Nicholas Hengen
hengen@umn.edu
Office: 306B Lind Hall
Office Hours: W: 515-600
Th: 100-200
& By Appt.

WRIT 1301
University Writing
Section 60
4 Credits
M/W 400-515 Lind Hall 340
http://www.tc.umn.edu/~heng0024/1301.php

Expectations

WRIT 1301 is a writing class. By the end of this semester, you will have improved your ability to articulate your ideas to various audiences. You'll learn to write like a professional and make convincing, clear arguments.

We will do a lot of writing. But the real work of our semester won't just be putting words on the page. As we read, discuss, consider, re-read, peer-edit, and re-vise our writing, we'll question what learning, education, and the university are all about.

Much of our time in class will be spent talking, not writing. It is impossible for this to happen without your participation—that is, your commitment to reading the assigned texts and sharing your ideas about them. To say something in class is always a risk. If we all enter each meeting with the understanding that this is a mutual venture—one in which most of us will make some "mistakes"—we can, I hope, have productive discussions. I will ask that you come to class with a willingness to take risks, to suspend closure, and to accept that asking questions is often more important than being "right."

Attendance

Keeping up to date with our ongoing conversation is essential. If you miss class, please be in touch—visit my office hours or, at the very least, send an email. It is, naturally, your responsibility to find out what you missed. Please note: For each absence after your **second**, your grade will decrease; if you miss more than **five** sessions, you will not pass this course.

Office Hours & Communication

I strongly encourage you to visit me during office hours on the third floor of Lind Hall. They are a great opportunity to get direct assistance (remember: the more you tell me about your interests, the more I can do to help you succeed); anecdotally, students who visit tend to write stronger papers.

Another way to reach me is email, which I check regularly. Please check yours regularly as well, as I will often contact you with assignments and updates. (The U of M email system frequently blocks messages from senders like Hotmail—please use your U of M account.)

Finally: I will also operate a rudimentary course website where I will post weekly assignments, info, and various potentially relevant links. You can find that here: http://www.tc.umn.edu/~heng0024/1301.php

Readings

It is required that you buy this handy reference: Longman Writer's Companion. 4th edition. University of Minnesota edition. Eds. Anson, Chris, Robert Schwegler, and Marcia F. Muth (2007). It is available only at the University Bookstore as it is designed specifically for our program.

This section won't require any other books. You will, however, have to do a fair amount of printing. We all need to have the essays we're discussing at hand in class to refer to. Please print them out and make marks on them as you read.

You will find (most of) these texts at the library's e-reserve page for our class. It can be found here—http://eres.lib.umn.edu/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=1000—and accessed with this password: jQc88rt. I will be adding (and subtracting) things both to that page and to the course webpage frequently.

