**Games We Play: Sports Literature  
English 203-01 and -02, Texts in Conversation: Thematic and Intertextual Perspectives**

Monday/Wednesday/Friday **◘** JRC 246 **◘** 9:35–10:40 (01) and 10:55–12:00 (02) Dr. Elizabeth Wilkinson **◘** wilk9056@stthomas.edu   
Office: JRC 358 **◘**  Contact: 651-962-5632 **◘** Office Hours: MWF 12:00 – 1:00 and by appointment  
 **“You learn more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation.” ~Plato**

What is any sports event but a story—multiple stories—playing out before our eyes? Sports by definition involve conflict and drama: man vs. man; man vs. himself; man vs. nature; and, if we believe it possible, man vs. the supernatural. It’s no accident that some of our greatest metaphors come from the arena of athletics. In this class, we’ll be investigating a theme that develops across genres. Through sports we have a way to look at the values of America: at the best we have to offer…and the worst.

This course is designed to help you become better **readers**, **writers**, and **critical thinkers**. Ultimately, through this class, I hope you develop confidence in your writing, recognize the writing tools you already own, enjoy the literature you read, and take bold rhetorical chances.

**Some of our goals include… (see also the departmental goals on Bb)**

* trying your hand at four different types of shorter essays (2 pages each=8 pages):
  + Close Reading
  + Rhetorical Analysis
  + Text in relation to another Text
  + Text in relation to a Scholarly or Research Article (written for Team Discussion)
* writing two longer essays (5 pages each=10 pages):
  + Ethnographic Study
  + Personal Narrative
* playing with types of writing that lead you to your completed essays:
  + “Composting” (a type of in-class free writing)
  + Reader Response (an on-going notebook of reactions)
* evaluating and using some basic and some sophisticated tools for composition:
  + The rhetorical triangle, plus the elements of context, intent, and genre
  + Types of appeals—ethos, pathos, logos
  + First, second, and third person—I, you, they (when is each appropriate?)
  + Paragraph unity, paragraph structures, and topic sentences
* knowing how to avoid common grammar/punctuation errors

**Required Texts**

Percy, Benjamin. *The Wilding* (novel) **the author is coming to our class September 30!**

Sandoz, Joli (Ed). *A Whole Other Ball Game* (anthology selections—stories, articles, poetry)

Bascomb, Neal. *The Perfect Mile* (historical non-fiction)

Bissinger, H.G. *Friday Night Lights* (ethnographic non-fiction)

Greenberg, Richard. *Take Me Out* (play)

Readings on Blackboard or in class, as assigned

**Assignments**

20% In-class “Composts” and Reader Response Notebook

20% Conferences, Writing Workshops, Team Discussion, Participation

60% Final Portfolio: 15-18 pages of polished, revised work (3-4 short essays and 2 long essays)

**Grades on all essays are tentative until the final draft is presented in the Portfolio**

**Grading Scale: A=superior; B=above avg.; C=average; D=below avg.; F=far below avg.**

94-100 = A; 90-93 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 84-86 = B; 80-83 = B-; 77-79 = C+; 74-76 = C; 70-73 = C-;

67-69 = D+; 64-66 = D; 60-63 = D-; < 60 = F

**Final Portfolio (60%)**

* Your portfolio will include:
  + - table of contents
    - a persuasive letter to me on your writing and reading experiences
    - five or six polished essays (revised)
    - drafts of essays
    - writing workshop handouts
    - selected reader responses and “composts,” if you choose

**Revision Policy**: You may revise each essay twice any time during the course of the semester.

**The portfolio is a rhetorical artifact you use to argue for the grade you have earned.**

**Late Policy and Portfolios**

* All essays must come in **at the beginning of class** on the day they are due. If you turn in an essay late, that is, if it comes in any time after the beginning of class, you cause your Final Portfolio grade to be reduced by a certain percentage: one late paper = -5% (out of a possible 100%); two late papers = -10%; three late = -15%; four late = -20%; five late = - 25%; six late = -30%. Remember that you are allowed to rewrite all of your essays, so if you are in a pinch, just be sure to bring in something, **even if it is a hot mess**. You must turn in all of the essays to pass.

**Workshops/Conferences/ Team Discussion/Participation (attendance policy) (20%)**

**Each of these components counts 5%; all four = 20%**

* You must attend class during **Writing Workshop** days with a draft in hand to share with your partner. No draft = workshop absence. Attend all workshops, draft in hand = A
* You must attend one writing **Conference** with me. Feel free to schedule more conferences for additional one-on-one help with essays. Come on time and prepared for our conference = A
* You must come prepared for **Team Discussion**, and must turn in the **Text w/ Scholarly Article** essay directly after class the day your team leads discussion. Bb has details and requirements. Getting it done solidly and completely; engaging your classmates in lively debate = A
* **Come to class** on time, having done your reading and writing, and be **ready to participate**. To participate means to actually exchange ideas with classmates out loud. So, leave your shyness at the door and come ready to share your ideas with me and with each other. If you’re excessively quiet or are obviously unprepared, then you’re basically absent.

Using your input to make the class an interesting one to be in = A.

