

UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON

COURSE TITLE:	TED.COM – IDEAS WORTH SHARING		
SUBMITTED BY:	Tim O'Donnell	DATE:	11-15-14

RATIONALE. Include short statement addressing how this course meets the FSEM's basic components and new student learning outcomes (see FSEM call above).

This discussion-based course involves student led, active learning around the ever growing and already massive inventory of conversations, controversies and ideas collected under the auspices of TED.com. The primary goal of the course is to have students identify, research, and communicate an idea that they think is worth sharing.

TED talks (and the research and advocates which back them) are the primary sources around which students design their own curriculum of themes and topics for focused discussion from the TED library. This in-depth and structured analysis of TED talks will not only create the conditions and material for seminar style learning on topics that require no prior knowledge, but it will introduce students to exemplars for their own talks.

Structured assignments in research, writing, and speaking will culminate in a final oral presentation for the course in which students will present their own TED talk while learning to utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve and synthesize information, and improve their written and oral communication competencies.

SYLLABUS. *Attach a course syllabus.*

SUBMIT this form and attached syllabus **electronically as one document to Dave Stahlman** (wdstahlm@umw.edu). All submissions **must** be in electronic form.

FSEM-TED.com • Fall 2015

FSEM 100E1-01 • Combs 322 • T R 12:30 – 1:45

Tim O'Donnell

Department of English, Linguistics, and Communication

Office: 1201 William St., 2nd Floor, #25

540-654-1252 (o) • 540-847-4639 (c) • todonnel@umw.edu

Office Hours: TR 10:45-12:15, W 10:00-noon and by appointment

Readings/Required Materials:

The primary materials for this course will be drawn from TED Talks available at TED.com and short supplementary readings and other materials which support the theme of the day. We will use CANVAS as the Learning Management System for this course and you will be expected to take advantage of the resources and online learning modules available therein.

Course Description and Objectives:

As a first year seminar, this course is designed to introduce students to the world of college level seminar style learning through the choice of an accessible topic – in this case, TED. The course will be discussion based and will focus on the development of students' research, writing, and speaking skills which are foundational to a liberal arts education.

Learning Outcomes:

As a general education course satisfying the FSEM requirement, this course has the following learning outcomes which are contained in the University of Mary Washington's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP):

- Students will be able to utilize a variety of research techniques to retrieve information efficiently, evaluate retrieved information, and synthesize information effectively to support their messages/arguments.
- Students will improve development and organization of written arguments.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to edit and revise in the writing process.
- Students will be able to apply the basic theories and principles of oral communication.
- Students will communicate effectively in a variety of settings, including public speaking and group discussion.

Grading:

The final grade for the course will be computed from the following:

- 15% - Participation/Group Discussion
- 30% - Your Own TED Talk/Public Presentation
- 15% - Discussion Leader
- 15% - Prospectus Paper
- 10% - Journaled Writing Assignments
- 15% - Final Reflection Essay

A mid-semester grade report of unsatisfactory is a warning that significant improvement is needed. Unsatisfactory performance could result from a lack of attendance/participation, a grade of “D” or lower on one or more assignments, and/or a failure to complete an assignment by the due date. Students whose mid-semester grade report indicates unsatisfactory performance are highly encouraged to meet with the instructor as soon as possible.

Attendance:

Attendance in class is expected, required, and essential to a seminar style learning environment. Students have one, nontransferable, excused absence per month in September, October, and November. Attendance is expected on the days when students present their TED Talks. Absences will be reflected as part of the evaluation of class participation

Discussion Leader:

During the weeks indicated on the calendar, each student will work with partners to lead class discussion on two different days. Your assignment includes identifying the TED talks which speak to the theme of the day (1-2 talks) as well as one or more short readings. Discussion leaders are expected to prepare advance materials for the day: a) Embed links to the TED video on the class distribution list and the selected reading one week prior to the scheduled class session; b) Facilitate class discussion in any of a variety of techniques (in order to prepare for the final reflective paper, each discussion should consider the connections between the theme/talks and higher education, the liberal arts experience, and one’s own learning process).

Class Participation:

Everyone is expected to be an active participant in this seminar. This means: attending class regularly, being an active listener and cooperative learner when present, as well as being prepared for class by listening to/watching the TED talks and doing the readings assigned by discussion leaders, and participating in and contributing to class discussions both in-class and online. Your class participation grade will be based on (1) the frequency and quality of your contribution to the class, (2) the degree to which you make use of the videos, readings and other materials in sharing your insights with the rest of us (3), the energy, enthusiasm and involvement you bring to our meetings and the material of the course, and (4) the degree to which you function as a “civilized” member of our social learning community and (5) your participation in and completion of the online learning modules embedded in the Canvas course. You are encouraged to review the “Rules for Critical Discussion” attached at the end of this syllabus to consider how you can be a more effective discussant.

