

Engaging Assignments, Engaging First-Year Students

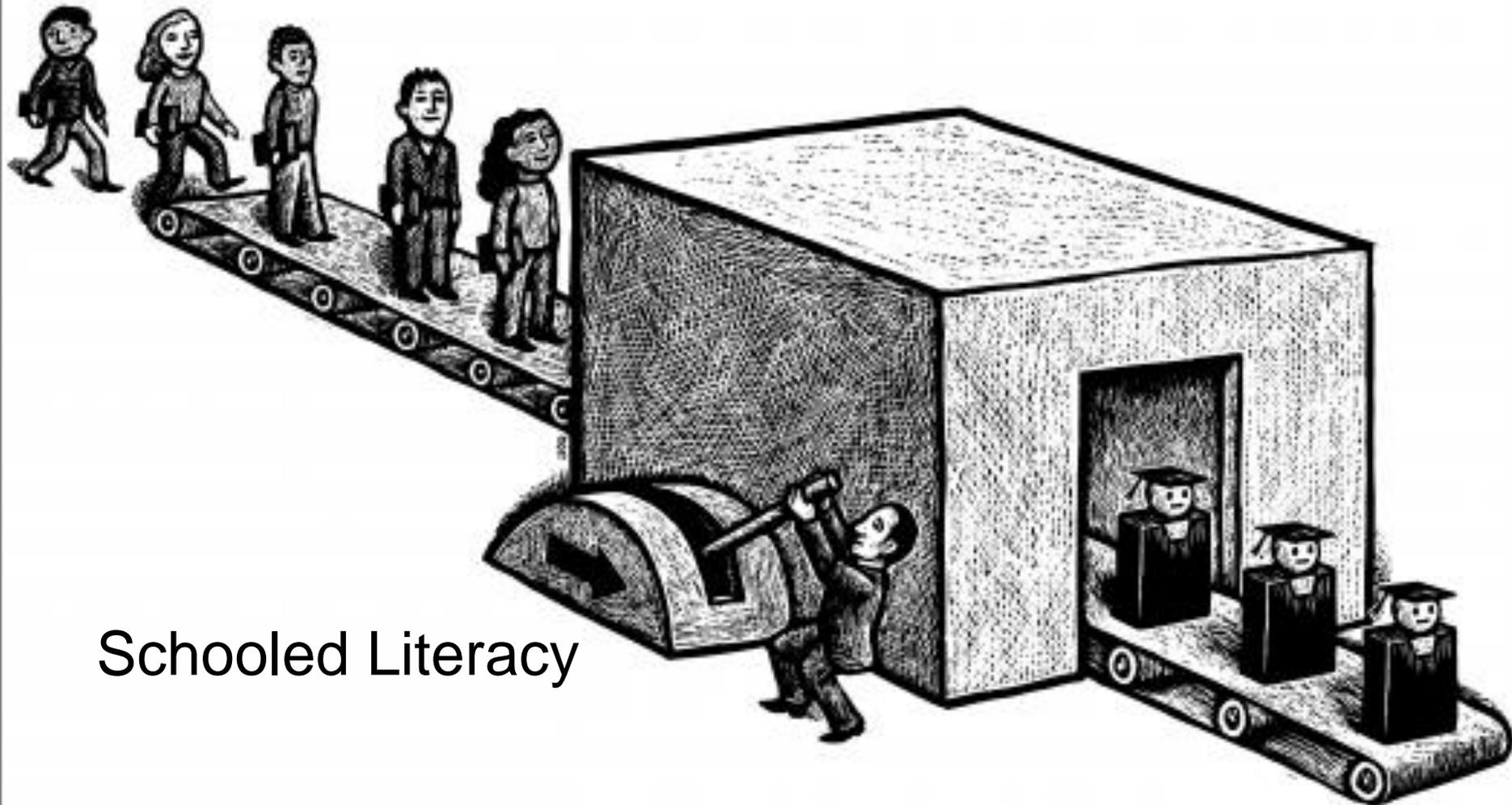


Jennifer Trainor
San Francisco State University



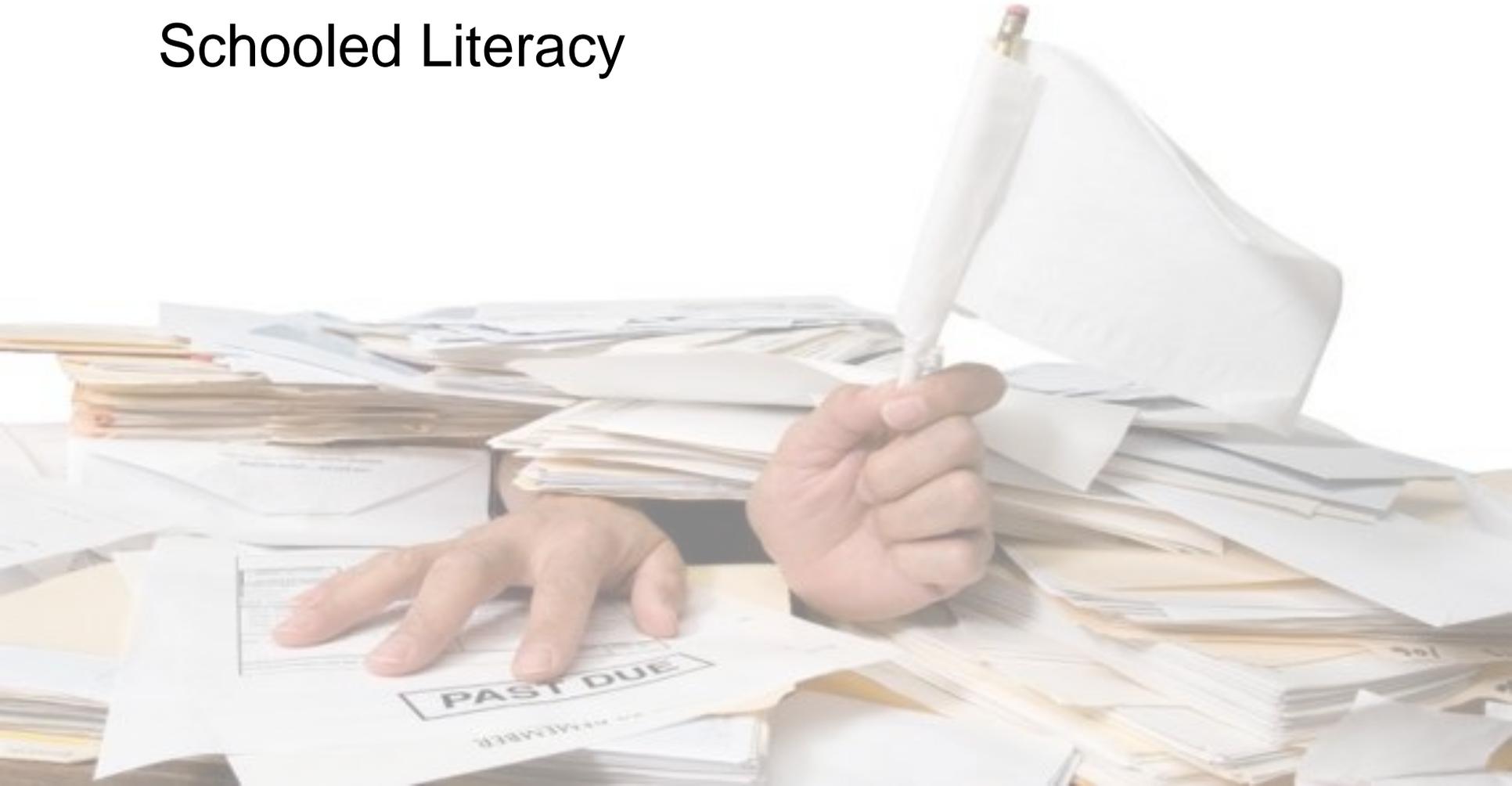
How have your assignments changed over time?
What motivated those changes?

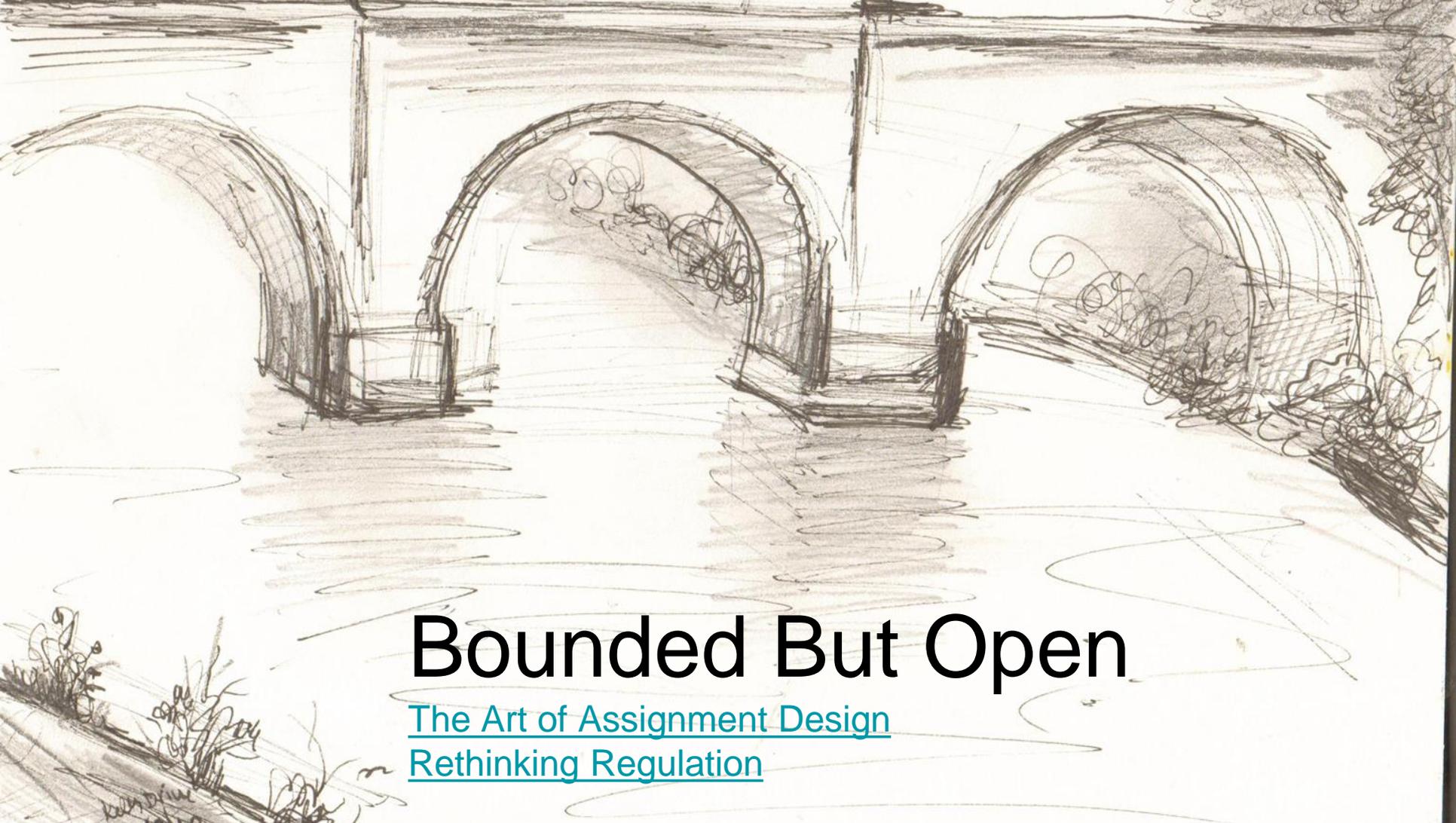




Schooled Literacy

Schooled Literacy





Bounded But Open

[The Art of Assignment Design](#)
[Rethinking Regulation](#)





Background: As first year college students, many of you are new to both the college environment and San Francisco State University campus. And, as a result, many first year college students find themselves overwhelmed and a little bit lost, often unaware of the resources available to them as students. Our goal is to help them discover resources that might help students acclimate to college.

