

A TEACHER'S *ALMANACK*

.....

A Guide to Expository Writing 101

2016 – 2017



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Updated by Regina Masiello
<http://wp.rutgers.edu>
2016-2017 Edition



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A LETTER OF WELCOME

Dear Colleagues,

Expository Writing is the only course that all Rutgers University students are required to take, and about 6,000 students take Expos each year.

Expository Writing at Rutgers has bold and ambitious goals. It aims to teach students to read non-fiction texts carefully and with sensitivity, when most of the undergraduates who take the class have rarely been asked to confront non-fiction prose at all. The course hopes to encourage critical thinking that enables students to make independent claims, claims derived from analytical readings of texts that address some of the most complex and pressing issues of our time. Our students are asked to consider topics they have rarely confronted, especially in an English or Writing course, such as global warming, cultural and national conflict, and genetic engineering. Finally, Expository Writing urges students to communicate their ideas to the world with confidence and clarity that can only be achieved through revision, from the reformulation of a phrase to the wholesale reversal of one's prior position. Revision is an essential part of the writing process, but few incoming students have been asked to revise their work to the extent Expos requires of them. These are lofty and ambitious goals indeed.

But what is at the heart of Expository Writing, and what makes me admire the pedagogy of *The New Humanities Reader* so much, is its deep and abiding optimism, which insists that Rutgers undergraduates can achieve the goals the course has established. The course maintains the belief that entering students can read and synthesize complicated texts from disparate disciplines, make independent claims based on those texts, and then articulate those claims in a coherent and meaningful way. Expository Writing represents a hope that our students will successfully grapple with and solve the problems that loom so large in the reader.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Rutgers and to the 101 Orientation, and I hope that you will find the mission of Expository Writing as inspiring as I do. I invite all of you to share the course's mission with your students in the most explicit terms; tell your students what faith their university has in them, and that the challenges this course will present are an articulation of that faith. With your help, your students will rise to the occasion.

Best wishes for a productive semester.

Sincerely,

Regina Masiello
Assistant Director, 101 Coordinator



SECTION I

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PEDAGOGY

The New Humanities Reader encourages students to see themselves as participants in an ongoing written “conversation” about some of the most important issues of our time: globalization, urban development (and redevelopment), biotechnology, environmental decline, the encounter between different regions and cultures, the changing nature of identity, and the search for enduring values beyond the prospect of seemingly random change. This conversational model of writing assumes the notion of a community that includes the authors of the assigned texts, the teacher, and all other students in the class. In other words, as the students read, they can imagine being in conversation with the author in terms of what the author is saying; when the students participate in class discussion, they are in conversation with their peers and the teacher about the reading; when the students write an assignment concerning two or more texts, they can assume that the authors are in conversation with them and each other as they lead them in discussion; when the students write, they show their work to a group of their peers to converse with them about the merit and meaningfulness of their work; when teachers grade the final draft, they are in conversation with the students through their written marginal and end comments. In all ways, therefore, the Writing Program’s pedagogy is a collaborative one. It assumes that in the absence of definitive “answers,” the writer’s most important task is the understanding of complex issues and the communication of this understanding to others.

The New Humanities Reader presupposes that the context for writing is always prior reading and critical thinking, and in this spirit it is an anthology rather than a textbook or rhetorical text. The point of this anthology is to elicit writing that closely approximates the work students are likely to do in many of their college classes and, later, in their professional lives. To encourage complex thought, teachers should construct “sequences” of readings and assignments that will lead incrementally toward essays that synthesize multiple sources while making an independent argument.

Reading, interpretation, connective synthesis, and the use of textual evidence should receive highest priority during the first half of the course. We want our students to develop independent claims and to engage the essays in the reader conceptually. Strong academic writing incorporates cycles of reading, pre-writing, drafting, peer review, rereading, and revision. Revision, as part of this cycle, is not only about the formal presentation of the paper, but also about developing one’s ability to rethink a position or to re-examine one’s previously held conclusions. Revision, therefore, is as much about conceptual and intellectual flexibility as it is about rewriting individual sentences.

We ask our students to think complexly, and communicating this complexity with clarity must be a priority. Grammar and formal presentation must be addressed. To this end, students are asked to read and re-read, to think and re-think, to draft and re-draft, so that final drafts represent the polished delivery of a synthetically generated claim.

Students should be taught grammar, clarity, and structural coherence in the context of revision, and student writing generated within the context of the course (as opposed to workbook-style exercises or lectures on correctness and style) should be the center of all revision related conversation. The conversational, collaborative and community based model of the course must be encouraged so that students can acquire and then mobilize a shared discourse about their writing and the writing of their peers. Together, students learn to develop claims successfully by drafting and revising.

The idea that knowledge comes into existence through conversations among informed reader/writers, which can be thought of as a social process involving a “co-construction of meaning,” contradicts several of the assumptions underlying the curriculum in many high schools. Typically students have learned how to summarize or repeat information, or to offer “personal responses” to literary works or to themes assigned by the teacher. Few first-year students have read prose texts as lengthy and complex as Steven Johnson’s “The Myth of the Ant Queen” or Joseph Stiglitz’s “Rent Seeking and the Making of an Unequal Society.” In the presence of extended arguments that challenge and, at times, even threaten to defeat their best efforts at understanding, students need to be reminded that many good readings begin as misreadings, and that re-reading, writing, and revising initial interpretations are fundamental to the discovery of knowledge in every field.



SECTION II

II. CLOSE READING

Critical thinking and analytical writing are predicated on the practice of careful reading. Making students conscious of *how* they read and *why* they read is at the center of Expository Writing. When students confront conceptually dense passages of text, unfamiliar vocabulary, or syntactically challenging sentence structures, their first instinct may be to avoid the discomfort or anxiety these passages provoke. But for the purposes of Expos, and for the purposes of careful reading in all of college and in the world, students must become comfortable grappling with challenging texts. The Writing Program calls this confrontation close reading, and this kind of work with text requires engaged textual analysis that can help build independent and original claims.

Teachers should begin modeling the practice of close reading on the first day of class, and should emphasize that the work of close reading is essential to good analysis, and an essential part of working with quotations in their papers. Activities should be designed around the practice, and each time a new essay is assigned (usually the day a final draft is due), teachers should isolate a passage for close reading in class. Return to this practice in order to reinforce the notion that close reading is an integral part of generating ideas and of using textual evidence.

Close Reading Strategies

- **Choose dense passages:** When modeling close reading in class, it is helpful to choose conceptually (and sometimes grammatically) dense passages for analysis. The beauty of dense passages is that every word is meaningful, so when you ask students “what word or phrase seems important here, and why?” they can rarely be wrong, and the word or phrase they choose can always be used to begin generating discussion.
- **Don’t give background, just jump right in:** Teachers sometimes feel that they need to introduce a text, give some background to help students understand it, or explain some basic parts of its argument that students might have missed. Don’t do this! The goal of our pedagogy is to make students independent and active learners. The beauty of close reading is that it forces students to do the work of confronting what they do not understand so they can develop strategies to make sense of all of the complex and unfamiliar texts they will encounter at college. Among the strategies they should learn are looking for repeated words or phrases, thematically related words, key terms that help to name concepts in the text or that seem to speak to the core meaning of the passage, apparent contradictions, and unusual grammatical or syntactical choices.
- **Practice active reading:** Teachers often forget that we need to *instruct* students to do some of the basic things that well-practiced readers of complex texts always do, such as reading with a pen or pencil in hand and making comments in the margins or on post-it notes. Some teachers require that students make a

certain number of marginal comments per page, and go around the room to check for visible work that demonstrates textual engagement. Encourage students to use their marginal comments not only to mark what seems important, but also to ask questions of the text or make connections with other things they have read.

- **Read, re-read, and then read it again:** When modeling close reading in the classroom, read the passage in question out loud. Then ask the students to read it quietly to themselves. Multiple readings create more sophisticated understandings of texts. Tell students to read, read carefully, and then do it again.
- **Isolate key terms and phrases:** When working in class with a passage from an essay, ask students which words seem important, and why they seem so. Help students become conscious of textual signs that indicate when a term is critical (such as repetition, modulation, etc.). Many students are inclined to think the “big” words are the ones that matter. Help them attend to the small words as well; pronouns, prepositions and articles often imply collectivity, isolation, selectivity and connectivity.
- **Use close reading to teach grammar and syntax:** We often assume that students come to college with a basic vocabulary for discussing grammar. We think: “shouldn’t they at least already know the terms ‘subject,’ ‘verb’ and ‘object’? Weren’t they taught to identify ‘articles,’ ‘prepositions,’ and ‘pronouns’?” Likely they were taught these terms at some point in their K-12 education, but few have been required to use those terms. As a result, that grammatical vocabulary has been largely forgotten. Emphasize that grammatical terms are part of the basic vocabulary any college student should have, and if they have forgotten these terms they should take time to learn them. Discussing an interesting sentence in class is a great opportunity to teach students some of this basic vocabulary.
- **Make connections:** Students should attend to how parts of an essay speak to one another, contradict one another, or complicate one another. Making connections within a text is critical to understanding the text as a whole. As students begin to work with multiple texts they should begin to do the work of making connections between them at the level of specific language.



SECTION III

III. COURSE STRUCTURE AND PACING

Expository Writing: 15 Week Class Plan (Fall 2016)

Please use this 15-Week Class Plan to determine the pacing of your course. The schedule provides a sense of where you should be throughout the term, as well as information on administrative procedures you need to keep in mind for each week. This offers a workable schedule for the entire semester—a rough draft or a final draft due each week. To maintain this pace, it is important that you return work to students promptly; please do not collect a new set of final drafts before you have returned the previous set. Once you establish this rhythm, you can carry it through to the end of the semester. ***Please remember that the final exam in Expos should take place on the last day of class (and should be written in blue books). If you find you have some extra time in your schedule over the course of the term, please use that time for revision exercises or student conferences.***

<p>Week 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete first day writing sample*** • Distribute syllabus • Discuss course pedagogy • Photocopy, distribute, and discuss grading criteria • Assign reading 1 • Explain and practice close reading by working in class with a passage from reading 1 • Discuss reading 1 • Assign paper 1 	<p>September 6 – 9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Classes begin Tuesday, September 6</u> • Add / Drop Period • Encourage students to visit course Sakai site
<p>Week 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rough Draft of Paper 1 Due • Define goals for peer review • Peer review drafts 	<p>September 12 – 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to visit class Sakai site • Last day for students to add or drop a class (without a W) is Tuesday, September 13
<p>Week 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return rough draft of paper 1 with <u>full teacher comments</u>*** • Workshop sample student work: 	<p>September 19 – 23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Centers open for enrollments—refer students who need tutoring (be sure to indicate in your comments what

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> identify strengths and weaknesses • Final Draft of Paper 1 Due • Assign reading 2 • Practice close reading by working in class with a passage from reading 2 	<p>your students might need to work on with tutors)</p>
<p>Week 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Reading 2 • Assign Paper 2 • Rough Draft of Paper 2 Due • Peer Review drafts 	<p>September 26 – 30</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals to Writing Centers
<p>Week 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Draft of Paper 2 Due • Assign Reading 3 • Practice close reading by working in class with a passage from reading 3 	<p>October 3 - 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign up for folder review • Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown on Sunday, October 2
<p>Week 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss reading 3 • Midterm Exam (one full class period) • Assign paper 3 	<p>October 10 – 14</p> <p>Midterm Folder Review: Bring graded papers 1 and 2 from all students; copies of your assignments; and your grade book and attendance records.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yom Kippur begins at sundown on Tuesday, October 11
<p>Week 7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return and discuss midterms • Rough Draft of Paper 3 Due • Define goals for peer review • Peer review drafts 	<p>October 17 – 21</p> <p>*This is a great time to ask students to fill out a midterm self-evaluation. This practice is optional, though it often turns out to be informative for both students and instructors. *</p>
<p>Week 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Draft of Paper 3 Due • Assign reading 4 • Practice close reading by working in class with a passage from reading 4 • Discuss reading 4 • Assign paper 4 • Rough Draft of Paper 4 Due • Define goals for peer review 	<p>October 24 - 28</p> <p>*This is a great time to schedule conferences with students. This is optional, but students often benefit from talking with instructors at this point in the term.*</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer review drafts Workshop student writing 	
Week 9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return rough draft of paper 4 with full teacher comments*** Assign second rough draft of paper 4 	October 31 – November 4
Week 10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rough Draft 2 of Paper 4 Due 	November 7 – 11
Week 11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Draft of Paper 4 Due Assign Reading 5 Practice close reading by working in class with a passage from reading 5 Discuss reading 5 Assign paper 5 	November 14 – 18
Week 12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rough Draft of Paper 5 Due Define goals for fifth peer review Peer review drafts Assign second rough draft of paper 5 Peer review second drafts 	November 21 – November 23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change of Designation of Days: Tuesday, Nov. 22 = Thursday Classes Change of Designation of Days: Wednesday, Nov. 23 = Friday Classes Thanksgiving Break from November 24 - 27 Writing Centers suspend tutoring for Thanksgiving
Week 13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rough Draft 2 of Paper 5 Due 	November 28 – December 2
Week 14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Draft Paper 5 Due Assign Reading 6 Exam Prep: Discuss Reading 6 	December 5 - 9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student Evaluations
Week 15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Exam 	December 12 -14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classes end Wednesday, Dec. 14 <p>Final Folder Review: Bring the following: all graded papers, copies of your assignments, rosters with grades in pencil, grade books, attendance records, final exams graded pass/fail in</p>

	pencil, and completed grade information sheets.
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After Final Folder Review

- Hold a final office hour to return folders and discuss students' grades. Submit final exams to the director with whom you have folder review.
- Do not post or e-mail grades!
- Return unclaimed folders to the Writing Program office on the campus where you teach; watch for a memo with details regarding end-of-semester procedures.



SECTION IV

IV. SAMPLE SYLLABUS

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

(Available on the “Expos 2016 - 2017” Sakai project site)

Expository Writing

Fall 2016

Instructor:

Instructor’s Email:

Class Meetings: Days, Times, Location

Office Hours: Days, Times, Location

The certified learning goals for 355:101 are:

1. To communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience.
2. To evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly.
3. To analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

Course Description

In this course you will read and write about a variety of texts concerning a range of fascinating, relevant, contemporary issues. Course goals include helping you to read deeply, think critically, and write interpretively and effectively, creating your own independent argument that synthesizes multiple sources.

Required Texts

- Miller and Spellmeyer, *The New Humanities Reader*, 5th Edition
- Miller-Cochran and Raimes, *Keys for Writers*, 7th Edition
- Selected student papers to demonstrate and correct errors, or as models of strong writing

Course Requirements

- Write a first day writing sample
- Read six selections from *The New Humanities Reader*
- Write **five** out-of-class essays, minimum of **five** typed pages each
- Write a typed rough and final draft for each assignment (and demonstrate significant revision between drafts)
- Give three brief oral presentations in class, including one on grammar
- Complete an in-class midterm exam (essay format, graded pass or fail)
- Complete an in-class final exam (essay format, graded pass or fail)
Students must pass the final exam to pass the course.
- Keep all rough and final drafts in a folder, for mid-semester and end of semester folder review.

- Regularly check your Sakai Course Site at sakai.rutgers.edu. (To access Sakai, you will need your Rutgers Net ID and password. You will receive announcements from Sakai at your Rutgers e-mail address, so remember to check that account frequently.)

Grading

- The final course grade will be determined by your highest level of sustained achievement until the end of the term.
- You must complete the midterm exam to pass the course.
- You must pass the final exam to pass the course.
- Half a letter grade will be deducted from the final draft for each day its rough draft is late, one full letter grade will be deducted from a final draft for each day it is late.
- The lowest passing grade for a paper and for the course is C.
- Papers that exhibit significant errors of punctuation, grammar, spelling, or syntax (generally, three or more errors per page) risk failing.
- **All grades are subject to departmental review.**

Policies

- Attendance at all classes is expected. After four absences you *risk failing the course*.
- Punctuality is important. Lateness of twenty minutes or more counts as half an absence. After missing forty minutes of class you will be marked absent.
- You must submit rough and final drafts of all five papers to pass the class (there should be substantial revision between rough and final drafts). Rough drafts must be four full pages, and final drafts must be five full pages in length. You must also complete the midterm exam, and pass the final exam to pass the class.
- If you are two final drafts behind, for any reason, you automatically fail the course.
- If you transfer into a section of Expos late, you have one excused absence only. If, for example, you miss the first three classes of the semester, only one will be excused and you will have two absences.
- You must review and abide by the University's Policy on Academic Integrity. This can be found online at: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>.
- **You cannot drop Expos 101 without a Dean's permission.**
- Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (ADAA) of 2008, and Sections 504 and 508 that mandate that reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please register with the Office of Disability Services for Students, which is dedicated to providing services and administering exams with accommodations for students with disabilities. **The Office of Disability Services for Students can be contacted by calling 848.445.6800 and is located on the Livingston campus at the following address: 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Suite A145, Piscataway, NJ 08854.**

Finding Support At Rutgers

Rutgers Health Services

- <http://health.rutgers.edu>
- Medical <http://rhsmedical.rutgers.edu>
- Counseling, Alcohol & Other Drug Assistance Program & Psychiatric Services (CAPS) <http://rhscaps.rutgers.edu>
- Pharmacy <http://rhspharmacy.rutgers.edu>
- Health Outreach, Promotion & Education (H.O.P.E.) <http://rhshope.rutgers.edu>

Academic Deans and the Office of Academic Services

- <http://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu>
- <https://sebs.rutgers.edu/academics/>
- <http://www.business.rutgers.edu/>
- <http://www.masongross.rutgers.edu/content/undergraduate-academic-advisors>
- http://pharmacy.rutgers.edu/content/academic_services
- <http://soc.rutgers.edu/oas/advising>

Dean of Students

- <http://deanofstudents.rutgers.edu>
- <https://undergraduate.rutgers.edu/for-students/student-resources/campus-deans>

Writing Centers

- <http://wp.rutgers.edu/tutoring/writingcenters>

Office of Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance

- <http://vpva.rutgers.edu>

Center for Social Justice & LGBTQ Communities

- <http://socialjustice.rutgers.edu/>

Office of Disabilities Services

- <https://ods.rutgers.edu>

Public Safety

- RUPD <http://publicsafety.rutgers.edu/rupd/>
- Department of Transportation Services <http://rudots.rutgers.edu/>

Writing Program Policies

The Writing Program's policies on grading, attendance, and academic integrity are represented on the sample syllabus above; please respect these standards and alert students to these policies. **Review the following items before the first day of class, be sure students understand these policies before the end of your first class meeting, and review these policies throughout the semester:**

- After four absences, students risk failing the course. Students who miss six classes **automatically fail the course** and should retake it at a time when they are better able to commit to it.
- Teachers must contact students who have missed class three times to remind them of the course attendance policy. Once a student has missed six classes, his teacher must notify him that he has failed the course.
- A student who is twenty or more minutes late to class earns half an absence. Once a student has missed forty minutes of class, he or she is considered absent.
- If a student transfers into your section from another section at the start of the semester, the student has one excused absence only. If, for example, a student misses the first three classes of the semester, the student has two absences.
- In accordance with University policy, absences for religious observance are excused.
- **If a student is experiencing dire circumstances, he or she should be advised to contact the appropriate Dean.** For a list of Deans, see the following site: <http://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/staff-directory>. Please refer students struggling with academic issues to the Academic Deans, and students struggling with personal issues to the Dean of Students. A dean will speak with a struggling student, and will need documentation from the student verifying the student's circumstances. The Dean will determine an appropriate action, if any, and will contact you with his or her recommendation. Students who appear to be struggling in the course are always welcome to talk with a Writing Program director.
- Students may switch class sections through add/drop, but they are not allowed to drop Expository Writing without a Dean's permission. It is useful to remind students that they cannot "drop" Expository Writing. Students who are unaware of this policy will sometimes stop attending class while they seek permission to drop, only to discover they cannot drop the course and must return. Alert students at the beginning of the term that they should not stop attending class while seeking a Dean's support.

- Students must submit all drafts of all five papers, must complete the midterm exam, and must pass the final in order to complete the course. Rough drafts should be at least four full pages, and final drafts should be at least five full pages.
- Instructors may set their own policies about late papers. Given the pace of the course, late and missing papers may become difficult to accommodate. The following penalties are recommended: a half-letter grade (C+ to C) if the rough draft is late, and a full letter grade (B to C) if the final draft is late.
- All drafts must be typed and instructors should not accept handwritten work.
- Instructors must comment on the **rough drafts of papers one and four**.
- Instructors must comment on **all five final drafts**.
- Instructors cannot assign minus or “split” grades.
- Instructors must use a Rutgers email address to communicate with students. This is University policy.
- Instructors must maintain (establish and regularly update) a course Sakai page.
- Instructors must require students to submit all drafts of all papers to Turnitin via the course Sakai site.
- Instructors must attend a midterm and end-of-semester folder review.
- Instructors are expected to teach all scheduled class meetings. In the event that an instructor must find a substitute to cover a class meeting, the following form must be submitted to the Writing Program as soon as such arrangements are made: <https://goo.gl/forms/Yrl1gfy3DCt3ov0h2>. Please note: this is not a request for a substitute – all teachers are expected to teach their own classes. Should an instructor need a substitute, it is the instructor’s responsibility to make such arrangements. The Writing Program will not find substitute teachers for instructors.
- Instructors are required to hold one office hour each week for each section of Expository Writing. If, for example, an instructor has two sections of the course, that teacher must hold two office hours each week (one for each section). Instructors must hold office hours on the campus where the class meets.
- Instructors cannot give special permission to add a student to their sections. Students must follow the add/drop process to add an open section. The Writing Program generally does not over-enroll sections.

- All plagiarism issues must be referred to Donald Dow (the Director in charge of academic integrity violations). Please contact him (ddow@scarletmail.rutgers.edu) before addressing a potential plagiarism issue with a student.



SECTION V

V. WRITING

Students will come to your class with a great deal of practice in writing to demonstrate prior knowledge (a skill that will continue to have value for them in many other courses). They may have had less practice writing to discover a position of their own in relation to other writers, and even less practice communicating that position to others in a cogent way.

Early in the term, teachers should be less concerned with seeing a fully developed argument and more concerned with deepening the students' understandings of the texts and encouraging the making of sustained and pertinent connections. Emphasize conceptual engagement in early papers, as opposed to focusing primarily on rhetorical form; emphasize the importance of ideas to deepen their sensitivity as readers and thinkers.

At the same time, students must recognize that thinking, speaking, and writing are fundamentally social acts. Understanding by itself is never adequate; the point, finally, is to be understood. As the semester progresses, open reflection and risky engagement with texts are framed as first steps in a process that ends with the convincing presentation of a new way of seeing. Without risk, the writer learns nothing; without coherence, the same fate awaits the reader. Organizational effectiveness and general clarity should be emphasized during the later weeks of the semester.

Teachers should construct sequences of readings and assignment questions. Sequencing asks students to revisit essays and asks that they think connectively as new ideas are introduced to the class discussion. Sequencing requires students to read closely and to think synthetically. During the 15-week semester, students will complete two reading sequences.

The Five Paper Model for Expository Writing

- Students are required to **read a total of six essays** from *The New Humanities Reader*.
- Students will write **5 graded papers**. Each rough draft must be a minimum of four full pages, and each final draft must be a minimum of five full pages.
- The structure of each assignment throughout the semester is as follows:

- Paper 1 – Reading 1
 - Paper 2 – Readings 1 & 2
 - Midterm Exam – Readings 1, 2 & 3
 - Paper 3 – Readings 1, 2 & 3
 - Paper 4 – Reading 4 & one of the first three readings
(The instructor may choose one particular reading from the first sequence, or the instructor may allow students to use any one of the first three readings.)
 - Paper 5 – Readings 4, 5 & one of the first three readings
(The instructor may choose one particular reading from the first sequence, or the instructor may allow students to use any one of the first three readings.)
 - Final Exam – Reading 6 & one of the previous five readings from the semester
(The instructor may choose one of the previous five readings to pair with the sixth reading, or the instructor may allow the students to choose which one of the five readings they wish to pair with reading six. **The final exam should ask students to pair reading six with only one other essay from the course of the semester.**)
- **Teachers must comment on the rough draft of Paper 1, and on the rough draft of Paper 4. *No grade is given on rough drafts.***
 - **Teachers must grade and comment on all five final drafts.**
 - **Do not assign minus grades or “split” grades.**
 - Students conduct **Peer Review** for every paper they write.

Building An Assignment Sequence

When choosing essays for a sequence, consider larger contexts or themes which might draw readings together about such issues as urbanization, aesthetics, human psychology, the effects of technology or modernization, globalization, perception and so on. Once you have a context or theme that draws your essays together, create each assignment with a view towards developing that context/theme and adding layers of complexity to it. The sequence should help students identify topics as points of

connection, in which students might not only connect authors in terms of saying “and” or “furthermore,” but also “but” or “however” as they acknowledge the complexity of issues.

The Assignment Sheet

Class discussion should revolve around textual complexity, forming connections between texts, and the discussion of ideas. This idea driven conversation can be sabotaged by questions about formatting, assignment requirements, or guidelines. To keep the conversation in your class on ideas, use your assignment sheet to give clear instructions so that practical matters do not become the center of discussion.

- **Name the Reading or Readings**

You should name the readings you expect students to discuss at the outset of each assignment. This becomes especially important as the semester progresses and you expect students to return to readings they had discussed previously. Some students will not immediately understand that this means they should discuss all of these readings in conversation with each other. Be explicit about which readings need to be discussed. It is advisable to set the list of readings for the assignment apart by giving it a label (“Readings”) and listing the author and title of each piece.

- **Use the Visual Elements of the Page for Emphasis**

With computers, we can all be good page designers, able to use white space, lists, boldface, and other visual cues to help students understand our assignments. A good assignment will use boldface to highlight the specific question that is being asked, and will use the blank space of the page to organize the various components of the question. *Your priorities are communicated by your use of space.*

- **Ask a Question**

Some assignments, including those by some very experienced teachers, never really ask a question of students. Without a question to answer, students have no clear prompt for writing. Not only should your assignment ask a question, but it should also highlight that question (perhaps with boldface or by putting the question into its own paragraph, or both). This enables students to focus on what you are asking. Your question should not be posed as an either/or scenario, as some students might assume they are limited to one of two predetermined answers. For example, the question “Can uncertainty preserve happiness?” invites to students to answer either “yes, it can” or “no, it can’t.” This question might be more fruitfully posed in the following manner: “What is the role of uncertainty in the preservation, creation or destruction of happiness?” This formulation asks students to consider a multiplicity of possible answers.

- **Highlight the Main Question**

Highlight the main question in some way, perhaps by putting it in bold, making it an independent paragraph, explicitly labeling it “Question,” or all of the above. This will then provide a prompt for an effective and succinct instigation for writing.

- **Utilize the Language of the Essays to Introduce the Question**
Before one can pose a meaningful question, the assignment must provide the student with a brief introduction to the issue at hand. A class that has focused on issues of happiness and uncertainty (in their readings and in class discussions), for example, would benefit from a paper assignment that places the assignment question in the context of these previous considerations. While providing this context, instructors should use the critical language of the assigned texts, thereby modeling the very work we want our students to do. If we ask that our students engage with the language and the ideas of the texts, we ought first to do it ourselves in the assignment question.
- **Ask Follow-up Questions or Give Advice**
After you have written your question, imagine how your students might begin to formulate an answer. What advice can you give them? What additional questions (clearly segregated from the main question) might help them understand what you are asking and how it applies to the texts under consideration? Think also of the kinds of thought questions that might invite students to consider your assignment question from a less obvious position. Introduce the possibility of an alternate approach to the question. *Please mark these thought questions explicitly, telling students that they need not answer all of them in order to address the assignment.*
- **State the Learning Objectives (or, “What I’m Looking For”)**
With each paper you likely will be looking for different skills, or “learning objectives.” With the early assignments, you might want to emphasize the importance of connective and interpretative work, guiding students away from papers which are primarily composed of summary or which treat the texts in isolation. In later assignments, once your students can adequately distinguish between summary and analysis, and can grapple with complicated passages from the readings, you might specify the learning objective is having a strong thesis.
- **Give Due Dates**
Either at the top or at the bottom of the page, you should have clear due dates for both the Rough Draft and the Final Draft. And be sure to remind students to bring extra copies of their Rough Drafts for Peer Review day.
- **Provide Specific Formatting Instructions**
Please specify the basic formatting you expect students to follow in preparing their papers. Be sure to repeat the minimum page requirement of at least four pages for the Rough Draft and at least five full pages for the Final Draft on all assignments. Be explicit about your expectations: the paper should have one-

inch margins; should be typed; should be double-spaced and in a 12 point font; the paper should have the student's name and the due date in the upper left or right hand corner; assignments should be stapled in the upper left hand corner; pages should be numbered; and each paper should have an original title.

