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Mitakuye Oyasin : Pedagogy and Design in Composition I

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MITAKUYE OYASIN: PEDAGOGY AND DESIGN IN COMPOSITION I

BY

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE PAGE

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This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for

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This thesis is dedicated to *Mitakuye Oyasin*.

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ABSTRACT

MITAKUYE OYASIN: PEDAGOGY AND DESIGN IN COMPOSITION I

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Mitakuye Oyasin, an *Oceti Sakowin* (Lakota/Nakota/Dakota) phrase that translates as "All My Relations," is a philosophy that means all things created on earth and in the universe are related and inhabit a shared space. Because all things are related and share space, they all have a purpose and a responsibility to discover and serve that purpose to ensure all of our relatives thrive in our shared space. This relational thinking influences the way the *Oceti Sakowin* interact with the world, including the way they teach. In this thesis, I analyze the way composition theories shape the curriculum and pedagogy of the Composition I, Composition I course at South Dakota State University, and suggest that the course incorporate pedagogical and rhetorical methods influenced by *Mitakuye Oyasin*.

While instructors make a conscientious effort to invite students into the academic discourse community, several aspects of the course's design perpetuate binary thinking. I ask readers to consider how binary thinking, which I suggest is at the root of the culture of contention in the United States, impedes the instructors' success at most effectively inviting students to learn to critically read, write, and think in the academic commonplace. Finally, I ask readers to consider that when they overtly incorporate *Mitakuye Oyasin* in the course, such as introducing the concept of *zuya* and utilizing more explicitly narrative as a rhetorical and pedagogical device, the academy normalizes Native intellectual engagement and wisdom, and creates a more welcoming place for

Native students, professors, and professionals, thus honoring the university's

commitment to rectifying past wrongs against the original people of the Dakotas.

INTRODUCTION

Of the 886,667 people living in the state of South Dakota, Native Americans "alone" compose nine percent (U.S. Census). According to South Dakota State University's (SDSU's) Office of Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Access, nine tribes of the *Oceti Sakowin* people reside within the state. While three tribal colleges and one tribal university in South Dakota serve the needs of Native students, similar efforts to serve the higher educational needs of Native students in South Dakota's state universities do persist. SDSU's American Indian Student Center (AISC) posits that it provides,

> . . .a welcome home-place to support those who have courageously chosen to walk the path of higher education. The AISC understands that a vital part of our function involves nation building and works to encourage students to recognize and develop their voice and help prepare Native students to respond to the call to return home. (*American Indian Student Center*)

The University also promotes the Wokini Initiative, a "collaborative and holistic framework to support American Indian student success and Indigenous Nation-Building" (*Wokini Initiative*). This *wokini*, or "new life," for SDSU seeks to increase the number of American Indian students, and to "support" their needs holistically, so that they graduate from the University and "return home" to their respective reservations to "give back" to their people, thus fulfilling the "call to return home."

Native Americans across the state appreciate SDSU's commitment to the Wokini Initiative's support of and focus on Native American students. Several of my former students who are Native American and who attended or currently attend SDSU have expressed to me their appreciation of the AISC on campus where they go for academic, social, and spiritual support. At the same time, these students have expressed their discomfort among the University's large and predominantly non-Native population, whose cultural norms, social expectations, and preconceived notions of Native American identity create additional stress for Native students.

SDSU's American Indian and Indigenous Studies Coordinator Mark Freeland commended the university's efforts to address Native students' needs. As Freeland and other campus leaders and students have noted, such initiatives are long overdue. Native American students enter the public education system with what many Native American elders and scholars call historical trauma. Stories told by parents and grandparents about boarding school experiences and educators' efforts to "Kill the Indian, Save the Man" (Pratt) consciously and subconsciously haunt students as they absorb the white man's education in the white man's world. The discomfort Native students feel when they leave their small, predominantly Native-populated schools and attend large, state universities often results in their withdrawal—despite supportive programs such as AISC.

One way SDSU can attract Native American students, particularly those who hail from this region, is to incorporate into its Composition I: Composition I course the philosophical perspective of the *Oceti Sakowin* (Seven Council Fires). The freshman composition course provides an optimal space to present a modern understanding of the

Native perspective and experience. More specifically, all students taking the first-year composition course at SDSU would benefit from the wisdom of an Indigenous philosophy.

Consistent with most university-level composition courses across the country, SDSU's Composition I provides students opportunities for improving their critical thinking and writing skills. To do so, the current course asks students to analyze, "various aspects of American culture—its images, language, ideas, and discourses" (Serfling 1).   While no single paradigm necessarily governs the design of this course— in addition to analyzing aspects of American culture, students also attend to the grammar and rhetoric of academic prose, and develop proficiencies that will contribute to their own effectiveness as writers—the current course nonetheless places great emphasis on one of the more current pedagogical models in Composition Studies, one that stresses the need for student writers to recognize themselves as members of a community rather than as isolated individuals. The vision for the course thus corresponds with the community paradigm described by Joseph Harris. In his seminal essay, "The Idea of Community in the Study of Writing," Harris describes the conception of this writing paradigm as follows: "We write not as isolated individuals but as members of communities whose beliefs, concerns, and practices both instigate and constrain, at least in part, the sort of things we can say. Our aims and intentions in writing are thus not merely personal, idiosyncratic, but reflective of the communities to which we belong" (12). While recognizing some of the current strengths of this "community" paradigm, this thesis identifies features of SDSU's composition course that present challenges for both instructors and students. One recurrent challenge facing many writing instructors is

that many students misconstrue critical thinking as binary thinking. Such misunderstandings can lead to fractious class discussion and in student essays, to reductions of multi-faceted concerns to two-sided issues. As I will explain below and in Chapter One, many scholars in Composition and Rhetoric have written extensively about this problem, even those who try to follow this community paradigm. These scholars have proposed models of instruction and course design that ideally contribute to a more inclusive classroom environment and to more nuanced and effective argumentation in student papers; however, putting such models into practice proves challenging for many.

This thesis proposes yet another approach, one that draws from Indigenous philosophy. While I do not pretend that the philosophy behind this approach can resolve all the issues that emerge in our composition classrooms, I do identify some key features of Indigenous thought that might remedy some of the shortcomings found within the first-year composition classroom. More specifically, this thesis recommends an approach informed by the Lakota/Dakota/Nakota, or the *Oceti Sakowin,* philosophy of *Mitakuye Oyasin*, which translates as "all my relations." As the term suggests, this philosophy underscores the importance of recognizing our relationships to one another, and to all things. Such an emphasis on relationality, I argue, can enhance students' critical thinking and writing skills, encouraging them to conceive of the issues we ask them to analyze with a stronger sensitivity to complexity, and to resist the simplified, binary thinking often found in student papers. In addition to *Mitakuye Oyasin*, I will introduce another central component in Lakota philosophy, the idea of a *zuya*, meaning a life's journey. I suggest employing this term helps students conceive of their learning

experience—in this class and in others—as journeys, each student's journey having

begun in a different place from their classmates' journeys, and each presenting

challenges along the way that are often unique to their own education. As I will explain

below, I introduce this concept of a *zuya* at the beginning of the semester, and then

invite students to compare and contrast it with similar, European conceptions of our

intellectual development such as the one illustrated in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave."

By doing so, instructors can more effectively establish the "community" conditions that

Harris and other Composition Studies scholars such as David Bartholomae and Gerald

Graff see as essential for developing the proficiencies expected in academic writing.

   Drawing from Indigenous traditions enriches the community conditions of the

classroom in other respects as well. The current composition course uses as its reader

editor Michael Keller's *Reading Popular Culture* (*RPC*), an anthology that provides an

array of essays to choose from as instructors build the units covered in their syllabi.

While *RPC* exposes students to a diversity of perspectives and forms (including essays,

short stories, and allegorical prose), works by Indigenous writers are few, and other

writers from diverse, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds are also limited. Since the Oceti

Sakowin are the predominant Indigenous people in South Dakota, this thesis makes a

case for their inclusion with two goals in mind. First, I explain how including works by

Lakota writers contributes significantly to SDSU's commitment to diversity, one of its

"Core Values," in fact, and to the recognition of Indigenous contributions to academic

discourse (*Diversity and Inclusion* 2). Second, I demonstrate how including some

foundational stories from Lakota culture teaches students the rhetorical power of

narrative form. For instance, I explain how the story about Iktomi and the ducks

demonstrates the nature of truth from an Indigenous perspective, which differs

significantly from the conception of truth conveyed in Plato's "Allegory of the Cave."

The inclusion of works from the Lakota tradition is also warranted as the

University stands on the ancestral territory of the *Oceti Sakowin*, an alliance that consists

of *the Wahpekute, Wahpetunwan, Sisistunwan, Bdwakantunwan, Ihanktunwan,*

Ihanktunwanna, and *Titunwan* peoples. But while including such Indigenous works may

enhance the sense of community I am trying to build in this writing course, I will also

draw from recent research that has demonstrated how such efforts can prove either

meaningless or even counterproductive if not thoughtfully designed. Drawing from the

scholarly work of Indigenous Studies scholars Scott Lyons, Sandy Marie Anglás

Grande, Albert White Hat Sr., and Joseph Marshall, I point out how multi-cultural

education of recent decades, however well-intentioned, has proven deeply problematic

for Native people, especially when the rhetoric of democracy and inclusion found in

some multiculturalist discourses follows a logic of assimilation, or of fluid or hybrid

identity. I thus argue that composition instructors wishing to diversify their courses need

to be ever cognizant of the troubled history of United States' efforts to integrate Native

peoples into their educational systems, that the priorities of maintaining cultural and

political sovereignty for Indigenous populations present challenges but also

opportunities for those wishing to enhance the diversity of composition course materials.

SDSU's current Composition I, or Composition I, curriculum's compass points

to writing as a significant communal act, despite the tendency to identify writing as a

solitary act. When we think of community, we typically think of a group of people

experiencing and/or sharing common space, ideologies, beliefs, customs, rules/laws,

and/or purposes. One often feels a part of community when one can relate to the group and feels accepted by it. Of course, writing is most often a solitary act. For instance, I sit now in isolation constructing, dismantling, and reconstructing the content of this thesis—but it is also very communal: as I revise, I consider feedback from my advisor, reshape the language and structure, and discern the best rhetorical choices for the purpose and presentation of this document. That is, I craft the writing to serve a communicative purpose, one that will hopefully incite conversation and influence the way readers view and consider composition course development and pedagogy.

The university itself constitutes a discourse community, but theorists disagree about the extent to which the academy is distinct from other, non-academic communities. David Bartholomae describes how students come to the academy with little notion of what topics warrant in-depth study, or of the ways academics use and construct language to analyze such topics. Bartholomae calls these students "basic" writers and suggests that instructors prepare their syllabi and pedagogical methods to help students learn the academic "commonplace" with its allusions, language use, and depth of critical analysis so that students can both understand, respond critically to the texts they read, and then write about them with authority (5, 9-11). The nature of the course's design places academics in positions of authority, with instructors choosing works they deem suitable for analysis, designing the syllabus, and limiting what students write about to a narrow list of topics. Joseph Harris and Gerald Graff question this hierarchy, which seems to elevate academic commonplaces over other commonplaces, and Harris provides some ideas for avoiding it. In Chapter One, I will show how

Harris's concept of a "public space" attempts to change the instructor's concept of community, eliminating perceptions of its status as both hierarchical and homogenous.

Similar to Harris, James Berlin presents a version of the academic writing community in more inclusive terms, explaining how composition courses developed around a culture studies approach might help to address another hierarchy that has long plagued English Studies. He describes how cultural studies challenged the long tradition of privileging poetic (imaginative, timeless, and aesthetically pleasing) works over rhetorical (political, practical, and historically specific) works in English studies. Allowing the rhetorical to play a more central role in our discipline achieves two pedagogical goals. First, with cultural studies as their governing principle, instructors might incorporate into their syllabi the many other texts circulating within our media saturated environments, adding headline news or the latest TikTok meme to works canonized in literature anthologies. Second, centering the rhetorical in the classroom helps students develop critical reading and writing skills not only necessary for success within academia, but also within the many other discourse communities they occupy.

The design of SDSU's Composition I draws from Berlin and other cultural studies theorists. It focuses on popular culture, asking students to examine cultural artifacts that represent and shape American concepts of race, gender, class, knowledge, and intellectualism. In addition, its course reader, *RPC*, includes an array of texts, from canonical short stories by Washington Irving and Nathaniel Hawthorne to critical essays by leading cultural theorists such as Susan Bordo and Jackson Lears. But as inclusive as *RPC* appears, it lacks a sufficient selection of one form of written expression that I find especially productive for developing students' critical reading and writing skills: the

narrative form. In this thesis, I make a case for the overt and purposeful inclusion of *Oceti Sakowin* narratives, highlighting their value for equipping students with the rhetorical tools we teach in Composition I.

Other concepts that inform Composition I development address the writing process and whether or not a students' writing should be revised and assessed based on students' intentions or on the final product. This argument raises some interesting questions about students' relationship to their ideas and what they write for their instructors—what is going on in their minds, and how effectively can they communicate those ideas on paper, or in conversation? Both Harris and Bartholomae heavily influence the way 101 instructors address this tension, while Donald A. Daiker and Donald M. Murray are additional sources that help student instructors navigate the tension between the ideas students write about and the essays they produce in the course. The conferences and kind of feedback encouraged by these theorists contribute to developing in students a concept of writing communities that challenge the notion that writing is a solitary act and contribute to the sense of community the course tries to create between the students and the academy.

While these theories of community attempt to address some of the challenges students face writing in the academy and instructors face teaching, the theoretical lens and the pedagogical methods that inform graduate teaching assistant (GTA) and instructor training yield in essays, instruction, and discussions what Deborah Tannen calls a "culture of critique," and I argue that this critical culture counters the desire to create community. Tannen argues in her essay "The Roots of Debate in Education and the Hope of Dialogue" that college classrooms "proceed from the assumption that the

educational process should be adversarial" (605). Tannen suggests that when instructors

ask students to "frame arguments between opposing sides—that is, debate—or as attacks

on the authors—that is, critique," female students may be less likely to take part in the

class discussions. Indeed, I have noticed this same tendency in composition courses I

have taught at SDSU, the design of which invites an adversarial approach to academic

arguments; but even more concerning, I have learned through experience and research

that most students, regardless of gender, race, or creed, hesitate to participate in

discussions about controversial topics for fear of offending students or instructors or

because they see no point in arguing with their peers. Most students do not want to

engage in debate, and many professors and teaching assistants lament their unsuccessful

attempts to involve all of their students in classroom discussions.

　　　　When controversial subjects do arise in classes, they often lack luster or become

heated, two-sided debates (Tannen 601). Peter Elbow, who argues for "The Uses of

Binary Thinking," acknowledges critiques of binary thinking, such as Hélène Cixous's

concern that "wherever there are polar oppositions, there is dominance. . . . According to

this critique, binary thinking almost always builds in dominance or privilege –

sometimes overtly and sometimes covertly" (qtd. in Elbow 51). Elbow argues that

instructors could take five different approaches to the uses of binary thinking in the

classroom. The approach he argues for is to "Affirm both sides of the dichotomy as

equally true, necessary, important, or correct," and he says another good approach is to

"Reframe the conflict so there are more than two sides" (54). *St. Martin's Handbook*,

one required text for SDSU's Composition I courses, encourages students to "engage

difference" and find "common ground" when approaching arguments, and in some sense

supports Elbow's argument (Lunsford 14-15). Lunsford's approach is interesting in that she discusses the way that writers gain credibility through argument by establishing a relationship with readers, which she outlines explicitly in her text *Everything's an Argument* (40-41). Lunsford also argues that everything can be framed as an argument, and each form of communication is an argument serving different purposes and different ends. James Berlin also espouses the idea that all texts are rhetorical in his challenge of what he considers the traditional poetic-rhetoric binary in his book *Rhetorics, Poetics, and Cultures.* The form of argument Lunsford seems to most agree with is the "Rogerian argument . . . based on finding common ground and establishing trust among those who disagree about issues, and on approaching audiences in non-threatening ways" (Lunsford and Ruszkiewicz 6).

Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's text *They Say/I Say*, also required for the Composition I course, invites students to engage in the critical argument, or academic "conversation," and acknowledge the complexity of views surrounding any given idea or subject matter. Graff and Birkenstein provide a list of theorists who argue that writing is a social act, and then writes, "Despite this growing consensus that writing is a social, conversational act, helping student writers actually participate in these conversations remains a formidable challenge" (xiv).The paradox in these texts is that they invite students to find common ground while also encouraging them to anticipate and focus on differences. Even the act of teaching writing is posed as a "formidable challenge" because the academy must be "demystified" for students (Graff and Birkenstein xiv). Difference, challenge, demystification, searching for common ground—each of these words and phrases characterize what I think is a very American way of thinking about

the world as a challenge to overcome or conquer—a fight to win, and I will propose a way to think differently about engaging students in intellectual dialogue.

While neither Tannen nor I dismiss the value of adversarial pedagogical methods to engage students in critical thinking, we both argue that professors should rethink their approach to teaching students how to engage in academic dialogue and critique and model for students a less adversarial approach to writing academic arguments. Elbow's suggested approach, in its simplest form, boils down to accepting that we can "agree to disagree" when students are faced with dichotomies or paradoxes. Elbow writes about Hegel's "dialectic" and explains that this "tradition sees value in accepting. . . nonresolution" (52). He writes that "when we encounter something that is difficult or complicated or something that tangles people into endless debate, we are often in the presence of an opposition that needs to be made more explicit—and left unresolved" (Elbow 53). I take issue with this approach on one level because people often use it to escape or dismiss an argument, and rather than find a solution or common ground, we drop the discussion into a pit of unresolved issues. However, when one thinks about Lunsford's, Graff and Birkenstein's, and Elbow's approaches to argument in tandem, they present an approach that may acknowledge the different purposes of argument, respect the different perspectives on what might be paradoxically true in the different arguments, as well as accept that some differences are unresolvable. Lunsford writes, "Americans in particular tend to see the world in terms of problems and solutions" which, if one takes that assertion as truth, suggests that American students will come to the classroom with a mindset that any issue can and should be resolved (Lunsford and Ruszkiewicz 19), yet many students would rather not argue at all. Still, my own

resistance against agree to disagree approaches to argument serves as support for Lunsford's assertion—we can determine a solution to any problem, but one solution may not be best for everyone involved. I will explore the nuances of how to talk about and represent argument in the composition course and argue for an approach that may reframe the way we teach dissention.

How we teach our students affects how they act beyond the classroom. In her essay, Tannen argues that the adversarial nature of classrooms leads to the adversarial nature of our social and political culture, and that we think in terms of choosing a side rather than looking at all sides. Tannen writes, "What we have is a culture of critique. The press ready to pounce on allegations of scandal," and these accusations "make the news, no matter where they come" (618). These "allegations" become fuel for politicians to discredit the reputation of their opponents (618). She concludes that the pool of capable and willing political and social leaders has and continues to shrink (619). In our current political and social climate, we split issues into two sides, and people debate their positions but are often diverted from the pertinent political and social issues and embroiled in a moral battle of right and wrong. Pertinent issues affecting the public interest are reduced to simplistic pros and cons and debates aim for a "win" rather than the best solutions or are tabled because no one will work to an agreement. Citizens debate issues in coffee shops, workrooms, and on social media, and people who do not pick a side, or who do not pick one of the two sides, are told to either get off the fence or sit down and shut up. This reality begs the question: how did we get here? Education as well as popular culture influence how we approach our world. SDSU's Composition I course presents a paradoxical approach to critical thinking and writing that contributes to

this adversarial outcome even as the reading material explicitly states that people need to approach arguments with an effort to understand "difference" and find "common ground" (Lunsford , *SMH* 14-15).

In this thesis, I will show how *Mitakuye Oyasin* offers us a philosophy that compliments Tannen's argument. Tannen suggests we reframe debate so that people represent more than two sides of an issue and make "the goal to mediate and diffuse" polarities rather than stack sides (625). This approach allows for "a range of perspectives that shed nuanced light on the original two sides or suggest other ways of approaching the two sides entirely" (Tannen 625). Tannen also promotes dialogue over debate, citing rules of engagement from Amitai Etzioni's *The New Golden Rule*, and brings to my mind the idea of dialogue presented by Paulo Freire. Instead of inviting students into a conversation, I will explore how instructors can frame discourse as dialogue that seeks understanding and communally values both consensus and dissent. *Mitakuye Oyasin* offers instructors and writers another way of reframing the adversarial approach so that it takes backstage to seeking understanding through the way ideas and people relate to one another with the goal not to win the argument but to uncover concerns and/or discover resolutions that benefit all involved and/or affected.

Introducing *Mitakuye Oyasin* into the Composition Classroom

In Chapter Two, I will explain how *Mitakyue Oyasin* invites instructors to restructure the course with a relational mindset, and how that restructuring will address some of the ongoing challenges instructor's face in teaching academic critical reading

and writing and students face in learning to critically read and write in the academy through a curriculum based on cultural studies.

Mitakyue Oyasin is an *Oceti Sakowin* philosophy that positions one's attention on the relationship between all things. The outcome of this philosophical approach is an ongoing development of understanding how elements and beings influence and affect each other. One who sees the world through *Mitakuye Oyasin* uses that understanding to make sense of and even resolve issues that arise in one's life through a belief that all of a person's thoughts and actions have consequences that affect others now and into the future. The philosophy asks a person to consider how one's thoughts and actions affect the relationships one chooses and the relationships that are inevitable because of the nature of where and when one lives or with whom one lives.

Albert White Hat, Sr. says in his book *Zuya: Life's Journey,* "I am not trying to convince anybody of anything, only to give a better, clearer understanding of our people and the traditional beliefs and systems that are in place in our culture. Hopefully, and importantly, there is no mystery in our philosophy, that everything we do is reality based" (xix-xx). From the perspective of the *Oceti Sakowin oyate*, or the Lakota/Dakota/Nakota people, everything a person does—in thought and in action—has meaning and influence. White Hat uses key phrases that shape an understanding of *Mitakuye Oyasin* as a way of thinking that invite a person to analyze the world carefully and critically in terms of relationality and influence. He also invites the reader to think about one's personal responsibility in affecting relationships. White Hat avoids dictating what others should think or do, and instead asks audiences to consider how the information he shares influences the way the audiences think about the world and their

relationship to it. This attitude reveals another aspect of the *Oceti Sakowin* epistemology, which is that people respect each person's individual choices and right to think and act differently. While White Hat predominantly focuses on understanding Lakota culture, I think the philosophy offers non-Native instructors an opportunity to address divisiveness and diversity through a lens that accepts the contrary as a natural course of existence and embraces it for the relationships it fosters or illuminates rather than positions ideas and people in terms that oversimplify their complexity and causes animosity with division.

Instructors have a tendency to simplify information for students and then in increments expose them to more difficult concepts and skills. This is a logical learning progression, and one might even frame that learning curve as a journey. Yet not all journeys are simple, and one could argue that they do not begin as simply as people often convey them. Additionally, journeys are often full of unexpected challenges. These challenges change a person along his/her journey. According to White Hat, traditionally, a *zuya* was a journey that a young man took. His first challenge was to escape camp "without being caught" and he may be away from home for a day, a month, or years. During that journey, "They would have met people and survived challenges and on return would be more responsible and wiser." White Hat explains that he told one of his students that the "*zuya* was a form of education, of learning self-sufficiency and responsibility." During a *zuya*, one must practice fortitude, according to White Hat, which means to "make decisions and be strong with them" (47). College is a decision, and students who attend it are on a version of the *zuya*. This journey comes with challenges and expectations. Asking students to think about their college experience in

terms of a journey that helps them mature may be a strategy that will help instructors shape students' attitudes toward writing and the academy in ways that improve their responses to the course's expectations and inspires them to think of the journey's likely outcome—greater wisdom.

In Chapter Two, I will also explore how the Composition I course offers a similar concept as *zuya* through Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," in which a prisoner is released from a cave and his education outside of the cave leads him to accept truths he did not know existed before his release. While the Lakota youth was not a prisoner, he still had to leave camp without getting caught, and his experience outside the camp led him to understand different truths, but the notion of truth to the *Oceti Sakowin* differs from that of Plato's notion of truth. I discuss the ancient concepts of truth in depth to address how the course can bring in specific concepts of truth by people indigenous to South Dakota to demonstrate how different cultures develop similar explanations of the nature of lived experience and philosophical perceptions.

Lived experiences as well as traditional stories shared through oral and written narratives serve as pedagogical and rhetorical strategies in the *Oceti Sakowin* traditions. Several Western theorists, particularly those who follow what Harris identifies as *growth* theory, argue that instructors should teach students to write from their lived experiences. Harris writes, "The growth theorists argued for an acceptance of the individual's own language or dialect, with a resulting de-emphasis on teaching correct or standard forms" so the "focus of most English lessons was not to be the forms of language but lived experiences, as shown in the literature or the writing of students" (10). The growth

theorists believed students' writing skills would improve with practice reading and writing, and direct writing instruction was unnecessary.

