



English 201.450 (1462)
Fridays 10:50AM – 1:30PM

John Jay Honors
Classroom: NB L2.72.07 & Beyond

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People often seem torn between the desire to conform and be part of a community and, on the other hand, to stand out as an individual. Most often when people struggle with issues of conformity and individuality, they must make decisions about the normality of their personal identity and how much they want to invest in it. If someone invests completely in “the normal,” how does this limit their creativity, their pleasure, or their achievements? After all, some of our most prominent artists, scientists, and even world leaders haven’t been what one could call “normal.”

If someone completely denies “the normal,” how does this strain their relationship to family, community, or society? Many who have shirked normalcy have been shunned by society and, in some cases, rubber roomed. Frequently, societies or governments enforce normalcy and that puts into question a citizen’s right to free expression, pursuits of happiness, and civil rights. Do citizens have the right to be weird?

In this course, students will explore the non-normative, considering what role it plays in the progression of society, the undermining of values, the risk of civil rights, the sustainability of culture, and whatever other issues students can uncover in this forum of the weird, whacky, queer, and quirky. Through the varying perspectives of psychologists, artists, filmmakers, sociologists, scientists, and historians, we will negotiate the often turbulent waters between normal and strange.

Course Objectives

Invention and Inquiry:

- Students learn to explore and develop their ideas and the ideas of others in a thorough, meaningful, complex and logical way.
- Students practice varying processes and conventions of writing as it moves from field to field.

Awareness and Reflection:

- Students learn to identify concepts and issues in their own writing and analytically talk and write about them.
- Students reflect upon how their composing skills can be applied in diverse writing situations.

Writing Process:

- Students learn methods of composing, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading.
- Students consider how writing can help them learn new discipline-specific subject matter.

Sentence Fluency:

- Students learn to write clear, complete and correct sentences and use a variety of sentence types.

Conventions:

- Students learn to control language, linguistic structures, and punctuation necessary for diverse literary and academic writing contexts.
- Students expand their abilities to discuss their writing strengths and challenges.

Rhetoric and Style:

- Students learn rhetorical and stylistic choices that are appropriate to a variety of genres, audiences and contexts.
- Students learn to identify the preferred genres, rhetorical concepts, terminology, formatting, in various disciplines.

Claims and Evidence:

- Students learn to develop logical and substantial claims, provide valid and coherent evidence for their claims and show why and how their evidence supports their claims.

Research:

- Students learn to conduct research (primary and secondary), evaluate research sources, integrate research to support their ideas, and cite sources appropriately.
- Students learn different types of research methods and writing that they will face in the content-based courses of the college.
- Students review research methods, conventions, and practices that they integrate into the cross-disciplinary writing assigned for this course.

Grading Policy

In this course, your words will earn your grade for you – not only by the quantity that you produce but, also, by the quality of their expression. Each assignment will have a certain value which you will accumulate during the semester up until the submission of the portfolio. For example, an assignment may be worth 100 credit points. The first time you submit a draft of the memo you may receive only 25 points because you didn't fulfill the expectations of the assignment. Don't despair. You may then revise the piece of writing and have credit added to the subsequent drafts. After multiple drafts your assignment may go from being worth 25 points to 95 or 100 points, but this will be dependent upon your willingness to revise, your ability to respond to critique about your writing, and your motivation to resubmit your work.

Absence Policy

You may lose points with absences. For every absence, you lose 50 (fifty) points. If you want to regain these points, you must submit a memorandum that states the reason for the absence, provides evidence to justify your absence, and states what you've done to prepare for the subsequent class meeting. Depending upon your rationale, your evidence, and your efforts remain caught up, you could regain a partial or the complete amount of your absentee losses. Notice that in all these memoranda you are attempting to make something happen: securing your points and thus improving your ultimate grade.

