

## Sustainability Revisions for UNIV104: Reading and Writing at the College Level

UNIV104 is a one-credit companion to English 101 which aims to bolster students' critical reading and writing skills and prepare them for the level of scholarly work necessary in college and beyond. My first iteration of the course sought to challenge students with a diverse array of in-class reading assignments—including satirical news reports, *Chronicle* op-eds, and canonical short stories. Major assignments beyond active participation in class discussion included a choice of short paper assignments responding to a particular class text, a workshop and revision of the same assignment, and a short oral presentation on key rhetorical concepts.

My proposed reboot for the Fall maintains much of this basic structure but organizes course readings and assignments around central questions of food ethics and sustainability. In addition to the desired sharpening of students' critical reading and writing abilities, the course now seeks to introduce them to a panorama of today's pressing food issues, asking them not only to grow and reflect on themselves as scholars and writers, but as eaters, too.

Our work begins with a short writing diagnostic exercise, where students describe their writing process, goals, strengths, and weaknesses. We will also prepare and share short personal narratives about food—likes and dislikes, memorable meals, dietary philosophies, etc. The idea is to begin with reflection and foster an open classroom environment. These personal reflections will then transition toward local issues. We'll discuss the problems and opportunities presented by life on and around campus, and, since students will have only just arrived for their first semester of college, an overview of the campus gardens, farmers' market, and other related curiosities will provide some potentially valuable practical information.

Readings begin in earnest with a discussion of audience, food celebrity, and review ethics prompted by Pete Wells' *NYT* review of Guy's American Kitchen. In subsequent meetings, we will dig into some of the highlights from the Chesapeake Project reading day, including articles by Michael Pollan and Barbara Kingsolver. Later, we'll investigate the rhetorical strategies and purpose of satire in several food-related articles from *The Onion*, inquire into the history of the Slow Food movement and its tangled connection to the gourmet megamart Eataly, and compare food industry advertisements from different cultural contexts. In addition to ads, clips from recent food documentaries will be analyzed in an effort to examine the ways in which medium affects rhetorical tactics in food discourse.

An in-class essay prompting students to rhetorically analyze a short food-centric text is the first of the major written components of the class. This essay will then serve as the springboard for workshopping and revising, culminating in a substantive revision due at the end of the course. In addition, group projects delving deeper into key concepts introduced in class round out the semester's assignments. Students will be assessed both on effort and growth as writers throughout the semester and on their ability to engage in meaningful discussion of food issues.