Task: You will locate and research a number of different campus resources as you compile the information necessary to create an informational brochure. Your brochure will offer 2 expository paragraphs for each resource: one that explains some of the services the resource offers and one that provides instructions on the steps a student should take to make the best use of the services.

- You must visit each of the resources that you choose.
- For Box A, you must see either an EOP or an Undergraduate Advisor
- For Box B, you must make a tutoring appointment
- Do not staple your pages until I've handed out the rubric. Then staple the finished rubric to the top of the page
- For every resource include location and contact information
- Include a title page with the date, my name and the section number
- Put pages numbers in the bottom right of each page
- Use clear and focused language
- Use three list words and addition words to signal supporting details
- Do not use any font size larger than 12 and no margins larger than one inch
- Essays are due at the end of class on 10/3

1. First, please take note of what time it is, and then locate and copy out verbatim the full sentence as uttered by Lindsey and reported by Roozen in your copy of the textbook (that is, from the book itself, not from this assignment prompt).
2. Then, write it again, using square brackets to identify pronoun antecedents, align verb tenses, account for changes in capitalization, etc. in ways that are useful for your thinking (much like I did in the opening paragraph of this assignment prompt).
3. Next, please write it once more, this time separating out into a list, or a map of some sort, the individual words or phrases in the quotation you see as particularly useful to consider.
4. Once you have a list or a map, work to unpack, define, construct meaning for each of the parts you separated out in #3.
5. Finally, write a paragraph about your subsequent understanding (and “ownership”) of the quotation, your experience in working through this quotation, and how your work with that one quotation “enables you.”

Write a reflection about the process.

Explain your response to the reading.

Write about what racism means to you.



Task: You will locate and research two campus resources to create an informational brochure that offers 2 expository paragraphs for each resource: one that explains some of the various services each resource offers and one that provides detailed instructions on the steps a student should take to make the best use of the services.

Assignment Elements	Bounded	Open
Task: Method	x	
Task: Problem or question	x	
Task: Solution or answer	x	
Genre	x	
Scaffolding	x	
Procedures	x	

Task: Analyze the two articles using the questions we generated in class. Decide which article has the best analysis of _____. Write an argument to your classmates in favor of this analysis. Your argument should have a thesis and at least four reasons supporting it. Use at least one design feature (image, heading, pull-out quote, table or graphic) to enhance your argument.

Assignment Elements	Bounded	Open
Task: Method		x
Task: Problem or question	x	
Task: Solution or answer		x
Genre	x	x
Scaffolding		
Procedures		

Task: We've studied photosynthesis and conducted experiments with plants and light. Write down one question that this process has left unanswered for you, and propose a new experiment that might help us answer it. Create a slide deck that explains your question and the experiment you're proposing.

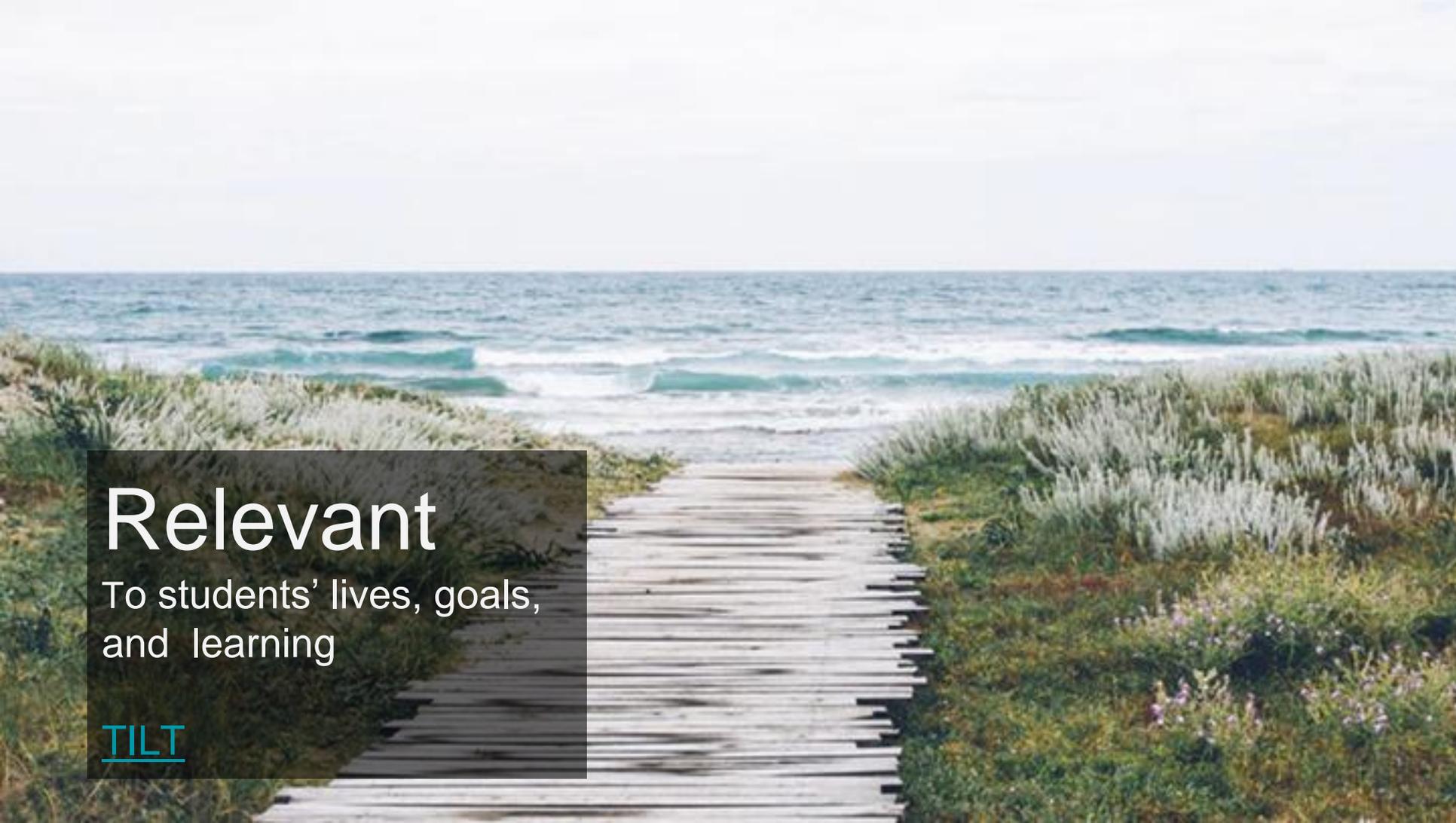
Assignment Elements	Bounded	Open
Task: Method	x	
Task: Problem or question		x
Task: Solution or answer		x
Genre	x	x
Scaffolding		
Procedures		

