

VANISHED PEOPLES AND LOST CIVILIZATIONS: a First Year Writing Seminar

1:45 – 3:30 MW
Admin 211B
Fall 2008

Dr. Dave Huelsbeck
office: X-142 (inside X-140)
hours: MW 11-12, TTh 2-3
Or by appointment
huelsbdr@plu.edu, 535-7196

Introduction: Was the earth visited by ancient astronauts? Did the Egyptians use mysterious technologies to build the pyramids? Is Sasquatch a real creature? These are a few of the questions that are examined by a wide range of public media. Pop archaeology is concerned with many of the same issues as academic archaeology: humans and their culture, human origins, and the development and understanding of human behavior. However pop archaeology often relies on methods, theories and assumptions that differ dramatically from academic archaeology. We will begin by learning to recognize the methods of science and pseudoscience and will develop a framework/method to evaluate competing claims. Then, we will use that methodology to explore, discuss and write about “mysteries” of the human past.

This course is a First Year Writing Seminar. While we learn about interesting aspects of the human past, our “Writing” goal is to help you develop skill and confidence in your ability as a writer. Effective writing is an essential life skill. It will help you to frame relevant questions, to research answers to questions, and to communicate that information with others. One of the most important skills for an effective writer is to be able to critically read, edit, and revise your own writing. Towards that end, we will spend time in class collaboratively editing classmates papers. You will use feedback from classmates and from the professor to revise several writing projects. In addition to helping classmates learn to edit and revise, our “Seminar” goal for the course is to develop a sense of shared intellectual endeavor by helping each other develop ideas, find sources, evaluate sources and extract useful information.

Text: *Frauds, Myths, and Mysteries: Science and Pseudoscience in Archaeology*, sixth edition, by Kenneth L. Feder, and an assortment of articles and websites listed in the daily class schedule.

Assignments: There will be four major writing assignments. Each will be submitted in draft and in revised, polished form. In addition there will be weekly writing and in-class editing assignments.

Attendance: You can not participate in a seminar if you are not in class. Missing class, especially on days when in-class editing is scheduled, will have a negative affect on your grade. If you must miss class, contact me, preferably before the class. If you wish to have an absence excused, be prepared to submit evidence of the reason for the absence (doctor’s note, etc.).

Course Grade:

“Who Done It? paper – 50 points
Annotated bibliography – 50 points
Web site critique – 75 points
10 page research paper – 125 points
class participation – 100 points

Your final grade will be based on the number of points earned out of the maximum of 400.

Also, up to a maximum of 15 points of extra credit (enough to move your grade up by one step) may be earned by identifying articles and/or websites suitable for use in next year’s course. Turn in an annotated bibliography citation (see below) and a short paragraph describing why you think other students would enjoy/benefit from examining the source. Each submission is worth a maximum of 4 points based on the quality of the source and the quality of the written submission.

The polished writing assignments:

1). “Who Done It?” Who do you think perpetrated the Piltdown Hoax? Why that individual and not one of the other suspects? Audience: general public. Purpose: convince the reader you are correct. If you supplement the information in the text, be sure to cite the source of the information. Length: approximately 3-5 pages.

Save a clean copy of the first draft, and copies of drafts with comments. Turn in all of the drafts along with the final polished version of the paper. Response to feedback and improvement are part of your grade. See Writing Criteria on the last page and classroom discussion for additional information on how writing projects will be evaluated.

September 29 first draft due, October 8 final version due. 50 points

2). Annotated Bibliography. This is a preliminary bibliography for your research paper (note that your paper topic and a paragraph describing are due October 6). For each source, list the source in proper bibliographic format (use the text as a model). Summarize the important information in the source. Identify the “authority” of the author (why should you believe or disbelieve the author?). Is this a primary or secondary source? (Is the information original research by the author or a synthesis of research done by other people?)

You may include sources here that you decide not to use in your paper. You may use sources in the final paper that are not listed here. (The bibliography exercise is early in the semester and most members of the class will need to add sources as your research paper develops over the course of the semester. You must include academic sources in your paper (journal articles, articles in edited volumes, books) in addition to web sites (if

you use web sites at all – you do not need to use any web sites). Academic sources undergo some kind of peer review by academic experts before publication. Web sites, even those of respected academics, rarely undergo such review. Audience: the instructor. Purpose: demonstrate to yourself and to me that you will be able to write a paper on your selected topic. Include first draft and drafts with comments along with the final polished version.

October 8 first draft due, October 22 final version due. 50 points.

3). Critique a web site. Critically evaluate a web site of your choice (I'd select one related to your research paper.) Identify the web site. Summarize the information presented, whether the information is primary or secondary, the audience the site is directed at, the authority of the author, and the perspective of the author (science, pseudoscience, etc.). Present evidence to support your conclusions.

