

English 462-01: Sr. Seminar – The Figure of the Pirate  
Eastern Connecticut State University  
Spring 2009  
Wednesdays, 7-9:45pm  
Winthrop Hall, 100A

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Office hours: M 3-5pm; W  
10am-12pm; F 10-11am; and  
by appointment

## The Figure of the Pirate: Part Two

### About the class

In the second half of the seminar, we'll build on the foundation we laid last semester as you pursue independent research and writing on a topic of your own devising. Independent work is just that—independent—but we'll continue to meet as a group to prevent your work from being utterly solitary. Last semester's discussion-focused seminar will be transformed into something like a writing workshop this semester as you draft and revise your work, receiving feedback from others in the class, and read and respond to the work of others.

Because the focus of the class is on workshopping papers, it's essential that you be prepared both to share your own work and to comment thoughtfully on other people's. For the class to succeed—and for you to get the feedback that will help you write the best seminar paper in your power—you need keep up with the pace of work in the class. If you're to have new material one week, you need to have new material, *even if it's still rough*. You also need to ensure that you have enough time to read and respond to other people's work as you'd wish them to read and respond to your own.

I have to emphasize that the quality of this class will depend entirely on the level of engagement and commitment of its members. Everybody's success will be in proportion to the work that everybody else puts in.

### Required text

The only required text this semester is *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*, by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein (W. W. Norton & Company, 2006). If you don't already have one, you might also look for a copy of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. You should also be prepared to incur some costs related to photocopying, etc.

### Assignments

*Written work:* The major assignment for the semester, of course, is the seminar paper itself, which will end up weighing in at somewhere around 20-25 pages or more. On the way to the final draft, there will be a number of intermediate deadlines, for which you'll also be responsible.

*Workshopping/participation:* While writing your seminar paper will be your largest individual assignment this semester, you'll spend a fair amount of time reading and responding to other people's work. You'll work with a primary review group of approximately three people (groups will be constituted according to the complementarity of members' topics). You'll also have the

opportunity to give feedback to and receive feedback from other members of the class not in your primary review group.

*Class blog:* We'll be using a blog hosted at Wordpress.com for sharing and commenting on work this semester: <<http://figureofthepirate.wordpress.com>>. You will need to set up a free account at Wordpress, if you don't have one already. I've sent "invitations" to each of you to join.

*Oral presentations:* You will give two formal oral presentations on your project this semester: one near the beginning of the semester, and one at the end. The first presentation will be five minutes long, and the second will be ten minutes long. These presentations should be focused and polished—not improvised, but carefully planned out. At the very least, you should have notes or an outline, but you may find it helpful to write your presentation text out fully. You may want to provide a handout, but there won't be time for PowerPoints.

### **Grading**

Your final grade for the course will be no lower than the grade arrived at using this formula:

Participation/workshopping	40%
Oral presentations	20%
Seminar paper (product and process)	40%

### **Academic Integrity**

As the capstone to the English major, this seminar is dedicated to the proposition that students should carry out substantial, independent, original research. Obviously, plagiarism (misrepresenting someone else's work as your own) runs absolutely counter to that ideal. There should be little danger of unintentional plagiarism in this class, since we'll have an entire semester to think through the relationship between your work and the work of other scholars. If I discover, however, that you've attempted to pass off someone else's work as your own, you will receive a grade of "F" for the course. In keeping with Eastern's academic misconduct policy, I will also refer cases of plagiarism to the University's judicial officer.

### **Other notes**

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of AccessAbility Services at 465-5573. Please understand that I cannot provide accommodations based upon AccessAbility until I have received an accommodation letter from the Office of AccessAbility Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Obviously, we'll be doing a lot of peer review of our own, but I also encourage you to use the support offered by the **Academic Services Center** located on the ground floor of the Library.

Tutoring, Math, Writing, and supplemental Advising Services are available for students in the Center at the following times: Sun. 2-9; M.-Th. 9-9, Fri. 9-5. (Closed Sat.) For further information, check the ASC website at <<http://academicaffairs.easternct.edu/ASC-FAQs.html>>, or call 465-4272.