This notion of lived experience in some ways appears in the cultural studies paradigm through the inclusion of and student reaction to stories told through movies, novels, short stories, personal narratives, documentaries, films, and poems, but in Composition I, students do not initiate their lived experiences as subjects about which they write; instead, instructors choose the subjects and ask students to analyze them. These subjects are supposed to be chosen because instructors think they will be interesting and familiar to students. They come in the form of popular culture media and critical essays about the way information is represented in that media. Many essays in the reader *RPC* include aspects of narrative as a rhetorical tool, a few of the works are fictional narratives, and one essay by bell hooks is a personal narrative essay, but students do not directly learn about the uses of and power of narrative as a form of rhetoric in the course, and the expository writing prompts ignore narrative approaches to the content except that students are now able to use "I" in their essays, a pronoun use most associated with personal narratives and letters to newspaper editors. So, the personal, lived experiences of students disappears in the Composition I course if the instructor does not explicitly address it, and the use of fictional narrative is cursory at best.

In fictional narratives, lived experiences are often imagined or allegorical. In Composition I, students might read a narrative that exemplifies ideas they must write about, or that they experience but have not realized that experience yet. *RPC*'s fictional narratives include Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The May-Pole of Merry Mount," or

Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle." Students may also view a film from popular culture, such as *Her* (2013) or *The Circle* (2017). The connection students have with these texts may be and often is superficial in that students may have no direct experience or understanding of the content of the narratives. For example, students may also play video games as does the main character in *Her*, but they may not relate to a white man falling in love with an operating system. Instructors ask students to find the relationship between their lived experiences or the lived experiences of the average American citizen, and the narratives in the films—they must draw upon their prior knowledge and experience to make sense of the stories they read and view even if they find making those connections difficult because of the seemingly foreign nature of the language, syntax, characters, culture, or context of the narratives. While I think asking students to read and view material with which they have no previous experience or connection is akin to the *zuya* journey, the argument that the course uses popular culture to meet students on common ground loses credibility when the narratives used do not more closely relate to or stem from what the students in the class have lived. This is not an argument against cultural studies or the use of narratives with which students are unfamiliar, but instead an argument that popular culture is not really common ground unless instructors survey their current students and choose works and subjects with which those students are familiar. In this respect, I draw attention to the way and kind of reading material instructors choose for the course.

Narrative is considered a very powerful tool for teaching and conveying information and ideas in *Oceti Sakowin* culture, and many people in other cultural traditions share the same belief. Lunsford includes a section on narrative as an "effective

method of development" and writes that "People almost always respond to stories, which can be used effectively in almost all kinds of writing," (*SMH* 63); however, this section on narrative is often glossed over in Composition I courses unless the instructor chooses to directly address it in the section about paragraph development. The power of narrative is even greater I think than what Lunsford depicts in *SMH*.

Scholar Thomas King writes that the truth about stories is that they are powerful, and because they are powerful, storytellers bear responsibility for what and how they tell stories, and audiences bear responsibility for what they do with those stories (King 10). *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative* is a collection of Massey lectures King presented in 2003 as the first lecturer of Cherokee descent to present at the prestigious gathering of writers and scholars. These lectures unfold from the storyteller's tongue a complex mixture of personal narrative, cultural storytelling, and citations of authority from predominantly Native and some well-known non-Native scholars, writers, and storytellers. The lectures address a wide audience and offer allusions that nod to Native, popular, and academic cultures, and provide information and perspectives that guide the audience to reconsider what it means to tell and listen to stories about others and about oneself. They offer an example of how instructors might choose the reading material for students in the Composition I course.

King's teaching style provides context for deeper human truths understood through shared human experiences. King uses narrative and metacognition, which requires thinking about one's own thinking, as rhetorical tools to suggest to audiences that Native stories and philosophies offer Native and non-Native people effective and less divisively-inclined means to approach their relationship with others – their

interactions and reactions to other people. His oral tradition, committed to the page, models a combination of Western and Indigenous rhetoric as well as oral and written forms and structures that teach and present an argument with which the audience can act on – or not. King's influences come from a mixture of Indigenous and Western experiences, epistemologies, and philosophies, and closely resembles the ideas about *Mitakuye Oyasin* presented by White Hat. This mixture does not create a hybrid "other," but instead fits aspects of Western and Indigenous methods of communication together artfully to create a sophisticated and serious argument about the way stories influence how we think and how we act—the relationality paradigm is reflected in presenting stories of lived and imagined experiences alongside a critical analysis of these experiences.

Students typically come to the academy thinking that literature includes fiction and poetry. Literature—in the broader definition, the one that encompasses more than a canon of texts by award-winning writers chosen by an elite group of scholars at top universities—reflects culture and history as much as it influences it, and when we forget or ignore the stories of any culture, we lose what that culture can offer other cultures. The United States of America stretches from the Florida Keys to Alaska, and from Hawaii to Vermont. We are a nation of diverse climates, customs, and languages even as we share a common popular culture and the English language. Composition I focuses most of the students' attention on nonfiction, expository, and relatively contemporary literature with minimal narrative fiction or nonfiction. The reader used for the course does not include a diverse collection of essays and narratives by diverse scholars with unique perspectives. This choice to include more nonfiction than other forms of writing,

and to include works written by predominantly white scholars, the majority of whom are male, reveals a bias against narrative as a serious form of rhetoric, and underrepresents perspective by non-white people. While this bias and the underrepresentation may be unintentional or circumstantial, it is still present, and even counters James Berlin's arguments to balance the poetic-rhetoric binary that English studies often perpetuates. A course that is founded in the concept of cultural studies should include voices from diverse cultures, not just different arguments from people with shared ideologies. At SDSU, one culture that should definitely be included in each unit is that of the *Oceti Sakowin.*

When we think of literature in a broader context, then to include diverse narratives that document lived experiences as a part of the curriculum makes sense. These narratives integrated with critical essays about various topics concerning the United States' popular culture bring to life the way various people experience the world and the way scholars analyze and criticize. Additionally, when we teach students how to integrate narratives into their own critical essays, we require them to connect seemingly remote ideas to their personal experiences and understandings. When students connect experience and real-world situations with that which they can relate, they will more likely remember the ideas about what they write, and they will be able to better connect and understand abstract, academic conversations Graff and Birkenstein, and other scholars, invite them to join.

When students reflect on their own lived experiences in comparison to others, they develop a greater sense of their personal identity and their communal identity. While instructors and GTAs who receive training to teach Composition I do not read

explicitly about critical pedagogy, the course is influenced by it. According to Native

scholar Sandy Marie Anglás Grande, engagement in critical pedagogy requires one to

think about "the way one learns to see oneself in relation to the world," and understand

"the formation of self" which "serves as the basis for analyses of race, class, gender, and

sexuality and their relationships to questions of democracy, justice, and community"

(346). Critical theory and pedagogy, then, require a person to think about how his/her

identity is shaped by relationships between the self and various aspects of the world.

Critical theorists argue that identity is based on a "theory of difference," which is,

according to McLaren and Giroux, "firmly rooted in the 'power-sensitive discourse of

power, democracy, social justice, and historical memory'" (qtd. in Grande 347). Grande

explains that the critical theorists' notion of identity, rather than fixed and

"predetermined by biological and other *prima facie* indicators" is shaped by where it is

"historically situated" and how it is "socially constructed" (347). Critical pedagogy

informs Composition I course content and design in that by critically analyzing popular

culture, students are challenged to consider the forces that shape the identity of an

American citizen—class, race, gender, democracy, justice, and community; however, the

requirement of "difference," Grande explains, motivates many Native Americans to

embrace the essentialist theorists' view that Native identity encapsulate a narrow

definition that is unique and unchanging and based on a "set of characteristics" that

distinguish Natives from what she calls "whitestream"—the typical white American

(346). The essentialist theory of identity is problematic for Native Americans, too,

because it perpetuates a fixed and homogenized misrepresentation of Native American

peoples and defines the Native American identity in contrast to white identity even when contrasts are insignificant or non-existent.

Over 500 federally recognized tribes thrive on reservations across the United States. Each of these tribes operates under sovereign tribal governments who sustain a treaty relationship with the U.S. federal government. Under these treaties, each tribe operates within its own culture, language, and governing systems. They rely on the treaty agreements for economic stability, and they must maintain a fixed cultural identity to set themselves apart from other Americans. If a tribe's culture and language is indistinguishable from mainstream culture, the tribe's sovereignty, treaty rights, and federal recognition are threatened (Grande 348-49).

Native scholars like Scott Richard Lyons and Vine Deloria Jr. stand in the space between their own tribal, traditional cultures and white America. Lyons shares in his essay "In Vine Veritas," his insecurities as a Native American scholar living in white suburbia. To Native people he perceived as more Indigenous than himself, such as renowned Native intellectual Deloria, Lyons fears he is not "*Indian enough*" (61-2). His father was Native; his mother was white. Living in suburban America, his pale skin and short haircut distanced him even further from what many perceive as "Indian," even people in his own tribe (61). He writes,

> Perhaps it's fair to speak of history, as Deloria often did, which for
> centuries described Natives as savages, warriors, and heathen – then later
> as drunkards, welfare cheats, and gang bangers – but never intellectuals;
> a history that turned Indians into what Audre Lorde called capitalism's

"surplus people" – meaning "excess" or "waste" . . . . the dominant

historical message to Indians has been this: *you are not smart*. (Lyons 62)

Historically, Native people were "too Indian," evidenced in Pratt's speech and

U.S. government policy, which championed "Kill the Indian, Save the Man." This

campaign fueled government policies that forced parents to send their children to Indian

boarding schools where educators, priests, and nuns "killed" the Indian. Federal agents

picked up students from their homes and sent to them to Indian-designated boarding

schools at the age of five. Most of these children remained at school until they were 18.

In the years between, teachers and nuns physically and emotionally punished students

for speaking their languages or practicing their cultures. They went to school with other

children from other tribes across the country, and some did not see or visit their families

during their twelve to thirteen years of schooling. This approach to teaching Native

children emerged from a Peace Commission in 1867, and rather than officially sanction

genocide, the Commission called for "cultural, and specifically linguistic, genocide" to

deal with the "Indian problem," or "language differences that led to misunderstandings"

(Reyhner and Eder 41). In contemporary society, Lyons finds himself wondering if he is

"Indian enough," because he does not live on the reservation, speak the language of his

people, or "remember what real poverty is like" (63).

Like his ancestors, who graduated from boarding school, he feels disconnected

from both his ancestry and his whitestream life. He also exemplifies the man from the

"Allegory of the Cave" who leaves what he knows, learns new ways of thinking and

seeing the world, and then is faced with the consequences of returning home. In Lyon's

case, and in the case of many Native scholars, the idea of returning home is more

metaphorical than physical, because their *zuyas* do not always support a return home. When he measures himself against Indian identities on his reservation and in mainstream America, Lyons recognizes that his identification as a Native intellectual does not exist in the national or tribal narratives. Early boarding school educational systems trained Indian youth to pursue agricultural and domestic lines of work. Young men were encouraged to enter the military and taught to obey (Mails 224-225). Educators, priests, nuns, and dorm matrons raised the children as problems to be fixed. The children were not considered intellectually capable of pursuing academic careers. Lyons's identity as a Native scholar in English challenges other notions of Native identities, and he admits to feeling insecure and maybe even guilty about who he is as a Native intellectual. When non-Native students in a composition course read works by Native scholars and practice relating to them without identifying them as "other," but still recognizing them as equals, they might become skeptical of stereotypes of what it means to be Indian.

Since the critical and essentialist theories are problematic for Native Americans politically, socially, and personally, Grande argues that "many marginalized groups" seek "culturally relevant curriculum" so that they "ensure inclusion in the democratic imaginary," but Native American "scholars and educators" want to "disrupt and impede absorption into that democracy and continue the struggle to remain distinctive, tribal, and sovereign peoples" (356). Grande cites Ojibwe scholar May Hermes, who asks not "What is the role of culture in knowledge acquisition," but "What is the role of the school as a site of cultural production" (Grande 355)?

Mainstream culture naturally forms the basis of instruction for most courses taught at SDSU, including Composition I, which uses the text *Reading Popular Culture*.

While the academic articles in the anthology are written by diverse academics, these academics represent the whitestream that Grande identifies. Diverse topics about culturally relevant issues does not necessarily equal diverse representation of non-White perspectives. Even efforts to create multicultural curriculum fall short of adequately representing diverse cultural perspectives because it often appears in the form of content about non-White people and how they are represented. Instead, essays by Native and other non-white scholars should be included for their perspectives about culturally relevant topics and not only about the way they are represented by white-dominated popular culture. For example, King writes about the power of stories through an Indigenous perspective more than he writes an essay about Indigenous identity, even though he addresses identity in his essay. He also serves as an intellectual scholar who when read by students, helps to normalize Native people as intellectuals.

While Native American numbers are minimal when placed as a percentage of the overall population of the U.S., their presence in the plains states is prominent and essential to intellectual, political, and social issues and decisions in the Northern Plains. What often happens currently, is that Native scholars and issues that Native people deem significant for everyone are relegated to American Indian studies departments, Native American literature courses, or Indigenous community colleges simply because they are a minority voice. When I think of this tendency, I am reminded of Thoreau in his essay published in the pamphlet, "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience,"

> But it is the fault of the government itself that the remedy is worse than the evil. It makes it worse. Why is it not more apt to anticipate and provide for reform? Why does it not cherish its wise minority? Why does

it cry and resist before it is hurt? Why does it not encourage its citizens to

be on the alert to point out its faults, and do better than it would have

them? (12)

While Thoreau addresses the morality of government's Mexican-American war tax and

slavery in this essay, I think of these same questions as I campaign for SDSU's English

department and other freshmen composition courses in South Dakota to adopt the

philosophy of its "wise minority," the Dakota/Lakota/Nakota indigenous Nations of

South Dakota.

Some people may argue that whatever a small minority culture within the U.S.

might have to offer is good for them, but not for everyone. Another criticism is that if

people not born into that culture use an aspect of it to shape their study or practice, they

risk being accused of and found guilty of cultural appropriation. In either case, the

Mitakuye Oyasin philosophy and its influence on the composition class could benefit

everyone and improve writing and reading instruction. To relegate it to the sidelines or

wrap it up and protect it from those who might make it perverse is to reject the value of

improving what we do, or to horde it and risk losing it to history.

An instructor asked to teach using a Native philosophy may meet with concerns

of appropriation. Yet we learn the philosophy of others – Kant, Derrida, Lacan,

Aristotle, Plato, Butler, Harris, Bartholomae – and we teach new teachers theories

informed by these philosophies without serious complaint. Inherent in the texts of

Harris, Bartholomae and Butler – theorists and educators who influence how we teach

composition at SDSU – is the idea that truth is relative to one's level of knowledge and

understanding. The curriculum is formulated around a cultural studies model, and we are

taught to inspire students to find points of contention, take a position, and refute counter arguments in critical discussions and essays. Most instructors do not explicitly explain to students this pedagogical approach. Instead, they practice the approach through their choice of content, order of presentation, types of assignments, methods of instruction, and language of instruction. That design is already laid out in an approved template with approved goals.

Pedagogical Design

In Chapter Three, I provide more specific details about how to integrate the Indigenous approach into this composition course by first focusing on the texts used to teach the course. *RPC*, which, as I have already discussed, includes a variety of essays by scholars and authors from a variety of disciplines. These authors write about the representation of intellect, democracy, capitalism, gender, race, class, technology, and education in popular culture. Popular culture includes both fiction and nonfiction media, and when analyzing it, the reader or viewer searches for the "truth" of what is represented. The students learn to ask questions that the essays also pose, both explicitly and implicitly, that may help them get at that truth or those truths. *RPC* incorporates a variety of academic voices that demonstrate what critical analysis looks and sounds like on paper. The essays collected essays are positioned so that students can see how they respond to each other not only based on their subject matter but based on their literal references each other's arguments. By choosing essays from authors who quote each other or mention each other in their essays, *RPC* demonstrates that the authors are

engaged in conversation with one another—they are engaged in academic discourse about representation in popular culture.

Despite the diversity of academic discipline representations in *RPC*, the text lacks cultural diversity. Based on the biographical information provided in *RPC* about the authors and a Google search of each author, I identified of the sixty-three authors in *RPC*, thirty-eight white males, seventeen white females, one Japanese female, one Jewish female, one Black female, one Native American female, and four females whose race could not be determined via any biographical information or pictures. I confirmed that at least fifty of the authors are over the age of fifty and/or are deceased. Most of the essays were originally published in the 1990s and early 2000s, a few were published after 2010 and a few published between 1940 and 1990. Finally, several narratives are published from the nineteenth century and Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" was published during the Greek Classical period.

At issue here is that the text predominantly consists of authors and scholars whose work, while still significant in today's cultural climate, is for most incoming freshmen outdated. Students do not understand the cultural references or allusions because for them, the references are a part of a past with which they are unfamiliar. I found no confirmation of any essays written by Black, Native, Asian, or Hispanic males. Most of the essays or narratives by people who identify as a minority in America are about their minority status in relation to the subject matter. Given the number of minority scholars in our country, I think we could do better to balance representation of different scholars and communities in our content selections for Composition I.

RPC alleviates the instructor's need to locate reading materials that serve as examples of critical academic essays, conversations in academic discourse, and sources students can cite in their own essays as they join the academic conversations. Many of the graduate students will teach the same essays and prompts they use the first semester they teach, and their repeated use of the same reading materials makes sense. It saves time. Instructors become familiar with the texts and the more they teach them, the easier they become to teach. If they feel so inclined, they may swap one prompt for another, or one essay for another, but for the most part, every student at SDSU writes an ad analysis, a paper about technology or education, and a paper about representation or ant-intellectualism. Instructors can also easily check the accuracy of quotes and discover instances of plagiarism more readily. If the instructors know the essays from which students will collect information, and all students pull from two or three of four or five essays in a unit, then the instructor does not need to read or search through forty to fifty different essays to verify accuracy or check for plagiarism. Finally, the collection ensures students are read essays written by well-respected scholars and authors. These essays exemplify effective arguments and uses of rhetorical devices and provide students with content that contributes to the ethos of their own writing.

To address the difficulty many students have reading some of the essays or narratives in *RPC*, Michael Keller and his colleague Professor Nathan Serfling advise new instructors to teach easier essays in the first unit and more difficult ones later. The longer the essay, the more difficult it seems to be for students. The older the essay or narrative, the more difficult it seems to be for students. Both professors suggest anticipating what students will need to know before they read the essay and prepping

them for the texts that will likely most challenge students. So even though students struggle with many of these essays, Keller anticipated this challenge and created plans to help instructors address it. This point is significant when we think about incorporating narratives and essays that may be unfamiliar to students because they are from the *Oceti Sakowin* traditions. Pedagogical approaches are already in place to help students understand what they do not already know or have experience with, and some of these approaches will be effective even if some of the essays currently used are replaced with essays by and/or about Native people.

While the *RPC* collection is strategically and for the most part effectively compiled, it unfortunately lacks the diversity and timeliness to address the needs of students in 2022. I think students would benefit from a collection of essays that are more current—published after 2015, about similar cultural issues and by a more diverse group of scholars. Many Native American intellectuals and activists use popular media sources to promote their ideas, movements, etc. in addition to publishing scholarly articles about concepts that do not focus on Native identity and representation specifically. Instead, they write through a Native perspective. Articles by and about Native people in relation to the many subjects the composition course already includes on its smorgasbord of prompts could be incorporated into the curriculum and would stand as a way to create a narrative that Native American scholars are actively engaged in academic conversations. Additionally, each unit should seek to provide articles written by scholars of other cultural backgrounds and ages. From the perspective of *mitakuye oyasin,* all my relations does not only include Native people or White people, but people of any cultural background. Wisdom comes from understanding others and

figuring out the relationship that one has with others. Philosophically, the concept of all my relations includes more than Native and White perspectives. The perspectives of other Americans who may be Black, Asian, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, or transgender are also important.

The other texts used in the class, *St. Martin's Handbook* (*SMH*) and *They Say/I Say* (*TSIS*), are effective tools that help the instructor teach students the elements of writing. *SMH* focuses on common grammatical errors, discusses the ways students might and should define and approach academic arguments, outlines how to create arguments, identify faulty arguments, develop sentences, paragraphs, and essays for different purposes, and conduct research. Despite the text's comprehensive and predominantly useful presentation of how to write academically, it uses language— which Lunsford indicates is very important in her chapter "Words Matter!"—that engages difference in a way that positions the writer on one side and opponents on another with the common ground in the middle. *TSIS* in its title alone engages the binary thinking as well, and I will address how Graff and Birkenstein, throughout the text, argues that they are not encouraging only two sides of an issue in a debate, but simplifying the presentation of ideas as they might be positioned by a student on paper using the templates they present. The kind of language and the positioning of ideas in these texts supports the binary thinking that I think should be dismantled.

CHAPTER 1
CURRENT THEORETICAL INFLUENCES

Theories that shape South Dakota State University's Composition I grapple with how best to introduce students to the academic writing community. Instructors learn to think of these communities through discussions of commonplaces in their Teaching College Composition seminar or training sessions. According to composition theorist David Bartholomae, students learn different commonplaces as they grow up in their respective communities. Their interactions at home, school, and in social situations each present a different commonplace, and the phrases, idioms, jargon, allusions, and other modes of communication constitute the way students use and understand language. Others describe these modes of communication as codes that represent meaning. James Berlin describes them as "cultural codes, social semiotics that work themselves out in shaping consciousness in our students and ourselves" (124). Students learn how different communities use different codes, which develop into commonplaces, to signify meaning and they subsequently shape their consciousness—the way they think about themselves and others. Understanding commonplaces creates the foundation upon which the composition course develops a writing community where students learn the academic commonplace.

Within and across commonplaces, people engage in discourses. A discourse is written or spoken communication and an "an academic discourse community," concludes Joseph Harris in his book *A Teaching Subject: Composition Since 1966*, is a group of people who gather and share their ideas more through their written work than in a physically shared space. The people in an academic writing community share "an

affinity of beliefs and purposes, consensus," and their "physical nearness" is replaced by "like-mindedness" (Harris 138). So, the academic writing community then shares a consciousness. When writers engage in discourse, the discourse consists of its own "clusters of allusions and references its members share" (Harris 137). These clusters, or codes, might be unique to different discourses but the academic codes in Composition I are codes used across different discourses and in multiple academic commonplaces. This universal academic commonplace is important for Composition I students to learn because it creates a web that allows them to communicate on a basic level in the multiple discourses they will enter through their academic studies. The students are required to take the course. They will enter diverse disciplines in the university. The texts for students and the verbal style sheet used in the English department outline the codes students might use in whichever discipline or discourses they enter after taking Composition I.

In his discussion of community and its relationship to writing pedagogy, Harris explains that the academic community carried a negative, "chummy club" connotation when he started teaching in 1984—a community to which he never felt fully a member. Harris relates to Raymond Williams's description of potential alienation from both one's home and academic communities: a person gains perspective when he leaves a community and enters a new one (Harris 133). Harris argues that once a person transfers from one to another or multiple communities, one can feel on the outskirts of each of those communities (133). When students come to college, they "often confront ways of speaking and writing that make use of rules, conventions, commonplaces, values, and beliefs that can be quite different from (and sometimes in conflict with) some of those

they already know or hold" (20). In *RPC*, Keller includes bell hooks' personal narrative essay about her own alienation based on her socioeconomic class and race. I think the texts used in Composition I assume students begin on the outside of the academy, invite them in, tell them how hard it will be, teach them a new way of communicating and subsequently thinking, and potentially alienate students from all of their communities. Many theorists from multiple disciplines call this new position a hybrid experience, and others think of it as intellectual evolution. For students, however academics frame it, they must deal with the position in which it places them. Instructors are meant to help them navigate the new intellectual space created from their new learning experiences, and the texts, which anticipate the potential stress of this transition will create.

Both *TSIS* and *SMH* give students the "set phrases, rituals, gestures, habits of mind, tricks of persuasion, obligatory conclusions, and necessary connections that determine the 'what might be said' and constitute knowledge within the various branches of our academic community" (Bartholomae 11). In learning these codes, students may develop not only new perspectives and understandings, but new ways of talking about their own and others' perspectives. "We write not as isolated individuals but as members of communities whose beliefs, concerns, and practices both instigate and constrain, at least in part, the sorts of things we say" and so "our aims and intentions in writing are thus not merely personal, idiosyncratic, but reflective of the communities in which we belong" (Harris 133-34). The sources used in Composition I attempt to guide students through the unfamiliar academic codes, but Harris raises concerns that the definition of community by theorists such as Bartholomae creates "discursive

utopias that direct and determine the writing of their members" and do so without directly stating the parameters of these communities (134).

