

JD Lancaster  
English 297  
Project #3 Draft 3  
November 13, 2002

## *An Odd Event*

Junior and Senior English Period 2: Second Quarter Syllabus

Week One- Descriptive Writing

Day One:

Word of the Day Presentation

Descriptive writing introduction day. We will begin our unit on descriptive writing by discussing our ideas of what descriptive writing is. We will also develop a rubric for our final descriptive piece.

We will also review our Workshop Constitution to ensure that we are effectively abiding by it, and to see if it needs to be amended. Remember, it is a living document.

If there is time, we will look at some examples of descriptive writing to get us thinking.

Homework:

Bring in two examples of what you think is "good" descriptive writing. I will not pass judgment on what I think meets this requirement, but be prepared to explain why you think your examples are "good." Be prepared to give a 1-2 minute informal at-your-seat presentation about your examples.

Day Two:

Word of the Day Presentation

1-2 Minute Informal Presentations.

Homework:

Begin work on your first descriptive piece.

Day Three:

Word of the Day Presentation

Free writing day.

Homework:

Bring in a draft of a 2-3 page descriptive piece to be workshopped and your Writer's Memo. Be sure to bring in enough copies for your group.

Day Four:

Word of the Day Presentation

Workshop

Homework:

Write a one-page reflection on how you think the workshop went. Include three positives and three opportunities. Think about what piece(s) you want to submit for publication in the Junior/Senior Literary Journal.

Day Five

Word of the Day Presentation

Free writing day. Begin five-ten minute individual conferences to discuss your descriptive pieces and any individual questions or concerns you may have.

Homework:

Revise the second draft of your descriptive piece to be turned in on Monday. Please include a Writer's Memo.

Week Two- Writing with Rhythm and Haiku

Day One:

Word of the Day Presentation

Begin mini-unit on Writing with Rhythm and Haiku. Discuss what it is to have rhythm. Guided Brainstorm to think of all the things in our lives that have rhythm. Listen to samples of spoken word and lyrics that demonstrate rhythm. A possible visit from our band director, Mark Briggs.

Homework:

Free write for twenty minutes. Focus solely on the rhythm of your language. Do not pay attention to exactly what it is you are saying. Try to lose yourself in the rhythm of the writing. It may help to think of you as someone else. Attempt to distance yourself from what you are writing. The words do not have to make sense. The rhythm is the only thing that matters. It may help to put some music on, although, I would discourage you from listening to music with audible lyrics, as this may sway your writing. Remember, the rhythm of the language is what we are focusing on. Bring in drafts to be workshopped.

Day Two:

Word of the Day Presentation

Workshop

Day Three:

Word of the Day Presentation

Rhythmic writing presentations and discussion

Homework:

Bring in the definition of Haiku and one example. May be your own or an existing published piece. If published, be sure to include MLA citation.

Day Four:

Word of the Day Presentation

Post the definition of Haiku.

Mini-lecture on the history behind Haiku

Haiku presentations

Free writing day to work on Haiku.

Homework

Bring in a publishable draft of your Haiku.

Day Five:

Word of the Day Presentation

Free-Writing Catch-Up Day

Homework

Think about what piece you are going to publish in the literary magazine, your Rhythmic Writing piece or your Haiku.

Watch a movie you haven't seen before, or listen to a CD you haven't heard before. Take notes. Think about what the successes and failures of the movie or CD in preparation for our week on Critical Reviews.

Classified File:

From: Andy Smithson (Deputy Officer of the Tazewell County PD)  
To: Tom Andrews (Senior Director of the FBE)  
Subject: An Unexplainable Event  
Date: December 13, 2002

At approximately 12:45 on Friday afternoon a semi-truck full of anti-freeze collided with a fertilizer truck carrying anhydrous ammonia on the interstate two miles southwest of town. Neither one of the drivers was injured, but the emergency crew that responded on the scene and onlookers said that a large whitish green cloud formed above the accident site and began moving to the northeast. No one was evacuated in the area northeast of the accident because the cloud appeared to dissipate quickly.

