

## Crafting the Essay Syllabus

COURSE TEXT: *Back to the Lake* by Thomas Cooley

### WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

- Daily journal entries
- 6- 8 short writing pieces (approx. 100- 250 words each)
- 4 Essays (approx. 750 words); all four essays will be developed through peer review and teacher feedback, with at least one essay being taken through the entire writing process and ending with publication in our class anthology.
  1. Descriptive Essay Based on pre- writing activities, write a descriptive essay conveying your personal response to the subject about which you are writing. Use a variety of sensory details to make your subject real for readers. This essay may focus on any person, place, or experience that you know/recall vividly enough to describe in close detail.
  2. Narrative Essay We tell stories every day, to our friends, parents, and teachers. Narratives focus on events, often even everyday occurrences, but present them in a way that draws the reader's interest. Write an essay that tells a story about a firsthand experience. Bring your reader into the moment with you to witness your experience.
  3. Classification Essay We classify things in our lives every day in order to better understand and interact with the world around us. In this essay, focus on a broad topic or issue that you can break into 4 or more distinct categories. Be very mindful of your audience and purpose in crafting this essay, as intended audience will greatly affect the way you classify your topic.
  4. Argument Essay When we argue, we are taking a position either for or against something. To "win" the argument, we must support our position with credible evidence. Your evidence could be cited from a reliable source or it could be based on personal experience or a credible example. In this essay, you will argue for something, an issue or an idea, that you can support based on your own experience, examples based on "global knowledge" and from interviews with credible sources.

### IMPORTANT TERMS

#### Week 1

close reading  
defamiliarization  
syntax  
denotation vs connotation  
SOAPSTone  
symbolism  
dominant impression

#### Week 2

functional fixedness  
*in media res*  
mood vs tone  
stream of consciousness  
personification  
verisimilitude

#### Week 3

style  
voice  
logical fallacy  
bias  
irony  
Aristotelian appeals

## Week 1

Concepts/Goals	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
<b>Monday</b> - Establish classroom norms - Review syllabus - Journal - Intro to literary nonfiction - Descriptive essay assignment and rubric - Lesson 1: Diction and denotation vs connotation - Showing vs Telling - Generating ideas/forms of pre- writing - Close reading & annotation	- Journal #1: What kind of a writer and reader are you? What are your strengths and weaknesses? What do you hope to gain from the class? Share and discuss - Introductions/icebreaker - CTY Honor Codes (sign and return); computer policies - Review syllabus. Discuss what literary nonfiction is (and is NOT) as a genre - Establish class norms/contract together - Pre- assessment (1 hour)	- Jigsaw read pp 166-179 in <i>Bttl.</i> Discuss in pairs and share with class. - Lesson on connotation vs denotation. Then have groups make connotation graph lines. - Add details to non- descriptive sentences in groups.	- Create 5 non- descriptive sentences to be used Tuesday AM. - Lesson: Being a critical reader/annotation practice. Read pp 2-10 and answer questions with partner. Then model SOAPStone. - Read Paul Crenshaw "Storm Country" pp 203-206 and E.B. White "Once More to the Lake" pp 219-224. Answer guided reading questions & SOAPStone for both. Be ready for class discussion tomorrow.
<b>Tuesday</b> - Journal - Reading Workshop/ discussion groups - Trust building/teamwork - Adding sensory details - Writing essay #1 - Workshop - Lesson #2: Audience and Purpose	- Finish work from last night? - Journal #2: How does Crenshaw use diction in "Storm Country"? Give 3 or more specific examples of how his diction impacts your understanding of the story. - Reading workshop - Discuss diction and description in the two sample essays - class building activity	- Choose a place/experience to describe in one full paragraph (focus on dominant impression). - Swap with partners and give feedback on descriptive paragraphs using the class made rubric as a rough guide.	- Take one of the 6 descriptive paragraphs and build it into a working rough draft of your first essay. Bring 5 copies of RD for workshop tomorrow AM.
<b>Wednesday</b> - Syntax - Elements of descriptive essays - Writing workshop - revision - close reading	- Journal #3: Look at the painting and sentence projected. How does the sentence enhance or alter your understanding of the artwork? - What is syntax? Practice with long and short sentences and the effect of each (AP syntax cards) - Review how to give constructive criticism pp. 179-190. - Model peer feedback using student example pp 182-190 - Writer's workshop	- Revision of RD #1	- Complete and turn in FD #1 - Choose one of the remaining essays in ch 7 to read in addition to "Raccoon of my Own". SOAPStone both essays.
<b>Thursday</b> - Journal - Narrative writing assignment - Lesson 3: Symbolism - Generating ideas for writing - peer feedback - close reading	- Journal #4: What is a story? How do we tell a story and what are the important features of stories like this? - Discuss medieval heraldry symbols. Coat of arms activity. - Read pp 94-104 and practice different plot maps - Read student example pp 110-113 and discuss. - Introduce autobiography in comic strips.	- Read 129-138 and complete SOAPStone. Discuss with partners. - Storyboard out a narrative from your own life in comic panels. Must contain at least 20 panels – 18 w/text. - Create rubric for narrative essays - Read "Generating Ideas" pp 51-56. Choose one of these methods and brainstorm larger narrative essay.	- Read Annie Dillard "An American Childhood" pp141-145 and Anne Bernays "Warrior Day" pp 153-155. Answer close reading questions and complete SOAPStone for each in preparation for tomorrow's discussion.
<b>Friday</b> - Journal - Writing Workshop - Lesson 4: Characterization - Close Reading - Writing	Journal #5: How does Dillard use both syntax and symbolism to create meaning in her story? Give at least one example of each and explain its impact on your understanding of the essay. - class building (symbol character creation) - mini- workshops of comic strips - characterization lesson - refine/prepare comics for display	- Discuss model essays from yesterday. How are the elements we have learned so far (diction, syntax, symbolism, plot, and characterization) developed/used in each?	<b>SUNDAY PM</b> - Journal #6: Reflection on first week of class. - Rough draft of narrative. Bring 5 copies to next class for workshop. - Choose 1 more essay to read from narrative chapter. Answer close reading questions and complete SOAPStone for essay.