Prescribed Assignments with Potential Points

Auto-Archive Assignment

Compiling the Auto-Archive Box	50 Points
Composing the Auto-Archive Narrative	150 Points
Creating the Auto-Archive Powerpoint/Prezi/OneTrueMedia	200 Points

Total Points for All Auto-Archive Assignments 300 Points

Weird Tour Guide

Script for a Tour	100 Points
Photos for the Tour	50 Points
Moving Presentation for the Tour	150 Points

Total Points for All Weird Tour Guide Assignments 300 Points

Freedom Fighter Biography & Rhetorical Analysis

Wikipedia Biographical Entry	100 Points
Rhetorical Analysis of Freedom Fighter Speech	150 Points
Presentation Your Choices of Media	150 Points

Total Points for Freedom Fighter Assignments 400 Points

Back to the Future of English 101

Revision of an English 101 Assignment	50 Points
Reflection on a Year of Freshman Writing	50 Points
An Online Tutorial about a Literacy Task You've Learned	100 Points

Total Points for Back to the Future Assignments 200 Points

Grading Scale

There are 1200 total points that you can accumulate by adding the points of your assignments. Throughout the semester, I will keep an account of your point credit, and, at the end of the semester, you will exchange your accrued points for the grade you earn. You should also keep a careful record and evidence of your points. The following is the point grade scale:

A+	1200 + extra credit or extra effort points
A	1150-1199
A-	1100-1149
B+	1050-1099
B	1000-1049
B-	950-999
C+	900-949
C	850-899
C-	800-849
D+	700-799
D	601-699
D-	501-600
F	500 \geq

Course Schedule

Module 1: Personal Quirks: Articulating Weirdness

Friday, 1 February

1. Course Introduction
2. Word History:
 1. Normal
 2. Normative
 3. Weird
 4. Whacky
 5. Queer
 6. Quirky
 7. Eccentric
 8. Conforming
 9. Outlier
 10. Freak
 11. Stigma
 12. Standard

Choose one of the words above and write a history of how its definition has changed throughout history. Analyze how it had particular significance in certain eras, how it has arrived at its meaning today, and how its meaning has gained new expressive ability in the present. Instead of relying on Webster's, you should use etymological dictionaries and/or the Oxford English Dictionary (you will find it on the John Jay databases) to do the research for this assignment. You should include examples of how the word is used in different pieces of literature, what types of people use(d) the word, and for what purposes.

Search terms in Oxford English Dictionary (OED): Using the *OED*, compose a paragraph that reveals the evolution of the word and analyze how its evolution has affected its denotation(s) and connotation(s). Do any of its original meanings still resonate in its contemporary meaning? Who or what has altered this word's meaning throughout history?

3. Discuss Goffman "Stigma" & Bechdel *Fun Home*
4. Introduce Weird Auto-Archive Assignment
5. Sign up for Gmail, Prezi.com, Dropbox.com, Pinterest.com and OneTrueMedia.com.

Friday, 8 February

- For class: **Read**
1. Bonnin “School Days of an Indian Girl”
 2. Quan “Girl Who Wouldn’t Sing”
 3. Eigner “Dumpster Diving”
 4. Williams “Death of the Profane”

Chat What similar themes or sub-themes run through these piece of writing? What extended and/or alternative messages do these author’s want to convey through the descriptions of their personal experience? What material objects play a role in their narratives and what role(s) do those material objects play? How does this author turn the “I” or “me” (first person) of their story into a “we” or “us”? How does the author invite the reader into their experience?

Write Auto Archive Assignment (autoarch): Step One--Collect images, documents, paraphernalia, photographs, memorabilia, and other significant shiny objects and place them into a box. You may decorate the box if you choose to do so. As inspiration, use this collection of objects (this mini-autobiographical archive of your life), compose a narrative that develops a descriptive profile of yourself. You will show-and-tell your auto-archive with your peers so make informed decisions about what you want to divulge.

In the same way that the authors above used their own experiences to address a particular issue, you should use this memoir to reveal a larger social perspective to your audience. How do your personal experiences help frame or illustrate a more expansive topic? How do the material objects of your life contribute to the story? What descriptive role will they play in your narrative? You should put this narrative in an envelope and tape it to the box of your auto-archive. Also, bring your auto-archive box to class.

Also, have a draft of your auto-archive piece available digitally so that you can access it on the computer.

Step Two of this project: scan or photograph the objects in your auto-archive in preparation for a multi-modal piece. Save your resulting pics as .jpgs.

Friday, 15 February

Deadline: Prepare a Mashup (textual + visual presentation) based on your auto-archive text and imagery. (See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mashup> for definitions.) You could use Powerpoint, Prezi.com, Pinterest.com or some other open source software to compose your Mashup. The Mashup must intermix your images with the text of your Auto-Archive narrative. You should have access to this piece via the internet for class.

Excavation and Profile of a Peer’s Auto-Archive

Students exchange auto-archives and, after excavating and perusing the archive, compose a one- to two-page profile of their peer based on the contents of the box.

