

ENGLISH 125: IDENTITY, ETHNIC CONFLICT, AND DEMOCRACY

University of Michigan

Winter 2010

Revised Version

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Department of Political Science	First Year Seminar
7726 Haven Hall	FY Writing Requirement
Office Hours: W 8:30-10:30, and by appointment	Class time: MW 2:30-4:00 pm
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Course Description:

From Rwanda to Ireland, Sri Lanka to Lebanon, ethnically-motivated violence appears depressingly common in the world today. What is ethnicity, and when and why do conflicts over ethnic identities lead to violence? Where do such identities come from, and to what extent are they malleable rather than fixed? Multi-ethnic societies pose special challenges for democracy; indeed, some political philosophers have argued that loyalty to one's ethnic group over one's state will make democratic government impossible. In this course we will explore the meaning of ethnicity, its origins, and its consequences through readings (and viewings) in a variety of genres, including fiction, film, newspaper and magazine journalism, and academic scholarship. As this is a writing course, we will also pay special attention to the ways language shapes individual and group identities and to the role that language policies have played in exacerbating or alleviating ethnic grievances around the world.

The main goal of English 125 is to help you develop your ability to write complex, analytic, well-supported arguments that matter in academic contexts. You will work closely with your peers and me to develop your written prose. College writing is a difficult skill to master, and one requires a great deal of practice. Therefore, expect to write a lot in this class—in a variety of styles, on a wide range of topics, and in both low- and high-stakes settings.

Required Textbooks

The St. Martin's Handbook (6th Edition), Andrea Lunsford, Bedford/St. Martin's (2008).

Elements of Style (4th Edition), William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, Longman (2000).

Nations, States, and Violence, David D. Laitin, Oxford: Oxford University Press (2007).

Course Requirements

Graded Writing Assignments

Over the course of the term, you will write four essays totaling about 25 pages of “polished prose.” Each will have a revision requirement, and you will work with your peers and me to plan, draft, and edit your writing. I will not grade work other than on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory scale until the final draft is submitted. The essays are as follows (you will receive more detailed prompts for each essay when it is formally assigned):

- *Essay 1 (4-5 pp.)*: You may choose one of these options:
 - Option 1: Personal narrative
 - Option 2: Observation
 - Option 3: Critical response

Draft due Jan. 22; revision due Feb. 5

- *Essay 2 (4-5 pp.):* Critical review of two articles
Draft due Feb. 19; revision due Feb. 26
- *Essay 3 (4-5 pp.):* Comparison of cases to motivate a research question
Draft due March 19; revision due March 26
- *Essay 4 (8-10, including parts of Essay #3):* Causal analysis
Draft due April 9; revision due April 21

Both drafts and revised versions of essays are due no later than 4pm on Friday, submitted **both** as a hard copy to my office (7726 Haven Hall) and electronically on CTools in the Assignments Folders.

Research Paper Presentation

The assignments and activities in the course will culminate in your final essay, an 8-10 page research paper with an original argument. In the second-to-last week of the term (April 12 or 14) you will present your research findings in class to your peers and me. These presentations will allow all of us to share what we have been working on and exchange ideas and comments. The presentation will also provide an opportunity for you to solicit feedback before you turn in your final draft and give you experience delivering arguments orally as well as in writing. Your presentation should succinctly sum up your question, case comparison, and main conclusions, should make use of visual aids, and should last no more than 10 minutes, with a five minute question-and-answer period to follow. In addition, you will be expected to respond to and comment in writing on your peers' presentations.

Reading Responses

Roughly once a week during the term, you will be asked to react to and comment on the next class session's assigned readings by writing a response paper. These "reading responses" are a key component of the course and a regular opportunity for you to practice writing in a low-stakes setting. I will evaluate responses using a simple -/√/+ scale, with a √ indicating satisfactory effort. In your responses, I encourage you to comment on whatever interests you about the readings, including the ideas and arguments, your own related personal experiences or anecdotes, and even aspects of the writing itself such as the author's writing style, tone, and voice. Reading responses should be a minimum of one page, although the typical response paper could range anywhere from 2-5 pages.

