WRITING ACROSS CARROLL

Let's Talk it Over: Preparing for Effective One-on-One Conferencing

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The Listening Eye: Reflections on the Writing Conference

IT WAS DARK when I arrived at my office this winter morning, and it is dark again as I wait for my last writing student to step out of the shadows in the corridor for my last conference. I am tired, but it is a good tired, for my students have generated energy as well as absorbed it. I've learned something of what it is to be a childhood diabetic, to raise oxen, to work across from your father at 115 degrees in a steel-drum factory, to be a welfare mother with three children, to build a bluebird trail, to cruise the disco scene, to be a teen-age alcoholic, to salvage World War II wreckage under the Atlantic, to teach invented spelling to first graders, to bring your father home to die of cancer. I have been instructed in other lives, heard the voices of my students they had not heard before, shared their satisfaction in solving the problems of writing with clarity and grace. I sit quietly in the late afternoon waiting to hear what Andrea, my next student, will say about what she accomplished on her last draft and what she intends on her next draft.

It is nine weeks into the course and I know Andrea well. She will arrive in a confusion of scarves, sweaters, and canvas bags, and then produce a clipboard from which she will precisely read exactly what she has done and exactly what she will do. I am an observer of her own learning, and I am eager to hear what she will tell me.

I am surprised at this eagerness. I am embedded in tenure, undeniably middle-aged, one of the gray, fading professors I feared I would become, but still have not felt the bitterness I saw in many of my own professors and see in some of my colleagues. I wonder if I've missed something important, if I'm becoming one of those aging juveniles who bound across the campus from concert to lecture, pleasantly silly.

There must be something wrong with a fifty-four-year-old man who is looking forward to his thirty-fifth conference of the day. It is twelve years since I really started teaching by conference. I average seventy-five conferences a week, thirty weeks a year, then there's summer teaching and workshop teaching of teachers. I've

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probably held far more than 30,000 writing conferences, and I am still fascinated by this strange, exposed kind of teaching, one on one.

It doesn't seem possible to be an English teacher without the anxiety that I will be exposed by my colleagues. They will find out how little I do; my students will expose me to them; the English Department will line up in military formation in front of Hamilton Smith Hall and, after the buttons are cut off my Pendleton shirt, my university library card will be torn once across each way and let flutter to the ground.

The other day I found myself confessing to a friend, "Each year I teach less and less, and my students seem to learn more. I guess what I've learned to do is to stay out of their way and not to interfere with their learning."

I can still remember my shock years ago when I was summoned by a secretary from my classroom during a writing workshop. I had labored hard but provoked little discussion. I was angry at the lack of student involvement and I was angry at the summons to the department office. I stomped back to the classroom and was almost in my chair before I realized the classroom was full of talk about the student papers. My students were not even aware I had returned. I moved back out to the corridor, feeling rejected, and let the class teach itself.

Of course, that doesn't always happen, and you have to establish the climate, the structure, the attitude. I know all that, and yet . . .

I used to mark up every student paper diligently. How much I hoped my colleagues would see how carefully I marked my student papers. I alone held the bridge against the pagan hordes. No one escaped the blow of my "awk." And then one Sunday afternoon a devil bounded to the arm of my chair. I started giving purposefully bad counsel on my students' papers to see what would happen. "Do this backward," "add adjectives and adverbs," "be general and abstract," "edit with a purple pencil," "you don't mean black you mean white." Not one student questioned my comments.

I was frightened my students would pay so much attention to me. They took me far more seriously than I took myself. I remembered a friend in advertising told me about a head copywriter who accepted a piece of work from his staff and held it overnight without reading it. The next day he called in the staff and growled, "Is this the best you can do?"

They hurried to explain that if they had more time they could have done better. He gave them more time. And when they met the new deadline, he held their copy again without reading it, and called them together again and said, "Is *this* the best you can do?"

Again they said if only they had more time, they could . . . He gave them a new deadline. Again he held their draft without reading it. Again he gave it back to them. Now they were angry. They said, yes, it was the best they could do and he answered, "I'll read it."

I gave my students back their papers, unmarked, and said, make them better. And they did. That isn't exactly the way I teach now, not quite, but I did learn something about teaching writing.

In another two-semester writing course I gave 220 hours of lecture during the year. My teaching evaluations were good; students signed up to take this course in

advance. Apparently I was well-prepared, organized, entertaining. No one slept in my class, at least with their eyes shut, and they did well on the final exam. But that devil found me in late August working over my lecture notes and so, on the first day of class, I gave the same final exam I had given at the end of the year. My students did better before the 220 hours of lectures than my students had done afterwards. I began to learn something about teaching a non-content writing course, about under-teaching, about not teaching what my students already know.

The other day a graduate student who wanted to teach writing in a course I supervise indicated, "I have no time for non-directive teaching. I know what my students need to know. I know the problems they will have—and I teach them."

I was startled, for I do not know what my students will be able to do until they write without any instruction from me. But he had a good reputation, and I read his teaching evaluations. The students liked him, but there was a minor note of discomfort. "He does a good job of teaching, but I wish he would not just teach me what I already know" and "I wish he would listen better to what we need to know." But they liked him. They could understand what he wanted, and they could give it to him. I'm uncomfortable when my students are uncomfortable, but more uncomfortable when they are comfortable.

I teach the student not the paper but this doesn't mean I'm a "like wow" teacher. I am critical and I certainly can be directive but I listen before I speak. Most times my students make tough—sometimes too tough evaluations—of their work. I have to curb their too critical eye and help them see what works and what might work so they know how to read evolving writing so it will evolve into writing worth reading.

I think I've begun to learn the right questions to ask at the beginning of a writing conference.

"What did you learn from this piece of writing?"

"What do you intend to do in the next draft?"

"What surprised you in the draft?"

"Where is the piece of writing taking you?"

"What do you like best in the piece of writing?"

"What questions do you have of me?"

I feel as if I have been searching for years for the right questions, questions which would establish a tone of master and apprentice, no, the voice of a fellow craftsman having a conversation about a piece of work, writer to writer, neither praise nor criticism but questions which imply further drafts, questions which draw helpful comments out of the student writer.

And now that I have my questions, they quickly become unnecessary. My students ask these questions of themselves before they come to me. They have taken my conferences away from me. They come in and tell me what has gone well, what has gone wrong, and what they intend to do about it.

Some of them drive an hour or more for a conference that is over in fifteen minutes. It is pleasant and interesting to me, but don't they feel cheated? I'm embarrassed that they tell me what I would hope I would tell them, but probably not as well. My students assure me it is important for them to prepare themselves for the conference and to hear what I have to say.

"But I don't say anything," I confess. "You say it all."

They smile and nod as if I know better than that, but I don't.

What am I teaching? At first I answered in terms of form: argument, narrative, description. I never said comparison and contrast, but I was almost as bad as that. And then I grew to answering, "the process." "I teach the writing process." "I hope my students have the experience of the writing process." I hear my voice coming back from the empty rooms which have held teacher workshops.

That's true, but there's been a change recently. I'm really teaching my students to react to their own work in such a way that they write increasingly effective drafts. They write; they read what they've written; they talk to me about what they've read and what the reading has told them they should do. I nod and smile and put my feet up on the desk, or down on the floor, and listen and stand up when the conference runs too long. And I get paid for this?

