

Bridging the Gap: Community and the Rhetoric of Idealism

A genuine community...is a group whose members have made a commitment to communicate with one another on an ever more deep and authentic level. There are very few true communities.

-- M. Scott Peck

Service is the rent we pay for living; it is the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time.

-- Marian Wright Edelman

Greetings,

This course is all about making connections. How will we relate to each other? How will you connect with the people of South Bend at your service venue? How will you link our readings and discussions with your writing and your service experience? How will you translate writing instruction to the pieces you author? We'll see.

I have three goals for the course:

1. to help you improve your writing skills;
2. to promote critical thinking about issues related to community, social justice, and service;
3. to foster a spirit of genuine community in this classroom.

As we move through the semester together, I hope this becomes a class that really matters to you. Know that the quality of your investment will determine the quality of your experience.

Writing

Ours is mainly a course in rhetoric, the art of persuasion. What rhetorical choices must you make to communicate most effectively with your target audience, given your purpose? We'll work to properly answer that question throughout the semester. Here are your writing assignments and due dates. You can find instructions for the assignments in your course packet.

Th	8/30	2 page Personal Narrative
T	9/4	3 page Rhetorical Analysis
T	9/18	3-5 page Definition Argument
T	9/25	Revision of Definition Argument
T	10/9	2 page Reflection/Analysis
T	10/18	Research Proposal
T	10/30	Source Analysis
T	11/6	4-5 page draft of Researched Argument
Th	11/15	2 page Reflection/Analysis
Th	11/20	8-10 page Researched Argument (completed draft)
Th	11/27	3-5 page piece, either Narrative Argument or Evaluation Argument
T	12/15	Final Portfolios due in class

Reading

Course readings, guest speakers, and film explore issues related to community and social justice. You'll need the following books for the course:

- * Course Packet. "Bridging the Gap: Community and the Rhetoric of Idealism" (Bookstore)
- * In the Presence of Fear. Wendell Berry. The Orion Society. (Bookstore)
- * A Pocket Style Manual, Fourth Edition. Diana Hacker. (Bookstore)
- * Good Reasons with Contemporary Arguments. Faigley and Selzer. (Bookstore)

Films

Required: Philadelphia

Optional: "Invisible Children"

Service

Venues: Queen of Peace Convent
Robinson Community Learning Center
South Bend Juvenile Correctional Facility

Holy Cross Care and Rehab
South Bend Center for the Homeless
Other (arrange with me)

Course Structure

We meet twice a week in seminar format. We'll spend most of our time in class either discussing assigned readings or workshopping essays. Sometimes student teams will lead class discussions of readings. On occasion I shall invite guests in to speak with you on course-related issues.

When you meet in groups to discuss your writing, bring photocopies of your work for the other students and submit the "original" to me. Make sure you have all copies ready at the start of class so you can begin to workshop the drafts on time. The Writing Workshop is an important part of this course. I expect you to take it seriously and work hard to establish the kind of climate that will make it successful. Stay focused and avoid the "bull session" temptation. If you finish ahead of time, begin work on your revision or assemble in large groups to focus on a writing issue.

This is **not** a creative writing course; it imposes tasks and demands skills that should challenge you in new ways. Know that I am willing to help whenever possible. I count on you to take advantage of the opportunity for one-on-one conferences.

Participation

We have only twenty-nine days to work together in this course, so let's make the best of the time we have. I expect you to **be here every day, on time, fully prepared**, ready and willing to engage in whatever the task at hand. Your active participation is crucial to the success of this class. I trust you to invest yourself in reading and discussion. Analyze and articulate the choices writers (student and professional) make and how those choices affect you as a reader. When you're up to lead discussion, prepare ahead of time. How can you best engage your classmates in the way you would like to be engaged were you in their place? Be focused, be creative. Don't be afraid to take risks.

An added word about punctuality and attendance: It matters to me that you come to class on time every day. Please spare me the displeasure of having to dock you for being repeatedly late or absent.

