

Introduction to Literary Research

LITT 2123-001

Fall 2009

MWF 12:45-2:00

B-014

Thomas Kinsella

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Office: J-230, Ext. 4419

Office Hours: MW 2:30-5:00; and by appointment. I'm on campus most days. During the early part of the semester I will be haunting the library.

652-4419

This is a Writing-Across-The-Curriculum-Course.

Required Texts

Paine, Thomas. *Common Sense and Related Writings*. The Bedford Series in History and Culture. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000. ISBN-13: 978-0312201487.

Birkenstein, Cathy, and Gerald Graff. *They Say/I Say: Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. W.W. Norton & Co., 2007. ISBN-13: 978-0393065459.

Hacker, Dianna. *Writer's Reference*. 6th edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's. ISBN-13: 978-0312593322.

LittResearch Blog — a good spot for class information.

Goals & Focus of Course

This course introduces the techniques of research that every literature major at Stockton is expected to master. Students are taught to develop reasonable paths of inquiry and to make skillful use of paper and electronic resources in support of their research. They are expected to analyze scholarly information effectively and to formulate well-supported and well-written arguments. The expectations of this course are high.

Expectations and Policies

Much of the work of this course will take place outside the classroom. There may be days when class ends early in order to pursue research; there may be research days when class does not meet. Attendance, therefore, is mandatory. More than 3 absences and your grade will drop one mark; more than 5 and it will drop two marks; more than 7 and you will not pass.

Understand that many of these assignments call for in-depth research and cannot be done at the last moment. I intend to rigorously enforce the due dates in this syllabus. You will need to plan accordingly. If you need extra help, ask for it. E-mail is an excellent way to contact me.

All writing should be error-free. You are expected to proofread for typographical, spelling, mechanical, and grammatical errors. I will mark down substantially for mechanical and grammatical errors. Proofread and revise vigorously.

I will not give incompletes at the end of the semester unless you have warned me well in advance and have appropriate reasons.

I will not accept papers as email attachments unless an assignment calls for it or previous arrangements are made.

It is not my responsibility to make sure that you have handed in all assignments; it is yours. *All* assignments for the class must be completed in order to receive a passing grade.

Etiquette

Lateness disrupts the learning experience of other students (and distracts me), so make every effort to arrive on time. Two instances of lateness (or leaving before the end of class) will count as one absence.

For obvious reasons, please silence cell phones and do not text message, check email, listen to music, or surf the web during class. Also (and it seems strange to write this), please do not spit your gum on the pavement outside college buildings; dispose of it properly.

Assignments

Reference Resources (5%)

Recognizing Scholarship (10%)

Citation Mechanics and other quizzes [announced and unannounced] (10%)

Research Questions (15%)

Single Annotation & Paraphrase Assignment (10%)

Common Sense Class Project (10%)

Powerpoint Presentation (10%)

Draft of final paper, preliminary bibliography and research process (5%)

Final Paper: annotated bibliography & essay (25%)

Extra Credit: Attend and review 2 outside events (5%)

Description of Major Assignments

Recognizing Scholarship. You will be reading and evaluating the opening pages (or complete texts) of approximately 8 secondary sources. Using both extrinsic and intrinsic clues (such as information about the author, publisher or journal that might be obtained from MLA or Academic Search Premiere, as well as the quality of writing and research itself) discuss the ways in which these sources might, or might not, be considered scholarly. The paper you turn in for this assignment will be prepared as an essay, with a title, an introductory paragraph and conclusion, approximately 1-2 paragraphs of discussion per source, and a list of works cited.

Citation mechanics quizzes. When a mechanics quiz is assigned, you will need to go to the website for the Diana Hacker book, *A Writer's Reference*. This will take you to the homepage. In the right hand corner, near the top of the page, you'll see a column that says "Register." Click on the link for "Student" below. You will need to register in order to complete the exercises. For "instructor email" please type in my full email address, as follows: thomas.kinsella@stockton.edu. When you are registered, logged in, and ready to do the work, you can go to the link for "Research Exercises" and complete the assigned exercises. Your results will automatically be sent directly to me. Your goal is to answer

at least 8 out of 10 questions correctly on each exercise set. If you receive an average of 80% or above on the assigned exercises (listed on the schedule below), you will receive a grade of 100% for your Citation Mechanics quiz grade. If you have completed the assigned exercises, but have not achieved an average score of 80%, you may complete the following additional exercises to raise your average: 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4, 4-2, and 4-5. These exercises must be completed no later than September 21.