Sample Assignment Sheet

PAPER 3

Expos 355:101

Readings: Karen Ho, “Biographies of Hegemony” (*New Humanities Reader*)
Cathy Davidson, “Project Classroom Makeover” (*New Humanities Reader*)
Susan Faludi, “The Naked Citadel” (*New Humanities Reader*)

For the midterm exam, I asked you to think carefully about how Susan Faludi used the words “stripping” and “remolding” in “The Naked Citadel.” In her discussion of the fourth-class system, she claims that The Citadel hopes “to ‘strip’ each young recruit of his original identity and remold him into the ‘whole man’” (75). For paper three, I want you to consider another important term in this quotation: “identity.” Using the connections you made between Faludi’s terms and the terms in Davidson and Ho’s essays, I want you to consider the following question: **to what extent is an individual’s identity influenced, shaped, or otherwise impacted by the institutions with which he or she comes in contact?**

Questions to Get You Started:

- What is an identity? Do the authors define it? How are you defining it? Is it stable? Does it change?
- What form does influence take? Influence, shape, and impact are pretty generalized terms. How can you make them more specific?
- Which institutions are you going to discuss? Banks? Colleges? Are all colleges the same? All banks? Remember to be specific and to draw on the textual evidence you have available.
- What kind of “contact” will you be considering? Physical? Cultural? Economic? Are these kinds of contact connected?

N.B.: Remember that these questions should inform your thinking, but should not be answered as a list.

❖ **Rough Draft Due: Thursday, March 12 (four full pages)**

Please upload (as an attachment) to **Assignments** on our Sakai site (sakai.rutgers.edu) by 12:00 PM on **Thursday, March 12**. Bring two hard copies to class for peer review.

❖ **Final Draft Due: Tuesday, March 24 (five full pages)**

Please upload (as an attachment) to **Assignments** on our Sakai site (sakai.rutgers.edu) by 12:00 PM on **Tuesday, March 24**.

Late rough drafts will result in a half-letter grade deduction from the final draft of Paper 3. Late final drafts will result in a full-letter grade deduction from Paper 3.

Required:

*stapled *double-spaced *1-inch margins *12-pt. font (Times New Roman)

*MLA format (Your headers, page numbers, and quotations should be formatted properly.)

The Assignment Question

The most important part of any writing assignment is the main question it asks. You might want to ask a number of questions in your assignment, but having one main question (or no more than three related questions) can focus student responses. Once you have decided upon a main question, you might use secondary or rejected questions to organize class discussion or group activities.

Begin with “How” or “Why”

Questions can take a wide variety of forms, but the most successful tend to begin with “How” or “Why” rather than “Who,” “What,” “Where,” or “When.” Other ways of asking these types of questions include “In what ways” (equivalent to “how”), “what is the relationship between” (or “how are they related”), “For what reasons would” (which is basically another form of “why”).

Point to the Text

Be sure that the question directs students back to the text and that the texts can be used to address the question.

Open It Up

Make sure your question is open-ended enough to allow for a variety of responses. It should not be possible to answer only “yes” or “no.” The best questions are often those that even you are not sure how to answer. Such questions set students with a task and motivate them to develop an original project to fulfill it.

Push Beyond the Explicit

The best questions don’t ask for an explication of the text (which will tend to produce summary) but instead direct students to consider the implications, complications, or applications of its ideas.

Types of Questions

The following are some categories of successful questions that follow the pedagogy of the New Humanities. These questions are modeled on the kinds of questions professors across the university in all disciplines pose on paper assignments, and they encourage responses that are based on connective thinking and analysis.

Close Reading

Students are asked to examine implicit assumptions or arguments within the text (usually about some “big question”) by looking closely at a specific motif or recurrent theme. Often, a close reading will direct students to decode symbolism, unpack the implicit meaning of specific terms, or untangle the relationship between form and content.

- How does the way that O’Brien has written his essay relate to his own claims about storytelling?

- How do symbolic representations or cultural symbols, such as a veil (Nafisi), operate in the formation of community?

Synthesis

Students are asked to combine ideas from one reading with those of another to produce a more complex idea or a more complex representation of the world.

- How might XXXX contribute to “living fully”(Sacks), and to what ends?

Frame and Case

Students are asked to use a theoretical idea from one reading to “frame” (or create a paradigm for interpreting) the “case” (or example) offered by a second reading. This type of assignment works well when you have one strongly theoretical reading and one or two rather descriptive or narrative readings. The ideal frame and case question will encourage students not only to use the frame to read the case but also to use the case text to complicate the frame. A frame and case assignment can also be used with three readings. You might use a synthesis of two texts to create a frame for interpreting a third, or consider two texts as dueling paradigms with the case text used to demonstrate the validity of the preferred framing text. Frame and case questions are often formulated in the following manner: “What is the role of idea X in example Y?” or “How would writer X interpret writer Y?”

- How might Gladwell’s theory regarding the power of context predict the ways in which the Citadel academy responded to Shannon Faulkner as described by Faludi?
- How might the forces that give rise to “Generation Me” (Twenge) be explained using “the power of context” (Gladwell)?

Terministic Frame

Students are asked to use a term offered by the instructor’s assignment, to invent a term of their own, or to apply terms from one of the readings in order to frame their interpretation of a second reading. This works like “frame and case,” but here students focus on using terms as the frame.

Dueling Paradigms

Students are asked to examine the competing worldviews or models of society implied by two texts and either decide which paradigm is more compelling, explain how both might be compelling in their own right, or try to explain the root of their differences.

- Is scientific progress as described by XXXXXX driven by the workings of the psychological immune system, which “makes us strangers to ourselves” (as discussed by Gilbert)? Or, conversely, does genetic technology or synthetic biology have the potential to redefine the workings of the psychological immune system, putting happiness within more people’s reach?

Action Horizon

Students are asked to use ideas from the readings to describe a plan of action in the real world. This question asks students to develop an “action horizon” to describe how real problems might be solved by applying ideas from the readings.

- How and why did the media get Matt Shepard’s murder wrong, as described by Loffreda? What would it take to provide better coverage of such tragedies?
- Loffreda records her frustration at hearing teachers speak of their own “uselessness” and “irrelevance” in the face of Matt Shepard’s murder. What is it that teachers can or should do at such times? What role should secular institutions play in trying to shape the way their students see and understand the world?

Sample Assignment Sequences

Sequence 1: Regina Masiello

PAPER 1

Reading: Cathy Davidson, “Project Classroom Makeover” (*New Humanities Reader*)

According to Cathy Davidson in her article, “Project Classroom Makeover,” “young people who come to an elite private university . . . have taken one of a number of specific routes to get there. One way is to test to get into the best preschools so you can go to the best private grammar schools so you can be admitted to the most elite boarding schools so you can be competitive at the Ivies or an elite school outside the Ivies like Stanford or Duke” (51). If students do not take this route, they spend a life, according to Davidson, getting A’s and A+’s in public schools, “getting perfect scores,” and come to “elite” universities as “astonishing young overachievers” (51). **For this first paper, I want you to consider Davidson’s use of the word “elite.” What does the word “elite” imply in Davidson’s article, and how and why might that designation matter?**

Here are some thought questions to get you started on this prompt. Please do not answer these questions as a list for the purposes of organizing your paper – that approach will not lead you to success. Instead, use these questions to begin understanding the prompt above, and to begin formulating your own, independent, textually based response. Remember that your paper must quote Davidson’s essay directly.

- What is an implication? How does one “imply”?
- What does elite mean? Does Davidson seem aware of what it might mean to her readers? Does Davidson ever address this designation explicitly in the essay?
- Could the ipod project happen at a university that isn’t designated “elite”?
- Who creates such designations? Why? For what purpose?

PAPER 2

Readings: Cathy Davidson, “Project Classroom Makeover” (*New Humanities Reader*)
Karen Ho, “Biographies of Hegemony” (*New Humanities Reader*)

In her essay “Project Classroom Makeover,” Cathy Davidson says that at Duke they “were inverting the traditional roles of teacher and learner, the fundamental principle in education: hierarchy based on credentials. The authority principle, based on top-down expertise, is the foundation of formal education, from kindergarten playgroups to advanced graduate courses” (50). According to Davidson, the iPod project at Duke challenged the “authority principle” in a number of ways. For paper two, apply Davidson’s concept of the “authority principle” to Karen Ho’s description of Wall Street. **How does the “authority principle” work or appear on Wall Street? Is the concept challenged, expanded, or changed?**

PAPER 3

Readings: Karen Ho, “Biographies of Hegemony” (*New Humanities Reader*)
Cathy Davidson, “Project Classroom Makeover” (*New Humanities Reader*)
Susan Faludi, “The Naked Citadel” (*New Humanities Reader*)

For the midterm exam, I asked you to think carefully about how Susan Faludi used the words “stripping” and “remolding” in “The Naked Citadel.” In her discussion of the fourth-class system, she claims that The Citadel hopes “to ‘strip’ each young recruit of his original identity and remold him into the ‘whole man’” (75). For paper three, I want you to consider another important term in this quotation: “identity.” Using the connections you made between Faludi’s terms and Davidson and Ho’s essays, I want you to consider the following question: **to what extent is an individual’s identity influenced, shaped, or otherwise impacted by the institutions with which they come in contact?**

Questions to Get You Started:

- What is an identity? How are you defining it? Do the authors define it?
- How can something be influenced? Influence, shape and impact are pretty generalized terms. How can you make them more specific?
- Which institution are you going to discuss? Banks? Colleges?
- What kind of “contact” will you be considering?

Sequence 2: Kailana Durnan

PAPER 1

Reading: Cathy Davidson, “Project Classroom Makeover”

Davidson’s essay champions the idea of “unlearning” as an educational method with far-reaching benefits, most notably that of **customization**, as opposed to “expertise, specialization, and hierarchy” (55). “Project Classroom Makeover” provides a wealth of examples in which customization arises in response to circumstances that seem obsolete or overly static. In your first essay, I would like you to consider the complex effects of customization in Davidson’s essay using specific quotations and moments of evidence from the text. **To what extent, and in what ways, does customization produce social change?**

To kick-start your original thinking (optional):

- Think about the key terms of “standardization,” “crowdsourcing,” and “democratization.” How is customization different from, or related to, these concepts?
- Locate the key moments of customization in each essay. Who is doing the work of customizing, and for whom? Who is working against customization: how and why?

- Consider the individuals or groups who are being empowered by customization in these essays. What are the social repercussions of this empowerment?

PAPER 2

Readings: Jean Twenge, “An Army of One: *Me*”
Cathy Davidson, “Project Classroom Makeover”

In staging a debate between standardization and customization as pedagogical and social trends, our class has been grappling with an array of ideas about which kinds of products and practices actually serve the individual’s *best interest*. Marketing and education alike are quick to emphasize that they help the individual to *succeed* in specific ways, and in her essay, Jean Twenge examines yet another path to success: self-discovery. Of course, institutions, social groups, and individuals each define success differently, and these definitions often contradict, or converge with, one another in surprising ways. In your papers, I would like you to think productively and synthetically about where these competing messages are coming from and how they affect the individual. Using specific examples from *both* Twenge’s and Davidson’s essays, please answer the question: **What constitutes “success?”**

Questions to get you started (*note: do not answer these questions as a list*)

- Is it possible to determine a single definition for success? Why or why not?
- *Who* determines what makes for individual success? What kinds of external influences, if any, shape the establishment of a standard of success?
- To what extent is the idea of success a culturally shared story? To what extent is it a fact?
- What role does the individual play in defining and achieving his/her/their personal success?
- What are the repercussions of a false, flawed, or incomplete idea of success?
- Are there moments where Davidson and Twenge agree? Are there moments where they disagree?

MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Required Texts: Cathy Davidson, “Project Classroom Makeover”
Jean Twenge, “An Army of One: *Me*”
Andrew Solomon, “Son”

In our coursework and class discussions thus far, we have been examining various ways in which a person’s potential to achieve, succeed, or grow is alternately encouraged and inhibited by various kinds of childhood experiences. Throughout these discussions, you have all been especially attentive to the ways in which the individual’s sense of self is conditioned by the messages he/she/they absorb from these experiences. Using textual evidence from *all three* essays, please compose an argument responding to the following prompt: **How does an individual’s upbringing shape his or her identity?**

Warm-up Questions:

****Remember – don't answer these questions as a list!****

1. What *kinds* of “upbringing” do Davidson, Twenge, and Solomon describe?
2. What people, groups or institutions are in control of an individual’s “upbringing?”
3. *How* do these entities and experiences “shape” identity, specifically? What form does this “shaping” take – where can you locate evidence that identity has been shaped?
4. Think about the key terms we reviewed together last week: *homogenization*, *self-acceptance*, *abnormality*, and *solidarity*. Which terms, in your opinion seem particularly relevant to the prompt? What is the relationship between these terms and “identity?”

NB: You may want to spend 10-15 minutes *planning* (and outlining) your essay before you begin writing. Your essay should take you 60 full minutes to plan and write, but there is no minimum or maximum length. Please be sure to cite and close-read text from each of the required essays.

PAPER 3

Readings: Cathy Davidson, “Project Classroom Makeover”
Jean Twenge, “An Army of One: Me”
Andrew Solomon, “Son”

In your midterm exercise, you spent a full hour thinking critically about the ways in which individual identity is formed through early interactions with parents, teachers and cultural institutions. As we move into the second half of our semester, we will be shifting our focus to the institution’s role in this interaction; we’ll be asking a set of questions about the social, personal, and ethical stakes of particular institutional practices. To start us off down this path, I’d like you to address *all three essays* we’ve read thus far, using evidence from the text to answer the following prompt: **To what extent do institutions encourage social diversity?**

Questions to get you started (*note: do not answer these questions as a list*)

- What are the most significant *institutions* in these three essays?
- What does it mean for a society to be “diverse?” What trends do you associate with diversity?
- What *specific* institutional behaviors contribute to, or undermine, embracing social differences?
- What personal characteristics do institutions aim to instill in individuals, and why?

Sequence 3: Ian Bignall

PAPER 1

Readings: Davidson, Cathy. "Project Classroom Makeover." *New Humanities Reader*

In "Project Classroom Makeover," Cathy Davidson imagines "a new paradigm of formal education for the digital era" (55), critiquing authority-centric forms of standardized pedagogy predicated upon "expertise, specialization, and hierarchy" (55). Such approaches to learning, she suggests, are relics of an era when "public education was seen as the most efficient way to train potential workers for labor in the newly urbanized factories," and thus fail to engage the "intellectual habits of a new generation of students" (57; 50).

In place of the top-down "standardization" of thought she criticizes, Davidson proposes a turn towards a collaborative "revolution in the democratization of knowledge," a function of "the new forms of thinking required by our digital, distributed workplace" (59; 60). She envisions not a simple dumbing-down of familiar ways of learning and thinking, but an embrace of diversity and complexity which "requires attention to surprise, anomaly, difference, and disruption, and an ability to switch focus, depending on what individual, unpredictable problems might arise" (60).

Employing evidence from Davidson, write an original essay addressing the following question: **in what ways might the shift from "standardization" to multiple "forms of thinking" impact the individual's relationship to "knowledge"?**

Below are some further questions that may be useful to consider in generating your argument. Remember that you only need to address the above prompt in bold.

- What *is* "knowledge" for Davidson? How might her definition differ from other possible definitions? Does Davidson seem more interested in knowledge itself, or the means by which we acquire it?
- Davidson privileges "crowdsourcing" as a model of knowledge production. What happens to the role of the individual amidst this emphasis upon collective work? What *is* an individual in this essay?
- How might concepts such as the imagination, freedom, and individual agency – or their opposites – prove helpful to your argument?
- Davidson states that "unlearning is as vital a skill as learning" (67). How might this rethinking of knowledge as not only multiple but multidirectional impact your argument?

PAPER 2

Readings: Lethem, Jonathan. "The Ecstasy of Influence: A Plagiarism." *New Humanities Reader*
Davidson, Cathy. "Project Classroom Makeover." *New Humanities Reader*

In our last essay, we explored how Cathy Davidson reconceives the idea of knowledge, moving from a privileging of "expertise, specialization and hierarchy" towards something more multiple and collaborative that engages "the intellectual habits of a new generation" (55; 50). While Jonathan Lethem doesn't share Davidson's preoccupation with questions of formal education, he is no less engaged in "The Ecstasy of Influence" with reimagining the nature of knowledge itself.

Arguing against a proprietary model of creativity, Lethem suggests instead that "the primary motivation for participating in the world of culture in the first place [is] to make the world larger" (220). That is, where Davidson suggests knowledge should not be approached as a narrow line running from expert to apprentice, but rather as a broad "cloud" that emerges from the reciprocal communication of the "crowd," we move with Lethem towards a closely related position: that "invention ... does not consist in creating out of the void but out of chaos" – a chaos, that is, of "appropriation, mimicry, quotation, allusion, and sublimated collaboration" (214). The value of this crowded and chaotic "public commons," as Lethem identifies it, lies in the fact that it is something which "belongs to everyone and no one," "altered by every contributor, expanded by even the most passive user" and thereby serves as a "practical necessity" for a healthy collective intellectual life (222; 223).

Employing evidence from Lethem AND Davidson, write an original essay addressing the following question: **What are the implications of reimagining knowledge as a "commons"?**

Below are some further questions that may be useful to consider in generating your argument. Remember that you only need to address the above prompt in bold:

- Do Davidson and Lethem have similar concepts of "knowledge"? If so, how can we complicate that similarity?
- Lethem is primarily concerned with questions of creative production; what is the relationship between creativity and knowledge?
- There is tension in this piece between ownership of knowledge and use of knowledge; how might this impact your argument? Is Lethem's rethinking of "plagiarism" useful?
- Is it helpful to think of "knowledge" as a process as opposed to an object, a thing?
- Do questions of individual freedom and agency still matter? What is the nature and role of the individual when knowledge is treated as a "commons"?
- How might Lethem's conception of the "gift economy" aid us in putting him into conversation with Davidson?

PAPER 3

Readings: Nelson, Maggie. "Great to Watch." *New Humanities Reader*
Lethem, Jonathan. "The Ecstasy of Influence: A Plagiarism." *New Humanities Reader*
Davidson, Cathy. "Project Classroom Makeover." *New Humanities Reader*

Our last two essays have both worked to complicate the concept of knowledge, treating it less as an object to be acquired than as an engaged, analytical process. This discussion of knowledge production has centered largely upon questions of binaries and how they structure – or limit – thought through blurring, breaking down, complicating, and even multiplying “boundaries.” Maggie Nelson continues this conversation through her efforts to question contemporary culture as a sharp division between “unremitting banality and inconceivable terror,” an undermining of the same tendency towards reductive binary thinking that comes under attack in Lethem and Davidson (306).

While the “boundary” is an important concept implicit in all three texts, Nelson’s argument regarding the need to interrogate the means by which we understand knowledge makes this issue explicit. As Nelson explains, “Not all boundaries or mediating forces are created equal; not all serve the same purpose,” such that “the function of that boundary need not be a constrictive or restrictive one.” (308)

Citing specific evidence from all three texts, develop an original argument in response to the following question: **In what ways might the concept of the boundary be productive rather “constrictive or restrictive”?**

NB: Make sure the argument you craft in response to this question is specific and proposes a clear framework for the different ways in which we see “boundaries” manifest in these texts. In other words, make the stakes of your argument – the “So what?” claim – very clear. While this question seems to move away from the key term of “knowledge” that we’ve been developing this term, you can still incorporate it as part of the intellectual context for your argument.



SECTION VI

VI. REVISION

Once students have written their rough drafts, they will embark on the process of revision. Our focus on revision reinforces the claim, central to *The New Humanities Reader* pedagogy, that writing is a process, and that the conversation between authors—students and others—should be developed in an open-ended process of revision that may actually lead to a change in perspective. Just as we encourage students to think that their first readings of the essays in *The New Humanities Reader* cannot be the final one, so the first writing of their paper is not the final one. Also, from a practical perspective, students usually write themselves into a viable project. While they start to answer the assignment question at the beginning of their rough drafts, it is often the case that a synthetic thesis (which connects the assigned readings with the students' own ideas) only emerges towards the end of the process. Revision invites students to observe their own development, build upon successful moments of composition, and sometimes discard the writing that helped them develop a claim in favor of new writing that develops a coherent thesis around which they can structure their papers.

Peer Review

Students must become independent readers of their own writing. This skill is necessary throughout college and in the professional world. Students learn to read their own writing critically by reading the writing of their peers – writing that has been generated in response to shared class assignments. Some students are resistant to their peers' comments; they imagine their peers are inexperienced and unable to offer valuable advice. And in some cases, this is a justified criticism of the peer review process. However, the value of peer review is not only in the comments one might receive from a helpful reader, but also in the experience of reading the work of others and learning what is successful and what is not successful in their partner's papers. The value of peer review is in the training our students receive in reading and discussing their own writing. This value must be made explicit in the classroom, and should be discussed openly before peer review begins.

Peer review should focus on different aspects of paper writing throughout the course of the semester, and should change to reflect the focus of the class. For example, an instructor might only ask about summary versus interpretation on the first two papers. Once the class has mastered that distinction, the instructor might move to a new set of conceptual issues or writing skills. Although teachers comment on the rough drafts of

papers one and four, students should be doing a peer review of those rough drafts as well.

In order for peer review to run successfully in class, a shared discourse about writing must be established in the classroom. Students need a language with which to discuss their writing and the writing of their peers. Before asking students to read one another's work independently, model the discussion of writing in class by using sample writing from the students themselves. When discussing their writing, emphasize how one speaks with respect as well as how one offers revision-oriented comments. Guide the class through a discussion about both the strengths and the weaknesses in the sample writing. Use the following question to motivate discussion: "What work has the student done?"

Peer review groups usually consist of two or three members. Students will need an appropriate number of copies for class, so indicate on your assignment sheet how many drafts students will need for class on that day. Students give their peer readers their drafts, and peer readers use the directions from peer review sheets to comment. After students have completed the peer review process, it is critical that students have time to share their comments with one another. This period of discussion allows students to converse with one another about their writing; they use the discourse established in class to work with one another in a smaller setting.

Most teachers rely on peer review sheets during peer review days. These sheets give students instructions, ask specific questions, and create tasks for students to complete as they read one another's work. Below are the kinds of instructions one might include on a peer review sheet:

- Go through your partner's paper and mark with a star all the places where you think the writer is interpreting and thinking rather than supplying information directly from the readings in the form of summary. Also mark places with a large S where you feel the writer is providing unnecessary summary that does not seem to help her develop an argument.
- Which of the starred moments in the draft seem especially interesting or promising? That is, what place in the essay does the writer say something that seems most original or interesting? What is strong about this moment?
- What is the writer's argument, in your own words? That is, how does she respond to the main essay question? What answer does the essay suggest? Do you agree with the writer's argument, as you see it? Why or why not?
- Is the writer's argument or project coherently represented in the introductory paragraph of the paper? Is the paper trying to accomplish what the thesis announces, or is it attempting (or accomplishing) much more than that? Perhaps the paper is actually doing something the thesis does not promise at all?

- How does the writer utilize multiple sources to produce his idea? In other words, how do the assigned essays come together to inform the writer's position?
- Does the writer quote the readings in most paragraphs of the essay? Where should the writer do more to incorporate or quote from the readings? What passages or ideas from the readings should she or he especially consider?
- Locate at least one place where the writer can strengthen connections between essays. Explain the connection: Is the connection between the essays clear? Does this connection relate back to the main argument? How might he or she explain this connection more carefully?
- What are some of the things that the writer should work on in revision? For example: Does the writer address the basic elements of the assignment? Does she try to form an argument that addresses the essay question? Does the writer generally work to present analysis rather than summary? Has she incorporated the other readings into the essay well enough? Does she or he use quotes or discuss these writers' arguments directly? Does the writer use specific references to the text to illustrate points? Does the writer try to engage the texts in conversation rather than just using them to back up her or his narrow argument? Does the writer acknowledge the arguments of these writers and work to separate her or his own voice from that of the writers (not repeating things said by the writers as though it were her or his own opinion)?
- Look at two quotations that the writer uses, and talk about how accurately and how well the writer deals with those quotes. First, pick a quote that you think the writer could definitely discuss more thoroughly. Second, look at the longest quote that the writer has used. Is this quote too long? Is it being used in place of writing or in place of some sort of directed summary? If you think the choice of quotation is useful—or if you think it should be shortened—what is the most important part of the quote? What part should the writer discuss most? What might the writer say about the quote? Does the writer explain how the quotation works and why it is important?

Sample Peer Review Sheets

Sample One: Expos Boot Camp Peer Review

Reviewer's name _____ Writer's name _____

To the Reviewer:

- **You must read your classmate's paper at least once, in full before answering** any of these questions. This should take about ten minutes (possibly longer). **Don't write during the read through period.**
- Once you have read your classmate's paper, begin to answer the questions on this sheet. Read sections of the paper over again as you need to.
- Each answer on this sheet **must be specific!** That means that each answer should refer to **specific page numbers** and **specific sentences** on those pages. **You must give detailed answers.** Answers which are vague, general, and unhelpful (i.e., "she analyzes quotes well") will be considered incomplete.
- **DO NOT BE NICE FOR THE SAKE OF BEING NICE.** Peer review does not work when you tell your classmate that his or her paper is perfectly clear and easy to understand. No one's writing is perfect, and we all need revision. Don't hesitate to tell your classmate about strong moments in the writing, but spend the bulk of your time making suggestions for revision.
- **Please be respectful of your peer's hard work.** Comments that are unduly harsh are unnecessary and unhelpful.
- Peer review is not a short process. Anyone who finishes a peer review sheet in less than the time I've provided has not taken his or her job seriously and will be graded appropriately. **Remember that peer review is graded and is part of your participation in this course.**

To the Writer:

- You must hand in your partner's peer review sheet with your final draft.
- You should use the comments you receive in peer review to rethink and revise your paper.

Complete these questions in full sentences. You may write on this sheet AND on your partner's paper.

1. Do you have a clear idea what the paper is about and what you can expect to find in it? Write down in the space below, in your own words, what the paper wants to be about and what you think the writer is trying to tell you. Does it present a **thesis**, a main idea, or a point that the writer wants to express? Where did you find that project?

2. Does the writer set up the context of the paper for you? In other words, does the introduction include the authors' full names and the title of their works? Does it describe the project or purpose of each text? Are these projects differentiated from the student writer's thesis?

3. Look for places that the writer is summarizing the essays rather than analyzing them. **Bracket** them on the actual paper and **label** them with an **S for summary** or an **A for analysis**. Is there more summary than analysis? _____
4. Are there places where you lose the writer's train of thought? Where the meaning is unclear? Mark them on the paper with "?" or "unclear" and be sure to discuss them with the writer.
5. As you go through the essay, do not make corrections to punctuation or meaning. Instead, underline the areas that need revision or put a "?" to indicate confusion. Revising the grammar of sentences is the responsibility of the writer, but you can show him or her where it doesn't sound right to you.
6. Does the writer use quotations from the text/s in every body paragraph? _____
Are all of the texts represented? Is there a balance to the quote selection?

7. Does the writer set up or introduce the quotations? _____
8. Does the writer expand, analyze, or comment on the quotations? _____

Make comments about the writer's work with texts, starting with issues in questions 6-8. Is the writer building connections? **Be sure to mark quotations that do not seem to fit with the paper so the writer can make revisions.**

9. PRESENTATION:

Look at your classmate's formatting.

Are the margins all one inch?	Yes	No
Does the font look to be 12 point Times New Roman?	Yes	No
Is it double spaced?	Yes	No
Is each paragraph indented with a tab?	Yes	No
Is the paper free from extra spaces in between paragraphs?	Yes	No
Do all quotations look cited correctly?	Yes	No

Is the paper stapled?	Yes	No
Are there page numbers?	Yes	No
Is the heading correct?	Yes	No

Tell your partner what formatting changes need to be made here:

10. Finally, turn your partner's paper over (or find some empty space at the bottom of a page) and make a list of action points. List the three things the writer must do right away to improve the work in this draft. To make this list, you will want to remind yourself of the course priorities. Review the grading rubric, and remember that independent thinking, analyzing text, and original claims are the keys to succeeding in academic writing.