Because of that concern, the Composition I course's reading assignments in both Lunsford's and Graff and Birkenstein's texts, the use of the "Principles of Verbal Style" handout[1], the initial focus on common grammatical errors, and the structure of the writing prompts establish the academic parameters taught in Composition I. These codes are considered helpful for students across academic disciplines. Nonetheless, inherent in the course is the dynamic between who harbors the knowledge and gives the grades and who does not, between who is already a part of the academic community and who is not. This dichotomous relationship seems unavoidable, and it establishes a hierarchy that places the academic instructor above the student.

Harris argues that theorists such as Bartholomae and Patricia Bizzell attempt to demystify the academic commonplace, and academy's role is to "help us to see that it is only through being part of some ongoing discourse that we can, as individual writers, have things like points to make and purposes to achieve" and so "we write not as isolated individuals but as members of communities whose beliefs, concerns, and practices both instigate and constrain, at least in part, the sorts of things we can say" (133-34). This concept of community challenges earlier theorists who focused on the individual's solitary development of writing or the individual writing process. Harris argues that while helpful, these socially conscious, utopian theories of writing communities held by theorists such as Bartholomae are vaguely defined, and as such,

[1] This handout, provided by the director of the writing program, lists verbal style expectations instructors teaching Composition I will teach students and expect them to apply in their writing. They are: "use vivid verbs, use active rather than passive voice, avoid expletive constructions, avoid nominalizations."

they lack "conflict or change," because they imply that the university has one common form of discourse that can be taught by those who know it. Those who know it, intentionally or not, create an elitist attitude and "polarize" views of writing as either a defense of "the power of the discourse community or the imagination of the individual writer" (Harris 134).

As an example of this tension, Bartholomae positions himself and his colleagues inside the academic community with what Harris calls a "sense of shared purpose" and his students outside of that community (135-36). The paternal/maternal nature of this relationship characterizes professors/teachers as an elite group who harbor all the knowledge, despite Bartholomae's effort to characterize commonplaces as different— even those within the academic community—rather than hierarchical. The gap between students' original abilities and commonplaces and the academic expectations and commonplaces may be (or appear to be) so vast that students feel at the mercy of the instructor's expectations and expertise.

For instance, in Composition I, which emphasizes popular culture as a strategy to create a familiar territory for students to explore, instructors forewarn our students that traversing the gap will be difficult between their communities and the academic discourse community. Then, were instructors to assign a text like Jackson Lears's "Beyond Veblen: Rethinking Consumer Culture in America" from *RPC*, in which students struggle to understand vocabulary, syntax, context, and content, it seems more like a trick to students than a reassurance that the challenge will improve their ability in the academic community. Even more disingenuous is that while instructors posture as mere facilitators of discussion, they are equipped with a list of important ideas about the

text that shape and limit the scope of the conversation. In this relationship, students do not generate meaning from the commonplace; instead, they collect meaning from instructors. This is not to say that *RPC* provides only inaccessible texts. Works like African American scholar bell hooks's narrative, "Learning in the Shadow of Race and Class," address this potential imbalance by providing students with a more accessible essay. Students are more capable of relating to the structure, syntax, vocabulary, and context of the narrative. Like hooks, the students often consider themselves outsiders to the community based on their socioeconomic class—many coming from rural communities and middle class families—even if they are not also facing challenges based on their race. Compared to Lears's essay, hooks's essay is easier to understand and relate to, and therefore balances the more difficult and foreign commonplace with the more familiar one.

Instructors assign readings in Composition I are chosen to equip students with skills of critical citizenship that will empower them in communities beyond college. The academic community trains students to understand their popular culture with critical habits of mind that will extend beyond the classroom into other communities, locally, nationally, and globally. The Composition I syllabus (appendix) reads, "Regardless of your major, these faculties [analysis, critical thinking, critical reading, critical writing] will be invaluable to you as you advance in your studies here at SDSU, in your professional career, and in your civic life" (Serfling 2). Additionally, the syllabus explains that students will read, analyze, and write about "narratives American culture embraces and advances" to help students "develop another turn of literacy: that of an attentive and engaged citizen" (2). The 101 course attempts to characterize academic

writing as engaging in a discourse within the academic community. Instructors must understand that one community can harbor multiple commonplaces, because thinking about language communication within a commonplace helps one to think about the way language expectations change depending on the mode of communication (a formal essay, speech, or casual conversation), the intended audience (specialists, constituents, friends), and the purpose (to conduct critical analysis, to solicit votes, to share life-changing experiences) of the communication. Theorists spend extensive time discussing different definitions and concepts of community and how it influences the language individuals and groups use to convey meaning, and how language and meaning shape thinking. So, instructors then assume and expect that students will bring with them communication codes that may make their ability to communicate and think like an academic challenging.

SDSU instructors, often new to teaching college composition, on the simplest level are asked to think about the commonplaces from which students come and the academic one into which they will venture because the course acts as the bootcamp for students to learn the basics of academic communication expected from them in their college career. SDSU's course uses popular culture as a bridge between the students' current understanding and use of language to an academic understanding and use of language. Popular culture presents a space where commonplaces and their codes mingle, and many young people learn about different commonplaces that exist outside their home communities from watching and listening to popular media sources such as TV shows, films, advertisements, the Internet, newscasts and through their public education and social experiences. Using popular culture then provides students a space for

examining some of American culture's commonplaces, codes, and discourses present within them.

The pains taken to think about the language of communities and how to teach students the ways language is used differently within different communities assumes that when students enter the academy, they often harbor misconceived notions of what college life will be like and of the work instructors will require of them. In freshmen courses, students realize the reading and writing they must complete reaches a level of commitment and difficulty that far exceeds the expectations they met in their secondary education. Scholars are not remiss in realizing the truth evident in the gap between secondary and collegiate expectations. To address this gap, Composition I is designed to invite students into the academic community at the same time it challenges them to participate in critical thinking through reading and writing critical essays. Students practice metacognition—thinking about their own thinking—and write critically about social and cultural concepts of representation that shape how Americans identify themselves and others. The course's focus on popular culture as a point of analysis arises from the theory that by using sources with which students may already be familiar, instructors can more easily teach students how to think about and talk about those sources like an academic. Popular culture as a source of analysis also draws from a cultural studies approach discussed by James Berlin.

Cultural studies uses as its primary sources popularly consumed texts, such as films, television shows, and advertisements. Students analyze these sources, and at SDSU, they read scholars who analyze similar sources. They learn to identify the rhetorical features of all texts, examining how form, focus, content, and context, make

an argument or suggest a viewpoint that promotes certain ideologies and/or attitudes towards the subject matter. For example, the representation of a woman in a bikini on a street corner arguably represents women as sexual objects and prostitutes. Composition I teaches students to critically analyze these sources for their implicit and explicit representations and reflect and speculate on the way these representations influence the way people think about others in American society. Students often fail to buy into the argument that learning to critically read and write about representations in popular culture is imperative to collegiate success. They often ask, "How is this going to help me as a mechanical engineer, businessman, environmentalist, or chemist?" Instructors must convince the students of the value of critical analysis in their academic careers and their roles as American citizens. Students are not so much concerned with the kinds of texts they read but the kind of reading and writing they are expected to do because they do not readily and easily find critical analysis personally or professionally valuable. The students' resistance to reading and writing that is not content-specific augments the instructor's challenge of teaching writing and so the instructor must convince students that the discussions of representation in popular culture are important for them to analyze because these representations influence the way people see each other and themselves, and result in thinking and actions that threaten the promises of America's democracy.

An instructor must then use popular culture artifacts and the essays about them to prove that repeated exposure results in normalizing certain ideas and behaviors, and people may not even realize the subtle influences of that exposure. The idea that these subtle influences are potentially nefarious inspires many students to do the work that

will help them develop critical literacy; however, in popular culture, literacy is usually associated with the ability to read poetic or imaginative literature. SDSU's course expands the students concept of literacy, and they learn to read critically not only canonical literature, but other sources of information, an expansion that harkens to an earlier definition of literature, before the nineteenth century.

In the eighteenth century, literature meant, "'reading ability and reading experience, and it included philosophy, history, and essays as well as poems'" (qtd. in Berlin 5). This definition characterized literature as a "'specification of the area formerly categorized as *rhetoric* and *grammar*: a specialization to reading and. . .to the printed word'" (5). In the nineteenth century, literature "'became an apparently objective category of printed works of a certain quality'" (5). The shift in how people defined literature went from one of "learning in general to literature as taste and sensibility" and evolved from the "the church and state universities. . .to the new scholarly profession defined on class terms" by the bourgeoisie (5). Berlin argues that the "notion of taste created a set of complementary binary oppositions categorizing the subjective over the objective, the unconscious over the conscious, the private over the public" (6). Imaginative writing was judged by those in positions of power who could determine their quality and distinguished them from a lower class of writing that was objective and for practical, work-related purposes. "The elevated qualities of art were on the one hand attributed 'to the imaginative' dimension access to a truth 'higher' or 'deeper' than 'scientific' or 'objective' or 'everyday' reality" (7). From this distinction, Berlin says comes "the division between art and science, literature and politics, high culture and low culture—in general the distinction between poetic and rhetoric" (7). Berlin argues that

English departments that consider any analysis of texts for their "political unconscious," and do not take "seriously the production and interpretation of rhetorical texts that address political matters" serve to maintain the power structure (15-16). The "educated middle class" through the "educational system" control portions of what Berlin calls "cultural capital" and maintain power through "class biased achievement tests and entrance requirements" (16).

Berlin's goal is to "challenge the old disciplinary binaries that privilege consumption over production and aesthetic over the rhetorical" (123). He writes that "Popular taste," prefers "function to form. . . displaying a utilitarianism considered a part of the practical and political world;" whereas the "intellectual response. . .prefers 'the representation—literature, theatre, painting—more than . . . the thing represented'" (Bourdieu qtd. in Berlin 12). Subsequently, Robert Scholes argues, "English Departments 'mark those texts labeled literature as good or important and dismiss those non-literary texts as beneath our notice'" (qtd. in Berlin 13). Many American English departments still privilege canonical literature over other forms of texts, even though American English Departments in the late 1960s imagined English as a research-based teaching subject in which its scientific approach "defines the subject and then identifies a set of principles for use in its study," (Harris 9). One might think that the scientific approach would also embrace works that, while perhaps not considered poetic, certainly prove rhetorically powerful for different reasons. Berlin is not as focused on the "objects and methods of study" in the way a scientific approach may dictate, but he still argues that "students must examine" the functions of texts "as parts of coded structures" and employs a strategy so students can look "at the text successively within its generic,

ideological, and socioeconomic environment" (125). Berlin's focus, then, is not on the kind of text used, but on each text's rhetorical value, and how the rhetoric of the text is influenced by its historical and political context, and how the text influences its audiences and shapes the social and political context.

Berlin's discussion supports serious consideration of the poetic and rhetorical features of all texts—forms of communication that include literature as well as movies, advertisements, and essays, even if they do not meet the aesthetic standards established by high culture. While Berlin specifically aimed to disrupt the hierarchies of "reading over writing," "consumption of production," and "poetical over rhetorical texts" in the course he taught at Purdue University (123), he also talks about other courses that use the concept of cultural studies, including one taught at Carnegie Mellon by Alan Kennedy. Like Kennedy's course, Composition I places "all cultural texts" within the historical context "which has given them a particular meaning" (Kennedy qtd. in Berlin 162). Kennedy argued "that all texts are finally rhetorical, that is, designed to bring about effects in the material world" (Kennedy qtd. in Berlin 162). In Composition I, all the texts, including those from popular culture, are treated as rhetorical representations. Instructors teach students to analyze how texts rhetorically represent race, gender, class, technology, and education, and how these representations shape consciousness. Since popular culture texts influence how people communicate, when students learn how to read them and write about them critically, then students have "recognize[d] the inevitability of difference in values. . . . They will not be victims of indoctrination. . . . They learn that there are different, and often contradictory, value systems in the world" which are "unavoidable" (Kennedy qtd. in Berlin 161-62). Lunsford's and Graff and

Birkenstein's texts prepare students for the potentially different views they will encounter in the *RPC* essay and class discussions and serve to equip students with some of the codes they need to talk about certain texts as academics. Instructors are tasked with helping students learn the codes of popular culture texts—codes with which students may not be familiar because they do not know the language used to talk about and forms applied to develop texts like an advertisement or a film.

While *RPC* provides the subject matter for essays students write in Composition I, *SMH* and *TSIS* invite students into the composition classroom with a supportive attitude that essentially lets students know the texts about writing "got the students' backs." The language in each of the undergraduate texts addresses students' fears that in these discourses, where they will argue, the arguments will lead to conflict, expose difference, and therefore present a "formidable challenge" for students, and as Graff and Birkenstein state, for instructors too (xiv). This array of concerns often deters students from wanting to join the conversation. These informational texts acknowledge the potential fears and other obstacles a student feels and encounters when learning to write an academic essay. Not only might the inevitable fight intimidate students, but they must also overcome the other obstacles—particularly their ignorance of the academic codes— such as vocabulary and grammar use, complex syntax, and rhetorical strategies. By identifying these fears, the authors empathize with the students and hopefully alleviate their concerns by promising that their texts will provide them with the habits of mind and language tools that will fortify them with that academic voice. *TSIS* and *SMH*, then, signal the authors' empathy for the intimidation students may feel, suggest students adopt an "open minded" mindset, and teach students grammatical tools and writing

strategies that will equip them with the ability to write academic essays with confidence and authority. These texts strive to help students engage in the same commonplace as the academics through the discourses presented in *RPC*. The logic of the course is that if given the proper tools and the moral support to do the job (write critical essays like an academic), students will be more confident in their attempts to do said job. Both *TSIS* and *SMH* provide students with very helpful tools and insights that when understood and applied clearly help students improve their writing skills; however, the invitation into the texts and the explanations for different approaches to critical writing simultaneously encourage students and create barriers for them as academic writers.

Graff and Birkenstein write that one challenge students face when entering an academic conversation is that students think they need to be "experts in the field" about which they are asked to write, and since they are not, making "I" statements that reflect their own position in an argument is "daunting" (57). They suggest that arguments are not based on what people know only, but also on "everyday habits of mind that can be isolated, identified, and used by almost anyone" and "the arguments that finally win the day are built. . . on some very basic rhetorical patterns that most of us use on a daily basis" (57-8). In *SMH,* Lunsford sets up a similar introduction to writing as an act that engages difference. In Chapter Two's "Expectations for College Writing," she begins:

> What does it mean to be a college student? It means becoming the self
> and the thinker and the writer you most want to be. It means engaging
> with challenging new ideas and with people who are different from you
> in many ways. It means not only opening your books (including this
> one!) but also opening your mind. In a time when many writers find

themselves in the echo chambers provided by social media—where they

encounter only ideas and views like their own—opening your minds

seems especially necessary. Indeed, openness is a theme that many

groups across the country are pursuing. . .. With its nationwide National

Conversation Project, First Listen aims to open minds by modeling the

kind of respectful civil discourse you can practice as a college writer,

speaker, and thinker. (14)

Lunsford follows this up, stating students should expect to engage difference, identify

the barriers that might prevent them or others from doing so, and then develop "habits of

mind" that they should practice so as to avoid or manage their responses to "heated

conversations" or debates in which they will inevitably find themselves (17).

Lunsford's introduction assumes that students come to college wanting to be

writers and thinkers, that they do not have to engage with people who think differently,

that they might not open their books or their minds, that they are consumed with social

media and listen to their own ideas in its "echo chamber." These characterizations may

be true for many students, but they immediately set students on the defensive. Many

students did not come to college to be writers or thinkers. They came to learn a

discipline or trade. Many already have open minds but lack the knowledge or awareness

of others' views not because of social media echo chambers as much as geographical

isolation and minimal experiences. Lunsford recognizes the nature of division in the

country in this introduction, and clearly wants to help students think about how best to

engage difference respectfully. My concern is that Lunsford assumes students do not

already know how to engage difference, be respectful, and listen to other views, and that

the academy is where they will learn to develop these habits. While it is true that our current sociopolitical climate is very divided, we risk deepening those divisions by assuming students come to the academy with close-minded attitudes. As subtle as this may seem, these assumptions perpetuate the hierarchy that places the academy over the students.

The *TSIS* authors, in multiple chapters, also make similar assumptions about the close-minded attitudes of students upon entering the academy. They provide rhetorical, even language they can use in templates, to help students engage different positions in any argument they may encounter. Such strategies increase the authority with which students engage in these arguments. One strategy is to use rhetorical patterns of "agreeing, disagreeing, or some combination or both" (58). Graff and Birkenstein acknowledge that some critics might think reducing an argument to one of these three rhetorical patterns may seem to ignore the "complexity, subtlety, or originality" of an argument, but instead, "the more complex and subtle an argument is, the more it departs from the conventional ways people think, and the more your readers will need to be able to place it on their mental map in order to process the complex details you present" (59). They argue that the placement of ideas into these simple, reduced patterns actually allow writers to provide a map that positions their argument in relation to others—like describing landmarks when providing directions—and this helps readers understand the context in which the writer has positioned him or herself. *TSIS* painstakingly defends the characterization of "they say/I say" throughout the text to support the benefits of acknowledging different positions in an argument even when the positioning could reduce the argument to two sides of a debate. Graff and Berkenstein argue that this

adversarial approach provides a simplification that students recognize because it is a part of "conventional ways people think."

I think the way Lunsford, Graff and Berkenstein talk about engaging different viewpoints and the time they spend doing it exemplify a conventional thinking that reveals what Deborah Tannen calls an "argument culture." This culture, "with its tendency to approach issues as a polarized debate, and the culture of critique, with its inclination to regard criticism and attack as the best if not the only type of rigorous thinking, are deeply rooted in the Western tradition, going back to the ancient Greeks" (Tannen 601). The Greek philosophers valued logos over pathos. Pathos was most closely associated with poetics, and the bards who traveled through the land sharing their stories used their "power to persuade others by getting them all worked up" (603). Both *TSIS* and *SMH* provide logical recommendations for how students can address potential disagreements, and even encourage them to identify counterarguments that may weaken their arguments. The writer is tasked to anticipate attacks and perhaps diffuse them before they have a chance to mount with force. The point of the argument is to discover the truth. "Our glorification of opposition as the path to truth is related to the development of formal logic, which encourages truth seeking as a step-by-step alternation of claims and counterclaims" (Tannen 603). The Composition I texts that most inform how instructors, especially new instructors, approach the act of analysis, which is through this adversarial approach that is intrinsic in the way Americans think. Even Lunsford points out that Americans tend to enter an argument with the idea that there are solutions to them (Lunsford and Ruszkiewicz 19). This kind of thinking Tannen suggests is a result of scientific thinking within American culture that does not

give credence to a person's personal convictions because "truth is objective." If we think of arguments as a means to flush out the truth, then the positioning of opposing arguments will reveal untruths and make clear the truths. This approach, though, assumes there is a truth in the mix of voices, and the writer's goal is to bring that truth to light while at the same time proving that the others' positions are untrue.

Tannen argues that the division we experience in our social and political lives stems from this adversarial thinking and is reflected in the way we teach students even at a very young age. She herself cites a different way of presenting argument style that rejects "disputation." She writes, "In China and India. . .the preferred mode of rhetoric was exposition rather than argument" and the goal was to "'enlighten an enquirer' not to 'overwhelm an opponent'" (602). Tannen also points out that the Eastern cultures considered philosophy a concern with "observation and experience" rather than the search for truth. The shift in how one approaches information, one's habit of mind, changes how one talks about and presents the information. While the texts used in Composition I present adversarial arguments as ways to engage difference and show the truth of an argument, they are still shaped by this adversarial habit of thinking. All of the efforts to help students think about their approach and control their emotions during disagreements in class or on paper are still shaped though the idea that we will disagree with others. A legitimate argument is that disagreement is a natural result of experience, and students need to learn how to deal with their disagreements like academics, so students can argue and debate without losing their cool. However, if learning through this method proves to create more barriers and slow students' ability to learn how to analyze and discover truths within the material they analyze and compare, then why not

consider an approach that would invite students to think less adversarial, and more like a wisely?

One example of this Tannen provides involves thinking about the questions we ask and the implications of those questions. A male student asked in a sociology class, "Smith is very vague in her theory of XX. Can you explain it further?" He could have asked instead, "I didn't understand the author's theory. Can you explain it to me" (Tannen 606). The first way of asking the question puts the responsibility for the explanation on the writer, and the second puts the responsibility of understanding on the reader. Tannen argues that males are more likely to ask questions like the first to avoid appearing ignorant, but students may not think about why they ask questions the way they do, nor do many instructors (606).

Another example of how questions an adversarial culture, in Composition I instructors in the Teaching Seminar are given a list of questions to inspire class discussions of an essay, and the first question is to ask students what they thought about the reading. This open ended question does not always receive much of a response from students, and so the teacher follows up with a directed questions that asks them, "What did you think about the distinction the author makes between X and Y? Why does he make that distinction? Do you agree with it?" Not only do these questions guide the students to what the teacher thinks is important in the text, challenging the students to look for the "right" answer, but it also asks students to establish themselves in a position with a viewpoint that agrees with or disagrees with the author, creating debate between the text and the reader. The Composition I course embraces this debate as a way to generate discussions, and I think even passionate discussions are welcome depending on

the experience of the instructor, but most instructors who are new to teaching struggle to manage discussions in which students do engage in expressing divergent positions, or struggle to motivate students to feel confident enough to express their points of view because they fear a debate will ensue.

This underlying debate culture, which the texts encourage, shape the potential approaches instructors adopt in the composition classroom when teaching critical writing and reading. The debate culture also influences the choices teachers make when deciding the subject matter for units and texts the students will read. Some instructors will avoid potentially controversial units because they are not sure how to handle possible conflicts in class discussions or worry that a low grade on an essay arguing a contrary position will either be affected by their own bias or lead to accusations that the grade is a result of that bias. In these situations, even the interactions between students and teachers can become adversarial, and then fail to achieve the goal to use tension as a tool for learning. Instead, tension becomes a fight between the students and the instructor about what is fair or just.

In Composition I, many instructors assign Plato's "Allegory of the Cave," and teach it for its discussion of truth, with its prisoners having access to a representation of the world—which is its shadows—and not the world for what it actually is. Instructors use this allegory specifically to argue that the process of finding truth will lead the prisoner out of the shadows and into the light. The allegory serves many functions. Teachers explicitly align it with the role education plays in the discovery of knowledge, or Truth as absolute and outside the material world of shadows. The enlightened individual sees the source of the shadows and can now distinguish Truth from illusion.

The unenlightened person thinks the shadows are real, and the willfully unenlightened person has the opportunity to see the "truth" when the prisoner returns home to share what he has learned because he has taken "pity on them" (567). However, the inhabitants of the cave refuse to accept that their reality is not real, and say of the freed prisoner, "that he went up and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if any one tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death" (Plato 567).

In most instances, a student will want to be the enlightened individual, because most people want to know the Truth, but this concept of truth establishes a hierarchy that implies that the people who are enlightened know better than rather than know differently from others. To be enlightened in and of itself establishes a knowledge or intellect hierarchy. When students do not understand concepts in texts, they may feel that they do not have the intellectual ability to be enlightened. They must either accept that what their instructors explain to them is true, or they reject that "truth" and adopt the attitude that this new version of truth is actually false, and the rogue instructor, or academy should be "put to death." In these instances, students either challenge the academy or instructor, or they leave the academy. When students remain in the academy, and they become enlightened, they risk experiencing what bell hooks experienced. They are forever changed by their enlightened experiences and new understandings. When they return home, their home communities reject them, considering them corrupted by the institutions they attended. This dynamic plays out in many Composition I classroom discussions as well as in the lives of students who attend

the university; however, the allegory also contains subtler influences that students and instructors may consider.

The argument Plato makes is systematic, using reason and logic, yet he uses a story form, the allegory, to convey his philosophy of forms. Students in Composition I do not discuss the narrative of the story as a rhetorical tool, nor the poetics of it. The narrative utilizes the elements of a story with characters and a plot. The poetics is the artful way of putting the story together that appeals to some standard of aesthetics. The rhetoric is the way the story persuades the audience to accept the story's points. Plato establishes a cause and effect sequence so that he can "show in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlighted" (565). In the telling of his allegory, he asks leading questions that logically take the reader/listener through the sequence, "And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels. . .which appear over the wall?. . .and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave" (565)?

In these and subsequent questions, Plato uses questions that specify causes and effects in the course of events and in the questions that posit the relationship between one act and another, "do you see how this can lead to this, and doesn't it make sense that. . ." so that he states the answer in the question rather than leaving it open for interpretation. Oftentimes instructors take this same approach. They ask questions that lead the students to the answers they already determined from the text. Students do not discover what information is in the texts; rather, instructors lead them to the answers instructors want them to understand. Then, instructors ask them to report what the authors say, and respond with what they think about what the authors say. The instructor

harbors the knowledge and authority, and this creates in students the notion that they need to "get it right" so as to avoid the embarrassment of "getting it wrong." Of course, students need to understand the text and accurately represent what the authors have written, but one might ask if that representation of knowledge comes from the student's own discovered understanding, or if it is simply a report of what they learned from the teacher. Additionally, is what the students' say a true reflection of their own thoughts and positions, or a projection of what they think the instructor will accept? One way to trust that students genuinely understand a text and reflect genuine responses is to create a community in which they feel safe to do so.