**Schedule**  
(some shifting may occur)

Week 1	1/28	<b>Regrouping</b> (Stupid snow!)
Week 2	2/4	<p><b>Discussion:</b> “So you want to write literary criticism”: The rhetoric of literary analysis, varieties of claims, argumentation, and evidence</p> <p><b>Read:</b> <i>They Say/I Say</i>, Introduction (pp. 1-13), Chapters 1-2 (pp. 17-37), Chapters 4-5 (pp. 51-71), and Chapter 10 (pp. 123-31)</p> <p><b>Assignment:</b> Choose one secondary source that you expect you’ll definitely use in your seminar paper and re-read it, looking for the ways that the author has employed any of the various “moves” that Graff and Birkenstein describe. (Note, of course, that the authors may not have used precisely the same words that Graff and Birkenstein have chosen for their templates.)</p> <p>Note the ways they introduce and summarize the views of others, as well as the ways they signal the extent to which they are agreeing or disagreeing with arguments others have made. Note, especially, moments of what Graff and Birkenstein (in Chapter 10) call “metacommentary”—the places where the writer signals to readers what they’re doing in their argument.</p>
Week 3	2/11	Prepare a preliminary statement of your thesis (in approximately one paragraph), a preliminary outline, and a list of ongoing research/argumentation questions (that is, stuff you kind of think you might need to look into or figure out). <b>You’re not committed to any of these things yet, so don’t freak out.</b>
Week 4	2/18	<p>No formal class session: Conference week</p> <p><b>Due:</b> At least five pages of draft work posted to the class blog by <b>5pm Monday, February 16.</b> (Note – “five pages,” not necessarily the <i>first</i> five pages: <i>any</i> five pages.)</p> <p><b>Over the course of the week:</b> Read everybody’s work. Provide written comments at least to the other members of your core review group, as well as to anybody else you’d care to.</p>
Week 5	2/25	<b>Due:</b> Section engaging with at least one secondary source. Review <i>They Say/I Say</i> , Chapters 1-5, looking for templates that you can use (or modify) to: 1) summarize the writer’s argument and 2) position your own argument relative to it (paying particular attention to Chapter 5).

Week 6	3/4	<b>Oral presentations:</b> Give us the really short (five-minute!), focused version of your argument as it stands now.
Week 7	3/11	No formal class session: Conference week <b>Due:</b> At least five more pages of draft work posted to the class blog by <b>5pm Monday, March 9.</b> (May or may not be continuous with the last set of five pages you gave us.) <b>Over the course of the week:</b> Read everybody's work. Provide written comments at least to the other members of your core review group, as well as to anybody else you'd care to.
Week 8	3/18	<b>Due:</b> New or revised section addressing the questions discussed in <i>They Say/I Say</i> , Chapter 7. Look for templates you can use (or modify) to explain to your readers the "stakes" of your argument. <b>Due:</b> Revised outline of argument, noting sources you'll be addressing in each section.
	Spring Break	
Week 9	4/1	<b>Due:</b> Draft of 150-word abstract of your paper
Week 10	4/8	No formal class session: Conference week <b>Due:</b> 10-15 pages of semi-polished work posted to the class blog by <b>5pm Monday, April 6.</b> <b>Over the course of the week:</b> Read the work of and provide written comments to at least the other members of your core review group, as well as to anybody else you'd care to.
Week 11	4/15	<b>Due:</b> Review Chapter 8 of <i>They Say/I Say</i> and look for places in the work you've produced so far where transitions could be clarified using any of the "moves" Graff and Birkenstein identify (or variants of them that you arrive at yourself).
Week 12	4/22	We will have class tonight. Just in case. <b>Due:</b> Full draft (20+ pages) posted to the class blog by <b>5pm Monday, April 20.</b> <b>Over the course of the week:</b> Read the work of and provide written comments to at least the other members of your core review group, as well as to anybody else you'd care to.

Week 13	4/29	<b>Oral presentations:</b> Give us the short (ten-minute), focused version of the argument you've arrived at this semester.
Week 14	5/6	<b>Oral presentations:</b> Give us the short (ten-minute), focused version of the argument you've arrived at this semester. <b>Due:</b> Two versions of an abstract of your paper: a brief, 150-word version and a longer (less than 500-word) version. Post these to the class blog by <b>5pm Thursday, May 7.</b>
Week 15	5/13	<b>English Department Awards Ceremony and Senior Seminar Reading</b> – 5:30-7:30pm in the Student Center Theatre. <b>Afterwards:</b> Celebration and general releasing of steam.