WAYS TO RAINY MOUNTAIN

Inventive Modeling: Autobiography / Literary Writing (Spring 2012)

IF YOU MISSED THE 1ST CLASS, SEE ME IMMEDIATELY AFTER THIS CLASS.

English 4330-003 Office Hrs.: T/TH 3:30-5, and by appointment; 405 Carlisle

Instructor: Dr. Roemer **Please schedule all appointments in advance.**

T/TH 2-3:20 Phone: 272-2729; roemer@uta.edu

302 Preston Hall English Dept. Office: 203 Carlisle

GOALS / MEANS /ASSESSMENT:

1. to improve students' writing ability: focus on non-fiction prose, especially narrative, descriptive, and autobiographical writing (though some students have used poetry, photography, illustrations, and music), as well as skills related to gathering and integrating oral narratives and written historical sources;

2. to help students to see relationships between reading, writing, and self-discovery, especially the discovery of a written persona or voice: focus on the connections between a ("factual" and storytelling) knowledge of place, family, and community and the development of a written voice.

*Means and assessment*: an intensive study of Momaday's THE WAY TO RAINY MOUNTAIN. After this study, students take an exam (see below for criteria) and then write their own versions of Momaday's book (see the stages and criteria below).

ASSUMPTIONS:

1. One of the best ways to help students to improve their writing is to encourage them to see the relevance of reading and writing to identity creation.

2. Modeling the processes and form used by Momaday is one way to do this.

3. The students enrolled in the class have already "mastered" "basic" writing skills (if students need a refresher, they can seek advice at the Writing Center, Library, 4th floor; bring this syllabus to show the instructors and tutors if you seek help in the Center).

4. The amount of learning and enjoyment gained in this course depends to a large degree upon how disciplined students are, since much of the work during the semester will be conducted independently.

5. Key elements in the course are group and class discussions/workshops. This is a highly individualistic course, but it is also a communal experience. Students can benefit greatly from the experiences of their colleagues at all stages of composition.

6. I have helped more than 20 graduates of 4330 to publish parts of their collections, and one student (Robret Rummel-Hudson) gained the confidence to become a writer; without my assistance he wrote a successful personal narrative published by St. Martin’s Press. But this course is not geared toward publication. The creation of a written identity, voice, or angle of vision is the primary goal. This identity should, nevertheless, help students in writing that is geared for publication.

REQUIRED READINGS: (Books such as Gerard's *Creative Nonfiction,* Miller & Paola’s *Tell it Slant*, and Nguyen and Shreve’s *Contemporary Creative Nonfiction* will also help students)

-- N. Scott Momaday. WAY TO RAINY MOUNTAIN [WTRM]. U of New Mexico

-- Kenneth Roemer, ed. APPROACHES TO TEACHING MOMADAY'S WTRM

-- Packet [P]: Momaday's " Man Made " and "Kiowa Legends”; excerpts from writings about the Kiowa , e.g., Mooney, Marriott, Nye, Mayhall, and Boyd; several maps and illustrations, and two articles about this course that appeared in *College English* and *Paintbrush;* Lincoln's "Tai-Me to Rainy Mountain"; Morris, "Getting the Mail,” brief excerpts from Gerard, Miller & Paola, and Nguyen & Shreve, articles on phony memoirs.

-- Published and unpublished writing and oral sources for each student’s collection

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE, READING ASSIGNMENTS, AND REQUIREMENTS

Even though the first part of the course will be devoted to an intensive study of RAINY MOUNTAIN, **students should be thinking about the "landscape" or other focus they will use for their version of Momaday's book from the first day of the course.**  After consulting with me about this landscape or focus, students should begin to jot down personal memories about that place and to gather oral and written sources. Since the latter may involve writing away for information or interlibrary loan requests, it's best to **begin collecting information as early as possible.**

The deadlines and stages of composition outlined below represent "minimum" guidelines. Some students may want to show me drafts of particular sections before the first three section drafts are due. Some students may also want to set up individual appointments before or in between the required meetings. Also minor and/or major revision may occur at any stage of the composition. **Pay close attention to announcements and this schedule; sometimes we meet as a class; sometimes for required or optional individual conferences; sometimes there are no classes or required conferences and students work "on there own." Reading assignments should be completed by the dates indicated. Important due dates and what is due appear in bold print.**

(S/U) indicates that the assignment will be graded satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory written work will have to be rewritten. (G) indicates the usual A, B, C, D, F grading system. (P) indicates the course packet.

INTRODUCTIONS TO THE COURSE AND TO “CREATIVE NONFICTION”

1/17,19 Introd. to the course; in-class writing sample; the “non” genre; Frey factor

Reading: Gerard, Miller & Paola, Nguyen & Shreve, “Live on ‘Oprah,’” “Fakers and Phonies,” Morris’s “Getting the Mail” (P)

Samples of past students’ work will be displayed.