Of course, what my students are doing, if they've learned how to ask the right questions, is write oral rehearsal drafts in conference. They tell me what they are going to write in the next draft, and they hear their own voices telling me. I listen and they learn.

But I thought a teacher had to talk. I feel guilty when I do nothing but listen. I confess my fear that I'm too easy, that I have too low standards, to a colleague, Don Graves. He assures me I am a demanding teacher, for I see more in my students than they see in themselves. I certainly do. I expect them to write writing worth reading, and they do—to their surprise, not mine.

I hear voices from my students they have never heard from themselves. I find they are authorities on subjects they think ordinary. I find that even my remedial students write like writers, putting down writing that doesn't quite make sense, reading it to see what sense there might be in it, trying to make sense of it, and—draft after draft—making sense of it. They follow language to see where it will lead them, and I follow them following language.

It is a matter of faith, faith that my students have something to say and a language in which to say it. Sometimes I lose that faith but if I regain it and do not interfere, my students do write and I begin to hear things that need saying said well.

This year, more than ever before, I realize I'm teaching my students what they've just learned.

They experiment, and when the experiment works I say, "See, look what happened." I put the experiment in the context of the writing process. They brainstorm, and I tell them that they've brainstormed. They write a discovery draft, and I point out that many writers have to do that. They revise, and then I teach them revision.

When I boxed I was a counterpuncher. And I guess that's what I'm doing now, circling my students, waiting, trying to shut up—it isn't easy—trying not to interfere with their learning, waiting until they've learned something so I can show them what they've learned. There is no text in my course until my students write. I have to study the new text they write each semester.

It isn't always an easy text to read. The student has to decode the writing teacher's text; the writing teacher has to decode the student's writing. The writing

teacher has to read what hasn't been written yet. The writing teacher has the excitement of reading unfinished writing.

Those papers without my teacherly comments written on them haunt me. I can't escape the paranoia of my profession. Perhaps I should mark up their pages. There are misspellings, comma splices, sentence fragments (even if they are now sanctified as "English minor sentences.") Worse still, I get papers that have no subject, no focus, no structure, papers that are undeveloped and papers that are voiceless.

I am a professional writer—a hired pen who ghostwrites and edits—yet I do not know how to correct most student papers. How do I change the language when the student writer doesn't yet know what to say? How do I punctuate when it is not clear what the student must emphasize? How do I question the diction when the writer doesn't know the paper's audience?

The greatest compliment I can give a student is to mark up a paper. But I can only mark up the best drafts. You can't go to work on a piece of writing until it is near the end of the process, until the author has found something important to say and a way to say it. Then it may be clarified through a demonstration of professional editing.

The student sits at my right hand and I work over a few paragraphs, suggesting this change, that possibility, always trying to show two, or three, or four alternatives so that the student makes the final choice. It is such satisfying play to mess around with someone else's prose that it is hard for me to stop. My best students snatch their papers away from my too eager pen but too many allow me to mess with their work as if I knew their world, their language, and what they had to say about their world in their language. I stop editing when I see they really appreciate it. It is not my piece of writing; it is not my mind's eye that is looking at the subject; not my language which is telling what the eye has seen. I must be responsible and not do work which belongs to my students, no matter how much fun it is. When I write it must be my own writing, not my students'.

I realize I not only teach the writing process, I follow it in my conferences. In the early conferences, the prewriting conferences, I go to my students; I ask questions about their subject, or if they don't have a subject, about their lives. What do they know that I don't know? What are they authorities on? What would they like to know? What would they like to explore? I probably lean forward in these conferences; I'm friendly, interested in them as individuals, as people who may have something to say.

Then, as their drafts begin to develop and as they find the need for focus, for shape, for form, I'm a bit removed, a fellow writer who shares his own writing problems, his own search for meaning and form.

Finally, as the meaning begins to be found, I lean back, I'm more the reader, more interested in the language, in clarity. I have begun to detach myself from the writer and from the piece of writing which is telling the student how to write it. We become fascinated by this detachment which is forced on student and teacher as a piece of writing discovers its own purpose.

After the paper is finished and the student starts on another, we go back through the process again and I'm amused to feel myself leaning forward, looking for a

subject with my student. I'm not coy. If I know something I think will help the student, I share it. But I listen first—and listen hard (appearing casual)—to hear what my student needs to know.

Now that I've been a teacher this long I'm beginning to learn how to be a student. My students are teaching me their subjects. Sometimes I feel as if they are paying for an education and I'm the one getting the education. I learn so many things. What it feels like to have a baby, how to ski across a frozen lake, what rights I have to private shoreline, how complex it is to find the right nursery school when you're a single parent with three children under six years old.

I expected to learn of other worlds from my students but I didn't expect—an experienced (old) professional writer—to learn about the writing process from my students. But I do. The content is theirs but so is the experience of writing—the process through which they discover their meaning. My students are writers and they teach me writing most of the time.

I notice my writing bag and a twenty-page paper I have tossed towards it. Jim has no idea what is right or wrong with the paper—and neither do I. I've listened to him in conference and I'm as confused as he is. Tomorrow morning I will do my writing, putting down my own manuscript pages, then, when I'm fresh from my own language, I will look at Jim's paper. And when he comes back I will have at least some new questions for him. I might even have an answer, but if I do I'll be suspicious. I am too fond of answers, of lists, of neatness, of precision; I have to fight the tendency to think I know the subject I teach. I have to wait for each student draft with a learning, listening eye. Jim will have re-read the paper and thought about it too and I will have to be sure I listen to him first for it is his paper, not mine.

Andrea bustles in, late, confused, appearing disorganized. Her hair is totally undecided; she wears a dress skirt, lumberjack boots, a fur coat, a military cap. She carries no handbag, but a canvas bag bulging with paper as well as a lawyer's briefcase which probably holds cheese and bread.

Out comes the clipboard when I pass her paper back to her. She tells me exactly what she attempted to do, precisely where she succeeded and how, then informs me what she intends to do next. She will not work on this draft; she is bored with it. She will go back to an earlier piece, the one I liked and she didn't like. Now she knows what to do with it. She starts to pack up and leave.

I smile and feel silly; I ought to do something. She's paying her own way through school. I have to say something.

"I'm sorry you had to come all the way over here this late."

Andrea looks up surprised. "Why?"

"I haven't taught you anything."

"The hell you haven't. I'm learning in this course, really learning."

I start to ask Andrea what she's learning but she's out the door and gone. I laugh, pack up my papers, and walk home.

REAFFIRMING THE WRITING CONFERENCE: A TOOL FOR WRITING TEACHERS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

PESCHE C. KURILOFF

Considerable literature has been written in recent years supporting the concept of teaching writing across the curriculum. Teachers and researchers agree that the idea is consistent with theoretical models of how students learn and how discourse communities function. Much less has been offered, however, about how to teach writing in these non-writing classes. Do we simply appropriate the techniques that have proven successful in writing classes? Are such techniques generalizable across the curriculum? Assuming that so-called content instructors have neither the time nor the commitment to teaching writing that writing instructors do, what works best? If we have to choose, to which techniques should we give priority?

