FS 102
Academic Discourse II: “Smarter or Dumber?”
Spring 2014
Bob Roos
http://cs.allegheny.edu/~rroos/fs102s2014

Syllabus

Instructor: Bob Roos
Office: Alden Hall 106

Office Hours:
Mon., 9:30 am–11:30 am; 2:30 pm–4:30 pm
Tues. 8:30 am–10:30 am; 1:30 pm–3:30 pm
Weds., 9:30 am–11:30 am
Thur., 8:30 am–10:30 am
and by appointment

Go to http://cs.allegheny.edu/~rroos/schedule.html to schedule office hour appointments.
To schedule an appointment outside my regular office hours, please email me with your request.

Office phone: 814-332-2883 (on campus: extension 2883).
Email: rroos@allegheny.edu

Chat: you can try chatting with me via Gmail if you see that I’m logged on (but I often leave my email open when I’m not sitting at the machine, so good luck with that)

Time and Place:
MWF 1:30–2:20pm, Alden 109
Final Exam: Exam Group F—Fri., 2 May, 7pm–10pm (At this point I am considering ways to make the best use of this time slot.)

Textbooks:


Course Description. Here is the description appearing on the Course Information page at the Registrar’s Web site:

A study of the critical literature surrounding several familiar technologies. Proponents of modern media-intensive digital culture claim that television, video games, the World Wide Web, and other inventions have improved the multitasking, problem-solving, and
analytical abilities of today's students. Critics maintain that these same technologies inhibit the ability of students to think deeply and critically and have created what one writer calls "the dumbest generation." We explore these issues through readings, discussion, presentations, and experiments. This seminar develops oral and written communication skills with an emphasis on persuasive communication in an academic context.

**Learning Outcomes:**

These are taken directly from the Allegheny College "First-Year/Sophomore (FS) Program" Web site at [http://sites.allegheny.edu/facultyresources/fsprogram/](http://sites.allegheny.edu/facultyresources/fsprogram/).

- To participate in a sustained conversation with other academic writers and speakers
- To generate a thesis that addresses a clearly defined problem
- To support a thesis with appropriate reading and evidence
- To communicate in progressively complex and nuanced ways

**Grading:** (All percentages are approximate!)

- Three formal papers (5–6 pages each) approx. 45% (15% each)
- Two major presentations (7–10 minutes each) approx. 30% (15% each)
- Shorter assignments (oral and written) 15%
- Attendance and participation 10%

**Attendance:**

If you miss class for any reason (yes, even sleeping in or forgetting what day it is!), please notify me as soon as you are able. Frequent or prolonged absences due to illness should be documented by the Health Center, the Dean of Students' Office, or the office of Student Disability Services. If other circumstances arise that are beyond your control, please contact the Dean of Students office and explain the situation to them so that they can notify the instructors of your courses. Even if your reason for missing class would not be considered a justifiable excuse, please acknowledge and explain any absences.

**Late Policy:** Every assignment has a due date and time. Failure to hand in an assignment by the deadline will result in a late submission penalty.

Assignments handed in within one week of the deadline will receive automatic reductions of one and a half letter grades (so, maximum grade B-); this is in addition to reductions in grade resulting from the evaluation of the work. Assignments handed in within two weeks of the deadline, but not within one week, will receive automatic grade reductions of three letter grades (so, maximum grade D) on top of any other reductions in grade. Assignments will not be accepted more than two weeks past the deadline unless you can provide clear evidence of extenuating circumstances.

Late submission of assignments creates serious fairness issues for the members of the class who hand in their work on time; it is not fair or reasonable for someone to receive a non-zero grade on an
assignment that is handed in weeks after everyone else has submitted their work. Any extenuating circumstances must be documented through the Learning Commons, Counseling Center, Dean of Students office, Health Center, or other authoritative source.

Email:

“The use of email is a primary method of communication on campus. . . . All students are provided with a campus email account and address while enrolled at Allegheny and are expected to check the account on a regular basis.” [p. 8, The Compass, the Allegheny College student handbook]

I will sometimes need to send out announcements to the class with things such as clarifications, changes in the schedule, or other matters. I will use your Allegheny College email account to do this. It is your responsibility to check your email (I suggest at least once a day) and to make certain that your email is working correctly (able to send and receive messages).

Special Needs and Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services at (814) 332-2898. Disability Services is part of the Learning Commons and is located in Pelletier Library. Please do this as soon as possible to ensure that approved accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Honor Code:

All students enrolled at Allegheny College are bound by the Honor Code. For FS courses, the following sections are especially relevant:

Section 3

Plagiarism is defined as using the ideas or words of another without citing the sources from which the ideas or words are taken. In take-home examinations, papers, and reports, the following must be carefully observed:

A. Any sequence of words taken verbatim from another source not original with the student must be enclosed in quotation marks and its source fully and accurately identified. Such material must be quoted accurately.

B. Any sequence of words taken verbatim from any other work of the student must be enclosed in quotation marks and its source fully and accurately identified. (See Section 4)

C. Where the ideas of another are paraphrased or interpreted, quotation marks cannot be used. In these cases, the student must fully and accurately cite the source. In addition, the language and sentence structure must be that of the student and not of the original source author. While each instructor who assigns a paper, report, or examination may direct students to a particular style for footnote and bibliographic documentation, the rules noted above must be followed. Ignorance here or in any other part of the code is no excuse.

Section 4

No work submitted for one course may be submitted also for another course except with the explicit approval of both instructors.
### Tentative Schedule for FS 102, Spring 2014

Most weeks will consist of two student-led class sessions, plus one instructor-led session. In most cases these will be related to material in the readings (the two textbooks plus other resources).

Some weeks will be devoted almost entirely to student formal presentations.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>13–17 Jan</td>
<td>Introductions; sharing FS 101 experiences; getting started</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>20–24 Jan</td>
<td>Thompson; student-led discussion</td>
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**Mon 20 Jan: NO CLASS: MLK DAY**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>27–31 Jan</td>
<td>Thompson; student-led discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3–7 Feb</td>
<td>Thompson; student-led discussion; first paper due 7 Feb</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>10–14 Feb</td>
<td>First presentation</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>17–21 Feb</td>
<td>First presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>24–28 Feb</td>
<td>Lanier; student-led discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3–7 Mar</td>
<td>Lanier; student-led discussion</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>10–14 Mar</td>
<td>Lanier; student-led discussion; second paper due 14 Mar</td>
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**Mon 17 Mar–Fri 21 Mar: SPRING BREAK**

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>24–28 Mar</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
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**Tue 1 Apr: GATOR DAY! WATCH FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>31 Mar–4 Apr</td>
<td>Second presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>7–11 Apr</td>
<td>Second presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>14–18 Apr</td>
<td>Workshopping final paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>21–25 Apr</td>
<td>Final paper due 28 Apr; course summary</td>
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**Fri 2 May, 7pm** **FINAL EXAM PERIOD**

*(I DON’T KNOW IF WE WILL MAKE USE OF IT)*