Sample Two: Mapping the Thesis and Finding Implications

Reviewer's name _____ Writer's name _____

To the Reviewer:

- **You must read your classmate's paper at least once, in full before answering** any of these questions. This should take about ten minutes (possibly longer). **Don't write during the read through period.**
- Once you have read your classmate's paper, begin to answer the questions on this sheet. Read sections of the paper over again as you need to.
- Each answer on this sheet **must be specific!** That means that each answer should refer to **specific page numbers** and **specific sentences** on those pages. **You must give detailed answers.** Answers that are vague, general, and unhelpful (i.e., "she analyzes quotes well") will be considered incomplete.
- **DO NOT BE NICE FOR THE SAKE OF BEING NICE.** Peer review does not work when you tell your classmate that his or her paper is perfectly clear and easy to understand. No one's writing is perfect, and we all need revision. Don't hesitate to tell your classmate about strong moments in the writing, but spend the bulk of your time making suggestions for revision.
- **Please be respectful of your peer's hard work.** Comments that are unduly harsh are unnecessary and unhelpful.
- Peer review is not a short process. Anyone who finishes a peer review sheet in less than the time I've provided has not taken his or her job seriously and will be graded appropriately. **Remember that peer review is graded and is part of your participation in this course.**

To the Writer:

- You must hand in your partner's peer review sheet with your final draft.
- You should use the comments you receive in peer review to rethink and revise your paper.

Complete these questions in full sentences. You may write on this sheet AND on your partner's paper.

MAPPING THE PAPER'S THESIS AND CLAIMS:

1. **Identify your partner's thesis** (the sentence or two that might contain the idea your partner will develop in the paper.) Your partner's thesis may not be in the first paragraph. Look for it in the introduction, but also look for it in the body of the paper. Once you find the idea that the paper is developing, underline it. Now complete the following:

Write the thesis here:

Is the thesis vague or specific? Can you ask a lot of questions about the thesis (why what, or of what kind)? If you have to ask those questions, it's probably too vague. Explain.

Is your partner's thesis an accepted truth? That is, would any rational, logical reader want to disagree or argue with it? If your partner's thesis does not inspire conversation or even debate, it may not be a thesis. Consider, and comment here.

Is your partner's thesis an independent idea? That is, does it strike you as a unique response to the assigned question? If it does, please explain why. If it doesn't, please explain.

2. Now go through the paper looking at each paragraph. Identify the claim of each paragraph. (If you can't find a claim, consider what topic the author has organized the paragraph around. Then translate the topic into a claim.)

For each body paragraph, state the claim in the writer's own words. Then, provide a "so what" question to help make the claims more specific and meaningful:

Paragraph/Claim 1:

So what?

Paragraph/Claim 2:

So what?

Paragraph/Claim 3:

So what?

Does the claim in each paragraph relate to and/or connect with the thesis? How? If not, please explain which claims seem unconnected.

Do the claims build on one another? (In other words, if you could rearrange the order of the paragraphs, and they would still make sense, then your thesis is static, and needs to develop a tighter relationship between claims so the paper advances an argument.)
Tell the writer what they might do to strengthen the relationship from claim to claim:

WORKING WITH TEXT:

Does your partner's paper engage with *both* assigned texts? _____

Is one author neglected by the writer? _____

Identify what you consider to be your partner's **least successful paragraph** in terms of textual analysis.

After each quote in this paragraph, ask **two questions** that will help clarify the implications of the text. You may also ask “so what” questions.

Suggest an idea, quote, or theory presented by one of the authors that would connect to and illuminate the example of another author or two other authors. (You are providing a “Frame and Case” text analysis connection.)

Does your partner’s use of the text sound like a summary of the authors, or like analysis? Are there particular summary paragraphs that are unnecessary? Examine the best or worst example from the paper.

Are there moments that display reading comprehension problems?

Look at the sentences that follow quotations in your partner’s paper. Do they explain how the quotes work and why they’re important? Do they engage with the author’s language? Choose one in particular on which to comment. Does it display engagement with the text (analysis) or simply summary? Explain.

SPECIFICITY

Read through your partner’s paper once more and underline every sentence that seems general or vague to you. Words like “many,” “some,” and “always” often indicate that the author should be more specific. Overusing pronouns like “it,” “they,” and “these” often indicate the author needs to be more specific about the subject of their sentences.

The more often you could ask “So What?” and the author hasn’t been clear, the more sentences should be underlined.

Be brutal and exacting about this task. Underline every sentence that seems general or unclear to you.

PRESENTATION:

Look at your classmate's formatting.

Are the margins all one inch?	Yes	No
Does the font look to be 12 point Times New Roman?	Yes	No
Is it double spaced?	Yes	No
Is each paragraph indented with a tab?	Yes	No
Is the paper free from extra spaces in between paragraphs?	Yes	No
Do all quotations look cited correctly?	Yes	No
Is the paper stapled?	Yes	No
Are there page numbers?	Yes	No
Is the heading correct?	Yes	No

Tell your partner what formatting changes need to be made here:

Sample Three: Listening to Your Writing

Reading/Hearing the Paper:

You will spend 40-45 minutes reading or hearing your paper. Then, you will switch roles with your partner. (Decide which writer will hear his or her work first.)

Each writer will listen to his or her paper. The reader will stop at the end of every paragraph for 1-3 minutes. The reader will ask questions in the margins of the paper. The writer will record observations about his or her writing. Then, the reader continues with the next paragraph.

During this exercise, I only want to hear the words on the paper. You'll be tempted to talk about the process, and to chat about other things not involved in this paper... Stay focused on reading, listening, and critical thinking.

I will give you five minutes at the end of class to talk about the revision process with your partner.

Responsibilities for the Reader:

Read at a steady pace and try to make sense of the paper as you read out loud. Don't read too quickly!

You should stop at the end of every paragraph so your partner can take notes. You should ask at least three questions in each paragraph. This is a time to ask about what's confusing; does your partner need to provide more key term definitions? Ask clarifying questions. Ask complex questions that will make your partner consider the issue in a different way. As you practice the skill of curiosity, don't be shy about using the six basic question starters we've worked with in class (who, what, when, where, why, how, to what extent).

Be patient and responsive to your partner's needs in this phase. Read with sensitivity and give them time to write, if they need it.

Responsibilities for the Writer:

Listen closely to your draft! Follow the voice of your partner and don't start reading ahead or getting distracted. If you need to, ask the reader to pause for a moment so you can write something down. Tune in to how your words sound when someone else speaks them. If your partner is tripping over your sentences, you might be writing with a clunky writing style, or there could be grammar errors.

Make at least three notes about your work per paragraph.

What did you notice about the flow of your sentences? How do your ideas build off one another? Are there moments where you confuse yourself? Which quotes are smoothly integrated into your writing? Which claim sentences stand out? Record all the discoveries you make while listening to your paper!

Each writer will take home the two marked drafts. Make substantial revisions before your final draft is due next class!

Sample Four: Peer Review Revision Assignment

Spend some time thinking about the work you did during peer review. First, write down some reflections about what worked in your partner's paper. Do you do those kinds of things in your own papers? Should you? How might you start?

Now, spend some time reflecting on your partner's weaknesses – the things you said needed revising. Do you do those things in your own work? How might you do those things differently going forward?

Now, begin revising your draft using your peer reviewer's comments and using the insight you gained from reading your partner's work. Do the following for our next class meeting:

1. Choose the three most pressing comments (or action points) your peer reviewer made and make them into a list. Print and attach that list to the rest of your work for this assignment.
2. Make a list of the three things you learned based on your reading of your partner's paper (these three points can be listed on the same sheet as the items you list for number one).
3. Begin revising your draft based on your list.
4. Mark the changes you make in your draft by bolding, underlining or placing the newly revised passages in brackets.
5. Print your work and hand it in next class.
6. Write a brief reflection about the revision process. Explain what you did to revise, how you made decisions about your work, and how this work differed from any revision work you did in the past. Answer the following questions:
 - How did you decide which comments were most pressing? Were the action points easy to recognize and address?
 - Describe what you did to revise. Did you change words? Quotations? Whole sentences? Whole paragraphs? How was the revision process in this class different from revision you have undertaken in the past?

Sample Four: Student Created Peer Review

Once students have become accustomed to reading their own work critically and to commenting on the work of their peers, some teachers ask the class to generate a peer review activity on the day peer review is to take place. These teachers ask students to create a list of questions they are to address as they read one another's papers. This exercise puts the students in control of the revision process, and contributes to creating a writing community in the classroom. Again, the success of this kind of peer review depends on the shared discourse about writing that has been established through the discussion of sample writing in the classroom. You might guide your students to generate their own peer review by providing them with the following categories:

Project

- Can you find and understand the author's project and identify two or three main supporting ideas? Can you restate the project in your own words? Do it here, if you can. Can you mark the places in the paper where the project and the ideas emerge? Write 'project' in the margins where you see this happening.
- Does the project really respond to the assignment? Why or why not?
- Is the project sufficiently developed? Is there enough detailed, relevant, supporting evidence? If not, what ideas need support?

Organization

- Does each paragraph's topic sentence relate directly to the project? If not, write a suggestion to help the writer make that relationship stronger.
- Are there any places where the author needs better transitions between paragraphs? Within paragraphs?
- Are there any places where the author seems to get off track? Is there any evidence that is not really relevant?
- Are there any places where the essay breaks "unity"?
- Are there any problems with unity within paragraphs?
- Is the essay coherent? Can the reader follow the author's ideas? Indicate places where the coherence breaks down.

Use of Text

- Look at the author's quotations. Has the author selected "idea" quotes rather than "fact" or "summary" quotes, and used those quotes to strengthen, launch, or complicate her/his own argument?

- Are there quotes that are not smoothly integrated or embedded? (Do not rewrite the paper for your author, but suggest what she or he might want to accomplish).
- Are all quotations and paraphrases properly cited? If not, show specifically where and tell what the problem is.
- Is the author using unnecessary summary? Where?
- Are all three texts used, in reasonable balance? If not, what's the problem?
- Are all three texts interpreted fairly? If not, what is the author misreading?

Presentation

- Normally, peer reviewers stay away from commenting on presentation. No peer reviewer should become another student's editor, and many students are not necessarily skilled enough in grammar, mechanics and syntax to avoid giving bad advice. However, many of you requested feedback on presentation, so . . .
- Are there one or two kinds of error that you see the author repeating over and over again? Mark the places and identify the kinds of errors the author needs to address.

Teaching Revision

The use of sample student papers to focus on revision strategies is critical. Using sample work not only encourages students to see all writing as work in process, but also creates a sense of shared purpose in the classroom. Self-directed revision is arguably more effective than commenting directly on every rough draft, as it gives students the ability to be their own best readers and critics (in Expos and in other courses as well).

- Use photocopied passages: You may photocopy representative passages from several student essays and ask the class as a whole to consider their successes and the opportunities for revision they present. (This revision work may also be done in small groups.)
- Try group revision of selected passages: You may photocopy and distribute one page where a student writer has introduced but not really engaged with a quotation. Each student might redraft that paragraph, and some students might share their revisions with the class.
- Make global comments: You may write a composite set of comments in response to the rough drafts as a group for distribution to the students, identifying (and perhaps providing brief examples of) the most common or important areas for revision. Then ask the students to apply those global comments to their own work, identifying the common errors and correcting them.

- Emphasize the importance of re-reading as part of revision: Many students attempt to revise without re-reading the assigned texts, even when the primary need for revision is misunderstanding (or too simplistic an understanding) of the texts. Ask students to select one of the quoted passages in their papers, and have them re-read the pages from which the quotations were taken.
- Develop revision stamina: While teaching revision usually begins with passages of student work, be sure to eventually ask students to work with entire drafts as well. It is essential that students be able to revise an entire paper as well as smaller pieces of drafts.



SECTION VII

VII. THE MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAMS

The Midterm Exam

The Midterm should be administered after *the completion of paper two and after the class has read and discussed the third reading*. The exam should ask students to connect the new (third) reading with the first two readings, and it should serve as a meaningful preview of the third paper topic. ***The midterm question should not be the same as the paper three prompt, and students should not have the question in advance.***

The in-class Midterm Exam (graded pass/fail) serves multiple purposes:

- Students practice for the in-class final exam, which they must pass in order to pass the class. It is almost unfair to expect students to perform well on the in-class final without having prepared students for timed writing, which they will also experience as a requirement in other classes at Rutgers.
- Students benefit from using the midterm as a lead-in or fast draft of paper three. This is especially useful for students who struggle beginning a paper or complain of “writer’s block,” because students see that, indeed, they can produce writing on demand.
- Students are more willing to reconsider or complicate their positions on paper three because they have already spent time thinking about the new text for the midterm. For students struggling to develop an independent claim (which is needed to earn a B range grade), the extra draft the midterm provides can work to complicate a thesis.
- A failing midterm often gives students the psychological push they need to sign up for tutoring or to put more effort into the remainder of the essays.
- A passing midterm is sometimes a student’s first passable work, and thus it may give them hope in continuing toward passing work in the remaining papers.
- The midterm gives instructors a mid-semester indication of where students stand in the course; instructors can use the midterm to assess which skills their students seem to use with dexterity and which skills still need work.

Sample Midterm Prompts

- In your previous paper, you reflected on the effects of conflicting values on the media situation in Laramie, Wyoming, as described by Beth Loffreda. In this essay, please use Leslie Bell and Beth Loffreda's articles to consider the following question: **how does Azar Nafisi represent conflicting values in Iran in her essay and why might she use this approach?**
- Using Leslie Bell's "Selections from *Hard to Get: Twenty-Something Women and the Paradox of Sexual Freedom*," Daniel Gilbert's "Immune to Reality," and Susan Faludi's "The Naked Citadel," please answer the following question: **To what extent are psychological defense mechanisms (like "splitting" and the "psychological immune system") at work at The Citadel?**
- Gladwell, Stout, and Nafisi give us examples of individuals who choose to live in divided states of mind, or find their minds divided against their will. Using examples from Stout, Gladwell, and Nafisi, compose an essay that answers the following question: **How can a divided self protect or endanger an individual?**
- In our last paper we considered how Malcolm Gladwell and Susan Faludi address the ways individuals and social groups arrive at a sense of right and wrong because of context. Using Gladwell, Faludi, and a third author, Beth Loffreda, address the following prompt: **How do stories, or the ways events are reported, influence our sense of right and wrong?**

The Final Exam

On the last regular day of classes you will administer an in-class, open-book final exam. The Writing Program is the only Department at Rutgers allowed to administer a final exam during regularly scheduled classes instead of during the exam period (which would complicate the process of folder review). The exam is essay format and is graded on a Pass/Fail basis. Students must pass the final exam in order to pass 101.

The final exam asks students to connect and write about a newly assigned sixth reading. The exam continues the practice of sequencing, and requires students to make an independent claim, make connections, and use textual evidence to accomplish the work of the paper. The exam is not meant to "trip up" your students. In thinking about which essay to use for the final, aim for a "soft pitch" which clearly relates to the other readings of the class versus one in which the larger context or textual connections are obscure. You might want to select, in particular, an exam reading that clearly sequences with the fifth essay, which will be fresh in students' minds, or which relates to several other readings (which allows students to choose the one most familiar to them).

In writing the final exam question, some instructors use a directed question, which asks students to work with the new essay and one of the previous essays selected by the instructor. However, a more generous exam question will be phrased in such a way that **students can select** which of the previous essays they would like to use in conjunction with the new reading. **Whatever approach you take, students must engage at least two texts in the final exam.**

In preparation for the final, you should have students come to the penultimate class meeting having read the exam essay. Allow them to discuss the essay in small groups. You should not direct this discussion. If you are planning on a question that gives students a choice about which of the previous essays to use in their response, you might tell students that they should select which essay they want to use with the exam reading in their response. That allows students to focus their reading of the new essay, as well as their discussion, on the reading they will actually use during the final.

The purpose of the final exam is to check that students embody the lessons of our class and that they are the people who wrote the papers they submitted during the term. The exam is thus about “the body,” as it were, so it is essential that it be administered in class and that students take it in your presence or in the presence of a proctor (if they miss the original exam session). They are allowed to use dictionaries and should refer to their textbooks (especially to quote passages). No notes, other than those they have written in the margins of their texts, can be used.

Sample Final Exam Prompts

- In describing Mitchell Sanders’ desire to get his story right, Tim O’Brien says “In a way, I suppose, you had to be there, you had to hear it, but I could tell how desperately Sanders wanted me to believe him, his frustration at not quite getting the details right, not quite pinning down the definitive truth” (444-5). In his essay, “How to Tell a True War Story,” O’Brien often returns to the notion of “being there” or of instinct, and how those things might change or determine truth. He shares this concern about perception (its generation, its reliability, etc.) with many of the other authors we’ve read this semester. Using Tim O’Brien’s essay and any other essay we have read this term, answer the following question: **How does one arrive at an understanding of “truth”?**
- At the end of “Homo religiosus,” Karen Armstrong sums up one of her main concerns as follows: “Religion as defined by the great sages of India, China, and the Middle East [...] did not require belief in a set of doctrines but rather hard, disciplined work, without which any religious teaching remained opaque and incredible” (38). Using Armstrong’s discussions of the rewards gained through experiential knowledge, deeds, actions, and trials, and examples from one of the other essays we have read this term, please answer the following question: **What is the value of hard work and close attention?**

- Work with Twenge and Gilbert, and respond to the following question: **How might the case Gilbert makes about our “ignorance of our psychological immune systems” lead us to reassess the use of self-esteem programs in education?**



SECTION VIII

VIII. CLASSROOM PRACTICES

One goal of *The New Humanities Reader* is to foster student writing that goes beyond the staid formulae of personal response or book report. The pedagogy of *The New Humanities* encourages students to actively engage in connective thinking not just in the context of the composition classroom but in their other courses and in the world in which they live. To encourage student engagement, Expos demands an active learning approach that creates a collaborative classroom environment that puts students in conversation with each other and with the authors of the readings. All of these activities are conceived of as working in the context of the students' own writing: theirs are ultimately the primary texts with which we deal. With this in mind, the activities described here take the instructor through the full arc of a single paper assignment. In the course of a 15-week semester, with five papers to be completed, an instructor can expect to spend four to five class periods on a paper cycle. The cycle would look something like this:

- Day 1—Introduce (assign) a new reading, close read a passage from the new reading, and collect the final draft of the previous assignment
- Day 2—Discuss the new reading, and assign the next paper
- Day 3—Collect the rough draft, hold peer review
- Day 4—Work on revision and the mechanics of writing (use student writing in the classroom)
- Day 5—Final draft due, introduce (assign) a new reading, close read a passage from the new reading

Each step in this cycle lends itself to different kinds of in-class work; an activity that works well on a new reading assignment will not necessarily be appropriate for working on rough drafts (though there can be very useful moments of overlap). The activities collected below have been divided into sections based on the stage in the paper-writing process at which they have been best used, and/or in terms of which part of *The New Humanities Reader* pedagogy they are relevant to. It is essential to revisit the different parts of the writing process at various points in the cycle.

The most productive learning environments typically feature a number of different but related tasks. A class might begin, for example, with individual “free writing,” then move to work in small groups, and then gather students to a discussion with the entire class. Tasks for the individual student can be used either to prepare them for a discussion in a larger group or to help them absorb the ideas that come up in general class discussion. Small group activities make students accountable for their ideas but relieve the pressure of both individual work and whole class work, fostering collective knowledge in a context which allows every student's voice to be heard in a less threatening context than the full-class discussion. And whole-class activities are essential for exploring the different interpretations of a text that are available, and providing a forum for the teacher to approach the issues a class is having globally, without singling any student out for particular attention. Each kind of activity reinforces a different part of the writing process and ultimately fosters our goal of teaching exploratory and connective thinking.

Assigning a New Reading

The pre-reading part of the paper arc, occurring when the instructor presents a new reading to the class, is a crucial point in the entire process. At this stage, we want students to be able to engage with the concepts introduced by a new essay both as a discrete entity and in the context of prior readings. Both reading comprehension and contextualization are critical—a student needs to start to understand the concepts introduced by the new essay, and needs to connect those ideas with other texts.

This stage focuses students' attention on particular parts of the new text, without the expectation that the students have read the whole text. This requires preparation on the part of the teacher, in order to focus students' attention, and to help them to comprehend the new, possibly intimidating, prose that they see before them. Typically students are asked to work from part to whole and back again, puzzling through sections of the text or working with quotations, then trying to synthesize the overall argument and connect it with prior readings.

Discussing a Reading

In order to reinforce the idea that reading and writing go hand-in-hand, as well as to give students concrete points of access to the text, instructors usually assign some reading questions for students to consider as they begin a new selection from the textbook. Early in the semester, these questions may take the form of review questions, intended to test and encourage reading comprehension. But questions should ultimately call for as much interpretation as summary. The “Questions for Making Connections within the Reading” at the end of each essay are intended as reading and pre-writing exercises. If students address these questions as they read, they will be prepared to participate productively in class discussion and to enter into the writing process with confidence. Even if you only ask students to write a list of their own questions as they read, they will come to class more ready to make sense of the text than if they were to read it with no guidance.

Throughout this reading and re-reading process, students will often find that as one question is answered or one problem resolved, another question or problem—often a more complex one—emerges. This trial-and-error or exploratory method of conducting class discussion is messier than lecturing to the students, or simply answering their questions as they arise, but it has several advantages over lecturing. Not only does the exploratory method usually cover the same textual issues that a lecture would, but it also raises important issues that you yourself might not have thought to raise. The exploratory method also models—and gives students practice in—learning as discovery, rather than as delivery of understanding from teacher to student. Finally, the exploratory method gets all students (not just those who are already comfortable talking in class) involved in understanding the text, especially when small-group work precedes full-class discussion. Here are some suggestions for making group work successful:

- If you are having small group discussions, you can include a step that involves writing on the board. (Incidentally, this also helps to get “slow” groups up to speed, because they see that other groups are ahead of them.) You might ask students to establish a list of important terms and write it on the board, to define a term and write the definition on the board, or to choose a significant passage from the text and write the passage on the board.
- When small groups report, assign several students in advance to ask questions of each group after they report. If students know in advance that they are “on call” to ask questions, they will be more engaged with the class.
- In full-class discussion, ask each student who speaks to choose the next speaker. Students often feel more comfortable participating in response to another student’s request, than answering the teacher’s question.
- Always recognize every serious effort to participate as beneficial to class discussion. Find ways to reward students when they make a clear effort to be involved in class discussion. Even if a student is “wrong,” we can find ways to make use of every student comment. (For example, “Pat has pointed to an important passage. Let’s all spend some time working with this passage to see if we can extend Pat’s idea.”)
- Many of the readings in our book are about controversial situations or issues. Staging an in-class debate might help students crystalize their own positions, while imagining counterarguments. If you decide to hold a debate, you could create two debating teams, and ask for about five volunteers on each side. You might even ask students to position themselves on the side that they initially do not think they believe in, as often, by playing ‘devil’s advocate’, they are forced to expand their understanding of opposing viewpoints or to complicate their own views. The advantages of holding a debate are that students learn not only to articulate clearly, which will help them in their writing, but also to anticipate and evaluate clearly what others are saying. Those students not on the debating teams can ask questions when the presentations and rebuttals are complete, and then a vote can be taken to see which team had the most convincing position.
- Divide the class into small groups and ask them to generate a list of the larger contexts for this essay, locating quotations from the piece that point to that context or larger conversation. At the start of the semester, it might help students if you choose quotations for them, but later in the semester they should try to identify good quotations themselves. For example, with Sacks, we might list the different methods of adaptation for someone recently blinded, the role of the visual imagination, the way the brain works, and so on. Not only does this generate the themes of the essay, but it also helps students to see that these texts are not isolated writings but participate in larger conversations when considered alongside one or two other readings. It additionally gives them practice in locating these larger conversations. When working in groups in this

way, there should be a group leader who then comes forward in front of the whole class, and who talks about the chosen quotations and the connections between them from the different readings, to the whole class.

- Either schedule class in a computer classroom when beginning a new reading, or ask your students to do some online research of their own to learn about the background of the author of an essay they are about to read. There is fascinating information found on Google, for example, about the rich life of Oliver Sacks. In the case of students having researched this as homework, one or two students could give an oral presentation to the rest of the class about their research discoveries, and this could then turn into a larger conversation.

Getting Started on an Assignment

On the day you distribute a paper assignment, design an activity that helps students work together to make sense of the challenges the assignment might pose. Getting students to engage your assignment in class has the advantage of exposing difficulties or problems the assignment question might present.

Have students read the assignment together and write for a few minutes about how they might address the question. Once they have written for five to ten minutes, put them into groups of three or four to work on the following tasks: In your own words, what is the question asking? What process will you use to answer the question and write the essay? What answers do you think you might find? Do not distribute a paper assignment and then immediately dismiss class. Like the essays we assign, teach students to read paper assignments closely; ask them to identify and question key terms, and to look for implications.

Collaborative Interpretation or Composing

Probably the most standard exercise in Expository Writing classes is to put students into small groups of three to four students and give them a reading or writing task. At the end of the task, an elected group leader will report the results back to the rest of the class. For example, you can ask them to find two quotes from Sacks' "The Mind's Eye" that they would use to construct a paragraph that begins to address the question that Sacks asks in his essay: "But to what extent are we - our experiences, our reactions - shaped, predetermined, by our brains, and to what extent do we shape our own brains?" Each group's leader would then be responsible for presenting the group's response to the rest of the class.

Working with Quotes

Another group activity involves putting students into groups where they are directed to choose two quotes from the text or from two different texts that they then connect in a paragraph with a strong topic sentence. Each small group then elects a group leader to speak to the class. On the first occasion you do this activity, you might actually type out five quotes from the reading onto a piece of paper, with instructions that each group should choose two quotes that they think can be connected in a paragraph. This way

you have a chance to model for them which quotes would be most fruitful for discussion. On subsequent occasions, make students responsible for locating and choosing the quotes they will use.

Classroom Activities

Instructors of Expository Writing are expected to adopt a student-centered and active-learning pedagogy. Students are expected to assume responsibility for understanding the readings and for reaching positions of their own through critical thinking inspired by collaborative discussion. Instructors should not lecture in an Expos classroom. Instead, they should develop meaningful activities that direct students back into the readings, invite conceptual thinking and analysis, and inspire an ongoing conversation with peers and the texts themselves.

What follows are sample activities that you may adopt in your classrooms, or that you may use as models when developing your own activities. These activities are also available in electronic form on the Expos project site to make them easier to adopt or revise. Teachers are encouraged to develop new activities each semester; each class presents its own challenges, has its own needs, and ultimately pursues a unique conversation about the assigned readings. Classroom activities should reflect the conversations that the students maintain, and should be customized to reflect the discourse of the classroom. Activities should also evolve over the course of the semester to reflect the skills students have acquired, or to address collective challenges that become evident in rough drafts. You will recall that while we comment fully on all final drafts, only rough drafts one and four receive written feedback. Classroom activities should be designed to respond to the collective challenges that emerge in rough drafts two, three, and five. In addition, these activities should preview the kinds of tasks in which students will be expected to participate during peer review. Classroom activities should mobilize the same language you use in your comments and in your peer review sheets.

“TEN ON ONE” Text Analysis Exercise

Instructor: Brendon Votipka

In this exercise, we'll work from the following premise: When attempting deep and rigorous analysis, it can be more productive to make ten observations or points about a single representative issue, example, or idea than to make the same basic point about ten related issues or examples. Rather than "jet skiing" across the surface of the text, I ask you to "scuba dive" and explore the text in service of discovery. Use this exercise to extend your CLOSE READING skills and explore implications in the text.

Select a one-sentence idea quote from the author's essay and re-write the text word for word in your notebook. Ask yourself "So What?" as you re-read the text. Reveal ten observations, implications, connections, or questions in response to this quote. You should list your observations in numbered bullet points following the correctly cited text.

(Don't merely summarize! Ask challenging questions, explore language and subtext from multiple angles, and consider what the text implies. Discuss any word choice or punctuation that might be important. You might also want to consider how the sentences before and after your quote relate to your observations. It is perfectly acceptable to contradict yourself in different bullet points; this might be the beginning of understanding the complex ambiguity of the text.)

Notable Quotables

Instructor: Max Shulman

FOR EACH ARTICLE THAT WE READ, STUDENTS SHOULD PREPARE A SHORT PRESENTATION KNOWN AS A “NOTABLE QUOTABLE.” Every student should present at least one notable quotable during the semester.

Directions to the Students:

- As you read the text, pick a sentence that you think is important in the reading.
- This should be a sentence that is central to the argument of the writer. It is probably not part of the author’s proof or evidence – e.g. “In a blind survey 95% of students prefer Expos class to root canals.” This kind of quotation is *evidence*. What we are after in the Notable Quotables is a quotation that contains *argument*.

You will present the sentence to the class and make your own argument as to WHY THIS IS AN IMPORTANT SENTENCE.

- How is it central to the argument?
- Is it the thesis statement of the article?
- How does it fit into the argument as a whole?
- Does it connect to any other article we have read? How so?