Prospectus Paper:

This 5-7 page prospectus for your TED Talk follows from your research effort and (a) reviews existing literature and the variety of perspectives and arguments which encompass the background to the idea you plan to share (2 pages), (2) provides a context for the talk (the need for this idea) (approximately 2 pages) and (3) has a one-page statement of purpose concerning the goal and purpose of the talk (the idea). It should also include a thorough bibliography written in the format that is appropriate to your desired major (e.g. APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.) demonstrating effective information retrieval techniques. This paper should utilize several different sources of information, including the Simpson library databases discussed in the library session, and should consider the whole spectrum of arguments and opinion related to your topic. A **first draft** of this paper will be due four weeks in to the semester and a **second** version after instructor and peer review will be due at the end of the mid-semester break. Pay particular attention to the “Tips and Pointers” for effective writing as well as the “Moves that Matter in Academic Writing” (at the end of this syllabus) in preparing this writing assignment.

Journalled Writing Assignments:

Periodically throughout the semester you will complete a short writing assignment that is designed to conjure your written reflection on the course, its themes, and your progress in the course. These short writings will be part of a course long journal through which you document your thoughts, reactions, sentiments as we move through the course. These short writing assignments will be cumulative and should form the journalled foundation for your final reflection essay.

TED Talk/Public Presentation:

During the last weeks of the class students are required to give their own TED talk. This talk is your synthesis of your research and investigation of multiple sources. The focus of this talk is your own original idea worth sharing that was researched and developed in the prospectus paper. This is a 10 minute talk with ten minutes for post-presentation discussion with the class. Students must create a typed annotated bibliography using a style manual appropriate to their prospective discipline which supports the talk that derives from their prospectus paper. In the spirit of TED, we will be tight with the clock.

Final Reflection Essay:

There is no final exam for this course. In lieu of an exam, students will complete a final reflective paper which organizes and reflects on their own TED talk as well as that of their classmates. In particular, this reflective paper should consider the connections between this course and higher education, the liberal arts experience, and one's own learning process. Part of the assignment is about explicitly relating the topic to the liberal arts and to your own education, its purpose, and its methodology and drawing from the journalled written reflections developed over the course of the semester.

Student's Class Rules:

Participants in this course have developed and agreed to the following "rules."

Technology in the class room: Participants will refrain from using digital devices to communicate with the outside world and refrain from using them to perform non-class related activities during the times that the class is assembled. During the final presentations, students will refrain from using these technologies all together.

Food and beverages: Food and beverage is acceptable so long as it is consistent with University policy on the facilities, consumption is not distracting to others in the class and there are no remnants or litter left in the classroom.

Side conversations: Participants have agreed to refrain from having side conversations with persons in their general vicinity when the class is gathered in an assembly of the whole ("i.e. no talking while others are talking").

Disagreements: Participants have agreed to be disagree without being disagreeable. Differences of opinion should be aired – but constructively and respectfully.

Writing Center, Speaking Center, Simpson Library:

UMW makes a wide variety of academic support services available to students. These include the Writing Center, the Speaking Center (both located in the ITCC) as well as the services of Simpson Library. Early in the semester we will visit both centers to learn more about how they can support your

academic performance and we will have one class session led by a librarian to expose you to the many valuable research tools that UMW has available for all students.

Disability Resources:

The Office of Disability Resources has been designated by the University as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you receive services through the Office of Disability Resources and require accommodations for this class, make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodation needs. Bring your accommodation letter with you to the appointment. I will hold any information you share with me in strictest confidence unless you give me permission to do otherwise. If you have not made contact with the Office of Disability Resources and have reasonable accommodation needs, (note taking assistance, extended time for tests, etc.) I will be happy to refer you. The office will require appropriate documentation of disability.

Honor System:

The Honor Code is a critical component of this course and relates to all written and spoken assignments. Please write and sign the University of Mary Washington honor pledge on every written assignment. I assume that you are observing the honor code for all of your work in this course, including each of your spoken and written assignments. Appropriate actions in accordance with the Honor Code will be taken as warranted. In this course, honor system violations include the willful claiming in a speech, as one's own, another's ideas, words, phrases and the like without appropriate acknowledgement in the form of an oral citation or reference.