Research Questions. You will receive up to 10 research questions in this very important assignment. You are expected to spend *extensive* time in Stockton's library tracking down answers. Most of the questions cannot be adequately researched using the web. If you do find answers using the web, you are required to verify the answer using the resources of the Stockton library. Failure to verify web answers with print sources will result in points being deducted. Submit answers and a thoughtful description of your research process in a well-written format. Students frequently ask whether this research can be completed at local town libraries. The short answer is no. Other college libraries will provide many of these answers, but most local libraries do not have the reference sources or academic focus needed to complete research of this sort.

Annotation and Paraphrase Assignment. This assignment is completed in preparation for the final research essay. You will be asked to locate one or two articles on Tom Paine's work and to place helpful annotations of each article online. You will also be asked to identify and paraphrase the main and supporting arguments.

Common Sense Class Project. As a class we will be creating an annotated, pdf edition of Tom Paine's *Common Sense*. Each student will be in charge of annotating a portion of the essay or of writing a contextual essay.

PowerPoint Presentation. You will complete research on another 18th-19th century American writer (to be assigned) and present your knowledge to the class. Individual presentations will take 8-10 minutes.

Final paper. Students will write a research essay of at least 8 pages on Paine or the writer you researched for your PowerPoint presentation (your previous assignments should help you to come up with ideas for this project). In addition, you will include an annotated bibliography with at least 15 appropriate scholarly sources. Articles from websites will not be accepted as scholarly sources. The essay itself must incorporate the work of at least five of these scholarly sources. This is the culmination of the course; it should be a work of substance.

Extra Credit. Students may gain extra credit by attending and reviewing 2 outside campus events. Example events include Visiting Writer Series Readings, campus dramatic performances, art gallery openings, dance program performances. Each review must be at least two pages double spaced.

Special Needs

Students with disabilities who seek accommodations should contact the Learning Access Program located in West Quad 110 (609/652-4998). More information can be found at www2.stockton.edu/wellness/lap.html.

Academic Honesty

The Literature program expects students to maintain the highest standard of academic honesty. You should make yourself aware of The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey's Academic Honesty Policy, which can be found in the Student Handbook (intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=67&pageID=2#10). You should also make yourself familiar with the penalties for violations of the policy and your rights as a student.

Please be aware that plagiarism (one form of academic dishonesty) includes, but may not be limited to using all or part of a source, either directly or in paraphrase, either intentionally or unintentionally, whether that source is published, or online, or taken from a fellow or former student, without properly acknowledging that source. If you are found to have represented the work or ideas of others as your own, intentionally, or unintentionally, you will face serious consequences, as follows:

1. If this is the first time the student has been found to have plagiarized, he or she will receive an “F” for that paper or assignment and/or the course.
2. For second offenses of plagiarism, the student will receive an “F” for the course.
3. Whenever possible, a student who is found to have plagiarized a paper or assignment, in full or in part, should meet with the professor of the class for which the paper is written in order to review and discuss the suspect work. Additionally, and in accordance with Stockton College policy, Literature faculty will report all instances of plagiarism to the Provost of Academic Affairs. Students may be subject to discipline by the college, such as being placed on academic probation or expelled. If you have a question specific to a paper you are working on, please bring it to my attention. I will be happy to discuss areas of ambiguity that may exist in your understanding of plagiarism.

Expectations and Policies

Writing for this course should demonstrate the ability to formulate interesting and intelligent arguments that are both well-supported and well-written. Expectations for this course are high. Below are brief descriptions of ways that I will grade writing in this course.

A: Excellent work. Written arguments are intelligent, creative, logically constructed, and complete; they are well supported with evidence from primary texts and/or theoretical discussions gleaned from secondary texts; prose is uniformly well-written (phrasing and sentences are clear and concise, not awkward, not wordy, diction is appropriate); punctuation and grammar are excellent.

B: Good work. Written arguments are generally well constructed and complete, but some ideas might be developed at further depth; ideas are generally supported with evidence from primary texts and/or theoretical discussions gleaned from secondary texts; prose is generally well-written with a few stylistic weaknesses (a few phrases and sentences are not clear or concise; there are limited amounts of awkward or wordy prose; some diction is inappropriate); punctuation and grammar are good but not excellent.