Responses should be turned in electronically in the designated space in the Assignment folder on the course CTools site. I will read your responses that day and return them to you at the end of class; in order to give me enough time to do so, response papers must be uploaded to CTools no later than 8am on the day of class (usually Monday). **Responses submitted after 8am will not be accepted for any reason!** It is therefore in your best interest to write and post these well in advance of the deadline. However, because emergencies and bad days (and nights!) happen, you are allowed to skip one reading response without penalty. Each additional skipped response will result in a 1/3 grade penalty (i.e. an A- becomes a B+ with two skipped responses, a B with three, and so forth).

Workshops

Writing for a college-level audience is not easy, especially without previous experience. We will spend a significant portion of class time working on various aspects of your writing. These activities will include discussion of your writing in groups of your peers (3-4 students) and as a whole class. We will also use workshops to discuss various aspects of writing: thesis statements, introductory paragraphs, organization, style and tone, and use of evidence and quotations, among others. To help us make these workshops as effective as possible, you should read your peers' papers thoroughly and take the time to make detailed suggestions. You are expected to be active participants in these sessions, both as discussants and recipients of other students' comments and suggestions.

Assigned Readings

This course has a moderate reading load. Assigned readings will cover specific topics, concepts, or cases central to that day's class plan. These you are expected to read closely and carefully and to have completed before class. A typical day's assigned reading will include one piece related to the course theme, and one on some aspect of writing from the *St. Martin's Handbook* (abbreviated SMH in the schedule) or the *Elements of Style*.

Class Attendance and Participation

In-class activities will be a mix of discussion, workshops, and presentations. In a typical week, we will split our classroom time about equally between discussion of topics related to the course theme and to aspects of writing. I expect all students to contribute regularly to class discussion. Regular attendance is therefore a prerequisite for success in the course; missing more than two classes, for whatever reason, will adversely affect your participation grade. If you anticipate needing to miss more than two classes, please come talk to me as soon as possible. In addition, arriving late to class can be disruptive and is an inconvenience to your fellow students and me; habitual tardiness will likewise adversely affect your grade.

Newspaper Reading

Because we will refer regularly to current events in this course, you are encouraged to follow the news on a daily basis. Our news source of record will be the New York Times; you may read it online for free (registration required) at www.nytimes.com. I will periodically send links to articles that are especially timely or relevant to course themes and will proceed on the assumption that you have read them.

Individual Writing Conferences

I have set aside two days during the course for individual meetings with each of you to discuss your writing, your research topics, and any concerns that you or I might have. These conferences are required; **failure to show up for a scheduled meeting will result in a participation grade reduction.** To give us time to meet individually, our regular class will be cancelled on January 27 and March 24.

Final Grade

Your final grade will be determined by the following breakdown:

- Participation: 20%
 - Workshop responses: 10%
 - Attendance and contribution to class: 10%
- Reading Responses: 20%
- Essay 1: 10%
- Essay 2: 10%
- Essay 3: 10%
- Essay 4: 30%
 - Presentation: 10%
 - Paper: 20%

The assignments and activities in the course are designed to be cumulative. Considerably greater weight is therefore given to the final research essay, which I expect will incorporate large parts of your third essay as well.

Other Issues

Email (kbarist@umich.edu)

Email is by far the easiest way to reach me: I check frequently, and will do my best to reply as promptly as possible. I will also regularly send important class announcements over email via the CTools announcement function, so please make sure you have a working umich.edu email account and check it often.

Office Hours: Wednesday 8:30-10:30 and by appointment

Office hours are for your benefit. I urge you to come to my office hours to talk about any difficulties you may be having with the class or to discuss a topic touched on in the readings or during classroom discussion. If you cannot make my scheduled office hours, I am happy to schedule individual appointments.

Paper Formatting

Your essays and response papers should follow these standard formatting guidelines:

- Double-spaced;
- 12" Times New Roman font;
- Your name, course number, instructor name, and assignment due date in the upper left-hand corner;
- Page numbers and last name in the upper right-hand corner on every page except the first.

Resources for Writing

One of the objectives of this course is to help you understand where to find writing and research resources on campus, of which there are many.

All first-year writing seminar students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources of Sweetland Writing Center (1139 Angell Hall, <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/swc>). These include:

- *Writing faculty*, available for one-on-one meetings with students to review and discuss their writing for courses;
- *Peer tutors*, upper-level undergraduates with extensive experience working one-on-one with students to improve their writing;
- *Writing references and resources*, collected in one place and listed online: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/swc/student-services>

In addition to the resources at Sweetland, non-native English speakers may find more specialized help from the English Language Institute (500 E. Washington St., <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/eli>).