Offer a *CLOSE READING* of the sentence to show us how much we can get out of it. What does it mean? What is its significance? How is it changing our minds? Presentations are to be no longer than 3 minutes. Make your statement, and make it clearly. This is about conveying an idea in public.

Evaluate the Thesis Exercise

Sample Introductory Paragraph from Paper #2 to Discuss as a Class

When introduced to an entirely new environment, we are never completely sure of the underlying effects that may alter our perceptions of what is appropriate behavior. When we join establishments there are often times new traditions we are expected to follow, or to a more extreme we may just have to conform to a new implied set of laws for our own survival. Our instincts alert us not to question our higher authorities rule despite how hostile a situation may become. In Malcolm Gladwell’s essay “The Power of Context”, the writer describes many different scenarios where the complexity of the given circumstances could alter our ethical decision making abilities. Most notable was the Zimbardo prison experiment and the impression the surroundings made on the volunteer inmates and especially the role accepted by the guards. When Susan Faludi decided to write “The Naked Citadel”, she was also trying to find the hidden reasons behind the unusual behavior of people in relationship to society. The difference was

that the Citadel was not an experiment. These were the real life unethical actions made by a highly impressionable student body that were just beginning to learn the difference between what is right and wrong. The details will show that the relationships formed by both groups were partly because of the shared space that they inhabited. In each case, it was the institution that was common between both groups which showed how our conditions can make a profound impact on our ethical standards.

Notes on Class Discussion:

Some Questions to Ask of the Thesis

- *Is the thesis clearly stated in the opening paragraph?*
 - What, exactly, is the thesis saying?
 - Does the rest of the paragraph funnel into the thesis?
- *What questions does it leave unanswered?*
 - Can you ask “how” or “why” of it?
 - “According to whom?”
 - “By whose standards or set of values?”
- *Is this really an argument?*
 - Could somebody reasonably disagree with this statement?
 - Are there alternative explanations?
- *Does it use the texts BUT ALSO make an independent claim?*
 - Does it just restate an author’s argument as your own?
 - Are all of the authors implicated in the thesis?
- *Is it complex enough to be worth arguing?*
 - Does it synthesize ideas from more than one text?

Exercise

1. Write your thesis statement on the board.
2. When the class is done writing statements on the board, select one statement that does not belong to you.
3. Write down this thesis statement, take it back to your seat, and analyze it.
4. When your time is up, locate the owner of the thesis and discuss your comments with your partner.
5. Revise your thesis based on feedback.
6. Rewrite it on the board.
7. Repeat steps one through five.

Drafting A Paragraph

Your job today is to draft a paragraph that sets forth a claim about how Ethan Watters’ ideas in “The Mega-Marketing of Depression in Japan” can connect with ideas from one of the other essays we have read. I suggest you draft that on Google Docs as a way of starting your draft. Once you write and revise on Google Docs, then post that paragraph in response to the prompt in our Forum on Sakai – very much like we did in previous lab activities this semester. Remember, the draft is due next class!

The Question

How can Watters' discussion of culture serve as a lens through which to view another writer's ideas? Alternatively (or in addition), how does that other writer inspire you to re-evaluate or qualify elements of Watters' ideas?

Getting Started

I recommend you draft the paragraph in Google Docs or some other word processing program. When you are happy with what you have written, please post your finished product in reply to the Forum on our Sakai site.

Writing has to start somewhere -- and it hardly matters where we start, since all writing has to be revised to be any good. But if you have trouble getting started, here is one order in which to do things:

1. Why do you want to put this particular author together with Watters? What issue or issues seem to be at stake in putting them together? How might the conversation between them help you to address this issue? Write a few sentences that try to get at the main theme on which you are going to focus.
2. Begin by looking at a specific passage or example from Watters's essay that connects with this issue. Type out the quote and write about it. Discuss what the quote says, and why is it important to understand it. Which words are most important? Why? How does it connect to the issue you raise above? (You are welcome to begin with the other writer if you think that will work better).
3. Quote a passage or describe a specific example from the second essay you are going to discuss. (You can use two pieces of evidence from the second reading if it helps clarify your point.) Type that quote or example and discuss it.
4. Make a connection between the second quote or example and the idea from Watters. Write about the connection.
5. Formulate a clear independent claim based on the connection you have made. What point are you making? What connection have you noticed? How does it address the issue you raised at the outset? Write it down.
6. Once you have worked through the first five steps, re-read what you have written and revise in order to foreground your claim (from #5) to turn it into a topic sentence for a paragraph -- and to make the rest of the paragraph function as support for that claim. Revise!

Self-Assessment and Reflection

A midterm self-assessment assignment asks students to reflect on their progress. Ask them to go through their work thus far and to write a note or an e-mail about how they have improved and what they need to do in the coming papers. Use this as an opportunity to assess the activities you have done so far in the course. It's best to have students respond to a set of guiding questions that you distribute. The questions can go

beyond self-assessment to invite an assessment of the class, of your comments on papers, and of class activities. The following instructions and questions are commonly found on successful midterm assessment activities:

- Reread your first three papers, along with my comments. Once you are done, write a short “report” to me via e-mail evaluating your work and thinking about things you can do to improve. I will respond before the next paper is due. Try to give a thoughtful and honest assessment. To do this well should probably take from thirty minutes to an hour of your time.
- What have you learned in this class about college writing that differs from what you had thought or learned before?
- What do you consider to be your greatest strength(s) as a writer? What things are you doing well?
- What are your weaknesses? What do you need to work on in future papers?
- Compare your weakest paper with your best paper so far. What things are you doing in your best paper that you were not doing in the weakest paper? What improvements have you made that can help you in future papers?
- What concrete steps do you think you can take to improve your performance in the class?
- What class activities or exercises have been the most helpful in improving your writing? Can you suggest any in-class activities you might find helpful, or things you would like us to do or cover in class?
- Is there anything you feel a bit confused about and wish I would explain again? Are there any remarks I have made in class or on your papers that you have not understood? Is there anything you are concerned about as relates to the class?

Final Reports to the Class

This self-assessment happens late in the term, and allows students to articulate the skills they have acquired throughout the course. Each student addresses the entire class, and presentations consist of descriptions of achievement and/or struggle in the course. The student can discuss the work he or she did to resolve a problem or to achieve a particular success. Use this kind of assessment to remind students to apply the lessons of Expos to their writing throughout their college careers.



SECTION IX

IX. GRADING

Grading can be anxiety provoking, both for students and teachers. Having common grading criteria can help. The following are the standards used in the Rutgers Writing Program:

- The official final grades for all papers in the Rutgers Writing Program are A, B+, B, C+, C, and NP. Please note that there are:
 - no "D" grades
 - no minus grades
 - no split grades such as C+/C (these can lead to ambiguity)
- While the F or NC can indicate that a student has not passed the course at the end of the semester, instructors should use the mark "NP" (not passing) to indicate that an individual essay is not passing quality. This mark encourages revision.

Official Grading Criteria

Papers need to fit all four categories (thesis, working with assigned text, organization, and presentation) to some degree to receive the grade defined; however, **thesis and working with text should be weighted more heavily than organization and presentation in determining a paper's final grade.** Papers are not expected to fulfill every point to receive the grade.

Reasons why a paper might not pass:

THESIS

- The paper has no clear or emerging thesis. It may work with the readings through reference, paraphrase, or quotation, but it provides no indication of how these moments of textual work contribute to a larger point or position in the paper.
- Alternately a paper may have a thesis, but rely too heavily on summary and fail to engage responsibly with textual evidence.
- Papers that do not show significant revision from the rough draft to the final draft may not pass.

WORKING WITH TEXT

- Although the paper may make reference to the issues raised by the assignment question, it does not engage with the assigned readings but over-generalizes about the texts.
- The paper does not work effectively with text, as it demonstrates a lack of basic reading comprehension, or misinterpretation, or a failure to grasp the outline of an assigned author's argument.

- The paper depends largely on summary of the assigned reading that is not pertinent to the assignment question.

ORGANIZATION

- It may have too little coherence from paragraph to paragraph, or it may lack an organizational structure. Use of paragraphs may be weak.

PRESENTATION

- The paper has significant sentence-level error that makes it difficult to follow. Serious patterns of error might include sentence integrity, verb agreement, and number agreement. Less serious patterns, including misused apostrophe and other spelling errors, can contribute to a paper earning an NP, especially when they occur with high frequency.
- Alternatively, students may fail to proofread their papers, possibly resulting in errors that they may be able to correct on their own.
- In either case, if a student's errors are so numerous or severe that they impede meaning, the student should not pass.

C range:

THESIS

- In a C paper there is evidence of an emerging thesis—something the student wants the paper to accomplish—or the beginnings of a focus or argument. Often, C papers fail to articulate their thesis in the paper's introduction.
- Papers often achieve a passing grade by taking a clear position once—perhaps at the end of the essay—even when the project is not sustained in the rest of the paper.
- The thesis may be vague or general.

WORKING WITH TEXT

- The C paper demonstrates the student's ability to work with more than one source of text and engage with the ideas in the readings. The C paper can make connections within a text, or between texts.
- The C paper generally lacks a clear sense that the student's voice contributes to the conversation.
- Although a passing paper may include summary, the quality of the summary demonstrates sufficient reading comprehension and often helps the student begin to define a focus.

ORGANIZATION

- Passing papers, in places, create coherent relationships within paragraphs even if they have not developed a larger organizational structure. Students have a sense of how to write paragraphs, even if the relationship between the paragraphs is not clearly presented.

PRESENTATION

- A passing paper has fatal sentence-level errors under control. Although errors may appear on each page, they do not significantly impede the meaning of the essay or undermine the writer's credibility.

C+ range:

THESIS

- C+ papers have a thesis, but it may not be clearly articulated. In other words, C+ papers often have thesis or position statements that do not represent the true achievement of the paper, and do not express the paper's actual project.
- There may be a sense that the writer has not realized that there is a thesis in the paper.

WORKING WITH TEXT

- C+ papers have several moments of solid work with text. However, the paper may not indicate how these moments contribute to the project.
- C+ papers more consistently attempt to engage with the more complicated ideas and examples from the readings than do C papers.
- The moments of working with text may remain implicit: connective thinking may not be explained fully or at all.

ORGANIZATION

- C+ papers are often distinguished from B papers because they lack a meaningful structure. There may not be a clear relationship between the paragraphs.

PRESENTATION

- C+ papers have errors under control. That is, there should be no patterns of error, just a few irregularities in either mechanics or citation and formatting standards.

B range:

B papers may include "C" moments in an otherwise well-reasoned and well-developed thesis.

THESIS

- B papers do everything the C-range essays do, but they offer a sustained and meaningful structure and/or a thesis that is often more complex than in a C-range paper.
- The student advances more independent ideas. However, B papers may be distinguished by a repetition rather than a development or reconsideration of these ideas.
- B papers can represent the thesis of the paper in the introductory paragraph with some degree of accuracy.

WORKING WITH TEXT

- The paper shows the student beginning to take interpretive risks, responding to the assignment and to the readings in thoughtful and distinctive ways.
- The paper demonstrates that the student is able to work with textual evidence in a number of ways. It does not rely solely on summary, reference, or paraphrasing, but is able to work with quotations and think connectively to contribute to the thesis.

ORGANIZATION

- The paper demonstrates a reasonable coherence in its overall presentation: the relationships between the paper's paragraphs are clear and coherent.
- The presentation and development of the thesis is controlled and organized.
- Topic sentences and transitions between paragraphs are smoother than in a C-level paper.

PRESENTATION

- Presentation errors must be minimal.

B+ range:

Sometimes, a paper achieves the B+ level because it executes several of the elements of a B paper particularly well.

THESIS

- B+ papers do everything a B paper does, but the independent thinking is consistently developed.
- A B+ paper is itself more complex because it engages with more of the complexity in the readings.
- B+ papers begin to, but may not fully, understand the actual complexity of their own argument. They often exhibit a turn in thinking that is not yet fully integrated into the way they forecast their thesis for the reader. Possible moments of insight are sometimes not as fully developed as an A range paper.

WORKING WITH TEXT

- B+ papers show that the student is able to assume confidence and authority in working with the full range of textual evidence.
- B+ papers may have more sophisticated work with text, including an ability to analyze text with particular insight.
- These papers demonstrate connective thinking in which student's ideas are in control through most of the paper.

ORGANIZATION

- B+ papers are particularly well organized. Each paragraph clearly functions within the paper and contributes to the thesis with an overall fluid movement.

PRESENTATION

- Presentation errors must be minimal.

A range:

An A paper might have one or two "B" or even "C" moments, but they do not significantly detract from the overall force of the paper.

THESIS

- An A paper does all the good things that B-level papers need to do, but an A paper is usually distinguished from B range work because the student understands his or her own thesis from the beginning and clearly represents that understanding to the reader.
- The thesis is clear and original, and exhibits complexity of thought and discovery. A papers generally develop theses that cut across the readings in unanticipated ways.
- An A paper moves through its own thesis step by step, though the individual paragraphs.
- An A paper develops and presents its independent ideas persuasively throughout the paper.
- Sometimes a paper achieves an A because a student develops a thoughtful and well-defined interpretive approach and an awareness of his or her own position in relation to the positions of the assigned essayists.

WORKING WITH TEXT

- A papers are distinguished from B-level work by student-centered connective thinking that engages with the ideas in the readings. The paper presents the sustained development and effective articulation of a position that is related to ideas in the readings, while it is not reducible to relationships readily identifiable in the readings.

ORGANIZATION

- The organization is logical, fluid, and clear.

PRESENTATION

- Presentation errors must be minimal.
- There is often an eloquence and elegance of writing style.

Determining Final Grades

The Final Grade will be determined by the student's highest level of sustained achievement at the end of term. A student must earn her highest grade twice in order to demonstrate that she can sustain that level of achievement. As always, any questionable or borderline grades will be discussed in Folder Review.

Please tell students that Expos is not graded on improvement (this is part of the Expos mythology that pervades the campus). If the class was graded on improvement, the student who started with an NP on Paper 1 but earned a B by Paper 5 would receive an A for improving so much, while a student who had been earning a B all semester would get a lower grade because he did not improve as dramatically. You may want to use an

example like this to demonstrate to your students that improvement would not be a fair measure.

Students who fail the Final Exam fail the course. Cases where a student has written passing work but failed the exam should always be examined in folder review. The final exam is graded Pass or Fail only and is never factored into the grade for passing students.

Final grades for the course are determined by paper grades and not by classroom behavior, participation, or attendance (except in the case where a student has failed the course for excessive absences or missing work). Any penalties exacted for late papers or missed drafts should have been deducted from the individual paper grades.

Teachers cannot exact later penalties in addition to those imposed on the papers themselves, nor should teachers award higher grades to students whose attendance and participation were outstanding, unless their work merits it. Diligent effort, after all, will naturally contribute to higher grades. Note: we recommend that, when making deductions, teachers indicate the reasons for the lower grade clearly on the paper itself or on the final paper so that if a student appeals the grade the department will understand the reason the grade was lower than the paper's quality might indicate.

Non Passing Final Grades

At the end of term, please fill out a Grade Information Sheet (several of which will be attached to your Final Roster) for ALL STUDENTS WHO RECEIVE A NON-PASSING GRADE other than a "W", and give it to the Director with whom you are doing Folder Review. This helps us keep track of failing students and to monitor the reasons as to why they are not passing. Below is a list of possible Non-Passing Final Grades:

F: This is a punitive failing grade. It is assigned only to students who have a failing performance on the Final Exam and/or on Papers, in combination with any of the other following problems:

- Six absences during the term
- The student was two final assignments behind
- Missing assignments
- Missing rough drafts
- Frequently late work

NC: Students have attended the class regularly, completed all five rough and final drafts of the papers, taken the midterm and final exams, but their work is not yet passing. This is a non-punitive failing grade given to indicate that despite the students' efforts throughout the term, their work is not yet passing. Even though some students have improved throughout the semester, they may not be strong enough as writers to complete 101. Once students retake the course, the grade is replaced. To pass 101, students should be ready for English 201, a course in which they will be expected to read long and complex texts that they must synthesize into a research paper that asserts a point of view. Those who, for example, are still struggling with reading

comprehension or sentence-level error are not ready to take on the demands of an independent research project.

TF: The “temporary fail” is almost never used in 101, and only when students have already demonstrated passing work on two of the last three papers but are missing one assignment OR the final exam due to illness or other adverse circumstance. Instructors should never promise to assign a TF grade to students who need extra time and should never grant extensions beyond the last day of class. Students receiving TF grades must complete all missing work by the deadlines set in the Final Exam Memo and instructors must submit a Change of Grade Form with the department secretary in Murray 108 before the start of the following semester. All TF grades must be discussed in Folder Review.

W: If a student appears on your final roster with a note of “W” in the grade area, the student has officially withdrawn from the course. You do not have to fill out a Grade Information Sheet for a student who officially withdraws. A “W” cannot be assigned to a student by the instructor, and students cannot withdraw from 101 on their own. Students may only withdraw from 101 with a Dean’s permission (and that permission is only granted in exceptional cases). Even if students claim to have withdrawn from the course or say they will seek a withdrawal from their Deans, they must be given an “F” if their names appear on your final roster without a preexisting printed “W” in the grade area.

TZ: The TZ should only be assigned when a student is unable to finish his/her course work due to a verifiable emergency situation. Documentation from a Dean is required. All TZ grades must be discussed in Folder Review.

All grades are subject to departmental review. Instructors are expected to apply the department’s grading criteria when grading papers. If a director feels that those standards have not been applied accurately, he or she will adjust grades accordingly. Departmental review helps to protect both students and teachers by making the grading process less subjective and more transparent.



SECTION X

X. COMMENTING

Comments and grades on student writing arguably constitute the most serious, sustained teaching intervention you can make in a student's writing career. Responding to a student's paper involves (1) reading it carefully while making marginal comments, (2) writing a final comment in which you sum up the paper's strengths and weaknesses, then (3) sometimes assigning a grade.

- **What are the Writing Program's priorities?** Before you begin to evaluate student work, review the priorities and shared goals of our department. Review the grading criteria. What does strong writing look like? What does it accomplish? What are its attributes? The Expository Writing grading rubric keeps these priorities in focus, and should be reviewed prior to commenting.
- **What work has the student done?** This question should motivate your commenting, and you should look to praise promising moments that need imitating or repeating in the student's next draft. Remember that marking every misstep in a student's paper may lead to over marking, and that students often see pages covered in comments as critique rather than constructive criticism. Pointing out positive moments can be very powerful for students.
- **Make revision-oriented comments**, not "readerly" comments. Every comment you write should give the student specific direction about what to do next time, and should be clear and informative. Vague check marks, and comments like "awkward," leave students confused and do not provide guidance about how to revise or rewrite. When marking a passage, *be sure to name the strength or weakness*, and *to explain why* the student should or should not repeat that moment (for example, "this is an excellent use of text because...").
- **Ask questions in the margins.** Marginal comments should facilitate the development of ideas by encouraging students to question their own assumptions and conclusions about the texts. Encourage them to think about the "how" and "why" underlying their assertions. Asking the "so what" questions push students towards implications and new directions in their writing.
- **Make your comments legible and accessible.** More and more instructors are opting to write comments electronically, which makes the worry about having legible handwriting a thing of the past. But many instructors do comment by hand, and those comments must be easy to read. In addition, the tone of those

comments must be accessible; students seeking guidance often misinterpret sarcasm and jokes.

- **Make both marginal comments and an end comment.** While marginal comments represent your engagement with your student's ideas as they develop in the paper, your end comment makes sense of those interventions, and helps your student prioritize the comments you have made throughout the draft. Many teachers find it helpful to isolate the three most pressing issues in the paper and to organize the end comment around these three items. You should refer to specific marginal notes in your end comments. For example, you might write: "Please see my notes in the margins on pages 3 and 4 for examples of places where more analysis of text would have helped you develop your claims."
- **Always say something positive in your end comment.** Before getting to the items most in need of attention, isolate and praise a successful moment in the paper. Refer to the page on which the success occurred, and encourage the student to repeat this practice.
- **Make your end comments specific.** When explaining which items need attention first, be sure to point to the specific page and paragraph where such issues can be identified and studied. Comments should be in conversation with the student's work, and should always be referring back to the places in the paper where students can learn from their own successes or missteps.
- **Dedicate classroom time to reading and engaging with your comments.** Teachers spend many hours making valuable comments, and students should be given time in class to read and absorb that feedback. It is best to spend time explaining your method of commenting to students prior to returning your first batch of papers to a given class. It is helpful to ask students to write about what revision means prior to returning comments as well. These reflections on revision can inform class discussion prior to working with comments and once papers are being reworked. Once you return papers, ask students to begin reading and engaging with your comments right away. Many instructors ask students to respond to comments, asking students to write an action plan for revision. You might ask students to make a list of the three most pressing items for revision, and for a plan about how to move forward with those revisions.

What work has the student done?

While many of the mistakes our students make are readily apparent, identifying each of these errors may not be the most valuable commenting practice. Instead, commenting becomes most productive when it takes the following question as its starting point: **what work has the student done?** Teachers should begin their comments by identifying the “promising moment” (or moments) in their students’ papers. A moment of conceptual complexity, a particularly well-analyzed quotation, or a finely crafted sentence can all serve as promising moments to which attention should be drawn. These moments deserve more than a star or check mark in the margin (which might leave a student wondering what made the moment successful in the first place). Teachers need to provide an explanatory comment along with the indication of praise (e.g., “this is particularly strong engagement with the text *because* you are pointing to specific words in the quotation which develop your claim”). When successful moments are praised, students benefit in two ways: first, they have a model to imitate in their very next drafts. Second, having been provided with evidence of their ability to succeed, they become more receptive to the constructive criticism that will inevitably follow.

Once instructors have identified the promising moments in their students’ papers, they must move on to the task of identifying errors. When commenting on student papers, instructors need to remember the triage method: treat the most serious problems first. Instructors should call attention to the three most pressing problems in any given paper. If, for instance, a paper has no emerging project, or no idea it wishes to develop, this should be identified as a pressing issue. If a paper does not engage with the assigned texts, or is not thinking connectively about the texts, this problem should be identified as pressing. When trying to determine which errors are most pressing, instructors should consider the grading criteria, and the fact that thesis and work with text are weighted more heavily than organization and grammar.

Patterns of Error

Most students have a handful of grammatical errors that they make again and again. This is what we call a “pattern of error.” Once a pattern of error is identified, it is beneficial to circle and correct it the first few times it occurs, and to attach a name to the error (this way the student can look it up in the grammar guide). Do not identify each occurrence of the error in the paper, and instead extend an invitation to the student to work on identifying and correcting the remaining errors during office hours. Instructors should identify patterns of error rather than identifying each and every grammatical problem in a paper. By identifying a particular pattern of error in a paper, the instructor sets a reasonable task for the student’s next draft: the student must avoid that pattern (not every single error he made in his last paper).

According to the grading criteria, a non-passing paper “has significant sentence-level error that makes it difficult to follow,” while “a passing paper has fatal sentence-level errors under control... Although errors may appear on each page, they do not significantly impede the meaning of the essay or undermine the credibility of the writer.” Patterns of error need to be taken into account both in terms of their frequency, and the

nature of the error itself. When a pattern of error appears more than once in every paragraph of a paper, it is considered frequent and severe. When a pattern of error only occurs once or twice in a paper, it is considered mild.

As for the nature of the error itself, certain errors, including subject-verb disagreement, verb tense shifts, sentence boundary issues (run-on and fragments), and, to a lesser extent, unclear pronoun reference, are called “fatal” errors, as they are considered severe enough to hinder the author’s ability to communicate effectively. A paper that has several fatal errors on each page may not pass. “Non-fatal” errors include articles, preposition choices, word choice, spelling and some punctuation. Some of these, particularly the first three, may still be severe enough to prevent a paper from passing if several occur in almost every sentence. In order for students to move beyond a C+ in the class, however, they must have their errors reasonably under control.

Marginal and End Comments

The importance of making careful, specific, and extensive marginal and end comments on students’ final drafts cannot be over-emphasized. Think of these comments as an ongoing conversation with your students. Your marginal and end comments will help your students see their work from the perspective of the reader. Additionally, your comments on the draft of one paper will help students be more thoughtful and deliberate in the writing of their next papers.

Marginal Comments

We ask our students to imagine themselves in conversation with the authors of the essays they read. We ask our teachers to imagine their marginal comments as their own contribution to that conversation. Marginal comments should first and foremost engage with the students’ ideas. Vague check marks or unexplained lines in the margins do not contribute to the conversation, but questions that force students to return to a given line of thinking and reconsider its direction push the conversation forward. For example, a student writing about the catastrophic effects of losing one’s sight in adulthood may claim that the loss of vision is insurmountable. An effective marginal comment would ask the student to consider some of the examples in Oliver Sacks’ essay “The Mind’s Eye: What the Blind See” in order to question this conclusion. Or, a student writing about happiness might be asked to pause to consider how a term like happiness is defined (culturally, personally, religiously, etc.). These kinds of marginal comments ask students to consider (and reconsider) the ideas they are developing. Remember that thesis and work with text are more heavily weighted than organization and grammar. Encourage students to consider the complexity of the texts, to make richer connections between the texts, to challenge preconceived notions, and to develop their own ideas, even if this initially feels chaotic and uncomfortable.

Instructors should make marginal comments as revision oriented as possible. Rather than writing “good quotation,” explain what is good about the moment in the paper. Is it the student’s choice of quotation? Why is it a good choice? Is it the analysis of the quotation? What might the student do again to engage in the same kind of analysis? Comments that provide explanations for why a quotation is good (such as how it

supports the student's thesis, how it relates to the overall meaning of the paper, etc.) will enable students to develop their skills. The more the teacher's comments engage with the students' ideas as specifically addressed in the work, the better.

Avoid being too negative or demeaning in your comments. Comments such as, "I hardly see what you are getting at here" are of no value, and can in fact create animosity and a feeling of being demeaned. Being helpful, positive and constructive in your comments will also provide a good role model for students when they review each other's work.

End Comments

Instructors should compose an end comment that first identifies one strength in the paper (or a promising moment), and then summarizes the two or three most pressing points of concern in the paper. These comments should be revision oriented; they should aim at providing advice about avoiding the same mistakes in the next paper. It's especially useful to students if your end comment refers to particular places in the body of the essay. You might, for example, place a large asterisk in the margin at a promising moment in the paper and then refer back to that page and that asterisk when discussing the promising moment in the end comment. You might also use an asterisk and a double-asterisk to contrast strong and weak moments so that students can see where they do things well as well as where they don't.

The end comment should always be written with the next assignment in mind. If some students had trouble with an idea in an essay you plan to use in the next paper assignment, you could redirect them to helpful passages in that text; or, if you find that a student does not demonstrate in detail how a key idea from one essay applies to another, you may assume that such demonstration will be called for again and help that student develop the ability to articulate that connection. Remember that the ultimate goal of written comments is to help the student to become a more effective writer.



SECTION XI

XI. SAKAI

Sakai is an on-line system used to enhance and sustain various university communities (such as classes, interest groups, or research teams). It is organized into “sites,” and instructors, group leaders, and students can create sites in order to communicate and share materials with other members on-line. **Writing Program instructors are required to establish and maintain a course site using Sakai.** To get started with Sakai, please visit: <https://sakai.rutgers.edu>.

There are many benefits to using Sakai: when students are unable to attend class, they access their course Sakai site and find their missed work right away; when inclement weather impacts class meetings, instructors use Sakai to maintain class momentum and move learning on-line; when traditional class meetings end, Sakai facilitates asynchronous conversation and learning.

Creating Your Class Sakai Site

You will need to log on to **sakai.rutgers.edu**. Once there, you will be prompted for your user ID, which is your Rutgers Net ID, and your Password, which is the password you use to retrieve your Rutgers e-mail. Once you have provided this information, you can then log in. Please note that it is important to use your Rutgers e-mail account information when using Sakai, otherwise Sakai will think you are a “guest” and you will not have access to critical privileges, such as creating your Course Site.

When you have logged in, you will be able to create your Sakai Course Site.

You will see from the tab at the top left of your screen, that you are in ‘**My Workspace.**’ You will also see a vertical list of options below the ‘My Workspace’ tab, and the one you will need to click on is ‘**Worksite Setup.**’ Then click on the red button ‘**New**’ at the top left of your screen. You will be asked to specify which type of worksite you would like to create: a Course or a Project site. Definitely select the ‘**Course Site**’! The Sakai recommended templates are a good way to begin building your site – you can always add more tools later.

Once this is selected, then select the academic term, **Fall 2016**, from the dropdown box.

Click **Continue**.

You will then be able to add your **Roster**, as you will be taken to a screen displaying course sections. Check the box that corresponds to your course section number. If you are teaching two sections of Expository Writing and only want one Sakai site, you can check both section numbers, and the rosters from both sections will be imported into

your Sakai site. However, most teachers find it easiest to create a Sakai site for each section they teach.