THE RAINY MOUNTAIN MODEL

1/24,26 The Text: Initial Acquaintances with WTRM

Open questions; group discussions about the form; begin focus on sections IV, VII, XVI, XVII, and XXIV

Reading: WTRM (the entire book)

1/31 The Text: Form

Continue discussion of sections; discussions of the poems, prologue, introduction, epilogue, illustrations, book design, and typography

Reading: WTRM; at least two essays from " Critical Contexts: Form" in APPROACHES

2/2 The Contexts: Biography, Sense of Place, Culture (slides/power point), Literature

Discussions of Momaday, SW Oklahoma, Kiowa Culture, Modernism, Lyric Romanticism

Reading: WTRM; bio. sheet handout; Schubnell (especially note the influence of Yvor Winters and modernism), Trout, Bataille, Kodaseet Interview, and Part One and Appendices of APPROACHES

2/7,9 The Contexts: Composition

Discussions of Momaday's composition processes; discussions about why certain sections from JOURNEY were omitted; implications of the similarities and differences between sections of WTRM and Momaday's written, visual, and oral "sources."

Reading: WTRM; "The Man Made of Words," "Kiowa Legends from JOURNEY," excerpts from Mooney, Marriott, Nye, Mayhall, Sullivan, Boyd, Momaday (AC and NAMES); maps; "Inventive Modeling"; "Returning the Gift"; "Pedagogical Contexts: “Composition" in APPROACHES; Lincoln, "Tai-me to Rainy Mt." (all in the course packet)

**2/14** **A Valentine’s Day** **Examination** (G) Distribute guidelines for landscape/focus selection

INVENTIVE MODELING

2/16 Exams returned and discussed

**2/16,21** Individual meetings to discuss landscape/focus justification

**Requirement: justification of landscape/focus, 2/16** (S/U)

2/23 Class discussion of landscape/focus selections

2/28 Continue gathering information (jotting notes about personal

experiences, finding materials about family, community and landscape)

Individual meetings are not required at this stage, but

students needing help should set up appointments to see me.

**3/1** Individual meetings to discuss information gathered

**Requirement: typed list of written and oral sources** (S/U)

[3/3 UTA Pow wow]

**3/6** Class discussion of sources selected and relationships among voices **Requirements: students must be prepared to offer a concise**

**description of their sources and the relations between specific voices** (S/U)

**3/8** Optional conferences & **Turn in draft of at least three sections by 5 p.m.** (G).

[3/12-18 Spring Break]

3/20,22 Individual meetings to discuss the drafts and **organization**

**3/27** Class discussions of overall organization

**Requirements: students must be prepared to discuss tentative** **organization;** **tentative outlines turned by 5 p.m. (**SU)

3/29 No class or conferences; continue research, writing, and rewriting

[3/30 English Dept. Hermanns Lectures]

4/3 Individual meetings to discuss organization; continue writing and revising

4/5,10,**12** Write draft of fifteen to thirty, three-voice sections, including

the three sections already turned in

**Requirements:** individual meetings are not required during

this period; however, students should feel free to set up

appointments to discuss their work at any point during this draft writing. **A draft of the 15 to 30 sections will be due by 5 p.m. 4/12** (G). This draft counts for **20%** of your semester grade.

4/17,19 Individual meetings to discuss the 15-30 sections; continue revising and write drafts of the introd. and closing, which can be prose and/or poetry.

**4/24** Discussions of introductions, epilogues, illustrations, formatting

and of any other questions about the sections or relating the sections to the introductions, epilogues, illustrations, formatting.

**Requirements: students must be prepared to discuss**

**their introds. & epilogues [illustrations and formatting];** **drafts of introds. and epilogue; due by noon on Wed., 4/25.** (G).

4/26, 5/1 Introds. & epilogues returned (11/30); discussion about final revisions, formatting, illustrations, sources and acknowledgments

**5/3** **Turn in entire "final" draft by 5 p.m.**

5/8 Final drafts returned and class discussion of this type of reading and

writing experience

EXAMINATION: Pt 1: short-answer questions drawn from the readings and classes; Pt. 2: essays based on an application of class discussions. I will distribute a detailed study sheet the class before the exam. *Grading criteria*: emphasis will be on how well students address all parts of the question, the quality of he logic of the arguments, and the degree to which all claims are supported by relevant examples.

GRADING: The approximate "weights" of the assignments are listed below. Although the S/U grades will not be averaged in numerically, they will weigh heavily when a student's semester grade is between two grades (e.g., C+ / B-).

-- examination (G) 20%

-- justification of selection (S/U)

-- list of sources, notes, etc. (S/U)

-- draft of three, three voice sections (G) 25%

-- outline of organization (S/U)

-- oral presentations (S/U)

-- draft of 15 to 30 sections (G) 20%

-- draft of introd. & epilogue (G) 10%

-- "final" draft (G) 25%

100%

**I expect improvement "between" drafts,** i.e., if one draft received a B and the next draft of that material is not improved, then the grade on that draft will be lower than B.

WARNINNGS: Under normal circumstances, no late assignments will be accepted. **Attendance: Five unexcused absences will result in a half-grade drop in the semester grade; ten = whole grade, etc.** Students wishing to drop the course must follow University procedures. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be handled according to University policies. If you have questions about these matters, please contact me and / or read chapter 2 of the 6th edition of *the MLA Handbook*.

ENCOURAGEMENT: Consistent and constructive **class participation** will (positively) affect the semester grade. Also, I am very willing to work with students who have disabilities. At the beginning of the semester these students should provide me with documentation authorized by the appropriate University office (e.g., the Office of Students with Disabilities, 817-272-3364). Note: Other helpful offices are the Veterans Affairs Office (817-272-3373) and UTA's Office of University College Programs (817-272-6107), which offers academic, personal, and social advising.