

First-Year English Program

Spring 2010

Course Descriptions

General Description of 76-100, Reading and Writing in an Academic Context **9 units**

76-100 is a reading and writing course for multilingual students, especially those who are not native speakers of English. Students who have identified themselves as those who speak English as a second or third language rather than as their primary or home language are eligible to take this class. The course, designed as a prerequisite for 76-101, stresses reading in English for comprehension and application of key concepts for writing summaries and short position papers. Students will be introduced to readers' expectations for western rhetorical style at the sentence, paragraph, and whole text levels. Norms for academic English will be explicitly taught within the contexts of these assignments, as well as academic standards for citing sources. Students who take this course will qualify through a placement test that is administered through the university prior to the fall semester.

Section	Class Day/Time	Instructor
A	MWF 11:30-12:20 AM	L. DiPrete
B	MWF 12:30-1:20 PM	Y. Zhao
C	MWF 1:30-2:20 PM	R. Miller

General Description of 76-101, Interpretation and Argument **9 units**

Gen Ed: Fulfills Category 1: Communicating requirement for H&SS and a designated writing course for other colleges.

76-101, a research-based First-Year English course, is structured to introduce students to an inductive process for writing an argument from sources. The course assumes that reading and writing are inseparable practices for responsible, academic authoring. In the course, students are exposed to a variety of different texts, both fiction and nonfiction, so that they can explore and critically evaluate a single issue from multiple perspectives. They are taught to summarize and analyze arguments within that issue so that they may contribute an argument of their own.

The course is also geared toward helping students understand the requirements of college-level writing. Students should learn to be reflective and strategic with their composing processes as they plan, write, and revise their own texts. Ultimately, the course provides opportunities for students to develop critical thinking skills and strategic methods for analyzing and producing texts within the context of an academic community.

Section A

V. Perry

8:30-9:20 AM

Before And After The Crash: Public Argument and The US Economy

What should American economic policy be? What role should the public play in economic decision-making? In normal times we have been content to leave these questions to experts or trust the “free market” to look after itself. The crash of 2008 painfully brought these questions back to center stage. In this section of 76-101 we will examine public arguments about the economy through a variety of media. We will learn just enough economics to understand how it all can go right or wrong, and examine influential arguments that help set the scene. Then we will try to make sense of the often angry public debate over economic policy in the wake of the crash, the bailouts, and the stimulus packages. While considering these issues students will learn important academic reading and writing skills, including the close analysis of argument structure and the synthesis of argumentative positions from a variety of sources. By the end of the term students will write their own informed contribution to the continuing conversation about the American economy that we will engage within this course.

Section B

L. Schmidt

9:30-10:20 AM

The Sokal Affair: the practice of science, the humanities, and academic life in the public sphere

The now decade-old submission of Alan Sokal, a physicist at NYU, to the cultural studies journal *Social Text* set off a furor of press and academic activity when he revealed in *Lingua Franca* that his submission was a ‘hoax.’ He claimed the submission showed the dangerous downward spiral of humanities’ reliance on a postmodern ideology that denies the objective nature of reality and the status of scientific truth. This class will investigate the original submission and responses to it, from press-based reports to physicists and literary theorists’ responses on the pages of academic journals themselves, in order to examine the debates around this incident. We will consider these debates and their importance to the practice of science, the humanities, and academic life in the public sphere. Students in this class will work to engage with this material in order to begin to learn the conventions and challenges of academic controversies and contributions, especially as they move toward writing their own argument analyses, syntheses, and contributions.

Section C

D. Phillips

9:30-10:20 AM

Media and Public Debate

Public debate is necessary to promote an engaged, democratic society, and the media system is the primary means by which information is disseminated to the masses. Yet questions arise as to what it means to be engaged and which form(s) of media best serve this purpose. Complicating the debate is the emergence of new technologies that is threatening the role of traditional journalism in the United States. Do these new media outlets serve to bring the U.S. toward a more unified public sphere or do they, in fact, fragment our society into competing public spheres that actually undermine the unified democratic process?

In this course we will seek to understand the role of media in a democratic society, as well as who is considered a journalist, and ultimately, what such a definition affords. Further, we will unpack the nature of public debate and its ability to support democracy. At the end of the semester, you

should be able to situate your opinions within the context of the larger debate. You will be asked to summarize and synthesize major approaches before offering your own original argument.

