Reflections:

Weekly Discussion Board Posts

From the syllabus

This being an online course, you'll soon find that the majority of our communication and assignment work will be done via writing. That means that, technically, there is more writing in this course than in the in-person version. I don't want that to scare you away, but I do want to set that expectation up front. You will be writing quite a bit this semester, whether it be for an assignment, to engage with reading material, or to communicate with me and your classmates.

Reflections

[Reflections: 20 points each week = 300 points total]

Each week, there will be one or more "readings" you are expected to complete. In the past, I have neglected to understand what I teach in my courses about reading: that it is a "transaction" of meaning-making, not a "transmission" of information. We will discuss this in the course. For now, just know that I expect you to do 3 things with the readings each week:

1. Read the material and "engage" with it in some way (either take notes in a note-taking app or document or hand-write them, or highlight important bits with annotation software like OneNote, Adobe Acrobat, Goodnotes, or Apple Notes, or simply freewrite [discussed in week 1] your thoughts after reading.) I may occasionally ask you to share your notes or annotations with me via a Journal assignment on Blackboard before composing your peer-facing reflection. Simply uploading pictures or screenshots of a few of your annotations/highlights or copying and pasting a few notes into the text area of the assignment will be fine for these. You can also share some of your notes from ChatGPT if you are using AI to help you with the material.
2. Compose a reflection on the material in our discussion board every week by Thursday, 7pm EST. For these, I would like an effort to present your thoughts/ideas more clearly: attention to spelling, limiting typos, etc. I will give prompts for ideas, but this semester, I'd like to extend you some freedom in what you take from the reading as well. Reflections will need to be at least 150 words.

3. Respond to at least 2 students' posts each week. These replies should be at least 50 words. You're encouraged to respond to even more and to carry on interesting conversations throughout the course. That's why the word count requirements here are kept so low.

While this may seem like a lot, once you get used to it, it will not take much longer than reading the material itself and thinking about it. While I expect effort, I do not expect the world of you for these. These reflections will constitute the 30% participation portion of your course grade. During weeks of major project draft due dates, there will not be new material readings; reflections on your own writing or the work of your peers will take their place. These readings and reflections are meant to help give you ideas for your 3 major papers and practice the "recursive writing process."

Rules of Our Online Course

For some of you, this course may be your first online course at the college level. While we don't have to worry about traveling to be in any particular place by certain times on certain days for this course, there are still some other basic expectations that may resemble an in-person class, such as:

- Be punctual. Assignments and discussion board posts will have due dates, and for our course to function well, your input will be needed by specified time so that we can have meaningful and productive discussions and write meaningful work.
- Practice accountability. Taking an online course means that we won't have an in-person scheduled day in a physical space together to hold us accountable week-to-week. The course schedule, including major assignments, is available at the end of the syllabus. I recommend making use of your calendar app of choice and inputting the due dates, at least for the three major papers and their drafts.
- Be respectful of one another's ideas. We will share many ideas and potentially details about our writing selves through our discussion board posts and drafts. We'll read a lot of academic writing within the "discourse" of Composition Studies. Ideas and studies about student writers, experienced writers, writers of marginal communities, and others will end up on your screens for weekly readings. Some of us may disagree on certain topics, especially topics that hit close to home for us about our literacy histories. While disagreeing is not a form of disrespect, practice should be taken to do so in a respectful way when the time comes.

- You will need to familiarize yourself with your technology/devices (laptop, iPad, phone, etc.) and be prepared to use it for this course. While traditional papers can work for all three major papers, we will discuss multimodal writing throughout this course. This means that for some assignments, you will be able to make use of digital tools to create things like videos, podcasts, websites, slideshows, and other things. I recommend making sure you have a reasonably functional device–a tablet or a laptop–and that it's no more than two or three years old. While you can and should feel free to use Blackboard on your phone for simple assignments like our discussion board posts, relying on a phone entirely may prove difficult. I also cannot guarantee that I can accept some assignments or discussions late purely due to technical issues, especially if frequent technology issues arise from you.

Late Work

Accountability and punctuality should be a top priority for you at the college level. However, I understand sometimes things happen. If you need an extension, please send me an email directly to my university email account (not a Blackboard message) at least 24 hours in advance of a discussion board post or major paper draft/revision due date. Unless I hear from you by then, I cannot guarantee that I will take the assignment late.