



- What does *justice* really mean? Is it possible to live in a society where everyone has an equal opportunity—or do we already live in such a society?

Many of these are *serious* questions, and much of the reading and discussing we will do revolves around serious issues. But understanding the problems around us, finding out what your peers and others think, and becoming better informed can be an exciting experience. Let's make it one!

And now for the rules and regulations.

### **TEXTS & MATERIALS AVAILABLE IN CSM BOOKSTORE**

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- *The Bluest Eye*, by Toni Morrison
- *A Hope in the Unseen: An American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League* by Ron Suskind
- *A Course Reader*, available in class
- *The Pocket Handbook*, by Kirszner and Mandell (optional **if** you already have a recently published handbook)
- A good quality college-level dictionary (we won't be using them directly in class but you will definitely benefit from having one, in this class and many others).
- I will hand out all other readings in class.

### **SEMESTER'S WORK**

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Throughout the semester you will have regular assignments including:

- **Research paper**  
This is an assignment that we will work on throughout the second half of the semester; we will work in installments so that the project is not overwhelming—for you or me!
- **Out of class essays**  
In addition to the research paper, you will hand in **five** essays this semester. These must be typed and turned in class (please do not email me papers except under extraordinary circumstances—and please let me know in advance if you do need to email an assignment). If this will be a problem for anyone, please see me after class.
- A **final exam**, given in class during finals week.
- **Conferences:** Because of the number of students enrolled in 100, I do not have time to meet with you individually for every paper, though I would like to. We will have only **two required meetings** during the semester, but you are welcome to meet with me at any time for extra help.
- Presentations of **readings:** You will be asked to do at least one oral presentation with a group of peers during the course of the semester.
- **Peer review:** a particularly important element of class participation—see notes about grading below
- **Quizzes and homework**, usually having to do with the required readings
- **Hour-by-arrangement** requirement, see below.

### **LATE PAPERS**

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Deadlines are a fact of life, as much as we all might wish otherwise. In this class, all essays must be submitted at the beginning of class on the day they are due. You have the option to turn in **one** late essay no later than one week after the original due date. You may not use this option on the final project. Once you have used this option, I will not accept other late papers. Late papers may not be revised. Though I will read a late paper carefully, I cannot guarantee that it will receive the same extensive comments it would have received had it been submitted on time.

Use the attached "Late Paper Coupon." **Note: Do not turn in papers via email unless you have cleared it with me first. I will not accept an emailed paper.**

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## ATTENDANCE AND PROMPTNESS

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Because your essays will arise from class discussions of the readings, and because working on your writing process depends on classroom and peer activities, participation is essential in this class.

Because I am not always able to get students to come to class by the pure force of my personality, I have some policies to encourage you to take attendance and promptness seriously:

**Missing classes:** I will follow CSM policies regarding attendance: you will be dropped if you miss 6 classes in a MWF course, or four classes in a T-Th course.

**Arriving late:** I understand if you show up a few minutes late once in a while; I may do it myself. But students who are frequently late seriously disrupt the class and really annoy me with their questions about what happened when they weren't around. Each lateness counts as  $\frac{1}{2}$  an absence; if you are chronically late, you may lose attendance credit.

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## HOUR BY ARRANGEMENT REQUIREMENT

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To get help with your reading and writing, you should make use of the reading and writing centers available on campus. I require only three (20 minute) meetings in addition to some tutorial work (on library research), but you can make use of these great resources much more.

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## GRADING IN GENERAL

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- Essays (including midterm and research paper) .....80%
- Attendance, homework, quizzes, hour by arrangement, peer-review .....20%

Papers are graded A, B, C, D, and NP in this course. A final grade of NP means you must revise your work after a conference with me (note that you can only do this twice; your second NP paper will receive only a C when revised). Criteria for passing (and excelling) on each paper will be made *very* clear with each assignment.

To pass the course, you must:

- Complete ***all*** the essay assignments
- Attend class regularly and **participate**
- Present with a group to class
- Complete all assigned readings

**NOTE:** Although essays and the final project count for the grade, Attendance, Class Participation, Homework, and Conferences are all important. **Getting A's in these areas is very easy**—show up, participate, and complete all assignments. Doing well in these areas can only help your grade. However, doing poorly in these areas can result in you not passing this course if your essay grades are low enough. Did I mention “don't blow it?”