Peer Review of Auto-Archive Narrative and the Mashup

Introduction of OneTrueMedia: Show examples.

Friday, 22 February Deadline: OneTrueMedia presentation; use this open source software to reformulate your previous auto-archive versions into a moving/lyrical/musical/visual/voice-overed/animated derivation. You don't have to include all of these characteristics, but you should carefully pick and choose different media to make an intriguing multi-modal narrative.

Module 2: The Mecca of Whacko: Strange Places, Queer Behaviors

Assignment for this Module:

A Weird Tour Guide Script/Tour Pics/Podcast or iMovie of Tour

Write a tour guide of really odd places and things in New York City (Manhattan and the boroughs). You will write a script for an out-of-towner which describes how to arrive at these venues, describes the odd or unique things about the place, and shows how this place represents the quirkiness of NYC.

Quirky Museum Visit

Create a weird tour of a museum. It can be any museum you choose in NYC, but it has to be one which other students can visit. In the same way that museums give audio-tours of their collections, you will write a script that leads a visitor to specific exhibitions and then offers them some intriguing information about that part of the museum.

Friday, 1 March

View: Livingston, Jenny *Paris Is Burning* (Documentary Film)

Read: Bell, Shannon "Tattooed: A Participant Observer's Exploration of Meaning (Anthropology)

Dalrymple, Theodore "Marks of Shame: Tattoos and What to Do about Them." (Editorial)

Munoz, Jose Esteban "Stages"

Tuesday, March 5

How to Survive Film Viewing and Panel Discussion

Friday, 8 March

Read: Mavor, Carol "Touching Netherworlds"

Halberstam, "Animating Revolt, Revolting Animation"

Module 3: Bucking Conformity: Civil Disobedience & Other Admirable Qualities

Assignments for Module 3:

Updating Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*

In *Civil Disobedience*, Thoreau uses a style of language that can be easily distinguished as a nineteenth-century voice. Rewrite this manifesto, updating it into a more contemporary language. Use references to current events, characters, and political situations that parallel the events, characters, and political situations that Thoreau describes of his day. In other words, retain the viewpoint of this piece of writing but apply contemporary themes and events so that it would be more accessible to a modern-day reader.

Friday, 15 March

Read: Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* and complete the assignment above.

Friday, 22 March

NO CLASS (MARK AT CONFERENCE)

Read: Time Capsule in a Milk Can

Write: Do some more research on Emanuel Ringelbaum and the Oneg Shabbat. Write a two-page expose of facts and responses to the work of this group.

Choose: A world freedom fighter and compose a three- to four- page biographical profile. In addition, find a speech or speeches that this person gave/has given and explain how the rhetoric of the speech conveys ideas of social justice, human freedom, and/or civil rights. As you develop this piece you should log your ideas into a blog (Word Press). Then take your blog entries and turn them into a more formal academic piece of writing.

Possible Freedom Fighters: Rigoberto Menchu (Guatemala), Malcolm X (USA), Martin Luther King (USA), Benazir Bhutto (Pakistan), Mirabál Sisters (Dominican Republic), Aung San Suu Kyi (Burma), Nelson Mandela (South Africa), Desmond Tutu (South Africa), Dalai Llama (Tibet), Jane Adams (USA), Elizabeth Katie Stanton (USA), Jane Adams (USA), Larry Kramer (USA), Peter Staley (USA).

If you decide to choose your own freedom fighter, you must let me know who you've picked and send me a paragraph that gives the reason you've chosen this person.

Friday, 29 March

SPRING BREAK

Module 4: Body Oddities: Evolving Bodies, Evolved Thinking

Friday, 5 April

Read: Tibbles, J. A. R. & Cohen, Jr., M. M. "The Proteus Syndrome: The Elephant Man Diagnosed"

Fine, Michelle "Missing Discourse of Desire"

Friday, 12 April

Friday, 19 April

Module 5: Idiosyncratic Reflections: Celebrating My Weirdness

Module 5 Assignment: Step 1--Choose an assignment that you completed for your English 101 portfolio and revise the text for issues of invention, organization, style, and research. You should apply what you've learned in this semester of English 201 to improve the rhetorical force and audience-based value of this chosen piece.

Step 2—Remediate this assignment into a multi-modal piece using one of the sources with which you have composed this semester.

Friday, 26 April

Friday, 3 May

Friday, 10 May Submit Final Portfolio