Tentative Course Calendar for TED.com

Date	Topic	Readings/Videos
	Overview of the Course What makes for an “idea worth sharing?”	
	Simpson Library Tour Start of the 30 Day Challenge (reflection due). Finalize Syllabus and Tour of the Speaking and Writing Centers	
	The TED Phenomenon Last day to drop without a W	
	First Draft of Prospectus Due THEME 1: _____ THEME 2: _____	
	Peer Review Due THEME 3: _____ End of the 30 Day Challenge (reflection due). THEME 4: _____	
	THEME 5: _____ THEME 6: _____	
	FALL BREAK THEME 7: _____	
	Final Draft of Prospectus Due THEME 8: _____ THEME 9: _____	
	THEME 10: _____ THEME 11: _____	
	THEME 12: _____ THEME 13: _____	
	THEME 14: _____ THEME 15: _____	
	THEME 16: _____ UMW Talks Preparation	
	UMW TALKS Preparation	

THANKSGIVING

UMW TALKS
UMW TALKS

Final Exam

(Final Reflection Paper Due)

Criteria for Grading Speeches

adapted from the
National Communication Association

You will earn an A on your speeches if you meet the following standards:

1. Satisfy all requirements for a B speech.
2. Demonstrate imagination and creativity in topic selection development.
3. Develop & sustain strong bonds of identification between you, your audience, and the topic.
4. Consistently adapt supporting material to the experiential world of your audience.
5. Reflect an even greater depth of research (e.g. more references).
6. Demonstrate the artful use of language and stylistic techniques.
7. Make a polished presentation that integrates verbal and nonverbal communication skills (and visual aids/multimedia if part of the assignment).

You will earn a B on your speeches if you meet the following standards:

1. Satisfy all requirements for a C speech.
2. Select a challenging topic and adapt it appropriately to your audience.
3. Reflect a greater depth of research (e.g. more references).
4. Clearly identify sources of information and ideas.
5. Create and sustain attention throughout the speech.
6. Make effective use of transitions, previews, and summaries.
7. Use an effective oral style appropriate to your audience, message, and communication situation.
8. Present your speech with poise.

You will earn a C on your speeches if you meet the following standards:

1. The speech is original (your own work).
2. The type of speech presented is appropriate to the assignment.
3. The topic is sufficiently focused and appropriate for the audience.
4. The speech fits the time requirements of the assignment.
5. The speech is presented on the day assigned.
6. Main ideas are developed with appropriate supporting material (facts and figures, etc.).
7. The speech has a clear sense of purpose.
8. Speech design is appropriate, complete with an introduction and conclusion.
9. The speech is presented extemporaneously.
10. The speech satisfies any specific requirements of the assignment, such as number of references, outlines, or use of visual aids.
11. You use language correctly and your outline demonstrates few if any errors.

The D speech does not meet one or more of the standards for a C speech or

1. It is obviously unrehearsed. The speaker READS their speech (unless reading, as in oral interpretation of a text, is part of the assignment).
2. It is based entirely on biased information or unsupported opinions.

The F speech does not meet three or more standards of a C speech, reflects either of the problems associated with a D speech, or

1. It uses fabricated supporting material.
2. It is plagiarized.

Rules for Critical Discussion

[From Frans H. van Eemeren & Rob Gootendorst , Argumentation, Communication and Fallacies: A Pragma-Dialectical Perspective, Hillisdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1993.]

1. Participants must not try to silence each other to prevent the exchange of arguments and criticism.
2. If you make a claim, you must be willing to provide support if it is requested.
3. When you criticize someone's argument, you should be sure you are talking about what they really said.
4. You should defend your claims with arguments relevant to them.
5. You should not claim that others have presumed something they have not, and you should be willing to admit your own presumptions.
6. You should try not to start argumentation with a starting point others do not accept, and you should not deny a genuine starting point.
7. You should not say your claim has been established unless you have provided proper argumentative support.
8. You should stick to arguments that are logically valid or can be made valid.
9. If you fail to establish your claim, admit it; if others establish their claims, admit it.
10. Avoid unnecessary ambiguity, and try to interpret other's arguments as clearly as possible.

