

Report of the Program Evaluation Sub-Committee: Haney, Kinneavy,  
Wainwright

In response to the Nov. 4 charge from the F.E.P.C., the P.E.C. met to discuss the objectives, content, and rationale of our present Freshman English Program. To meet the immediate needs of the textbook sub-committee, we offer the three attached descriptions of 306, 307, and 308; these descriptions include guidelines for text selection.

The F.E.P.C. also asked the P.E.C. to consider the rationale of our present program. Although we have indicated our willingness to do so, we would like to propose an alternative:

1. That the F.E.P.C. establish a standing sub-committee on curriculum development. Changes in the Freshman program are imminent: the 307 syllabus will probably be revised and there is some talk of adding another 2nd semester variant-- a course in writing for science majors. This committee believes that it should not be responsible for both developing and then judging curriculum. Therefore, we suggest a curriculum sub-committee. The P.E.C. would then be responsible for evaluation.
2. Because changes are in progress, we suggest that the F.E.P.C. set a date after which no program changes can be made for the following semester-- say, March 1 for Fall semester, etc. If we don't set cut-off dates, we will sometimes end up with texts that no longer match the syllabus. The P.E.C. thinks such discontinuity harmful to the program. So we encourage the F.E.P.C. to establish cut-off dates for program changes: one date for each semester.
3. If the F.E.P.C. establishes a curriculum sub-committee, the P.E.C. asks to be relieved of its current charge: to provide a rationale for the current Freshman program and to improve the sequencing that now prevails. On the other hand, we would accept a charge to evaluate the current sequencing-- if such an evaluation is deemed necessary.

Attached you will find descriptions and guidelines for text selections.



## E 307

### Description (as in the College of Humanities catalog)

Only one of the following may be counted: English 307, 601b, 305, 308. A composition course at a level more advanced than that of English 306. Students will study rhetoric and logic and apply the principles to writing and analyzing exposition and argument, with materials drawn from literature, chiefly prose fiction. Prerequisite: English 306 or the equivalent.

### Objectives

In E 307 the students read and analyze both non-fiction and fiction. In general, students are taught to become more discriminating readers of all kinds of texts. More specifically, they learn to compare and contrast different discursive aims and to recognize that different aims mandate different structures, voices, themes, styles and effects. Moreover, they are encouraged to draw connections between rhetoric and literature-- much in the way that Kenneth Burke does. To help them make the connection, the reading units address the following rhetorical and literary problems: unity-purpose, structure-organization, character-voice, theme-values, style, effect. In this way, we give the students one way of discoursing about literature.

But E 307 also tries to put some of the "literary" into a student's discursive writing in general. Consequently, our writing objectives are rather broad. Taken together, the suggested writing assignments include most of the aims and modes of discourse; but in all cases, the student is encouraged to try more "creative" ways of fulfilling each aim or mode. That, at least, is our ideal. However, in practice, E 307 stresses analytic argumentation or exposition over other forms of writing.

### Texts

I. Handbook/Workbook: My experience has shown that workbooks are more effective than handbooks in E 307. Mechanics are covered on an individualized basis although we presume that all students have on hand their 306 handbook. As for the workbook, it should:

- a. include numerous exercises on the most common grammatical problems our students have: comma splices, fragments, fused sentences, unclear pronoun reference, shifts in tense or person, and dangling modifiers.
- b. offer students examples of how to use semi-colons, colons, and dashes; and provide exercises that encourage them to use these more sophisticated marks of punctuation.
- c. include a series of exercises on such concerns as thesis development, paragraph development, transitions, and voice.

d. include a long and varied section on stylistic concerns: directness, sentence patterns, diction, rhythm, variety and emphasis.

e. ideally, approach mechanics, structure, and style as rhetorical concerns rather than prescriptions. However, since the workbook contains little explanatory material, it may be up to the teacher to stress the rhetorical perspective.

II. Rhetorics: Although there is some question about the necessity for a 307 rhetoric, the P.E.C. feels that such a text is a good idea-- at least for the moment. A rhetoric text will encourage 307 teachers to make connections between rhetoric and literature and between the student's writing and his reading. In short, it will inhibit the tendency to turn 307 into a literature course. A 307 rhetoric should include:

- a. a long and respectable section on reading and writing about literature
- b. an approach to literature that stresses its relationship to and divergence from other discursive aims and modes.
- c. some discussion of Burke's pentad; or an analysis of unity, structure, character, theme, style, and effect in fiction.
- d. an equally comprehensive section on rhetorical modes and aims other than the literary. In this case, sections on purpose, organization, voice, subject matter, style, and shaping an audience are necessary. A book that covers these issues permits us to draw the connections between literature and rhetoric ( i.e. when the class is discussing character in literature, the students can be working on voice in their own writing).

III. Readers: Two readers are necessary for 307: an anthology of fiction and an anthology of non-fiction. The fiction anthology should include:

- a. stories by a wide range of authors who have differing styles and concerns
- b. a few short novels in which character or universe of value are of primary interest.

The non-fiction anthology should include:

- a. numerous argumentative and expository essays
- b. some examples of other kinds of essays-- from persuasion to self-examination



c. essays by poets and novelists; these essays help us navigate the passage from non-fiction to fiction.

d. some essays that fulfill their aim by concentrating on character or style.