Task: Drawing on your experiences and analysis of the book, write a review for Amazon that encourages or discourages others to buy it. Briefly summarize the book, and explain what you see as its strengths/weaknesses.

Assignment Elements	Bounded	Open
Task: Method		x
Task: Problem or question	x	
Task: Solution or answer		x
Genre	x	
Scaffolding		
Procedures		



What parts of your assignments are bounded? What parts are open?

A scenic view of a wooden boardwalk leading from a grassy dune area towards the ocean. The boardwalk is made of weathered wooden planks and runs straight towards the water. On either side of the boardwalk, there are dunes covered in green and greyish grasses. The ocean is a deep blue with white-capped waves breaking in the distance. The sky is a pale, overcast grey.

Relevant

To students' lives, goals,
and learning

TILT

Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT)

Students want to connect learning to their lives. By calling attention to how an assignment will relate to students now and in their future careers, we can demonstrate meaning, value, and relevance. (“Just a TAD: Transparent Assignment Design”
Laurel Willingham-McLain)

Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT)

Where students perceived more transparency...they reported gains in academic confidence, sense of belonging, and mastery of **skills**.

(“A Teaching Intervention that Increases Underserved College Students’ Success” Mary-Ann Winkelmes, Mathew Bernacki, Jeffrey Butler, Michelle Zochowski, Jennifer Golanics, and Kathryn Weavil)

TILting

The Introduction to Your Research: Assignment 10

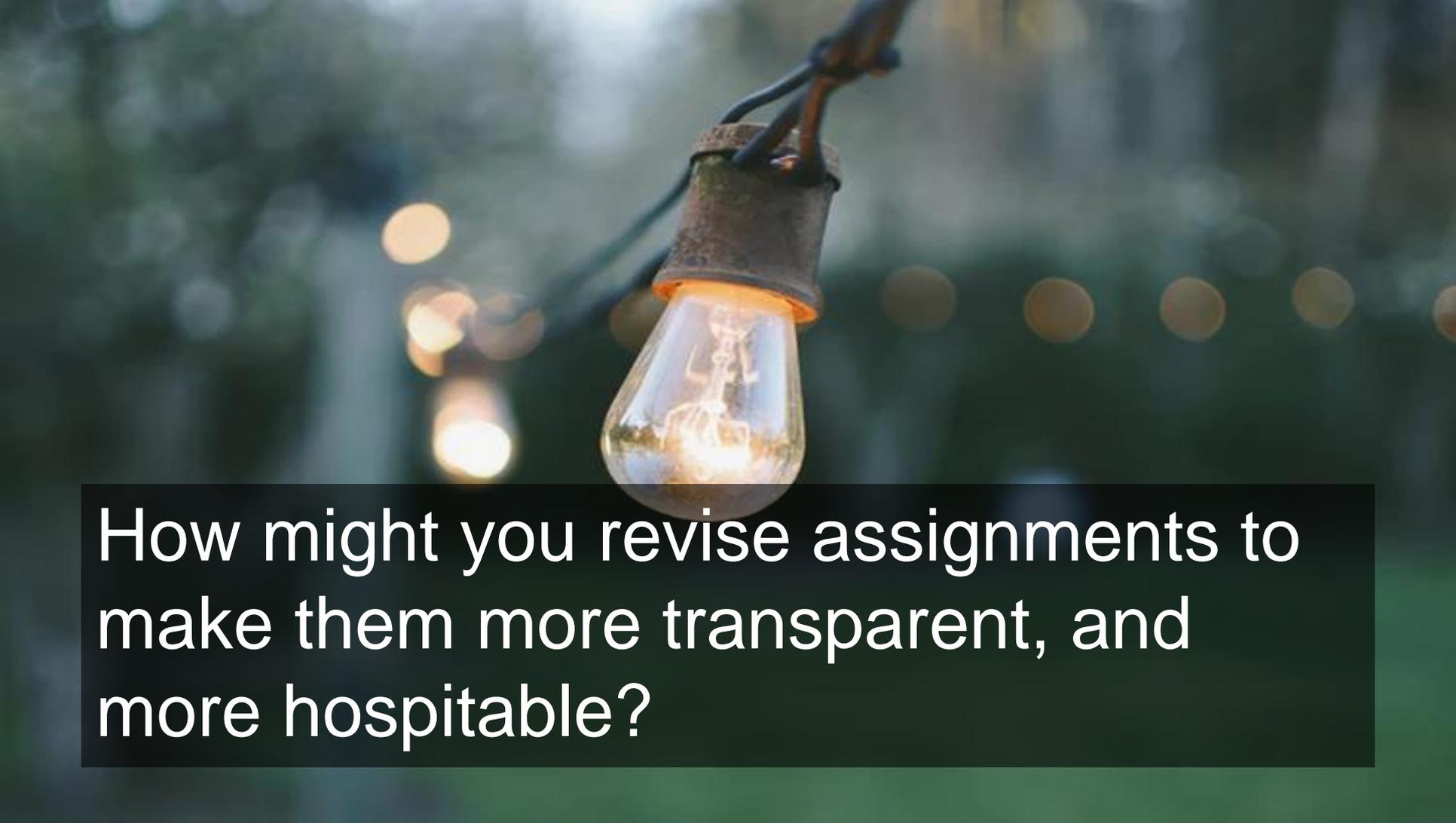
The rhetorical principles that we practice in this assignment will be useful to you in many contexts -- whether you're writing for a composition classroom or in your major, whether you're writing a letter of application for a future job, a presentation to a coworker, or a marketing plan for a product you want to sell.