* + **If you miss more than four classes, your grade will suffer. If you miss more than six classes, you could fail the class. There are no “excused” absences. You get four to use or not. After four, we have a talk. After six, in most cases, fail.**
  + **Would you text in the middle of practice? Don’t text in the middle of class.**

**“Composts” (private) and Reader Response Notebooks (shared) (20%)**

* If you miss an in-class compost writing, you can’t make it up. Like classes, you have four composts to miss without penalty. Grading = done, A/not done, F. Potentially, this is easy A.
* Reader Response is five minutes worth of writing about the selection you read for class, collected periodically during the semester. This is informal writing meant to get you thinking and to give you a place to start class discussion. Unlike composts, you will share these with classmates.

**Cheaters Never Prosper**  
Plagiarism: it’s theft of thought; don’t do it. Please understand that using someone else’s words or ideas as your own is grounds for failing an assignment, and, potentially, failing the course. No one wants that, so please know that **I value *your* ideas**—no need to look elsewhere. If you have questions about plagiarism, see this site: http://www.stthomas.edu/english/graduate/current/policies/default.html. We’ll work on correct paraphrasing and MLA citation so you won’t have to worry about mistakes. **When in doubt, ask!**

**Need Some Assistance? Consult the Center for Writing**  
The Center for Writing located in JRC 361 (right beside my office) is for any writer at any level who wants some qualified, one-on-one input on any essay for any class. Check their web address http://www.stthomas.edu/writing/ for hours and information. Call for an appointment: 232-5601.

**Enhancement Program for Disability Services**  
If you have any sort of disability that could affect your performance in the class or for which you need accommodation, please contact the Enhancement Program, which provides services for students with disabilities. Their web address is http://www.stthomas.edu/enhancementprog/; they are located in OEC 119; phone is 2-6315 or 800-328-6819, extension 6315. They’re open 8-4:30 M-F.

**General Semester Schedule**

These are the general dates for each of our five essays.   
Be aware that these schedules may be adjusted due to class needs.

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| September 7 – September 28  **Writing Workshop: September 26**  **Draft Due: September 28**  Benjamin Percy reading: September 29  Benjamin Percy in class: September 30 | **Close Reading**  (*The Wilding*) |
| September 28 – October 17  **Writing Workshop: October 14**  **Draft Due: October 17** | **Rhetorical Analysis**  (selections from *A Whole Other Ball Game* and more poems, articles, and stories on Bb) |
| October 17 – November 7  Friday, October 28: Fall Break  **Writing Workshop: November 4**  **Draft Due: November 7** | **Personal Narrative**  (*The Perfect Mile*) |
| November 7 – November 30  Thursday, November 24 and  Friday, November 25: Thanksgiving Break  **Writing Workshop: November 28**  **Draft Due: November 30** | **Ethnography**  (*Friday Night Lights*) |
| November 30 – December 14  **Writing Workshop: December 12**  **Draft Due: December 14** | **Text in relation to Text**  (*Take Me Out*) |

***The Wilding*** and **Close Reading Essay**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Reading due | Writing due | Activity |
| Wed.  Sept.7 |  |  | Introductions and whatnot |
| F9 | *The Wilding* 1 – 39 | Reader Response (five minutes worth of very informal writing to share) | Trade RRs (this will happen randomly throughout the semester—be ready!) |
| M12 | *The Wilding* 40 – 85 | Reader Response | **Team led discussion** |
| W14 | *The Wilding* 86 – 122 | Reader Response |  |
| F16 | *The Wilding* 123 – 142 | Reader Response |  |
| M19 | *The Wilding* 143 – 180 | Reader Response | **Team led discussion** |
| W21 | *The Wilding* 181 – 203 | Reader Response |  |
| F23 | *The Wilding* 204 – 238 (end) | Reader Response |  |
| M26 |  | **Writing Workshop: Bring a full draft!** |  |
| W28 | In class we’ll read four poems:  “The Poet Tries to Turn in his Jock” (Bb)  “Night Game” (Bb)  “The Springboard” (*Whole Other Ball Game* xi)  “A Night Game in Menomonie Park” (*WOBG* 211 - 212) | **Complete, revised draft due in to me** | Intro to rhetorical analysis using in-class poems  Info on and strategies for reading poetry |