October 29 first draft due. November 12 polished version due. 75 points.

4). Research paper. Select a topic related to the course and write a 10 page research paper. (Page length is approximate and does not include figures or references cited. The references cited section should include only the citation; do not include the annotations from assignment 2.)

On October 6 turn in a paper topic and a paragraph describing your planned treatment of the topic. This will be worth up to 10 points.

On October 8 turn in the first draft of the annotated bibliography for the paper. The final draft of the annotated bibliography is worth up to 50 points and is due on October 22. See assignment 2, above.

On November 19 the first draft of the paper is due. The first draft is worth up to 10 points. If the draft is incomplete, or very rough, it will be worth less than 10 points.

The final version of the research paper is due on December 16 by 3 pm (the end of our scheduled final exam period). This is worth up to 105 points, making the paper worth a total of 125 points.

Class Participation: The weekly writing assignments and in-class editing assignments will be graded check minus, check, check plus (inadequate, good, excellent or lame, helpful, very helpful). This will make up the quantitative portion of your participation grade. An average of “check” will earn an 85% (a ‘B’). This grade will be raised or lowered depending on the instructor’s qualitative evaluation of classroom participation in the seminar. Thoughtful, respectful, effective contributions (questions, comments, suggestions, etc.) will be rewarded. A total of 100 points possible.

Weekly writing assignment: Write a short (2 – 3 page long in September/October, 3 – 5 page long in November/December, double spaced, 12 point font) reaction to the readings. You may respond to one or more of the following questions, or select your own focus.

- What was the reading about? What are the most important points? (the author's perspective)
 - What do you think are the most interesting issues raised in the reading? Why are they interesting? (your intellectual perspective)
 - What is your reaction to the reading and why? (your emotional perspective)
 - What information can you add to that presented in the reading (be sure to identify the source of the information).
 - Write a response to the critical thinking exercise at the end of the chapter.
- Bring 2 copies of your assignment to class on the specified day. You will turn in one clean copy and exchange one copy with a classmate for the in-class editing exercise.

Weekly editing exercise: Exchange a copy of your weekly writing exercise with a classmate. Write constructive comments on the paper. Discuss the comments with your partner. Write a paragraph summarizing the strong points and areas for improvement.

Note – except for the in class writing exercises, assignments must be turned in on paper; e-mail attachments normally will not be accepted.

Academic Integrity – Students who are interested in the same research paper topic, may work together to collect information. Each student **MUST** write their own paper. Copying what someone else has written and submitting it as your own is plagiarism. Paraphrasing material or ideas of others without citation is plagiarism. Plagiarism is cheating and will result in failure. This applies to material written by classmates or available on the web. Copying or paraphrasing what someone else has written and including a citation is not cheating. Stringing together a series of quotes or paraphrases with citations is not cheating, but it also is not writing a research paper. When in doubt – ask about it

Writing Center – The writing center, on the second floor of the library exists to help students with writing projects (#8709). I encourage you to use this service. Include their feedback on your drafts along with other drafts and feedback when you turn in final polished versions of assignments. (The tutors are instructed not to give you written feedback, so you will need to summarize their suggestions in order to include them.)

Special Needs – If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. If you have any questions concerning the services available for special needs at PLU, call Ruth Tweeten in the Services for Students office at extension 7206.

CLASS SCHEDULE

September

- 8 -course overview
-interview a classmate, write an introductory paragraph, share with class
- 10 -in class writing – “what I hope to learn in this course” – write a paragraph
-in class edit – exchange, edit, discuss the feedback
-class discuss the process
(this is a practice session for what will be a regular part of class)
-begin discussing chapters 1 and 2 in the text
-view some of the Chariots of the Gods video
- 15 -lecture – marks of pseudoscience
-discuss: discuss chapters 1, 2, 8 and the lecture, identifying characteristics of science and pseudoscience
-video – Nova: Ancient Astronauts?
- 17 -rough draft of weekly writing chapters 1, 2, and 8 (Science, pseudoscience and “ancient astronauts.”
-weekly editing rough draft of chapters 1, 2, and 8
-discuss analytical methodology, apply to videos
-discuss reserve reading *Memoirs of a True Believer* and her web site.
- 22 -weekly writing Science, pseudoscience, etc.
-weekly edit
-preliminary discussion chapter 3, Cardiff Giant and reserve reading *The Iceman Reconsidered*.
- 24 turn in weekly writing chapter 3 and *Iceman*, weekly editing of same
preliminary discuss chapter 4, Piltdown and info from the Piltdown website listed at the end of the chapter
Who Done It paper assigned
- 29 -first draft of *Who Done It?* due
-in class edit *Who Done It?* first draft
-preliminary discuss chapter 5:102-120, *Peopling of the Americas* and *The North Atlantic Ice-Edge Corridor*, by Bruce Bradley and Dennis Stanford. *World Archaeology* 36(4):459-478 (available through JSTOR)