Once you have selected the section numbers that you want, click **Continue**.

You are now ready to customize your Course Site, and will be taken to a screen that will do just that. The **Title** of your Course Site will be your section number. You will then see a response box in which you are asked to enter a **Description** of your course, so you could add your Course Description here. This will be displayed on your Course Site's Homepage. There will also be a window for a short description, but this should be left blank.

Add your full name into the **Site Contact Name** box and your e-mail address in the **Site Contact Email** box if it is not already there.

Click **Continue**.

Click the check box next to **Publish Site** to make your Course Site available to your participants. As soon as you publish your worksite, it will be live and any participants will be able to see it.

Do not check the box for Global Access, as your Course is only for those with authorized access in the Rutgers Writing Program; namely your students.

Click on **Continue**.

You will be shown a screen with a synopsis of your Course Site details. Review the details to make sure that everything is correct. Click **Back** to make changes, or **Create Site** to finalize your course worksite. Please be patient as it might take a few minutes to complete the operation.

After your Course Site is complete, it will have a tab in the site navigation bar. *To enter your site, click on its tab in the site navigation bar.* Click on **Site Information**, which is close to the top of the vertical menu on the left of your screen, and you will see, once there, that your roster has been imported. There is even a photo roster, so you can see the faces of all your students!

Students log into your Course Site by logging on to sakai.rutgers.edu, using their Rutgers Net ID and the password they use to retrieve their Rutgers e-mail as their User ID and Password in Sakai. Once they have logged on, they will see your Course Site, when it is published, as a tab in the site navigation bar at the top of their screen. Please note that students must be told to check their Rutgers e-mail so as to see any e-mail notifications that you send from your Course Site.

Important Tools to Include and Use on Sakai

Announcements: For posting current, time-critical information. Each announcement, once created, can also be sent as an email to all your students. You should familiarize yourself with this tool, as it will be useful should we experience weather emergencies that disrupt class meetings.

Assignments: For posting assignments online, and for the collection of all student papers through Turnitin. It is required that all instructors use Turnitin for the collection of rough and final drafts.

Chat Room: For real-time conversations in written form. (Optional, but students might like this.)

Discussion and Private Messages: For an online Discussion Forum. (Optional.)

Syllabus: For posting the Course Description and Goals, Readings, Course Requirements, Grading and Policies. (The Syllabus, once created, can also be sent as an e-mail to all your students.)

Using Your Course Site

To create an **Announcement** in your Course Site, click on the word '**Announcement**' to the left of your screen. Then click on the red button, '**Add**' at the top of the screen and you will be taken to a screen in which you type in the title of your announcement, and then add the text of your announcement in the response box below. When it is complete, you have the option of notifying your students by e-mail of this announcement, so click on the down arrow alongside the words '**E-Mail Notification**' and then click on '**High-All Participants**'. Then click on '**Add Announcement**', and your announcement will be added to your Course Site, appearing on the Home Page, and will also be e-mailed.

To add your **Syllabus**, click on the word '**Syllabus**' to the left of your screen, and then click on the red button at the top of your screen that says, '**Add**'. Follow the same procedure as noted above, including choosing whether to notify your students by e-mail, and when you are complete, click on '**Post**'. Your Syllabus will be visible to students in your Course Site when they click on the word 'Syllabus' at the left of their screen, and by e-mail if you choose to notify them this way.

Assignments can also be created in the same manner, by clicking on the word '**Assignment**' on the left of your screen, and then on the red button '**Add**'. When you have typed in the name and content of the assignment, click on '**Post**', and it will be visible in your Course Site.



SECTION XII

XII. PRESENTATIONS

We require each English 101 student to make three brief oral presentations in class. The Public Speaking exercises used by most teachers can be arranged in four categories: Grammar, Reading, Writing, and Context. Any of these kinds of Public Speaking exercises can be presented by a single student within a small group, by a single student before the whole class, or by a group of students before the whole class. Teachers typically vary the format and the type of presentation so as to give students the opportunity to find the ones that work best for them, as well as to expose students to the range of ways that public speaking might function.

In every case, although public speaking exercises always involve monologue—the single speaker making a sustained point before his or her peers—they should also, often, lead to dialogue of some sort. That is, we want students to treat speaking in public not just as the presentation of finished thought, but also as thinking in public: making one’s thought public, and so inviting (and expecting) response from others. Here are some suggestions for class presentations:

Grammar Presentations

Students can do at least one oral presentation on a grammatical issue, based on the handbook and examples they come up with themselves. As an instructor, you can help students identify grammatical errors in their writing, and to understand and apply grammatical rules during revision. Asking students to give presentations about the errors they are currently making in their own work shifts responsibility from the commenting teacher to the proactive student. Here some common topics for grammar presentations: “MLA Citation Guidelines,” “Plagiarism and Boundaries: Your Words and the Writer’s,” “Sentence Integrity When Using a Quote,” “Subject-Verb Agreement,” “Verb Tense Shift,” “Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement,” “Vague Pronoun Reference,” “Sentence Fragments,” “Run-on or Fused Sentences,” “Comma Splices,” “Other Comma Usage,” and “Apostrophe to Show Possession.” It is up to each instructor when these presentations are made and in what order. Grammar presentations are often helpful on peer review or revision days; once a group has presented on a particular topic, students can review their papers for the grammar point and then set about correcting identified errors.

Reading Presentations

Reading presentations typically require students to briefly discuss some aspect of the currently assigned reading. Some teachers find it more useful to have students present on a question asked ahead of time, while others require students themselves to pose questions for the class to explore. In either case, the point is to make the students initiate discussion. This works especially well when several students present on the same question or topic; inevitably there are significant and interesting differences in their presentations, and the teacher then needs to do little more than point to these for good discussion to ensue.

Writing Presentations

Writing presentations provide occasions for students to help one another produce better drafts. Some teachers ask small groups of students to identify weak and strong areas in one another's rough drafts, and then to present these to the class along with suggested revisions that they have arrived at together. On the days when rough or final drafts are due, some teachers have students present their "finished" arguments to the class, and then have chosen respondents evaluate these. When this works, students both make excellent defenses of their work and also discover ways in which their papers might be revised even further.

Context Presentations

Context presentations require students to present the results of research they have undertaken on some aspect of the assigned reading. But in addition to presenting such information simply as a way of explaining something in the text that had been unclear, students are also encouraged to present their research so as to "open up" the assigned reading.

Drafts Presented as Works in Progress

For all five papers, each student can present either a rough or a final draft as a work in progress. While a rough draft offers the most room for revision and intervention, a final draft, especially one in the middle of the semester, offers revision in the subsequent papers of the sequence. Each student has five minutes to present to the class how she has interpreted the assignment, which parts of text she is using, which points she wants to make. Having student presenters prepare a handout for the class and identifying respondents might help to focus these presentations for the audience. In the presentations, students should test out their claims. They should offer a working thesis, a focus that is entirely under construction, and they should point out their interest in it, anticipating objections and articulating some worries. The presentation should include some discussion of the parts of the text they will discuss. Students should offer a focus and then should ask for help with that focus. You can have three students present and then have the class respond, or have all six present and have students prepare questions.

Students Presenting Readings to the Class

Ask students to work in groups to identify key passages and terms or to unpack quotations; have the spokesperson of each group present his group's findings to the class.

Student Initiated Class Discussion

Group presentations scheduled for the first class meeting after students read a new essay, can serve as a way of starting class discussion. Group members will each be responsible for a five minute talk that addresses any aspect of the new essay which they find interesting and which can relate in some way to one or more of the essays previously read in the course. Examples might include a look at how two authors approach a similar theme differently, or an examination of how two authors use personal anecdote or textual evidence.



SECTION XIII

XIII. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is on the rise at Rutgers University, and Expository Writing teachers must be vigilant about detecting violations and teaching ethical writing practices. Several factors contribute to the increased number of cases, but the two most evident causes are the broad availability of papers online (which students easily access and reuse), and the sophisticated programs available to detect cases of academic dishonesty. To better identify violations, **the Writing Program requires that all teachers use the “Assignments” area on their Sakai sites to collect student submissions through Turnitin.** While you do not have to comment on the papers digitally, it is imperative that all drafts of all papers be submitted through Assignments, and all instructors do have to use Turnitin to identify cases of dishonesty. When posting an assignment on Sakai under the Assignments tab, please be sure to click the box that initiates the work of Turnitin (in other words, turn “Turnitin,” on!).

Expository Writing plays a pivotal role in teaching students their responsibilities as college-level writers. Discussing plagiarism in the classroom is critical, because the anxiety and stress associated with the course can lead to ethical violations, and because some students may be unfamiliar with proper citation procedures. Discuss intellectual boundaries in the classroom, and acknowledge the online culture of borrowing, posting, and reposting. Draw distinctions between the casual practice of borrowing online and what must happen in college classrooms. Many of these academic integrity violations can be prevented by discussing the issue in class, and by providing students with a detailed lesson on MLA citation standards. Handouts and activities for the purpose of discussing plagiarism in class can be found on our Expos project site. Visit our shared course Sakai site and click on Resources to find the “Academic Integrity” folder.

Please review the university’s policy on academic integrity, and ask students to do the same. The policy, along with a description of the types of violations and their attending consequences, can be found on-line: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/policy-on-academic-integrity>.

Reading a Turnitin Report Accurately

Turnitin is a powerful platform that can accurately match the text of a given student paper to other previously submitted student papers. It can also match the text of a student paper to online sources, such as published journals and blogs. When Turnitin examines a paper, it generates a similarity percentage. The similarity percentage tells you how much of the newly submitted paper was detected in previously submitted papers or other sources. The similarity percentage is color-coded; lower percentages will appear in green on your Sakai site. Higher percentages will appear in yellow,

orange, and red. This is what Sakai will look like once students have submitted their papers and Turnitin and has analyzed their content for similarities:

Submitted	Submission Status	Report
Feb 17, 2015 2:14 PM	Submitted	14% 
Feb 16, 2015 11:59 PM	Submitted	18% 
Feb 19, 2015 12:37 PM	Late	1% 
	Not Started	
Feb 17, 2015 12:57 AM	Submitted	13% 
Feb 17, 2015 1:19 PM	Submitted	20% 
Feb 17, 2015 1:52 PM	Submitted	19% 
Feb 19, 2015 11:44 AM	Late	
Feb 17, 2015 10:50 AM	Submitted	12% 
Feb 17, 2015 9:43 AM	Submitted	25% 
Feb 17, 2015 2:44 PM	Submitted	22% 
Feb 17, 2015 10:21 AM	Submitted	16% 
Feb 17, 2015 11:40 AM	Submitted	4% 
Feb 17, 2015 12:14 AM	Submitted	22% 
Feb 17, 2015 6:59 AM	Submitted	19% 
Feb 17, 2015 10:42 AM	Submitted	11% 
Feb 16, 2015 9:08 PM	Submitted	18% 
Feb 17, 2015 5:01 PM	Late	14% 
Feb 17, 2015 11:30 AM	Submitted	22% 
Feb 17, 2015 10:39 AM	Submitted	13% 
Feb 17, 2015 10:34 AM	Submitted	11% 
Feb 17, 2015 4:27 PM	Submitted	52% 

Green percentages indicate lower levels of similarity. Some percentages may seem high regardless of their color. For example, a 22% similarity indicates that nearly a fifth of the student’s paper has appeared, word-for-word, in other sources. But please do not take this percentage at face value; Turnitin will find similarity in the quoted material your student has selected. The quotations a given student chose from Ethan Watters will create similarity with a previously submitted student paper that used the same quotation from Watters. The similarity is in the quoted material. If the quotations are marked properly and cited, then no plagiarism exists, regardless of the similarity percentage.

What to Do When You Suspect a Student Has Plagiarized

If you suspect that a student in your class has engaged in plagiarism (willful or inadvertent, mild or severe), please contact Dr. Donald Dow, the Writing Program Director in charge of academic integrity violations. **Do not confront the student before speaking with Dr. Dow.** Please provide the following materials to the director in charge of all Academic Integrity violations:

1. The paper you suspect has been completely or partially borrowed, with all of the suspect sections highlighted.

2. The source you believe has been copied or stolen, with all borrowed passages highlighted (Turnitin should have identified the source and made it available to you).
3. The Turnitin report.
4. Your course syllabus.
5. The assignment the potentially plagiarized paper was addressing
6. An objective, written account of the circumstances surrounding the particular case, and a description of the assignment in question (rough draft, final draft, paper number, etc.).

Dr. Donald Dow handles all cases of plagiarism, so please do not submit a case to the office of academic integrity on your own. Here is Donald Dow's contact information:

Donald Dow
Busch Campus Director
(848) 445-3496
ddow@scarletmail.rutgers.edu

The Transparency Test

When you suspect a student has cheated, place the papers under suspicion next to one another (particularly when the papers in question both belong to students in your class). Given the collaborative design of the class, some overlap of ideas can be expected; student writing will be influenced not only by readings of the assigned essays, but also by class discussion, and work with peers. This overlap should not produce papers that are identically structured, which draw on the same passages in the same order, make the same connections, draw the same conclusions, and use the same vocabulary.

The Attribution Test

Many plagiarism cases involve students who have received outside help from people not affiliated with the course and unaware of its conventions and concerns. This kind of help usually leads to papers that use language the student writer does not understand fully and makes arguments that the student writer may be unable to follow or reproduce on his own.

If you suspect that a student has plagiarized, but you do not have definitive proof, it can be useful to ask the student a series of questions: Can you explain why you chose to cite one passage rather than another? Can you explain why you have structured your argument the way you have? Can you identify the key terms in your argument and define them?



SECTION XIV

XIV. FOLDER REVIEW

All teachers must meet with a Writing Program Director twice during the semester, at midterm and at the end of term. In folder review you will meet individually with one of the Writing Program Directors for one hour to review your teaching work. This is an opportunity to talk about how your class is going, to share pedagogical strategies, and to ensure that course objectives, levels of difficulty, and grading are consistent throughout the Writing Program.

Teachers should bring the following materials to every folder review: hard copies of grade records; hard copies of attendance records; hard copies of assignment sheets; all graded and commented student work.

At mid-semester review, 101 instructors should present all student work through paper two, as well as completed midterm exams (if possible). All student papers must be fully graded and commented on in order to complete folder review.

At final folder review, teachers must present all five graded and commented papers, graded final exams, a hard copy of the completed Expos grade book, hard copies of all grade and attendance records, and hard copies of assignments.

Some teachers choose to comment on student work on paper by hand, while others choose to comment electronically. The Writing Program encourages instructors to use the method that leads to the most useful, revision-oriented comments. If you are commenting electronically, be sure that the Director you meet with for folder review is willing to conduct an electronic folder review. This information can be found in the Google sign up sheet that will open during the folder review sign up period. Read each Director's instructions carefully before committing to an appointment. If you elect to comment on paper, understand that all graded and commented papers must be collected from all students prior to folder review. If you elect to comment electronically, be sure that all papers are accessible to the Director with whom you meet (either by adding the Director to your Sakai site or by sharing collaborative documents online).

Some Practical Guidelines for Folder Review

- **Have hard copies of all of your assignments (even if you are conducting a digital folder review).** We like to keep these for orientation purposes. If you have particularly strong assignments, we may want to publish these on our website, too. On a practical note, it's hard for us to understand the papers we're reading when we don't have the assignments. You might also want to bring drafts of your next assignments, or some ideas of what essays you want to use next; we'll be happy to look at these with you.

- **Bring all the folders from your class(es) if you make handwritten comments.** If you are commenting on hard copies of papers by hand, you will need all of the graded, commented papers collected in folders to bring to folder review. Of course, we realize that often the students you most want to discuss are also the students least likely to give you their folders. If a student at particular risk doesn't give you a folder, try to bring in any work you might have from him.
- **Try to collect all student folders.** If you are conducting a paper classroom, you should explain to your class that Folder Review helps standardize grading across all sections to ensure you receive all student folders before your scheduled meeting. Often, students believe their instructors are too severe when assessing student work, so let them know it's in their best interests to give you their folders, since it's the only way the Program can review grades.
- **Bring in your grades and a roster (in hard copy, even if you comment digitally).** We'll want to look at these so we can have a quick sense of how your class is doing overall and, of course, we will want to look at the grades of particular students you're concerned about. Having a roster with you can help us look up a student in the system.
- **Bring in your attendance records.** We'll want to see how many absences the student has had in case there is a larger problem that needs to be addressed.

Some instructors may be concerned about the progress of their students at midterm. Generally, the class will show significant improvement as a whole by the third paper; however, if you have students who are clearly struggling, midterm is a good time to recommend them to one of the Writing Centers.

Midterm is also a good time to review your students' absences. You may wish to identify students who are at risk of failing the class because of excessive absences, and you should warn these students about their attendance via email. Sometimes issuing students a midterm progress report of sorts can head off emerging attendance problems.

You may encounter other problems with student progress or with your class in general. Remember that the Directors of the Writing Program are always more than happy to meet with you to discuss any issues or concerns you have, or to answer any questions. Often, addressing these concerns at midterm can avoid problems at the end of the semester.



SECTION XV

XV. TEACHING SEMINAR

In addition to Orientation and Folder Review, the Writing Program offers Expository Writing teachers support in the form of a teaching seminar (required for all new Teaching Assistants and open to new Part-Time Lecturers) and Faculty Development Workshops (voluntary meetings on topics such as crafting paper assignments, writing effective marginal and end comments, helping struggling students succeed, etc.). In addition, teachers are always welcome to visit a Director to discuss issues related to their courses. Directors generally have an open door policy, though it may be useful to schedule an appointment.

The teaching seminar is designed to support instructors teaching Expository Writing at Rutgers for the first time. **New Teaching Assistants from all disciplines are required to attend**, while Part-Time Lecturers new to the Writing Program are strongly urged to attend.

Each seminar will meet for about an hour. **The time spent in the seminar will inevitably save time for instructors later; learning to grade efficiently or use classroom time wisely will ease the demands teaching Expos can make on instructors.**

Fall 2016 Teaching Seminar Schedule

Mandatory Meeting One: Week of September 12 – 16

- Practical Matters: Rosters, Add/Drop, Computer Labs
- Identifying/Supporting Students at Risk
- Course Pedagogy and the Practice of Close Reading
- Techniques for Discussing New Texts
- Crafting Assignments
- Rough Draft Comments

Mandatory Meeting Two: Week of September 19 -23

- Writing Revision Oriented Comments
- The Principles of Peer Review

Mandatory Meeting Three: Week of September 26 – September 30

- Grading and Commenting
- Crafting the Midterm and Paper 3 Assignments
- Helping Students Move to the Next Grade Level
- Preparing for Midterm Folder Review

Mandatory Meeting Four: Week of October 17 – 21

- Grading Workshop

- Review Course Policies: Absences, Missing Work, etc.
- Rough Draft Comments and Student Conferences

Mandatory Meeting Five: Week of October 31 – November 4

- Helping Students Move to the Next Grade Level
- Grading and Commenting

Mandatory Meeting Six: Week of November 29 – December 2

- Preparing for the Final Exam
- Crafting the Final Exam Question
- Preparing for Final Folder Review
- Determining Final Grades

Day	Time	Location	Seminar Leader
Tuesday	10:00 – 11:00	Lucy Stone Hall B 105	Lynda Dexheimer
Tuesday	2:30 – 3:30	Lucy Stone Hall B 105	Lynda Dexheimer
Wednesday	10:00 – 11:00	Scott Hall, 219	Regina Masiello
Wednesday	2:30 -3:30	Scott Hall, 121	Regina Masiello

If for any reason you cannot attend your regularly scheduled seminar, please arrange to attend a different meeting that week. Please alert both Regina Masiello and Lynda Dexheimer, should this be the case.



SECTION XVI

XVI. SPECIAL CONCERNS

Though students at Rutgers long ago rejected the parental authority and duties of teachers (or *in loco parentis*) so that they could lay claim to the freedoms of college life, we know that students can use a little guidance from time to time. Often, a little timely intervention on the part of the teacher can prevent students from making costly mistakes or getting into trouble. “An e-mail in time saves nine,” one might say, and both teachers and students find that e-mail is the quickest, least intrusive and most efficient way of exercising some early intervention. E-mail also creates a historical record that may be useful later in addressing student complaints.

Absent and Disappearing Students

It’s important to let students know early on that attendance in Expository Writing is required and the course cannot be dropped without a Dean’s permission. After four absences, they risk failing and no student should be passed who has missed six classes. Also, if students are ever two final drafts behind in the course, they have already failed and should be told so immediately to avoid any confusion.

When students miss even two sessions, it might be useful to send an email to remind them of the attendance policy and to encourage them to return to class. Sometimes student absences can create a pattern of behavior that needs to be addressed.

Support for Students at the Writing Centers

The Writing Program in New Brunswick has three Writing Centers. At each Writing Center, students work with tutors on a variety of issues such as reading closely and critically, understanding assignments, revising rough drafts, creating arguments, and identifying and correcting patterns of error. The goal at each center is to reinforce and strengthen the skills that teachers are trying to develop in students’ writing. Please refer all students whose reading and writing skills seem to require more than the help you can offer during office hours.

Tutoring is free to students, although they must commit to attend for at least five weeks. The Writing Centers open in the 3rd week of the semester for scheduling, and in the 4th week of the semester for tutoring. You will receive an opening announcement along with copies of referrals in your mailbox in the 2nd week of the semester. When you refer a student to the Writing Center, please complete the bottom half of the “Referral Form.” The more detailed you can be, the more a tutor can tailor the work she or he does with your student. You will receive notices when one of your students signs up, when a student misses a session, and when that student completes 3 sessions with a

tutor. Please attend to these notices as soon as possible. In order to ensure that a student is getting the best help possible, tutors find it very helpful when teachers write tutoring comments on students' papers regarding particular skills or areas they wish the tutor to focus upon.

The three Writing Centers and their directors are:

- The Plangere Writing Center (College Avenue)
Website: plangere.rutgers.edu
Murray Hall, Room 304
Phone: 732.932.1149
Coordinator: Brendon Votipka (848.932.5338)
- Douglass Writing Center
Website: dcwc.rutgers.edu
135 George Street, Room 201
Phone: 732.932.8856
Coordinator: Jacqueline Loeb (848.932.8042)
- Livingston Writing Center
Website: lcwc.rutgers.edu
Lucy Stone Hall, 106A
Phone: 848.445.4048
Coordinator: George Schroeffer (848.445.5659)

As the Writing Centers operate on the same pedagogical principles as writing classes, teachers are some of our best tutors. If you are interested in tutoring, please contact the center director on that campus. The Writing Centers always welcome graduate students and teaching assistants to work as tutors.

Student Athletes

Below are some important guidelines and policies for instructors with student athletes in their classes.

University Policy for Athletes

Rutgers University leaves the issue of attendance, missed work, and make-ups regarding student athletes to the discretion of faculty. In practice, this policy often means that student athletes are able to make up work they have missed due to athletic events when an instructor knows in advance that the athlete will miss the work.

Writing Program Policy for Athletes

Student athletes in Writing Program courses are held to the same attendance standards as other students, with the understanding that they may miss some classes because of games. Expect a student athlete to provide a list of game days early in the term. While

these days generally count as absences in the class, the individual student and instructor should make arrangements to make up any missed work. These arrangements may involve electronic submission of a paper, an early due date, or a due date that coincides with the class meeting following the athletic event (without penalty).

Writing Center Tutoring for Athletes

Student athletes should be encouraged to register for Writing Center tutoring. All tutoring for athletes in Writing Program courses occurs in a Writing Center. This arrangement ensures that the tutoring athletes receive conforms to our “minimalist tutoring” pedagogy.

Problems

Instructors should contact a Director for guidance if a student athlete (or any student) begins to accumulate absences or missed/late work. A student athlete who has more than two absences, is missing/late work, or is not passing by mid-semester must be discussed in folder review. Close attention to these problems early in a term can often correct them before they prevent a student from passing a course.



SECTION XVII

XVII. SAMPLE PAPERS

Sample Paper 1

For your first assignment, you looked at the ways in which people become entrenched in their perspectives and how people might come to realize that change might be necessary. In this paper, you are going to look at Johnson's concepts of patterns and complexity. He talks about the difference between organized and disorganized complexity and how such systems can shape people, cities, and computer programs. Taking both Johnson and Davidson into consideration, answer the following question: **How might one perspective become the dominant idea in any community?**

Yiyi

Attractive thinking and behavior

All of persons are different. People do things that they think right. Everyone is his own leader when they face problems. However, there are a small part of people that could lead other one. This part of persons could not only control their own life, but also could changing the world. Why there are some people could change other people's mind and some places is full of attractions? There are a lot of reasons. In the "Project Classroom Makeover", Cathy Davidson argues about the teaching ways to different students and the influences of new technical. She thinks that for the differences of students, the teaching ways should always change. Unique treating is important for students. In other words, unique ways could lead different people all together. Not only for teachers, different cities also need its own development way. In "The Myth of the ant queen", Steven Johnson talks about Manchester's specialty and development. He has given a lot of reasons that explain why Manchester is popular. The beautiful scene may

be a reasons, but the development way that full of order and global connections is more important. No matter persons, cities, or countries, leading other one need not only be the best themselves but also treating all things in a unique way. Unique is always connected with attraction and leading.

Although all of people would sometimes have new ideas about their life, creativity is so precious and rare that only a few people own, and this small number of people always become leaders in communities or groups. Almost all people in the world use new technology to make their life more convenient, and the large amount of new things are all connected with creativity. No matter scientists or inventors, all of them need to use creativity to discovery and create. The ability of creativity is so important because it could change the world by many new ways. People who own a magic brain maybe more popular in the society, and creativity do make their life better and out of the ordinary. Creative thinking is necessary in all fields, and it “cannot be computerized and automated” (Cathy Davidson, 60). As Cathy Davidson says, creativity is not digital and automatics. It is full of variations and vitality. This kinds of feature determined that creativity is connected with guiding people. People who own creativity need “to surprised, anomaly, difference, and disruption, and an ability to switch focus” (60). When people completed their studies from school and step into society, “To be prepared for jobs that have a real future in the digital economy, one needs an emphasis on creative thinking, at all levels” (60), and “Many of these jobs require highly specialized and dexterous problem-solving abilities or interpersonal skills-but do not require college degree” (60). The creative people maybe very popular, and this ability bring them a lot of privilege on finding job and do work. “Turing had imagined his

thinking machine primarily in terms of its logical possibilities, its ability to execute an infinite variety of computational routines.” (Steven Johnson, 202). As everyone knows, Alan Turing is a good scientist and has made great contributions to the development of mathematics, but this is not the only reason to explain why he is so popular and famous. There is another reason that he pioneered the field of artificial intelligence. This such a great field that full of creative thinking. No one knows that machine maybe could thinking in one day. Creative thinking makes Turing become a great scientist, and full of personality charm. Creative thinking and behavior could help people live better life and more attractive.

Personality is so important that people would always want to make friends with who are full of humor and ideas. There is a huge amount of people in the world. Only a small part of people could lead other one, and this small part of people always have a same thing. They are all full of personality. When people need to make some decisions, they would always choose persons that they are believed in, and these persons always have their own thinking. Personality is not only important for people but also important to a city or country. If a city has no history and culture, and development in a wild way, people would not like to live there. Personality is sometimes like a kind of leading. No matter persons or cities need this to attract others. Like Steve Johnson says, “The city is complex because it overwhelms, yes, but also because it has a coherent personality, a personality that self organized out of millions of individual decisions, a global order built out of local interactions.” (199). Manchester is such a big city that contains different people from all over the world. It is full of attraction to them. People enjoy living, working, and traveling there may be for its beautiful scene. More importantly, it has its

own personality. This personality is different from person's personality, but also could make people excited. Manchester makes a connection between its own culture and global changing. Everyone in there could both feel England's culture and his or her own culture. This kind of personality helps Manchester becoming an attractive city step by step. For city, unique and order is necessary, and for persons, own thinking and lifestyle also could attract others. There is a teacher that could teach many 'weird' students.

"She insisted that everyone had a unique way of learning and believed that to be true of the smartest students as well as the academically weakest." (Cathy Davidson, 65). As everyone knows, teaching ways among all over the world is similar. All the students need to study in class and do exams to inspect the learning outcomes. However, everyone is different. Teachers should do some changings in teaching ways when the students are not adapting to it. The unique ways to teach students could both furthers student's ability and give teacher new thinking about academic.