**Short Stories, Poems, Articles** and **Rhetorical Analysis**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| F30 |  |  | Benjamin Percy will be in class—be ready with questions about *The Wilding* |
| Monday  Oct. 3 | Selections from *Everyday Use* (Bb)  Introduction (*WOBG* 3 – 17) | Reader Response on rhetoric of poems from W28 and/or Introduction | Info on Rhetorical Analysis |
| W5 | “Joan Benoit: 1984 Olympic Marathon Gold Medalist” (*WOBG* 157-158)  “The Fight to Establish the Women’s Race” (Bb)  YouTube videos in class  “The Lady Pitcher” (*WOBG* 85 – 86)  “To Throw Like a Boy” (*WOBG* 104 – 105)  “Revenge”(*WOBG* 278 – 292) | Reader Response  (Women in Sports) | **Team led discussion** |
| F7 | “Raymond’s Run” (*WOBG* 19 – 29)  “Lady Lobo” (*WOBG* 61–67)  “October 1968, Mexico City” (*WOBG* 77 – 80) | Reader Response  (Losing…and Winning) | I will be out of town at a Native American Symposium. Class discussion on Bb forum. |
| M10 | “Obsessed with Sport” (Bb)  “Posting –Up” (*WOBG* 31 – 59)  “Poem for My Youth/Poem for Young Women” (*WOBG* 60)  “Wet” (*WOBG* 124 – 133)  “Skating after School” (*WOBG* 278 – 279) | Reader Response  (The Sheer Enjoyment) |  |
| W12 | “Playing to Win” (Bb)  “Her Marathon” (*WOBG* 293 – 311)  “On Chuck Hughes, Dying Young” (Bb) | Reader Response  (Playing Hurt) | **Team led discussion** |
| F14 |  | **Writing Workshop: Bring a full draft!** |  |
| M17 |  | **Complete, revised draft due in to me** | YouTube video in class—an homage to Roger Bannister  Wear your running shoes—we’re doing a mile! |

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-HQozm_wpE&feature=related> (coverage of Olympic marathon)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMGPGq2tWg4&NR=1> (speech by Joan Benoit-Samuelson)

***The Perfect Mile*** and **Personal Narrative**

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| W19 | *The Perfect Mile*  Prologue – p. 42 | In-class writing on Personal Narrative | Info on Writing Personal Narratives |
| F21 | *The Perfect Mile* 43 – 95  “Frozen at Home” (Bb) | Reader Response |  |
| M24 | *The Perfect Mile* 96 – 137 | Reader Response | **Team led discussion** |
| W26 | *The Perfect Mile* 138 – 180  “My Life, My Body” (Bb) |  | Share ideas about Personal Narrative |
| **F28** | **Fall Break** | **Fall Break** | **Fall Break** |
| M31 | *The Perfect Mile* 181 – 225 | Reader Response | **Team led discussion** |
| Wed.  Nov. 2 | *The Perfect Mile* 226 – 269 | Reader Response | YouTube videos |
| F4 |  | **Writing Workshop: Bring a full draft!** | YouTube videos |
| M7 | “Autumn Begins in Martins Ferry, Ohio” (Bb) | **Complete, revised draft due in to me** | Friday Night Lights video and book preview |

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGaotnDSuqA> (homage to Bannister)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWqwi6FcyH8> Bannister breaks the record

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jP_NzZP_LK0> (actual call of the race between Landy and Bannister)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wQLEKw0Nkc&feature=related> (Landy helps opponent during race)

***Friday Night Lights*** and **Ethnography**

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| W9 | *Friday Night Lights* beginning - 52 | Reader Response | Info on Writing Ethnography |
| F11 | *Friday Night Lights* 53 – 105 | Reader Response |  |
| M14 | *Friday Night Lights* 105 – 157 | Reader Response | **Team Led Discussion** |
| W16 | *Friday Night Lights* 157 – 207 | **Ethnography Proposal is due** |  |
| F18 | *Friday Night Lights* 207 – 260 | Reader Response |  |
| M21 | *Friday Night Lights* 261 – 311 | Reader Response | **Team Led Discussion** |
| W23 | *Friday Night Lights* 312 - 367 | Reader Response |  |
| **F25** | **Thanksgiving Break** | **Thanksgiving Break** | **Thanksgiving Break** |
| M28 |  | **Writing Workshop: Bring a full draft!** |  |
| W30 |  | **Complete, revised draft due in to me** | Scenes from *Take Me Out* on YouTube |

***Take Me Out*** and **Text with another Text**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Friday  Dec. 2 | *Take Me Out* Act I | Reader Response | Info on Analyzing Drama |
| M5 | *Take Me Out* Act II | Reader Response | **Team Led Discussion** |
| W7 | *Take Me Out* Act III | Reader Response | **Team Led Discussion** |
| F9 | “God is a Big White Baseball” (Bb) | Reader Response | **Dramatic Reading of the Play!** |
| M12 |  | **Writing Workshop: Bring a full draft!** |  |
| W14 | “To An Athlete Dying Young” (Bb) | **Complete, revised draft due in to me** |  |

During finals week, you may meet with me to talk about revision of your essays and about putting together your final portfolio.

We will not have a final exam. Instead, your final portfolio will be due on the last day of finals. Feel free to turn it in earlier. We will set up specific turn-in dates/times as the semester draws to a close.

In addition to this course counting for your core requirement for English, you may also count this for a minor in American Culture and Difference, UST’s American Studies program. If you are interested in this minor, please see me for more details. Here are the ACD course goals:

1. Through reading and writing assignments, this course will offer students a critical perspective on the diversity of American society and culture.  
2. By studying a range of texts (music, film, advertisements, literature, television, art, political and historical documents, etc.), students will learn how national, class, racial, and gender identities have evolved in historically specific ways.  
3. Students will be exposed to the experiences, struggles, and achievements of communities that have been historically marginalized because of their class, gender, racial or sexual identities.