Section D

A. Karlin

9:30-10:20 AM

It's All About ME! : Perspectives on Selves and Others

You know who you are, right? If I were to ask you to indicate yourself, you'd probably be able to point to your own body, utter your name, or provide your CMU student ID. But, where and what exactly is the self? What makes you "you"?

This 76-101 section is devoted to examining and debating the construction, function, and existence of a boundary between "self" and "other." Despite our daily, intimate, life-long relationship with our "selves," can we really say we know who we are? From the Sanskrit atman to the Greek psyche, from existentialist analyses to developmental psychological views on consciousness, the "self" has drawn a great deal of attention. We will sift through the arguments of Western philosophers, scientists, and psychologists like Martin Buber, Carl Jung, Jean Paul Sartre, and Abraham Maslow, Eastern thinkers like Shantideva, Lao Tzu, and Patanjali, and contemporary films such as Woody Allen's *Zelig* (1983) and Peter Weir's *The Truman Show* (1998). Based on these authors' representations of "self", we will first produce texts that analyze and synthesize their perspectives in relation to one another. We will then ultimately author our own academic contributions to debates on how definitions of "self" shape how we form relationships, and engage and empathize with others.

Section L

K. Shimmin

9:30-10:20 AM

The Politics of Genocide

What do we do with genocide? In this 76-101 course, we will examine various definitions of genocide and arguments about what are the points of tension that need to be resolved in order for the international community to intervene when genocide occurs. We will draw on the films *The Armenian Genocide*, *The Killing Fields*, and *Beyond the Gates*. We will also consider segments from Samantha Power's Pulitzer Prize winning book, *A Problem from Hell*, to examine how the U.S. has treated the problem of genocide from the Armenian Genocide in World War I, to the so-called "ethnic cleansing" in Cambodia and Rwanda. We will consider arguments for isolation, others for intervention, and still others for suspicion and denial—especially within the ongoing situation in Darfur. As we discuss these perspectives, we will learn strategies for summarizing, synthesizing, and analyzing arguments within an ongoing academic debate. By the end of the course, students will write their own arguments about how we can understand advocacy—or a lack of it—when people are confronted with the ugly reality of genocide.

Section BB

M. Colabuono

10:30-11:20 AM

Who are you? Who cares?

We are confronted with the word identity on a day-to-day basis, but what exactly is identity, and why does it matter? How does our identity affect our daily lives, our notions of who we are, and how we exist within society? To what extent do we control the way our identity is represented in

the world? Do we choose our identities? These are all questions we will explore in this section of 76-101. We will look at theories of identity in general, as well as the way specific identity groups exist and interact within today's society while we consider how various constructions of identity shape culture and in turn are shaped by cultural factors, such as biology, politics, and even technology. Not only will contemporary ideas of identity come into play, but also historical perspectives on identity will aid our exploration of this topic. Students will engage with the subject through class discussion as well as work on their writing skills through a number of writing assignments that will lead them to become contributors to the existing discourse of identity studies.

Section E

N. Datta

10:30-11:20 AM

Surviving Tourism: Stories We Would Really Like To Tell.

Why do people feel the desire to travel to far-off and exotic destinations? Why do tourists willingly submit themselves to the hassles of the airport and immigration checks as they travel abroad? Why do a lot of tourists in contemporary times disassociate themselves from the term “tourist”? How does tourism affect the production of social space? How do various tourist practices reflect changes in the way we have come to think of everyday life? These questions are linked to the ways we construct our identities, both as socially invested individuals and as individuals with a desire to find personal answers to personal questions. This course will allow students to address the issue of how tourism allows us to construct our identities both as social beings and as “unique” individuals. The exposure to this general body of scholarship on tourism allows students to see tourism as a visible manifestation of this identity-construction process.

This 76-101 section assumes that reading, writing, and making arguments are inseparable activities that are part of the process of responsible academic work. Students will utilize various interpretive tools to summarize, synthesize and analyze arguments. By the end of the course, students will ultimately contribute their own position about defining this “fun” filled, expensive activity called “tourism.”

