**GEN 1120: Rhetoric & Composition (W1)**TR 10:30-12:20 J-201  
Fall 2010

Dr. Deborah Gussman

Office: F137

Hours: TR 1:15-2:15 and by appointment  
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**Required Texts**:

*The New Humanities Reader*, 3rd edition, Richard E. Miller and Kurt Spellmeyer, eds. Houghton, 2009.

*A Pocket Style Manual*, 5th edition, Diana Hacker, ed. Bedford, 2009.

**Course Description and Goals**:

This is a course focused on reading, writing, reflection, and engagement. You will be reading, thinking, and writing about a variety of texts concerning a range of fascinating, relevant, contemporary issues: from how we live our lives and the structures of institutions that shape us, to how our identities and beliefs are constructed, to where the pursuit of happiness might lead us and our planet. Course goals include helping you to read deeply, think critically, and write interpretively and effectively about these issues, creating your own independent arguments that synthesize multiple sources.

* This course meets Stockton College’s W1 (writing-intensive) course requirement.
* This course has a required Service Learning component.

**Course Structure**  
On many days this semester, the class will be conducted in seminar format, which means we will engage in discussions about reading, writing, and service learning assignments and examine the rhetorical strategies used to communicate with a variety of audiences. As a class, we will raise questions, pose problems, interpret readings, challenge each others’ ideas, and develop strategies for successfully completing assignments. There will also be many sessions in which we perform workshop-style activities, including peer review, conferencing, drafting, and editing. Although there will be mini-lectures on a variety of writing-related topics, we will spend the majority of class time engaging in collaborative discussions and activities.

**Course Requirements**

* Read six selections from *The New Humanities Reader.*
* Write 5 out-of-class essays
* Write one in-class reflection essay

1. **Class Attendance**: Regular attendance is required. You are expected to come to class having completed the assigned reading and/or writing and prepared to discuss the texts and your own work. More than four absences will lower your grade. More than seven will result in failure of the course. Coming to class without a draft on peer revision days will also count as an absence.

2. **Assignments**: You can expect to write and revise five out of class essays and one in-class essay during this term, as well as to complete reflective and informal writing assignments on Blackboard and in class. You will write a typed Rough and Final draft for each formal essay. Please keep all Rough and Final drafts in a Folder, for your final reflection essay. This comes out to approximately one paper or other writing assignment per week.

3. **Service Learning requirement:**

Service Learning consists of the completion of at least 20 hours at a site chosen in consultation with Tara Ronda (who coordinates the campus service learning office). Most students will begin their placements during the 4th week of the term and complete them by the 13th week, for about 2 hours/week. In addition, students will post weekly reflections about their placements on Blackboard. Your final paper (approx. 5 pages) should make a connection between class readings and discussions and your individual service experiences. Research paper option: In certain cases, students enrolled in the course cannot make a service learning placement work with their schedules or lives. If you are unable to complete a service learning project, you will write a 15 page paper **in addition to** the five other essays. You will choose your topic from one of the areas of inquiry addressed in the readings this term. You will begin research by the fourth week, and provide regular progress reports on Blackboard including a detailed description of your topic, a working bibliography, outline, and drafts. Your paper should proceed as follows:

* Define a problem/issue that needs to be addressed
* Conduct a search for information to determine the scope of the problem—local, state, national or global.
* Identify current or pending policies (local, state, national or international) that affect how the problem might be solved OR identify an on-going debate in relation to the issue.
* Develop at least one strategy (solution to the problem) to actively address the problem, or develop an argument that explains your position on the debate

(adapted from Sylvia Mikucki, “Communication and Critical Inquiry Media Literacy Assignment” http://www.nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial10/pep-syllabus)

This paper will be due no later than ??? (earlier submissions will be accepted).

Other grading policies:

* Grades will be lowered by 5 pts. for each day late, unless prior arrangements have been made with me.
* Papers that exhibit significant errors of punctuation, grammar, spelling, or syntax (generally, three or more errors per page) risk failing.
* All assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade for this course.

In accordance with the College’s policy, I do not give incomplete grades unless there are extremely serious circumstances, and then, only by prior arrangement.

Your grades will be calculated as follows:  
Drafts (must be turned in on day due and peer reviewed for credit): 15%  
Five out of class papers: 50%

Reflection paper: 10%

Service Learning or Research Paper: 20%

Participation and attendance: 5%

**Grading Scale:**

100-93: A 82.9-80: B- 69.9-67: D+

92.9-90: A- 79.9-77: C+ 66.9-63: D

89.9-87: B+ 76.9-73: C 62.9-60: D-

86.9-83: B 72.9-70: C- 59.9 & below: F

**Academic Honesty**: The college expects students to maintain the highest standard of academic honesty. You should make yourself aware of Richard Stockton College’s Academic Honesty Policy, which can be found in the Student Handbook. You should also make yourself familiar with the penalties for violations of the policy and your rights as a student.