Speculation is that when the remnants of the then invisible cloud reached the school house, the conditions in room 297 (71 degrees Fahrenheit with a relative humidity of 67) sparked a chemical reaction. This chemical reaction manifested a very interesting occurrence. The individuals who were in the classroom typing at their computers did something that has never been documented. It seems that they all simultaneously closed out of the documents they were working on, opened up new documents, and typed for 10 consecutive minutes, giving an unadulterated look at their subconscious. It seems that they typed exactly what they were thinking. For a moment, they shared their souls. Oddly enough, they focused mainly on the writing class in which they were sitting. Upon the completion of the ten minutes, they finished their respective sentences and pressed "Print." None of the participants remembered what happened. For them, time stopped. What follows is the only proof of the incident. A perplexed Mr. Liston handed these documents over to the authorities this morning. He found them in the printer.

Andy

I like Mr. Liston. This class always goes pretty fast even on days that we are freewriting. I am glad he lets us set up our own schedules and talks to us about our grades. I especially liked our unit on biographies. I thought it was cool that he let us pick out any character we wanted to do a biography on. I didn't choose a famous person though. I chose my uncle Jeff. He was in Vietnam. I thought that he would probably have a cool story, so I wrote a biography about him. Steve thought it was pretty cool, and he is a good writer so I think I will keep it for my final portfolio. I am really happy that Mr. Liston doesn't make us do worksheets and stuff like that. I hate wasting my time talking about grammar. I know it is important and everything, but I would rather just put something out there and have somebody edit it later. This class is pretty cool though. I feel like I am doing pretty good in this class but I just wish I had more time to type at home. My mom said we might be able to afford a computer after Christmas. She is getting more hours at Wal-Mart now so maybe she is right. I don't know. I just can't write (I mean like handwriting) as well as I can type. It is like, when I am typing the words just come to me a lot easier. When I am writing I have to concentrate on making the letters look just right and half of the time, I can't read what I wrote the night before. I know that we can use the computers in the computer lab but I would definitely do better in this class if I had a computer at home. Like the other day, Angie turned in this paper about her grandma's house and she had a picture of her grandma sitting on her front porch swing. I don't know how well she wrote her paper but I think Mr. Liston will probably give her an A just because of the picture.

Mr. Liston

I think the first two weeks of the quarter have gone pretty well. The class finally seems to be coming together, and I think that students are finally getting comfortable with the workshop dynamic; they all seem to be getting more and more open about their drafts.

I appreciate the diversity we have in this class, but I have to be honest, it creates a lot of challenges. I get the impression that many of them don't see eye-to-eye and probably will never see eye-to-eye. As you can imagine, this can have a detrimental effect on our workshops. I enjoy this challenge though. I am thinking about bringing some drama into classroom. Maybe a week in the near future we can assume a role of a random class-member. We could set aside a day

to get to know our character... probably on a Monday. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, we could be that classmember. An interesting assignment would be to write a persuasive piece from our character's perspective. This would be especially interesting if our character were in opposition to our self . I think a mini-unit like this would do a number of things: it would give students an opportunity to act, it would focus on the authorial reading, and it would focus on audience. I would be concerned about possible embarrassing situations that may arise from this. I can think of a couple of students who would take this as an opportunity to make fun of their characters. I could assign characters to the class, but that would take away from our democracy. I don't know... I think that there would be some excellent benefits to this type of project, but I do not want to embarrass anyone in the process.

Devon

This class is bunk. I don't mind the free writing days but aint nobody in this class that is going to tell me anything about my writing that I don't already know. How's they going to understand where I'm coming from, and what I want to say? I like writing rhymes and stuff like that. I don't want to sit down and have people read them. I want to preform them. That the only way that you can feel it. Besides, I don't have to write something down to remember it. I remember all my rhymes. All in all, I guess this class is pretty cool as far as school goes. I just hate hearing people like Angie trying to tell me how it be. She don't know jack. All she knows is her country club life and that her daddy has money. That shit ain't real though. So why would I sit in a workshop and listen to what she has to say about my descriptions and my rhymes. You know what is completely sick about this whole deal though is that I have to be spontaneous with my shit. I can't sit around and be like (white guy voice) "Yeah I need to do this for homework so here goes." I just sit there and can't write anything. I have to write when I feel like it. Last year when my younger brother was in his car accident, it was easy for me to write. I just came back from the wake and BLAM! Shit was just flying off of my fingers. Time slowed down. Minutes seemed like hours and all of my words came together perfectly. That's the shit that makes you the bling bling. Not this stupid shit about haiku and kitty cats and shit like that.