Section EE

D. Haeselin

10:30-11:20 AM

Steal this Course: Piracy, Intellectual Property and Authorship in the Digital Age

“Intellectual property is the oil of the 21st Century”- Mark Getty

The Internet has fundamentally changed the ways in which Western people access, use and distribute information. This shift has spurred arguments about the nature of intellectual property, which, in turn, reconfigure notions of the need for individual privacy and the very nature of economic production. This section of Interpretation and Argument will explore the debates surrounding cyberculture while attempting to formulate critical approaches to the questions: Can and should the current system of copyright protection reliably and justly promote innovation without infringing on basic notions of privacy and anonymity, even on globally linked networks? How do authorship and ownership change in this climate? And, perhaps ultimately, do the technological advances of the digital age foster a pragmatic space for progressive thinking, or do these advances simply underscore the contradictions of contemporary society?

Besides reading scholarly and journalistic articles from no earlier than the last four years, students

will interact with some forms of media and texts that the class interrogates, including, for example, musical “mashups,” which are collages of music that complicate the definition of copyright protection and question the nature of artistic “originality.” Students will engage these questions, texts, and objects in order to learn central moves in academic argument so that they can write their own positions concerning the future of the Internet and its possible need for reform.

Section F

D. Markowicz

10:30-11:20

Defining Terrorism

Terrorism has become a central element in contemporary American politics and international conflict. But pinpointing a definition of terrorism has proven to be elusive. This course will explore different interests behind competing definitions of terrorism and their political implications. Is terrorism merely a destructive force bent on undermining Western civilization? Is it a politically necessary tactic or strategy? Is it used only by the powerless to resist domination? Or do powerful states and institutions also use terror for their own purposes? What forms of protest are labeled as “terrorism” and who has the authority to make such distinctions?

This writing course will provide students with an entry into contemporary arguments concerning issues of terrorism and power using texts that demonstrate a wide array of disciplinary styles—including cultural analysis, testimonials, fiction and film. Students will interrogate these texts through a sequence of assignments (argument analysis, issue analysis, and contribution) that will allow them to critically examine competing definitions of terrorism.

Section G

D. Dickson-LaPrade

10:30-11:20 PM

Evil in America

Is religion the root of all evil? Or is the lack of religion? Should we blame mindless obedience to authority and tradition for the world’s evils? Or individualistic, hedonistic rejection of authority and tradition? Are conservative ideas and policies more likely to generate evil, or liberal ones? In this section of 76-101, students will examine a variety of arguments regarding the nature and causes of evil in the United States, as well as how the world’s evils should be remedied. Students will analyze these arguments using a variety of conceptual tools, describe how these varying arguments work against and inform one another, and finally enter the argument themselves in a contribution assignment. In addition to learning what different authors have to say about the nature, causes, and remedies for evil, students will also gain experience with the argumentative strategies which authors use to make opposing positions seem despicable, irrational, and dangerous, and to make their own seem desirable, reasonable, and practical.

Section H

K. Holterhoff

10:30-11:20 AM

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Armenian Genocide, The Killing Fields, and Beyond the Gates. We will also consider segments from Samantha Power's Pulitzer Prize winning book, *A Problem from Hell*, to examine how the U.S. has treated the problem of genocide from the Armenian Genocide in World War I, to the so-called "ethnic cleansing" in Cambodia and Rwanda. We will consider arguments for isolation, others for intervention, and still others for suspicion and denial—especially within the ongoing situation in Darfur. As we discuss these perspectives, we will learn strategies for summarizing, synthesizing, and analyzing arguments within an ongoing academic debate. By the end of the course, students will write their own arguments about how we can understand advocacy—or a lack of it—when people are confronted with the ugly reality of genocide.

Section I

J. Bowman

11:30-12:20 AM

Understanding Tragedy

In conversations about books and films, we often classify a text by genre: it's a comedy, a drama, a romance, a romantic comedy. In this section of 76-101, we will focus on generic classifications and the role of genre in interpretation, and more specifically on arguments about tragedy, beginning with Aristotle. What defines tragedy? How can we recognize a tragic character, tragic action? What is the role of fate and fortune in the tragic plot? Why are tragedies pleasurable? How does understanding a generic form and its use in a particular work contribute to meaning and interpretation? In addition to a selection of readings that define tragedy, we will consider the artistic and social functions of genre and the effects of generic instability.