Two recent books in composition studies have underscored the critical role in teaching played by response (Anson 1989; Freedman 1987). In both these works response is defined broadly. As Anson points out, the "ideology of response" has evolved considerably since the days when teacher response consisted of marking themes (4). Whatever ancient practices persist in some composition classrooms, many teachers today view response in a collaborative framework. "It seems clear," argues Freedman, "that for response to be effective, teacher experts must collaborate with

learning writers with the aim of helping the writers become independent. This collaboration must result in a process the writer could not have engaged in without expert guidance and should result in a product the writer could not have produced without such guidance" (9). Simply correcting students' errors could never have such an impact on the writing process or on their texts. What, then, do we mean by response and what form should response of this quality take?

Kenneth Bruffee's use of the term "conversation" as a metaphor for teaching and learning has been applied mostly in the context of collaborative learning among peers. Yet the notion of conversation has much to contribute to an understanding of the relationship between teachers and students engaged in the writing process. Conversation between teacher and student can significantly influence the evolution of a text. Even the teacher-expert advocated by Freedman need not achieve expert status by dictating to students. By using experience and credentials as members of the discourse community students are seeking to join, teachers can exchange ideas with students and offer advice in a conversational rather than lecture format. Such a format seems more appropriate for the level of response teachers and researchers are finding not only desirable but increasingly necessary to teach students what they need to know.

The most obvious vehicle for this model of response as conversation is the writing conference. Clearly, if teacher and student can sit down together for a period of time, they can answer each other's questions and discuss possibilities for changes in the text in an efficient and collaborative way. Such communication could occur in writing but rarely does, partially because, as Brufee points out, only through conversation do we learn what we need to ask. In Freedman's study both teachers and students preferred writing conferences as a mode of teaching (157), but teachers had difficulty providing sufficient time for conferences. Time constraints aside, the more we demand of ourselves and others as respondents, the more appropriate the conference format becomes as a teaching methodology of choice.

The significance of conversation and the advisability of writing conferences become even more critical in the context of writing across the curriculum where teachers play a major role as representatives of their disciplines. They literally speak to students not simply as arbiters of good style in the tradition of Strunk and White, but

as spokespersons for a field that has conventions of its own. Recently we have become more aware of how knowledge of a field influences a student's ability to write papers (Jolliffe and Brier) and how much discipline-specific conventions determine whether a student paper succeeds (Anson 1988). The ways in which these conventions function, often mysterious to students, may be revealed in the questioning and answering typical of conferences.

By the same token, in a conference setting instructors can more readily determine how much students know. If, as Jolliffe and Brier claim, "successful writers in a discipline know much more than their written products show" (71), the instructor's response must take this knowledge into account. Difficulties mastering content and methodology often manifest themselves as problems in writing (see Odell). As a result, effective response must address the student's thinking as integral to the writing, and conversation offers a suitable context in which to probe a student's thinking.

Focusing response on conversation about a student's ideas as well as about how those ideas are presented solidifies learning as it improves writing. It also gives teachers a better sense of what their students have absorbed. Knowledge gained by instructors in writing conferences can help them become more effective classroom teachers of content as well as more effective teachers of writing. Consequently, instructors can come to see the time spent in writing conferences as central rather than peripheral to their goals as teachers of their disciplines, a common concern in writing across the curriculum programs.

Because of the time and energy consumed by writing conferences, resistance to them occurs even among instructors for whom conferences are a tradition. Instructors who have no such tradition often question the effectiveness of conferences. They assume that well considered comments on papers represent the best feedback they have to offer students and that nothing will be gained by discussion with students unless the students have questions. These instructors do not view the conference as an opportunity for dialogue, and certainly not as a potential learning experience for both participants. The goal of this paper is to convince non-English teachers that both they and their students have much to gain from writing conferences.

Over the last few years, graduate student writing instructors in our Writing Across the University program at the University of Pennsylvania have repeatedly proven to me the value of writing

conferences for teachers across the curriculum. As a writing teacher, I had always required conferences because I believed them to be invaluable experiences for student writers. For years my students had reinforced that bias by gobbling up as much conference time as I could feed them. I had always viewed the inordinate number of hours spent each week in conference, however, from my point of view as an instructor, as a burden. Although I enjoyed getting to know my students in conference, the benefits accrued, I assumed, entirely to them as writers. Never did I pause to consider what else they might be learning or what non-English instructors might gain from writing conferences until I began training teachers from different disciplines. Even then, only after reading numerous testimonials to the importance of one-on-one instruction written by our graduate student instructors, did I insist on the writing conference as a teaching method for new instructors teaching writing across the curriculum.

Each year at the University of Pennsylvania approximately seventy graduate students from across the university take part in our Writing Across the University program. Trained by internal and external consultants experienced at teaching writing and familiar with composition theory, these writing fellows strive to incorporate teaching writing as a primary goal as they teach the content of their disciplines. Whether as teaching assistants they assume responsibility for their own classrooms, or as writing consultants they coach students outside of class, their mission involves integrating writing and thinking. They teach students not just how to write, but how to think through and write a sociology, management, or biomedical engineering paper.

Because these graduate students represent so many different disciplines each semester, they depend primarily on a combination of the experiences of previous writing fellows, which we regularly document, and their own inventiveness to discover teaching methods that produce results in their particular fields and in their specific courses. Although they attend seminars that instruct them in ways of responding to student writing, developing assignments that promote good writing, teaching revision, and using collaborative writing in the classroom, they must apply what they learn to the structures that exist in a given course and fill in the blanks with materials and strategies that are discipline-specific. Although we acquaint them with, for example, informal writing assignments from various courses, they frequently have to adapt

those assignments to their own courses or invent new ones. They frequently find that methods that worked well in History of Art do not succeed in History.

Each semester all writing fellows turn in reports detailing how they implemented the goals of Writing Across the University in their courses. After a number of brief questions about the structure of the course, the writing requirements and their role as writing fellows, we ask them to describe their approach to teaching writing in their disciplines, including references to drafting and rewriting, assignments, evaluation, conferences and formal and informal writing. The substance of these reports varies greatly, but repeatedly, over several semesters, the fellows spontaneously endorse writing conferences:

> I continued the process of conferences with the five-page paper, meeting with each of my students after reading a first draft of the paper. The process was time-consuming and brain-frying, but I'm convinced it is the most important service WATU (Writing Across the University) can offer.

Over sixty percent of the reports recently received from instructors mention writing conferences as crucial vehicles for teaching writing across the curriculum. While they are comfortable teaching the regular content of their courses to groups of students, several fellows insist that "the only way to teach writing is one-on-one." A number argue that conferences should be required in all writing across the curriculum courses. Consistently, instructors applaud the success of conferences as a means of integrating writing and learning. They report that the results achieved far exceed the results brought about by even the most exhaustive written comments, the method of response commonly used in courses not affiliated with Writing Across the University.

Unlike ordinary writing teachers, instructors in writing across the curriculum have a two-fold agenda. They seek to help students improve their writing, but they also want to influence students' thinking about the subject matter. Their enthusiasm for writing conferences stems from their discovery that in conferences they can further both goals simultaneously.