Thinking in different ways and being the connection between one and another could make the world smaller than before, and in the process, the person or city that be the connection could attract others and know more about the world. There are so many people, countries, and cities in the world. Almost all of persons have big or short connections with other one. City and city also have many connections. These connections always contain millions or hundreds of millions of economic and scientific cooperation. For human beings, the connections always mean different emotions among persons, business cooperation, and the relationships between working partners. Above all, if a city could help different groups making good communications, people would like to choose it to live. Like Steven Johnson says, "A city is a kind of pattern-

amplifying machine: its neighborhoods are a way of measuring and expressing the repeated behavior of larger collectivities—capturing information about group behavior, and sharing that information with the group.” (199). In this article, Steven Johnson talks about Manchester’s history and why it is so popular. One of the point is that Manchester could be said a good ‘machine’. What kind of city is a good machine? Helping all of groups in the city to communicate with each other is one of the most necessary things to do. Capturing and sharing information are good way to promote the relationships between different groups. This thing seems like no use to the development of city. Actually, when people gain benefits from the connections, they would love the city, and working hard for the city. For people, “Learning to thinking in multiple ways, with multiple partners, with a dexterity that cannot be computerized or outsourced, is no longer a luxury but a necessary.” (Cathy Davidson, 61). Thinking in different ways could not only helps people finding jobs but also could make the world more multinational, and the person, who could use multiple ways to thinking, is more attractive than other one. Most of people would like to make friends with this kind of persons because they want to know more of the world, so leader in a group always need to have this ability.

Good ideas would make people feel strange at first. All the communities need time to adapt to a new system or thinking. To make an idea becoming a dominant idea, the inventor has a long way to walk, but the result is always good if he or she believe himself or herself and working hard to spread ideas. Both the person’s perseverance and idea’s gold content could effect the result. However, human’s power is boundless, and every idea that come from the deep heart and mind is worthy of respect.

Sample Paper 2

For your first assignment, you looked at the ways in which people become entrenched in their perspectives and how people might come to realize that change might be necessary. In this paper, you are going to look at Johnson's concepts of patterns and complexity. He talks about the difference between organized and disorganized complexity and how such systems can shape people, cities, and computer programs. Taking both Johnson and Davidson into consideration, answer the following question: **How might one perspective become the dominant idea in any community?**

Jenna

One Perspective may Change a Community

Citizens should be able to generate new suggestions for their community as having diverse ideas are more valuable than having one. In "Project Classroom Makeover," Cathy Davidson had a new vision for her university students at Duke. Her outlook transpired into a change that benefited the educational system. In Steven Johnson's "The Myth of the Ant Queen," Johnson discusses Alan Turing's influential work on computing that is still studied to this day. Both authors consider multiple ideas over one and how they may lead to change for the betterment of their communities. While change can sometimes be a great thing, it is often difficult for people to accept something new happening. Over time, individuals will learn to adapt and conform to their surroundings. The power of group thinking helps a community form into a strong culture with being able to self-organize and handle challenges ahead. A community will be able to evolve successfully when they form their own efficient system whether that system has a leadership or not. Johnson examined the mysterious organized system of

the any colony and the city of Manchester's "organized complexity." Davidson's goal of helping her students communicate with one another and use of technology was a success since she believed "crowdsourcing" was a new solution. The authors' opinions are in agreement with trying to find answers as to what makes people and ideas spread across a population. A community's leadership style is not always traditional as people tend to form their own unique systems. There are distinct patterns of conformity, adaptation, intelligence, and order in every developing community.

In order for communities to evolve into organized, established places, citizens have to realize that changes have to exist. One individual's proposition may have an impact on an entire civilization who will welcome their new perspective with open arms. Davidson saw an opportunity for a change in the educational system and used her knowledge to convert the traditional teaching model into one that involves more interaction between students. Davidson's iPod experiment was an investment in a new form of learning and one that spread worldwide, including the school Culbreth Middle School's own iPod program. It is immensely important for individuals to realize that change can be beneficial. Davidson hoped that group interactions and the usage technology would change the way students learn in their classrooms as she writes, "At our most ambitious, we hoped to change the one-directional model of attention that has formed the twentieth-century classroom" (Davidson 54). A change needed to occur because the educational methods did not evolve with the modern world. Johnson discusses Alan Turing's influential career in Manchester during the mid-1900s. Similar to Davidson's embark on studying group collectivity, he focused on how groups of mathematical patterns work together in computers. Because of his brilliant mind, many

contributions to the physical design of the modern computer had been achieved because of him. Davidson and Alan Turing are examples of how a few ideas and perspectives could become the dominant in a community. Turing made an impression on the city of Manchester and his work had become a staple in education as "...he had completed the text that would help engender the discipline of biomathematics and inspire Keller and Segel's slime mold discoveries fifteen years later, and he had enjoyed a spirited exchange with the man who would eventually achieve world fame for his research into self-organizing systems" (Johnson 201). Both authors helped their civilizations become more organized and successful and their work became used over again since individuals accepted their ideas for change.

The complexity of the self-organizing systems of cities are as complex as one's own mind; however, we cannot underestimate the power of one individual idea that can change the outlook of a community. Amongst the chaos and appearance of confusion in the city of Manchester, there was stability. The power of change and group-thinking became the causation of this organic, unplanned, and peculiar city. Friedrich Engels, one of Manchester's most celebrated documentarian describes this naturally formed system as a pattern that occurred from humans themselves. The patterns of human movement, individual ideas, and acceptance for change, emerged into a population of repeated behavior and group thinking. Johnson thinks of the city in relation to a machine as he writes, "A city is a kind of pattern-amplifying machine: its neighborhoods are a way of measuring and expressing the repeated behavior of larger collectives-capturing information about group behavior, and sharing that information with the group" (Johnson 199). All it takes is a group of individuals to communicate their ideas to a larger group in

order to start a chain-reaction. The interactions and human footprints that made up Manchester were based on their own group rules accompanied by an “organized complexity” that shaped its strange, yet structured personality. Davidson also expresses her outlook on group-thinking by explaining how her young overachievers were able to successfully make their own rules to follow during her trial with iPods. Crowdsourcing is a word that Davidson uses that means inviting a group to collaborate on a solution to a problem as she states, “Crowdsourcing is “outsourcing” to the “crowd,” and it works best when you observe three nonhierarchical principles” (Davidson 51). Difference and diversity solves problems while participation of a group aids in finding better solutions. In order to innovate new changes for a community, there had to be one person that needs to step up. With that said, one perspective may initiate a positive change for the population since many communities involve group thinking. The best outcomes come from when a group of individuals are able to find a solution and solve it all together.

One problem that many communities have involves their understanding of leadership against the principles of self-organizing systems. Self-organization is comprised from the ground up instead of from the top down. The rise of the city of Manchester produced suitable results and lacked formal rules for the population to follow. However, there were flows of patterns that individuals followed on their streets. Communities have an order that they follow, regardless of whether they have leaders. Ideas can be easily spread in this ‘pattern’ that most will fail to recognize. When Johnston describes the authors’ reactions to Manchester, he expresses his thoughts as, “The city is complex because it overwhelms, yes, but also because it has a coherent personality, a personality that self-organizes out of millions of individual decisions, a

global order built out of local interactions” (Johnson 199). The ants from the ant colony possessed a certain level of intelligence in their genetics that allowed them to form such an organized system without any formal rules. Individuals failed to realize that the city had followed a discreet number of patterns amongst the presumed notion of it being disorganized. A self-organized system is shaped by individuals who interact with one another and share their perspectives on their community. With that said, it is easier for that idea to be spread across a population of individuals. Just like the ants and members of the Manchester community, the students at Duke also had a chance to make up their own rules for their education. Similar to Johnson’s idea of an organized system, the students worked together collectively with others in their group to innovate new apps. The students were not organized; however, they organized themselves when given the chance to do so without any leadership. Davidson expresses how the students made their own methods of studying, “The real treasure trove was to be found in the students’ innovations. Working together, and often alongside their profs, they came up with far more learning apps for their iPods than anyone—even Apple—had dreamed possible” (Davidson 52). Repeated behaviors can also be seen within a community since individuals are more likely to either conform or become the trend-setter of the town. This pattern can be seen in almost any community, even if it lacks formal rules or it is in chaos.

One individual’s perspective may become the dominant idea in a community. It is possible that one perspective, one simple idea can be transformed into something that everyone accepts to be a new beginning. Humans are able to recognize that change may be necessary if they start to witness others doing things differently. The power of

evolution cannot occur if change is not present. In order for a complex, intelligent system to work, it must emerge as a whole. People sharing their insights and perspectives with others can foster better communication and change as it gives them a chance to hear others' thoughts and opinions. One person can definitely have an impact on a group while that group can have an impact on all of society. This response later becomes a chain-reaction of different ideas that come from diverse people looking for a stronger solution. Crowdsourcing and group work may give individuals more initiative to work together. Both Johnson and Davidson quote about how group thinking can be an effective way of shaping a community. The organization of the cities in Johnson's text were not brought up in advance or written down on a piece of paper, they were instead assembled based on others' perspectives, and in the ants' case, an innate intelligence. Davidson made a change individually and her trial made an impact on the nation. There are patterns in a community that people often fail to recognize. They are staples in understanding why a certain area works in a specific way. When groups work together as a whole, even in the most disorganized of places, there will be order.

Sample Paper 3

For your first assignment, you looked at the ways in which people become entrenched in their perspectives and how people might come to realize that change might be necessary. In this paper, you are going to look at Johnson's concepts of patterns and complexity. He talks about the difference between organized and disorganized complexity and how such systems can shape people, cities, and computer programs. Taking both Johnson and Davidson into consideration, answer the following question: **How might one perspective become the dominant idea in any community?**

Marcy

Changing the World: One Perspective at a Time

As the world evolves, it is advancing and changing. People are choosing to voice their opinions and different perspectives are emerging. People want to see the world advance, so they are trying to make all the necessary changes to make sure that it happens. In Cathy Davidson's "Project Classroom Makeover", she discusses the need for change when it comes to integrating technology and education. She speaks about how embracing change can be a positive outlook especially with the fast pace and advancing society that is here and still approaching. While change should be embraced there are times where people's perspective on certain areas are deemed "complex". In Steven Johnson's "The Myth of the Ant Queen," he addresses the importance of organized and disorganized complexity in people, places, and objects. Johnson speaks on hierarchies, the evolution of the city of Manchester, the influential people who once lived in the city of Manchester, and how computers came about. If people did not use their perspective to stand up and make a change, then the world as people know it would have been stagnant. When there is change from people there will also be people

with their own perspectives of why change should not occur. Since people have different views and ideas, having a person's ideas become dominant perspective is a challenging feat that one must convince others to grasp by captivating the correct audience.

One's perspective might become the dominant idea in any community due to of the idea's probability in success and because it is different from the norms of society, people will flock to it making it become the dominant. People will flock to an idea sometimes because the idea is different and people are willing to take that chance on a new idea or perspective. In Davidson's, "Project Classroom Makeover", she mentions her ex mother-in law Mrs. Davidson's view of teaching. Mrs. Davidson fought every year against the Board of Education because she wanted to teach in her classroom based on her own rules. Davidson explains, "...She always did it her way, as a challenge, a game, an interactive and communal learning activity... She insisted that everyone had a unique way of learning and believed that to be true of the smartest students as well as the academically weakest" (65). Mrs. Davidson shattered the norms set by Board of Education by going outside the box with her teaching. Although, Mrs. Davidson had a seemingly success rates by teaching the way she believed to be correct, her way of handling things would be viewed as "disorganized complexity". Johnson mentions the ideas of "disorganized complexity" and defines Disorganized Complexity as, "problems characterized by millions or billions of statistical mechanics and probability theory" (203). With disorganized complexity, there is that chance that with whatever problem a person is trying to solve that it might not work. It is difficult for a person to say something will work definitely. Disorganized complexity is about taking a chance at something

outside of what the norm is and hoping that it works and Mrs. Davidson did just that every year. Mrs. Davidson's idea of teaching had a chance of working or failing. People would want to listen and see Mrs. Davidson's perspective on changing the way students could be taught because it is different and has worked to her advantage in the past. Because of one's perspective being different from the norm and showing a probability of being successful, it will bring people to their idea thus possibly becoming the dominant idea in any community unless fear is involved.

Being afraid of the consequences of breaking the norm will hinder people from sharing their perspectives thus making only society's ideas dominant. Many people hold back on their ideas concerning certain areas because they are fearful of the backlash and consequences they could possibly face. In some countries a person can be thrown in jail or worse, killed because they do not share the same views and perspectives of their society. Johnson mentions the lifestyle of the British polymath Alan Turing. Turing had open relations with men and unfortunately suffered the consequences behind it. As explained in Johnson's text, after Turing realized he was robbed after ending the relationship with his lover, "Turing reported the theft to the police and, with his typical forthrightness, made no effort to conceal the affair...homosexuality was a criminal offense according to British law... so the police promptly charge both Turing" (201). Turing was arrested because his perspective way of living was not correct by the British law. If people fear getting arrested, then they will not voice their own perspective and compete against the norm's perspective, thus making the norm the dominant perspective. While people are afraid to voice their perspectives because of the consequences, the children will become the most affected because their educators will

be silenced. Parents and teachers are afraid to deviate from what their Board of Education's perspective is on learning. Teachers are afraid of losing their jobs by choosing to speak up and deviate from the standard given to them by the BOE so they fearfully stand behind the idea of standardization. Davidson speaks on what the issues are when it comes to the United States low ranking when it comes to education.

Davidson explains, "It is little wonder that educators and parents are constantly reacting comparative, global numbers with ever more strident calls for standards...Our national educational policy depends on standardized tests, but it is not at all clear that preparing students to achieve high test scores is equivalent to setting high standard for what and how kids should know and learn" (59). Even though its not clear as to whether or not standardized testing is equal to how children learn people are afraid to speak out and try to change the system. Due to the fear of the consequences of going against the perspectives of their employers, the children will continue to be taught based on the past and not the evolving society of today. People that are in charge and have the proper power to make their ideas and perspective dominant because others will be fearful of the consequences that will possibly follow.

People who are in charge will have their views and perspective become dominant of their community because they have the power to dictate and make sure it will happen. The people with the power are normally those who are in charge. They are the ones who dictate the rules and the consequences if people choose not to follow. People with power run the governments, communities and the schools. Davidson speaks about the introduction of the iPod to Duke University. Davidson explains, "It was a little wild, a little wicked, exactly what you have to do to create a calculated exercise in

disruption, distraction, and difference: a lesson in institutional unlearning, in breaking our own patterns and trying to understand more of the intellectual habits of a new generation” (50). Davidson and her colleagues had power at Duke University to “break their own patterns” and introduce a new and advanced way of learning to the students. It takes power to be able to do that. Duke University had many years of thinking of learning should be implemented one way and Davidson’s power was enough to convince them that her perspective was enough to make that change. People have a higher respect for those who hold power and are in charge. Although, having power usually means that a person is in charge, there are cases where this may not be the case. Society tells humanity that if a person has a royal term such as, “king” or “queen” that they have power and are in charge. This does not hold up in all kingdoms or colonies. Johnson speaks about harvester ants and the role of the “queen ant”.

“Although queen is a term that reminds us of human political systems...the queen is not an authority figure...she does not decide which worker does what...the matriarch doesn’t train her servants to protect her, evolution does” (Johnson 194). The “queen” ant is viewed as leader, but actually does not have any power. The harvester ants in this case are actually the ones whose perspective would be dominant and running the community. While Davidson had the power at Duke University to persuade people to agree with her perspective of introducing the iPod into the learning curriculum, Johnson showed that even with the title of “queen” the queen ant does not hold any actual power to make any changes in the any kingdom. People who are in control through power perspectives will become or remain dominant because they are in charge.

Since people have different views and ideas, having a person's ideas become dominant perspective is a challenging feat that one must convince others to grasp by captivating the correct audience. Having the proper influence to change the views and perspectives of many is an amazing accomplishment. People like new ideas regarding change if there is a chance that they can achieve a better outcome than the current. As the world continues to evolve people will have their own ideas and perspectives on how the world should move and change instead of just remaining stagnant. With trying to make others believe that one perspective is better than another, there will be struggles like the possibility of division and the possibility of consequences and punishment. If people are afraid of the consequences of going against the norm, then they should band together with other people that share the same perspectives and views and in large numbers address the people who have they believe have the power so their ideas can become dominant. When the chances of being persecuted for going against what society is dictating the norm are low people will be fearless and address certain issues more. People have a better chance of being noticed and heard if they are in large groups. People may also need to be careful, just because someone may have some power does not necessarily mean that they are in charge and can make the proper changes to make a person's perspective become the dominant one.

Sample Paper 4

In her essay “Project Classroom Makeover,” Cathy Davidson says that at Duke they “were inverting the traditional roles of teacher and learner, the fundamental principle in education: hierarchy based on credentials. The authority principle, based on top-down expertise, is the foundation of formal education, from kindergarten playgroups to advanced graduate courses” (50). According to Davidson, the iPod project at Duke challenged the “authority principle” in a number of ways. For paper two, apply Davidson’s concept of the “authority principle” to Karen Ho’s description of Wall Street. **How does the “authority principle” work or appear on Wall Street? Is the concept challenged, expanded, or changed?**

Florencia

Looking Into the Future

As one of the most influential financial institutions in the world, Wall Street holds an immense amount of hierarchical power. Much of the power that “The Street” has is demonstrated through a top-down approach in recruitment, placement, and advancement. In Karen Ho’s essay, “Biographies of Hegemony,” Ho not only illustrates the mutualistic relationship between big institutions and the individual, but also shows how the relationship is based on “the authority principle.” This principle is explained in Cathy Davidson’s essay, “Project Classroom Makeover,” where she challenges the “authority principle” through the iPod experiment she conducts at Duke University. This experiment allowed for crowdsourcing, which is when a diverse group of individuals work together to solve a problem. “The authority principle” states that knowledge and power is distributed through a top-down approach where the people at the top of the hierarchy have the most power and those at the bottom have the least. On Wall Street,

“the authority principle” suppresses creativity and individuality because of this type of approach. As a result universities are molding their students for this principle instead of taking a theoretical approach that leads to originality and uniqueness. Wall Street is an institution that uses “the authority principle” to reinforce whiteness, patriarchy, and takes away individuality by selecting college students from elite universities to fit into this paradigm. In order to destroy the “authority principle” universities need to implement and promote creativity and human agency; this strengthens the fundamentals of crowdsourcing to create a more diverse and inclusive workplace that should be carried over to Wall Street.

The “authority principle” inhibits originality and individuality through its top-down approach. As defined by Davidson the “authority principle” is a “top down expertise, that is the foundation of formal education, from kindergarten playgroups to advanced graduate courses,” (Davidson 50). It refers to the traditional way of teaching where information gets passed from the top authorities down, and it assumes that the people at the top know more and what is best than those at the bottom; this is not always the case. In “Project Classroom Makeover” the “authority principle” relates to education, but when we see it on Wall Street it is about the power that the big financial institutions hold. While Davidson is saying that a shift away from top-down expertise will have a positive impact on the education system of America and society as a whole, Ho writes how important this concept is for Wall Street and says the following, “To play the role of ‘master of the universe’ requires not only especially strong doses of self-confidence and institutional legitimation, but also a particular set of beliefs regarding Wall Street’s role in the world and one’s own role on Wall Street,” (Ho 168). “Master of the universe” implies

being at the top of the hierarchy, and in this case being at the top of the hierarchy for the whole world. Having this confidence of being “master of the universe” gives Wall Street the power to dominate who enters Wall Street and determines exactly what the person will do there. They are able to control every step in the recruitment process and therefore this leads to a Wall Street that is dominated by white heterosexual males.

Undergraduates at many elite universities are being forced to follow a strict schedule, and are being kept in a box due to education being so political; this inhibits human agency and creativity. When speaking about the iPod experiment Davidson says that Duke caused a “revolution in the democratization of knowledge,” (Davidson 54). Knowledge used to be thought of in one way: if the student did well on the test then they were considered smart. This approach is very standardized and one-dimensional and because of the experiment Duke was able to take a new approach. The revolution that Davidson speaks about allows for knowledge to be a communal approach instead of top-down. This revolution is crowdsourcing. Davidson defines crowdsourcing as “inviting a group to collaborate on a solution to a problem,” (Davidson 51). Human agency and creativity will promote this move towards crowdsourcing which Wall Street inhibits. She also calls knowledge and intelligence democratic, this is because everyone has an equal chance to be smart, but it seems that when it comes to “smartness” at Wall Street this is not the case. For Wall Street, “Representing a world of ‘collective smartness’ and exclusivity seemed fundamentally connected not only to the criteria for becoming an investment banker but also the very nature of what they do,” mentions Ho (Ho 175). This “collective smartness” seems very similar to what crowdsourcing is, because in crowdsourcing you also get this collected group of smart people working together. But

what Ho refers to as “collective smartness” is something that the bankers came up with themselves, and it is not collective in any real way. Instead, the “smartness” they speak about leads education to be top-down instead of communal. On Wall Street, “smartness” is still totalitarian and one sided. It is always the same people, from the same elite college, and the same way of thinking: one dimension and inside the box. Because of this Harvard and Princeton shape their students in the way that Wall Street considers someone “smart.” When these students graduate they feel like there is only one way to be successful and that is through banking. When referring to this Ho mentions that a student says, “We should not let our type-A drive for success, money, or power or our fear of ending up outside the realm of ‘acceptable’ Princeton accomplishment dictate what we do with our lives,” (Ho 181). It seems that the only “acceptable” job they are being led to think they can have is one at Wall Street. This is not only caused by the universities they go to but the culture inside Wall Street as well. If someone chose not to go to Princeton or Harvard and get a job at Wall Street then automatically they were not considered smart. This type of mindset happens by the way the “authority principle” works at Wall Street and through the recruitment process that they have at Harvard and Princeton.

The concept of crowdsourcing has become very relevant to technologically advanced societies, and this leads to an emphasis on creative thinking and a more technologically envisioned societies that bring about positive change. Back in 2003 Duke University became an “Apple Digital Campus,” and what Duke was trying to achieve through this was to, “Invert the traditional roles of teacher and learner, the fundamental principle in education: hierarchy based on credentials,” (Davidson 50).

Through giving these iPods they were able to put the students and teachers at the same level; professors were no longer able to teach students the same way and therefore the way of teaching was no longer one-dimensional, instead the students were also teaching the professors. The three nonhierarchical principles that crowdsourcing is based on are: difference and diversity, by forcing a solution you limit participation and success, and the community that is most affected by this, should be the most involved (Davidson 51). This is very radical from what schools, institutions, and society has been about the past few hundreds of years. It is actually very different from what happens at Wall Street; you actually get the complete opposite of this. There is definitely no difference and diversity at Wall Street since most people are from either Harvard or Princeton, heterosexual males, and Caucasian; they tend to limit participation from those that are in the lower socio-economic classes, and what happens at Wall Street affects everyone in the world, but other than bankers there are not many people who are able to give input when it comes to solving the problems that affect every individual. In Wall Street “success is premised on pedigree, competitive consumption, and heteronormativity,” (Ho 177). These are not things that bring about crowdsourcing and equality but instead it brings about uniformity, which takes away from difference and diversity. From this it is also noticeable that Wall Street does not invite a group of people to solve a problem, instead it brings in the same people and tries to limit participation from anyone outside of the “norm.” Davidson sees what is happening at Wall Street as a problem and therefore she wants to turn this “authority principle” not upside down but just banish it in general. She wants people to collaborate as a group and not just take orders from higher authorities and wants young people, since they

hold the future in their hands, to think out of the box that America has kept them in for years, and to just be creative thinkers. Life is not about doing well on standardized tests but about thinking innovatively because society is moving towards that.

Technology and crowdsourcing can help equalize the playing field and give opportunity to people outside of the patriarchy that work on “The Street.” This makes crowdsourcing a more open and accepting principle than the “authority principle.” When speaking about collective learning Davidson says, “Once again, attention was being focused in multiple directions at once, not just on outcomes but on process and on interaction, the mirroring happening (as it must, definitionally) in both directions,” (Davidson 53). Moving away from focusing on outcomes leads to a move away from standardization and instead it works towards the goal of crowdsourcing, which is what smartness really is about. Smartness is about the process and interactions and the mirroring that is happening which leads to the revolution of education since it is no longer one sided but it works in both directions. At Wall Street power does not work in both directions, and when speaking about smartness Ho says, “it conveys a naturalized and generic sense of ‘impressiveness,’ of elite, pinnacle status and expertise, which is used to signify, even prove, investment bankers’ worthiness,” (Ho 167). Smartness is generic according to “The Street,” which once again reiterates the importance that it is put on standardization, since that is what leads to “smartness.” They are able to reach this elite, pinnacle status and expertise because throughout all of college and then their work lives they have followed the rules of standardization that makes them the most intelligent people in the world, according to themselves, since they are in charge of the global financial markets. Since our society is changing, the future will put an emphasis

on creative thinking instead of an educational hierarchy that focuses on standardization. When the time for the shift comes the “authority principle” will not survive and Wall Street will be in trouble. Making crowdsourcing and its nonhierarchical fundamental a better principle to follow. Therefore, moving away from a top-down approach will make Wall Street a more inclusive and diverse workplace that will indeed promote actual smartness, creativity, and individuality.

“The authority principle” became and still is very dominant in the education students receive from elementary school to higher education. According to Davidson, education needs to move away from this principle and become more like crowdsourcing because it is inhibiting individuality and creativity, which is what this society is moving towards. The three nonhierarchical fundamentals of crowdsourcing are key to creating a successful future society, especially the society within Wall Street. It is important to let students think out of the box and do what they are good at instead of implementing all these rules that make education very one dimensional, therefore it is important to destroy the “authority principle.” Crowdsourcing brings to the table everything that the “authority principle” does not which makes it the answer to solving this top-down problem that is found at Wall Street. This revolution created by crowdsourcing will move society away from standardization and will make society a much more inclusive and creative than it ever was before.

Sample Paper 5

For the midterm exam, I asked you to think carefully about how Susan Faludi used the words “stripping” and “remolding” in “The Naked Citadel.” In her discussion of the fourth-class system, she claims that The Citadel hopes “to ‘strip’ each young recruit of his original identity and remold him into the ‘whole man’” (75). For paper three, I want you to consider another important term in this quotation: “identity.” Using the connections you made between Faludi’s terms and Davidson and Ho’s essays, I want you to consider the following question: **to what extent is an individual’s identity influenced, shaped, or otherwise impacted by the institutions with which he or she comes in contact?**

Rachel

The Power of an Individual’s Identity in an Institution

A person’s identity consists of distinguishing characteristics, values, and beliefs that define him or her as an individual. Identity can be influenced by one’s experiences with parents, friends, culture, ethnic and religious groups, and more. For students at large institutions, identity can be shaped or even re-shaped by the authority that is in charge. Authority is the power or right to give orders, make decisions, or enforce obedience. In Susan Faludi’s essay, “The Naked Citadel”, Faludi discusses how the new cadets, otherwise known as “knobs,” are “remolded” and “stripped” of their original identities to become the perfect (imitation) soldiers. Their new identities are influenced by everything they learn at The Citadel; they are remolded. This “remolding” refers to changing how one behaves and what one believes to match what the authority wants. This kind of change can also be seen in Karen Ho’s essay, “Biographies of Hegemony”. Students from elite institutions are recruited to work as investment bankers on Wall

Street. During and after this process, the students are “reconstructed” according to the same set of values. There is a specific culture on Wall Street that the authority, which in this case is represented by the recruiters, wants everyone to accept. After attending the appropriate school, Wall Street employees will share similar identities, having been shaped by the authoritative forces at their schools. In less authoritarian structures, the institution does not try to “remold” its students. A student’s identity is shaped by the freedom they have to think and explore. For example, in “Project Classroom Makeover” by Cathy Davidson, Davidson argues that the better way for students to learn is to give them opportunities to use their own skills and interests. The students at Duke University were told to create an app for the brand new iPod. By combining all of their skills, the students were able to reimagine traditional educational practices. Nobody tried to change how the students perceived the new technology and how they chose to develop it (or for what ends). In stark contrast, the cadets at The Citadel and the students going on to work for Wall Street did not have the same type of freedom. Not all institutions aim to reshape their members, but particularly authoritarian ones “remold” their participants by communicating a shared set of values and by linking those values to certain versions of success.