While students may relate to this allegory in different ways, the problem with teaching Plato's allegory in isolation is that it assumes that an absolute truth exists and fails to consider that truth is relative to the situation. Are the prisoners who never experience any other truth ignorant or lesser than the prisoner who was released? Are their life experiences false, a mirage, because they have never entered the light? Are students prisoners? What holds them as prisoners? Who releases them? The academy? Lived experience? All of these questions are valid and interesting, but they provide a limited view of how people can think about Truth. The allegory also positions the "enlightened" academic above the ignorant student, and this power dynamic acts as yet another barrier in the composition classroom.

Theoretical discussions of writing discourse communities attempt to address these kinds of hierarchies and help students gain a sense of authority; Harris explores the difficulty of defining communities. He explains Stanley Fish's "interpretive community," a group of "loosely" connected people who "share certain habits of mind;"

the "speech community," which requires a physically shared space; and the "discourse community," which defines the group by their shared use of "references" and allusions (136-37). Bartholomae's concept of students moving from their home commonplace to the academic commonplace, according to Harris, differs from Bartholomae's pedagogy in that Bartholomae asks students to write what "they already think and feel about a certain subject. . . and then tries to get them to redefine that thinking through a seminar-like process of reading and dialogue" (Harris139-40).

The Composition I course begins with a similar writing task—the diagnostic essay—that introduces the students to the academic writing commonplace accompanied with instruction about grammar and depth of content through formal feedback, but this feedback comes before and without any subsequent revision of the diagnostic essay. The diagnostic is used to determine what the students can and cannot write well, but it also creates this hierarchical tension on the second day of class.

In the diagnostic, students assume authority over what they write. They are allowed forty-five minutes to write a two-to three-page analysis of a TV show they watched. The familiarity with the source and the freedom to write what they think about it allows students to begin the course with a sense of authority; however, that authority is quickly dashed when students receive the score and feedback on their essays, as well as potentially see examples of their sentences containing common grammatical errors displayed anonymously in a class assignment. While the diagnostic provides a baseline of the students' writing ability, and the grammar assignment uses student examples from the diagnostics for direct instruction in a whole class review, the public display of poorly written student work and the extensive feedback on diagnostics creates undermines the

initial invitation to allow students to engage in academic writing, drawing attention to how poorly they write academic essays. The instructors then must reassure students that this assessment is a baseline, and that the students' overall goal is to grow from this initial writing performance to an improved performance in the final essay. The instructor's ability to reinstate students' authority is hindered in that they tell students to perform with authority and then show them how poorly they perform, which shakes their sense of authority.

As a result, the academic writing community is fissured with the first writing assignment in the 101 course, and the rest of the semester, the instructor has to manage the tension it creates. Harris and Bartholomae, and I would even say Berlin, all think that this tension is necessary for individual student growth—students' own commonplaces need to be challenged for them to grow and learn to develop new commonplaces. The instructor must navigate the hierarchy that this tension creates and the contradiction that it establishes—a community that is supposed to invite everyone into the conversation with equal authority, but in which clear hierarchies exist. Harris ultimately argues writing scholars replace the word *community* with the term "public space" where a "community of strangers" can meet to "form their own voices as writers and intellectuals" (155). However, in the current 101 course, the writing community created by the course design and the instructors who teach it places the teachers above the students. This positioning resembles Harris's characterization and criticism of Bartholomae's concept of the academic discourse community, in which teachers are commissioned to help students learn how to "Invent the University." In the case of Composition I, the teachers have already invented the university and its academic

writing community and spend the semester trying to teach the students how to communicate in it.

RPC includes poetic works by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Washington Irving, and Plato, and narrative essays by Henry David Thoreau and bell hooks. The text places these narrative poetic texts alongside nonfiction, expository texts. In fact, the expository texts outnumber the poetic texts, and in doing so suggest that for academic composition, the hierarchy places rhetoric (expository) over poetic (narrative) for the purposes of addressing serious analysis of culture or any other subject in the academy. This shift is responsive to the utilitarian, scientific trends in teaching writing that Harris explains became clear after the Seminar on Teaching and learning English at Dartmouth College in 1966.

At Dartmouth, Americans presented a scholarly-centered approach to teaching English and primarily argued for a set of skills that acted as a "civilizing value" for students (Harris 8). Tannen argues that the origin of scientific thinking is "rooted in the Christian Church," which consisted of monks who were soldiers first, and so they used military experiences as metaphors for the battle between good and evil (603). "The history of science in the Church holds the key to understanding our tradition of regarding the search for truth as an enterprise of oral disputation in which positions are propounded, defended, and attacked without regard to the debater's personal conviction. It is a notion of truth as objective" (603). One who seeks the objective truth through scientific research is more civilized than one who does not. Removing the subjective, one could argue, removes unreliable emotional determinations from the equation of an argument. A scientific approach to the teaching of English defines "the subject," and

then identifies "a set of principles for use in its study" (Harris 9). One rhetorical principle in the Composition I course that is not considered as effective as forms of logos is narrative, in particular the narrative experience of the writer.

John Trimbur criticized Dartmouth scholars and teachers, including Harris, for "glossing over" the importance of the students as consumers who may speak different languages and come from different cultures (Harris 22). Harris addresses this concern in some measure when he discusses Bartholomae's commonplaces, and the teacher's role in helping students negotiate their way from their own commonplace through academic discourse. Following the growth theorists' model, a student who writes from her own "lived experience," must also write for and from her own commonplace, which enables her to acknowledge and root her academic writing in her "lived" culture and language. A weakness of the growth model, though, as Harris argues, is that in it, the teacher is apt to nurture a writer without challenging him or her to expand beyond the familiar commonplace and language, so students are able to negotiate different discourses. This criticism may be why instructors are not encouraged to teach students how to use narrative as a rhetorical tool, and even to expand it beyond lived experience into allegorical and anectodical forms to explain complex ideas in their writing.

A student's writing voice emerges from the interplay of experience, knowledge, and language. While different theorists taught or argued for slightly different definitions of voice and from where it emerges, they all show a "willingness to take on the tangled relationship between self and writer and text" (57). This focus shows that voice is very much influenced first by the writer's community of origin, then by community for which he writes, and finally by the discourse about and commonplace in which he writes.

Bartholomae claims voice emerges from the writer's reaction against other voices. Harris calls for "intensive academic writing" that bridges the space between "freedom and constraint," and that in "intensive writing," voice emerges from the writer, the conversations in which the writer engages, and through his or her specific use of language or "codes" (58-59).

Students struggle to grasp this abstract concept of voice. Graff and Birkenstein in *TSIS* and Bartholomae in "Inventing the University" argue that writers read to draw upon what others say (47). Students understand and experience the tension that exists between the writer and the text. Young college writers struggle to present their ideas to an academic audience in writing first from the sources to which they have easy access (prior knowledge and experience, and the language and perspectives of their commonplaces), and second from the sources newer to and more challenging for them (the language and perspectives of the academic or public commonplaces) in the essays they read. Tapping into a variety of narrative forms and structures and teaching students how to use them for rhetorical purposes rather than confessionals can not only help students better bridge the space between their home and academic commonplaces but helps them ground abstract concepts and ideologies in theirs and others' lived experiences. Grounding the abstract in their own realities or truths may be a more effective way of helping students learn how to understand the truths as others see them.

Sondra Perl, but more prominently Janet Emig and Linda Flower, espoused the idea that by teaching students the writing process, they escape an "egocentric point of view," which was the alleged culprit behind poor writing and could be the origin of the confessional writing that many instructors try to avoid by steering clear of directly

teaching narrative as a rhetorical tool in students' academic writing. Emig divides

writing into two categories, *reflexive* and *extensive*, which Harris says is another version

of "literary and nonliterary" (78). Reflexive is the poetic and extensive is business

writing, and Emig recommends composition courses incorporate reflexive writing more,

and that it should have a more "personal and 'contemplative' quality" (79). Harris

argues that Flower and Emig teach the process only, rather than teach students to

"shape" their "prose for a reader" (89), and that "their descriptions of the composing

process are predetermined by a vision of an ideal text" (78). He argues that process

teaching acts as a mode of acculturation that stifles or changes what the writer wrote and

thus masks the writer's voice (90-1). Additionally, he suggests that most if not all

students prefer to write more extensively than reflexively and insists that teachers teach

writing as an "ongoing conversation" with outside voices, and the form of writing the

students use must shift to meet the needs of the situation and audience (91, 94).

Reflexive writing is simply not a part of the Composition I syllabus as a choice

for exploring or presenting ideas in a text. The course emphasizes the importance of

writing as a developmental process that includes revisions, as well as a thinking process

that constructs ideas within the structure of an academic, expository essay against the

voices of other scholars. Students receive substantive instruction and numerous models

of this new-to-them form of critical, expository writing. They draft, peer review, revise,

conference with the instructor, and then revise again for a final draft. Many students

have not experienced such a significantly extensive revision process, and most have

never conferenced with their teachers about their writing, so in this way, the

Composition I design takes students through the "writing process." That process helps to

support the instructors' intent to create a writing community. While engaging in a discourse with other scholars is one way to create a sense of the writing discourse community, I think feedback on student essays and discussions about student writing in writing conferences act as the most significant ways for instructors to build this writing community with their students, even if the community seems to exist primarily of twenty-five communities of the instructor and each individual student, rather than a community of twenty-six writers.

To learn how to develop the writing community through feedback on student assignments, GTA instructors in their Teaching Composition course read Donald A. Daiker's "Learning for Praise," which encourages meaningful and specific feedback so that students understand what mistakes they have made and what they should do to correct them. These mistakes may be in grammar, verbal style, organization, or argument development. Many students have expressed to me that the feedback they receive on their essays far exceeds the nature of feedback they received on high school English essays. GTAs and other 101 instructors are encouraged to spend more time providing written, thoughtful feedback, often in the form of questions or explanations about why something is effective or ineffective on student essays. If the feedback is effective, students are able to express their own ideas through the use of language that integrates their own commonplace codes and those of the discourse in which they engage. Written feedback seeks to empower the students' voices, not overpower them, and so instructors are taught to ask questions that get students to think and express themselves, thus avoiding acculturating them, or drowning students' voices with the instructor's voice.

To help GTAs conduct the writing conferences, they read and discuss Donald M. Murray's "The Listening Eye: Reflection on the Writing Conference." Murray suggests that the instructor needs to essentially get out of the student's way and ask questions that inspire the students to talk through their ideas for the essay. Murray asks himself in the essay, "What am I teaching?" and initially, he answers with "I am teaching the writing process" (98); however, he then reflects, "I am really teaching my students to react to their own work in such a way that they write increasingly effective drafts" (99). Murray and Daiker reach similar conclusions as Harris, Bartholomae, and Berlin about what the teacher's intention and practice should look like—that they should focus on the "work of the students." Thomas Newkirk, in "The First Five Minutes," emphasizes too, that the teacher needs to resist dominating the conference and avoid the situation in which the "teacher identifies a problem and suggests remedies before the student is even convinced a problem exists" (323). This idea relates to the suggestion in Murray's essay that the teacher allow the student to talk through his/her ideas rather than point out the issues and tell the student how to correct them.

Geneva Smitherman's 1977 publication of *Talkin and Testifyin* argues for teachers to provide more feedback to the content of texts written by African American students and fewer conventional corrections (Harris 107). This argument—to focus on content foremost—supports the ideas espoused by the Daiker, Murray, Harris, Berlin, and Bartholomae. Smitherman promoted a teacher response style that coached students to consider their "choice of words," logic, and "originality" (Harris 110). According to Harris, Smitherman argues that instructors who teach language use should focus "on skills in reading and writing that are 'intellectual competencies that can be taught in any

dialect,'" (109). Smitherman also argues that "teachers need to move beyond a fetishizing of correctness and instead focus on the more substantive, difficult, and rhetorical aspects of communication such as content and message, style, choice of words, logical development, originality of thought and expression . . .the real components of language power'" (qtd. in Harris 109-10).

Instructors focus on these aspects of essays in Composition I, evidenced by the diagnostic essay and related grammar assignment, reading assignments in *SMH*, and the kind of feedback instructors, at least those who take the Teaching Composition seminar, are advised to provide. Mike Rose argues for ways to "demystify the workings of the academy for his students" which were typically "people of color from lower socioeconomic classes" and needed guidance into the academic systems "designed to exclude them" (qtd. in Harris 111-12). He did this by having students in one class "summarize short simpler readings, and then moved them slowly classifying and comparing to analyzing. . .I explained and modeled. I used accessible readings, tried to incorporate what the veterans learned from one assignment to the next, slowly increased difficulty, and provided a lot of time for the men to talk and write" (Rose qtd. in Harris 112-13). Rose and Malcom Kiniry focus on what Harris calls "matters of stance and argument" and not on conventions (113). They, like Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky "sketch out a plan for a basic writing course that is set up very much like a graduate seminar: students read, write, and talk together about a particular intellectual issues over the course of the term, coming at the same topic from a number of different angels, reading one another's writings, and seeing how the individual concerns they bring to their common subject influence what each of them has to say about it" (Harris 113).

Composition I instructors are encouraged to take this same approach—assigning more difficult texts in later units and using the texts as examples for how to develop a thesis, use rhetorical devices, write transitions, and/or construct effective conclusions. However, the course assignments could more effectively adopt this spiral approach to strengthen the relationship between each assignment and the final written product in each unit and more strategically demonstrate the relationship between each unit.

Berlin's discussion of the poetic-rhetoric binary as it relates to class systems in culture is also significant because education is seen as a means to improve or sustain one's socio-economic class in American culture. Many of the essays in *RPC* pertain to education and class in the United States' capitalist system. Composition I helps students "regardless of" their "major" to "develop intellectual practices" that are "invaluable" to students' academic and career endeavors as well as their "civic life" (Serfling 1). Students are taught so they become "engaged citizen[s]." Composition, along with the general purpose of education, is to teach students how to be participatory citizens rather than passive citizens. To do this, Keller carefully constructed a course design in which the intersection of texts and lessons attempt to build a community of critically thinking and culturally conscious readers and writers who, after having taken the class, will be prepared to write for any class in the academy. However, as I have demonstrated, and as with any carefully designed system, students would benefit from a rethinking of its approach to community, its reliance on binary thinking, and its neglect of narrative as a valid rhetorical tool for students to use in their academic writing.

CHAPTER 2
MITAKUYE OYASIN PHILOSOPHY

Students who take the Composition I at South Dakota State University enter the

classroom as new members in what is characterized as the academic community. In this

community, the students learn that not only is the expectation for reading and writing

different from what most of them have previously experienced, but also that they use

language differently and they apply ways of thinking that take them to critical depths

they may not have traveled before. As I have discussed in the previous chapter, several

composition theorists influence the design of the course and the way it is taught. Gerald

Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's concept of "entering the conversation" with academics

and using templates that will help them navigate the language attempts to ease the

learning curve of using academic "commonplaces," which is David Bartholomae's

concept of the way people communicate in certain environments and for certain

purposes. Upon entering the conversation, theorists assume that students will encounter

opposing views, and attempt to help students prepare for that opposition and learn to

address it. Andrea Lunsford attempts to alleviate the students' apprehension of potential

conflict by talking about how students need to "engage difference" and search for

common ground (Lunsford, *SMH* 14). James Berlin presents his idea of cultural studies,

using popular culture publications as artifacts to analyze for their cultural and political

significance (Berlin 133-40). By analyzing these popularly consumed artifacts, students

tap into material with which they may already be familiar, and through that material,

they learn to critically think, speak, and write about the way ads, movies, TV shows,

social media, and news casts subtly and overtly influence the way people think and act in American society.

In the previous chapter, I also explained how the community into which students are invited is often inherently presented as hierarchical and perceived by some theorists as elitist or utopian (Harris 145-46). While for the most part these theorists make a concerted effort to avoid promoting into binary thinking, they do so anyway in the language structures they use to talk about argument and joining an academic conversation and the way reading assignments are presented and discussed in class and often in essays. Additionally, the content of *RPC* fails to provide contemporary and familiar ground through which students can enter the academic community and its critical expectations, lacking the diverse perspectives that would normalize intellectual engagement and critical analysis from people historically marginalized in the academy, particularly Native Americans. Finally, the failure for the course to incorporate narrative purposefully and directly into its content both as a pedagogical tool and rhetorical device weakens the success to which the course could engage students in critical discussions that delve deeper into concepts of what it means to live in community with others. Each of these issues might be alleviated by allowing the concept of *Mitakuye Oyasin* to shape decisions in the design of the course and the methods of instruction. *Mitakuye Oyasin* means that all things are related, and by respecting the relationality of all things, instructors and students would use language that reshapes how they talk about argument and present their arguments to one another.

In this chapter, I will explain the different approach that is possible when instructors use the *Mitakuye Oyasin* philosophy to invite students into the academic

writing community, its discourses, and to teach the academic commonplaces students need to understand in order to read and write in this community effectively. Additionally, I will explore how using the *Mitakuye Oyasin* philosophy aligns with the idea of rhetorical sovereignty in that it acknowledges and honors a key *Oceti Sakowin* way of thinking, accepting it as a valuable asset in educating the youth who will be our future leaders. It also honors the *Oceti Sakowin* currently living in the Dakotas by recognizing them and their insightful contributions to human interactions that can help improve the way instructors teach academic critical reading and writing. When applied to the teaching of reading and writing, *Mitakuye Oyasin* invites instructors to expand dialogue and analysis in the classroom to include Native and other minority perspectives; reframe binary/dichotomous thinking; incorporate narrative more explicitly as a serious form of rhetoric; inspire complex student analysis; and reshape students' understanding of popular narratives that misrepresent Indigenous peoples and other historically marginalized people in the United States.

The recognition of Native American contributions to education theory and pedagogy, and the inclusion of Native scholars in a composition course required of all students also makes a bold statement about the importance of the Wokini Initiative. By making the intellectual contribution of the *Oceti Sakowin* a regular part of the way instructors teach students, and students learn, the university not only promotes "Indigenous Nation-Building" but Indigenous influence and wisdom at the university. It brings "new life" to the nation-wide concern about division within social and political discourse in the United States and helps not just Native students return home and give what they have learned to their communities from Western institutions, but helps non-

Native students return to their homes and give to their communities what they have learned from the *Oceti Sakowin*. The application of this philosophy then offers an integrated exchange of wisdom and practice that could help instructors and students develop more effective ways of communicating the complexity of ideas that influence social and political discourses and actions in peaceful and respectful ways, thus diminishing the focus on difference and otherness that has historically pervaded American education, social, and political systems.

Albert White Hat, Sr., a Lakota educator and elder on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota models in his book *Life's Journey—Zuya: Oral Teachings from Rosebud* ways of teaching and learning through the *Mitakuye Oyasin* philosophy that side-steps binary thinking and fosters critical thinking and writing skills. *Mitakuye Oyasin* cultivates community similar to the way Harris conceives of community as a shared space where people share ideas (Harris 147). The book is a journey that begins with a history of the Lakota. That history starts with White Hat's own experience and upbringing on Rosebud and traces the history of education and interaction with White, Western culture's influence on the *Oceti Sakowin*. He explains the history of oppression, broken treaties, and educational systems that were designed to control the Indians and assimilate them if not eradicate them from the United States. The United States, from the viewpoint of many tribal nations, was the invader that took from them their land, culture, and language without just cause. White Hat's treatment of the history of his people is not scathing nor accusatory; rather, it is reflective, insightful, and considerate of the differences between Western and Lakota perspectives. He writes more to his own people as much as he writes for other Native tribal members and non-Native people.

"White Hat seeks to preserve the link the Lakota people have with their past," the jacket cover indicates.

If we think of the Composition I course as an introduction to a *zuya*, or journey, we might also consider what it means to conduct that journey from the *Mitakuye Oyasin* perspective, and how that perspective, along with the ideas of rhetorical sovereignty for Native Americans and understandings of identity for all students, might influence how we advise instructors to teach composition, and how we teach composition to students as a beneficial tool for their journeys. A *zuya*, White Hat explains, is a journey a young man would take. He would sneak out of camp, and head in one direction. He would come back at some point to share what he learned on the journey. When he returned, he would "have met other people and survived many challenges" and would be "more responsible and wiser" (47). White Hat says that the *zuya* was "a form of education, of learning self-sufficiency and responsibility" and that people do not do that anymore. Many students on the reservations leave to attend colleges, and some stay away from the reservation until they have completed their degrees. They return home, more knowledgeable, more mature, and better able to contribute to their communities. Some never return to the reservation, and this too was possible for someone who left on a *zuya* (White Hat 47). While the journeys Lakota men took in the past are different, people today and in any culture often experience the same kind of journey that involves a separation from their homes for a period of time during which they live new experiences and learn from them. Students leave their homes where they communicate in commonplaces with which they are familiar—they know the rules and develop a certain level of literacy in reading the various forms of communication and expectations. When

they go to college, they learn to communicate in potentially unfamiliar commonplaces. Often, college is the first time that students have been away from home, and they face many intellectual and emotional challenges. When they return home, they are often more mature and wiser than they were when they left. They learned from the books they read, the courses they took, the people they met, and their varied experiences. Like the young men who traveled on their *zuyas*, young people today carry their newfound understandings home to help themselves and others in their communities.

A person who takes a *zuya* faces a challenge when they return home that White Hat does not discuss in his book, but a challenge that I have witnessed, experienced, and that bell hooks documents in her personal narrative "Learning in the Shadow of Race and Class" anthologized in *Reading Popular Culture*, the reader for Composition I. In hooks's personal narrative, she talks about her lived experience as a black college student from a working-class family at Stanford University from a working-class family. "Slowly, I began to understand fully that there was no place in the academe for folks from working-class backgrounds who did not wish to leave the past behind" (hooks 557). She characterizes in this essay the experience that she had in college where her values, ways of speaking and thinking from home differed significantly from what she encountered in the academy. Bartholomae addresses this difference by defining commonplaces and suggesting strategies that will help students learn the academic commonplace so that they can join in the academic discourses with authority. One who has authority also has developed confidence within a community. Gerald Graff invites students to join the conversations academics have and gives them templates that support the way they use language to talk about ideas in those conversations, hopefully in ways

that do not offend but instead engage those who "listen." hooks's outsider feeling is shared by other theorists. Earlier I pointed out how Harris and Raymond Williams also write about the way students feel on the outside of the academy, but they add another dynamic—that when students return home, they no longer fully integrate into their home communities because the *zuya* they took changed them. What they learn at the academy or out in the world is not always well-received by the people who stayed behind and have not changed. In many ways their identity has changed, and they are strangers to the place and people they once called their community.

SDSU's Wokini Initiative promotes Native students' return to their home communities to give back to their people, but when they return, their identities shaped by the ideas they learned in schools that explicitly and implicitly educate them through the philosophies and epistemologies of Western culture, they are not always received with open arms. While the *Oceti Sakowin* still harbor traditional beliefs and ways of thinking, they also harbor a mistrust of the White man's educational system, and the colonized ideologies that sought to "save the man" and "kill the Indian." A person who returns to the reservation then, may not be accepted because the tribe's sovereignty is intimately tied to identity, and Native identity has historically been defined by its differences from White American culture. Native identity includes speaking the tribe's traditional language, practicing traditional ceremonies, and dressing in traditional clothes and regalia. On the contemporary reservation, it may mean all those things, but it also includes speaking the language and being able to read it in reservation commonplaces. Native students who return from college must be able to codeswitch or shift from using the language and communication styles they used as school, to using the

language and communication styles they grew up with at home. While this may have also been true for hooks, and certainly is true for many if not all students, the Native students' face an even more politically and socially charged dilemma. If they are unable to identify as uniquely different from the rest of the people in American culture by means other than the color of their skin, the United States government could determine that a tribe will no longer have its sovereign status. What each Native student stands to lose or gain communally after college relates directly to what other students stand to lose or gain as individuals whose identities have been changed by their *zuyas*, but what they have to lose culturally, politically, and geographically is for them, exponentially more precarious.

A comparative analysis of the lived educational experiences of Native, Black, and working-class students, may help non-Native, White students understand ways and perhaps the extent to which history, geographical location, and education affect society, culture, and politics. Understanding this complex relationship requires critical questions that force students to learn about the ways historical policies and events, cultural expectations, and educational aspirations all continuously nudge and collide with one another to shape individual identities as well as cultural identities and social norms. In a country where division manifests itself in debilitating and fatal ways, this exploration of relationality may prove more successful and supportive of Harris's notion of a shared public space where students of different backgrounds have an opportunity to talk about their individual journeys and speculate on the way those journeys will affect not only them, but the people they meet along the way or return to at their educational journey's end. Instructors can also invite students to recognize the work they complete along this

educational journey, and more specifically in the composition class. As part of a common intellectual journey along which they will learn and develop come habits of mind and practices of writing found in academia.

