UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

FRESHMAN ENGLISH

Texts:


Guth, *Essays* (Wadsworth)

Barnet, Berman, and Burto, eds., *Introduction to Literature* (Little, Brown)

Note to instructors: The weekly writing assignments in this course outline are suggestions only. Reading assignments, whether from the weekly lists of suggestions or not, should be chiefly from the texts. The novel assigned in the second term should be from the list of suggested works *(see the seventh week's outline of the second term).*
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FRESHMAN ENGLISH

First Term

Aims:

1. To encourage in students an awareness of their world and an expression of their reactions to it

2. To present writing as a dramatic act involving both speaker and audience

3. To show that both the author's purpose and his audience affect his choices in writing

4. To help students to define and develop their ideas and express them cogently as well as clearly

Section I: The Speaking Voice

First Week

Lecture: The speaker in a piece of writing; some of the elements which create a speaker

Class 1: Introduction to the course
Assignment of a final long paper, the result of direct observation of the urban situation as it is exemplified in Pittsburgh
Class writing

Class 2: Identification of speakers in samples of writing from the previous class and from published writing

Writing assignment: A short paper and an analysis of the speaker in the paper. (Suggested subject: the student's reactions to a building or room he has never visited before. The instructor might suggest a list of places, the Hillman Library or Heinz Chapel, for instance.)

Useful materials in the texts:

Barnet, Berman, and Burto: 74; 331-339
cummings, "next to god of course america i," 339
Updike, "Youth's Progress," 341
Synge, "The Curse," 346
Frost, "The Pasture," 353

Second Week

Lecture: Purpose, attitude, and speaker

a) Relation of author's purpose and his attitude toward his subject; relation of both to speaker

b) Relation of author's attitude toward his audience with the speaker he creates
c) Brief comment on sentimentality, irony, satire, pomposity, jargon, slang

Class 1: Discussion of an essay for speaker, author's seeming intent, the attitude he reveals toward his subject, the audience he seems to be writing to; discussion of any sentimentality, irony, or satire in the essay.

Class 2: Discussion of students' own writing for the problems presented in the lecture 
or Discussion of a story for sentimentality or an essay for satire 
or Class writing

Writing Assignment: The instructor will list some possible audiences and possible subjects. Students will choose one subject and two audiences and write two papers on the subject, one for each audience.

Useful materials in the texts:

Perrin, 32-34
BBB:

Hopkins, "Spring and Fall," 340
Ransom, "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter," 371
Johnson, "Short Song of Congratulation," 370
Auden, "The Unknown Citizen," 445
Swift, "Satirical Elegy," 417

Guth
Introduction, 9-11
Eisley, "The Slit," 16
Addison, "Advertisements," 181
Paine, "The American Crisis," 378
Thurber, "Fables for Our Time," 319
Mannes, "The Conquest of Trigger Mortis," 185
Friedrich, "A Vivacious Blonde Was Fatally Shot Today," 192
Huxley, "Improving Natural Knowledge," 433

Section II: Invention

Third Week

Lecture: Thesis statement (and topic sentence); what it may reveal about the speaker; development of the general by the specific
a) narrowing the subject
b) indicating an attitude

Class 1: Practice in moving from specific to general and general to specific. Discussion of a general piece of writing to make it more specific
Class 2: Discussion of an essay to note specific development of thesis statement and development of other generalizations by specifics; to note also the narrowed subject of the essay and the author's attitude toward his subject and his audience; to note also the nature of the speaker.

Writing Assignment: A paper developing a thesis statement with specifics (perhaps including an illustration); the subject may come from students study of Pittsburgh

Useful materials in the texts:

Perrin, 112-119; 133-136

BBB:

Updike, "A and P," 294
Welty, "Lippie, 75

Guth:

Introduction, 2-3
Pritchett, "Striverstown," 39
Jacobson, "Cars, Cars, Cars...." 29
Eisley, "The Slit," 15
Baldwin, "Notes of a Native Son," 56
Addison, "Advertisements," 181
Allen, "The Rallyhour Years," 198
Beardsley, "Meaning and Contexts," 61

Fourth Week

Lecture: Definition: Definition as a step in development of idea; classification and division; connotation and denotation

Class 1: Formal definition; dictionary definition; the nature of synonyms; the importance of context; the value of etymology; negative definition

Class 2: Connotation and denotation presented through the diction and imagery of a poem or story; the speaker as revealed by connotation

Writing Assignment: An extended definition or a connotative paper

Useful materials in the texts:

Perrin, 66-67; 98-104; 348-350; 367-372; 374-377

BBB:

Updike, "A and P," 294
Freeman, "Cut Laurels," 342
Frost, "In White" and "Design," 405

Guth:

Introduction, 5-6
See essays listed on p. ix under "Definition"
See also essays listed on p.x under "Classification"

Leacock, "Good and Bad Language," 141
Beardsley, "Meanings and Contexts," 161
Huxley, "Improving Natural Knowledge," 433
Fifth Week

Student conferences with instructor; introductory work on long paper

Sixth Week

Lecture: Description: Concrete detail; dominant impression; possible ways of ordering descriptive detail

Class 1: Discussion of a descriptive essay

Class 2: Discussion of description in a short story, noting method and purpose

or

Class writing

Writing Assignment: Two descriptions of the same scene observed at different times of day, in different weathers, or in different moods. A comment on the details in each paper as they are related to the author's purpose and to the speaker.