Please be aware that plagiarism (one form of academic dishonesty) includes, but may not be limited to: using all or part of a source, either directly or in paraphrase, either intentionally or unintentionally, whether that source is published, or online, or taken from a fellow or former student, *without properly acknowledging that source.*

If you are found to have represented the work or ideas of others as your own, intentionally, or unintentionally, you will face serious consequences, as follows:

1. If this is the first time the student has been found to have plagiarized, he/she will receive an "F" for that paper or assignment and/or the course.  
2. For second offenses of plagiarism, the student will receive an F for the course.  
3. Whenever possible, a student who is found to have plagiarized a paper or assignment, in full or in part, should meet with the professor of the class for which the paper is written in order to review and discuss the suspect work.

Additionally, in accordance with Stockton College policy, I will report all instances of plagiarism to the Provost of Academic Affairs. Students may be subject to discipline by the college, such as being placed on academic probation or expelled. If you have a question specific to a paper you are working on, please bring it to my attention.

**Class Schedule (subject to revision – check Blackboard regularly)**

**PLEASE BRING YOUR TEXTBOOK TO EVERY CLASS (be sure you have the right volume!)**

**September**

**Week 1**

T 9/7 Introductions and in-class reading/writing sample (Jefferson and Chopra -- handout)

First reading assignment: Daniel Gilbert, “Immune to Reality”

TH 9/9 Discuss writing samples and Gilbert

Assign Paper #1 on Gilbert

Week 2

T 9/14 Guest speaker: Roni Bier (Service Learning coordinator)

\*\*Deadline to drop a course with a 100% refund

Continue discussion of Gilbert and writing assignment

TH 9/16 Draft due: Paper #1 – peer review (bring 2 copies of your paper to class)

Second reading assignment: Robert Thurman, “Wisdom”

Week 3

T 9/21 Discuss Thurman. Workshop sample student papers. Discuss SL questions or issues.

TH 9/23 Paper #1 due (final draft). Discuss Thurman.

Assign Paper #2 on Thurman and Gilbert

Week 4

T 9/28 Continue discussion of Thurman and writing assignment. Discuss or workshop writing issues from Paper #1.

TH 9/30 Draft due: Paper #2 –peer review (bring 2 copies of your paper to class)

Third reading assignment: Jon Krakauer, “Selections from *Into the Wild*”

**October**

Week 5

T 10/5 Discuss Krakauer. Workshop drafts of paper #2

TH 10/7 Paper #2 due (final draft). Discuss Krakauer. Service Learning issues.

Assign Paper #3: Krakauer, Gilbert, Thurman.

\*\* F 10/8 Deadline to withdraw from a full-term course with a 50% refund

Week 6

T 10/12 Discuss Krakauer and writing assignment. Workshop writing issues from Paper #2.

TH 10/14 Draft due: Paper #3. Peer review –bring two copies of your draft to class.

Fourth reading assignment: Susan Faludi, “The Naked Citadel”

Week 7

T 10/19 Discuss Faludi.

TH 10/21 Discuss reading #4/SL reflections

Paper #3 due in class. Assign Paper #4: Faludi and Gilbert.

Week 8

T 10/26 Preceptorial Advising – no classes

TH 10/28 Draft due paper #4. Peer review – bring two copies of your draft to class.

Fifth reading assignment: Amy Chua, “A World on the Edge”

**November**

Week 9

T 11/2 Discuss Chua. Workshop sample drafts.

\*\* W 11/3   Preceptorial Advising - no classes until 3:35PM

TH 11/4 Paper #4 due (final draft). Discuss Chua.

Sixth reading assignment: Annie Dillard, **"**The Wreck of Time: Taking Our Century's Measure"

Week 10

T 11/9 Discuss Dillard. SL discussion.

Assign Paper #5: The Pursuit of Happiness synthesis paper.

TH 11/11 Discuss Dillard and writing assignment.

Week 11

T 11/16 Draft due: Paper #5. Peer review: bring two copies of your draft to class.

TH 11/18 Workshop sample drafts.

Week 12

T 11/23 Paper #5 due in class. Assign reflection essay.

TH 11/25 Thanksgiving holiday – no classes

Week 13

T 11/30 Service learning roundtable

**December**

TH 12/2 Service learning roundtable (all blackboard reflection must be completed by this date)

Week 14

T 12/7 Reflection essays (completed in class/computer lab)

TH 12/9 Wrap-up/celebrate.