## Week 2

Concepts/Goals	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
<b>Monday</b> - Journal - Lesson 5: Tone and Mood - Writing - Workshop - Conferences	- Journal #7: "If a nation loses its storytellers, it loses its childhood" (Peter Handke). Respond. - Close reading and discussion (split groups between Siken's "The Definitive Version" and Momaday's "Way to Rainy Mountain" prologue). Discuss. - Tone and mood lesson (movie trailer exercise) - Writer's workshop	- Gallery Walk (symbolism, mood, tone) - Read pp 62-74 (Revising) - Revise RD #2 (narrative) using class made rubric	- Conferences with instructor/TA
<b>Tuesday</b> - Journal - Intro to classification essay - Lesson 6: Imagery - Write - Close Reading	- Journal #8: Write about the types media people consume. Which do you prefer and why? Which do you feel have more positive or negative impacts? - Piecemeal murals (work with partners). - Read pp 388-400 ("Classification Essays") and the student example pp 400-404. Answer close reading questions and discuss with partners. - Discuss classification essays and purpose. Create rubric. - class building activities	- Read Amy Tan's "Mother Tongue" pp 419-424 and Stephanie Ericsson's "The Ways We Lie" pp 409-416. Work with partners to answer close reading questions and build a SOAPStone for each. - Group brainstorming of classification topics (sticky notes). - Choose 3 topics and build classification charts in pairs. Share/discuss as class.	- Rough draft of essay #3 (classification)
<b>Wednesday</b> - Journal - Lesson 7: Structure - Reading Workshop - Writing Workshop - Writing - Close Reading	- Journal #9: Listen to the song and write about how music can be/has been classified and why it matters. - Lesson on structure (beyond basic plot charts). - Read Mindy Kaling's "Types of Women..." pp 427-430 and Krugman's "E Pluribus Unum" pp 433-435 and answer close reading questions for both. Work with a partner to reverse engineer an outline for both essays. Discuss as a class how these authors structure their writing. - Photo finish class building activity	- Discuss the purposes of self-revision and self-revision checklist - Self-revision of classification essay - TED talk	- Work on 2nd draft of essay #3 and bring 5 copies for the writer's workshop. - Read Sexton's "Her King" pp 445-446 and answer close reading questions to prepare for discussion tomorrow.
<b>Thursday</b> - Journal - Lesson 8: Functional fixedness/metaphors	- Journal #10: "To gain your own voice, you have to forget about having it heard" – Allen Ginsberg. This would seem to contradict our earlier lessons about audience and purpose, yet Ginsberg was always aware of both of those things. What do you think this quote means in the context of your own writing? - Lesson on functional fixedness and how metaphors help us overcome it. - Metaphor activity - Writer's workshop	- Final draft of classification essay	- Read Anzaldua's "Linguistic Terrorism" pp 773-775 and answer close reading questions. Work with a partner to analyze structure and at least 2 other elements we have discussed. - Lesson on using sources and citation. - Jigsaw pp 800-809 and 14-20 and 40-42. Discuss in groups.