Going to an educational institution will influence one’s identity because of the institutions’ shared and stated values; these values can change students’ identities altogether. Students want to fit in so that they are accepted by the institution’s administration, faculty and other students. When attending a military institution such as The Citadel, there are many rules to follow and expectations to live up to. In order to create the “ideal” man at the Citadel, certain behaviors and beliefs are encouraged and

others are discouraged. The authority to shape these beliefs and behaviors in new students is given to upperclassmen, which communicate the values of the school to its newest members. The “knobs” come in and respect the upperclassmen, even if violence is used towards them. The new cadets are not allowed to say anything about the violence or they will not fit in with the rest of the cadets. They are being taught the difference between wrong and right in the eyes of the upperclassman. While talking about the violence at The Citadel, Faludi says that, “the group mentality that pervades The Citadel assures that any desire on the part of a cadet to speak out about the mounting violence will usually be squelched by the threat of ostracism and shame...The power and authoritarianism of the peer group at The Citadel is exceptional because the college gives a handful of older students leave to “govern” the others as they see fit” (81). The “group mentality” refers to how the cadets are trained to think and behave in certain situations. In this case, each cadet is expected to tolerate pain and humiliation but not behave in a way that would get anyone in trouble by speaking out about the violence. Violence is one of ways the institution expresses its values, and it makes the students bond around the values and traditions of the group. They think it is now acceptable to keep important information from the people who might end the violence, because fitting in and respecting the upperclassman (the institution) is more important than doing what might be considered “right” outside of the group. This is the role that cadets at The Citadel learn to play as they develop their new identity. Though physical violence is not used to create a group mentality, students at elite colleges learn a group think of their own. Ho discusses the process of Wall Street recruiting and says that, “to play the role of “master of the universe” requires not only especially strong doses of

self-confidence and institutional legitimization, but also a particular set of beliefs regarding Wall Street's role in the world and one's own role on Wall Street" (168). Being "masters of the universe" is basically an identity in itself. When students see themselves as the "master of the universe," they clearly think that they are dominant over everyone else. And it is expected that this version of their institution's culture will be followed after graduation. On Wall Street, employees must follow a certain set of beliefs that all of Wall Street follows: the values that the universities impressed upon them in college. Consequently, both new recruits on Wall Street and new cadets at The Citadel, both have to absorb the values of the authoritarian institutions that seek to shape them. The attempt to fit in changes the way they see themselves and as they continue to identify with the larger group, their own sense of identity changes as well.

Institutions that "sell values" are more likely to influence their students' identities by pressuring them to conform to certain traditions or standards. Wall Street is successful in recruiting students from elite institutions such as Princeton and Harvard because students want to continue to feel that they are special. Students will even start to believe that if they do not go to Wall Street, they are not furthering their elite status. Their identity is reinforced by the Wall Street culture in order to fit in, be successful, and ultimately to advance their careers. Even though they are only starting to care about what their status in the world is, and they are only beginning to use their skills and knowledge to benefit themselves, they are pressured to conform to the culture of Wall Street to succeed. Ho discusses students' Wall Street notions by saying "that if students do not choose Wall Street post-graduation, they are somehow 'less smart,' as smartness is defined by continued aggressive striving to perpetuate elite status" (180).

Students identify as either “smart” or not “smart”. The “smartness” is what Wall Street thinks everyone at elite institutions strive for, and it is “perpetuated” by the universities that peddle these values. When coming from a place such as Harvard or Princeton, the individual already feels elite. Their values are going to lead to success, power, and “smartness”; this is what they have been sold, and this is what they have purchased. Wall Street recruiters and alumni sell a sense of those values. They are telling students that if they come to work for them, they will have an amazing life and if they do not decide to come, they are not living up to their full potential. A student’s identity becomes shaped by this message and they begin to see themselves as special, elite and smarter than others. While The Citadel doesn’t sell the promise of elite status and wealth, it sells an image of masculinity. Young men might choose to go, and pay tuition to The Citadel because they believe it will reinforce the values that are most important to them. The Citadel is selling values like masculinity, honor, and tradition. These are different types of values than at Ivy League schools, but The Citadel is still creating an identity that rests on feeling better and more important than others. The students’ identities will be reinforced by everything they do to conform to the expectations of the military college. Faludi talks about the type of people attending this military college. She writes that, “these were college men, manly recruits to an elite military college whose virile exploits were mythicized in bestselling novels by Calder Willingham and Pat Conroy, both Citadel alumni” (73). The process of “remolding” the cadets begins when the students believe in what the administration and alumni are promoting – in believing in the “myths.” Once accepted and admitted to the school, the individual’s expectations are validated by the events that occur at The Citadel. These promotions are actually

confirming the men's values. Therefore, the "remolding" of the individual's identities actually begin as soon as the students arrive and try to fit in. The alumni are selling the identity of the elite military college graduate so much that the young men start to believe there is no alternative especially if they want to be accepted. It does not even dawn on them that this new identity may have detrimental characteristics or that there may be alternatives.

Individuals who go to an institution that allows them to have their own self-directed ways of learning will have a better chance at keeping their original identities than those who go to an institution that tries to remake them. These individuals have more freedom to form their own identities. When being told what to do and how to do it, the individual loses their freedom and creativity. Their identity is twisted into something that is not truly who they are. It is important to be a creative thinker and do something that interests the individual. Davidson states that, "this creative thinking requires attention to surprise, anomaly, difference, and disruption, and an ability to switch focus, depending on what individual, unpredictable problems might arise" (60). "Creative thinking" is when the authority or institution allows and expects its students to learn in ways that will benefit them as individuals, and does not expects students to perform or learn in ways that will only benefit the institution. Institutions whose values are based on creative thinking will not seek to change students' identities. Student identities will keep expanding and growing from more life experiences. The young men and women can take what they are knowledgeable at and apply it to practical events. Duke University had the students use their own personal skills to achieve something great. At no point in this experiment did the faculty try to influence how the students thought about creating

new apps or using new technology. There was no pressure to conform to a fixed set of beliefs or values. Unlike how The Citadel works, Duke wanted their students to achieve what was best for them. Of course Duke benefited from the success of their students; the project added to the school's prestige. But students were not coerced by violence (The Citadel) or by the threat of failure (Wall Street) to creatively employ their iPods, nor were the students expected to suddenly become technological masters overnight. The Citadel intentionally tries to "reconstruct" their cadets. Faludi discusses the "fourth-class system" and says that "this "system" is a nine-month regimen of small and large indignities intended to "strip" each young recruit of his original identity and remold him into the "Whole Man" (75). The "stripping" and "remolding" refers to how the authority at The Citadel tries to change how their new cadets behave and think. It is important to them that all of the cadets believe in the same values so nobody is different or has any individual freedom. Duke did not "strip" or remold. Instead, it gifted a piece of technology with little to no known uses and asked that students merely imagine. Students' identities may have been shaped in the process; but the process was their own, and whatever they designed for their iPods reflected their values, not necessarily Duke's.

Identity is what a person has grown to become. Every experience that one has in life shapes who they are, who they identify with, and how they think about themselves. When students go off to college, they are vulnerable. Everything is subject to change for them. For most students, living away from home is a new experience that will further their understanding of what it means to be independent. However, when a place like The Citadel allows their cadets to treat the "knobs" in such a humiliating and violent way, it impacts how the new cadets will feel about themselves, their values and beliefs.

Their whole concept of what is right and wrong is destroyed. All that matters is fitting in. The same thing happens when a student who graduates from an elite institution, such as Harvard or Princeton, goes to work for Wall Street. The Wall Street “authority” has a different set of rules, standards, values and expectations than the new graduates are used to. They are basically being shaped to fit into the culture of the Wall Street investment bankers. In both The Citadel and Wall Street, the newcomers are “reconstructed” to accept a certain mentality. They are “stripped” of their original identities. The only thing that really matters to the students is to be accepted into the culture that is present which values a version of elitism and power above all else. However, if the institution does not try to “remold” their students into a different type of person, the student can explore their own identity more freely and even further their own skills. The individual will be forming their identity in their own way. No one else will be influencing them to believe in a certain culture. Not only will one’s original identity continue to be a part of them, but they can even use it to succeed in their careers.

Sample Paper 6

Over the course of the semester, we've discussed the various ways institutions re-define individuals' behaviors and vice versa. These symbiotic relationships necessitate both learning and "unlearning" (Davidson 67). Rituals, marketing campaigns, computer programming, adapting to a changing environment, and developing the appropriate kind of "smartness" are all forms of education that require the individual to accommodate her particular skills to achieve a need or desire. Putting Ho, Davidson, and **one** other author we've read in this class in dialogue, craft a specific argument answering the following question: **How can customization be a form of education?**

Neelay

Customized Symbiosis

The idea of education usually brings to mind the image of a child passively listening to what is being taught by the teacher in a classroom. In this scenario, the exchange of information proceeds in only one direction. However, in "Project Classroom Makeover", Cathy Davidson points out that institutional and student customization allows the notion of one-way teaching to be diminished, meaning that education can apply to both student and teacher. Customization is the ability to modify processes, thoughts, and actions for a specific goal or purpose. An essential aspect of customization is Davidson's idea of "unlearning", the replacement of previous notions and beliefs with new ones. According to Davidson, educational systems need to unlearn the method of learning imposed upon students through tests and assessments, which creates standard criteria against which students with disabilities are singled out. Unlearning makes an appearance in the pharmaceutical companies in "The Mega-

Marketing of Depression in Japan” by Ethan Watters, in which the companies try to influence the culture of Japan by convincing the Japanese people to replace their original conceptions of mental illness with the messages the companies try to convey in order to sell more drugs. Karen Ho’s article “Biographies of Hegemony” takes into account the various ways financial institutions, such as Wall Street, customize their processes to influence the beliefs undergraduate students of top universities have about investment banking in order to gather more members. The pharmaceutical companies and the financial institutions share a symbiotic relationship with the individuals they target; both achieve some form of benefit, either financial or educational. After the unlearning of previously held thoughts, customization of processes in order to achieve specific goals occurs, and these processes allow a link to be established between the individuals and the institutions. Customization by both individuals and institutions, therefore, is what allows the symbiotic relationship between an institution and individuals to exist through the unlearning of preconceived notions and the evolution of individual beliefs.

The educational institutions and the pharmaceutical companies create opportunities to form symbiotic relationships with their members by inducing the unlearning of certain beliefs. The most direct example of a symbiotic relationship in Davidson’s article is that of Inez Davidson and her classroom in Mountain View: “She took pride in finding challenges that inspired kids who had clear cognitive restrictions or physical ones, and defied anyone to bring her a kid she couldn’t teach” (Davidson 65). “Challenges” are interactive experiences that encompass Mrs. Davidson’s methods of customizing to discover her students’ abilities to learn. These challenges are also her

methods of making her students and the overall education system unlearn the idea that someone with a “clear cognitive restriction,” or learning disability, is unable to go forward later in life and is unteachable. A symbiotic relationship exists here because Inez Davidson discovers unique talents and methods of learning that her students have (and therefore perfects her own craft and learns more about how to teach), and the students with disabilities learn to find their true callings through her teaching style. Mrs. Davidson’s teaching is a form of education that is rather absent in other educational institutions, in which kids with different methods of learning and lower than average test scores are considered disabled and therefore medicated. As a result, the relationship between student and teacher in the general sense is not truly symbiotic. Mrs. Davidson’s situation is an exception, in this sense. The idea of exclusion based on standard criteria is not unlearned by the educational institutions. This exclusion of people with traits different from the norm also occurs in the Japanese society, in which “utsubyo was the sort of illness that would make it impossible to hold down a job or have a semblance of a normal life” (Watters 516). “Utsbyo” is the term that the Japanese originally use to describe depression, though as a condition that would severely limit one’s ability to live “a normal life” with a job or place in society (notice again that conceptions of “normal” play a huge role in the nature of certain relationships). Much like the kids with learning disabilities in Davidson’s article, those that fit the definition of a disorder are isolated and believed to be unable to land a suitable career. Customization by the pharmaceutical companies through their advertising campaigns allows unlearning of this belief of exclusion through redefining what constitutes a disorder. While the educational institutions do not unlearn or make

the students unlearn exclusion based on criteria, the pharmaceutical companies solidify their symbiotic relationship with the Japanese through the unlearning of Japanese perceptions of mental illness with the mega-marketing campaigns.

Customization of processes allows institutions and individuals to benefit from each other through the gradual development of beliefs. Before the pharmaceutical campaigns, the Japanese had an understanding of mental illness that did not address the “burgeoning concern...and...need for social attention to suicide rates and depression” (Watters 517). “Burgeoning concern” was the Japanese response to the increasing number of people who were affected by mental illness. Due to their criteria for mental illness being that it must inhibit a person’s ability to function in society, the “normal” people were actually being affected by mental illness and were left untreated. Therefore, the “need for social attention” represented the Japanese cry for customization and education in order to address the problem of illness in their society. As a result, the companies customized their advertising campaigns in order to show mental illness as an ailment common in society and treatable with medication. The processes of the companies allowed the Japanese to customize their personal beliefs and be educated with a different understanding of the nature of mental illness, and the pharmaceutical companies benefited financially through increased purchases of their products. Just as the pharmaceutical companies encouraged the Japanese to think a certain way, so do the ivy-league recruiters of Wall Street with their potential undergraduates. The undergraduates first unlearn the idea that technical skill and experience are necessary in investment banking, and are instead led to believe that “the key criterion of smartness is an ability to ‘wow’ the clients” (Ho 167). The word

“smartness” used here directly refers to the specific ideologies and impressive qualities that a recruit must possess. The student must “wow the clients” with these qualities by learning to present themselves to the institution in such a way so as to prove their capability of retaining the high elite status of a successful investment banker. With new members that can accurately possess and present these “smart” traits, Wall Street continues to be one of the top elite agents in the global capitalist market. While the customization of the recruitment processes also involves seduction through an upper-class lifestyle of “the fancy spreads at upscale hotels” the key to establishing the symbiotic relationship between Wall Street and the recruits is the education and evolution of the culture of smartness within the minds of the recruiters (Ho 175). Just as the pharmaceutical companies drive the Japanese to redefine mental illness so that the SSRIs were accepted and ultimately purchased, Wall Street encourages the recruits to redefine smartness in order to gather more potential members to retain its elite status. The symbiotic relationship in both the pharmaceutical companies and Wall Street is attained through the customization of institutional processes designed to influence the beliefs of those whom the institutions are targeting.

Although institutional decisions and processes may influence certain beliefs through customization, the individuals must also customize their own thoughts in order for their education to be most beneficial. Cathy Davidson cites the iPod experiment to show how much power the students at a given educational institution have in customizing their own education. The reason the relationship between the educational institutions and the students is not symbiotic is due to the heavy degree of influence and decision-making the institutions have above the students. But the iPod experiment

shows that “the real treasure trove was to be found in the students’ innovations” (Davidson 52). The “innovations” are customized methods of learning that the students conceived of by using the iPod. The fact that this experiment, customized by Davidson herself, promotes a new method of learning through networking and crowdsourcing makes the ideas the students come up with a “treasure trove”. The students were able to decide exactly what worked for them in their learning environment with these iPods. However, as Davidson notes, this experiment goes against the traditional educational model of a “hierarchy based on credentials” (Davidson 50). This “hierarchy” is the method of education many institutions (of higher education and in public and private primary schools) utilize with their students, and crowdsourcing through the iPod experiment encourages the unlearning of this hierarchy. More students focused on the exchange of insightful information between peers, rather than a top-down exchange of information. Hierarchy, on the other hand, is one of the main driving forces for the recruitment processes of Wall Street, due to its entailment in the culture of smartness. The undergraduate recruits continuously “are...imbued with a sense of their own personal exemplariness as...models for socioeconomic change” (Ho 168). “Models,” used in this sense, dictates the degree to which the undergraduates believe they have influence over the global market through investment banking. Wall Street “imbues” or leads the students to believe that they are part of one of the most elite and influential capitalist institutions in the global economy. In the recruitment processes, the students customize their mindsets in order to effectively pursue a career in investment banking. Instead of having “nowhere to go” after graduating, the students focus on trying to make a good impression on the recruiters in order to push themselves towards a suitable

future in investment banking (Ho 183). While the idea of hierarchy appears in both texts, it only presents a problem if the institutions are the only ones customizing their processes and not allowing the students a chance to find what works for them – or to customize their own way of thinking and learning. Because the undergraduate recruits also are given the chance to customize their own thoughts and beliefs to better themselves for their futures, hierarchy actually strengthens the relationship they have with the institution. Although both Cathy Davidson and Wall Street customize their processes for the students, the students are the ones who customize how to use their available resources to the best of their abilities. Through the customization of both the individuals and the institutions, an effective symbiotic relationship forms.

Wall Street and the pharmaceutical companies share a symbiotic relationship with the individuals they target, while the educational institutions have yet to fully establish one with their members due to the hierarchical model of education still dominating the system and limiting the choices of those who don't fit the criteria. In order for a symbiotic relationship to be achieved, certain originally held beliefs must be unlearned, and processes and mindsets must then be customized to fit a specific purpose with the help of the other party. Customization allows for both the institution and the individuals to benefit through education and evolution of mentalities, and while unlearning can affect original beliefs, customizing processes to replace those beliefs is what truly links two institutions or members of institutions into an interdependent network. A key entailment of education is a better future for oneself, and any institution that encourages this aspect of education through its processes will undoubtedly have a stronger symbiotic relationship with its members.

Sample Paper 7

According to Cathy Davidson's essay "Project Classroom Makeover," the iPod experiment at Duke University promoted "new forms of thinking" that challenged the principles educational institutions have traditionally valued: "expertise, specialization, and hierarchy" (59, 55). The experiment became "a calculated exercise in disruption, distraction, and difference: a lesson in institutional unlearning, in breaking our own patterns and trying to understand more of the intellectual habits of a new generation of students and providing a unique space where those new talents might flourish. Instead of teaching, we hoped to learn" (Davidson 50). Using a variety of textual evidence from Cathy Davidson's essay, respond to the following question. **How can "unlearning" at the institutional level influence the "intellectual habits" of individuals?**

Allison

Learning to Love Learning by Unlearning

Far too often, people use lack of interest as a reason for not wanting to learn about a topic in school. According to Cathy Davidson, "the most frequent complaint and cause of disaffection from schooling is boredom and lack of rigor... [which] also happens to be true among the lowest group" (Davidson 59). This lack of motivation is great cause for the leveling off of American educational attainment, which has been occurring since 1975. The act of unlearning at the institutional level will result with more motivated individuals since students will be encouraged to pursue their passions and interests. The very process of unlearning requires and inspires a change in thinking and learning that entails a willingness to fail and an openness to change. This idea of institutional unlearning is first introduced in Cathy Davidson's essay "Project Classroom Makeover," in which she explains this concept as a lesson in "breaking our own patterns and trying to understand more of the intellectual habits of a new generation of students"

(Davidson 50). She explains the necessity of adapting to the changing educational needs of society rather than agreeing with the one size fits all, industrialized mind set that institutions have stubbornly held on to for longer than necessary.

When institutions begin the process of unlearning, they must focus on working toward goals rather than accomplishing specific tasks accurately. This act of working with an objective was demonstrated when Duke required that classes create learning applications for free iPods. The university did not try to control the result by setting requirements or instructions besides stating the general intention. Davidson explains that Duke “knew from the science of attention, to direct attention in one way precluded all other ways” (Davidson 50), which is to say that they did not want to limit any potential ideas or possible takes on the assignment by guiding the students in any way toward a specific path to create the applications. Through the iPod plan, the university also demonstrated its lack of belief in the effectiveness that expertise might bring to accomplish a goal. The expertise that Davidson refers to is the mastering of a certain method, an ability which she believes limits creativity and prevents variation. She states that “the more expert we are, the more likely we are to be limited in what we conceive to be the problem, let alone the answer” (Davidson 51). This implies that because these experts have trained their minds to perceive problems in ways that they know they can understand and resolve, they not only limit the directions in which they can approach the problem, but they also develop a narrower method of resolving them. For this reason, Duke looked to crowdsourcing as a solution for the iPod plan. Crowdsourcing sees the value of democratizing knowledge so that communities can collaborate using critical thinking and diverse creativity to find solutions. It is a living, breathing example of

the benefits of being open to change. Since society is leaning toward innovation, the creativity that seems to be suppressed by expertise instead flourishes with group collaboration and the freedom of adaptation. Merely being brave enough to unlearn shows a change in intellectual habits of individuals. Breaking the pattern of using comfortable and proven methods demonstrates an openness to changing ideas and accepting failures and mistakes in order to get results. This allows one to approach problem solving with a mindset that yearns for unique solutions tested through trial and error, those of which one would not otherwise be open to due to the sureness that established idea paths bring. Where the superintendent of the small town in Mountain View, Alberta, Canada was accustomed to the punctuality and organization that the classic school system brought, Mrs. Davidson sought the benefits of letting the students collaboratively experiment with the material they were studying, establishing that mistakes were customary and expected when learning.

Mrs. Davidson was able to send off many successful students because she understood how to work with the intellectual habits of the new generation. The most important step in order to understand the needs of this generation is to first let Ichabod Crane die. He represents the ideal institution of the Industrial Era, which is why his “nod [of] approval at our current national educational policy” (Davidson 64) is an example of how the method of teaching is not up to date with the needs and direction that society is taking. In the past, society suffered from any inconsistencies and failures; there was no room for error, which meant no room for growth. Now there is an “increase in the number of jobs requiring exploratory, creative problem solving typically encouraged by postsecondary education” (Davidson 58). The contradiction of these two mindsets is the

first sign “that our education system is slipping in comparison to our needs” (Davidson 58), proving that learning institutions must move forward from the old values represented by Ichabod and the school bell, the symbol of public education which formed in the industrial era due to its correspondence with the priorities of that period. The stress on uniformity and dependability valued by old society instilled a fear of failure into people. Unlearning will encourage more adaptive education because students and administration will learn to not worry about trying new ideas out with the concern of possible failure lurking in the back of their minds. By letting themselves fail, they will discover new and better ways of working things out, letting the past stay in the past. If institutions recognize that a certain method of teaching is no longer effective or merited and they are able to modify their habits to fit the needs of society, then they will also be able to direct their students’ abilities and thinking skills to become more flexible and suited for the assortment of problems they will have to face. Instead of being limited to a few tactics, they will be able to test different approaches to situations to see which fits best. They will not be afraid of finding better methods because they will not be afraid to risk failure. Developing a patience with failure and a sense of flexibility are important ways in which the intellectual practices of individuals will change from the process of unlearning, but the actual result of unlearning at the institutional level is even more life changing.

An institution that is able to unlearn will be able to nurture the passion in the minds of its persons. Davidson explains that “the community most served by the solution should be chiefly involved in the process of finding it” (Davidson 51). The community described here is the group of people who have a common goal to work

toward. Since each person in this community has more or less the same drive to accomplish their objective, as a whole, they will most reasonably work the hardest to achieve what they want as opposed to those who are not to benefit. This community will therefore be able to achieve more and better results due to the relevancy its individuals are able to recognize. At Duke, administrators “had distributed more free iPods to students in forty-eight separate ‘iPod courses’ than [they] had given without strings to the 1,650 entering first-year students” (Davidson 51), proving how much drive and motivation students feel from being able to pursue topics of their interest. The method of teaching that society is leading to urges critical thinking which is vital because individuals best exercise their creative thinking when interested in a subject. Not only did this iPod experiment demonstrate how much interest can be drawn from students, but it also provided evidence of how much can be accomplished by people with ambition. Driven by relevance, “that lecture on Shakespeare delivered in the Allen Building at Duke could later be listened to by a student riding a bus in Bangkok or Brasilia” (Davidson 53) thanks to the creativity that students were allowed to explore in this project. From this new focus on developing passion in education, there will be fewer students who feel like failures, considering that everyone is passionate about something. Most of those who are not succeeding by institutional standards are simply discouraged by the educational emphasis on uniformity, which not everyone can fit in with. “As long as we define their success by a unified set of standards, we will continue to miss their gifts, we will not challenge their skills, and in the end, we will lose them from our schools” (Davidson 61). Similar to the artistic, green hair girl that Davidson observed, there are many who have a curiosity and passion within them that simply are

not being engaged by the topics and methods of teaching in the current school system. Students learn at different levels, requiring different methods, with different speeds, making it understandable why not everyone is able to succeed by the school system's narrow standards. Though it is more encouraging for individuals to learn using methods tailored toward them, it is also useful at times for them to learn by unfamiliar and uncomfortable methods. Doing so promotes discipline and new perspectives on ideas. By unlearning at the institutional level, the hope is that society avoids dispassioning students and instead encourages diversity regarding interests and ideas as it will propel education to the level of innovation that the new generation seeks from its peers.

The hope to maintain the high achieving position that America is recognized for by its peers can only be fully realized if individuals are fascinated enough to put in integrity and care into their work to triumph ground-breaking ideas. Today's society is more interested in innovation and inventiveness than the practicality or usefulness that was valued during the Industrial era. Intellectual practices of this generation are leading toward an understanding that being brave enough to fail will ultimately lead to success, that having mental flexibility will allow creativity, and having passion for specific goals will encourage productivity and advancement. A large aspect of learning and growing as a person is being comfortable with the possibility of failure. This allows individuals to test their strengths and therefore become aware of their weaknesses. This idea leads back to the idea that institutional unlearning is being able to change the ways of an establishment so that it can better itself and adapt to the ever-changing needs of society. The realization that most of which drives American citizens is their individual interests is what will propel the country to an admirable educational and economical

position in the world once more. Someday soon, the hope of institutional unlearning is that the symbol for school will cease to be a school bell and become a heart, representing passion and a life long love of learning.

Sample Paper 8

In “Project Classroom Makeover,” Cathy Davidson critiques the “authority principle,” the guiding paradigm of education in the United States that is based on “top-down expertise” and “hierarchy based on credentials” (50). She appeals to the new kinds of technical proficiency, individual aptitudes, and skill-sets that the current generation of students can bring to the classroom in order to reimagine the goals of education and the structure of educational institutions. Meanwhile, in “Biographies of Hegemony,” Karen Ho examines how the symbiotic relationship between Wall Street and elite universities produces a culture of “smartness,” a “naturalized and generic sense of ‘impressiveness,’ of elite pinnacle status and expertise” that signifies social dominance, but which is in practice distinct from any technical knowledge of finance (167). **How does Ho’s concept of the ideology of “smartness” complicate Davidson’s arguments about how to transform educational practices?**

Allison

Wall Street Dictates Social Change

Wall Street has long held the most sought after jobs because of the amount of prestige and money these jobs bring. These investment banking jobs are seen as the holy grail in a career. Unfortunately, there are only a select few who have the abilities and mindset that recruiters are looking for. The characteristics that Wall Street and elite universities respect and require in their individuals are representative of their outlook and their ideology of “smartness.” In “Project Classroom Makeover” by Cathy Davidson, she recounts all the wrongs in the current education system and creates an outline for one that she believes would fit today’s society. On the other hand, in Karen Ho’s “Biographies of Hegemony,” Ho investigates the educational philosophies that Wall Street and Princeton share, which represent the strong relationship between society, or

the job market, and education. This side-by-side comparison thereby paradoxically sheds light on the similarity in values between Davidson and the current education system. Despite some unchangeable disparities in views, the juxtaposition of Davidson's values and the values of elite universities make it clear why her desire to transform educational practices is impractical. By analyzing Princeton's ideology of "smartness" and therefore the method by which it teaches, it becomes clear that the principles that Davidson wishes to instill in the education system already exists, which complicates her argument since there can be little reformation if her beliefs already coincide with present day ones.

Princeton is a prime model of what is valued by the current education system. Getting into the university is the ultimate goal that the years of schooling is supposed to lead students toward. Therefore, the ideologies, or definition of "smartness," that Princeton has are those that the rest of the system looks to embody. Davidson stresses the importance of being "suspicious of expertise," suggesting that expertise should not be an automatic qualification for anything – despite its connotation, it is not as valuable practically as it appears to be (Davidson 51). She finds that the ability to think critically and adapt to situations much more valuable than the ability to simply take in information about a subject. This resonates with the mindset of Princeton, in which it finds that "although technical skill and business savvy also help to constitute smartness on Wall Street, they are often secondary, learnable 'on the job'" (Ho 167). Having a high level of expertise in or a lot of knowledge about the business field will not automatically qualify someone as a talented investment banker. This mentality is demonstrated by the institution's unusually high percentage of students going into investment banking – not

because there was a substantial amount of business majors, but because students of all majors were recruited into the industry. Though Ho implies that this is solely because of the prestige that Princeton students carry with them to their jobs by name association, it could also be that most of the university's students are critical thinkers, which makes them desirable to recruiters. It is likely that the students are analytically engaged intellectuals since the school is one of the best. With the university's outstanding reputation, it makes sense how it could draw in as many analytically minded individuals as it wishes, making the whole student population desirable in the job market. The lack of restriction in job choice due to a chosen major that Princeton students exhibit demonstrates how Davidson, Princeton, and Wall Street all recognize the lack of importance in expertise and the value of critical thinking. This similarity of principles demonstrates that there is little need for reformation regarding Davidson's desire to remove the accreditation that comes with expertise since this idea is already acknowledged by large institutions.