October

- 1 -weekly writing/editing Peopling of the Americas
-discuss grading rubric, plagiarism
-discuss research paper topic
-discuss long distance contact, Chapter 5:120-169 and reserve reading Kehoe, Invention versus Diffusion
- 6 weekly write/edit Long distance contact
turn in paper topic assignment, in class edit paper topic
discuss feedback on Who Done It? paper
discuss Annotated Bibliography assignment
- 8 polished draft Who Done It? due
first draft Annotated Bibliography due, in class edit the draft
schedule conference with instructor
discuss research paper topics
- 13, 15 class canceled, schedule personal conference with instructor
- 20 preliminary discussion reserve reading The Search for Bigfoot and compare/contrast www.bfro.net and www.csicop.org/si/2002-3/bigfoot.html
discuss Web Site assignment
discuss annotated bibliography assignment
- 22 polished draft Annotated Bibliography due
weekly writing/editing Bigfoot
discuss web sites being considered for the Web Site assignment
- 27 preliminary discussion North American Prehistory, chapter 6 and reserve reading "A Makah Village in 1491: Ozette"
discuss web site paper, research paper
- 29 weekly writing/editing North American Prehistory
first draft Web Site assignment due, in class edit Web Site assignment

November

- 3 preliminary discuss Atlantis and Troy, chapter 7 and reserve reading "Heinrich Schliemann and Troy"
- 5 weekly writing/editing Atlantis and Troy
discuss progress on research paper, website paper
- 10 preliminary discuss Egypt chapter 9, and the "guardians" and the "catchpenny"
websites listed in the text
discuss Web Site assignment feedback

- 12 polished draft Web Site assignment due
weekly writing/editing Egypt
share progress/problems/issues Research Paper
- 17 discuss archaeoastronomy and Stonehenge text:352-356 and reserve reading
“Stonehenge Chronicles”
research paper issues?
- 19 weekly writing/editing archaeoastronomy
first draft Research Paper due, in class edit Research Paper
schedule personal conference with instructor

November 24, December 1 class canceled for personal conferences with instructor

Happy Thanksgiving!

December

- 3 -preliminary discuss archaeology and the study of religion and gender - chapter
11, Cave paintings text:341-346, and reserve reading New Women of the Ice Age
-Research Paper issues?
- 8 weekly writing/editing religion and gender in the Pleistocene
Research Paper issues?
- 10 in class feedback on research paper
- 16 final exam” 1-3, polished draft of Research Paper due by 3 pm

The text covers a wide range of pop archaeology topics. Our in class discussions of the Web Site assignment and the Research Paper will address additional topics. If discussions of the text go more quickly than expected or if there is specific interest in topics not covered in the text, we can arrange to include them.

WRITING CRITERIA

Attributes of exceptional writing:

- Writing successfully isolates a task or frames a question for a specific audience.
- Writing effectively addresses the “so what” question.
- Outstanding conceptual clarity – even though concepts are usually quite complex.
- Sustained exploration of topic, task, or question which is fostered by a strong sense of structural organization.
- Demonstrates strong ability to choose, arrange and evaluate evidence and resources.
- Structural organization that fosters a sustained exploration of a question or thorough response to a task.
- Fluency with language – both stylistically and mechanically.
- Transitions serve a reader-friendly purpose.

Attributes of average writing:

- Clearly articulates a position or assertion.
- Writing is more reader-based (audience) than writer-based.
- Development of ideas relevant to position or assertion
- Much of the evidence and/or support for the ideas is directed or discerning.
- Demonstrates global (overall) and local (sentence to sentence) organization appropriate for the task.
- Variation in sentence structure and word choice.
- Standard use of grammar and mechanics.
- Maintains appropriate tone for the task.

Attributes of less than average writing:

- Representation of intellectual task may seem relatively simple.
- Focus is unstated, unstable, or unclear.
- Writing is more writer-based than reader-based.
- Ideas lack development or development is uneven.
- Use of terms is simplistic or key terms remain undefined.
- Other perspectives may overwhelm student’s voice.
- Evidence is indiscriminate, inadequate, or ineffective given the task at hand.
- Local and/or global organization is confusing or inadequate.
- Noticeable grammatical and mechanical errors.
- Inconsistent or inappropriate tone or register for the task at hand.

Adapted from the University of Michigan’s English Composition Board’s attributes of student writing, May 1996.