In all of these contexts, you'll need to be able to pitch your ideas and keep your audience's attention. This week, we'll practice just that, starting with presentations in class, and moving to drafts of your introductions for your projects. When we finish, you'll have a professional introduction to your work, AND you'll have honed a skill that will serve you in your major and your career.

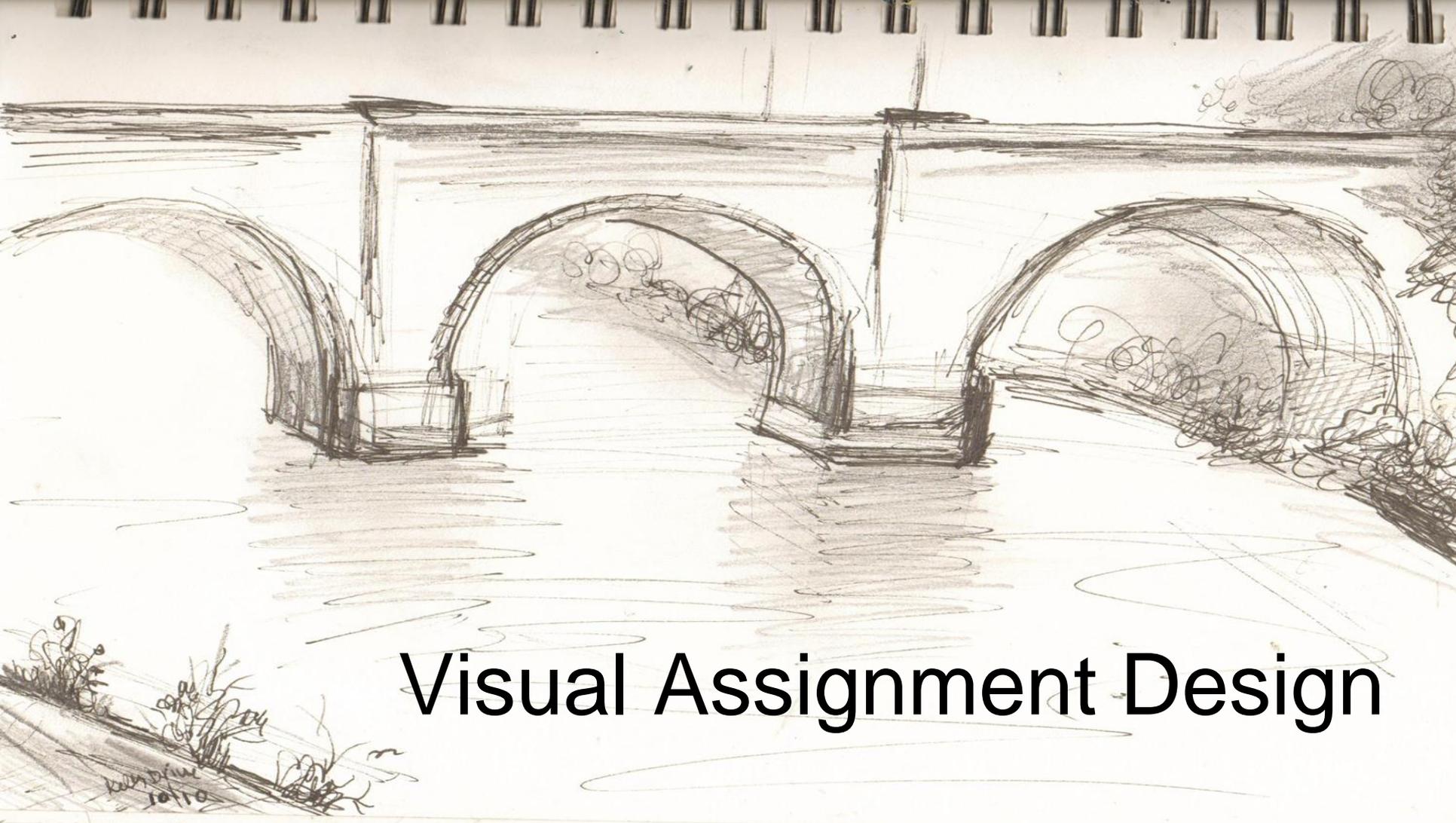
A stack of several books is in the foreground on the right. In the background on the left, a pencil holder contains several pencils. Further back, a camera is visible, and a spiral notebook is partially seen. The scene is a desk or study area.