Davidson, Princeton, and Wall Street also share the same ideals in that they admire those who take advantage of every opportunity. Princeton students "did not settle for number three or four on the college rankings. [Job recruiters] prey on [the students' desires] to find the 'Harvard' of everything: activities, summer jobs, relationships and now careers" (Ho 179). This provides insight to the level of drive that students at elite universities have exhibited in order to accomplish all that they have strived for. This characteristic draws attention to the types of individuals at the top universities who are sought after by recruiters. These students are highly motivated in all aspects of life, just as Davidson declares that all students should be. She proudly

proclaims that Duke “had distributed more free iPods to students in forty-eight separate ‘iPod courses’ than [it] had given without strings to the 1,650 entering first-year students” (Davidson 51). She uses this data as proof to illuminate the high level of drive and aggression that the students of Duke exhibited from her iPod experiment – a project which she uses as an example of her idea of a better education system. Meanwhile, students at Princeton already experience this same ambition to solve problems analytically and to succeed even though they were educated by the “Ichabod Crane” education system; this is a structure that Davidson underestimates because she believes society no longer has use for that type of approach. Despite her claiming to have little to no respect for the current education system, she proudly displayed Mrs. Davidson’s teaching habits as a success story. She uses Mrs. Davidson as evidence of how her reformed education system will be effective. Davidson verifies this victory by basing the success of this reformation on the students getting into top universities. This is ironic because the top universities by which she based success off of still maintain the ideologies of the standard school system. This indicates that though she does not realize it, she does admire certain aspects of the education system because they are already in line with her ideologies.

Another quality that resonates with Davidson’s education and current education is that both have the same objective or end goal. They both understand that the purpose of education is to find a job at the end of it. Davidson stressed that now that society has shifted from factory jobs to “jobs requiring exploratory, creative problem solving,” education systems must also shift to focus on shaping its students to become qualified for these critical thinking careers (Davidson 58). She requests that education fit

the desires of society. On the other hand, Ho's essay demonstrates that the path that education is currently taking is already the same as the direction that society is heading in, whereby the needs of society is mostly determined by Wall Street. America's capitalist society gives Wall Street the power to dictate the job market and thereby the community dictated by it. That means that its values, which are commanded by its ideology of "smartness," are reflected onto the universities which it recruits from, which in turn reflect on to the rest of the education system. Princeton students embody the qualities that it looks for since the university and Wall Street are so closely tied together, where "Wall Street's recruiting monopoly is simply that its presence dominates campus life" (Ho 169). The university specifically shapes and encourages its students to fit the criteria of recruiters so that they can get impressive, "Princeton like jobs." Seeing as how this university becomes a role model for the rest of the education system and it produces students who are desirable to the most influential entity, it is clear that the education system is already producing students who fit the needs of the job market and it is therefore producing students who fit the needs of today's society. Therefore, Davidson's desire to reform education to evolve alongside society is nonsensical seeing as it already produces students who are desirable in the job market.

Despite the fact that the basic principles of the current education system and Davidson's ideal education system are already the same, there are some ways in which they differ. Where Wall Street admires elitism and requires that its recruits have a certain image, Davidson's reformed school system would look solely at what an individual has to offer. Unfortunately, the only way that the education system will allow completely equal opportunity for all students, no matter their background, is if Wall

Street begins accept recruits exclusively based on the qualifications and abilities they have to offer. Since Wall Street has most of the power to influence and endorse social change, it is necessary to somehow change its culture to be able to see change in educational systems on a grand scale. Unfortunately, reforming Wall Street would be quite a feat seeing how set in its way it is. It is human nature to resist change, especially if a current way of life works and gets the job done. This flaw holds true regarding any group of people – the larger the institution, the more difficult it is to change ways. The fact that Wall Street thrives off of confidence and the feeling of empowerment and “the construction of its own superiority” is proof of its “assumption that other corporations and industries are ‘less than’...and thus less likely to survive the demands of global capitalism unless they restructure their cultural values and practices according to” (Ho 181) standards like its own. It is not surprising then, that with the mindset that investment bankers have, they will resist any changes. They do not support a culture where unlearning is possible and therefore it would take some sort of drastic disruption or obvious flaw in the results that they produce for them to consider a reformation of their definition of smartness and therefore a reformation of what it would take for them to succeed. Only then would they be able to be lead down a path that would put Davidson’s values into consideration and therefore allow the restructuring of the education system she dreams of. This brings to light the human flaw of only being open to change after facing some sort of tragedy. Only after confronting some misfortune, changes will be enacted on the personal level, on the institutional level, and in society.

Sample Paper 9

For the midterm I asked you to reflect on how Johnson’s concept of organized complexity might help explain educational practices in the cultural institutions that Ho’s “Biographies of Hegemony” and Davidson’s “Project Classroom Makeover” describe. For this paper, I invite you to explore how Johnson’s concept of organized complexity encourages us to see the existence of “pacemakers” in unexpected ways: “When we see repeated shapes and structure emerging out of apparent chaos, we can’t help looking for pacemakers” (Johnson 199). But as Johnson argues, “pacemakers” only *seem* to be able to influence and control the order that emerges in complex systems, and “models of self-organization” facilitate imagining a “world without pacemakers” (Johnson 197). **To what extent might “pacemakers” be involved in shaping the systems of organized complexity we see in Davidson’s, Ho’s, and Johnson’s essays?**

Allison

Organized Complexity

Organized complexity occurs when a system develops macrocosmic patterns from a multitude of individual microcosmic beginnings. This is due to the natural tendencies that systems are prone to develop. Often enough, there are “repeated shapes and [structures] emerging out of apparent chaos” (Johnson 199) due to similar things instinctively gravitating toward other similar things. The emergence of these groupings are instigated by the presence of “pacemakers.” Though Johnson attempts to dispute the existence of pacemakers, evidence found in these essays demonstrate that they are present in all organized systems. They serve as more than just ways that society tries to understand itself and actually do “influence and control the order that emerges in complex systems” (Johnson 197). In Cathy Davidson’s “Project Classroom

Makeover,” it is clear that the education system can only function with some sort of leader in charge, while Karen Ho collects evidence of Wall Street’s role as a trendsetter for the education system in “Biographies of Hegemony,” and the myth of the ant queen described by Steven Johnson in “The Myth of the Ant Queen” is not so much a myth as it is a misunderstanding. Pacemakers play the main role in jumpstarting organized complexity in these systems because they provide general direction and set standards, therefore creating the patterns in complex organizations that distinguish these systems from those of disordered and chaotic complexity. The presence of pacemakers in these systems are to encourage the dynamic contributions of each individual to its continuous development and progress – a notion that Davidson and Johnson focused on in their essays.

Johnson uses the initial overwhelming characteristic of anarchic systems to explain the way that the patterns that emerge within them create structure. This “sensory overload” that would occur from disorganized complexity would be present in the education system if it did not have some sort of guidance (Johnson 198). Without the existence of a leader to provide direction in a classroom, there would be little to no learning occurring. This understanding is obvious and can be recognized in Davidson’s straightforward summary of her iPod project. She admits, and is even proud that “if [her iPod project] were a reality show, you might call it Project Classroom Makeover” (Davidson 50). This analogy to her reformed, collaborative education system as a reality TV show is ironic. She spends most of her essay priding Duke on its proactive role in reforming the education system and she also stresses the importance of teachers choosing the right questions to ask their students as a way to guide students to work

together to solve problems. Both act as pacemakers. So, despite her essay's focus on the importance of removing authority figures, she uses examples of how important pacemakers are for jumpstarting unlearning, such as her esteem for Mrs. Davidson's ability and motivation to cater learning toward each individual student. Whether she realizes it or not, rather than describing an education system that consists of no real leader, she more so explains ways that teachers can facilitate more collaborative and learning. This guidance is reminiscent to the way that a reality TV show is directed. Though contestants ultimately interact with their own personalities, directors tell each of them to do certain things to generate conflict with one another. While these events are allowed to play out on their own, the directors act as pacemakers in the show, the same way that teachers are necessary to direct the students learning goals in a certain direction while still allowing them to explore their abilities and develop critical thinking skills. Rather than letting the students run amuck and letting the reality stars live without conflict, teachers and directors are chiefly in charge of providing the communities with a purpose while still allowing them to thrive and dynamically develop through each individuals' skills and personalities. The focus provided by authority alter these otherwise meaningless systems, as described by Johnson, into ones that cultivate organization while still conserving dynamic and complex intricacies provided for by its individuals.

Davidson mentions that "we are seeing the first signs that our education system is slipping in comparison to [the] needs" of our job market as a reason for reforming education system (Davidson 58). Here her connection between the needs of society and jobs suggests the high level of influence that the job market holds over the direction

that the education system needs to take. Her subtle understanding of the role that the job market plays in creating standards for education is better elaborated upon by Ho, who focuses more specifically on Wall Street's influence. Due to Wall Street's impressive status, it is understandable why it has such a strong influence on the rest of society. Ho's essay reveals how its power is mostly directed toward the education system since the job market and education are so closely intertwined. In this way, Wall Street acts as a trendsetter in the education system. It was able to have two universities "restructure their cultural values and practices according to the standards of Wall Street" (Ho 181). These universities now gear its students almost entirely toward the mindset appropriate for investment banking because Wall Street set the standard for education's end goal. On the other hand, while it was able to give Harvard and Princeton a general direction in which to educate their students, its role only goes that far. Though the education system may be geared toward a certain path due to a pacemaker, it evolves and sustains itself off of the interactions between all of its individuals. Collectively, the interactions between students, teachers, recruiters, and investment bankers are all necessary to continue to develop the education system, with no part being less important than the rest. Wall Street simply serves the purpose of organizing this intricate system by giving it a start.

Although the job market serves as a pacemaker for the education system, it does not consciously aim to control the different aspects in it – its mere presence influences it. While Wall Street has a heavy authority over the potential students that it aims to recruit, it cannot target each student that it comes across. Yet its presence is crucial in society seeing that investment bankers are "institutionally empowered to enact their

worldviews, export their practices, and serve as models for far-reaching socioeconomic change” (Ho 167). Wall Street’s power over culture and economics is not directed toward specific aspects of society, but its existence still influences it. Its overarching presence is able to enact change by simply acting as a model to follow. The way that it does not actively direct certain aspects of society to behave a certain way is the same way that the ant queen provides purpose in her ant colony. Johnson uses the myth of the ant queen as an example of how ant colonies don’t have real leaders, explaining that “it would be physically impossible for the queen to direct every worker’s decision about which task to perform and when” (Johnson 194). Though these pacemakers are not capable of creating a specific route for each worker to take, nor are they able to, they are responsible for taking the first steps and prompting others to follow suit. It is not feasible for potential pacemaker to micromanage the actions of all of the individuals in such complex systems, such as an entire ant colony or all of the students that the education system is comprised of. While the ant queen does not interfere with every step that the colony takes, she is deemed with the important task of reproducing and keeping the colony alive. Therefore, it is not reasonable to assign her with the same level of importance as regular worker ants when without her, there would be no more ants. The way that “it’s in the colony’s best interest... to keep the queen safe” demonstrates how the colony’s priority lies with the queen (Johnson 194). Her presence influences them to create a society that prioritizes her. So whatever actions the colony might take next are always with the knowledge that they must somehow keep the queen safe above all. Though pacemakers do not necessarily direct each aspect of a system, it is in a system’s best interest, whether it be the education system or an ant colony, to

develop in a way such that the actions and steps it takes prioritize these pacesetters, such as the job market or a queen.

The daily interactions that make up a complex system always start with a purpose. While the ants go about their business, they are all working toward taking care of their ant hill and keeping their queen safe. In society, the individuals which give a system purpose are the pacemakers, such as a teacher to a classroom or Wall Street to the education system. They give direction and purpose to the systems. This path allows the systems to develop in such a way that they organize to accomplish their goals. Each individual's actions begin to focus on a common objective. The interactions between them begin to develop into more than just random exchanges and self-organization begins to take shape. Where the pacemakers have given the systems general direction and focus, they begin to evolve on their own from the natural tendencies that humans are prone to. Patterns begin to shape, making the once seemingly random interactions become more structured and arranged. The natural tendency that Johnson discussed as being vital to self-organization – migrating toward like things – demonstrates that segregation will always exist. While it is not intentional, the desire and comfort that is experienced from this self-organization is human nature. Despite Davidson's desire to get rid of any hierarchy in her education system, it is always going to form naturally. Despite Ho's disapproval of the cross pollination between Princeton and Wall Street, their similarities will innately draw them together. Despite Johnson's belief that there are no pacemakers, the pacemakers are the only things that allow for self-organization and therefore organized complexity.

Sample Paper 10

In “The Ecstasy of Influence: A Plagiarism,” Jonathan Lethem uses a variety of terms, including plagiarism, in order to describe how artistic production is dependent upon borrowing, imitating, and reproducing its sources: in a passage that Lethem “borrows” from another source, he says “It becomes apparent that appropriation, mimicry, quotation, allusion, and sublimated collaboration consist of a kind of *sine qua non* of the creative act, cutting across all forms and genres in the realm of cultural production” (214). Use evidence from both Lethem’s essay and Steven Johnson’s “The Myth of the Ant Queen” in response to the following question: **In what ways might we use Lethem’s account of influence to understand Johnson’s self-organizing system as a model for cultural transmission and production?**

Allison

Shared Culture

Everything that happens in this world occurs from being influenced in one way or another. From a baby learning to talk by listening to the people around it to great philosophers building off of their predecessors’ works, culture develops from its individuals learning from each other. Others have influenced all ideas and interactions that occur. Jonathan Lethem explores this idea more in “The Ecstasy of Influence: A Plagiarism.” In his essay, Lethem gives examples of how the best art and ideas are developed from the artists’ abilities to be influenced by their surroundings. This is eerily similar to the way that a self-organizing system works. Self-organizing systems are able to exist through the simple interactions of its individuals that create larger patterns as the individuals are constantly influenced by each other. The key aspects of a self-

organizing system, described by Steven Johnson in “The Myth of the Ant Queen,” are apparent in the way that culture is transmitted and developed. That is because the two are one and the same. Culture is developed as a side effect of a community’s self-organization, while a large part of culture is the particular way that a community self-organizes. Lethem’s understanding that all ideas are “created” from the influence of others corresponds to the idea explained by Johnson, in which all individual interactions in a system are influenced by and build off of each other rather than a pacemaker. The fact that culture and self-organization are so closely related demonstrates that because culture is the only system truly without a pacemaker, it exists as the only true self-organizing system. That is the reason why the characteristics of self-organizing systems embody culture so accurately.

Seeing as pacemakers are necessary in so many systems, it is difficult to understand why culture does not have any. Johnson takes this phenomenon to the next level by claiming that there are no such things as pacemakers in systems and that people often imagine or create them. He tries to use the example of a seed growing into a flower as an example of self-organization, but what he does not realize is that there is a clear difference between a self-organizing system and one that requires a pacemaker – something that gives it purpose and direction. His questions “why does an evening primrose open when it does? And how does a simple seed know how to make a primrose in the first place?” have an answer besides his implication that it is because of self-organization (Johnson 204). In this case, the seed acts as the pacemaker in the lifecycle of the plant. The only way that it can survive and reproduce is if it grows and blooms. The need to survive gives it a purpose in life. On the other hand, culture does

not have a purpose. It has no ultimate end goal, which is why it does not have a pacemaker to guide it in any direction. As Johnson quotes, “there are no Five-Year Plans in the ant kingdom” (Johnson 194). Here, he again tries to provide an example of a self-organizing system. He fails to do so because as he previously explained, it is in the colony’s best interest to protect the queen. That proves that there is a purpose for the colony existing, which gives it direction and therefore a pacemaker. On the other hand, culture does not attempt or desire to accomplish anything in particular. It is simple the characteristic of a community. Culture acts as a mode to portray the way that a specific community shares and develops its ideas, whereas the seed and the ant colony exist with the sole purpose of survival. Even if culture did have a pacemaker, it would not need one because it does not need anything to keep it on track toward achieving a goal. In contrast, a system that has a motive for existing, such as a flower or a colony, needs a pacemaker to guide it toward accomplishing its end goal of survival and reproduction. The fact that all other dynamic systems exist with a purpose demonstrates that culture is the only true self-organizing system.

Culture is able to thrive off of self-organization because it builds off of its individuals’ interactions. A key concept in self-organization is that all interactions are influenced by each other and therefore grow from each other. Seeing as there is no such thing as a truly new idea, all ideas must be developed from the influence of previous ones. Lethem explains that “Dylan’s originality and his appropriations are as one” (Lethem 212). Lethem’s ironic statement highlights the fact that originality is an illusion. The “creation” of ideas is in reality the ability for an individual to be influenced by as many others’ ideas as possible and to reconfigure all of those influences in a way

such that they work together. He suggests that Dylan's fame as a musician is based off of Dylan's ability to appropriate many other sources of art. This demonstrates the value of building off of a multitude of other peoples' ideas. It shows why culture is able to function so well as a self-organizing system. It is a community effort to advance and develop ideas. A system's ability to grow from within itself is modeled by the computerized word identification system in which "the pool of demons is shown a series of words, and each demon 'votes' as to whether each letter displayed represents its chosen letter" (Johnson 206). Rather than relying on the opinion of one demon, all the demons have their own inputs which work to develop the most accurate representation of the word that they are trying to identify. This is similar to the way that ideas grow off of each other. The difference between this system and culture is that this system's ultimate goal is to correctly identify a word, whereas culture is not looking for establishing accuracy or precision in its ideas. The word identification system is not a self-organizing system because it uses the individual interactions as a way of correcting future interactions, while a self-organizing system uses individual interactions as a way of influencing new interactions. Culture does not exist with the purpose to develop the best idea possible because there is no such thing as the best idea; there are only different ideas and different ways of expressing those ideas. Thus, the main principle of self-organization is embodied by culture.

Another way to understand the equivalency of culture to self-organization is by seeing how when affecting one, the other is similarly affected. Society has been increasingly pushing the idea of copyright onto the community. It is trying to create a pacemaker in culture by allowing individuals to claim ideas as their own. Lethem quotes

“You take away our right to steal ideas, where are they going to come from?” (Lethem 214). The way that the quote claims that stealing ideas is a right highlights the contradiction of copyright. It indicates that ideas are meant to be “stolen,” which in turn indicates that ideas were never meant to be owned by anyone in the first place. Copyright tries to act as a pacemaker in the development of ideas. It attempts to put restrictions on ideas by determining which ideas are allowed to be further developed and by who. Placing limitations and boundaries on ideas prevent the natural self-organization that they should go through to continue developing. As there is a halt on the self-organization of ideas, there is also a halt on the development of culture. This is demonstrated “in the real world” by the fact that “we know that child-rearing, family, education, socialization, sexuality, political life, and many other basic human activities require insulation from market forces (Lethem 222). Each of these things Lethem lists are all the characteristics of culture, which is why they cannot function with a pacemaker, such as the market. It is necessary that they are protected from a pacemaker for the same reason that the self-organization of ideas is stopped by the attempt at creating claim over them; culture cannot properly exist with a pacemaker because it would prevent culture’s natural self-organization processes. Considering the way that an attempt at preventing self-organization would cause a standstill in what would naturally be a dynamic culture, the effects on self-organization are also felt by the culture. That is because they are one in the same.

This provides the realization that since culture is the only self-organizing system, all other dynamic systems have a pacemaker. This implies that they all exist with a purpose. That proves that almost everything in life has reason for being here. The way

that the world develops is so as to not waste anything. With the knowledge that matter and energy are neither created nor destroyed in a system, it is fathomable that all things that develop in a system must have relative importance. This fundamental law of science also explains why people can only use preexisting ideas rather than them being able to create ideas. Just as energy and matter can only be converted, ideas can only be reconfigured into other modes and mediums to maintain their use and relevancy. These ideas are able to develop in such a way from the inputs and recommendations that others have to offer. Ideas are not in a state in which they can truly belong to any one person. That is what makes them so dynamic and beautiful. They are created from the individuals within the system that the culture exists. The relationship between a culture and its people is give and take. This is why the attempts to rule over culture with copyright or any other pacemaker reduces the benefits that the culture and its individuals are able to receive. It is the greediness in human nature that attempts to achieve possession over everything. Many people cannot see the bigger picture and instead focus on what is right in front of them. So, rather than allowing ideas and art to belong to the community, some people try to make a profit or a name for themselves out of it by calling ownership over it. This hurts the production and transmission of culture because it creates restrictions and boundaries where none should exist. Culture should flow freely through its people because it belongs to the people just as much as its people are a part of it.

Sample Paper 11

For Paper 4, I asked you to consider how we might use Jonathan Lethem's "The Ecstasy of Influence: A Plagiarism" and Steven Johnson's "The Myth of the Ant Queen" how creative acts of appropriation participate in reproducing culture. In "Selections from *Reading Lolita in Tehran*," Azar Nafisi and her select group of students find that imaginatively engaging with fictional works can help them contend with the "absurd fictionality [that] ruled our lives" under a totalitarian regime (295). Using textual evidence from Nafisi, Lethem, and ONE of Johnson, Ho, or Davidson, write an essay in response to the following question: **To what extent is our view of reality constructed and determined by the cultural institutions that 'rule our lives'?**

Allison

Understanding Reality

A cultural institution is a way of life. Cultural institutions consist of the politics, the social norms, the government, the law, the educational systems, the art, and the censorships that dictate society as a whole. Each society has a different culture and each society emphasizes different aspects of its culture. Although all individuals are different and have their own free will, the cultures that develop these individuals heavily influence them. Aspects of culture act feed the decisions that individuals make to develop their own personalities and desires. Do not mistake this to mean that individuals mirror the culture in which they are raised. They are only reflections of their culture. Reflections are not carbon copies of the original piece. The original piece only provides these reflections an outline from which they can evolve into something new. It is the individuals' responsibilities and decisions to either accept the values that they are

surrounded by, rebel against them, or find some place in between. Nevertheless, they must take the reality that they are presented with and figure out how they fit into it. Culture provides a base of ideas and feelings that the people are able to personalize and grow from. In Azar Nafisi's "Selections from *Reading Lolita in Tehran*," Nafisi provides very relevant effects and results from growing up in a culture that is oppressive towards her. She explains the effects that such a culture has on her realities and those of her students. In a similar manner, Johnathan Lethem explores the ways that the art reflects the artist's culture through inspiration in his essay, "The Ecstasy of Influence: A Plagiarism." Nafisi's struggle with establishing personal identification in her very black and white society is reflected upon by the standards of education that are belittled in Cathy Davidson's "Project Classroom Makeover," where Davidson discusses how people are able to personalize otherwise general and basic ideas or systems. Despite the seemingly wide range of topics that these authors seem to cover, they all have something in common. These authors explain how a culture provides the base from which individual and personalized realities are able to develop. People interpret the actions and interactions around them in order to perceive the world in ways that they want to, which enables them to create their personalized realities. Being able to interpret the world (and their culture) imaginatively is what allows people to alter their surroundings in ways that modify the way they are perceived by others.

The way that a person interprets his or her surroundings is different for everyone. This idea can be understood through Cathy Davidson's summary of her iPod project. She starts her description of it by saying that "if it were a reality show, you might call it Project Classroom Makeover" (Davidson 50). Her reference to it as a reality show

initially implies that the reformation of Duke's education system has some sort of staged aspect. The director of the show and the teacher in the classroom provide this staged component. Though directors give certain directions to the contestants, the contestants ultimately interact with their own personalities and the exchanges that follow are allowed to play out on their own. The same way that this relates to the way that teachers direct student learning goals while still allowing the students to explore their abilities, it also relates to the broader idea that an environment provides an outline from which people take information to create their own realities. The way surroundings direct realities yet also allow realities to be distinctive in an uninhibited way can be understood by Nafisi's description of how "not just our reality but also our fiction had taken on this curious coloration in a world where the censor was the poet's rival in rearranging and reshaping reality, where we simultaneously invented ourselves and were figments of someone else's imagination" (Nafisi 294). She establishes her uncertainty of whether her reality is shaped more by herself or her culture by trying to distinguish "reality" from "fiction" and making the poet and censor foes. In actuality, the poet works with the environment that the censor provides to shape his or her reality the same way that the teacher directs the students but allows them to develop uniquely. Thus, the fiction and reality she speaks of in her quote work together to create one personalized reality that is reminiscent of the censor's imagination but ultimately established and determined by the poet's. These systems function with the focus provided by authority figures, such as directors, teachers, and censors, yet still allow the dynamic and complex intricacies of its individuals to flourish. This demonstrates the way that the interactions that occur on a show, in a classroom, or in life are interpreted in unique ways by each observer. The

culture, the directions, and the actions that take place in these settings provide a base from which each individual takes information in order to create his or her own understanding of what is happening, and thus creates his or her own reality.

Realizing that realities are all unique makes it possible to understand how all forms of expression therefore can and will be personalized. Lethem elaborates upon this idea when he claims that “finding one’s voice isn’t just an emptying and purifying oneself of the words of others but an adopting and embracing of filiations, communities, and discourses. Inspiration could be called inhaling the memory of an act never experienced” (Lethem 214). He suggests that expressing oneself requires developing ideas from those already present in the surroundings. His description of this process of inspiration implies this same idea that people take in what their environment has to offer them, such as memories, and develop it to imagine it in new ways. People then express these inspired interpretations of realities, revealing the ways that they reimagined those interactions to those listening. The ability for people to change the physical world around them, such as through art, in ways that demonstrate that they have interpreted the interactions around them in diverse ways can be seen from the Davidson’s “conceptual breakthrough: that a commercial product might also be susceptible to consumer customization, a way of extending the infinitely changeable open-source properties of the Internet itself to a product with a far more fixed, finite identity” (Davidson 53). It can be inferred that she realizes that open sources, such as the interactions around people or the Internet, have an infinite amount of ways to be interpreted or used. She highlights the fact that each individual has the ability and the predisposition to create a more definite and personalized idea that results in a more

customized product. Davidson and Lethem imply that creating that personalized reality and articulating that reality through self-expression begins with perceiving the interactions around them, such as the open source of the Internet or the open source of the person's community. That the interpretations that an individual develops are reflected onto the world around them through personal expression demonstrates the power of interpretation.

This ability to interpret the world imaginatively and then alter the surroundings accordingly changes the way that others perceive people. Scheherazade breaks the cycle of accepting the king's laws by interpreting the situation she was thrown into in a way that allowed her to view the circumstances in ways that her predecessors did not. She "fashions her universe not through physical force, as does the king, but through imagination and reflection. This gives her the courage to risk her life and sets her apart from the other characters in the tale" (Nafisi 290). Nafisi illuminates Scheherazade's ability to see the situation through reflection and then interpret it through imagination. She then uses this vision to apply it to the world around her by creating new circumstances that benefit her. From understanding the situation in her distinct way, she was then able to change the way that the king perceived her which saved her life. Being able to analyze the world in a distinctive way allowed her to see the unfortunate circumstance she was put into and then approach the issue in a way that those before her could not, thereby changing her fate. The benefits of looking at things through different lenses is also realized by Lethem as he explains "the surrealists understood that photography and cinema could carry out this reanimating process automatically; the process of framing objects in a lens was often enough to create the charge they sought"

(Lethem 215). This suggests that artists can change the way that others see things simply by trying to show others the lens through which the artists see things. By taking pictures and videos at different angles and of different views, the surrealists try to convey the ways that they interpret reality to the rest of the world in order to revive ideas. These artists modified the world around them using their unique perceptions of the world to then change how others see the world. Both Nafisi and the artists see the world in individual ways and then proceed to behave in ways that demonstrate their unique perceptions of the world either through taking risks that others have never before or through expressing themselves so that others could see these perceptions.

Art is a way that people express the unique realities that they are experiencing. The reason why it is not possible or feasible to claim ideas or art is because they are parts of the realities that every individual builds from. It is the re-creation of individual realities. Therefore, if realities develop and evolve from culture, it makes sense why there would be repetitive ideas in art. If multiple artists are influenced by the same culture, they will cultivate their realities from similar origins, causing overlap in their personal ideas. On the other hand, though the result of developing and learning from the same culture can mean for similar patterns in ideas, each individual is able to incorporate a personal aspect to them. Everything that people do is a result from their own decisions. Though there might be more consequences for doing one thing for a certain person, ultimately, that person is still going to have to make that choice and live with the consequences. Nafisi's decisions to quit her job and start a reading group had more consequences for her to worry about than someone starting a book club in America, but she took those risks to do something she wanted to. Just as the person

spending everyday anticipating his execution made the decision to write a book rather than just sit around demonstrates the power of free will that people can exercise no matter where they are. The women under the Islamic Republic seem to have little room to make their own decisions and yet they choose to lie to their parents and accept Nafisi's invitation rather than sitting around and accepting where they are and blaming their lack of action on their situation rather than recognizing that they made the choice to accept it.