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## HOW ESSAYS ARE GRADED

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I recognize that no single grade can truly reflect the work that goes into any student's essay. And each essay asks for different skills, so I will explain the grading criteria for each in detail--each assignment comes with a grading rubric so that you will know what specific areas I will focus on. The information below should give you a general idea.

### Major issues in essays

1. Focus and development overall: While good conversations often go all over the place, good writing is focused, making well defined points. The writing should do justice to the complexity of the issues we write about, while showing at the same time that the writer is aware of the needs of a reader; that is, the ideas are complex but the writing is clear. This isn't easy for almost anyone, but you can do it.

2. Focus and development at the sentence level: We will be discussing and working on exercises designed to increase your ability to write more complex, fluent sentences. Sentences that are simple and “choppy,” as we will see later in the course, do not make for good reading. At the same time, abstract, unfocused, show-offy sentences can interfere with a reader’s experience just as seriously. Good sentences are also not easy for most people, but this, too, we will work on together.

3. Grammar, spelling, and other sentence level concerns: We will not be spending very much class time on grammatical or mechanical issues *unless* you wish to bring them up and I feel that the entire class can benefit from a discussion of them. Otherwise, I treat grammatical problems individually, by returning papers with a single check (√) in the margins. This means that you need to correct the error, first by attempting to spot it and fix it on your own, but also, if necessary, by meeting with me for us to work together. Because this a regular rather than a developmental writing class, I expect you to proofread your own work carefully. If you are struggling with grammar, as many people do, we will be sure you get the help you need.

### **Revising essays**

You may revise **two** essays this term—up to April 22<sup>nd</sup> (the final drop date). I comment extensively on essays before this date in case you want to revise, but you should also meet with me before doing so. When you revise an essay, I will ask you to turn in the original with the revision, as well as to write a short note describing what you have changed.

### **PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism simply means “To use another person’s thoughts or writings as one’s own” (Oxford Dictionary). This includes having someone else write your papers for you, which is almost always a dumb strategy. Getting papers off the internet is also dumb; most of the papers available are poorly written, and I often have no trouble spotting them when you turn them in. A plagiarized paper will be an automatic “F” with no chance to revise. This very likely will result in you failing the course and having to take the whole thing over. Don’t do it— it is far better to let me know when you need help!

### **SOME NOTES ON POLITENESS**

I try to treat students with respect and I expect the same. Unfortunately, I must mention some very basic rules of politeness, due to the presence on our campus of a few people who haven’t quite grown up yet.

(1). Pagers and Cell Phones: Turn them off or leave them at home *unless you have an emergency situation*. If you feel that you must have your phone or pager on, please talk to me before class. Cruel punishment applies: If your cell phone rings, you get to buy donuts for the whole class.

(2) Leaving class: If you show up, I assume you are here to stay the whole time. If you will need to leave, please let me know before class.

(3)Eating and Drinking: Drinking non-alcoholic beverages in class is fine with me. Bring coffee, tea, or even those skanky Red Bull drinks if you wish. Eating tends to be more disruptive and often smells up the room, so please keep it outside. (Unless it is the donuts I mentioned in note one).

### **FINAL NOTES**

**To ESL students:** If you have been speaking English for fewer than six years, or if you very rarely speak English outside of school, you may be in for a difficult semester—and perhaps an

impossible one. I may advise you to take the ESL placement test if I feel you are in the wrong class.

**To students with learning disabilities:** Please make sure that we get assistance for you this semester—CSM has an excellent program to help you succeed.

**LATE PAPER COUPON**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Essay # \_\_\_\_\_

(Please print)

I understand and agree to the following conditions:

1. I am turning in this essay no later than one week after the original due date.
2. This will be the only late paper I will turn in. Other late papers will not be accepted.
3. I will not be able to revise this essay.
4. Though my late paper will be read carefully, it may not receive the same extensive comments it would have received had it been submitted on time, and I do not expect to get it back as soon as other papers.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Day and date you will turn in the essay \_\_\_\_\_

Original due date \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE SIGN AND HAND IN THIS COUPON ON THE DAY ESSAYS ARE DUE**