Writing Tips and Pointers

- **Thesis:** You need a thesis and you need to settle on your thesis before you start writing. A thesis is the main argument of your paper. It is the case you wish to make. A thesis is not your topic, but rather your *purpose* in writing the paper. It is the central message you wish to communicate to your reader. Papers that have a clear AND well supported thesis get better grades than papers that hint around at an argument, but never deliver.
- **Use what is built in:** Use Microsoft Word's spelling and grammar checking capabilities. Spelling/Grammar check is not perfect and you will need to "ignore" some of the suggested changes, but using it will reduce your number of errors.
- **Read aloud.** Read your text out loud as a regular proof writing exercise. You should never turn a paper in that you haven't read aloud at least once.
- **Outline and give directions:** Include a "directional" paragraph among the first few paragraphs of your paper. After introducing your thesis/stating your purpose, you should preview the moves which you will make to build your case. It is more than okay to say: "this paper begins with... it then examines... and concludes with...." Give the reader a preview of what you will do.
- **Look for the warrants and support:** Examine each claim you make in the paper and ask yourself "why" and "what is my proof." If the answer doesn't follow in your writing, you need to tighten up your warrants and your use of evidence.
- **Bibliographic Solutions:** Use a bibliographic program such as Zotero to build your bibliography and learn appropriate citation methods. Microsoft Word has one and EasyBib is also freely available and popular.
- **Avoid the thesaurus syndrome.** Yes, you should build your vocabulary, and yes you should use different words to say the same thing, however, simply plugging in words from your thesaurus can be risky.
- **Learning how to talk about something is learning how to write.** Work at building up ways of talking about a subject. With topics that you already know something about, the words come easier. When you are writing about a topic that you know little about, words come slower and the writing process is labored. In addition to writing about things that you know something about, you will need to build a vocabulary for talking about new topics.
- **Eliminate adverbs.** Instead, use strong and active verbs. *See Stephen King below.*
- **Keep it simple.** Use simple, clear sentences which express a single, complete thought rather than long, complicated sentences which contain multiple thoughts.
- **Less is more.** Eliminate excess words and superfluous phrases. Edit to cut down and tighten your ideas and weed out redundancy. Don't become overly impressed by or committed to your sentences and phrases.
- **Write in the active voice.** Put the active agent first and the verb second.

- The football player caught the ball. (Active)
 - The ball was caught by the football player. (Passive)
- **Use parallel wording and structure.** This creates patterns which help the reader understand and follow you more easily. There are several ways to build parallelism into your writing:
 - Sentence structure
 - Repeated verbs
 - Verb tense
 - Noun plurality
 - **Polish your transitions.** Transitions are the bridges which connect ideas and assist the reader in following you from point to point.
 - **Model the moves of academic writing.** Follow the “moves” of academic writing which means you are “entering into conversation with others.” Use the templates provided in *They Say/I Say* by Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein and Russel Durst.

Stephen King on Adverbs

Adverbs, you will remember from your own version of Business English, are words that modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. They’re the ones that usually end in -ly. Adverbs, like the passive voice, seem to have been created with the timid writer in mind. With the passive voice, the writer usually expresses fear of not being taken seriously it is the voice of little boys wearing shoepolish mustaches and little girls clumping around in Mommy’s high heels. With adverbs, the writer usually tells us he or she is afraid he/she isn’t expressing himself/herself clearly, that he or she is not getting the point or the picture across.

Consider the sentence “He closed the door firmly.” It’s by no means a terrible sentence (at least it’s got an active verb going for it), but ask yourself if firmly really has to be there. You can argue that it expresses a degree of difference between “He close the door” and “He slammed the door,” and you’ll get no argument from me . . . but what about context? What about all the enlightening (not to say emotionally moving) prose which came before “He closed the door firmly?” Shouldn’t this tell us how he closed the door? And if the foregoing prose does tell us, isn’t firmly an extra word? Isn’t it redundant?

Someone out there is now accusing me of being tiresome and anal-retentive. I deny it. I believe the road to tell is paved with adverbs, and I will shout it from the rooftops. To put it another way, they’re like dandelions. If you have one on your lawn, it looks pretty and unique. If you fail to root it out, however, you find five the next day . . . fifty the day after that . . . and then, my brothers and sisters, your lawn is totally, completely, and profligately covered with dandelions. By then you see them for the weeds they really are, but by then it’s –GASP!!—too late. (118)

King, Stephen. *On Writing*. Simon and Schuster, 2002.

Templates for the Moves that Matter in Academic Writing
from *They Say/I Say* by Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein and Russel Durst

Introducing What “They Say”

- A number of sociologists have recently suggested that X’s work has several fundamental problems.
- It has become common today to dismiss X’s contribution to the field of sociology.
- In their recent work, Y and Z have offered harsh critiques of Dr. X for _____

Introducing “Standard Views”

- Americans today tend to believe that _____
- Conventional wisdom has it that _____
- Common sense seems to dictate that _____
- The standard way of thinking about topic X has it that _____
- It is often said that _____
- My whole life I have heard it said that _____
- You would think that _____
- Many people assume that _____
- Making What “They Say” Something you Say”
- I’ve always believed that _____
- When I was a child, I used to think that _____
- Although I should know better by now, I cannot help thinking that _____
- At the same time that I believe _____, I also believe _____

Introducing Something Implied or Assumed

- Although none of them have ever said so directly, my teachers have often given me the impression that _____
- One implication of X’s treatment of _____ is that _____
- Although X does not say so directly, she apparently assumes that _____
- While they rarely admit as much, _____ often take for granted that _____

Introducing an Ongoing Debate

- In discussion of X, one controversial issue has been _____. On the one hand, _____ argues _____. On the other hand _____ contends _____. Others even maintain _____. My own view is _____.