If you miss three classes, your grade will be lowered by one full grade. If you miss five classes, you fail the course. If you're late for class more than three times, you risk grade deduction.

Service

Make it a point to share your time on a regular weekly basis (same day, same time, if possible). By doing so, you stand a better chance of establishing a meaningful, satisfying relationship, in turn enriching both your learning and your experience. You need to serve **fifteen hours** to satisfy the course requirement, an average of one hour per week. Of course, if you're moved to serve more hours, great! Orientation time counts toward your total, as do extra service times I'll make available, but travel time to and from the venue does not.

Theme

As the title "Bridging the Gap" suggests, the theme for the course is community building. Kathleen Weigert, former associate director for academic affairs and research at the CSC, tells us that in contemporary American culture "the voices affirming individualism...seem to be muffling those affirming the community" and adds that "the all-pervasive metaphor of the individual as a *consumer* crowds out such metaphors as *citizen* or *neighbor*." This course argues for community, for citizenship, and for social justice. **Moreover, it argues for idealism.** Many of our readings challenge us to transform the world. I'm interested in exploring with you the extent to which that is possible. What responsibilities come with the privilege most of us enjoy? How can we best contribute to the creation of a truly just world?

In "Learning in Community" Parker Palmer defines truth as "an eternal conversation about things that matter, conducted with passion and discipline." I look forward to engaging in that conversation with you, and I hope that our efforts to bridge the various gaps that divide us, both within and without the classroom, reflect the practice of the community of truth, the model of community in education that he claims best enhances and advances the educational mission of knowing, teaching, and learning.

Grades

Commit yourself to writing improvement, to authentic class participation, and to service, and you'll do well in here. This course emphasizes process, so I'll defer grades for your papers until I receive your final portfolio. You'll have all semester to think through and revise your writing. Take advantage of the writing workshops and of one-on-one conferences with me to get feedback that you can use for revision. Written feedback should give you a sense of how you are doing. If you're unsure, just ask. Same goes for class participation. Your service will speak for itself. **Bottom line: your final grade should be consistent with the quality of your investment.**

The University requires that all teachers of first-year students give mid-semester grades. The mid-semester grade that I give you will reflect my best judgment of the overall quality of your performance in my class after eight weeks of observation. I'll meet with each of you to discuss that grade. **However, you should know and your parents should know that neither a low nor a high grade at the midway mark necessarily guarantees a similar grade at the end of the term.** There's just way too much still to be determined in the last half of the semester. I can't stress that enough.

Here's how I'll determine your final grade:

Final portfolio (four papers)	50%
Class preparation and participation , including writing workshops	30%
Service and Reflection/Analysis Papers	15%
Oral presentations (including team-led discussions)	5%

Plagiarism See course packet for complete definition. See also "Avoiding Plagiarism," pages 272-275 in Faigley and Selzer text. Avoid plagiarism at all costs.

Other Honor Code Matters

First, professors assume that any paper submitted by a student for any class was prepared by the student for that specific class. You may not turn in a single paper for two or more different classes/courses unless each professor involved has authorized you to do so in advance. Furthermore, you may not submit for credit a paper that has been used to fulfill the requirements of another course at this or any other school (including high school) without obtaining permission of the current professor in advance. Finally, bogus documentation (claiming information is drawn from a source on a given page when it is not, in fact, drawn from that source or found on that given page) is an honor code violation.

Keeping in Touch

Office: Coffee house in the Center for Social Concerns (picnic tables outside, weather permitting)
Office Hours: 10 AM – noon on Mondays, 1:30 - 3 on Thursdays, or by appointment
Email: ekelly1@nd.edu Mailbox: 205 Coleman-Morse
Home phone: 272-7982 (before 10 PM!)

Calendar

Here is a rough schedule for the semester. Know that I will revise this schedule to meet our needs as we move through the course. Keep this and all "updates" in a safe, accessible place.