In the context of genre criticism, this course introduces you to an inductive process for writing an argument from sources. The course assumes that reading and writing are inseparable practices for responsible, academic authoring. You will be exposed to a variety of different texts so that you can explore and critically evaluate a single issue from multiple perspectives. You will summarize and analyze arguments within that issue so that you may contribute an argument of your own. The course is also geared toward helping you understand the requirements of college-level writing. You should learn to be reflective and strategic with your composing processes as you plan, write, and revise your own texts. Ultimately, the course provides opportunities for you to develop critical thinking skills and strategic methods for analyzing and producing texts within the context of an academic community.

Section J

L. Schmidt

11:30-12:20 AM

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The now decade-old submission of Alan Sokal, a physicist at NYU, to the cultural studies journal *Social Text* set off a furor of press and academic activity when he revealed in *Lingua Franca* that his submission was a 'hoax.' He claimed the submission showed the dangerous downward spiral of humanities' reliance on a postmodern ideology that denies the objective nature of reality and the status of scientific truth. This class will investigate the original submission and responses to it, from press-based reports to physicists and literary theorists' responses on the pages of academic journals themselves, in order to examine the debates around this incident. We will consider these debates and their importance to the practice of science, the humanities, and academic life in the public sphere. Students in this class will work to engage with this material in order to begin to

learn the conventions and challenges of academic controversies and contributions, especially as they move toward writing their own argument analyses, syntheses, and contributions.

Section K

E. Vazquez

11:30-12:20 PM

76-101 One Man = Total War: Globalization, Violence and Terrorism.

Terrorism has become a central element in contemporary American politics and international conflict. But pinpointing a definition of terrorism has proven to be elusive. This course will explore the different interests behind competing definitions of terrorism and their political implications. Is terrorism merely a destructive force bent on undermining Western civilization? Is it a politically necessary tactic or strategy? Is it used only by the powerless to resist domination? Or do powerful states and institutions also use terror for their own purposes? What forms of protest are labeled as “terrorism” and who has the authority to make such distinctions? Is terrorism something deriving from ancient influences? Or a wholly new form of politics?

This writing course will provide students with an entry into contemporary arguments concerning issues of terrorism and power using texts that demonstrate a wide array of disciplinary styles—including cultural analysis, testimonials, interviews, fiction and film. Students will interrogate these texts through a sequence of assignments (argument summary, issue analysis, and contribution) that will allow them to critically examine competing definitions of terrorism.

Section FF

S. Seibert

12:30-1:20 PM

Art and Society

This course will look at debates concerning art and its place within Western culture. Classical theories by Aristotle and Plato read alongside more contemporary theories show the complicated issues that surround definitions of art. Essays written by art critics and authors in a variety of genres will be assigned to illustrate classic and contemporary debates on aesthetics, the imagination, and the author. Students will complete the three core 76-101 writing assignments: Argument Summary, Argument Synthesis, and Contribution. By the end of the semester, students will construct their own arguments about an issue on art and society.

Section M

J. Wilton

12:30-1:20 PM

Documentary in the Age of “Reality” Culture

When *Fahrenheit 9/11* won the Palme D’Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 2004, rumor spread that the jury’s decision was based on the film’s politics, rather than its artistic merit. “You can’t strangle this movie with the title documentary,” jury member Quentin Tarantino argued in the film’s defense, “Michael Moore is f---ing with the format to bring us a movie-documentary-critical essay.” Controversies like this one not only challenge our notions of art and politics, but also raise important questions about information and entertainment in the 21st century. Even as filmmakers like Moore win high prizes for artistry, reality TV and radio documentary offer “real” stories as popular entertainment. The rising quality and sinking price of digital technology makes just about anyone a potential documentarian, but the glut of documentary products renders it less likely that anyone’s work will be seen. Are we becoming more and more preoccupied with “real,” and do documentaries actually show reality? Or, do documentaries question reality?

These (and other) questions will serve as the focus for this 76-101 course. We will use academic and non-fiction texts, film, television, and radio to explore this issue, with an eye towards the future of political art in the 21st century. Students will write essays that analyze the arguments and issues surrounding the documentary form, culminating in an essay in which they make a contribution to our contemporary knowledge of this unique art form.

Section N

A. Teagarden

12:30-1:20 PM

I Am Science and So Can You!

