Beth Flynn
HU6020, Special Topics in Composition: Literacies of Survival
Walker 139
T, Th 11:05 a.m.-12:20 p.m.
Fall, 2007
Office: 310 Walker
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Office Hours: T, Th 12:30-2:00 p.m. and by appointment

Texts:


Supplies:

Please keep your response statements and returned papers in a file folder. I'll collect it at the end of the term.

Purpose:

The course is described in the catalog as follows:

In-depth examination of theoretical perspectives on composing. May include discussion of current-traditional, expressivist, social constructionist, and postmodern perspectives.

I have described this particular topics course as follows:

We will investigate the literacy practices of oppressed groups (i.e., colonized, impoverished, marginalized). We will also investigate the ways in which literacy practices have been used against these groups to maintain the domination of colonial or postcolonial authority, the wealthy, or those who hold positions of power within a particular society. Some questions we will consider will include: How have literacies been used as forms of resistance? What alternative literacies have emerged as a way of circumventing domination? How does attending to the situation of survival change our understandings of what literacies are and what kinds of literacies are possible? What might be some ethical literate practices that majorities could develop in order to mitigate the oppression of minorities?

Writing Assignments:

Response Statements:

Response statements of one or two double-spaced pages should be turned in on designated days. Statements should summarize the text under consideration and then critique it or relate it to previous course readings or reading you have done elsewhere. Once during the term you should send one of these responses to the class e-mail list 6020-I@mtu.edu.
Portfolio Analysis

Please prepare a portfolio analysis (at least a page long) that provides a commentary on response statements, drafts, and the three formal writing assignments. What are some strengths of your performance on these assignments? What are some limitations? What positions that you have taken strike you now as especially insightful? What positions do you now think are questionable?

Formal Writing:

Three formal papers will be required. The first two should be at least 1,250 words long and the final one should be at least 3,750 words long.

Paper #1: Proposal
Prepare a proposal in which you make use of some of the perspectives set forth in assigned reading toward the goal of 1) explaining the literacy practices of a group of survivors or a single survivor; 2) exploring representations of the literacy practices of a group of survivors or a single survivor.

Paper #2: Literature Review
Prepare a literature review for your research project. Identify books, articles, websites, etc. that will be pertinent to your project and explain what these works will contribute to your argument.

Paper #3: Research Paper
Explain the literacy practices of a group of survivors or a survivor or of the representations of survivors or a survivor making use of material in assignments #1 and 2 but expanding on them and shaping them into a focused argument.

Reports/Discussions:

Once during the term make a five-minute report on background material that informs the reading assignment for that day or start the class discussion for that day's reading. If you prepare a report, be sure to submit an outline of it. If you start the discussion, submit the question or questions that you use to stimulate discussion.

Presentations:

You will have an opportunity to present assignments #1, 2, and 3 in presentations of at least ten minutes. The presentation should be based on the assignment you have submitted but should be tailored for oral delivery. Please use at least one overhead that provides an outline of the assignment you submitted. Please include a paper copy of the outline with your paper.

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Much of the course involves conversation about course readings. If you miss those conversations, you will have missed a good deal of the course content. More than four unexcused absences will affect your grade.

Late Papers:

Since the course emphasizes the revision process and since it is important that presentations be based on finished essays, drafts and final essays must be submitted on time. Late papers will affect your grade.

Grades:
Your grade will be based on the following:

Response statements, portfolio, report 25%
Presentation # 1 5%
Presentation # 2 5%
Presentation # 3 5%
Proposal 10%
Literature Review 10%
Research paper 40%

Criteria for Evaluation:

A Papers and Presentations:

The author makes an original contribution so that the reader becomes involved and learns from the piece or presentation.
The central point of the essay is clear, and the parts of the essay have been connected effectively. The outline for the presentation is correct in form and effective.
Support for the point is appropriate for the intended audience and convincing.
The reader's or listener's needs have been taken into consideration.
There are few if any errors.

B Papers and Presentations:

The writing or speaking is clear, but the contribution does not seem especially original or new.
The central point is clear, but the parts of the essay or talk could be connected more effectively.
Support for the point is adequate for the intended audience and fairly convincing.
The reader's or listener's needs have been taken into consideration to an extent.
There are some errors.

C Papers and Presentations:

Takes some effort on the part of the reader or listener to get through the essay or talk.
The paper or talk does not have a strong focus, and it is not always clear how the parts support the thesis.
Support for the point is not especially appropriate for the intended audience and not especially convincing.
The reader's or listener's needs have not always been taken into consideration.
There are a number of errors.

Other:

When papers are returned, most papers will have a letter grade on them. If you receive a grade lower than A, you may revise the essay and submit it no later than two weeks after it is returned.
A few papers, though, will have an "R" on them. This means that the paper must be revised within two weeks of the time the paper was returned, and only the revision will be graded. I will usually suggest that individuals who receive Rs see me before revising. Please include the original paper with the revision! Please use Modern Language Association (MLA) format in your essays where appropriate. A useful Website that describes MLA format is http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocMLA.html.

Remember that formal essays should have titles. Please leave at least an inch margin on the sides and top and bottom of the paper and remember to number the pages on papers. Label all work. Include your name, my name, the course number and time, the date, and the course assignment. Be sure to indicate if the assignment is the proposal, literature review, or final paper.
MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Dean of Students (7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head or chair, or the Affirmative Action Office (7-3310).

It may be necessary to alter the syllabus as the semester proceeds in order to better meet the instructional needs of the class.

Plagiarism—using the ideas or words of others without acknowledging the source—is unethical and a violation of University policy. Plagiarism cases will be handled by the Dean of Students. Some consequences of plagiarism could be failure of a paper or course. The University has subscribed to an anti-plagiarism service that can detect plagiarized material. If you have questions about the proper way to cite the ideas of someone else, please see me.

Course Schedule:

Week 1 (Sept. 4-6)

T    Introduction
Th   Fanon, Preface, "On National Culture," Response # 1 due.

Week 2 (Sept. 11-13)

T    Fanon, "Colonial War and Mental Disorder." Response # 2 due.
Th   Memmi, Preface, "Portrait of the Colonizer." Response # 3 due.

Week 3 (Sept. 18-20)

T    Memmi, "Portrait of the Colonized." Response # 4 due.
Th   Olson and Worsham, 3-42. Response # 5 due.

Week 4 (Sept. 25-27)

T    Olson and Worsham, 129-164. Response # 6 due.
Th   Olson and Worsham, 165-204. Response # 7 due.

Week 5 (Oct. 2-4)

T    Olson and Worsham, 205-240. Response # 8 due.
Th   Proposal due. Presentations.

Week 6 (Oct. 9-11)


Week 7 (October 16-18)


Week 8 (October 23-25)
Th Trinh, I. Response # 13 due.

Week 9 (October 30-Nov. 1)
T Trinh, II. Response # 14 due.
Th Trinh, III. Response # 15 due.

Week 10 (Nov. 6-8)
T Trinh, IV. Response # 16 due.
Th Literature review due. Presentations

Week 11 (Nov. 13-15)
T Presentations.

Week 12 (November 27-29)
T Hesford and Kozol, chapters 4 and 5. Response # 18 due.
Th Hesford and Kozol, chapters 6 and 7. Response # 19 due.

Week 13 (Dec. 4-6)
T Hesford and Kozol, chapters 10 and 11.
Th Research paper due. Presentations.

Week 14 (Dec. 11-13)
T Presentations.
Th Presentations, portfolio due.