

Writing Seminar I: The Politics of Change

Gallatin School, NYU, Fall 2009
Course No. K10.0372
MW 6:20-7:35
715 B'way, Rm. 501

Hannah Gurman
hrg2@nyu.edu/212-992-7745
Office: Room 616
Office Hours: Th, 3:30-5

President Obama's campaign motto, "Change You Can Believe In," highlighted the need for change in American politics and in the world more broadly. At the same time, it also raised questions about what is actually meant by change and how real change is brought about. Should change be gradual or radical? Does change take place at the level of the individual or the collective? From the abolitionist and women's movements of the nineteenth century to the anti-globalization and environmental movements of today, these questions have long divided individuals and groups who have sought to change the socio-political order on a grand scale. Through a series of informal response papers and polished analytical essays, we will explore our own conceptions of how to "change the system" today as well as examine the contours of the great debates of anti-systemic change in the past. Texts will include essays, speeches, and literature of journalists, poets, politicians, and activists, including Stanton, Marx, King, Hurston, Weisman, and Obama.

Books

The following books can be purchased at NYU bookstore (18 Washington Pl.). In addition, there is a course packet, which can also be purchased at NYU bookstore.

Giovanni Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein, *Antisystemic Movements*
Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty*
Alan Weisman, *The World Without Us*
Hacker, *Pocket Manual of Style*

Writing

Over the course of the semester, you will complete several informal writing exercises and 3 essays. The informal exercises will not be graded, but I may occasionally collect them. You will submit a rough draft of each of your essays, for which I will give you a preliminary grade. However, only the final grade will be counted. We will frequently workshop rough drafts in class. On the day your essay is being workshopped, you will be responsible for bringing in hard copies for the class or your group.

Final papers must be submitted in hard copy. (i.e. I will not accept email submissions.) Please use 12-pt font, double-space, paginate, and staple your papers. Essays will be graded for both the content and form of their analysis. I'm often asked, how do I get an A. The best way to do well in this class is to write about topics and readings that really interest you and be ready to revise and re-revise your writing in order to explore our theme in as much depth and clarity as possible. Be ready to challenge yourself and to have fun doing it.

Assignments and Grading

Essay 1: 4-6 pages (25%)

Essay 2: 4-6 pages (30%)

Essay 3: 5-7 pages (35%)

Participation, Informal Writing Exercises, and Attendance: (10%)

Writing Seminar I: The Politics of Change

Late Policy: Unless you have made other arrangements with me, papers will be penalized by 1/3 letter grade for every day they are late.

Attendance Policy: You are allowed 3 unexcused absences, no questions asked. Except for extenuating circumstances, additional absences will be penalized.

On Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the representation of someone else's work as your own, in large part or in small part. Someone else means anyone else. Plagiarism is also failure to give credit where credit is due. Do not plagiarize. Consequences for plagiarizing are severe.

Introduction:

Sept. 9: Obama and Change: "Yes, We Can" (1/27/08)

Sept. 14: Obama and Change
Wallerstein, *Antisystemic Movements* (intro, chs. 2-3)

Nineteenth Century: The Struggle for Selfhood and Equity

Sept. 16: Emerson, "Self Reliance"

Sept. 21: Marx, "The German Ideology," Part IA and IC

Sept. 23: Stanton, "Address to the First Anniversary of the American Equal Rights Association"; "Address to the First Women's Rights Convention"
Pre-draft Writing Assignment Due
Kinds of Arguments/MLA Citation
Assign Essay 1

Sept. 28: **No class**

Sept. 30: **Essay 1 Drafts Due**
Workshop 2 Drafts

Oct. 5: Workshop 3 Drafts

Twentieth Century: Social Change in African American Politics and Culture

Oct. 7: **Essay 1 Final Due**
Martin Luther King, "Nonviolence and Racial Justice"; "Letter from Birmingham Jail"

Oct. 12: Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"

Oct. 14: Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain,"
Selected Poetry of James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, and Claude

Writing Seminar I: The Politics of Change

McKay

- Oct. 19: Hurston, “How It Feels to Be Colored Me”; “Why The Negro Won’t Buy Communism” (in *Folklore, Memoirs, and Other Writings*)
- Oct. 21 Pre-draft Writing Assignment Due
Assign Essay 2
- Oct. 26: **Essay 2 Drafts Due**
Workshop 2 Drafts
- Oct. 28: Workshop 3 Drafts

Twenty-First Century: Ending Poverty, Greening the Planet, Spreading Democracy

- Nov. 2: Sachs, *The End of Poverty* (intro, chs. 1, 2, 9, 10)
- Nov. 4: **Essay 2 Final Due**
Sachs, *The End of Poverty* (chs. 12, 18)
Escobar, *Encountering Development* (ch. 2 and conclusion)
- Nov 9: Weisman, *The World Without Us* (Part 1: pages 1-83)
- Nov. 11: Weisman, *The World Without Us* (pgs. 84-139)
- Nov. 16: Weisman, *The World Without Us* (pgs. 140-231)
- Nov. 18: Weisman, *The World Without Us* (pgs. 232-278)
- Nov. 23: Weisman, *The World Without Us* (pgs. 279-353)
Assign Essay 3
- Nov. 30: Summary of the National Security Strategy 2002;
State Department, *The Future of Iraq Project*, Economy and Infrastructure Working Group, Summary
- Dec. 2: **Essay 3 Draft Due**
Workshop 2 Drafts
- Dec. 7: Workshop 3 Drafts
- Dec. 9: **Essay 3 Final Due**
Naomi Klein, “Baghdad Year Zero: Pillaging Iraq in Search of a Neocon Utopia”
- Dec. 14: Reflections