(Tentative) Schedule	**Monday**	**Wednesday**	**Notes**
Week 1 (Jan 23) **Why are you at college?**		Welcome	
Week 2 (Jan 28 & 30) **What is a "Liberal Education"? What were its origins? Is it useful?**	Twitchell, "Higher Ed, Inc."	Newman, The Idea of a University (excerpts)	
Week 3 (February 4 & 6) **Does how a class it taught matter? What subjects work with Freire's ideas?**	Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (Excerpts)	Library; Freire continued	
Week 4 (Feb 11 & 13) **Where can we find illustrations of Freire's ideas?**	Viewing (in class): Oleanna	Finish Oleanna; Workshop: ESSAY 1	ESSAY 1 due (Fri)
Week 5 (Feb 18 & 20) **How do universities deal with diversity? How should they?**	Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone"	Pratt continued	
Week 6 (Feb 25 & 27) **What is living in a "contact zone" like? How can we make it work?**	Packer, "Drinking Coffee Elsewhere"	Workshop: ESSAY 2	ESSAY 2 due (Fri)
Week 7 (Mar 3 & 5)	Library	[NO CLASS: Meetings]	
Week 8 (Mar 10 & 12) **Is Affirmative Action good for universities? Do alternatives exist?**	Lemann, "The Empathy Defense" **	Douthat, "Does Meritocracy Work?" **	PROSP-ECTUS due (F)
Spring Break (Mar 17 & 19)	**Spring Break**	**Spring Break**	
Week 9 (Mar 24 & 26) **Who do college rankings benefit? Are they reliable?**	U.S. News & Washington Monthly rankings & rationale ***	Thompson "Playing With Numbers"***	WORKS CITED due (F)
Week 10 (Mar 31 & Apr 2) **What is "Academic Freedom"? Is it important? Can it be maintained?**	Press & Washburn, "The Kept University" **	Horowitz, "In Defense of Intellectual Diversity"**	
Week 11 (Apr 7 & 9) **How does Deep Springs teach?**	Workshop: Research Paper **	Goodyear, "The Searchers" ***	
Week 12 (Apr 14 & 16) **Is Patrick Henry a good college? Why doesn't it do well on national rankings?**	RESEARCH PAPER due ****	Rosin, "God and Country"***	Research Paper Due (M)
Week 13 (Apr 21 & 23) **How does Phoenix compare to other colleges? Is it dangerous to higher ed?**	Workshop: Op-Ed ***	Cox, "Phoenix Ascending"; Op-Ed due ***	Op-Ed due (W)
Week 14 (Apr 28 & 30) **How do personal narratives make arguments?**	Adams, The Education of Henry Adams (excerpt)	Kirn, "Lost in the Meritocracy"	
Week 15 (May 5 & 7) **What (should) have we done this semester?**	Workshop: Personal Narrative	Self evaluation	Personal Narrative due (F)

Grades

Participation*:	15%
Essay 1 (Freire):	10%
Essay 2 (Pratt):	15%
Research Paper:	30%
Op-Ed:	10%
Personal Narrative:	10%
Teaching:	10%

*includes all in-class writing & verbal participation

Assignments

TEACHING: This is your chance to shape our learning. Each of you will pick a date and teach us about a topic related to higher education—preferably one not on the syllabus. The only caveat is that your teaching must draw on at least one academic source. When your turn rolls around, you'll prepare a short presentation (approx. 10 minutes) that introduces the issue and makes an argument about it. Handouts, power points, song-and-dance routines…it's all fair game. The goal is for us to learn; you have to figure out how to make that happen.

ESSAY 1: This essay should be addressed to an academic audience. It should examine Freire's ideas with reference to at least one other text—be that an academic article or a book, a piece of fiction or a film. In at least five* (though no more than six) pages, it should engage with Freire by close reading his argument and connecting it to other text(s).

ESSAY 2: Write an academic analysis of Pratt's essay focusing on the "arts" she enumerates. Do they belong in the university today? How might they be put to use? This should total at least five (though no more than seven) pages. To make this kind of argument, you will certainly need to cite academic sources and perhaps others.

RESEARCH PAPER: This will be an eight to nine page research paper about any aspect of university education. The possibilities are vast and it will be one of your most important responsibilities to refine your focus. You should cite multiple sources—this must include (at least) four academic sources, as well as popular sources—and speak to an academic audience. Some potential topics include (but are hardly limited to):

- Requirements: liberal arts, science, foreign language, writing / "Liberal Education"
- Useful/useless departments: American Studies v. Food Science
- Correspondence universities: Phoenix, Walden, and the like
- Different types of higher ed: Community Colleges, "Liberal Arts" schools, Universities
- Diversity / Affirmative Action
- Privatizing public universities: research money from corporations
- Academic Freedom
- Rankings systems: U.S.News / Washington Monthly / Princeton Review
- Grades: Are they useful?
- Admissions: Who gets in? And why?
- Teaching: Do colleges care about teaching? Why so many TAs?

OP-ED: This paper will be your chance to bring the argument of your research paper—which is tailored for an academic audience—to a popular audience. This writing will hew to the conventions of OP-EDs (we'll talk about this). In its brevity (between two and three pages), it will convey a complex argument so anyone can read it and be convinced.

*A note about page counts: Five pages means five full pages—not four pages plus three lines on the fifth—and does not include a works cited. Think of these numbers as guides; if your argument only amounts to three pages, it's probably not "too short" but in need of some fundamental revision to make the idea more contestable.