Our instructors regularly cite two benefits they derive from conferences which make responding to writing easier and which also promote student learning. First, conferences create a context

in which instructors can discover how much students actually know about their subjects. As one writing fellow described the process:

> The most significant thing I learned this semester was the importance of conferences, of *talking* to students about what they were trying to say in *writing*. On the first assignment, one student had handed me a first draft that seemed very confused, trying to say far more than could be tackled in 500 words. I said as much in my comments and received a second draft that seemed to me virtually identical to the first. Talking to the student led me to see that she was not, as I first thought, being defiant, but that she was not making her connections clear in writing. What seemed to her perfectly clear seemed to a reader completely disconnected. I think I helped her see that it is in her interest to get what she means across on paper (even if she thinks her readers are stupid because she has to do it). She helped me see that many students are much more articulate orally than they are on paper and need very detailed comment and reaction if they are to improve the way they put their meaning across.

Instead of having to extrapolate how much students understand the ideas about which they are writing from an often disorganized and highly "writer-based" (Flower) draft, in conference the instructor can question the student. Together they can begin to disentangle problems of fuzzy thinking or misconceptions about the subject matter from problems more specifically related to the writing process. This procedure also helps the instructor to encourage the emergence of ideas previously obscured by poor writing:

> There is nothing more valuable in the teaching of writing than one-on-one consultation. . . . The students became excited as well as defensive about their ideas, especially since they had roughed them out on paper and were able to talk intelligently about them. By articulating their thoughts out loud, they gradually saw how they could express them more clearly and effectively. I would correspondingly correct misconceptions that arose from a lack of contact with the text and Classical culture in general. More importantly, however, I would listen to the students and then explain in different words what they had said to see if it made sense. I also would develop their ideas by asking them further ques-

tions and impressing upon them the need to ask themselves the same type of questions. Needless to say, as a grammarian by inclination, I attempted to steer them clear of common colloquial errors in their composition. I found these sessions gratifying, and I think the students were pleased with the attention.

Until students have their ideas under control, their thinking tends to interfere with their writing. Although we may commend the process of writing to learn, that process does not lend itself to producing finished work unless we insist that students follow the writing process through to other stages. Eventually, student writers must learn to control their material, to turn their attention to issues of presentation for an audience and to concentrate on casting their ideas in structures appropriate to the assignment and the discipline. Long before that adjustment occurs, however, instructors can assist students in formulating their ideas, if they can gain access to them. The context created by the writing conference provides that access.

The second benefit follows logically from the first. In addition to suffering from fuzzy thinking, student papers frequently fail to reveal adequately the writer's intention. Too often instructors find themselves wondering about the point of a paper or why the writer chose to write on a given topic. In those situations the process of responding to the paper involves searching the text for clues, hoping that some obscure passage will give up its meaning under scrutiny. Although eventually instructors may satisfy themselves that they have understood what a student was trying to do, misreading frequently occurs. For example, the following paragraph introduces a student paper for a social history course. Can you determine with any confidence the topic of the paper?

> The 1820's-1830's were periods of tremendous social disorder and transition. The old castes of mercantile, artisan and agrarian were eroding, and the new factory/capitalist system was not yet fully established. This placed the people of this era between systems—in a world of disarray. The corporate family economy was being phased out and what the future held for most was uncertain. This caused particular anxiety for mothers who were concerned for the futures of their children.

Is this paper about family life in a period of transition in American history? Perhaps, but the next paragraph turns to religion and the

religious revivalism of the period. The third paragraph picks up on the role of women during the period, arguing that they led the revivalist movement, but then focuses on revivalism as a middle class movement. The succeeding paragraph veers off to discuss the Rational Radicals in contrast to the Revivalists. The rest of the paper continues to compare those two movements and the people who participated in them, concluding finally:

> Thus the Radicals were grounded in the past. They feared the Revivalists and saw the future system as potentially oppressive to members of the laboring class, namely themselves and their children. They banned together to offer an enlightened critique of the infant yet emerging capitalist economy.

Without commenting on the merits of the writing, I would assert that our inability as readers to discern the student writer's intention makes a coherent and useful response to this paper impossible. We can arbitrarily decide on the basis of the scanty evidence provided what the paper should be about and respond accordingly, but we risk advising the student to write a paper entirely different from the one the student had in mind. If you add to this the realization that this paper is a draft, and the student may not have understood her own interest, let alone the reader's, until the draft was written, the argument for withholding comment at this stage becomes even stronger.

In this case, as in many others, the student writer never succeeded in synthesizing her ideas until she discussed her paper with her writing consultant in conference. At that time she was able to articulate her intention to present the opposition between the Revivalists and the Rational Radicals as a form of class struggle, each movement representing a different social class. The professor in this course on Jacksonian America had repeatedly emphasized her view that, in analyzing historical events, family dynamics could sometimes serve as a metaphor for events in the culture. Consequently, the student set out to make her case for the class struggle by grounding her argument in references to mothers and children, particularly mothers' aspirations for their children, which reflected on the class issue.

Once the writing consultant understood what the student was trying to do, the mystery was solved. She realized that the student was trying to accomplish two goals at once: to make her

own argument and imitate the type of historical analysis her professor had demonstrated in class. Her failure to communicate clearly a focus for her paper resulted from her effort to use this method of historical interpretation, which she thought she should use, but with which she had had no experience. The consultant's role then became clear, to help the student choose between her two goals. In this case, knowing the professor's intention for the assignment, the consultant felt free to advise the student to eliminate her references to the family in the paper and to concentrate on using her own powers of analysis to argue her point about the class struggle underlying the religious movements of the period. The student felt released from an unwelcome burden, and the consultant recognized this as an appropriate strategy to follow in order to help the student achieve the goals she wanted to accomplish in the paper.[1]

For the sake of the student's understanding of the subject matter as well as for the sake of her writing, the most constructive approach to a paper like this one brings about a dialogue between the writer and a representative reader instead of the one-way communication from reader to writer that often occurs in non-writing courses.[2] The reader, an informed representative of the discipline as well as a writing advisor, needs to ask the writer what the paper is supposed to be about, what point the writer wants to make and how she proposes to influence a reader. The writer, in turn, needs an opportunity to question the reader, to determine whether the ideas the writer undertook to express make sense to a representative reader, and, if not, what type of clarification the reader requires. Full discussion, with both parties on hand to answer questions and point to evidence in the text, avoids both misinterpretations of texts and misreadings of comments. When we discover, as the instructor did in the case cited above, that the student intended to write about a subject quite different from those suggested by her draft, we can skip a close reading of the current version and focus instead on the one yet to be written, the paper the student imagined she was writing and wants to write but never succeeded in putting down on paper.

Drafts in which the writer's intention is never made clear to the reader appear regularly in content area courses as students struggle to own their ideas before they can begin to communicate them effectively to readers. This tension between the thinking process and the writing process inhibits the student writer from attend-

ing to the reader's needs. Although it seems like the right moment to intervene in the writing process if we want to influence the outcome, suggestions made in response to a first draft too frequently miss the writer's point. In order to help students discover their purposes, we must give them an opportunity to consult with an interested reader, preferably a reader familiar with the content of the paper, who can more appropriately direct the student's thinking. Before we reject strategies or propose alternatives, we need to understand not only why the writer chose the options that appear in the text but what other options s/he considered and rejected and what options were never considered. We need to review not only the text, but the decision-making process that led the student to present the text in its current form.