C: Average work: Written arguments are generally clear but not well constructed or complete in all areas; ideas might be developed in further depth; ideas are asserted but not always supported with evidence from primary texts and/or theoretical discussions; prose displays stylistic weaknesses (phrases and sentences are not clear or concise; prose in places is awkward or wordy; diction is sometimes inappropriate); punctuation and grammar appear to be understood but not consistently applied.

D: Passing work (Note: “C-,” “D+,” and “D” work is considered passing by the college as a whole and is acceptable for ASD and General Studies courses but not for Literature program courses. Only grades of “C” or above will stand for credit within the literature degree). Written arguments are reasonably understandable but not well constructed or complete; ideas need to be developed in further depth; ideas are not always supported with evidence from primary texts and/or theoretical discussions; prose displays general stylistic weaknesses (phrases and sentences are not clear or concise; prose is often awkward or wordy; diction is inappropriate); punctuation and grammar are inconsistently or incorrectly applied.

F: Failing work (not acceptable for college credit). Written arguments are not reasonably understandable and not well constructed or complete; ideas need to be developed in further depth; ideas are usually not supported with evidence from primary texts and/or theoretical discussions; prose displays a range of stylistic weaknesses (phrases and sentences are not clear or concise; prose is often awkward or wordy; diction is inappropriate); punctuation and grammar do not appear to be understood and are inconsistently applied.

WEEK 1

W 9/2 Introduction to the course.

Literature Resources assignment described.

Readings assigned: Cornell's Library Tutorials and Skills Guides — Evaluating Sources; wikipedia discussion pieces (on blog).

F 9/4 Wikipedia and evaluating sources pieces discussed.

Reading assigned: Francis Canavan's "The Relevance of the Burke-Paine Controversy to American Political Thought," *The Review of Politics* 49, 2 (Spring, 1987), 163-76 {find it on *Jstor*}.

Joining the Literature Listserve.

WEEK 2

M 9/7 Labor Day — College closed.

W 9/9 Brief discussion of Canavan essay.

Introduction to resources and research strategies at Stockton.

Pages 1, 2, and 8 of Reference Resources due in class.

{Deadline to drop a course with a 100% refund.}

F 9/11 **Page 19 of Reference Resources assignment due in class.**

Sample Recognizing Scholarship packet handed out.

Reading Assigned: *Common Sense and Related Writings*: Preface, Introduction, 1-26.

WEEK 3

M 9/14 Introduction to Tom Paine and *Common Sense*.

Reading Assigned: *Common Sense and Related Writings*: Introduction, 27-56.

Review guidelines on MLA format in Hacker, 378-404.

On-line quizzes assigned: E-ex MLA 4-3, 4-4, and 4-6.

W 9/16 Discuss Sample Recognizing Scholarship packet and how to evaluate sources.

Recognizing Scholarship packet handed out.

Reading Assigned: Hacker, 358-378.

On-line Hacker quizzes assigned: E-ex MLA 2-1, 3-1, and 4-1.

F 9/18 Review of citation mechanics and plagiarism issues.

Short film: *Crediting Your Sources* (call #: VH LB CYS).

A Second Short Film: *The Citation Strikes Back!*

Reference Resources assignment due in class.

You should be beginning work on Recognizing Scholarship.

WEEK 4

M 9/21 Individual Research Questions handed out.

Strategies for approaching research questions. Evaluating research materials; how to discover trends or focus in criticism, strategies for approaching questions.

Finishing up Recognizing Scholarship.

Beginning work on Research Questions.

All on-line Hacker quizzes must be completed by this date.

W 9/23 Evaluating research materials: how to identify standard/authoritative editions and biographies, strategies for approaching research questions.

F 9/25 **Recognizing Scholarship assignment due in class.**

Strategies for approaching research questions.

WEEK 5

M 9/28 **Your answer to one of your Research Questions (your choice) with citation due in class.** Strategies for approaching research questions.

W 9/30 Further discussion of Research Questions.

{October 1st is the Deadline to file for Fall 2009 graduation application without financial penalty.}

F 10/2 Single Annotation/Paraphrase assignment introduced.

Read Hacker, 57-66. {Deadline to withdraw from a full-term course with a 50% refund.}

WEEK 6

M 10/5 Assigned Reading: *They Say / I Say*, part 1.

Proofread and edit Research Questions.