Hospitable and Accessible

[The Accessible Syllabus](#)



How might you revise assignments to make them more transparent, and more hospitable?



Visual Assignment Design

Visual Design Priorities

Visual metaphors

Reinforce your message

White space

Reader-friendly and engaging

Layout choices

Openness and purpose are foregrounded;

Boundaries are visible but subordinate.



Writing the First Year
The Mission is You

Assignment Two:
Discovering the Campus

Our Purpose

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat

volutpat.

Your Task

1. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.
2. Sed mollis aliquam nibh.
3. Pellentesque pellentesque dictum urna.

Your Instructions

1. Vivamus gravida lorem vel neque pulvinar bibendum.
2. Aenean vestibulum odio faucibus sapien.
3. Pellentesque accumsan auctor tortor.

What Success Looks Like



MIDTERM PORTFOLIO

DUE SUNDAY, MARCH 24TH BY 11:59PM

FOUR TASKS:

1. REVISED CYCLE 3 ESSAY
2. REFLECTION LETTER
3. BOOK CLUB MICRO-ESSAY
4. WRITING HIGHLIGHTS

SEE FULL INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE

TO TURN IN:

1. POST REVISION ON ELI REVIEW AS USUAL
2. POST FOUR ITEMS ON YOUR PORTFOLIUM PAGE
3. PASTE LINK TO YOUR PORTFOLIUM PAGE IN ILEARN



FOUR TASKS:

1. REVISED CYCLE 3 ESSAY
2. REFLECTION LETTER
3. BOOK CLUB MICRO-ESSAY
4. WRITING HIGHLIGHTS

SEE FULL INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE

TO TURN IN:

1. POST REVISION ON ELI REVIEW AS USUAL
2. POST FOUR ITEMS ON YOUR PORTFOLIUM PAGE
3. PASTE LINK TO YOUR PORTFOLIUM PAGE IN ILEARN

Task Instructions:

1. Revised Eli Cycle 3 essay (800-1000 words)

Significantly revised

2. Reflection Letter (500-700 words)

This letter should cover the following two things:

- 1) what was revised in your paper and why
- 2) what you have learned in this class that helped you write this paper

3. Book Club Micro Essay

Write the question that your group came up with and answer it in 400-600 words.

4. Writing Highlights

Pick 3-4 pieces of writing (sentences or paragraphs) of your writing to share that you are proud of in some way as well as 2-3 quotes from others that were interesting or significant to you.

You should take at least one piece of writing from your first or second Eli cycle essays, annotated bibliographies, and Commonplace Books *each*.

For extra credit:

For extra credit points, include a cover image on each project in Portfolium so that it looks polished and eye-catching. Also curate the previous assignments from last semester (either update them with pictures or remove them).



Writing the First Year *The Mission is You*

Assignment Two: Discovering the Campus

Our Purpose

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat

volutpat.

Your Task

1. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.
2. Sed mollis aliquam nibh.
3. Pellentesque pellentesque dictum urna.

Your Instructions

1. Vivamus gravida lorem vel neque pulvinar bibendum.
2. Aenean vestibulum odio faucibus sapien.
3. Pellentesque accumsan auctor tortor.

What Success Looks Like



Writing the Sciences: Photosynthesis Questions and Answers

Your Question

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat.

Your Task

1. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit.
2. Sed mollis aliquam nibh.
3. Pellentesque pellentesque dictum urna.

Your Instructions

1. Vivamus gravida lorem vel neque pulvinar bibendum.
2. Aenean vestibulum odio faucibus sapien.
3. Pellentesque accumsan auctor tortor.

What Success Looks Like

ENGLISH 114

Instructor: Melody Parker | MWF 3:00 - 3:50 p.m. | HUM 474

Contact Info

mparker3@mail.sfsu.edu

Office hours

F 12-1 pm & F 2 - 3 pm
HUM 128

Visit me in office hours or email me to set up a meeting!

Important Dates

Mon. 9/3 No school

Mon. 9/17 Drop deadline

Mon. 11/12 No school

Nov. 19-23 No school

Fri. 12/21 Final Exam Day

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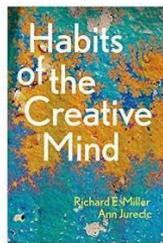
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Welcome to ENG 114! First-Year Composition

Course Goals

In this college course, you will begin to **see yourselves as writers and readers** contributing to the larger community of English composition. **Your ideas are valid, valued, and expected** throughout the course. We will not focus much on grammar or mechanics, though I will go over a few tricks. We will focus on content. You will learn to **demonstrate your understanding of language** and how it **relates to your personal identity**. You will learn to have a better command of the English language and to present yourself better on paper and in person.

Completion of this course fulfills your GE A2 Written Communication I requirement



This is your textbook (available in the SFSU bookstore or online). **Bring it to every class meeting.**

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change.

Grades

Writing Project.....	10%
Purpose Project.....	15%
Inquiry Project 1.....	20%
Inquiry Project 2.....	20%
Final Portfolio.....	15%
Other Work & Participation.....	20%

Student Learning Outcomes

- Use writing as a form of inquiry, in order to build inquiry-driven academic arguments
- Demonstrate a familiarity with rhetorical conventions, including purpose, audience, and genre
- Read actively and use information acquired from readings critically in your own writing
- Use writing processes and strategies for discovering and revising ideas
- Reflect on and develop student success and writing strategies; identify and practice habits of mind such as curiosity, openness, engagement, persistence, flexibility, and responsibility
- For a complete list of course expectations and student learning outcomes visit your ENG 114 iLearn site

Teaching Methods

The approach we will use in this class is **highly self-reflective and student-centered**. Much of the success of this class is in **your hands**. You will be asked to participate actively in class discussions and in small-group conversations about the readings and writing assignments for the week. To be successful in the course, you will continually refine your own ideas throughout the term. Be prepared to consistently **reflect on, rethink, and revise** your beliefs, interpretations, and views in an ongoing way throughout the term. Remain open to new ideas, be flexible and adaptive, connect to the other approaches or ways of thinking. And you should support your colleagues in doing the same.