Make Pursuit of happiness the theme –whole semester

Give out Deepak Chopra list of happiness on-line to read first day.

Writing sample:

Read Deepak chopra’s essay on . . . then consider the following.

Many Americans consider the “pursuit of happiness” their birthright. In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson asserted that “We hold these truths . . . .” It’s worth remembering that in the first draft, he wrote “Pursuit of Property” as a basic human right . . .

Thinking about both Chopra’s essay and what you know about the American ideal of happiness, discuss what you believe the meaning or secret to the pursuit of happiness is? How do you define the terms pursuit and happiness? Do your definitions square with Chopras or Jefferson’s or are they different? From where do you derive your ideas about happiness: family, school, religious traditions, books, films other media? Are you in pursuit? Do you know anyone who is truly happy? Etc…..

Paper #1

Choose one of the following topics:

1. The Declaration of Independence proclaims “all men” are “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights,” among them “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” What are the *political* implications of the research indicating that the pursuit of happiness is often misdirected because people typically fail to recognize the conditions that will really make them happy? Does Gilbert’s work suggest that Thomas Jefferson’s proclamation was based on a false assumption? Is the pursuit of happiness properly understood as in the same category as the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution—namely, the right of free speech and assembly, trail by jury, and so on? Or is the idea that the pursuit of happiness is an unalienable right itself an expression of a mistaken understanding of the necessary conditions for bringing about happiness?

2. What are the *economic* implications of Gilbert’s argument? If people began to choose “action over inaction, pain over annoyance, and commitment over freedom,” would the consumer economy survive? That is, is consumerism dependent upon our collective ignorance about the path to happiness or is the hope that one’s life will be improved by increased purchasing power itself a path to happiness? Is trying to be happy with what one has a form of action or inaction?  If Gilbert is right that “explanation robs events of their emotional impact,” what roll does explanation play in consumer economy? Is a healthy economy dependent upon consumers who are well-informed, consumers who are “immune to reality”?

Paper #2

Thurman and Gilbert

Use question on page 754 or on page 232

(use the one below as a model)

In “Wisdom” Robert Thurman argues that the ideals of Buddhism, which are fundamentally different from the western emphasis on the individual self, can help us achieve our best potential. In “Futile Pursuit of Happiness” Gertner examines the work of psychologists who study our predictions of happiness.

How do the ideas in Gertner’s article confirm, complicate or contradict Thurman’s belief that it is possible to achieve happiness by transcending the concept of ‘self’? Would our society benefit if we could go beyond the ‘self’?

Your answer must use both Gertner’s and Thurman’s essays to support your own project. (do not simply compare and contrast Gertner and Thurman) You should also incorporate quotes in your essay and have proper citations. (MLA Style – see Easy Access p197)

In this paper I want to see that:

* you considered the ideas in both texts and put them into conversation with each other
* you have your own project that goes beyond the ideas in Thurman and Gertner
* you are choosing relevant quotations and examples, and you are explaining the connections between this evidence and your larger project (each paragraph should try to have quotes from both writers)
* you are proofreading your essay carefully for grammar and spelling errors

or

Paper #3

Krakauer –McCandless through the lens of Gilbert and/or Thurman

Paper #4

Faludi and Gilbert

1. Whether one feels called upon to argue for or against the training practices Faludi describes in “The Naked Citadel,” it is clear that they differ in significant ways from the teaching and learning practices used in non-military educational institutions. Faludi offers a host of reasons for why cadets find life at The Citadel to be rewarding, but her explanation serves, in large part, to make the cadets and their actions more difficult to understand. In “Immune to Reality,” Daniel Gilbert sets out to create a theory of happiness, one that explains why humans, in general, are so unprepared to predict and to pursue the material things and activities that lead to happiness. Does Gilbert’s theory shed new light on the choices and the actions of the cadets at The Citadel? Would Gilbert’s explanation for why The Citadel continues to attract students—male and female—reinforce, extend, or contradict Faludi’s argument? Write an essay about the degree to which happiness, as Gilbert defines it, plays a role in education inside and outside The Citadel.

Paper #5 Synthesis

Paper must incorporate all 6 readings for the term. Students are encouraged to use Dillard’s model –lots of quotes, organized by sections . . . Based on your reading and writing and discussion this term, what can you tell readers about “The Pursuit of Happiness”? Which models or explanations do you find most persuasive? Do any of the readings cause you to question previous beliefs? Do explanations work across time and culture -- For instance, what does Chua’s essay suggest about the universality of the American conviction that democracy and freedom are the best path to personal happiness? What role do traditions –educational, political, institutional, wisdom—play in the pursuit? Etc. . . .

Might include images that coorespond to or support your views.