Useful materials in the texts:

Perrin, 72-76; 131-133; 166-168; 182-183; 372

WEB:
Welty, "Livia," 75
Welty, "A Worn Path," 248
Updike, "A and P," 294
Shakespeare, "Spring" and "Winter," 324
Wordsworth, "Composed upon Westminster Bridge," 424
Keats, "To Autumn," 425
Thomas, "Fern Hill," 449

Guth
Introduction, 7
Essays listed on p. ix under "Description"

Section III: Organization

Seventh Week

Lecture: Organization of the whole: Thesis statement; coherence; climax; beginning and endings; proportion and emphasis; transitions; effect of organization on the speaker created

Class 1: Discussion of an essay as to its climax, the nature of its beginning and ending, the value of the author's choice of details, the sequential development

Class 2: Analysis of student writing for coherence, proportion and emphasis, and elements creating the speaker
Writing Assignment: A multi-paragraph theme on a subject concerned with the student's study of Pittsburgh and with careful attention to matters discussed during the lecture and the previous classes.

Useful materials in the texts:

Perrin, 47-52, 720-723, 864
Guth:
Krutch, "April...the Day of the Peepers," 23
Jacobson, "Cars, Cars, Cars..." 29
Baldwin, "Notes of a Native Son," 56
Hutchins, "The University of Utopia," 118
Wain, "The Dilemma of Youth," 128
Beardsley, "Meanings and Contexts," 161
Friedrich, "A Vivacious Blonde Was Fatally Shot Today," 192
Rumford, "The Romanticism of the Pioneer," 255

Eighth Week

Student conferences with the instructor; continuation of work on long paper.

Ninth Week

Lecture: The paragraph; the speaker of the older paragraph and of the modern (discussion of length and structure)

Class 1: Analysis of paragraphs by the Christensen method (New instructors will receive an explanation of this method and the Christensen method of sentence analysis.)

Class 2: Analysis of paragraphs by Christensen method or Class writing

Writing Assignment: An analysis of and comment on one paragraph in one of the student's own papers

Useful materials in the texts:

Perrin, 111-151
Guth:

Most of the following essays are useful for analysis of both paragraphs and sentences:
Emerson, "Art," 287
Arnold, "Sweetness and Light," 297
Clemens, "Pudd'nhead Wilson Maxims,"
Paine, "The American Crisis," 378
Burke, "Reflections on the Revolution in France," 386
Hecht, "Misty Mountain," 311
Thurber, "Fables for Our Time," 319
Thoreau, "On Civil Disobedience," 356
Lippman, "The Renewal of the Public Philosophy," 410
Taylor, "On the Vanity and Shortness of Men's Life," 422
Stevenson, "Apology for Idlers," 446
Paragraphs from writers of various literary periods

**Tenth Week**

Lecture: The sentence: The speaker in sentences of older prose and modern prose: balanced, loose, and periodic sentences; some analysis of sentences by the Christensen method

Class 1: Analysis of sentences by the Christensen method

Class 2: Analysis of sentences in selections from various modern authors

Writing Assignment: Rewriting of a theme from earlier in the course

Useful materials in the texts:

Perrin, 275-325
Guth:

Taylor, "On the Vanity and Shortness of Man's Life," 422

Sentences from writers of various literary periods

**Eleventh Week**

Lecture: Organization in papers of comparison and contrast

No class sessions: student conferences with instructors; student investigation of sentences in earlier and modern prose

Writing Assignment: Comparison and contrast of sentences in earlier and modern prose; development of thesis statement by particulars and illustration

Useful materials in the texts:

Perrin, 120-121
Guth: See essays listed on p. ix under "Comparison and Contrast"

**Section IV: Dictation and Imagery**

**Twelfth Week**

Lecture: Etymology and history of the language

Class 1: Comparison of dictionaries; work on etymology

Class 2: Class writing or work on long paper or student conferences
Writing Assignment: Find a word in a modern context. Trace its history in the OED and comment on its amelioration or pejoration. Comment also on its part in creating the speaker of its context

Useful materials in the texts:

Perrin, 362-369; 596-603; 713-718
Guth:
Leacock, "Good and Bad Language," 141
Wimsatt, "When Is Variation Elegant?" 149
Beardsley, "Meanings and Contexts," 161
Bacon, "Idols of the Mind," 172

Thirteenth Week

Lecture: Imagery: Its relation to purpose, audience; appropriateness; logic: the mixed metaphor; its effect on the speaker. Analysis of the imagery of a short poem

Class 1: Analysis of imagery in an essay

Class 2: Class writing: Analysis of imagery in a poem

Useful materials in the texts:

Perrin, 350-356; 620-621
BBB:
Blake, "The Sick Rose," 360
Stevens, "Anecdote of the Jar," 361
Jarrell, "Death of the Ball Turret Gunner," 377
Updike, "A and P," 294
Guth:
Taylor, "On the Vanity and Shortness of Man's Life," 422
Stevenson, "Apology for Idlers," 446
Allen, "The Ballyhoo Years," 198
Mann, "The Conquest of Trigger Mortis," 185
Lynes, "Is Kindness Killing the Arts?" 268

The long paper should be due some time during or after the twelfth week.