There are no quizzes or exams. I won't lecture at you. We all make mistakes while learning new skills, so let's work to create a culture of **open-minded inquiry** in which we support, question, encourage, and respect each other without judgment.

Course Requirements

Required materials

- *Habits of the Creative Mind* by Richard E. Miller and Ann Jurecic
- Access to a computer (available for checkout at the library), iLearn (<https://ilearn.sfsu.edu>), and a printer
- Adobe reader (to view my feedback via screencast)
- A pack of 30 or more 3x5 in index cards

Major projects

The work we do for each class serves our five major written projects of the semester. In the **Writing Project**, you explore your history, voice, and identity as a writer/student; the transition



Reader-Friendly Text

English 1010 Course Description:

The purpose of English 1010 is to teach students to write clearly and to organize complex arguments that engage in a scholarly way with expert knowledge. Toward that end, students will learn to conduct independent bibliographic research and to incorporate that material appropriately into the sort of clear, complex, coherent arguments that characterize academic discourse. More specifically, in English 1010, students will learn that to write clearly means that they must take a piece of writing through multiple drafts in order to eliminate any grammatical errors or stylistic flaws that might undermine the author-audience relationship. They will also learn that, to write with meaningful complexity, they must learn to practice a variety of invention strategies, from the five classical appeals to freewriting to commonplaces to analytic reading strategies to library research – and to revise continuously the material generated by these methods. Students will also learn that, in order to make coherent arguments out of the material generated through these invention strategies without sacrificing complexity, their practice of revision must be guided by certain principles of style and arrangement – for example, principles of emphasis, cohesion, parallelism, figuration, and syntactic variation, to name a few. Also, students must grow adept in the genre of argument itself through work with models and templates of the sort outlined in the standard rhetorics of argument. Students must learn, moreover, that in order to create effective arguments they must cultivate strategies for analyzing the texts of other – that is, they must grow adept at situating the texts of others in a context, looking at them through the lens of some other body of thought, to see how such a move heightens the significance of certain elements of the text under analysis. And they must learn strategies for active, critical reading, strategies for deciphering why a text might be arranged a certain way and what that arrangement might mean, as well as strategies for summarizing and paraphrasing and quoting. Also, they must learn to conduct research in the library, evaluating sources, incorporating the work of others into their texts and doing so while following the proper conventions of citation endorsed by the Modern Language Association. Finally, in order to maximize the students' potential for developing these abilities, the method of instruction in English 101, week by week, will be organized as a hybrid that combines four different instructional modes: 1) discussions as appropriate to a seminar; 2) hands-on, productive work as appropriate to a studio or lab; 3) brief lectures; 4) regular one-on-one conferencing with the teacher. Through all of these means, students in English 1010 will learn to produce clear, complex, coherent writing with meaningful academic content.

English 1010 is designed to help you write clearly and organize complex arguments that engage in a scholarly way with expert knowledge. Toward that end, you will learn to conduct independent bibliographic research and to incorporate that material appropriately into the sort of clear, complex, coherent arguments that characterize academic discourse. Specifically, you'll learn that:

- To **write clearly** means that you must take a piece of writing through multiple drafts in order to eliminate any grammatical errors or stylistic flaws that might undermine the author/audience relationship;
- To **write with meaningful complexity**, you must learn to practice a variety of invention strategies (e.g., classical appeals, freewriting, reading and analysis, and library research) and to revise continuously the materials generated by these methods.
- To **make coherent arguments** without sacrificing complexity, your practice of revision must be guided by principles of style and arrangement, and you must grow adept in the genre of argument itself through work with models and templates established by standard persuasive rhetorics;
- To **create effective arguments**, you must cultivate strategies for positioning texts against each other to familiarize

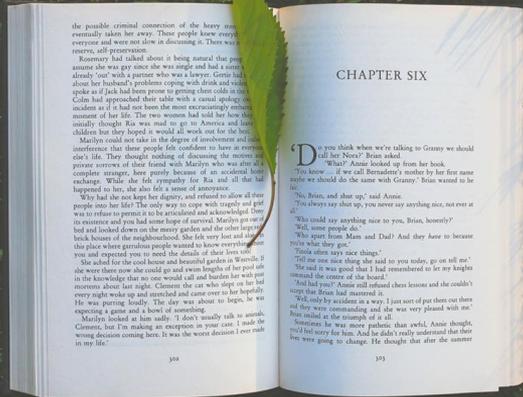
yourself with the arguments of others before developing your own claims, and grow adept at using warrants, evidence, counter-claims, and other rhetorical tropes to craft your own arguments. You will learn strategies for active, critical reading, strategies for deciphering why a text might be arranged a certain way and what that arrangement might mean;

- To **conduct effective research** means utilizing the library, evaluating sources, and incorporating the work of others into your texts using the proper conventions of citation endorsed by the Modern Language Association (MLA). You will also learn strategies and conventions for summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting others' work to support and develop original claims.

To develop the skills mentioned above, English 1010 balances seminar-style discussions with heavy student participation; brief lectures; hands-on productive work in writing workshops and guided "lab" exercises; and regular one-on-one conferencing with your professor.

By the end of the semester, you will have completed a **minimum of 30 pages of graded prose** as well as a minimum of 5 short low-stakes writing assignments. This page count is standardized across 1010 courses, but not to worry, I will guide you through each stage to make sure you're ready.