In the absence of clarification from students, instructors, particularly inexperienced instructors, tend to make up the student's side of the learning/writing experience. In conversation with students, however, instructors can make it their business to acquire information about the process a draft text represents and advise students accordingly to rethink as a prelude to rewriting. In the conference setting, they can effectively rethink decisions with students, focusing on the process rather than the product and playing the role of master writer/teacher rather than just informed reader. In this context the process of the writing conference becomes part of the intellectual process we teach students to undergo in the course of producing a paper. Eventually we expect that students will internalize the conversation of the conference and carry on the same dialogue with themselves, but initially we teach them the process by accompanying them through it.

Our writing across the curriculum instructors frequently cite other advantages to writing conferences which stem from the relative flexibility of the conference situation. These aspects of conferences, familiar to writing instructors, often take non-writing teachers by surprise and reveal new ways of increasing their effectiveness as teachers of their content areas. Instead of structuring the conferences as a confrontation between writer and critic, the student defending the text and the teacher defending the comments, some instructors prefer inviting students to discuss their drafts in lieu of written comments. Even when instructors have returned papers with comments, they find that conferences create opportunities for students to retake control of their ideas by determining what issues they want to discuss and which ignore. Instead

of teaching students just to follow the instructions often implicit in written comments, conferences help students take responsibility for their writing and thinking and often open up new territory for both student and teacher. In the difficult process of motivating students, conferences can also play a crucial role. As one instructor insisted:

> Evaluation of writing should always be written, if only in outline form for quick reference or reminder to the student of conversations, but personal interaction is a *must* in teaching writing. Formal writing by its very nature posits an audience, and an interested reader is the best encouragement for good work.

Many of our writing across the curriculum instructors shy away from offering students prescriptions for good writing. Particularly when students are writing for audiences in different disciplines, we try to help them bring their ideas to fruition without suggesting that a paper written in a specific form or style will necessarily constitute a good paper in any context. Since conventions vary from field to field, we avoid suggesting that a well received paper in one field will automatically work in another discipline. In spite of the fact that we de-emphasize universal principles of writing in favor of teaching writing as part of the process of learning a discipline, students do learn a good deal about writing. We have found in our program that teaching students the process of drafting and revising in their content area courses, combined with appropriate reader feedback and in conjunction with writing conferences works well for many students. At the end of one semester, 62% of our student sample described their writing as improved. In addition, 90% of the students rated the helpfulness of their contact with their writing instructors three or above on a five-point scale, where five represented the most favorable evaluation, and 30% gave the highest rating possible.

In our efforts to teach the writing process across the curriculum, the writing conference emerges as a critical vehicle for communicating with students. In addition, we find that the collaboration which occurs between teacher and student in the conference setting serves not only to instruct students in writing but to further their thinking. Conversation as a mode of inquiry and instruction enables both speakers to teach and learn from each other. In the process of responding, teachers learn about students' intentions,

about their thinking and writing processes, about what they know and need to learn. Regardless of how much students value or learn from writing conferences, instructors clearly benefit as well.

This approach to teaching writing integrated with thinking and in conjunction with the conventions of different disciplines has in large part been defined by the aims of our writing across the curriculum program. Our goal in this endeavor is not simply a better student text but empowered student writers and learners. As Cynthia Onore argues on the subject of response, "Without empowerment there can be no significant purpose for responding to writing." In order to encourage empowerment, instructors must be willing to sit down with students and hear what they have to say. "Only within a context where an inquiring learner comes together with an inquiring teacher, where both persons negotiate, exchange meanings, and share and modify intentions, can empowerment occur" (247). The writing conference provides such a context for teachers and students engaged in dialogue. As they strive to become effective teachers of their subjects, our instructors consistently rely on writing conferences to enable them to accomplish their goals, and with good reason.

Pesche C. Kunloff is the Director of Writing Across the University at the University of Pennsylvania. She is the author of *Rethinking Writing* published by St. Martin's Press.

Notes

[1]My thanks to Michele Sinex, the writing consultant in this case, for allowing me to use this interaction as an example and also for reading a draft of this article.

[2]Using the work of Michael Oakeshott and Lev Vygotsky as documentation, Bruffee defines thought as internalized conversation (638-41). From a teacher's point of view, then, I would argue for the importance of sustaining a conversation with students which they can use as a model for their internal conversations.

Works Cited

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Bruffee, Kenneth A. "Collaborative Learning and the 'Conversation of Mankind.' " *College English* 46 (November, 1984): 635-52.

Flower, Linda. "Writer-Based Prose: A Cognitive Basis for Problems in Writing." *College English*, 41 (September, 1979): 19-37.

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Conference Worksheet

English 125, Section XX

Please complete and bring to the conference. Conferences will be held in my office.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. In this class, what has been your most successful piece of writing to date? Why do you think it was successful? (This may include journal assignments, short essays, etc.)

2. Overall, what areas of writing do you think you need to focus on most (for example: argument, organization, sentence structure, idea development, paragraphing?) What will you do/what have you done to improve your writing?

3. Evaluate your experience with peer review workshops in this class. What about it do you find helpful? What are its benefits? If you do not find it as beneficial, what are its downsides? How would you improve its structure? How would you characterize your participation in workshops, and overall, what kind of reader do you believe yourself to be?

4. How do you assess your overall performance in this class? How do you assess yourself as a class participant/contributor? How might you improve on your performance?

5. Please comment honestly about any aspect of the class, such as writing assignments, readings, class discussions, group work, etc. What do you like most about this class? If you could change something about the course or the instructor's teaching of it, what would it be?

HS 211 (FALL 2019)
United States History to 1877

Dr. Marcus Gallo, mgallo@jcu.edu
John Carroll University
Sec 51: MWF 11:00-11:50, AD 233
Sec 52: MWF 12:00-12:50, AD 233

Office Hours: Admin B255
https://mgallo.youcanbook.me/
MWF 10:00-10:45, 1:00-1:45
Tuesdays 10:00-11:30

Course Description

This course is a survey of American history through the post-Civil War era. It covers political, economic, social, and cultural history, emphasizing the diversity of the nation's people. In particular, we will examine how race, ethnicity, class, and gender have influenced America's history.

This course fulfills the Issues in Social Justice (ISJ) requirement of the core curriculum. It is also required for all history majors.

Required Readings

-Foner, Eric, *Voices of Freedom: A Documentary History*. Vol. 1. 4th ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 2014.
-Edwards, Rebecca, Eric Hinderaker, Robert O. Self, and James A. Henretta. *America's History: Concise Edition.* Vol. 1. 9th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2018.
-John Hollitz, *Contending Voices: Biographical Explorations of the American Past.* Vol. 1. 3rd ed. Boston: Wadsworth, 2011.
-Various articles available online through JSTOR.