- When it comes to the topic of _____, most of us will readily agree that _____. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of _____. Whereas some are convinced that _____, others maintain that _____.
- In conclusion, then, as I suggested earlier, defenders of _____ can't have it both ways. Their assertion that _____ is contradicted by their claim that _____.

Capturing Authorial Action

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • X acknowledges that _____ | • X insists that _____ |
| • X agrees that _____ | • X observes that _____ |
| • X argues that _____ | • X questions whether _____ |
| • X believes that _____ | • X refutes the claim that _____ |
| • X denies/does not deny that _____ | • X reminds us that _____ |
| • X claims that _____ | • X reports that _____ |
| • X demonstrates that _____ | • X suggests that _____ |
| • X complains that _____ | • X urges that _____ |
| • X celebrates the fact that _____ | |
| • X emphasizes that _____ | |

Introducing Quotations

- | | |
|--|--|
| • X states, "_____" | • Writing in the journal _____, x complains that "_____" |
| • As _____ puts it, "_____" | • In X's view "_____" |
| • According to x, "_____" | • X agrees when she writes, "_____" |
| • X writes, "_____" | • X disagrees when she writes, "_____" |
| • In her book, _____, X maintains that "_____" | • X complicates matters further when he writes, "_____" |

Explaining Quotations

- Basically, X is saying _____
- In other words, X believes _____
- In making this comment, X argues that _____
- X is insisting that _____
- X's point is that _____
- The essence of X's argument is that _____

Disagreeing with Reasons

- I think _____ is mistaken because she overlooks _____
- X's claim that _____ rests upon the questionable assumption that _____
- I disagree with X's view that _____ because, as recent research has shown, _____
- X contradicts herself/can't have it both ways. On the one hand, she argues _____. But on the other hand, she also says _____
- By focusing on _____, X overlooks the deeper problem of _____.
- X claims _____, but we don't need him to tell us that. Anyone familiar with _____ has long known that _____.

Establishing Why Your Claim Matters

- X matters/is important because _____
- Although X may seem trivial, it is in fact crucial in terms of _____
- Ultimately, what is at stake here is _____
- These findings have important consequences for the broader domain of _____
- My discussion of X is in fact addressing the larger matter of _____
- These conclusions/This discovery will have significant application in _____ as well as in _____
- Although X may seem of concern to only a small group of _____, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about _____

Transitions

Cause and Effect

- accordingly
- as a result
- consequently
- hence
- it follows, then
- since
- so
- then
- therefore
- thus

Conclusion

- as a result
- consequently
- hence
- in conclusion, then
- in short
- in sum
- it follows
- so
- the upshot of all this is that
- therefore
- thus
- to sum up
- to summarize

Comparison

- along the same lines
- in the same way
- likewise
- similarly

Contrast

- although
- but

- by contrast
- conversely
- despite the fact that
- even though
- however
- in contrast
- nevertheless
- on the contrary
- on the other hand
- regardless
- whereas
- while
- yet

Addition

- also
- and
- besides
- furthermore
- in addition
- in fact
- indeed
- moreover
- so too

Concession

- admittedly
- although it is true that
- granted
- I concede that
- of course
- naturally
- to be sure

Example

- after all

- as an illustration
- consider
- for example
- for instance
- specifically
- to take a case in point

- by extension
- in short
- that is
- in other words
- to put it another way
- to put it bluntly
- to put it succinctly
- ultimately

Elaboration

- actually

Adding Metacommentary

- In other words _____
- What _____ really means by this is _____
- My point is _____
- Essentially, I am arguing that _____
- My point is not that we should _____, but that we should _____
- What _____ really means is _____
- In other words, _____
- To put it another way, _____
- In sum, then, _____
- My conclusion, then is that, _____
- In short, _____
- What is more important, _____
- Incidentally, _____
- By the way, _____
- Chapter 2 explores _____, while chapter 3 examines _____
- Having just argued that _____, let us now turn our attention to _____
- Although some readers may object that _____, I would answer that _____