While framing the educational experience as a journey is one way the *Oceti Sakowin* traditions can help improve Composition I, another is to use the understanding of "all my relations" to build concepts of community that influence how the community interacts. The attitude and expectations of the instructor and the students intertwine with each individual's understanding of and commitment to community. For young people in the traditional *Oceti Sakowin* community and home, the first lesson they are taught is the relational *Oceti Sakowin* philosophy of *Mitakuye Oyasin*, which stems from the *oyate's* creation story, and the "understanding necessary to live that philosophy starts at birth" (White Hat 87). White Hat suggests in that statement that to understand that philosophy, one must grow up with it, but is it possible to adopt a philosophy that one did not grow up with? Assuming that it is possible to put into practice a philosophy that one did not begin life learning, and initially laying aside legitimate concerns of appropriation, and acculturation, I want to explore how *Mitakuye Oyasin* would influence the college academic writing community. White Hat writes, "in our culture, everything is a relative, regardless of the situation. Everything is a relative, and we work with them all" (152).

In Western culture, more often than not, young people are taught to be fearful of strangers. Everyone is not a relative, and relatives, friends, acquaintances, and strangers are all treated differently. An individual is often more dependent on one's personal relationship with another individual than an overarching sense of communal responsibility. When a child learns to interact and understand the world, he/she gains

knowledge and experience that shapes his/her ways of thinking and doing. White Hat says that "Knowledge is wonderful, but without experience, it has no meaning or feeling to it" (87). He explains that children see the way people in their *tioŝp̄ayes*, or their families, do things from birth—they watch, and often they experience what they see in order to develop an understanding" (87). When students come into a course designed through *Mitakuye Oyasin*, they experience a relational way of thinking and doing. This begins with the attitude and approach the teacher takes in creating a public space focused on relationality—a familial sense of community—rather than Harris's public space in which strangers meet.

To provide a better understanding of *Mitakuye Oyasin*, White Hat tells the *Oceti Sakowin* origin/creation story that begins with *Iyan*. In this creation story, Iyan shed his blood, and from his blood, the creation of the world ensued. White Hat explains that "we came from the blood of Iyan, that we are all related to all creation." The first element of creation was Maka and Mni, land and water. Maka complained that she was too dark and cold, and so Iyan create the sun, Anpetu Wi. When Maka complained it was too hot, Iyan created the moon, Hanhepi Wi. White Hat notes that "from the beginning, we as a creation complain. We're not satisfied" (31). The moon brought balance to the sun, and soon Maka asked for a covering. With each creation, Iyan lost power, so by this time, creation became a shared effort between Iyan and those who he created. When Maka asked for a covering, Iyan said, "If we give you a covering, you must promise to give it life and nourishment" (White Hat 32). Grass, plants, and trees followed, and "with each creation another need arose, and with each need, all of creation would get together and decide how to fill that need" (32). White Hat explains that with each element/being Iyan

created, he "created another identical one in the universe" (32). Man and woman were created last, and man, Wicasa, was made "to be like the universe, to carry the power and energy of the universe" and woman, Wiyan, was created "to be like the earth, to give nourishment and life" and "together. . .create life" (32). This creation story shows how the *oyate* think of all that is created on earth and in the universe as related. Children practice this understanding of relationship through experiences in their *tiošp̄ayes*, their blood relatives, and that practice informs the children's behaviors and relationship beyond their blood relatives and extends their notion of relative to all of the elements and creatures of creation.

In Western ideology, a "psychological distance" exists when one refers to aunts or uncles, and that distance increases as one moves away from the nuclear family to friends, neighbors, animals, plants, and weather (White Hat 88). An *Oceti Sakowin* cultural value considers such psychological distance unnecessary between any form of creation. Consider that the greater distance one feels from another being or object, the easier one can mistreat or ignore that being. We might pay attention to the spiders beneath our feet until they crawl on us or create webs that get in our way. We can easily kill a spider without thinking about the consequences of our actions for the spider or for us. Western culture treats a spider as nonsentience, and people psychologically distance themselves from it; therefore, it has less value. But if we consider it is a relative in creation, we may think about the way spiders control other insects for us by simply living their lives—eating the insects that would overcome us without the spider as their predator. The *Oceti Sakowin* do not just think of this as a metaphor or a nice story about nature. This is a real and valuable relationship that must be respected to keep harmony

and balance in the creation community. All things are related. All things have a purpose. Some of those things are good, some are bad, but they all serve a purpose. The person's role is to understand this truth and work to discover and fulfill his/her purpose.

Understanding this concept or relationality can help composition instructors rethink how they create a writing community in their classrooms. Instructors might suggest that each of the students on this educational journey are possibly in unfamiliar and intimidating territory, and that lack of familiarity contributes to the psychological distance they may experience. Ways to alleviate that distance through *Mitakuye Oyasin* might be to think about the way an instructor greets students when they come into the class. When students are greeted by the instructor as individuals, and when they greet each other in the shared, public space, Harris's "community of strangers" (Harris 154), becomes instead a community of relatives—people related in their humanity, their educational journey, their physical location, and their purpose (enrollment in a particular Composition I course). Depending on the instructor's comfort level, she or he might use familial terms to address the students—son, daughter, sister, cousin, aunt, or even friend—which is a practice common on reservations. The instructor would shake their relatives' hands, make eye contact, and ask them how they are doing. This greeting ceremony creates a community of relatives in a space comfortable and safe. A space where invitations are unnecessary because they are already welcomed.

Harris raised a concern about the tendency to frame the academic writing community as utopian; but the idea of community through *Mitakuye Oyasin* does not promote or imply that the individuals in the community will always be in harmony. While focusing on the idea that all things are related, *Mitakuye Oyasin* does not ignore,

or devalue the individual's position or opinion. "In our philosophy. . .individuality is very important," and White Hat says that "They [ancestors/elders] always say that everybody is different. Everyone is unique and has a purpose" (White Hat 76). "You can decide for yourself" and should "Consider the source of the information, how it has come down to use today, and then make your own decisions about it" (78).

In a classroom, when students explain their thoughts and interpretations, they develop an argument which may contradict someone else's argument. Harris cites Kenneth Burke's *A Rhetoric of Motives*, in which Burke describes "intellectual debate" as a "'somewhat formless parliamentary wrangle,' a 'horse-trading' of ideas in which individual critics try to grab support for their own positions through whatever deals, borrowings, and alliances they can strike up with some colleagues, and whatever raids or attacks that can make on the views of others'" (qtd. in Harris 154). Harris points out and agrees with Burke's own observation that the "temptation" of teachers is "to give form to such wrangles by placing opposing views in dialectical tension with each other, so their conflicts can then be resolved at some 'higher' or 'ultimate' level" (qtd. in Harris 154). This dialectic is found in Plato's dialogues, and Peter Elbow addresses them as well in his essay "The Uses of Binary Thinking." Harris, Burke, and Elbow all agree that leaving issues unresolved may be the best goal a writing instructor can aim for, rather than pushing for consensus or common ground, as Lunsford suggests in *SMH*. Trying to get students from "opposing speeches to agreement, diversity to consensus, wrangle to dialogue" positions the teacher "as both judge and advocate of what gets said, pointing out the weaknesses of some positions while accenting the strengths of others" (Harris

154). Harris promotes a "wrangle" that allows students to draw their own conclusions rather than a "dialogue whose course has been charted in advance by the teacher" (155).

This sentiment is strongly supported by the *Oceti Sakowin* epistemology of the individual's choice to dissent. White Hat's examples do not contain an effort to change another person's mind or actions, but rather he shows how the *oyate* present an argument for the ideas, a course of action, or strategies for taking action. Each individual in the dialogue must decide for him or herself what to think or what action to take. The presenter simply asks the listeners to consider what he/she argued, and then listens to other arguments without interrupting. Additionally, in the *Oceti Sakowin* tradition, the people are given time to think about the argument—not just seconds, but hours, days, or weeks. The allotment of time for thought and consideration shows a value for contemplation and critical thinking which cannot always take place in the span of a class period, and the design of the class would then need to consider ways to allow time for students to think and reflect before requiring them to respond. Additionally, the instructor would need to resist dictating an agenda for discussions about reading assignments or concepts. The classroom activities would then need to be designed to allow students to explore their thoughts and ideas without telling the students what they need to understand from the text, but instead helping the figure out how to discover meaning from the text. The instructor's role, then, is to help students learn to explore and think critically to discover meaning.

Another aspect of understanding how to create a relational community revolves around virtues that if practiced, help a person function more effectively as individuals within community. *Mitakuye Oyasin,* as White Hat indicates, is a practice influenced by

"the four virtues of fortitude, generosity, bravery, and wisdom" (White Hat 89).

Fortitude is to have "strength and endurance to stick to your decisions, to withstand

pressure" (46). Generosity is to give "from your heart," and this giving is done to honor

and respect those to whom a person gives, and when one gives, it will come back to

him/her, even if not in his/her lifetime, it will be remembered, and returned to one's

children or grandchildren (46). Bravery is to have that "courage to make decisions" and

"then take responsibility for those decisions" (43). And finally, wisdom is "the result of

knowledge and experience combined" (47). These virtues help the individual consider

his/her responsibility to educational commitments, not only for him/herself, but for those

with whom he/she interacts. Each of these virtues can be directly explained and nurtured

in the classroom by the instructor to help create a space in which each individual works

to strengthen not only his/her own critical thinking and writing skills but also support

peers in the development of their skills. For students to acquire these skills, an instructor

must think of ways the individual would need to apply these virtues to complete

assignments and participate in class discussion. When planning lessons and assignments,

instructors need to think about their audience: who are they and how might they learn?

White Hat addresses learning styles through the Lakota perspective in his

explanation about the way the people learn. He says that each person approaches

learning about ceremony in a different manner. While White Hat observes and

contemplates, he will sometimes think of an explanation for whatever he is observing.

His nephew, on the other hand, asks a lot of questions (82-83). Whether observing and

thinking about what one sees to achieve understanding, or asking questions, White Hat

says that "The old saying that actions speak louder than words is true; how we behave

and then use language to describe that behavior, that's how our kids come to understand" (19). The meaning associated with the words teachers use, and the subsequent actions used with those words, act as a powerful teaching tool for any learning style. For teachers to effectively teach students, they must consider not only how their own actions and words interplay and display learning, but also what they have students do in the classroom to reflect and practice that learning. The relationship between words, actions, and meaning through *Mitakuye Oyasin* presents yet another way that the philosophy might inform not only what is taught in the class, but how it is taught by the teacher and practiced by the students.

The language Lunsford uses when she introduces college writing in *SMH* with "Expecting—and engaging—difference" departs from White Hat's description of respective differences. She begins with,

> Whether you go to college in the North, South, East, or West and whether you attend an HBCU, a large state university, a two-year college, a small liberal arts college, whether you come from a conservative or liberal background—or somewhere in between—you will meet people who come from very different places with a range of cultures and values, who speak different languages and dialects, who think in different ways, and who have ideas unlike your own. (Lunsford, *SMH* 14)

In this introduction, the language is of difference and sets up a binary relationship between each example, then steps back from that binary position once to acknowledge a linear spectrum ("or somewhere in between"). This language does two things: it explicitly focuses on difference, and it establishes the binary thinking that too often

leads to positioning ideas and people on two sides of an argument. Lunsford likens the exposure to different people and ideas to world travel, and frames it as an opportunity to "learn about cultures, languages, and ways of knowing practiced by people from other places, to listen and slowly understand, and to engage differences in an open and welcoming way" (*SMH* 15). She then discusses the "barriers" that exist to listening and understanding those who are different and the mindset one should adopt to overcome these barriers. She lists eight barriers: "fear, stubbornness, ego, ingrained cultural and religious beliefs, lack of knowledge, understanding, or willingness to listen, name-calling and labeling; stereotyping; and peer influence (mob mentality)" (Lunsford, *SMH* 15). Then she lists the qualities of an open-minded person: "learning, awareness; expanding your experience; self-knowledge, self-growth; appreciation for the diversity and complexity of the human experience; opportunity to explore ideas; humanizing people who are different from you; experiencing school as a safer environment (intellectually and physically)" (Lunsford, *SMH* 17).

In this introduction, the task of college writing has already been presented as a challenge to overcome. The challenge could be interpreted as one that motivates and excites students—they get to travel the world without ever leaving their classroom—but it sets each individual up to anticipate unsafe engagements. Students might think that their own fears, ego, and biases are under attack before they even begin class, and that they need to brace for that attack. They must also be careful of what they say, because it may reveal stereotypes or biases. The statement that an open-minded person humanizes those who are different implies that a closed-minded person dehumanizes people. Again, the binary thinking is inherent in this introduction to the college composition classroom.

The students are asked to rise to an exciting challenge—engage in differences—but be careful what they say and how they say it. The paradox often leads students to choose silence over voicing their thoughts in class, and to prepare to pick sides in a debate that may challenge their beliefs. A re-write of this introduction through the concept of *Mitakuye Oyasin* would instead focus on the four virtues: fortitude, generosity, bravery, and wisdom. Students commit, share their thoughts and time, which requires both generosity and bravery, and throughout the course, develop wisdom about their relatives—the people who are themselves experiencing a *zuya*, and from whom they can learn something that will help them better understand the complexities of the world.

To shape how instructors might design and teach under *Mitakuye Oyasin*, we return to community, but this time instructors are asked to think in terms of relationality beyond the classroom or even the human, two-legged community. The *Oceti Sakowin* does not exclude one's relationship with Nature's elements even when they are physically located elsewhere—there is no psychological distancing even when one is physically distanced from an element. The observation of relationships between different elements offers lessons for how one might approach any number of activities or situations. Observing and applying lessons from Nature to any human act or process is not poetic or metaphorical. Observing and identifying relationships throughout creation is a practical, rhetorical, and educational strategy. Observation of the world around us, watching, noticing details, thinking about how the details interact and influence one another is an expectation of learning through the *Mitakuye Oyasin* perspective. Nature speaks to us through its actions, and we should read those actions to help us address our needs. This habit of mind requires critical thinking essential to the Composition I

composition course. For example, an instructor might observe the progression of seasons to understand how to organize lessons and integrate assignments to serve an overarching purpose or multiple purposes. The instructor could explain the significance of seasons as the *Oceti Sakowin* might think of them to extend this concept of relationality to cultural relationships. This aspect of the philosophy harkens to the Composition I course content, which focuses on cultural studies.

In the *Oceti Sakowin* culture, the four seasons are events during which the *Oceti Sakowin* hold ceremonies. In the spring, they welcome back the thunder (a spirit nation) and have a wiping of the tears ceremony for anyone who has lost loved ones and may be mourning; during the summer they hold the sun dance ceremony, and during the fall, they prepare for the winter. Winter is a time for "preparation for the coming new year, for the new seasons, and for taking stock. It's a time to share knowledge and wisdom, and a lot of teaching takes place" (White Hat 81). In this cycle, each season is a time to reflect on and apply what came before and prepare for what comes next. The relationship between seasons is one of interdependence, and even though each season has its own elements and conditions, people must adjust to those conditions and in many instances rely upon them. This observation of the natural cycle is another way to understand *Mitakuye Oyasin*. Not only does the cycle exemplify the relationship between each season, but it also exemplifies the relationship between people and the way conditions influence what people do during them.

Even though White Hat states that the Western way of thinking is different from the *Oceti Sakowin*, and many other Indigenous and Western thinkers may agree, in both cultures, people educate their children in Winter. This time to "share knowledge and

wisdom" as White Hat states, historically was determined by each people's relationship to the cold—we stay inside during the cold months, and we use that time to share knowledge. The way that the *Oceti Sakowin* shared knowledge was through storytelling. Unfortunately, in Western culture, the role of storytelling as a teaching method in many ways has lost its official power even if it is still a common strategy used by many teachers. Storytelling in many different forms is still a very important part of education for the *Oceti Sakowin* tradition and its inclusion more explicitly in the composition course would help reinforce the concepts of cultural studies as described by James Berlin and growth theorists. Berlin challenges the poetic-rhetoric binary and argues for a balanced presentation of poetic and rhetoric writing to explore culturally significant discourses. Growth theorists argue that students learn to write from their lived experiences. Both growth theory and cultural studies center student writing in the composition classroom and support greater use of different forms of narrative as both rhetorical devices and writing strategies to engage students in the critical writing process.

Another scholar and author from the Rosebud Reservation, Joseph M. Marshall III, provides traditional stories that teach seven Lakota virtues that are not exclusive to the *oyate*; rather, they present concerns fundamental to the human condition. For instance, Marshall shares his story of the Deer Woman who tempts a man into her tipi while on his hunt, and when he returns home, he forsakes everything in his life to search for her again. While Marshall uses this story to explain the Lakota concept of respect, it also presents a model for understanding an individual's right to self-determination, and the generosity a person exhibits when she shares knowledge that will empower someone

else, and then allows that person to practice that knowledge without interfering in his/her practice. The story's main character is Koskalaka, who hears about the hunter's obsession with Deer Woman from his grandmother. He listens to her tale, and when he himself faces the temptress in the woods, he resists her advances because he remembers and respects the words of his grandmother. She raised her grandson's awareness of the danger Deer Woman posed. Her generous knowledge empowered him to resist Deer Woman, he took responsibility for his own actions, practiced self-determination, and was rewarded for having listened to his elder and applied the lesson.

Native scholars use narratives, whether they be traditional, contemporary, personal, and/or anecdotal to educate and expose the possibilities and consequences of different actions. Most Indigenous narratives include a journey of some sort. The narratives relate to lived experiences regardless of who the characters are and carry within them some truth about one's relationship with the world. A teacher chooses to use a narrative strategically. Students determine the significance of the story when they analyze it for understanding, and with understanding, they can garner meaning. The teacher's role is to present the story and then allow students to spend time with it to explore its meaning(s). The teacher may need to teach students how to explore those meanings, such as what elements to look for or think about, the kinds of questions they can ask themselves and each other, but not to dictate the meaning for them. Teachers may also relate the stories to his/her own lived experiences to demonstrate the story's truth, and then ask students to do the same.

If the instructor of the composition course adopts this approach to teaching, she will share information and model how to process, analyze, and argue through that

information in the beginning of the course. Students learn the power they have when they consider applying the knowledge they receive from instructors, texts they read, and other students. Instructors and students also learn how to apply narrative as a rhetorical device—not just as a means to introduce an idea in an essay, but as a powerful educational and persuasive tool. In the latter half of the course, like Koskalaka does in the latter half of the Deer Woman story, students are equipped to "go on the hunt" and apply what they have learned from the teacher. The intricate way that one story can relate to so many levels of doing and speaking in the class reinforces the nature of community under *Mitakuye Oyasin*—all things are related—and this philosophy does not have to be presented through Native stories alone.

Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" offers an understanding of the impact knowledge has on an individual, and an instructor can compare it to *Oceti Sakowin* ideas to helps students understand different concepts of truth, as well as consider the affect education might have on a student's experiences in different communities. In Plato's story, the man who left the cave returns to the cave from the earth's surface to share what he has learned from above. The people in the cave do not accept the stories the man returns with about the world outside the cave. The remaining cave prisoners persist in a willful ignorance of the realities they are told about outside the cave—a truth strange and unfamiliar to them—and accept only the shadow world they know as real. Plato's depiction of ignorance and truth reflect a journey from being unenlightened to enlightened, moving from below ground among the shadows, to moving above ground in the light. Truth is fixed—the underworld is a representation, a mere shadow of the upper world, which is real.

In the *Oceti Sakowin* tradition, truth is relative to one's position. The prisoner experiences truth in his reality, and the one who journeys away from the cave, experiences a different truth. Conceptually, the Lakota man would not tell the prisoner that his reality is not true, but that his reality is reflected differently outside the cave. I suggest this because the *oyate* believe in that "for every being on earth, there is an identical other in the universe" (White Hat 32). A symbol common in Lakota artwork and design is that of two triangles joined at their points to create an hourglass shape. The top triangle represents the reality in the universe, and the bottom triangle represents the reality on earth. These realities mirror one another, and energy can pass between them. What happens above, happens below and vice versa. Both realities are true, so traditionally, the *oyate* would not question the truth of a reality with which they have no personal, lived experience—both realities are true.

Marshall shares another story about Iktomi, the spider and a trickster figure, which helps to further explain *Oceti Sakowin* concept of truth. Iktomi is hungry and tricks a group of ducks into dancing with their eyes closed so he can conk them one by one on the head and cook them. Marshall uses the story to explain the Lakota concept of truth as subjective and subject to change. Applied to Plato's allegory, the prisoner in the cave experiences three different truths. In the cave, he sees variations of life in degrees of darkness, and his reality is limited to the few items and people he sees. When he moves to the surface, his truth changes, because his position on the land has changed. Marshall further explains that "Truth has two parts: that which is given and that which is accepted" (120). In the story of Iktomi and the ducks,

Iktomi and the ducks created a truth: that his sticks were sacred songs. Iktomi

wanted the ducks to believe because he was hungry, while the ducks wanted to

believe because they wanted to dance. The truth lasted only until one duck

opened his eyes and realized yet another truth: Iktomi was killing them and they

would all die if they didn't flee. If the ducks had remained skeptical, the

momentary truth would not have come about. All the ducks would have lived

and Iktomi would have walked away hungry. (Marshall 120)

The agent (Iktomi) gives a truth (song sticks) which the birds accept because they want

to dance.

Marshall relates Iktomi's story to historical events. He identifies the way truths

changed between the U.S. government and tribal nations as each promised truth

contradicted the reality of that truth. For example, the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868

promised the Sioux would own the Black Hills "for as long as the sun shall rise, as long

as the rivers shall flow, as long as the grasses shall grow"(Marshall 121). That truth

changed when miners found gold in the Black Hills. The current reality is that the Sioux

Black Hills, or He Sapa, is currently occupied by predominantly non-Native American

citizens.

Students learn that since truth is subjective, one should be skeptical of truth.

Skepticism proves helpful to students when they read a text, dialogue with other

students, and write their own essays because it helps them approach each situation with

a critical eye. However, a person who remains skeptical in light of new information can

also suffer. This means one must always be aware and observant of any given situation

and not remain locked into one version of truth. The people who remained in the cave

rejected the possibility of new information and a different understanding of the world because of their skepticism and mistrust of the one who left and then returned.

A human story of subjective truth presents itself when the *Oceti Sakowin* ancestors were first placed on reservations and were not allowed to leave the reservation without permission from the reservation supervisor. Over time, that restriction was lifted, but children were then forced to leave their parents to attend boarding schools, mostly run by Christian churches, and were not allowed to speak their own languages. When they returned home, in many cases twelve or thirteen years later, students could not speak their Native language, and the parents could not teach students their cultural understandings. The language became a barrier, and the behaviors students learned from their English speaking, white, Christian teachers lead to misunderstandings between *tiošpaye* relatives. The children through the white man's educational system became shadows of themselves, their ancestral culture and language. Their truths changed, and the chaos caused by the forced change, which did not respect individual choices, created an extreme skepticism of the White man's education. Over time, tribal members have chosen to reconcile conflicting cultural experiences and truths, and one way has been to collect and reconnect with traditional stories and think about how they relate to contemporary living. This exploration of truth shapes the conflict between cultures in a way that resists binary thinking without ignoring the ways in which cultures are affected by the choices individuals make.

Rather than positioning the story of European expansion on a battlefield with winners and losers, the *Mitakuye Oyasin* explains what happened to lead to what is. To understand the different concepts of truth and skepticism, one must position it in

historical and contemporary contexts not as a metaphor but as a means of understanding and choosing how to think and behave now as a result of that understanding. Pointing out the way Indigenous experiences and ideas relate to non-Indigenous experiences, the teacher addresses cultural differences without engaging difference, but instead walking through it and examining it as a part of the way cultures relate to one another. Plato's "Allegory of the Cave,' compared to "Iktomi and the Ducks," reveals ideas of skepticism and truth, and positioning the notions of skepticism and truth in historical events and contemporary circumstances helps students better understand themselves, others, and the complexity of how cultures relate to one another and interact.

