

Comments from the final class meeting

Punctuation, spring 2012

We had a very good discussion about the course during the final class meeting of spring 2012. I asked students to suggest ways I might make the course more rigorous at the same time that I embrace more flexibility in the course structure and assignments.

While many students enjoyed the final creative assignment, others suggested alternative assignments including the following:

- Going into school systems in a form of service learning to present on sophisticated forms of punctuation.
- Holding a Punctuation Fair, with Punctuation debates and examples: invite grammar students, young kids, etc.
- Day of student-found punctuation examples.

The class was in general agreement that texting/tweeting/facebook posts of earlier course discussions would be useful and serve as possible exemplars of electronic punctuation.

Some said that I should make the Grammar course prerequisite for the Punctuation course, which I told them I was hesitant to do. Their answer was that at least I should announce that an excellent grasp of grammar was strongly advised.

- Students asked that I create assignment check sheets with additional examples of punctuation, especially punctuation strategies that shift depending upon differing grammatical structures.
- I need to build a better out-of-class grammar component.
- Spread the grammar more thoroughly throughout the course.
- Students wanted more mini-tests of interpretation. More of the sort of handouts done near the end of the course, but in short bursts.
- Quizzes should cover specific right/wrong punctuation. Save the gray areas for the exams.
- Set up discussions of incorrect punctuation examples alongside correct or skillful examples. This could be done on youtube as short, short discussions.

There were suggestions for a different **second essay**. Instead of repeating the “write about a point of punctuation” assignment, they suggested close analysis of a novel, short story, or poem/poetry that was well known to the student. Look at, analyze, and discuss the punctuation.

An alternate suggestion was that the **first essay** should be the analysis of one mark from several sources; the **second essay** should be analysis within one source of several marks.

If I keep the creative final assignment, the students suggested that I reduce its length to 6-8 pages, but include a 1-2 page explication of usage.

Or, I could require a shorter creative assignment of 1 style of punctuation with accompanying explication and make that due sooner than the final, perhaps around the time of the second examination.

It warmed my heart to have students suggest I provide more history of punctuation and stress it throughout the course. I could certainly bring more examples of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature when discussing heavily rhetorical use of colons and semicolons in Partridge.

I should design a pre-test and a post-test.

Quizzes might be administered to make sure students have done the Partridge reading. Take examples right out of Partridge.