As far as your papers are concerned, you must submit a cover sheet (see course packet for sample) with each draft you bring to a writing workshop. When you turn in your portfolio at the end of the semester, be sure to attach a cover sheet for each of your polished drafts, as well. Moreover, be sure to include all preliminary drafts on which I have commented and a cover letter for which I will give you instructions near the semester's end. **Don't throw anything away!**

WEEK ONE

What matters?

T	8/28	Submit completed questionnaires. Icebreaking: defining key terms / introductions / syllabus questions. Discuss Edmundson (CP 2) and Distler (CP13).
Th	8/30	Workshop personal narrative. Guests: Rosie McDowell and former students

assignment.
class. provide information on service venues. Preview rhetorical analysis
Read McNeill (CP 17) and Weil (CP 24) to prepare for Tuesday's

F 8/31 Trip to Q of P and HCCR. Leave CSC @ 3 PM; return by 5 PM (2 hours service credit). This trip is OPTIONAL.

BRING MULTIPLE COPIES OF RHETORICAL ANALYSIS (EACH WITH A COVER SHEET) FOR TUESDAY'S WORKSHOP.

WEEK TWO

Rhetorical Analysis

T 9/4 Workshop rhetorical analyses of McNeill, Weil, or Edmundson. Come to class prepared to discuss all three pieces.

Activities Night @ ACC 7-9 PM

Th 9/6 Preview Week 4 Assignment. Discuss rhetoric of McNeill, Weil, Edmundson. Commit to site orientation.

****Conferences today and Friday to discuss service venues, definition argument, and concerns**

WEEK THREE

Definition

T 9/11 Discuss rhetoric of Lerner, "A Values-Based Education" (CP 29). Preview steps to building a definition argument (F&S, 125-126). Prepare two definitions, "What is Emancipatory Spirituality? And "The Anti-Americans," for discussion on Thursday.

Th 9/13 Small/large group analysis of definition arguments: "What is Emancipatory Spirituality?" (CP 35), What is an "Anti- American"? (CP 89)

BE SURE TO BRING MULTIPLE COPIES OF DRAFT # 1 OF DEFINITION ARGUMENT TO CLASS ON TUESDAY. BE SURE, TOO, TO PROVIDE A COVER SHEET FOR EACH COPY.

WEEK FOUR

Workshop Week

T 9/18 Workshop draft 1. Bring CP with ABCD characteristics to class with you. Tend to claims, stakes, criteria, audience, rhetorical appeals. How fully are the terms of the assignment met? WRITE USEFUL COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT.

Th 9/20 Whole class workshops selected student sample: apply characteristics of ABCD writing.
Guest: Annie Cahill Kelly (and, perhaps, student guests): “Moving From Generosity to Justice.”

PREPARE REVISION FOR TUESDAY.

Sun 9/23 Dinner @ Kelly’s (optional). Meet 5:30 @ Siegfried Circle.
Back by 7:30.

WEEK FIVE **Looking Ahead**

T 9/25 SUBMIT REVISED DRAFTS TO ME WITH ORIGINAL (my copy).
Beginning research: Topics, issues, questions assignment in class. Visit from Jay Caponigro: researching South Bend community issues.

Th 9/27 Bring Pre-library exercise with you to class. We meet today in the Hesburgh Library. Linda Sharp will give you info and hands on experience in library research.

WEEK SIX **Exploring Other Research Issues: Singer and Kingsolver**

T 10/2 Team #1 leads discussion of Singer (CP 45): rhetorical situation? claims? evidence? rhetorical appeals? counterarguments? effectiveness?

Th 10/4 Team #2 leads discussion of Kingsolver (CP 78): see questions above.
Preview reflection/analysis assignment. Read Flower (CP 39) for Tuesday class.

WEEK SEVEN **Making Connections**

T 10/9 Workshop reflection/analysis papers (bring two copies): requirements of theological reflection satisfied? Compare analysis w/ that of Becker (CP 156).
Discuss service in sm/lg groups through the lenses of Flower’s “Partners in Inquiry” and faith tradition.

Th 10/11 Submit papers not submitted Tuesday. Team #3 leads discussion of Berry’s “Thoughts in the Presence of Fear.”