Grade Structure

Signature on Academic Honesty Form	1%
13 Quizzes (1% each)	13%
4 Reading Notes (5% each)	20%
Final Exam	15%
Signature Assignment:	
Book Conferences by September 15th (mgallo.youcanbook.me)	1%
Pre-Paper Conference	5%
First Paper	15%
Revised Paper	25%
Final Reflection	5%
Attendance and Participation	
Attendance	(1% off final grade for each unexcused absence)
Participation	(Bonus of up to 3%)

Course Learning Goals

In this course, students will:

-Identify various facts about United States history to 1877, demonstrating a basic grasp on the major events of the period (see Quizzes below);

-Read and analyze journal articles written about early American history (see Reading Notes below);

-Produce research by choosing and interpreting appropriate primary and secondary sources, thereby creating and defending the students' own historical arguments (see Signature Assignment below);

-Synthesize their own narratives about broad swathes of early American history, selecting appropriate evidence from primary and secondary sources (see Final Exam below).

In addition, I expect students to develop their public speaking abilities by participating in class on a daily basis, as we discuss primary and secondary sources throughout the course (see Participation below).

Departmental Learning Goals

In alignment with the university's learning goals, the Department of History has established the following learning goals for history majors. History majors will:

1) **Think critically** by:
   a) assessing the strengths and weaknesses of historical arguments;
   b) critically interrogating primary and secondary sources;
   c) employing these sources properly in fashioning their own historical arguments;
2) Become competent **researchers** who can discover pertinent primary and secondary sources;
3) Become effective **writers** who can clearly and elegantly express a complex, thesis-driven historical argument;
4) Develop skills in **public speaking** and oral presentation.

This course addresses all of the department's learning goals: critical thinking [Reading Notes, Signature Assignment, Exam], research [Signature Assignment], effective writing [Signature Assignment and Exam], and public speaking [Participation].

Learning Goals for Issues in Social Justice

-Demonstrate an integrative knowledge of the human and natural worlds

-Develop habits of critical analysis and aesthetic appreciation

-Understand and promote social justice

This course meets all of the requirements for Issues in Social Justice, which are assessable through the final product of the Signature Assignment (see the final page). These requirements can also be assessed through the Final Exam.

Signature on Academic Honesty Form

I will not accept any papers until I receive your signature on the Academic Honesty Form, available on Canvas. This means that I will consider any papers that you submit to me as late if I have not received your signed plagiarism handout (even papers that you have submitted on time). Also, please initial one of the statements on the back of the form. The form appears directly below, for your records. You will receive 1 point for turning this in.

Academic Honesty Form

I realize that the following are all examples of academic dishonesty:

- Quoting a textbook, primary source, or any other material that is not my own in a paper or other assignment without a citation. This includes "cutting and pasting" from a website.
- Paraphrasing a textbook, primary source, website, or any other material that is not my own in a paper or other assignment without a citation.
- Paraphrasing a textbook, primary source, website, or any other material that is not my own "too closely" in a paper or other assignment. Anything that is paraphrased must include a citation and must be completely rewritten into my own words so that it does not, at all, resemble the syntax of the original. For example:
    - Original: "Bitterly disappointed and disillusioned, the western confederates divided into mutual recriminations that enabled the American troops to consolidate their victory."
    - Too closely paraphrased: "Severely disappointed and disillusioned, the western allies divided into mutual recriminations that allowed the American troops to secure their victory." Notice that I've only changed a few words, but the sentence is essentially the same.
    - Paraphrased using my own words: "The western coalition fell apart into a series of bitterly opposed factions. Thereafter, the Americans no longer faced serious military opposition."
- Submitting a paper or other assignment written by anyone other than me, including a friend, a parent, a tutor, or a paper mill.
- Submitting a paper or other assignment written by me previously for another class.
- **Helping someone else to engage in academic dishonesty.**

I understand that the university takes plagiarism violations seriously. **If I plagiarize an assignment, I will receive a "0" for the assignment, and have my infraction officially reported.** If I plagiarize more than once, I will fail the course, and may face further discipline from the university.

I have read and understand the preceding terms and I agree to abide by them.

_____ _____

Signature Name Printed

_____

Date

Attendance

I will take attendance daily at the beginning of class. Each unexcused absence will reduce your final grade by one percent (1 point).

Quizzes

I will derive quiz questions from the material we covered in class during the previous week, along with the assigned readings from both the previous week and the current week.

Reading Notes

Over the course of the semester, you will read four articles. On the day that a reading is assigned, you will submit **typed** notes, which will be graded on a check/check minus basis. These notes will respond to questions that you will find on Canvas.

If you receive:	Your percent correct is:	So your grade is:
√+	100%	5
√	85%	4.25
√-	60%	3
0	0%	0

-late notes are reduced by 10% (0.5 points)

Signature Assignment

For assignment details, see the final pages of this syllabus.

Participation

I reward serious, regular participation in the class with up to five bonus points, to be added to the final grade.

Final Exam Format

For the final exam, you must write one essay. During the exam, you will only be allowed to refer to notes that you take in class during our review sessions in Week 15 – I will collect these notes and hand them back during the exam.

I will give you a choice of three of the following essay questions:

1. Compare and contrast two of North America's colonies, describing how each colony changed over time, from its foundation to the American Revolution. Which countries colonized the land and why? How did the ethnic makeup of the colonies evolve? How did economies, religion, social structures and power relations differ?
2. Describe how the American Revolution unfolded, from its causes to its outcome. Who benefited from the revolution? Who did not benefit?

3. Compare the colonial era with the early republic. What impact did political, economic, technological, religious, and ethnic changes have on American society?
4. Describe the sectional crisis that led to the Civil War. Be as detailed as possible.
5. Describe how the Civil War unfolded. Explain how tensions during the war revealed inequalities in American society.
6. Describe Reconstruction. To what extent did Reconstruction succeed or fail? How did this era affect American lives and society?

Absences and Late Work

This class relies on regular student participation. If you do not attend every class, you will miss important information and your fellow students will not benefit fully from your insights. Arrive to class on time and refrain from leaving early, so as not to disrupt your classmates.

If you are absent during a quiz, you must have a legitimate excuse in order to schedule a makeup quiz during my office hours.

I will consider as late any paper that is not submitted during class or to the Canvas site on the due day. During most of the semester, late papers receive a grade reduction of 10%, which is normally one full grade (an A becomes a B, for example). Any papers turned in after the final papers are due (that is, after Thanksgiving Break) will receive a grade reduction of 50%.

Do your best to manage your time so that you can finish your assignments when they are due, or ahead of schedule. If something unforeseeable occurs that prevents you from doing so, come see me immediately.

Academic Honesty; Accessibility Services; Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Bias

John Carroll University's policies on academic honesty; student accessibility services; and discrimination, sexual harassment, and bias are listed on Canvas (https://canvas.jcu.edu/). These policies are available in the "Learner Support" section of Canvas folder that appears at the bottom of the global navigation bar on the left-hand side of the landing page.

Course Grade Scale

In order to receive:	Your grade range must be:
A	≥92.45
A-	89.45-92.44
B+	86.45-89.44
B	82.45-86.44
B-	79.45-82.44
C+	76.45-79.44
C	72.45-76.44
C-	69.45-72.44
D+	66.45-69.44
D	62.45-66.44
D-	59.45-62.44
F	≤59.44

Class Schedule

Read the textbook assignments for the day BEFORE coming to class. Bring all three textbooks (and any article we read that day) with you to class.