The UM Library System offers a number of useful resources specifically for undergraduates, listed here: <http://www.lib.umich.edu/services-undergraduate-students>.

Of special interest is Shapiro Undergraduate Library's online research tutorial, Searchpath, here: <http://guides.lib.umich.edu/searchpath>

Finally, the main writing textbook for this course, St. Martin's Handbook, has a companion website with an extensive collection of supplementary materials. I encourage you to take a look: <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/smhandbook6e/Player/index.aspx>

Late Assignments

Response papers will not be accepted late and can under no circumstances be made up. Essays will be accepted late but with a 1/3 grade penalty, if the essay is turned in by midnight on Friday, and an

additional 1/3 penalty for every additional day late; this includes drafts! If you turn a draft in late, your *revised* essay will be penalized.

Plagiarism and Improper Citation

Plagiarism is falsely representing someone else's ideas or words as your own. Simply put, don't do it. All your work should represent your own effort. Plagiarism is a serious offense that may result in failure of the course and referral of your case to the Assistant Dean for Student Academic Affairs. We will discuss plagiarism and proper citation practices in detail in this course; if you nevertheless are not sure what constitutes plagiarism, please ask!

CTools Site

All class readings along with other important class documents, announcements, and useful links will be posted to the class CTools site, so make sure that you can access it and check it regularly.

Special Accommodations

Any student who feels he/she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability is encouraged to see me during office hours.

COURSE SCHEDULE (JANUARY 6 – APRIL 21)

Week 1: Introduction

Weds. – 1/6

- *In-class activities:*
 - Introduction to course; syllabus and requirements; student introductions
 - What is good writing? What are the components of a good essay?
 - How to read and summarize effectively
- *Homework:* summarize Connor reading for next Monday

Week 2: What is Ethnicity?

Mon. – 1/11

- *Readings:*
 - Walker Connor, “A Nation Is a Nation, Is a State, Is an Ethnic Group, Is a...”
 - St. Martin’s Handbook (SMH): Ch. 1, “Expectations for College Writing,” and Ch. 2, “Reading, Writing, and Research.”
- *Assignment due:*
 - **Reader Response (due at 8am Monday in CTools Dropbox):** Summary of the Connor reading
- *Classroom activities:*
 - Discussion of Connor piece
 - In-class writing assignment
 - Discussion of directed self-placement materials
- *Homework:*
 - Readings, prepare reader response for Wednesday

Weds. – 1/13

- *Readings:*
 - Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner, “Would a Roshanda by Any Other Name Smell as Sweet?”
 - SMH: Ch. 3, “Rhetorical Situations”
- *Assignments due:*
 - **Reader Response (RR):** response to Levitt and Dubner reading
- *Homework:*
 - Essay #1 assignment prompt distributed

Week 3: Imagining Identities: Chosen or Imposed?

M – 1/18: NO CLASS – MLK Jr. DAY

- *Optional assignment:* Attend MLK Jr. Day activities, incorporate into essay

W – 1/20

- *Readings:*
 - Benedict Anderson, “The Nation and the Origins of National Consciousness”
 - SMH: Ch. 5, “Exploring, Planning, Drafting”
- *Assignments due:*
 - **RR:** response to Anderson reading
- *Homework:*
 - Finish Essay #1 draft

*****Friday, January 22: Essay #1 draft due, 4pm*****

Week 4: Where Do Ethnic Identities Come From?
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M – 1/25

- *Readings:*
 - Amy Tan, “A Pair of Tickets,” and “Mother Tongue”
 - SMH: Ch. 6, “Reviewing, Revising, and Editing”
- *Assignment due:*
 - **Reader Response (RR):** Response to Tan readings
- *Homework:*
 - Reread Essay #1 draft, be prepared to discuss in one-on-one meeting

W – 1/27: NO CLASS – INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH INSTRUCTOR

Week 5: Language as Ethnic Marker
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M – 2/1

- *Readings:*
 - John Gardner, “Lies! Lies! Lies!” intro and selected journal pages
- *Assignments due:*

- Peer review assignment
- *Homework:*
 - Study for Elements of Style Quiz

W – 2/3

- *Readings:*
 - David Laitin, Ch. 2, “National Cascades”
 - Elements of Style (1st half)
- *Quiz:*
 - Elements of Style, 1st half
- *Homework:*
 - Finish Essay #1 Final Draft

*****Friday, February 5: Essay #1 Revision Due, 4pm*****

Week 6: Does Language Shape Culture?