This course looks at historical descriptions of science as a discipline and the contemporary debate about what makes someone a scientist or something scientific. Is science a method for observing the world (which anyone can practice) or an acculturation to professional norms (that requires specific training)? Whether as close as campus or far-reaching as national policy, definitions of science often silently, but always powerfully, affect views on critical issues: how students get taught, whose research gets funded, where accountability lies, and what truth is pronounced. Over the semester students will read a sample of arguments that attempt, in various ways, to define what science is. We will also look at what (and how) definitions underpin various popular media depictions of science. Along with analysis of the individual arguments, students will produce syntheses of the course readings and, in the final part of the semester, develop, compose, and present their own research projects, which will be expected to contribute in some way to the ongoing discussions in the fields of science studies.

Section O

J. Reeves

12:30-1:20 PM

Evil in America

Is religion the root of all evil? Or is the lack of religion? Should we blame mindless obedience to authority and tradition for the world's evils? Or individualistic, hedonistic rejection of authority and tradition? Are conservative ideas and policies more likely to generate evil, or liberal ones? In this section of 76-101, students will examine a variety of arguments regarding the nature and causes of evil in the United States, as well as how the world's evils should be remedied. Students will analyze these arguments using a variety of conceptual tools, describe how these varying arguments work against and inform one another, and finally enter the argument themselves in a contribution assignment. In addition to learning what different authors have to say about the nature, causes, and remedies for evil, students will also gain experience with the argumentative strategies which authors use to make opposing positions seem despicable, irrational, and dangerous, and to make their own seem desirable, reasonable, and practical.

Section P

M. Thompson

12:30-1:20 PM

Society and the Individual

Are humans unconscious bundles of animalistic drives whose primitive violence can only be held in check by the civilizing constraints of society? Or is society an oppressive force intent on shackling the glory of the individual? Are we ethically justified when we refuse to obey unjust laws? Or does acceptance of society's protection oblige us to follow its dictates? Are we

obligated to contribute to the common good? Is selfishness a virtue? In this class, we attempt to figure where the rights of the individual intersect with the reality that we exist within complex systems of competition, support, and control. Drawing primarily from philosophy, we begin with Hobbes, Rousseau, and Mill before moving into more modern instances of a debate whose roots stretch back to the dawn of civilization itself.

Section II

K. Hamilton

12:30-1:20 AM

The Politics of Genocide

What do we do with genocide? In this 76-101 course, we will examine various definitions of genocide and arguments about what are the points of tension that need to be resolved in order for the international community to intervene when genocide occurs. We will draw on the films *The Armenian Genocide*, *The Killing Fields*, and *Beyond the Gates*. We will also consider segments from Samantha Power's Pulitzer Prize winning book, *A Problem from Hell*, to examine how the U.S. has treated the problem of genocide from the Armenian Genocide in World War I, to the so-called "ethnic cleansing" in Cambodia and Rwanda. We will consider arguments for isolation, others for intervention, and still others for suspicion and denial—especially within the ongoing situation in Darfur. As we discuss these perspectives, we will learn strategies for summarizing, synthesizing, and analyzing arguments within an ongoing academic debate. By the end of the course, students will write their own arguments about how we can understand advocacy—or a lack of it—when people are confronted with the ugly reality of genocide.

Section HH

H. Steffen

1:30-2:20 PM

What Does It Mean to Be a Student? What Is It to Study?

Who are contemporary college students? Are you money-hungry future yuppies? Empty-headed whirlwinds of texts and tweets? Seekers of deep knowledge? Beer-swilling party addicts? Debt-laden, superexploited workers? None of these things, or all of them?

This section of 76-101 will focus on the ongoing debate about who today's college students are and what it means to study in the twenty-first century university. Most of the essays we will read are by professors, journalists, cultural critics, and other non-students. Therefore, this course equips you to interpret and critique scholarly arguments while it asks you to write back to those who represent you without your permission or input. You will critically consider your position as "ones who study" and explore the meaning of this ubiquitous, but often un-reflected-upon, activity. Students will interact with the course readings through a variety of in-class activities and by completing the three core 76-101 writing assignments, which will scaffold you toward becoming clearer academic writers and craftspeople of convincing arguments.

Section R

D. Cloud

1:30-2:20 PM

Is Gay the New Black?