Reading Notes are due in class on the day the article is assigned. They must be typed. The articles are available on JSTOR through the library website.

Submit all other papers to the class Canvas site.

Week One: Introduction / Choose Paper Deadlines in Class
Wednesday, September 4 / Friday, September 6
Reading for Friday: Edwards et al., *America's History,* Chapter 1

Week Two: American Colonies
Monday, September 9 / Wednesday, September 11 / Friday, September 13 (Quiz)
Reading for Monday: Edwards et al., *America's History,* Chapter 2
Reading for Wednesday: Hollitz, *Contending Voices*, Chapter 1
***** Book Conferences with Dr. Gallo by September 15 (**https://mgallo.youcanbook.me/**) *****

Week Three: Early English Colonies
Monday, September 16 / Wednesday, September 18 / Friday, September 20 (Quiz)
Reading for Monday: Edwards et al., *America's History,* Chapter 3
Reading for Wednesday: Hannah Farber, "The Rise and Fall of the Province of Lygonia, 1643-1658," *The New England Quarterly* 82, no. 3 (September 2009): 490-513. **(Available on JSTOR -- Submit Notes in Class!)**

Week Four: British America
Monday, September 23 / Wednesday, September 25 / Friday, September 27 (Quiz)
Reading for Monday: Edwards et al., *America's History,* Chapter 4
Reading for Wednesday: Foner, *Voices of Freedom*, Chapter 3
***** Colonial paper: Conference with Dr. Gallo this week *****

Week Five: British America and the Imperial Crisis
Monday, September 30 / Wednesday, October 2 / Friday, October 4 (Quiz)
Reading for Monday: Edwards et al., *America's History,* Chapter 5
Reading for Wednesday: Hollitz, *Contending Voices*, Chapter 3
***** Colonial paper deadline: 1st Paper due Friday, Oct 4 at 11:59 PM *****

Week Six: Revolution
Monday, October 7 / Wednesday, October 9 / Friday, October 11 (Quiz)
Reading for Monday: Edwards et al., *America's History,* Chapter 6
Reading for Wednesday: Anne M. Ousterhout, "Pennsylvania Land Confiscations During the Revolution," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 102, no. 3 (July 1978): 328-343. **(Available on JSTOR -- Submit Notes in Class!)**
***** Colonial paper: Receive Graded 1st Paper in Conference with Dr. Gallo this week *****

Week Seven: The Early Republic
Monday, October 14 / Wednesday, October 16 (Quiz)
Note: No class or office hours on Friday, October 18 (Fall Break)
Reading for Monday: Edwards et al., *America's History,* Chapter 7
Reading for Wednesday: Foner, *Voices of Freedom*, Chapter 7
***** Colonial paper deadline: 2nd Paper due Friday, Oct 16 at 11:59 PM *****
***** Antebellum paper: Conference with Dr. Gallo this week *****

Week Eight: Jeffersonian America
Monday, October 21 / Wednesday, October 23 / Friday, October 25 (Quiz)
Reading for Monday: Edwards et al., *America's History,* Chapter 8
Reading for Wednesday: Hollitz, *Contending Voices*, Chapter 7
***** Colonial paper: Receive Graded 2nd Paper in Conference with Dr. Gallo this week *****
***** Antebellum paper deadline: 1st Paper due Friday, Oct 25 at 11:59 PM *****

Week Nine: Jacksonian America
Monday, October 28 / Wednesday, October 30 / Friday, November 1 (Quiz)
Reading for Monday: Jennifer Fish Kashay, "Agents of Imperialism: Missionaries and Merchants in Early-Nineteenth-Century Hawaii," *The New England Quarterly* 80, no. 2 (June 2007): 280-298. **(Available on JSTOR -- Submit Notes in Class!)**
Reading for Wednesday: Edwards et al., *America's History,* Chapter 9
***** Colonial paper deadline: Final Reflection Paper due Friday, Nov 1 at 11:59 PM *****
***** Antebellum paper: Receive Graded 1st Paper in Conference w/Dr. Gallo this week *****

Week Ten: Antebellum Reform
Monday, November 4 / Wednesday, November 6 / Friday, November 8 (Quiz)
Reading for Monday: Edwards et al., *America's History,* Chapter 10
Reading for Wednesday: Hollitz, *Contending Voices*, Chapter 9
***** Antebellum paper deadline: 2nd Paper due Friday, Nov 8 at 11:59 PM *****
***** 19th Century paper deadline: Conference with Dr. Gallo this week *****

Week Eleven: Manifest Destiny and Sectional Crisis
Monday, November 11 / Wednesday, November 13 / Friday, November 15 (Quiz)
Reading for Monday: Edwards et al., *America's History,* Chapter 11
Reading for Wednesday: Edwards et al., *America's History,* Chapter 12
***** Antebellum paper: Receive Graded 2nd Paper in Conference w/Dr. Gallo this week *****
***** 19th Century paper deadline: 1st Paper due on Friday, Nov 15 at 11:59 PM *****

Week Twelve: Civil War
Monday, November 18 / Wednesday, November 20 / Friday, November 22 (Quiz)
Reading for Monday: Edwards et al., *America's History,* Chapter 13
Reading for Wednesday: Kevin Kenny, "Abraham Lincoln and the American Irish," *American Journal of Irish Studies* 10 (2013): 39-64. **(Available on JSTOR – Submit Notes in Class!)**
***** Antebellum paper deadline: Final Reflection due Friday, Nov 22 at 11:59 PM *****
***** 19th Century paper: Receive Graded 1st Paper in Conference w/Dr. Gallo this week*****

Week Thirteen: Reconstruction
Monday, November 25 / Tuesday, November 26 (Quiz)
Friday classes meet on Tuesday, Thanksgiving break from November 27-29
Reading for Monday: Edwards et al., *America's History,* Chapter 14
Reading for Tuesday: Foner, *Voices of Freedom*, Chapter 15
***** 19th Century paper deadline: 2nd Paper due Tuesday, Nov 26 at 11:59 PM *****

Week Fourteen: Conclusion
Monday, December 2 / Wednesday, December 4 / Friday, December 6 (Quiz)
Reading for Monday: Edwards et al., *America's History,* Chapter 15
***** 19th Century paper: Receive Graded 2nd Paper in Conf. w/Dr. Gallo this week *****

Week Fifteen: Exam Prep
Monday, December 9 / Wednesday, December 11 / Friday, December 13
***** 19th Century paper deadline: Final Reflection due Friday, Dec 13 at 11:59 PM *****

Monday, December 16, 1:00-2:50 PM -- HS 211-52 Final Exam (12:00 class)
Friday, December 20, 10:00-11:50 AM -- HS 211-51 Final Exam (11:00 class)

Signature Assignment for HS 211, History of the United States to 1877

Choose two groups of Americans that interacted with each other in ways that produced injustice. Explain why and how these two groups differed socially and culturally. What caused the two groups to interact? What were each group's motivations? What were the consequences of these group interactions? Use an individual from each group to illustrate your argument.