The discourse of truth and reality in the composition course can then expand into the truth of reality and authentic identity in popular culture representations. Neal Gabler, in an essay that appears in *RPC*, discusses the way movies mold American concepts of reality. He cites Alexis de Tocqueville's observation of Americans, who "'ask for beauties self-proffered and easily enjoyed. . . . require strong and rapid emotions, startling passages, truths or errors brilliant enough to rouse them up and to plunge them at once, as if by violence, into the midst of the subject'" (*RPC,* qtd. in Gabler 581). Gabler argues that movies tell stories that audiences want to live and make their own and create identities that audiences want to become. Students in this essay are asked to consider how stories influence their behaviors and their identity. Gabler writes that "sociologist David Riesman identified the emergence of a new type of social character in America that he called the 'other-directed,' by which he meant, essentially, that one's goals were directed toward satisfying the expectations of others—an audience" (584). Gabler's concern is that people seek to "live out their life's vision as it has been shaped

by mass culture" (584). He claims that we are "learning to measure life itself by how well it satisfies the narrative expectations created by movies" (585). The problem with movies in our modern culture, even though they are narratives, is that their purpose is to entertain—to be "easily enjoyed" and "plunge" the audience into the subject. They represent in some cases "truths" of lived experience, but many audience members want to live the experience of a film, which often leaves out travel time, down time, research time. Characters race from one event to the next, magically jump across the globe or the country, move from rags to riches, fall in love, or achieve astounding goals within the space of 90 minutes.

In relation to Plato's story of the prisoner and Marshall's story of the ducks and Iktomi, students and instructors might ask what truths are hidden in movies, and which are revealed? How do people construct reality and identity? What makes a person's identity authentic and who decides? When should people choose to be less skeptical, and when does being less skeptical lead to one's own detriment? These questions require reflection and invite students to draw upon their understandings from the texts they read, historical events, contemporary circumstances, philosophical perceptions of truth, personal lived experiences, and cultural representations to make sense of truth, reality, authentic identity, and cultural conflicts and differences. But the way that the instructor presents and directs the ideas through *Mitakuye Oyasin* resists the binary thinking by changing the way language is used in how the instructor creates community in the class, as well as relates narratives to lived experiences and critical arguments.

Mitakuye Oyasin. Everything is related. All things are relative to circumstances and knowledge, and knowledge is situationally and historically dependent. Each

individual harbors personal responsibility in his/her relationality. Knowledge empowers individuals, but if individuals do not accept the responsibility that comes with that knowledge, he/her and others will likely suffer from the individual's choice to reject new information. Accepting knowledge and applying it discerningly requires that fortitude, generosity, bravery, and wisdom, and one is unlikely to effectively live the *Mitakuye Oyasin* philosophy without applying these virtues in their practices.

CHAPTER 3
A *MITAKUYE OYASIN* COURSE

Establishing Community: Shared Public Space

Creating a writing discourse community through *Mitakuye Oyasin* involves thinking about the classroom and the discourse within it as Harris's "shared public space," but instead of a space where a "community of strangers" can meet, a community of relatives meet to share "their own voices as writers and intellectuals" (155). By shifting one's perceptions of the students as strangers to that of relatives they have not yet met, teachers create a more welcoming environment. Teachers might develop a form of greeting that invites students to think of the classroom as a place where they are safe and where they feel comfortable.

The *Oceti Sakowin* custom involves greeting someone by shaking his/her hand, asking how the person has been, talking about something important to the person or a shared experience, like the weather. Then, the people "get down to business." In my classroom, I try to greet each person who walks into the room, or the whole class by saying something like, "Hello everyone! I am so glad you decided to join me today! How was your weekend? Anything exciting happen?" A few students will respond, some with more story to tell than others. I often share something as well. Then I play a song that relates to the content of the day, and the music typically is more upbeat in the first weeks of class. I also choose a wide variety of music that reflects surveyed student interests. I sustain this pattern of behavior throughout the course, and the results tend to create a sense of family, like we are all in this endeavor together, no matter how differently people in the class may think about the subjects we discuss.

Right before we review the syllabus, I explain to students that they might think of their experience in college as a *zuya*, an educational journey akin to the journeys the *Oceti Sakowin* would travel. When they return home, their experiences made them wiser, and they shared their experiences and knew knowledge and understandings with the people. Sometimes the person never returns home. He or she travels to a new spot to settle, or lives as a migrant, moving from one town to another either because of the job she/he chooses to work or because he simply has a curiosity of the world. Whether the students return home or not, they will live among different communities, and what they learn on this educational journey can not only be an asset for them, but for others too. While they are here at the university, they will likely become part of new social groups, but they are also a part of the university, sharing space with other people who are here to learn too, and so all of the students, instructors, and staff members share a common purpose—to create, sustain, and maintain the educational institution.

Community is sustained in many ways throughout the course, including the way the teacher facilitates discussions, responds to assignments, conducts writing conferences, and through the ways that peers interact with one another in class, which is often facilitated by the kinds of class activities the instructor creates and the guidelines instructors develop for those activities. I provide below a snapshot of different ways *Mitakuye Oyasin* would shift the instructor's approach to teaching, the design of the course syllabus, the choice of texts, and the different assignments students may be asked to complete independently or in collaboration with other students.

When the instructor develops the Composition I syllabus shaped by the Lakota philosophy *Mitakuye Oyasin*, the instructor needs to consider the time students might

need to complete tasks and demonstrate understanding and application. Instructors need to understand exactly why they choose to use one text over another, and what they want to teach with it. At the same time, instructors need to create lessons that help students discover not only the ideas the instructor wants to share with students but allow them to discover ideas and patterns that the instructor may not have considered.

Collegiate level instructors are faced with getting students "up-to-speed" so that they can read texts critically and write academic essays. The goal of the course then is to teach students how to research and write an essay using particular skills applicable for the completion of any essay assignment students may receive in any college course. Composition I provides the basic writing skills that students will need using popular culture as the common ground between their prior knowledge and experience and the academic knowledge and experience they will gain in college. Students come into the class with varying skills, but many lack knowledge about or understanding of basic grammar, of how to synthesize information, of what rhetoric is, of how to analyze or interpret, of the significance of citing information, or even of how to summarize or paraphrase. These challenges require composition instructors to incorporate instruction in and practice of these skills into the syllabus and teach and assess them in the classroom while at the same time attempting to ensure students understand enough about what they have to analyze to be able to critically engage with ideas rather than simply report what they read.

To do this with *Mitakuye Oyasin*, the texts adopted for teaching writing, such as *They Say/I Say* and *St. Martin's Handbook* could be supplemented with chapters from *Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace*, by Joseph M. Williams and Joseph Bizup. The

templates in *TSIS* are helpful for students, and the instructions and tips in *Style* and *SMH*

provide students with clear and easy to understand examples of various grammatical and

writing style tips. *Style* and *SMH* also include assignments students can complete as

needed in areas where they most struggle to write clearly. For example, I notice that

many students will use the transitional words listed in Chapter Five of Lunsford's *SMH*.

The words are effective, but often placed without careful consideration at the beginning

of paragraphs because students think that one word is the best and easiest way to

transition when in fact a different kind of transition would work more effectively for

their purpose. Chapter Five in *Style* focuses on "Cohesion and Coherence." It extends

Lunsford's sections on transition and on "Making paragraphs flow."

When instructors assign the reading in these texts about writing, students begin

to understand the relationship between content and syntax, and how syntax helps to

emphasize certain ideas or words. Graff and Birkenstein repeatedly point out that

students should not be intimidated by academic writing, and students can use the

templates in *TSIS* to help them join the academic conversation. They explain, "Though

the immediate goal of this book is to help you become a better writer, at a deeper level it

invites you to become a certain type of person: a critical, intellectual thinker who,

instead of sitting passively on the sidelines, can participate in the debates and

conversations of your world in an active and empowered way" (Graff and Birkenstein

15). Graff and Birkenstein use an example from philosopher Kenneth Burke, "Likening

the world of the intellectual exchange to the never-ending conversation at a party" (16).

The assumption is that the students are not already critical, intellectual thinkers;

however, under a *Mitakuye Oyasin* approach, one expects the students to already have

the capacity and even the ability to think critically and intellectually. While Graff and Birkenstein may not think students do not have the capacity, the alienation students feel when they do not know the academic commonplace can suggest to students that they do not have that capacity. The instructor's job is to provide students with an understanding of how words relate to meaning and how syntax and word choice can change meaning significantly. When students understand the value and power of language, and how manipulating it shapes meaning, they will attend to careful sentence and paragraph construction when communicating ideas and "invent the university" in the way David Bartholomae suggests rather than copy it from a text. Still, the templates offer many students an effective tool for navigating phrases that help them get to the points they want to argue, and so instructors might consider a class activity in which students manipulate some of the template structures to fit them around what they want to say, rather than fit what they want to say in the templates. Some instructors already do this, and it supports an attention to the relationship between what one intends to say and how it is shaped by the language used to introduce it and relate it to other ideas.

Reading Popular Culture is an engaging collection of essays but does not contain a diverse enough collection of essays by diverse writers to adequately represent *Mitakuye Oyasin*. I found several essays by Native writers and activists, and I think many other voices could be invited into the conversations concerning identity, race, politics, socioeconomic class/status, education, and technology. If popular culture is considered the common ground upon which students can learn to engage in academic dialogue, then certainly each unit should include an essay by a Native voice, for South Dakota is home to seven tribes. The state does not want to lose their graduates to other

states, nor does SDSU want to lose their students to other state universities. Rather than ignore the Native populations of the state, SDSU could embrace them, and normalize their voices for non-Native students in the Composition I curriculum.

When students read Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" in *RPC* to discuss the nature of truth, reality, and perception, I recommend they also read Joseph Marshall's "Iktomi and the Ducks." These narratives help students explore complex ideas of truth and compare the relationship between the ancient concepts and interpretations of truth from a European Western perspective, and from an Indigenous Western perspective. Instructors might also include the first chapter in Thomas King's *The Truth About Stories*, whereby students would gain exposure to not only Plato's allegory and Marshall's version of Iktomi's trickery, but also to King's telling of the Iroquois creation story "The World on a Turtle's Back," the Christian story of "Genesis," to King's discussion of how stories influence beliefs and actions, and to his argument that certain stories are so powerful that they influence the way people think for centuries after they are first told. The evolution of this discussion establishes a pattern of growing complexity in the discourse of truth, choice, and responsibility. Instructors may then invite students to relate this complexity to the nature of social and political discourse in American popular culture and ask them where they see this complexity unfold in their communities and on popular media. In my course, I ask students how conflicting belief systems generate division in our society, and how the different belief systems approach the contemporary concerns about the growing rift between different communities within the larger American community.

As I have already stated, *RPC* address important, contemporary issues in popular culture, but lacks the voices of scholars of diverse backgrounds —especially Indigenous authors. Currently, instructors are tied to the text as a source of reading material critically analyzing different aspects of popular culture. Instructors are required to include essays from this text within each of the three writing units. The *RPC* essays serve as models for academic writing, educate students on the various subjects about which they will write, and provide practice for and examples of critical reading and thinking. These sources also serve as assignments—many instructors require students to respond to "Understanding the Text" questions at the end of the essays and submit them for the instructor to grade. Responses to these questions circulate online data bases such as Course Hero. Students often pay for access to responses and use them in their assignments. The assignments are supposed to be a way to ensure students read the essays, but many students still do not read the essays. The *Mitakuye Oyasin* philosophy would, among other things, inspire assignments that would reduce the likelihood of plagiarism by creating greater flexibility in the source material and kinds of assignments for the course.

In *RPC*, Native Americans do hold space in essays referencing cowboys and images of the West in Hollywood movies. These essays provide various analyses of how Hollywood represents the "frontier" and problematizes historical figures such as Pocahontas. While these are good and should remain resources for students, the collection of essays still relegate Native people to the category of stereotyped people who are misrepresented. The collection fails to give voice to what Native people have to say about other subjects in the course, such as technology, the commodification of

culture, or education. By using narratives and expository essays, and incorporating perspectives by diverse scholars, the Composition I course provides diverse sources for students to practice critical and cultural literacy and ensures that students begin to hear Native and other minority people as regular and expected voices in conversations about different social/political topics important to all people living in the United States. Normalizing the presence of Native and other minority perspectives removes the idea that minorities are "other," "different," or "exotic" in the sense that their presence creates discomfort or concern in White students about what to say or how to say something when historically sensitive issues arise in classroom or social conversations. While the class would not necessarily focus on Native issues or history, it would incorporate Native and other minority voices as a habit by design. The University could even solicit Native scholars and other minority scholars to write essays concerning current popular culture trends and issues for students to read in the course.

The inclusion of works by authors from diverse cultures is commonly referred to as multicultural education. David Bartholomae suggests that teachers do not need to "import 'multiple cultures' [into the classroom, via anthologies]. They are there, in the classroom, once the institution becomes willing to pay that kind of attention to student writing" (qtd. in Lu 309). Bartholomae argues that students provide the multiculturism of the course, if the course uses the students' writing as its source of those diverse voices. My concern with this argument is that while students do hail from their respective home communities with different commonplaces, and they may embrace different ways of understanding the world, a room filled with White students from rural and urban communities will still have very different experiences from students who are

Native American or Black or Asian. They will also share many experiences, but their reactions to those experiences and the way they interpret them may be very different for historically and socially significant reasons. When diverse voices are incorporated into the curriculum, students begin to understand how different people can arrive at different conclusions and solutions even if they disagree with their conclusions and solutions. The *Mitakuye Oyasin* philosophy encourages students to listen to these differences and understand their relationship to them. Students learn to argue for understanding rather than argue for position.

Mitakuye Oyasin Design

The Composition I course follows an evolutionary design. According to the syllabus, students are required to write a diagnostic essay within forty-five minutes on the second day of class. Instructors glean from this diagnostic each student's incoming writing ability and choose sample sentences containing common grammatical and verbal style errors. Instructors choose sentences based on a preset list of errors and use the sentences as an assignment for students to correct. Instructors then review the corrections with students to teach them to identify and correct or avoid those errors in their future writing assignments. This series of assignments helps to raise students' awareness of their own writing choices and how they help or hinder the reader's understanding. They also give the instructor a snapshot of the students' current writing abilities and allows them to consider from which aspects of the writing plan of instruction students will most benefit.

Thinking through *Mitakuye Oyasin,* the course begins with the diagnostic and a review of the syllabus and course expectations, which includes the "Introduction: A Supplement for Students at South Dakota State University," the chapter "Expectations for College Writing" in *SMH* but excludes readings from *TSIS*. I supplement these reading assignments with the following resource handouts: Metacognition, a Bloom's Levels of Questioning Chart, RACE, and Objective Summary Templates.[2] During the first two weeks of class, I facilitate a discussion of the Lunsford reading assignments, the Thomas King essay "'You'll Never Believe What Happened' is Always a Good Way to Start," and handouts about metacognition and questioning. This series of assignments would be more teacher-directed on many levels, and strategically planned to establish certain protocols and habits of thinking and doing in the class. As the course progresses, instructors would be able to step back their direction and require students to engage more actively in discovering the reading content and determining what they write about in their essays.

The first reading assignments introduce students to different approaches to critical inquiry. *SMH* discusses "differences" that create "barriers" to communication and subsequently encourages students to "challenge" and "engage" in "difference" by being "open-minded" and reaching "for common ground" (Lunsford 14-15). In class discussion, I ask students, "How do these words shape the way readers think about what they will encounter in college?" I asked this question of my Spring 2022 students, and

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[2] I collected the first two of these handouts from online sources, and the RACE guidelines and Summary templates I developed myself for secondary English students. While I am aware that other people have used RACE and presented it online, I developed this strategy independently, first as RAES, then RASE (restate, answer, support with evidence), and then RACE (restate, answer, cite, explain) because it better aligned with the state standards. I shared my acronym indiscriminately, and I suspect others developed it on their own as well.

some of the students characterized the Lunsford introduction as establishing how hard the work will be in college, or that it warns students that they will most likely get into some unfriendly discussions. I asked students to consider how language can be used to draw attention to differences rather than to relationships between people's ideas and cultures. I posed the question, "What is the difference between engaging difference and determining relationship?" I explicitly argued that difference is at the forefront of readers' minds when they read the Lunsford text, not relationship or commonality despite Lunsford's efforts to encourage finding common ground by developing certain habits of mind. I ask students, "What habits of mind do you think you practice, and why?" In my class, students discussed in pairs their responses to this question, and then shared their responses with the class. I suggested to my students that while much of the advice about how to engage in difference in the Lunsford text is valuable, the argument operates from the premise that they will confront people who are different and who will express oppositional viewpoints. I prepare them to read King's essay and tell them we will discuss what it means to think in terms of difference, and how that may differ from thinking in relational terms rather than dichotomous terms, as people working in co-operation with one another rather than in opposition.

SMH asks readers are asked to look for and address barriers they must overcome in classroom discussions and when writing an academic argument. I suggest to students, if we choose to instead begin with how people's ideas and cultures are related to one another, then we begin with connection rather than difference. Referencing *Mitakuye Oyasin*, I explained that the *Oyate* philosophy assumes relationship between all things, even when that relationship is contrary. All things have a connection, and often the

relationships between things are subtle or complex and difficult to understand. However, when we find that connection or common ground, we may recognize issues for which we might develop possible solutions. We shape these issues and/or solutions with the rhetorical tools we will learn about in this class, and we apply those tools in arguments toward a particular end.

Through this approach, my course alters the nature and use of the diagnostic. In the Fall 2021 semester, I asked students to write an analysis of a show, movie, song/album that made them happy during the COVID pandemic. The unit one essay prompt asked students to analyze how an artifact in popular culture made people during the pandemic happy, and why. How did that artifact relate to "The Declaration of Independence" and the idea that people have the "unalienable right to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness"? Many students used the same source from their diagnostic in their unit one essay, and the diagnostic acted as a brainstorming activity for the students.

Requiring students to use their handbooks to make revisions on their diagnostics is another way to help them enter the class thinking in terms of relationship. In the first week of class, I have students review Chapter One in *SMH*, which prepares students to recognize common errors in student essays, and read Chapter Seven, "Reflecting on Your Writing." Once the instructor has reviewed the diagnostics and identified in them verbal style errors and errors that hinder meaning, students can then be tasked with looking up the grammatical rules and style guidelines in *SMH* and *Style*. They can begin this process in a class activity, helping each other in pairs or small groups determine, for instance, what a comma splice is and learn to locate the rules pertaining to comma

splices. Students are encouraged to tab those places in the text where they may need to revisit the rules for review.

This activity requires students to use their handbook for a practical and clearly applicable purpose and places the responsibility for accessing the tools for writing on them. Students also practice helping each other navigate the text and make sense of it as well as make sense of their written work. This centers the student work in the classroom in ways that Berlin and other theorists espouse, and in a way that follows the *Mitakuye Oyasin* philosophy. This approach also individualizes the way the instructor addresses errors in student work. If multiple students continue to make the same mistakes in all of their writing assignments, then the instructor can address the issues in direct instruction or with videos that students can go back and watch repeatedly. Additionally, I work with the diagnostic to determine what specific reading and possible assignments students should complete in *Style*, making the work we do more specific to the needs individuals or the entire class.

In week two, I have students read Chapter Eleven from *SMH* which introduces "Constructing Arguments." I have students apply what they learn from this chapter during another in-class activity using their diagnostics. This time I have them focus on the structure of their arguments and identify what they used to support their statements. Students could break into small groups and review their diagnostics first by identifying their respective rhetorical situations and the structure their essays most resemble: the classic, Toulmin, or Rogerian (Lunsford, *SMH* 160-63). I also ask students to underline the claims they make and the kinds of evidence that they use to support those claims.

Students each write notes from their group discussions on their diagnostics or on a separate document, so they have these notes to reference in the future.

This strategy encourages students to think about their writing using academic language and builds confidence in the skills they bring with them to the page. They typically present a rhetorical situation, but they usually do not know that they established that situation in their essays. My students typically discover that they use a classical structure, or a combination of the Rogerian and classical structures. Students see that they do already have some basic critical writing skills, but they had not practiced metacognition, that is, to think about their writing, nor did they know the language to name what they did. This activity helps students think of writing as a practical construction because they acknowledge the way the information is organized helps them to understand it in particular ways. I ask students to think of their essays as puzzles that when completed, present an idea with a particular perspective. They begin to understand how they will need to manipulate what they have on the page to effectively present their perspectives to an audience clearly and effectively. When they identify the rhetorical situation, the evidence, and the analysis in their own writing, they have a better idea of what they will need to incorporate in their essays moving forward.

While this activity invites students to reflect on their own writing, it also provides an opportunity for students to work with each other, thus normalizing dialogue as a regular part of the writing process and preparing students for the peer review later in the course. The classroom becomes a public space for the students, and they are practicing metacognition by thinking about their writing, and then talking about it with their peers. When they discuss their rhetorical situations, and the subjects of their essays,

they will likely share with one another their own reactions and positions in response to what their peers wrote. If the diagnostic is about what popular culture artifact made them happy during the pandemic, the group members all could have chosen different television shows and they may discuss why one show appealed to one student and another show appealed more to the other student. They may also talk about how an awareness of audience in rhetorical situations can influence how and what one talks about. An audience who has never seen the show needs to know more than an audience who has seen the show, and a peer who has not seen one show is likely to ask questions about it that the students will consider when they approach different topics in future essays.

After conducting an activity like this in my recent Composition I class, one student referenced the term *kairos* from the reading assignment in *SMH*, which means "the appropriate time and the most opportune ways to get your points across" (Lunsford 27). He indicated that the discussion of happiness in popular culture was an example of *kairos* because so many people's lives were altered and many people reportedly suffered from depression as a result. By creating opportunities such as this activity designed to encourage students to reference their course readings, reflect on their writing and their peers' writing, and to practice metacognition via dialogues about writing in general, instructors engage students in the writing discourse community without alienating them. They develop a relational understanding of how they can use a variety of resources and methods to help them improve their writing. They also learn to connect the academic commonplace with their own lived experiences, which demonstrates another form of the relational mindset of *Mitakuye Oyasin.*

While composition instructors, including those at SDSU, are often anxious to assign the first prompt by the second week of class, my newly designed course waits until end of week three to introduce the unit one essay, and I extend the deadline for its final draft to week eight. This sequencing allows three weeks for students to read about writing and to complete in-class activities and related assignments about writing before they have to think about their first essay. Students read Chapter Five, "Developing paragraphs," Chapter Nine, "Reading Critically," and Chapter Ten "Analyzing Arguments" for this week. In class, they read a short essay and the instructor models for students critical reading habits outlined in *SMH*: annotating, summarizing a text, and formulating a response to an open-ended analytical question.

The essay students critically analyze should relate to the first unit prompt in some way. The instructor can model for students how to identify the publication information for the essay and write it as a citation with a hanging indent on a template for an annotated bibliography. Then the instructor models how to annotate the text for its thesis, author's purpose, central idea, key supporting ideas, and conclusion, after which the students work in pairs or small groups to formulate a summary using the Objective Summary template, or refer to instructions for summary writing from another source. I also have students identify the essay's rhetorical situation and which structure it most resembles to ensure they practice what they learned the previous week in relation to a different essay. Once students have completed their summaries, they can compare their responses to one the instructor creates and/or to each other's. They can use that comparison as a means to correct their own summaries and turn them in as a completion or graded assignment. The point here is to establish critical reading as an expected norm,

to model for students how to write a summary, to demonstrate for students how to create an annotated bibliography and works cited page, and reinforce the expected use of *SMH*, and the knowledge and skills they learned and practiced in the previous lessons. Students repeat the process they completed with their diagnostic essays but add new skills that they will need in other classes as well as for the essay assignments they need to complete for Composition I.

Students then read Thomas King's "'You'll Never Believe What Happened' Is Always a Great Way to Begin" from his book *The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative*. King argues that stories control our lives and people need to be equally mindful of the stories they tell and the stories they hear. Students summarize King's essay using the objective summary template I provided as a guide, and then compare their summaries to each other's. If they determine they have missed or misrepresented any ideas, they revise their summaries and place them on an annotated bibliography they are required to compile throughout the semester. We review how to write a works cited entry and create an annotated bibliography template. I show them how to transfer the summary assignment they wrote to this template, deleting from the summary the information they do not need, such as the publication title and date, since that information is already in the citation. I use this assignment to explain that summaries take multiple forms, and in the class, students will be expected to pay attention to the kind of summary they will need to write for different purposes and the information they will need to provide to create context for the summary.

We move from summary to an analysis of rhetoric in King's essay. Initially, I share with students my thoughts about the essay. I tell students that Spiderman was not

kidding when he said, "With great power comes great responsibility," and King shares a similar statement in his essay. He references a poem from Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* in which a witch tells "A story of murderous mischief" that the other witches wanted taken back, but it could not be taken back (King 9-10). "So you have to be careful with the stories you tell. And you have to watch out for the stories that you are told" (King 10). King warns his readers that because stories have power, storytellers, writers, and their audiences, must respect the responsibility that comes with that power. King quotes Isaac Newton, "To every action there is always opposed an equal reaction," and says if Newton were a writer, he could have written instead, "To every action there is a story" (29). Each story, in Berlin's definition of texts, possesses rhetorical value, and King's story mixes different kinds of writing, from culturally significant creation stories, poetry, personal narrative to scholarly and expert sources of authority, all to form a logical argument. I thus encourage students to consider the rhetorical situation of King's narrative.