In Barack Obama's election-day victory speech, he claimed that his election represented a victory for all Americans, be they young, old, rich, poor, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled and not disabled. When we talk about oppressed groups, is it really as simple as being in or out, oppressed or not oppressed? In other words, is the difference between black and white the same as disabled and not disabled or gay and straight? For example, many have drawn a comparison between bans on same-sex marriage and now-defunct prohibitions on

interracial marriage. Does this mean that these two civil rights struggles and the groups behind them are essentially the same? In this section of 76-101, we will explore the historical, political and personal issues involved in comparing civil rights movements, specifically the African American and LGBT movements. Students will first learn to analyze and synthesize other authors' views on the relationship between civil rights groups organized around race and sexual orientation. By the end of the semester, students will be ready to enter the debate and make their own argument about what it means to talk about minority status and civil rights in an increasingly pluralistic society.

Section S

E. Hanbury

1:30-2:20 PM

Public Opinion & Democracy: Under the influence?

This section of 76-101 will address the place of public opinion in democratic theory in the 20th Century. While the roles of the individual citizen and public opinion are assumed in dictionary-like or common sense notions of democracy, we will read theorists and critics who support, deny, and/or alter those roles. The authors we will read include Edward Bernays, John Dewey, Walter Lippmann, Joseph Schumpeter, and others. In looking at this ongoing conversation, we will examine different notions of what the public is, how the public's opinion(s) is formed, and the factors that are said to influence it. Some of the topics that we will encounter and grapple with during the course of this class are propaganda, persuasion, education, intelligence, knowledge, critical capacity, leadership, expertise, advertising, etc. Through a collection of readings, visual images, music, and video, this section will explore and attempt to make sense of the terms 'public opinion' and 'democracy,' how they are constructed within the above debate, and how some see the relationships among citizens, public opinion, influence, and the workings of a democratic society. Rather than quickly 'take sides,' we will first seek to come to an understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, concerns, assumptions, and (possible) worth of various perspectives. During this exploration, students will develop fundamental critical thinking skills in interpretation and argument for the purposes of reading and composition (summary, synthesis, analysis, and contribution).

Section T

D. Schuldt

1:30-2:20 PM

Comics are for Kids; Comics are Art

Are comic books an artistic medium or a form of children's literature? There has been a long-standing tension in American society between the public's general stereotype that comics are an innocent form of children's literature and the actual role that the artistic form of the comic book has played. This section of 76-101 will focus on the tensions between the artistic medium of the comic book and its accepted role as children's literature. Throughout the semester we will engage this discussion from a variety of positions including history of the medium, race, gender, ideological propaganda, children's culture, and the role of art in society. After learning to summarize, synthesize and analyze arguments about the role of comics as a medium in American culture, students will write their own arguments about a comic book and its implications as a product of American culture.

Section GG

K. Sampsel

1:30-2:20 PM

Is Popular Culture Ruining Our Children?

As many media scholars have pointed out, the history of mass media is the history of anxiety regarding its influence. Today's apprehensions about trashy TV and violent video games, for instance, are the contemporary equivalent of fears from a hundred years ago concerning "licentious" books and seedy movie houses. On one hand, most of us are skeptical about the influence of our media and pop culture: we just can't believe that rap videos or action movies can make someone a bad person, that media can truly affect us. On the other hand, we see corporations and advertising agencies spend billions based on the assumption that they can influence us using the media. We acknowledge that the music we love and the movies we watch help us figure out the clothes we wear, the people we hang out with, and the way we spend our evenings and weekends. Even the old belief that reading great literature and viewing classic films will make you a "good" and "well-rounded" person suggests that media has the power to impact us.

In this course we're going to take media and pop culture seriously. Although starting with a brief history of media anxiety for the sake of background, we'll ultimately focus on today's media, reading a variety of texts that speak to this tricky question of influence as related to books, advertisements, magazines, movies, pop music, television, pornography, and so on. These are the subjects on which we'll be practicing and developing our critical reading, critical thinking, and critical writing skills: both in the classroom and in writing, students will assess, analyze, synthesize, and respond to arguments about the influence of mass media and popular culture. At the end of the course, students will contribute to the discussion with their own argument. This course intends to make students better critics, shrewder consumers, and most importantly, stronger writers.