M – 2/8

- *Readings:*
 - John McWhorter, Ch. 2, “A Lesson from the Celtic Impact: The ‘Grammatical Errors’ Epidemic is a Hoax”
 - SMH: Ch. 7, “Developing Paragraphs,” Ch. 8, “Working with Others”
 - Elements of Style (2nd half)
- *Quiz:*
 - Elements of Style, 2nd half
- *Activity:*
 - Genre and style discussion
- *Homework:*
 - Essay #2 distributed

W – 2/10

- *Readings:*
 - David Laitin, Ch. 3, “The Cultural Foundations of Nationalism”; read Ch. 2 if you have not already
 - SMH: Ch. 15, “Integrating Sources into Your Writing,” and Ch. 16, “Acknowledging Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism”
- *Assignments due:*
 - **RR:** Response to the Laitin readings
- *Activity:*
 - Discuss Laitin chapters
 - Overview of citation guidelines and plagiarism
- *Homework:*
 - Prepare Essay #2 introduction for next Monday’s class

Week 7: Ethnic Conflict and Ethnic Violence
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M – 2/15

- *Readings:*
 - Donald Horowitz, “The Dimensions of Ethnic Conflict,” pp. 3-12
 - David Laitin, Ch. 1, “The Pandemonium of Nations”
- *Assignments due:*
 - **RR:** Response to Horowitz and Laitin readings
- *Activities:*
 - Discuss readings
 - Workshop Essay #2 intros
- *Homework:*
 - Work on Essay #2 draft

W – 2/17

- *Readings:*
 - Ashutosh Varshney, “Why Civil Society?: Ethnic Conflict and the Existing Traditions of Inquiry”
 - SMH: Ch. 9, “Analyzing Arguments”
- *Activities:*
 - Discuss Varshney reading
 - Discuss sample student compare/contrast essay
- *Homework:*
 - Revise and finish Essay #2 draft
 - Peer review of Essay #2 draft

*****Friday, February 19: Essay #2 Draft Due, 4pm*****

Week 8: Explanations of Ethnic Conflict and Violence

M – 2/22

- *Readings:*
 - Newspaper articles (TBA)
 - SMH: Ch. 11, “Constructing Arguments”
- *Assignments due:*
 - **Peer review: post to CTools by 8am**
- *Activities:*
 - Workshop papers
- *Homework:*
 - Revise Essay #2

W – 2/24

- *Readings:*
 - Steven Wilkinson, “Which Group Identities Lead to Most Violence?: Evidence from India”
 - SMH: Ch. 12, “Preparing for a Research Project”
- *Activities:*
 - Discussion of Wilkinson piece
 - Essay #3 distributed
- *Homework:*

- Finish Essay #2 revisions

******Friday, February 26: Essay #2 Revision Due, 4pm******

3/1 – 3/5:

SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

Week 9: Describing Multiethnic Societies

M – 3/8:

- *Readings:*
 - Daniel Posner, “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi”
 - Case studies of ethnically divided societies [See CTools Resources folder]
- *Assignments due:*
 - **RR:** response to Posner reading
- *Activities:*
 - Discussion of Posner
 - Discussion of comparative method
 - Writing activity: justifying a research question
- *Homework:*
 - Begin research for Essay #3

W – 3/10

LIBRARY DAY – MEET AT CLASSROOM TO WALK OVER TOGETHER
(Session is in Rm. 4059, in Shapiro Library, aka the UGLi)

- *Readings:*
 - UM Library undergraduate services page: <http://www.lib.umich.edu/services-undergraduate-students>
 - SMH: Ch. 12, “Preparing for a Research Project,” Ch. 13, “Conducting Research,” Ch. 14, “Evaluating Sources and Taking Notes”
- *Activity:*
 - Introduction to library resources
- *Homework:*
 - Continue research for Essay #3
 - Choose question and case study comparison
 - Write introduction

