

WRIT 101
“From Virtue to Vice”
Fall 2008
Pacific Lutheran University

Instructor: Dr. Mike Hillis
Office Phone: 535-7288
Email: hillis@plu.edu
Office Hours: M 11-12, TR after class, W 10-1,

Required Texts:

Phillips, C. (2004). Six questions of Socrates. NY: W.W. Norton and Co. (if unavailable at bookstore, purchase through Amazon.com)

Additional readings available in the bookstore as a course reader

Course Description: The Beatles once wrote, “All you need is love.” A splendid thought, most of us would agree. In a world of hate and jealousy, racism and bigotry, the emphasis on such an untroubled dictum would appear to be the right course of action. However, as G.K. Chesterton, the noted Catholic apologist once wrote, “The modern world is full of the old Christian virtues gone mad. The virtues have gone mad because they have been isolated from each other and are wandering alone.” This Writing 101 course will explore the nature of virtue and how those virtues can readily turn to vice.

Catalog Description: These seminars focus on writing, thinking, speaking, and reading. They involve writing as a way of thinking, of learning, and of discovering and ordering ideas. Taught by faculty from the university’s various departments and schools, these seminars are organized around topics that engage students and faculty in dialogue and provide the opportunity to examine issues from a variety of perspectives.

Instructor Background: I’m delighted to be teaching you this fall. My academic appointment at PLU is in the School of Education and Movement Studies where I currently serve as the Associate Dean and Chair of the Department of Instructional Development & Leadership. I was also trained to be a high school English teacher many years ago, so I’m always excited to return to the teaching of writing.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance/participation/preparation – There is an expectation that you will attend all class sessions and be prepared to discuss the readings. Since this course is set-up as a seminar, it is critical that you are here to contribute to how we understand the issues discussed in class. Please let me know if you are unable to attend a session.
2. Paper #1 – 4-5 page paper analyzing a popular media depiction of love/possessiveness

3. Paper #2 – 2-3 page letter on faith/blindness.
4. Paper #3 – 4-5 page paper utilizing conversation, dialogue, interviews, reminiscences, etc. to explore courage/recklessness
5. Paper #4 – 4-5 page paper analyzing the virtue/vice of justice/no mercy or compassion/codependency
6. Paper #5 – 10-15 page paper analyzing one of the virtues/vices discussed throughout the semester

Course Grade Determination:

As Gene Fowler once said, “Writing is easy. All you do is stare at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead.” Obviously, writing is not easy and no matter how talented a writer you might currently be, there is always room for improving something that you have written. Consequently, I focus on writing as a process and will try and facilitate the development of your writing as much as possible. In addition to in-class writing days where you will receive both peer and professor feedback, I will also look at papers at other times if you desire further input into your writing. However, please don’t assume that you can hand a draft to me and get it back within a day. Please start your writing early and work on it throughout the time frame given.

You are expected to turn in all work on time and late papers will receive a 5% deduction. Additionally, all papers must be completed with a high degree of professionalism (typed, double-spaced). Please carefully proof your work. Work that has numerous grammatical and/or spelling errors will be returned to you and you will receive a 10% deduction.

I will accept resubmissions if your grade falls below a “B.” However, the maximum grade that you can receive on a resubmission is a “B.” Grading criteria will be handed out in class and it is important for you to review the standards for your papers.

Assignment	Points
• Attendance and participation	10
• Paper #1	15
• Paper #2	10
• Paper #3	15
• Paper #4	15
• Paper #5	35

Grading Scale

94-100%	= A
90-94%	= A-
87-89%	= B+
84-86%	= B
80-83%	= B-
77-79%	= C+

74-76%	= C
70-73%	= C-
60-69%	= D
0-59%	= E

Assignment Descriptions:

1. Paper #1 – In a 4-5 page paper, analyze a popular media depiction of love/possessiveness. The media you choose to analyze is up to you – it can be film, television, magazines, literature, etc. The focus of your paper should be clear and manageable (i.e., don't try to write about love generally, but rather in a specific context related to your selected media). For example, you could analyze the movie "Click" and argue how Adam Sandler comes to a deeper understanding of love through his attempt to avoid the unpleasantness of life. Again, be careful to stay focused on the virtue/vice and what you have learned about these issues through the readings, the class discussions, and the media selection. You are expected to reference both the readings and the class discussion throughout your paper. **DUE – October 2**
2. Paper #2 – In a 4-5 page paper, compose a paper utilizing conversation, dialogue, interviews, reminiscences, etc. to explore what you think courage/recklessness means. The focus of this paper is to clarify the terms and to explore how other people view it. Again, you are expected to reference both the readings and the class discussion throughout your paper. Use the Phillips book as a guide to how this paper should look. **DUE – October 23**
3. Paper #3 – In a 2-3 page letter, I want you to direct your thoughts on faith/blindness to someone who you think would appreciate the discussion. The focus of the letter is to convey your thinking and feelings about this topic and how that might be important to this person. Although you do not have to directly reference the text and discussions, I do expect to see connections between these sources of information and what you ultimately write. **DUE – November 6**
4. Paper #4 – In a 4-5 page paper, analyze either the virtue/vice of justice/no mercy or compassion/codependency. As with the other papers, keep your topic focused and utilize the readings, class discussions, and other supporting material to help guide your thinking. **DUE – December 2**
5. Paper #5 – In a 10-15 page paper, select one of the topics that we have discussed through the term. Your task is to write about this virtue/vice (or a combination, if you choose) focusing on how your thinking has changed through the term. This paper could be a rewrite of a previous paper (obviously, you would need to extend it substantially) or you could work on a new topic. **DUE – December 15**

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Week 1

Topic: Overview of the Course

Tuesday, September 9

Introductions/Building a writing community

Readings for the following class:

- #1 -- Adler, M.J. (1952). Virtue and vice. In The Great Synopticon (pp. 975-983). Chicago, IL: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.
- #2 -- Lewis, C.S. (1977). Virtue. In The Joyful Christian (p. 124). NY: Macmillan Publishing Co.

Thursday, September 11

Seminar discussion on “What is a virtue?” and the assigned readings.

Readings for the following class:

- #3 -- Maugham, W.S. (1952). Virtue. In The Complete Short Stories of W. Somerset Maugham (pp. 705-739). Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc.
- Phillips, C. (2004). What is virtue? In Six Questions of Socrates (pp. 9-56). NY: W.W. Norton and Company.

Week 2

Topic: Virtues and Charity/Possessiveness

Tuesday, September 16

Continued seminar discussion on “What is a virtue?” and the assigned readings.

Readings for the following class:

- #4 -- Buechner, F. (1973). Love. In Wishful Thinking (pp. 53-54). NY: Harper and Row Publishers.
- #5 -- Selected poems

Thursday, September 18

Seminar discussion on love and the assigned readings

Assignment for the following class:

Preparation for Paper #1 – For the next two class periods, we will be focusing on popular conceptions of love in our culture. While we won’t have time for everybody to present, I would like to have everyone prepared to discuss their initial ideas about how love is being defined in a particular form of media.

Reading for the following class:

- #6 -- Lewis, C.S. (1952). The great divorce (pp. 90-107). NY: The Macmillan Company

Week 3

Topic: Charity/Possessiveness

Tuesday, September 23

Discussion of student ideas

Seminar discussion on the reading

Writing Notes -- Introductions

Reading for the following class

- #7 -- Op-Ed from Bob Herbert “Where is outrage over treatment of girls?”
& article by Lindsey Hunter on “Why ‘promiscuous’ could lead to
XXX”

Thursday, September 25
Seminar discussion on the reading
Media analysis example
Assignment for the following class:

Draft of Paper #1

Week 4

Topic: Courage/ Recklessness

Tuesday, September 30

In-class writing session

Readings for following class:

Phillips, C. (2004). What is courage? In Six Questions of Socrates (pp. 205-240). NY: W.W. Norton and Company.

#8 -- Plato. The simile of the cave from The Republic

#9-- Paumgarten, N. (2005). Dangerous game. *The New Yorker*.

#10 -- Frost , R. “The Road Not Taken”

Thursday, October 2

Seminar discussion on readings

Paper #1 DUE

Reading for the following class:

#11 -- Buechner, F. (1973). Doubt & Faith. In Wishful Thinking (pp. 20 & 24-26). NY: Harper and Row Publishers.

Week 5

Topic: Faith/Blindness

Tuesday, October 7

Readings for the following class:

#12 -- Kuo, D. (2006). Why a Christian in the White House felt betrayed.
Excerpt from *Time Magazine*.

#13 -- Kondracke, M. (2004). Democrats should get themselves to church.
Editorial in the *Tacoma News Tribune*

Thursday, October 9

Seminar discussion on faith/blindness

Reading for the following class:

Phillips, C. (2004). What is piety? In Six Questions of Socrates (pp. 241-284). NY: W.W. Norton and Company.