Section DD

C. Commer

2:30-3:20 PM

The Politics of Genocide

What do we do with genocide? In this 76-101 course, we will examine various definitions of genocide and arguments about what are the points of tension that need to be resolved in order for the international community to intervene when genocide occurs. We will draw on the films *The Armenian Genocide*, *The Killing Fields*, and *Beyond the Gates*. We will also consider segments from Samantha Power's Pulitzer Prize winning book, *A Problem from Hell*, to examine how the U.S. has treated the problem of genocide from the Armenian Genocide in World War I, to the so-called "ethnic cleansing" in Cambodia and Rwanda. We will consider arguments for isolation, others for intervention, and still others for suspicion and denial—especially within the ongoing situation in Darfur. As we discuss these perspectives, we will learn strategies for summarizing, synthesizing, and analyzing arguments within an ongoing academic debate. By the end of the course, students will write their own arguments about how we can understand advocacy—or a lack of it—when people are confronted with the ugly reality of genocide.

Section U

K. Lundgren

2:30-3:20 PM

Religion and Power

Whether as a form of resistance or as a source of domination, religion often plays a role in discussions of power, legitimacy, and violence. What is religion, and how do differing

understandings of religion affect its relationship to power? In this section of Interpretation & Argument, we will explore the factors that determine whether religion becomes a force for liberation or oppression, and chart the connections between religion, power, legitimacy, and violence. The course material will emphasize the Abrahamic faiths of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Students will read and construct arguments connecting different perspectives on religion to a variety of issues, such as politics, war, homosexuality, and the role of women. Course material will draw upon political theory, theology, current events, film, and other sources. Over the course of the semester, students will learn to analyze an argument, synthesize differing perspectives on an issue, and ultimately contribute to an ongoing academic conversation about the nature of religion and its relationship to power, legitimacy, and violence.

Section V

M. Nelson

2:30-3:20 PM

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Section Q

D. Schuldt

2:30-3:20 PM

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Section AA

M. Zebrowski

3:30-4:20

Fans and Fan Culture

Moshing. Tailgating. Buying prohibitively expensive Darth Vader costumes or Starfleet uniforms. Standing shirtless and screaming in the bleachers in sub-freezing temperatures with

your body and face painted your team's colors. These are all the types of things fans do that just don't make sense to people who aren't in the know. This section of 76-101 uses these types of experiences as a gateway into a broader discussion about what exactly it means to be a fan. How are our experiences of cultural events mediated by our fandom? Are fans idle receptors of the media they enjoy, the ultimately committed consumers, or do they contribute to and shape it in some way that creatively transcends consumerism? Is creative fiction/artwork by fans a participatory event or a co-opting that violates copyright law? How does being a fan influence our activities and our ideology outside of fan culture?

We will consider all these questions and more as we read a number of academic arguments about fan culture from cultural studies and sociology. We will also consider primary sources including films and memoirs that document fan events. We will practice valuable skills necessary for successful academic argumentation, and by the end of the semester, you will have produced an argument about fan culture of your own creation. Our goal in this course is to use our discussions of the phenomenon of fandom to model academic discourse at large and hone the skills necessary to analyze and synthesize arguments about any topic.

Section JJ

S. Hagan

3:30-4:20

Do images speak? (How do you know?)

If pictures can substitute for thousands of words, how do you know when you have the right ones—words that the artists and photographers who created those images would write, or a standard interpretation on which a community could agree? In this course, we'll consider research that suggests the possibility of similar interpretations, as well as research that suggests an image's interpretation usually begins and ends in the mind of the individual. Then again, is it reasonable to compare an image to a text, or do images offer something that text doesn't contain? Theorists argue for both of these possibilities as well. Coming to terms with these conflicting perspectives and arriving at your own point of view is useful because images have become a ubiquitous part of communication—meaning that understanding theories concerning image and image/text communication can help you decide when you are being manipulated either by the image or by the critic's interpretation of that image. Before finding your own perspective, you'll first learn to summarize one of our readings, so that you can later synthesize a variety of articles into a coherent theme that identifies the value and problematic aspects within that theme. After synthesis, you will develop your own argument about how images work and present your argument contribution in class.

To aid in this process, we will consider not only the physical workings of eye and brain, but also the personal, social, and cultural perspectives that affect interpretation as we discuss images from Pulitzer Prize winning photographs to