Concepts/Goals	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
<b>Friday</b> - Lesson 9: Logic and logical fallacies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Journal #11: “The aim of argument, or of discussion, should not be victory, but progress” – Joseph Joubert. How does this line up with your own view of arguments? How does this line up with the way we often employ arguments in our daily lives?</li> <li>- Lesson on logic and logical appeals</li> <li>- Mini- commercial activity to practice appeals</li> <li>- Whole class topic brainstorming</li> <li>- Tag team debates (choose one topic to expand into essay)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read pp 604-623 and student example pp 624-629. Answer questions and discuss with partners.</li> <li>- Logical fallacies and logical fallacy cartoons activity</li> <li>- Read Michael Lewis “Buy that Little Girl and Ice Cream Cone” pp 653-656. Create SOAPStone and answer questions with partner.</li> <li>- Discuss as class how the author employs logic in his argument and whether or not there are any fallacies in his writing/how he avoids them.</li> <li>- Source/MLA scavenger hunt</li> </ul>	<b>Sunday PM</b> - Rough draft of argument essay

### Week 3

Concepts/Goals	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
<b>Monday</b> - Journal - Writer’s workshop - Writing - Revision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Journal #12: Use your knowledge of logic and logical fallacies and think of how they are used in modern political debates. When have you witnessed good or poor logic? Share with class.</li> <li>- Logical fallacy bingo</li> <li>- Human Chain team building (with description)</li> <li>- Self- revision workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revise essay (make 5 copies for workshop)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read Jefferson’s “Declaration of Independence” and answer close reading questions. Work with a partner to carefully update for a modern culture and audience. Share with class.</li> <li>- Choose one other essay to read from argumentation chapter. Create SOAPStone and answer close reading questions.</li> </ul>
<b>Tuesday</b> - Journal - Writer’s workshop - Revision - Public speaking practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Journal #13: What is the position of the author in the essay you read last night (you may look at your SOAPStone to help refresh you). How do your own views on this issue match/ contrast the author’s?</li> <li>- Minefield activity</li> <li>- Writer’s workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mini lesson on public speaking tips</li> <li>- TED talk activity (practice with partners)</li> <li>- Argument essay revision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher conferences on revised essay.</li> <li>- Read Truths “Ain’t I a Woman” and Michelle Obama’s “Remarks at Topeka” and answer close reading questions.</li> </ul>
<b>Wednesday</b> - Journal - Final revisions/editing - Writing - Close Reading - Lesson 10: Irony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Journal #14- Choose one of the essays you read last night and write a response to it. Identify at least 4 separate points the speaker makes and address each one in your entry.</li> <li>- Irony practice with fairytales</li> <li>- Lesson on irony</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Give TED talk presentations to class</li> <li>- Jigsaw read “Debating the Value of a College Education” pp 675-689. Answer questions together and discuss personal views on this issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revise draft of argument essay (bring 5 copies for tomorrow)</li> </ul>
<b>Thursday</b> - Journal - Final workshop - Class mural - Class literary magazine design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Journal #15: Consider the grouping of essays you jigsaw read yesterday afternoon. What are your feelings on the value of education?</li> <li>- Class mural</li> <li>- Writer’s workshop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Revise final draft</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Writer round- table. Share chosen work with the class.</li> <li>- Choose format for literary magazine and begin making/compiling companion artwork</li> <li>- Post assessment</li> </ul>
<b>Friday</b> - Journal - Finish lit magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Journal #16: Reflect on your experience in this class. What was most helpful to you as a writer? What were the most fun things we did? What was the most challenging? Share with class</li> <li>- Wrap up / finish lit magazine</li> </ul>	Last day – no planned activities	