Steve

I love writing. I have been writing for years now outside of class. I have

sent off many pieces to be published in journals and magazines. My favorite genre is poetry, but I have enjoyed writing screenplays a lot lately. I have never received a grade lower than an A in English. My parents are both journalists, so I have been exposed to writing all of my life. My parents read to me until I was old enough to read on my own. I can't remember when I couldn't read. When I was six, I wrote my first illustrated book. It was pretty rough (notebook paper cut in squares with staples serving as a binder), but I still wrote a freaking book when I was six. I still have it at home. I can't remember how many pieces I have written since then, but my file is pretty full. Mr. Liston's class is alright, but I can't help but get bored with some of his lame writing assignments. Seriously, descriptive free writing might be beneficial to some of my classmates, but I am way beyond that. I need to focus on plot, on mechanics, on actually creating a story. I am sure he loves to read profound descriptions of student's bedrooms, or grandma's house, or whatever, but why do I have to waste my time with this remedial BS. I wish he would just let me focus on the projects that interest me. His writing workshops are alright, but I can't help but feel like my work is manufactured after I run a piece through the process. Do you think that Hemingway took the time to run his stuff through a workshop? Yeah, I am sure that Salinger was like, "I like this Holden character, but I think he needs to be developed more. I think I will consult my workshop group." Come on. Get real, and give me a break. This class bores me, and I just wish I could spend the time pursuing the writing projects I want.

Angie

Mr. Liston is cool. I just don't know why he gives us so much homework. If every one of my teachers gave me this much homework, I wouldn't have time to sleep, let alone go to cheerleading, or be on student council. My favorite part about his class is our freewriting activities. I think it is awesome what you can think of when you sit down and just write whatever is on your mind. I wrote a really cool descriptive piece about my grandma's house the other day. I was just brainstorming to think of every thing I see, smell, hear, taste, and feel at her house. It is really neat. I miss my grandma. I also liked our unit on writing poetry. My favorite part was the day we wrote haiku. I wrote mine about my cat, Phoebe. I also like the days that we can workshop our papers. It helps me to hear what other people have to say about my writing, and I like hearing what other people write.

Brandon

This class is kind of a waste of time. Who cares if we can write good descriptive stories and Haiku. How is that going to help us get a job and raise a family when I get into the real world. I need more of a challenge I guess. That is why I am going to be an electrical engineer. I want to do real things with actual benefits. All of this writing crap is lame. Reading is a waste of time, too. Tell me why you would read when you can just watch tv. I know that some writing is important. It is just not a challenge to write. I need equations or theories on thermo-dynamics to keep me busy. Mr. Liston is alright, but I just don't think he knows what it is like in the real world. I think he teaches because he isn't smart enough to get a job to make some real money. I really don't like anything about this class. It will not help me get a job when I graduate from college.

Sue

This class is the best English class I have ever taken, I am so glad that Mr. Liston doesn't grade us on grammar or spelling or anything boring like that. He totally seems more concerned with our ideas than he does with how we put them on the paper. Besides, he even said that you can be a good writer even though you don't have the best grammar. I always have liked writing descriptive stories and I am glad I can do it in this class. I wrote mine about a lake my family used to go to when I was in grade school. It was a lot of fun and I think that I might keep it for my final portfolio. I wish we could have more descriptive writing assignments. I wish he didn't give us so much homework though. It is hard for me to write 2 pages a night even though I set aside an hour a night. I like this class the most cuz Mr. Liston cares about our ideas and thoughts, I just don't really like it when I have to share my writing with other people. I know that it might help some people but it kind of feels embarrassed about it. The other day I think that Steve was making fun of my piece. I am not sure but I like Mr. Liston's assignments I just don't like sharing them with my classmates. You know what, I think it would be kewl if we could share our assignments with students in another English class somewhere else. We could email and IM with cyber classmates. That way, we could get feedback from people our own age and we wouldn't have to be embarrassed about seeing our workshop group in the hallways and at football games or around town or anything like that. I would be a lot more comfortable doing that than with the people I go to school with. I know I wouldn't have to put up with Steve making fun of me then.