******Friday, March 12: Choose question and case studies for Essay #3; email me by 4pm******

Week 10: Problems of Multiethnic Societies

M – 3/15

- *Readings:*
 - Jack Snyder, “Nationalism and Democracy in the Developing World”
 - SMH: Ch. 17, “Writing a Research Project”
- *Assignments due:*
 - **RR:** Response to Snyder
 - **Bring essay #3 intro to class**
- *Activity:*
 - Discuss Snyder reading
 - Workshop introductions
- *Homework:*
 - Work on Essay #3 draft

W – 3/17

- *Readings:*
 - Steven M. Fish and Robin S. Brooks, “Does Diversity Hurt Democracy?”
 - SMH: reread Ch. 15, 16
- *Activities:*
 - Review citation and plagiarism
- *Homework:*
 - Finish Essay #3 draft
 - Prepare peer review for Monday

*****Friday, March 19: Essay #3 Draft Due, 4pm*****

Week 11: Democratic Solutions to the “Problem” of Multiethnic Societies
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M – 3/22

- *Readings:*
 - Donald Horowitz, “Democracy in Divided Societies”
 - SMH: Ch. 63, “Writing for the Social Sciences”
- *Assignments due:*
 - **Peer review of Essay #3**
- *Activities:*
 - Workshop Essay #3 draft
- *Homework:*
 - Re-read Essay #3 draft, bring to one-on-one meeting
 - Essay #4 prompt distributed

W – 3/24: NO CLASS – INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH INSTRUCTOR

*****Friday, March 26: Essay #3 Revision Due, 4pm*****

Week 12: Institutional Design in Multiethnic Democracies

M – 3/29

- *Readings:*
 - Arendt Lijphart, “Constitutional Design for Divided Societies”
 - Benjamin Reilly, “Electoral Systems for Divided Societies”
- *Assignments due:*
 - **RR:** Response to Lijphart and Reilly readings
- *Activities:*
 - Discuss Lijphart and Reilly
 - Overview of research project assignment
- *Homework:*
 - Work on Essay #4 draft

W – 3/31

- *Readings:*
 - Newspaper articles (TBA)
- *Assignment due:*
 - **Bring research paper outline to class**
- *Activities:*
 - Discuss individual cases
 - Workshop on organization, integrating evidence into paper
- *Homework:*
 - Work on Essay #4 draft

Week 13: Wrap-up and Research Paper Work

M – 4/5

- *Readings:*
 - Laitin Ch. 4, 5
- *Assignments due:*
 - **RR:** Response to Laitin chapters
- *Activities:*
 - Discuss Laitin readings
 - Summarize what we’ve learned: major course questions, state of research
- *Homework:*
 - Work on Essay #4 draft

W – 4/7: Payback Time: Workshopping the Instructor’s Writing

- *Readings:*
 - Instructor’s paper [Title TBA]
 - SMH: Ch. 25, “Oral and Multimedia Presentations”
- *Assignment due:*
 - **Peer review of instructor’s paper**
- *Activities:*
 - Instructor oral and visual presentation of research
 - Workshop instructor’s paper
- *Homework:*
 - Finish Essay #4 draft
 - Finish oral presentation

*****Friday, April 9: Essay #4 draft due, 4pm*****

Week 14: Student Presentations

M – 4/12:

- *Readings:*
 - Review SMH Ch. 25
- *Assignment due:*
 - **Peer review of Essay #4 draft**
- *Activities:*
 - Workshop Essay #4 drafts
 - Discuss visual and oral presentation
- *Homework:*
 - Prepare for presentation
 - Revise Essay #4

W – 4/14:

- *Activity:*
 - Student presentations (5): we will reserve the whole class period for student presentations
- *Homework:*
 - Continue work on Essay #4

*****Evening of Wednesday, April 14, 6-9 pm: Student presentations (8)*****

Week 15: Final Class

M – 4/19:

- *Activity:*
 - Student presentations (5): we will finish the remaining presentations
- *Homework:*
 - Finish Essay #4

*****Wednesday, April 21: Essay #4 Final Draft Due, 4pm*****

GOOD LUCK ON FINALS, AND ENJOY YOUR SUMMER!