W 10/7 **Individual Research Questions due in class.**

F 10/9 Tom Paine & Common Sense Annotation Project assigned.

WEEK 7

M 10/12 Assigned Reading: *They Say / I Say*, part 2.

W 10/14 **Single Annotation/Paraphrase due in class.**

Reading Assigned: *Common Sense*.

F 10/16 Discussion of *Common Sense*.

Discussion of possible paper topics.

Assigned Reading: "African Slavery in America," "A Serious Thought," "A Dialogue between General Wolfe and General Gage in a Wood Near Boston" (in *Common Sense and Related Writings*).

WEEK 8

M 10/19 Discussion of Part Two documents in *Common Sense and Related Writings*.

W 10/21 Powerpoint Assignment introduced.

Handout sample essays.

Assigned Reading: “The Forester” and “The American Crisis”
(in *Common Sense and Related Writings*).

F 10/23 Research Essay and Annotated Bibliography
assignments introduced.

Read sample essays.

Review of sample theses and essays.

{Spring 2010 Preregistration Schedule of Classes posted.}

WEEK 9

M 10/26 Review of sample bibliographies.

Do’s and Don’ts of writing an annotated bibliography and
discussion of topics for final research essays.

Identify a topic for final Research Essay.

T 10/27 Preceptorial Advising - no classes

W 10/28 Work on Thomas Paine and *Common Sense*
Annotation Project.

F 10/30 Discussion of writing.

WEEK 10

M 11/2 **Tom Paine and *Common Sense* Annotation Project**
pieces due through email to Thomas.Kinsella@stockton.edu.

Thesis workshop. Read Hacker, 3-11, 355-358.

W 11/4 Preceptorial Advising - no classes until 3:35PM

F 11/6 **Draft of thesis statement, due in class.** Thesis
workshop. Assigned Reading: *They Say / I Say*, part 3.

WEEK 11

M 11/9 Reading Day.

W 11/11 Class meets in Computer Lab D-018.

F 11/13 Reading Day.

WEEK 12

M 11/16 In-class rough draft workshop.

Research Essay rough draft (at least 3 typed pages) and preliminary Annotated Bibliography (5 sources) due in class.

W 11/18 Arguments, introductions, and incorporating secondary sources.

Read Hacker, 362-371.

F 11/20 Arguments, introductions, and incorporating secondary sources.

WEEK 13

M 11/23 Arguments, introductions, and incorporating secondary sources.

Read Hacker, 67-90.

Discussion of final papers and Powerpoint issues.

Read blog posts on “Presenting with Powerpoint.”

W 11/25 Classes end at 3:25.

11/26-27 Thanksgiving.

WEEK 14

M 11/30 Rough drafts returned.

Powerpoint presentations begin.

W 12/2 **Powerpoint presentations.**

F 12/4 **Powerpoint presentations.**

FINAL CLASS MEETING (We officially begin at 11:30); Last Day Post-mortem.

WEEK 15

M 12/7 **Final Research Essay and Annotated Bibliography due (deliver to the ARHU office, K-150, or Kinsella's Office, J-230).**

Some Thoughts on Research

Successful literary research depends on your ability to ask questions — questions about literary genres, individual interpretations, culture, history, literary theories and much more. You must be able to ask these questions without my prompting or the prompting of some other professor. You need to develop strategies for accessing information stored in a range of formats, some traditional and some electronic. I will provide sample questions and strategies, but in the end you must create your own.

In order to sharpen your research skills, approach this course as though it were a complex research assignment. Push yourself to examine the ideas and skills presented; interrogate the assignments, the texts, and the instruction I provide.

Ask the following questions, among others of your own formulation.

What is the assignment? What kind of research and writing am I expected to produce?

What is the model I am to follow? What are its specific features? How is it put together? What techniques or devices are used?

What is the purpose of the supporting examples or readings? How do they contribute to an understanding of the model?

Is it possible to reduce the model to a formula? to a precise generalized description of a few steps that must be followed or a few fundamental techniques that must be performed? If so, what are these steps? Can I think of the model as a blueprint or pattern for making more items of its kind?

How do earlier sections of the course help me understand the present assignment and model?

This section has been adapted, with permission, from Robert Scholes, Nancy R. Comley, and Gregory L. Ulmer, *Text Book*, St. Martin's, 1995. Parts of this syllabus were written in collaboration with Deborah Gussman.

Good luck with all this. Let's have a productive semester.

Tom Kinsella