To position myself as one voice interpreting King's work, I ask students to think about the interpretative argument I made about King's essay. I hand out an organizer about Aristotelian rhetorical methods of logos, pathos, and ethos, and ask students to consider what they think about King's argument construction, its effectiveness, and whether or not they buy into his claim that stories have power. In my recent class, students questioned the purpose and effectiveness of the poem, which they did not consider an effective tool for an argument. Many students did not agree that stories are as powerful as King proposed, claiming that people have greater control over what they

choose to believe, and can easily reject a story's potential influence.[3] We talked about the stories people want silenced, and how damaging those stories can be if certain people heard them, such as stories of politicians accused of sexual harassment and then subsequently resigning from office. King infuses his essay with a variety of sources written by Native storytellers and philosophers, European Western philosophers, religious and spiritual texts. His work incorporates diverse perspectives, strengthens his ethos and contributes to the logos of his argument.

King's use of various forms of rhetoric in the essay creates convincing argument about a potentially divisive subject but does so without alienating his audience. He compares the Iroquois story about Sky Woman with the Christian story about Adam and Eve to illustrate how stories affect the way people think and act. He begins the essay with a story about the world created on a turtle's back, and then moves into a personal narrative. His narrative functions as a rhetorical device that reveals his relationship with his parents, a personal origin story, which shaped the way he understands and reacts to the world. He calls origin stories "patron" stories, and he draws the readers' attention to two origin stories that shaped two societies. He claims that the Sky Woman story models a co-operative mode of operation and way of thinking, whereas the Genesis story models a punitive hierarchy that sets the world into dichotomies such as good/evil, right/wrong, and sacred/secular. He reflects on the way he told the two stories:

> In the Native story, I tried to recreate an oral storytelling voice and craft
>
> the story in terms of a performance for a general audience. In the

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[3] [3] Later in the semester, students who originally claimed stories did not have power, changed their minds. After analyzing popular culture sources and talking about how they influence the way people think and behave, the class almost unanimously agreed that stories do indeed have power over how we think and act.

Christian story, I tried to maintain a sense of rhetorical distance and decorum while organizing the story for a knowledge gathering. These strategies colour the stories and suggest values that may be neither inherent nor warranted. In the Native story, the conversational voice tends to highlight the exuberance of the story but diminish its authority, while the sober voice in the Christian story makes for a formal recitation but creates a sense of voracity. (22-23)

King walks the reader through a metacognitive analysis about how he tells the stories and how his rhetoric gives each story different kinds of power—the power to entertain or persuade. King invites readers to explore rhetorical methods such as ethos, pathos, and logos, and through the activity, the students and the instructor draw attention to how King uses comparative structures and literary devices as rhetoric to shape his argument. After reviewing these elements of the essay in small group and whole-group discussion, I introduce the class activity.

In the class activity, we analyze the rhetorical situation and tools that shape King's argument and discuss the effectiveness of his rhetoric. Students are given a prompt:

What is a rhetorical method and device King uses to develop his argument? Provide an example of a rhetorical device he uses and what Aristotelian method you think he employs by using that device. Examples of rhetorical devices are personal narrative, analogy, questions, storytelling, expert quotations, and Aristotelian methods are ethos, pathos, logos etc.

Students are also given an introductory sentence: "King integrates various forms of rhetoric to argue that stories are powerful." Each group is given one assertion that acts as the second sentence to answer the question. I used a version of this assignment in my class, and a student group responding to this assertion: "In the Native story, the conversational voice tends to highlight the exuberance of the story but diminishes its authority, while the sober voice in the Christian story makes for a formal recitation but creates a sense of veracity." Students may add to this starter sentence the following response:

> Basil Johnston, the Anishinaabe storyteller, in his essay, "How Do We Learn Language?" describes the role of comedy and laughter in stories by reminding us that Native peoples have always loved to laugh. "It is precisely because our tribal stories are comics and evoke laughter that they have never been taken seriously outside the tribe…But behind and beneath the comic characters and the comic situations exists the real meaning of the story… what the tribe understood about human growth and development" (23).

I ask the group to explain in class how this example strengthens King ethos, and students might respond that King cited a Native storyteller about humor in storytelling, and the explanation of the way he told the story was one that the group agreed was as an honest assessment of his approach to each story—they could verify his reflection against their own assessment by reviewing the language, structure, and syntax of the creation stories in King's essay. Additionally, they might explain that in the comparison, King used humor by engaging directly with the audience and poking fun at the characters or his own storytelling. The humor made the essay engaging and the audience's positive

reaction made them more open to what King had to say. The comparison between the two creation stories helps the audience better understand the different ways that each story might influence a person's perspective of the world.

After the students share their group work, we talk about how King presents a potentially controversial argument in a way that does not condemn Christian believers but shows a different way of interpreting the Genesis story and introduces the Iroquois story. I ask students to think about what King assumes about his audience based on the way he tells each creation story. His audience is likely non-Native, and we talk about details from the essay that help us infer who King's intended audience is, and this leads to a discussion about the choices writers make based on their intended audience. Remember too, that the diagnostic activity and the summary writing activity also involved a discussion about purpose and audience, so this idea is cycling through each activity and lesson.

In King's conclusion, he tells the readers that he is not telling them what to think or do. What they do or do not do with the stories is up to them, but they are now responsible for the stories they have read. He ends with, "Take Charm's story, for instance. It's yours. Do with it what you will. Tell it to friends. Turn it into a television movie. Forget it. But don't say in years to come that you have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now" (29). He places the decision of what to do with the story in the readers' hands along with the responsibility for action or inaction. King's essay reflects a similar ideology toward rhetoric and argument set forth under the philosophy *Mitakuye Oyasin*. Learners, readers, listeners are presented with information from stories they have seen, heard, or read. They are left with the power of

those stories with which comes great responsibility. The responsibility is not handed off but shared. Shared stories create shared responsibilities and shared power that people can choose to ignore. Students determine their reactions to King but walk away with a sense that King is engaged in a conversation with many different scholars and storytellers across time and culture. This model serves as a way to talk about the discourse community King engages in and introduces to students how they too have engaged in discourses about truth, the power of stories, and the way stories use rhetorical devices and methods to exert their power.

Another addition to the curriculum I add before leaving King's essay is to discuss narrative as a rhetorical device. Lunsford discusses narrative as a way to organize information (49), as an "effective" method of "development" (63), and as a source for argumentation (131). She writes that "narrative—someone's story—is often a major part of arguments you will view and read and analyze, and with good reason: in every culture, stories play a key role in communicating and creating knowledge" (131). Lunsford points out examples of stories used for rhetorical purposes in movies, written arguments, and student essays. Following up these short paragraphs from Lunsford helps students think about how King and other authors use different kinds of stories to support arguments, and then think about the *kairos* of using a story in an argument.

As I have already discussed, when students engage with the difficult essays in *RPC*, they struggle to understand them. King is easy for students to read because he uses simple sentence structures and language students know and understand. Some texts in *RPC* are more accessible to students, such as Kelly S. Bradbury's essay "Outsmarting Popular Culture's 'Be Stupid' Pedagogy," but other texts pose a greater challenge for

students syntactically, verbally, and contextually. Jackson Lears's "Beyond Veblen: Rethinking Consumer Culture in America" offers a prime example. At one point in the essay, Lears explains that "mid nineteenth century . . . arbiters of taste" sensed "that market relations could be integrated into bourgeois society only if their centrifugal impact were controlled" because they wanted to "meld aristocratic fashion with republican simplicity" (18). Students who are unfamiliar with the terms in Lears's essay, or who struggle with longer syntactical structures, often find grasping the concepts and arguments in the essay difficult.

As indicated earlier, instructors who take the Teaching Composition seminar or training sessions receive notes over some of the more difficult essays that they may use to ensure students accurately discuss the ideas within those essays. And as I have explained, the teacher/student binary and hierarchy (the one Harris pointed out when he criticized Bartholomae, and the one Berlin hopes to expose in popular culture artifacts) exists in the 101 syllabus, because the students must rely on the instructor to understand the text if their own efforts garner misunderstanding, which is evidenced in either their responses to the Understanding the Text (UT) questions from *RPC*, discussion questions in class, or in their misuse of quotations in their essays. I do not see this hierarchical relationship as an inescapable relationship between typical 101 students and the instructor, but I do think that how the instructors approach that relationship affects the way students will respond and engage with the course content.

Most instructors assign the UT questions that follow each essay in *RPC*. Each question response is worth one point for a total of four points, and Michael Keller suggested that instructors read them not for grammatical errors, but to ensure students

read the text, understood it, and warned that we need to ensure students did not

plagiarize their answers. Plagiarism of UT responses is a pervasive issue because

students can access responses on sites like Course Hero. Instructors have been given

links to and lists of responses students submitted as their own. The concern for and time

spent checking plagiarized responses distracts from time that instructors could spend

attending to student writing rather. The increases in plagiarism warrants rethinking the

use of UT questions as a written assignment to ensure reading completion.

   While the difficulty of an essay should challenge students to rise above their

current knowledge base and understanding, the paradox here is that the course attempts

to help the students begin on common ground—through popular culture—so that the

complex ideas discussed in the essays will not seem so foreign to students, and thus the

move from their own commonplace into the academic commonplace will be less

daunting. Because students and many other non-academics think of advanced

vocabulary and compound-complex sentences as "over their heads," the more difficult

texts and the instructors who understand them are placed academically superior to the

students even as instructors try to elevate the students to the academic level as equals by

having them read the texts that familiarize them with some ongoing academic discourse.

This seems at odds with the efforts Harris, Bartholomae, Graff and Lunsford all seem to

make as a way to argue out of this hierarchical binary. Through *Mitakuye Oyasin*—that

argument may be unnecessary because the students be given more time to read these

more difficult essays.

   Instead of requiring students to read the essay and respond to the UT essays, I

have students read and annotate the essays for the information that they need to use to

write their summary for the annotated bibliography, and to address the questions or ideas outlined in the unit prompt. If the student is going to write about how consumer culture affected Native Americans long before the Washington football team created their redskins mascot, then I ask them to mark the passage in Lears's essay where he describes the carnivalesque and encourage them to connect this to the long history of Native stereotyping. Part of what students identify in the essay will differ depending on what they think they will write about in their essays. Part of it will be the same because everyone must write a summary. While students can still plagiarize a summary, they are less likely to copy someone else's annotations if they know that those annotations function as their research notes for their essay. This kind of assignment is again a reflection of *Mitakuye Oyasin* because it demonstrates for students the relationship between the reading and the essay. That relationship is present in the current curriculum, but students often focus on the UT questions as a test of comprehension rather than a tool for choosing support or explanation of varying views in an ongoing conversation. When students annotate the text as an assignment, they must have out their writing prompt, and they must use it to think about what they will write about and how the essay they are reading could be used as a voice in that ongoing conversation.

In the current course, students are not directly taught voice, but instructors discuss voice inadvertently when they teach students to use templates in *TSIS*. The editors explain, "The templates in this book can be particularly helpful for students who are unsure about what to say or who have trouble finding enough to say, often because they consider their own beliefs so self-evident that they need not be argued" (Graff and Birkenstein xix). One such template is: "Of course some might object that _____.

Although I concede that _____, I still maintain that _____. (xix)." Graff and Birkenstein explain that "this particular template helps students . . . make the seemingly counterintuitive move of questioning their own beliefs, of looking at them from the perspective of those who disagree" (xix). The *TSIS* text attempts to help students bridge the gap that exists between their knowledge base and the knowledge base we want them to learn at the university. Their voice will change as they move from one commonplace to the next, but their voice will still be distinct from other voices.

The writer's voice can disappear under preset forms and ideas, or commonplaces, from which he/she has historically gathered information, or from learned narratives such as the idea that "beauty is only skin deep," or "one should not judge a book by its cover." The same can happen when students think of the academic commonplace as distinctly different from their own, and they try to utilize language and experiences about which they understand little. To understand voice, the students need to understand from where they have come (the home commonplace) and where they are going (the academic commonplace). Their voice emerges from the way they access, combine, and present the new and old language and experience. When students plagiarize, the instructors often recognize that the students' voice has disappeared, and this provides an opportunity to address voice in the classroom, but this opportunity is left to the instructor. If the instructor is not confident teaching voice, then he/she can easily avoid addressing it even when addressing plagiarism. Teaching voice as a relationship to one's identity and as a tool to help one avoid plagiarism may take more time and seem more complex, but it inspires students to think more critically about the interplay of language and experience and is another opportunity to think about the power

of stories and language to influence the way people think about themselves and the world around them.

An instructor can think of numerous applications of the *Mitakuye Oyasin* philosophy in the Composition I course. One last suggestion I have in relation to the layout of essays is to choose an overarching theme for the course and allow instructors more flexibility in connecting each essay to form three essays in a series, or so that the final essay is a culmination of the research students collected over the semester. I chose for my course theme "The Pursuit of Happiness: An Unalienable Right." The overall theme of the pursuit of happiness is diverse enough to allow each essay to be engaging, build on one another, and still be different—much like the way King and White Hat talk about how stories are different yet the same when they are retold. The story of pursuing happiness is retold, but each retelling offers new and varied opportunities for analysis and insight. Happiness is a theme people care about, and it begins our class on common ground that fosters sharing, and that sharing exposes diverse experiences and perspectives, rather than enticing debate.

In my class, students wrote a diagnostic about a popular culture artifact that made them happy during the pandemic. We used that diagnostic for them to analyze their grammatical and verbal style use, and to think about the way they structured their essays. Students used the diagnostic as their brainstorm for the actual unit one essay. Students annotated the essays they read for the way they presented situations and mindsets that influenced how Americans think about happiness and the best ways to obtain it. They read essays in the second unit the same way, only this time the unit two essay focused on how technology influenced one's pursuit for happiness. In the final

essay, students chose a group of people represented in popular culture and wrote about how that representation might affect their pursuit of happiness. I encouraged students to choose a group with which they had little personal experience or interaction. Students chose a wide range of groups: Asians, oversized women, Black women, rap musicians, rodeo riders, White males, and Native Americans. In the Fall class, two students wrote about Native Americans, and in the Spring class, four students wrote about Native Americans.

By including Native scholars and works about Native people as a point of reference, I normalized referencing Native people as people who also have wisdom and knowledge to share with the broader American culture. Students were not only learning about Native people or cultures, but they learned about the Native perspective of ideas that we discussed in class, along with the perspective of a Black woman, bell hooks, and other White men and women scholars and authors. In adopting *Mitakuye Oyasin*, I think instructors at SDSU will achieve greater success in building a writing discourse community with students who will not only think critically about the world around them, but who will think in terms of their relationality before they think in terms of difference, and potentially engage more co-operatively as they move through their undergraduate degrees and on to be engaged citizens.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I ask instructors to consider incorporating into the design of the Composition I composition course the *Mitakuye Oyasin* philosophy of the *Oceti Sakowin* people. I was inspired to write this thesis by my experience teaching on the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, and by Scott Richard Lyons's arguments for rhetorical sovereignty.

Lyons briefly tells the story of Native educational experiences with the white man to demonstrate the mistrust Native people have with writing. He explains,

> As David Wallace Adams tells it in *Education for Extinction*, this tale 'constitutes yet another deplorable episode in the long and tragic history of white relations'—specifically, the development of education designed to promote 'the eradication of all traces of tribal identity and culture, replacing them with the commonplace knowledge and values of white civilization" (qtd. in Lyons, "Rhetorical Sovereignty" 448-49).

He continues, "The duplicitous interrelationships between writing, violence, and colonization developed during the nineteenth-century ... would set into motion a persistent distrust of the written word in English" Lyons writes ("Rhetorical Sovereignty" 449). Lyons writes that, "Rhetorical sovereignty is the inherent right and ability of peoples to determine their own communicative needs and desires in this pursuit [to recover losses from the ravages of colonization], to decide for themselves the goals, modes, styles, and languages of public discourse" ("Rhetorical Sovereignty" 450).

My attempt to apply the *Mitakuye Oyasin* philosophy to the teaching of composition is an attempt to use this philosophy to help Native people "recover from the

ravages of colonization." This effort carries with it an audacity usually displayed by White people, and passionately criticized by Native people. Who am I to claim I know anything about the concept of *Mitakuye Oyasin*? How is this proposal an act of rhetorical sovereignty if I, a non-Native, White person, developed it? What I hope to show in the following conclusion, is that I am not claiming authority, but posing a possibility.

I have spent my adult life teaching on reservations and working for Native people. I taught on the Dine Nation in Arizona, and on the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe in South Dakota. I worked for the American Indian Center of Indiana as a caseworker to assist Native people living in Indiana with educational and training efforts. I have learned a lot about different tribal cultures and belief systems so that I can best help the people I served. As a teacher on the reservation, I often wondered if I should move off the reservation and teach non-Native people about the people on the reservation as a way of dispelling myths and stereotypes and reminding people who do not live near Indian Country that Native people still exist. Even if my own children were not Native, I would still feel in some ways obligated to help right wrongs and make the world a more friendly place into which Native people can move without having to defend their existence and ward off age-old stereotypes of the savage or noble savage—if only for the people I know and love.

Regardless of my good intentions and heart-felt convictions that the *Mitakuye Oyasin* can help alleviate the influence of binary thinking and create more effective writing discourse communities in the composition classrooms as well as help students become stronger writers, I understand that my proposal is problematic for numerous

reasons, but most importantly because when a White educational system and its White instructors adopt a Native philosophy to teach composition, Native activists, scholars, and leaders might fear that this adoption could threaten Native sovereignty. Sovereignty is closely related to identity. While the Composition I course does not explicitly teach instructors critical pedagogy, it does engage critical theory, and the course's focus on thinking about the way popular culture reflects and influences the way one thinks and acts in the world relates closely with the idea of critical pedagogy and theory as Native scholar Sandy Marie Anglás Grande explains it.

While I addressed this in the introduction, it bears repeating to ensure readers understand the importance of identity in relation to sovereignty and the legitimate concerns Native people will have in response to my proposal. Grande says that engagement in critical pedagogy requires one to think about "the way one learns to see oneself in relation to the world," and understand "the formation of self" which "serves as the basis for analyses of race, class, gender, and sexuality and their relationships to questions of democracy, justice, and community" (346). Critical theory and pedagogy, then, require a person to think about how his/her identity is shaped by relationships between the self and various aspects of the world. Critical theorists argue that identity is based on a "theory of difference," which is, according to McLaren and Giroux, "firmly rooted in the 'power-sensitive discourse of power, democracy, social justice, and historical memory'" (Grande 347). Grande explains that the critical theorists' notion of identity, rather than fixed and "predetermined by biological and other *prima facie* indicators" is shaped by where it is "historically situated" and how it is "socially constructed" (347).

In addition, critical theory posits that when different cultures intersect, their differences "collide" and create "contradictions" (Grande 347). In a classroom in which "whitestream" culture and Native cultures collide, a dialogue could ensue (Grande 347). Paulo Freire explains that the

> dialogue characterizes an epistemological relationship. Thus, in this sense, dialogue is a way of knowing and should never be viewed as a mere tactic to involve students in a particular task. We have to make this point very clear. I engage in dialogue not necessarily because I like the other person. I engage in dialogue because I recognize the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of knowing. In this sense, dialogue presents itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing. (17)

Through this kind of dialogue, White people learn and know Native culture, but the problem results when White people "appropriate Native lands, culture, spiritual practices, history, and literature" and turn "centuries of war" between Whites and Natives into "genetic and cultural dialogue" (Grande 351). While the dialogue, according to Freire is meant to foster an understanding of the other culture, for Native Americans, this knowing threatens their existence as independent nations, because White culture assumes and consumes it, so that it is no longer uniquely identified and worthy of sovereign status.

So, the threat of my research is that White instructors could consume *Mitakuye Oyasin* by reducing it to what they already know and do—making it so much like what White theorists already do, that they fail to acknowledge what inspires the choices in the course design. For example, developing an interdependent relationship between

assignments and essays is called scaffolding in education. Native traditions from many tribes incorporated this kind of education in their own way long before European nations enacted removal policies; however, their historical realities may not stop White people from dismissing the value and contribution of Native philosophy to whitestream education. It also threatens to be another argument against continued sovereignty because if Native people do not distinguish themselves as "other" and "different" then they risk losing a reason to sustain sovereignty and becoming absorbed into the "melting pot" of American whitestream.

The truth of Native American identity is that Native American communities reflect the diversity of non-Native communities, but if Natives embrace this diversity of identity within their tribes and perhaps even across tribes, they lose their "authenticity" and risk losing their sovereign status within the United States. Grande writes, the "federal agencies have invoked the rational of fluidity or unstable identities" to deconstruct "the structures of tribal life" and foster "greater dependence on the U.S. government" (Grande 351).

The requirement of "difference," Grande explains, motivates many Native Americans to embrace the essentialist theorists' view that Native identity encapsulate a narrow definition that is unique and unchanging and based on a "set of characteristics" that distinguish Natives from "whitestream" (346). The essentialist theory of identity is problematic for Native Americans too, because it perpetuates a fixed and homogenized misrepresentation of Native American peoples and defines the Native American identity in contrast to White identity even when contrasts are insignificant or non-existent.

Over 500 federally recognized tribes thrive on reservations across the United States. Each of these tribes operates under sovereign tribal governments who sustain a treaty relationship with the U.S. federal government. Under these treaties, each tribe operates within its own culture, language, and governing systems. They rely on the treaty agreements for economic stability, and they must maintain a fixed cultural identity to set themselves apart from other Americans. If a tribe's culture and language is indistinguishable from mainstream culture, the tribe's sovereignty, treaty rights, and federal recognition are threatened (Grande 348-49).

Remember that Native scholars like Lyons and Deloria Jr. stand in the space between their own tribal, traditional cultures and White America. Lyons shares his fears that he is not "*Indian enough*" or "*smart enough*" (61-62). So Native people battle ideas of what it means to be Indian, and historically, Native people were "too Indian," evidenced in Pratt's speech and U.S. government policy, which championed "Kill the Indian, Save the Man." This campaign fueled government policies that forced parents to send their children to Indian boarding schools where educators, priests, and nuns "killed" the Indian, and even today, many Native people distrust White educators and their institutions.

In contemporary society, Lyons finds himself wondering if he is "Indian enough," because he does not live on the reservation, speak the language of his people, or "remember what real poverty is like" (63). Like his ancestors, who graduated from boarding school, he feels disconnected from both his ancestry and his whitestream life. He also exemplifies the man from the "Allegory of the Cave" who leaves what he knows, learns new ways of thinking and seeing the world, and then is faced with

possibly returning home. In Lyon's case, and in the case of many Native scholars, the idea of returning home is more metaphorical than physical, because their realties do not always support a return home.

Instead, Lyon's acts as an ambassador of sorts for his people. He represents a contrast to the stereotypes that persist about Native people in America. His story also demonstrates several other Indigenous rhetorical tools used in the context of this thesis: narrative and repetition. Lyons explains important and complex ideas by sharing his story. Writing instructors teach students to recognize how and when ideas repeat themselves in different forms of communication. To develop a depth of understanding about a subject, or create that depth of experience for a reader, the reader and writer learns to relate the ideas to multiple realms – lived experiences (their own or others), traditional stories, and historical events, and when they practice relational thinking repeatedly, it becomes a habit of mind.

When Lyons measures himself against Indian identities on his reservation and in mainstream America, he recognizes that his identification as a Native intellectual does not exist in the national or tribal narratives. Early boarding school educational systems trained Indian youth to pursue agricultural and domestic lines of work. Young men were encouraged to enter the military and taught to obey (Mails 224-25). Educators, priests, nuns, and dorm matrons raised the children as problems to be fixed. The children were not considered intellectually capable of pursuing academic careers. Lyons's identity as a Native scholar in English challenges other notions of Native identities, and he admits to feeling insecure and maybe even guilty about who he is as a Native intellectual. When non-Native students in a composition course read works by Native scholars and practice

relating to them without identifying them as "other," but still recognizing them as equals, they might become skeptical of stereotypes claiming what it means to be Indian.

While "many marginalized groups" seek "culturally relevant curriculum" so that they "ensure inclusion in the democratic imaginary," Native American "scholars and educators" want to "disrupt and impede absorption into that democracy and continue the struggle to remain distinctive, tribal, and sovereign peoples" (356). Ojibwe scholar May Hermes asks, "What is the role of the school as a site of cultural production" (Grande 355)? If SDSU took care to include *Oceti Sakowin* scholars in vetting the curriculum and pedagogical approaches I propose, then perhaps SDSU's composition courses could become a "site of cultural production," and not a site of cultural appropriation.

In another concern from a non-Native perspective, former SDSU Professor Christine Stewart cautioned against a political or cultural agenda such as the one proposed here that addresses Indigenous representations and identity. Maxine Hairston argues that multicultural content should not be included in a freshman composition course because the content is "too complex," and it is authoritarian in nature (486-87). Hairston insists students should choose their own topics about which to write. If the teacher chooses the reading material and writing subject, Hairston argues, the students might write what they think the teacher wants to hear, which indicates that the nature of the teacher's role is too powerful for her to run a class that is truly democratic (486).