#14 -- Armour, E. (2005). Christian ‘family values’ have changed throughout history. Sojourners Online.

Week 6

Topic: Faith/blindness

Tuesday, October 14

Seminar discussion on the readings

Assignment for the following class:

Draft of Paper #2

Thursday, October 16

Individual writing conferences scheduled through the week

Reading for following class:

#15 -- Russell, B. (1957). Why I am not a Christian. In Why I am not a Christian (p. 3-23). NY: Touchstone.

Week 7

Topic: Faith/blindness

Tuesday, October 21

Seminar discussion on the readings

Reading for following class:

#16 -- Chesterton, G.K. (1936). The suicide of thought. In Orthodoxy (pp. 52-80). NY: Dodd, Mead, & Company.

Thursday, October 23

Seminar discussion on the readings

Movie clips from The Apostle, Leap of Faith, "Homer the Heretic" or others that you may want to recommend

Paper #2 DUE

Readings for following class:

Phillips, C. (2004). What is justice? In Six Questions of Socrates (pp. 99-160). NY: W.W. Norton and Company.

#17 -- King, M.L., Jr. (1963/1986). Letter from a Birmingham jail. In A Testament to Hope (pp. 289-302). San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.

Week 8

Topic: Justice/No mercy

Tuesday, October 28

Seminar discussion on the readings.

Readings for following class:

#18 -- Poems by Langston Hughes

#19 -- Pitts, L. (2004). GOP's 'morality pitch riles this Christian. In Tacoma News Tribune.

Thursday, October 30

Seminar discussion on the readings.

Malcolm X speech

Readings for following class:

#20 -- Bono's remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast

#21 -- Lyrics to "Bullet the Blue Sky" by U2

Assignment for the following class:

Draft of Paper #3

Week 9

Topic: Justice/No mercy

Tuesday, November 4

Seminar discussion on the readings

In-class writing session

Reading for following class:

#22 -- Bruck, C. (2006). Millions for millions. *The New Yorker*.

Thursday, November 6

Seminar discussion on the reading

Paper #3 DUE

Reading for following class:

#23 -- O'Connor, F. (1965). The lame shall enter first. In Everything that Rises Must Converge (pp. 167-212). NY: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux.

Week 10

Topic: Compassion/Codependency

Tuesday, November 11

Seminar discussion on the reading

Reading for following class:

#24 -- Camus, A. (1961). The unbeliever and Christians. In Resistance, Rebellion, and Death (pp. 69-74). NY: Knopf.

Thursday, November 13

Seminar discussion on readings

Readings for following class:

TBD

Week 11

Topic: Compassion/Codependency & Moderation/Miserliness

Tuesday, November 18

Seminar discussion on the readings

Readings for following class:

#25 -- Brooks, D. (2005). Low-rise jeans and tank tops hide reality. Editorial in The News Tribune.

Phillips, C. (2004). What is moderation? In Six Questions of Socrates (pp. 57-98). NY: W.W. Norton and Company.

Thursday, November 20

Individual writing conferences scheduled through the week

Week 12

Topic: Moderation/Miserliness

Tuesday, November 25

Seminar discussion on readings

Readings for following class:

#26 -- Specter, M. (2006). The last drop. *The New Yorker*.

#27 -- Muggeridge, M. (1971). Mother Teresa speaks. In Something Beautiful for God (pp. 83-121). NY: Harper Row

Thursday, November 27

No Class -- Thanksgiving

Week 13

Topic: Moderation/Miserliness & Hope/Naïveté

Tuesday, December 2

Seminar discussion on readings

Paper #4 DUE

Discussion on papers

Readings for following class:

#28 -- McCall, N. (1997). On redemption. In What's Going On (pp. 189-205). NY: Random House

#29 -- Lewis, C.S. (1952). The great divorce (pp. 47-52). NY: The Macmillan Company

#30 -- Wiesel, E. (1990). Are we afraid of peace? In From the Kingdom of Memory (pp. 225-229). NY: Summit Books.

Thursday, December 4

Seminar discussion on the readings

Week 14

Topic: Hope/ Naïveté

Tuesday, December 9

Individual writing conferences scheduled through the week if needed

Reading for following class:

Phillips, C. (2004). Is excellence still possible? In Six Questions of Socrates (pp. 285-304). NY: W.W. Norton and Company.

Thursday, December 11

In class celebration day

Finals Week

Monday, December 15
Final Paper Due