To find a paper topic, I recommend that you think broadly and look through all three textbooks for a topic that you find interesting. You may want to begin by finding interesting primary sources, either in your textbooks or in the resources available on the Grasselli Library website (find "history" at http://researchguides.jcu.edu/). Many fascinating primary sources are available through the Grasselli Library website, including the vast Early American Imprints database, a variety of newspapers, and issues of *Harper's Weekly* from the Civil War era. There are also numerous primary sources available from other sources online, such as http://founders.archives.gov or https://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/18th.asp.

I also recommend meeting with the librarian Nevin Mayer to help define a topic and find sources (https://nevinmayer.youcanbook.me/).

This signature assignment will be broken up into the steps described below.

1) CHOOSE AN ERA TO WRITE ON

You have a choice of three eras. You will make this choice **in Week 1 during class**.

Colonial – you can write on any topic up until 1776 (the year Americans declared independence)
Antebellum – you can write on topics from 1775-1848 (from the beginning of the American Revolution until the end of the Mexican-American War)
19th Century – you can write on any topic from 1800 to 1877

2) SCHEDULE APPOINTMENTS (1 point toward your final grade)

By the end of Week 2, you will schedule conference meetings with Dr. Gallo. Sign up for these meetings online at https://mgallo.youcanbook.me/. Make sure to **sign up for three different dates**, during the times that your paper group meets.

Colonial:
pre-paper conference: Week 4 (September 23-27)
receive paper 1 back, conference: Week 6 (October 7-11)
receive paper 2 back, conference: Week 8 (October 21-25)

Antebellum:
pre-paper conference: Week 7 (October 14-18)
receive paper 1 back, conference: Week 9 (October 28 - November 1)
receive paper 2 back, conference: Week 11 (November 11-15)

19th Century:
pre-paper conference: Week 10 (November 4-8)
receive paper 1 back, conference: Week 12 (November 18-22)
receive paper 2 back, conference: Week 14 (December 2-6)

3) PRE-PAPER CONFERENCE (5 points toward your final grade)
For the initial pre-paper conference, be prepared to discuss your topic and your sources. To get a check plus, you will need to bring the following with you:

-a description of your paper topic
-a potential thesis statement
-at least three **scholarly** books or articles
    -these need to be books from university presses or articles from scholarly journals – check the library for books and JSTOR.org for articles
    -bring the books with you or print out the articles
-at least two **primary sources**
    -print these out and bring them with you to the meeting
-NOTE: **websites do not count** as sources for the purposes of this paper
    -in general, you should avoid relying on websites for information for your papers
    -an exception to this is when you are referencing specific primary sources that are available online

4) FIRST PAPER (10 points toward your final grade)
Your first paper will need to be uploaded on the Canvas site after your initial meeting with me. This will also be graded using a check system rather than a letter grade. Please look at the rubric below – this will be the basis of your grade. I want you to underline your thesis statement.

IMPORTANT: This paper must be between 1500 and 2000 words, including footnotes. You do not need a separate works cited page.

Name the file after your surname, then number it after the draft and word count.
For example: if this is your first draft, your surname is Smith, and your paper had 1537 words including the footnotes, your filename should be: Smith1-1537

Due dates:
Colonial: October 4
Antebellum: October 25
19th Century: November 15

5) MEETING AFTER FIRST PAPER
We will meet the week after you submit your first paper, at the time that you have scheduled to meet with me. I will suggest revisions to improve the paper at that time. I expect you to implement those revisions – my expectations for the final paper are higher than they are for the first paper.

6) FINAL PAPER (25 points toward your final grade)
You will submit the final paper the week after our second meeting. You will need to expand the paper slightly and you must incorporate my suggestions into the final draft of your paper. The final paper will be graded with a letter grade. Again, please look at the rubric below – this will be the basis of your grade. I want you to underline your thesis statement.

IMPORTANT: This paper must be between 2000 and 2500 words, including footnotes. You do not need a separate works cited page.

Name the file after your surname, then number it after the draft and word count.
For example: if this is your second draft, your surname is Smith, and your paper had 2316 words including the footnotes, your filename should be: Smith2-2316

Due dates:
Group A: October 16
Group B: November 8
Group C: November 26

7) MEETING AFTER FINAL PAPER
We will meet one last time after you have submitted the final paper. In this meeting, I will give you your final grade for the paper and we will discuss how you plan to approach the final reflection paper.

8) FINAL REFLECTION (5 points toward your final grade)
The final reflection paper will be no more than one page. It will be graded using a check system. You must answer one of the following questions (indicate your question at the top of the page):

A) Given what you have learned since you wrote this paper, how would you approach writing this paper differently? If you were able to write a third draft, would you take a significantly different approach to that third draft?
B) What have you learned during the process of writing this paper that will help you in the future, outside of this class?
C) Think about your paper's topic. Does the way that the past played out still affect society in the present?
D) How has the process of writing this paper changed how you think about the past?
E) How has the process of writing this paper changed how you think about the present?

Name the file after your surname, then number it after the draft and word count.
For example: if this is your third draft, your surname is Smith, and your paper had 201 words including the footnotes (which you probably won't need), your filename should be: Smith3-201

Due dates:
Colonial: November 1
Antebellum: November 22
19th Century: December 13

GRADING RUBRIC FOR PAPERS

Student articulates a clear and persuasive thesis that is situated in the appropriate historical literature.	**Thesis**	Student articulates an identifiable and logical thesis.	**Thesis**	Student fails to articulate an identifiable and logical thesis.
10	8.5	7.5	6.5	5

Engaging, scholarly introduction and conclusion; coherent and consistent structure; sophisticated transitions; ideas and themes fully developed in separate paragraphs.	**Organization**	Functional introduction and conclusion; identifiable structure with discernible transitions (including topic sentences which relate back to thesis); few logical problems.	**Organization**	Poor or no introduction and/or conclusion; absence of connections between thesis and paragraphs; few or excessively long or short paragraphs.
25	21.25	18.75	16.25	12.5

Substantial evidence; sources integrated to clearly and effectively defend the thesis; skilled analysis of sources in light of their historical context.	**Analysis of Evidence**	Sufficient evidence; sources credibly used to support a thesis; functional use of primary and secondary sources; analyzes sources in light of their historical context.	**Analysis of Evidence**	Use of only one or no sources; if present, sources not analyzed to support thesis; overlooks historical context of documents.
40	34	30	26	20

Skillful attention to sentence structure and word choice; no grammatical errors that inhibit clarity; only minor errors in usage, punctuation, or spelling.	**Style**	Proper sentence structure; few grammatical, mechanical and usage errors, slang, or clichés.	**Style**	Incoherent sentence structure and word choice; frequent grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.
15	12.75	11.25	9.75	7.5

Consistent attention to proper format for citation and proper use of sources; highest level of academic integrity.	**Documentation**	Sufficient attention to guidelines for citation and proper use of sources; no plagiarism.	**Documentation**	Lack of attention to guidelines for citation of sources; evidence of plagiarism.
10	8.5	7.5	6.5	5

Total Score:		**Points Toward Final Grade:**	