While Stewart and Hairston worry about the class reflecting student autonomy, Kurt Spellmeyer argues that the teacher needs to educate students about the issues they will face in the future, and to allow them to choose topics and reading material they like or might be interested in will not help students prepare for participatory democracy.

Spellmeyer argues that students know too little about the functions of "their society, their world, and their times" (469) and they need a place where they can "devise new understandings" of shifting identities in an ever-changing world (473). Spellmeyer taught a freshman composition course that challenged what he deemed ineffectual teaching. Instead of short, writing assignments based on an "effort to bridge the gap between the home world of the students themselves and the specialized concerns of the university," Spellmeyer, "after several years of trial and error," taught students to read and write about what he deems more academically and socio-politically meaningful topics, such as reading essays by Benjamin Barber and Martha Nussbaum, and writing essays about "healthcare in the Third World" and "environmental decline" (472).

Once again, an Indigenous method stands between these two opposing forces. Indigenous people learn under educators who impress upon them a Western ideology even if that educator allows students to choose their own topics and sources. Hairston's concern for student autonomy in a composition course at SDSU may allow for individual differences and mirror David Bartholomae's idea that the students' writing reflects multiculturalism, but these differences, especially at SDSU, come from a relatively homogenous group of White students. These White, and other non-Native students would benefit from learning a different way of thinking or approaching reading and writing as I have indicated throughout this thesis. And their knowledge may very well create an atmosphere for Native students in places like SDSU that help to foster a more supportive and accepting environment for Native students throughout campus.

Additionally, the students and instructors might emerge from that composition classroom experience with a sense that they are indeed a member of a larger academic

discourse writing community, as well as with an understanding of Native people as scholarly intellectuals contributing regularly to those discourse communities. While the Indigenous experience and aim is for independence from the consuming American identity, the *Oceti Sakowin* might consider that their wisdom, used to teach non-Native students how to become better writers and engaged citizens lead them and those with whom they share their knowledge to better understand the unique and valuable contributions Native people, their philosophies, and customs have to offer American culture. That understanding could help improve relations between tribal, state, and federal governments as well as between individuals, and it could change "the way of things" so that Native people do not have to be "other" to be sovereign.

The adoption of the Indigenous composition course I have proposed shows a much more committed and universal effort to right the wrongs against Native people by acknowledging the Native voice as an equal and necessary contributor to the ongoing conversations at the academy. It also offers composition teachers and their students a different way of receiving, processing, analyzing, and producing information grounded in an understanding of relationality. Finally, it adds to the wealth of approaches writing and rhetoric teachers can utilize to advance the field of teaching composition.

APPENDIX

COURSE INFORMATION

ENGL 101.S##: Composition I (3 credits)
South Dakota State University
Spring 2022
Time TTH (Room number and Building)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Name
Office: ### Pugsley
Hours: Times, and by appointment (3 hours required)
Phone: 688-5191 (office), [alternate contact number, if you wish]
Email: firstname.lastname@sdstate.edu

TEXTS

Reading Popular Culture: An Anthology for Writers (3rd edition), edited by Michael
    Keller (*RPC*)
The St. Martin's Handbook (9th [SDSU] edition), by Andrea Lunsford (*SMH*)
Documenting Sources in MLA Style: 2021 Update (available with the handbook in the
    bookstore) (*DS*)
They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing (5th edition), by Gerald
    Graff and Cathy Birkenstein (*TSIS*)

I also urge you to have access to a good college-level dictionary. I recommend either
The American Heritage or *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate* or their online equivalents.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Description

The *South Dakota State University Undergraduate Catalog, 2021-2022* provides the
following overview of English 101: "Practice in the skills, research, and documentation
needed for effective academic writing. Analysis of a variety of academic and non-
academic texts, rhetorical structures, critical thinking, and audience will be included."

Additional Course Description: Reading and Writing about Culture

As the catalog description suggests, this course focuses on literacy, academic literacy in
particular. And while the definition of literacy changes somewhat across various fields
in the academy, one must develop a few key intellectual practices to become
academically literate, namely, analysis, critical thinking, critical reading, and critical
writing. Regardless of your major, these faculties will be invaluable to you as you

advance in your studies here at SDSU, in your professional career, and even in your civic life.

To apply and sharpen these faculties, we will take as our object of study in this course various aspects of American culture—its images, language, ideas, and discourses. Reading about, analyzing, and writing about these can reveal to us the narratives American culture embraces and advances and how these narratives contribute to Americans' sense of identity and normalcy and affect our thinking and our actions, often without our full recognition. Not only will this focus help you develop your academic literacy, but it will also help you develop another form of literacy: that of an attentive and engaged citizen, for examining the wider culture through analytical and critical lenses can only raise your awareness of and insights into the various discourses surrounding you every day.

More specifically, our section of English 101 will focus on three units: the tactics and messages of advertising, the design and implications of digital technology, and anti-intellectualism in American life. Through our work in these units, you will learn about and practice the critical work and analysis needed for effective academic writing; enhance your facility with the grammar and rhetoric of academic prose; and become more proficient at developing and expressing your ideas in writing—abilities that are crucial for academic success.

PREREQUISITES

Enrollment in English 101 requires no prerequisites if you have an ACT score of 18 or above or an ACCUPLACER score of 86 or above. If you do not meet one of these requirements, you must successfully complete English 032, 033, or 039 before you can enroll in English 101.

TECHNOLOGY SKILLS

To successfully complete the work for this course, you will need basic keyboarding and word-processing skills. To successfully complete the research requirements, you will need to be able to search the internet and various online databases. When possible, instruction will include discussion and demonstration of such skills. For additional instruction in using library resources, call 688-5107 or email blref@sdstate.edu or go to http://libguides.sdstate.edu/english101.

To receive documents and other information pertaining to this course, you will need to check your Jacks email account or the course site on D2L frequently. To access the latter, go to https://d2l.sdbor.edu and follow the prompts to log in to the site. I will inform you in class when you need to retrieve material from your email account or from D2L.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You will read approximately 200 pages in *The St. Martin's Handbook*, 100 pages in *They Say/I Say*, and a dozen or so essays in *Reading Popular Culture*. You also will consult and read numerous source materials that you procure online and in Briggs Library. You will learn to read (and to discuss) these materials critically—that is, to annotate the texts, to comprehend their contents clearly and thoroughly and to paraphrase and summarize them accurately, to question their assumptions, and to formulate a well-reasoned and articulate response.

You will write three major essays (one of 4-5 pages, one of 5-6, and one of 8-9—you will submit three drafts of each, and each will include a research component) as well as a number of short assignments (responses to questions and exercises in the textbooks, peer reviews, freewrites, paraphrases and summaries, and online chats). Combined, these assignments will approximate 15,000 words.

You also will submit the revised draft and the final draft of each essay electronically to the dropbox in D2L, which will automatically submit your essay to Turnitin.com, a plagiarism-detection site. You will receive instruction in how to submit essays to the site.

COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Generally, this course seeks to help you to improve your ability to read texts (broadly construed) critically, to research and consider issues thoroughly, to think about them clearly, and to write about them convincingly. These objectives accord with and, thus, satisfy Goal 1 of the System General Education Requirements (SGRs) (see *South Dakota State University Undergraduate Catalog, 2021-2022* [https://catalog.sdstate.edu/content.php?catoid=42&navoid=6892#sgr1]):

Goal 1: "Students will write effectively and responsibly and will understand and interpret the written expression of others."

Student Learning Outcomes: "As a result of taking courses meeting this goal, students will:

a. Write using standard American English, including correct punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure [assessment based upon your performance on various exercises and responses and on the major essays];
b. Write logically [assessment based upon your performance on the major essays];
c. Write persuasively, using a variety of rhetorical strategies (e.g., exposition, argumentation, description) [assessment based upon your performance on the major essays];
d. Incorporate formal research and documentation into their writing, including research obtained through modern, technology-based research tools [assessment based upon your completion of the research component of the major essays and various documentation exercises]."

In addition, you will learn how to

- Plan Your Essay
    - Choose a subject and narrow it so that you can develop it sufficiently within the limits of the assignment;
    - Create a plausible, cogent argument—and explicit thesis—by fairly and thoroughly exploring your subject and your audience's assumptions about it.

- Organize Your Essay
    - Sequence the points of your essay clearly, coherently, and persuasively—making apparent to readers the logical progression of ideas both within and between paragraphs and the relation of those ideas to your thesis;
    - Begin and conclude your essay in engaging and thought-provoking ways.

- Support Your Essay
    - Marshal details, examples, facts, and plausible conjectures to develop and to substantiate your claims.

- Use Language Precisely, Correctly, and Effectively
    - Seek out the appropriate word in a given context;
    - Abide by grammatical rules and recognized standards of formal usage, but also determine which occasions and contexts might warrant departing from such rules and usage.

- Revise and Polish Your Essay
    - Reconceive and restructure the argument, and gather and deploy more effective evidence;
    - Edit and proofread.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

To successfully complete the work of the course, we will devote class time to 1) discussing the reading assignments and analyzing various advertisements, television shows, films, and prose samples; 2) discussing and practicing the various analytic, stylistic, and rhetorical strategies mentioned in the course description; 3) free-writing, drafting, and revising your essays (you must revise each of the major essays twice); and 4) reading and commenting upon your classmates' work.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance is critical to this course; the greater the number of students participating in discussions and writing activities, the greater the insights all students will receive. Of course, unforeseeable events arise, so you will have three unexcused absences for the course. (Excused absences include those for university-approved activities or severe weather, if you commute, or health or family emergencies; to receive an excused

absence for university-approved activities or for health or family emergencies, you must—as soon as possible—submit the appropriate documentation.) Each unexcused absence after three will lower your course grade by one-third letter (e.g., from B- to C+); each day an essay is late will lower your grade on that assignment by one-third letter. At the instructor's discretion, late small assignments will receive a lower score or will not be accepted. Only work that is late because of an excused absence is exempt from this policy. An emergency that becomes chronic and that forces you to miss class repeatedly, may require you to drop the course and take it in a subsequent semester.

Please note: To attend class means to be present—physically and mentally—and to be able to "attend" to class instruction and activities. If you use a digital device to take notes during class, that is fine. These digital devices, however, come with distractions. Should you use your digital devices for purposes other than class-related activities, you are, essentially, absent and will receive an unexcused absence for any class period during which you engage in this behavior. (And use of earbuds in class will result in an unexcused absence.) If you anticipate digital distractions being an issue for you, leave your devices out of reach and take notes by hand (incidentally, a more effective method, according to studies).

COVID-19 AND ATTENDANCE

The university has returned to its pre-pandemic attendance policies; however, we recognize that COVID-19 is still with us, and we want to ensure a safe and healthy learning experience. If you have any symptoms of, have been exposed to, or have tested positive for COVID-19, please report this using the self-reporting form on the JacksRBack page.

If you are in quarantine or isolation because of symptoms, close contact, or a positive test, I will work with you to devise a plan to make up missed class time. In some instances, that might include attending class via Zoom, but be aware that not all classrooms are equipped for this, and you will need to complete the self-reporting form prior to our class meeting to be eligible for Zoom accommodations. In other words, depending upon room set-up and other factors, including instructor discretion, I cannot ensure that Zoom will serve as an attendance alternative for absences for illnesses, including COVID-19 and/or other extreme emergencies. In addition, I will also work with you regarding missed or late assignments due to quarantine or isolation. As with other requests to submit late work because of an excused absence, you will need to provide appropriate documentation.

ASSESSMENT

I will assess your three major essays upon quality of content (including ideas, claims, support for the claims, and use of source materials), clarity of form (including organization and correct documentation), and clarity of style (including precision and variety at the sentence level and grammatical correctness). You will receive a letter grade for the final draft of each major essay, and I will average these at the end of the

semester along with your grade on daily work (see below) to determine your grade for the course. I will assess your essays according to the following criteria:

The grade of "A" ("exceptional") designates*:

- fulfillment of the requirements and objectives of the assignment
- an excellent, impressive command of content
- a clear explanation, development, and application of ideas
- independent thought and analysis
- thorough and persuasive substantiation of claims
- clear and effective organization
- precise, fluent, and distinctive expression
- correct grammar, punctuation, documentation, and format

The grade of "B" ("above average") designates:

- fulfillment of most of the requirements and objectives of the assignment
- a competent command of content
- mostly clear explanation, development, and application of ideas
- a capacity for independent thought, analysis, though it is not fully realized
- sufficient and mostly persuasive substantiation of claims
- mostly clear and effective organization
- mostly precise, fluent, and clear expression
- mostly correct grammar, punctuation, documentation, and format

The grade of "C" ("average") designates:

- fulfillment of the major requirements and objectives of the assignment, though minor ones are only partially fulfilled or unfulfilled
- an adequate command of subject matter
- adequate explanation, development, and application of ideas, though lack of depth is evident
- lack of independent thought or sustained analysis
- inconsistent substantiation of claims
- adequate organization, though lapses are evident
- adequate expression though lapses in precision, fluency, and clarity are evident
- adequate grammar, punctuation, documentation, and format, though errors are evident

The grade of "D" ("lowest passing grade") designates:

- insufficient fulfillment of the requirements and objectives of the assignment
- an inadequate command of content
- insufficient explanation, development, and application of ideas
- unexamined, clichéd thinking and little analysis
- inadequate substantiation of claims
- inadequate organization, making the text hard to follow
- inadequate expression with significant lapses in precision, fluency, and clarity
- numerous and significant errors in grammar, punctuation, documentation, and format

The grade of "F" ("failure") designates:

- a failure to follow or complete the assignment
- a failure to control or comprehend the content
- a failure to sufficiently explain, develop, or apply ideas
- a failure to analyze
- a failure to sufficiently substantiate claims
- a failure to organize the content, making the text largely incoherent
- a failure to write with any degree of precision, fluency or clarity
- a failure to abide by the conventions of grammar, punctuation, documentation or format

* Rubric appears in *South Dakota State University Undergraduate Catalog, 2021-2022* (https://catalog.sdstate.edu/content.php?catoid=42&navoid=6893#grades).

I will assess your smaller assignments (reading responses, exercises from *The St. Martin's Handbook* and *They Say/I Say*, in-class assignments, online assignments) with a four-point rubric: 4=A, 3=B, 2=C, 1=D, 0=F.

If at the end of the semester, your grade average falls between two grades—between a B and a C, for instance—frequent participation in class discussion will earn you the higher grade; infrequent, the lower. I also will assess your performance based upon your progress through the semester: steady improvement will raise your average; steady decline will lower it. And please note: To pass the course, you must complete and submit all drafts of the three major essays. Also, you must submit drafts that you have written for this section of English 101 only, not for another section of English 101 or for some other class. Recycled drafts will not receive credit.

CONNECTSTATE

Should your progress in the course falter due to lack of attendance or failure to submit work or to submit it on time or to submit work of passable quality, I will notify you and your advisor through the ConnectState early-alert program. This program serves to apprise students that early deficiencies in their performance, should they continue, will jeopardize their successful completion of the course. The program also sets in motion steps to help students get additional help. If you receive a notification in ConnectState, please seek assistance from me, your advisor, the Student Success Center, the Writing Center, or other campus resources.

If you have questions, please contact me or Jody Owen, the early-alert coordinator, at Jody.Owen@sdstate.edu or 688-4155.

FREEDOM IN LEARNING

Students are responsible for learning the content of any course of study in which they are enrolled. Under Board of Regents and University policy, student academic performance shall be evaluated solely on an academic basis and students should be free

to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any courses of study. Students who believe that an academic evaluation is unrelated to academic standards but is related instead to judgment of their personal opinion or conduct should first contact the instructor of the course. If the student remains unsatisfied, the student may contact the department head and/or dean of the college that offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.

CLASS DECORUM

This class encourages students of all ethnicities, identities, and backgrounds to bring their perspectives and experiences to class discussion. Like the proverbial town square, the classroom is a public space, and to nurture and preserve it as such, its members should abide by the conventions of civility no matter how controversial or diametrically opposed the ideas that arise in discussion might be. The class readings and discussions may well challenge students' perspectives—this, after all, is a desired consequence of a college education—but all class-sponsored discourse, whether in speech or in writing, should proceed in a manner that is genuinely curious about, and respectful of, points of view other than one's own. Students should think of themselves as an inclusive collective, an intrepid band of investigators hoping to shed light upon, and to advance understanding of, a host of gnarly social, cultural, and philosophical problems for the benefit of all.

CONCERNING HONESTY IN ACADEMIC WRITING

The English Department announces herewith that it will not tolerate plagiarism— representing another's work as one's own—in any form. Students must abide by the principles governing academic research and writing, the first and foremost of which is honesty. And students must abide by the university's policies regarding academic integrity, set forth in policy 2.4 of the South Dakota State University Policy and Procedure Manual. A summary of the policy, provided by the Office of the Provost, appears below.

> Student Academic Integrity and Appeals: The University has a clear expectation for
> academic integrity and does not tolerate academic dishonesty. University Policy 2.4
> sets forth the definitions of academic dishonesty, which includes but is not limited to,
> cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, misrepresentation,
> and other forms of dishonesty relating to academics. The Policy and its Procedures also
> set forth how charges of academic dishonesty are handled at the University. Academic
> dishonesty is strictly proscribed and if found may result in student discipline up to and

including dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about these matters, be sure to discuss them with me. You also may consult the full policy via the SDSU website.

WRITING CENTER

For those who would like extra feedback on their drafts or assistance with generating ideas, developing and organizing those ideas, or expressing their meaning clearly and concisely, the English Department provides free tutoring in its Writing Center, located in 103 Briggs Library. This service is available to all students, and I strongly encourage you all to use this service—all authors benefit from extra feedback on their writing. To schedule an appointment, go to the Writing Center's website (www.sdstate.edu/writingcenter) or call at (605) 688-6559. Depending on the availability of tutors, walk-ins are also welcome.

The success of students in this course is a primary goal, and sometimes, students need additional resources. Therefore, should you score a 1 or 2 on the diagnostic essay, the department requires that you seek assistance at least once on each of the three major essays. Should I determine that you need additional assistance on any draft, regardless of your diagnostic score, I also may require that you schedule an appointment at the Center. Should you not fulfill this requirement for any essay, I do reserve the right to lower your grade on that assignment, even to a failing grade.

DISABILITY SERVICES

South Dakota State University strives to ensure that physical resources, as well as information and communication technologies, are reasonably accessible to users in order to provide equal access to all. If you encounter any accessibility issues, you are encouraged to immediately contact the instructor of the course and the Office of Disability Services (Phone: 605-688-4504; Fax: 605-688-4987; email: Nancy.Crooks@sdstate.edu or SDSU.Disabilityservices@sdstate.edu; Address: Room 271, Box 2815, University Student Union, Brookings, SD 57007).

COURSE SCHEDULE

The schedule below lists our reading and the major writing assignments, but a good schedule is flexible. We may, as needed and within reason, add readings or assignments or take more time to complete tasks or pursue points of interest.

Date	Topics and Readings	Assignments
Week 1: 1/11	• Introduce course and texts.	• Access and review syllabus in D2L.
1/13	• Diagnostic essay.	

	• Joining academic discussions (discuss 1-18 in *TSIS*).	
Week 2: 1/18	• Expectations for college writing, and principles of good prose (discuss 14-25 and SD 2-5 in *SMH*). • Grammar review. Introduce revision symbols (767 in *SMH*) and verbal style.	
1/20	• Discuss purpose and methods of cultural analysis. • Introduce "After These Messages: Advertising and Its Effects." • Discuss prompt. • Discuss Plato dialog (565-72 in *RPC*).	
Week 3: 1/25	• Discuss Kilbourne essay (89-108 in *RPC*). • Establishing a thesis and organizing an argument, using the Kilbourne essay as a model (discuss 44-54 in *SMH*). • Making clear what's at stake in your argument (discuss 96-106 in *TSIS*).	
1/27	• Paragraph development (discuss 60-74 in *SMH*). • Incorporating other voices into your argument, using the Kilbourne essay as a model (discuss 19-56 in *TSIS*).	
Week 4: 2/1	• Quotation and integrating source material (discuss 209-13 in *SMH*). • Contextualizing quotes (discuss 43-52 in *TSIS*). • Documenting sources and compiling a works cited (discuss 3-4, 12-14, 19, 25, 30-41 in *DS*). • Avoiding plagiarism (discuss 218-25 in *SMH*).	
2/3	• Discuss Bordo essay (109-16 in *RPC*) and Miller essay (117-24 in *RPC*). • In-class analysis of ads. • Recommended reading: Lutz essay (125-36 in *RPC*).	
Week 5: 2/8	• Introductions and conclusions (74-77 in *SMH*).	• **Ad analysis draft due by**

	• Draft workshop. Be sure to have read 80-97 in *SMH* to prepare for the workshop. • Submitting an essay to D2L. • Recommended reading: Frank essay (41-52 in *RPC*).	**the beginning of class (ready to share)**.
2/10	• In-class work with verbal style (discuss 491-94 and 510-11 in *SMH*). • Work with the verbal style in your own essay.	• **Ad analysis revision due in the dropbox by the end of class.**
Week 6: 2/14	• Monday: Conferences (20 minutes in my office).	
2/15	• Conferences (20 minutes in my office). No class.	
2/16	• Wednesday: Conferences (20 minutes in my office).	
2/17	• Introduce "Servant or Master?: Digital Technology and the Imperatives of Design." • Discuss prompt. • Discuss Twitchell essay (137-46 in *RPC*). • Conferences before and after class (20 minutes in my office).	
2/18	• Friday: Conferences (20 minutes in my office).	
Week 7: 2/22	• Discuss Turkle essay (607-26 in *RPC*). • Constructing concise and effective sentences (discuss 490-91 in *SMH*).	• **Ad analysis final due in the dropbox by the beginning of class**.
2/24	• Discuss Spike Jonze's *Her*. (Watch the film prior to class.) • Discuss Keller, McEntee, Smith, and Wingate "Discursion" (479-94 in *RPC*).	
Week 8: 3/1	• Discuss Douthat (473-78 in *RPC*). • Paraphrase and summary (discuss 206-07, 209, and 213-15 in *SMH*). In-class exercises.	
3/3	• Ways of restructuring sentences—coordination, subordination, and parallelism (discuss 495-501 and 521-24 in *SMH*)—and of varying	• Paraphrase and summary exercise due in the dropbox by

	• sentence length and openers (discuss 502-07 in *SMH*). • Responding to other voices and emphasizing your own (discuss 57-81 in *TSIS*).	the beginning of class.
<u>Week 9</u>: 3/8	• Draft workshop. • Return and discuss ad analyses.	• **Servant or Master? draft due by the beginning of class (ready to share).**
3/10	• Work with sentence variety and structure (review your own essay). • Advanced research methods (discuss 172-85 and 191-206 in *SMH*). • Consulting the Briggs library site for English 101.	• **Servant or Master? revision due in the dropbox by the end of class.**
<u>Week 10</u>: 3/14-3/18	**Spring break. No class.**	
<u>Week 11</u>: 3/22	• Introduce "Democracy in the Balance: The Fate of Intellectualism in Higher Ed and the Public Sphere." • Discuss prompt. • Discuss Hofstadter essay (257-76 in *RPC*).	
3/24	• Hofstadter continued. • Discuss Gitlin essay (277-84 in *RPC*).	
<u>Week 12</u>: 3/29	• Library instruction. Meet in Briggs 125.	• **Servant or Master? final due in the dropbox by the beginning of class.**
3/31	• Discuss Berrett essay (341-50 in *RPC*). • Discuss Edmundson essay (285-300 in *RPC*).	• **Anti-intellectualism topic proposal due in the dropbox by 3:00 p.m.**
<u>Week 13</u>: 4/5	• Argumentation (discuss 144-69 and 125-43 in *SMH*). • Return and discuss topic proposals.	

4/7	• Considering other points of view (discuss 82-95 in *TSIS*). • In-class work with argumentation, thesis, and organization.	• **Outline and introduction due in the dropbox by 3:00 p.m.**
Week 14: 4/12	• Review format and documentation (discuss 1-41 in *DS*). • Return and discuss outlines and introductions.	
4/14	• Library work: Meet in Briggs.	
Week 15: 4/18-4/22	• Conferences (30 minutes in my office). No class this week.	
Week 16: 4/26	• Conferences (30 minutes in my office). No class.	
4/28	• Documentation Q&A. • Works cited workshop (be sure to bring an electronic copy of your works cited to class). • Final advice/questions about anti-intellectualism essay. • Final day to complete course evaluation.	
Week 17:	• Finals week; no class. • <u>Thursday, 5/5</u>: Office hours from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	• **Monday, 5/2: Anti-intellectualism essay due in the dropbox by 3:00 p.m.**

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