Mid-semester conferences today, tomorrow, and Monday to discuss researched argument, service, and mid-semester grades

WEEK EIGHT **Research Proposals**

T 10/16 Team #4 leads discussion of “Letter to Daniel Kemmis” (CP 49) with attention

making? to rhetoric, as well as issues in dispute. What kind of argument is Berry

Th 10/18 Workshop research proposals in pairs. Individual oral presentations: “what? why? and how?” regarding research assignment. List/analyze research questions as a class. Preview Source Analysis assignment (CP 95, 126)

Fall Break **Enjoy.**

WEEK NINE **Putting a Face on Homelessness**

T 10/30 REVISED PROPOSALS and SOURCE ANALYSIS DUE
Team #5 leads discussion of “Untouchables” (CP 67). Rhetorical situation? Ethos? Logos? Pathos? Effective?

W 10/31 Guest speakers from Hope Rescue Mission, **6:30-7:45, 117 DeBartolo.**
Dinner before at South Dining Hall, 5:15 PM.

Th 11/1 **No class. Conferences, as needed, to discuss proposals and other research-related concerns.**

N.B. - REMEMBER TO PROVIDE COVER SHEETS AND MULTIPLE COPIES FOR TUESDAY’S WORKSHOP

Sun 11/4 **Buy, prepare, and serve meal @ Hope Rescue Mission.** Three and a half hours of service credit. Participation is optional.

WEEK TEN **Film as Argument**

T 11/6 Thank you notes due. Workshop 4-5 page draft of researched argument (should have at least four library sources). Bring characteristics of ABCD writing to class with you. What kind of argument is this: causal? evaluative? proposal? other? combination? Focus on argument and audience.

W 11/7 View Philadelphia, **6:30-8:30, 117 DeBartolo.**

Th 11/8 Process film: rhetorical analysis of scenes from Philadelphia. If time, troubleshoot upper pyramid level concerns from draft one of researched argument.

WEEK ELEVEN **Putting a Face on Homosexuality**

M 11/12 Guest visit: **6:30-7:45, 117DeBartolo**. Dinner before at South Dining Hall. Come to class having read Rice and Cottrell (CP 76, 77).

OUTLINES FOR UNIT TWO ESSAY DUE (Be sure organizational plan is clear.)

T 11/13 **No class. Conferences to discuss researched argument, as needed.**

Th 11/15 Thank you notes due. Process visit. Preview final assignment. Critique Wittman paper (CP 135).
Workshop reflection/analysis papers. Share service experience.

READ AND CRITIQUE PEER RESEARCHED ARGUMENTS MONDAY NIGHT. COME TO CLASS TUESDAY WITH COMPLETED PEER REVIEW SHEET, READY TO SPEND WORKSHOP TIME DISCUSSING YOUR CRITIQUE WITH YOUR PARTNER(S).

WEEK TWELVE **Give Thanks**

T 11/20 Workshop researched argument, with focus on elements of peer review critique sheet. Evaluate using ABCD criteria.

Th 11/22 Thanksgiving

PROVIDE COVER SHEETS AND MULTIPLE COPIES OF FINAL ARGUMENT FOR TUESDAY'S WORKSHOP

WEEK THIRTEEN **Closing Arguments**

T 11/27 Workshop first draft of narrative or evaluation arguments: assignment met?

Th 11/29 Workshop one argument of each type with whole class.

Exit conferences today, tomorrow, and Monday to discuss service and your experience in the course, with an eye toward revision.

WEEK FOURTEEN **Revising**

T 12/4 Review final portfolio requirements.
Discuss "Gifts" (CP 83). Draw for X-C.
Oral presentations: results of research assignment: question, answer (findings),
difficulties, surprises, central claim, counter claim(s), stakeholders, implications?

Th 12/6 FYC/CBL evaluations due.
Conclude oral presentations. Revision work, if time permits.

WEEK FIFTEEN **Closure**

T **12/11** FINAL PORTFOLIOS DUE IN CLASS
TCE'S. Gift exchange.