coverage as well.

Phone: (856) 225-6005

Web: <http://crab.rutgers.edu/~ruhealth>

Internet

WIRE (Writing in Rutgers Education) website: <http://wire.rutgers.edu>

Paul Robeson Library: http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/libs/robeson_lib/index.shtml

Companion Site to *Brief Penguin Handbook*: www.ablongman.com/faigley

MyCompLab: www.mycomplab.com

An access code for this online resource comes with your Brief Penguin Handbook. The site contains advice and tutorials on the writing process and grammar pitfalls, sample student papers, and much more.