BOOK CLUB



PRESENTATIONS STARTING WEEK OF MAY 6TH

PRESENTATIONS SHOULD INCLUDE:

1. A QUICK SUMMARY OF THE BOOK
2. WHY THE BOOK IS VALUABLE TO READ WITH EXAMPLES
3. YOUR FAVORITE QUOTES FROM THE BOOK AND WHY

ALSO TO TURN IN:

1. A WRITE-UP IN YOUR FINAL PORTFOLIO INCLUDING YOUR STORY IN THE STYLE OF THE AUTHOR
2. A REFLECTION ON THE READING PROCESS

DIGITAL SHOW & TELL



MUST PRESENT AT BEGINNING OF CLASS BEFORE MAY 2ND

WHAT TO SHARE:

SOMETHING ONLINE (A VIDEO, SONG, MEME, ARTICLE, COMIC, ART, OR SOCIAL MEDIA ARTIFACT) THAT INTERESTS YOU AND CONNECTS TO THE CURRENT CLASS TOPIC (LANGUAGE AND POWER)

WHAT TO TALK ABOUT:

1. WHY YOU LIKE IT
2. HOW IT RELATES TO LANGUAGE AND POWER

REQUIRED TEXTS AND TECHNOLOGIES

- Blackboard, *check daily for schedule and assignments* <http://University.blackboard.com>
- If you have a smartphone, get the Blackboard App—it makes life so much easier.
- Class Notebook: *Bring to Class Daily*. We are writing our own textbook, you will not purchase one.
- Class Text System: Text @text2014 to (555) 555-5555; then text back your name when prompted
- Class Facebook Page: https://www.facebook.com/class_Like_page
- Oxford English Dictionary, www.oed.com (Off campus? From library edu, go to top right corner and click OFF CAMPUS LOGON. After logging in, you will be brought back to the library homepage and you can see subscription databases.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION (FROM ENGLISH DEPARTMENT)

English 101 is designed to help you write clearly and organize complex arguments that engage in a scholarly way with expert knowledge. Toward that end, you will learn to conduct independent bibliographic research and to incorporate that material appropriately into the sort of clear, complex, coherent arguments that characterize academic discourse. Specifically, you'll learn that:

- To **write clearly** means that you must take a piece of writing through multiple drafts in order to eliminate any grammatical errors or stylistic flaws that might undermine the author-audience relationship;
- To **write with meaningful complexity**, you must learn to practice a variety of invention strategies (e.g., the five classical appeals, freewriting, reading and analysis, and library research) and to revise continuously the materials generated by these methods;
- To **make coherent arguments** without sacrificing complexity, your practice of revision must be guided by certain principles of style and arrangement, and you must grow adept in the genre of argument itself through work with models and templates established by standard persuasive rhetoric;
- To **create effective arguments**, you must cultivate strategies for positioning texts against each other to familiarize yourself with the arguments of others before developing your own claims, and grow adept at using warrants, evidence, counter-claims, and other rhetorical topos to craft your own arguments. You will learn strategies for active, critical reading, strategies for deciphering why a text might be arranged a certain way and what that arrangement might mean;
- To **conduct effective research** means utilizing the library, evaluating sources, and incorporating the work of others into your texts using the proper conventions of citation endorsed by the Modern Language Association (MLA). You will also learn strategies and conventions for summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting others' work to support and develop original claims.

To develop the skills mentioned above, English 101 balances seminar-style discussions with heavy student participation, brief lectures, hands-on productive work in writing workshops and guided "lab" exercises, and regular one-on-one conferencing with your professor.

Grade Determination: I am required to enforce a grading policy uniform with the standards of the university and the English department because that is a multi-section class in which many students must be graded similarly. At the same time, I want to work with you to ensure you earn the highest grade of which you are capable. That's why I have daily work so you build toward papers and earn completion points; that's why I give reading quizzes and notes so you get credit for your work and stay on top of the reading; and that's why I create revision assignments so you always have thorough comments before you turn in the most heavily weighted version of the paper. I've set up this class to make it possible for you to do well while still maintaining ethics in grading, similarity across sections, and integrity at the university.

Unit 1: Analysis Paper	15%	Unit 2: Analysis Paper – Extension & Revision	20%
Unit 3: Research Paper	15%	Unit 4: Hybrid Argument Paper	20%
Group Work	10%	Low-Stakes & In-Class Writing / Quizzes / Homework	15%
<i>(Approx. 20 activities, calculated at end of semester)</i>		<i>Handwritten Notes (submitted periodically)</i>	
			3%

Before: Text-Based Syllabus



First-Year Writing: Rhetoric and Research in the Digital Era

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What Students Say

- "Dr. Womack is unlike other teachers... Traditionally, teachers teach topics and send you home to practice. Dr. Womack does this in reverse, you take notes at home and then you practice in class."
- "Come to class everyday ... discussions are crucial for success. Review old notes while writing essays to add elements we learned in class. This will boost your grade significantly."
- "Don't write off Dr. Womack's teaching style right off the bat because you're not used to it. Her method seems strange at first, but in the long run it will make you a better writer...you learn to become your best critic and analyze writing."

Course Resources

Dr. Anne-Marie Womack
Awomack1@tulane.edu

canvas

Google Drive

No books to buy. We write our own.

Text @class to 81010

After: Image-Based Syllabus

Accessibility

- Caption your photos
- Provide transcripts of video
- Use hyperlinks to provide alternative versions of instructional materials

<https://www.accessiblesyllabus.com/text/>

A background image showing a collection of colorful pencils (green, blue, purple, red, yellow, orange) arranged in a circular pattern, with their tips pointing towards the center. The pencils are slightly out of focus, creating a soft, artistic effect.

Universal Design For Learning

- Multiple Means of Representation
- Multiple Means of Action and Expression
- Multiple Means of Engagement
<http://udlguidelines.cast.org/engagement>



Questions, Comments,
Reflections, Discussion?