

## The Common Core of Revisions

Although individual sections of Revisions may vary to some extent in theme or approach, all sections are tied together by a set of unifying principles called The Common Core of Revisions. These principles are:

- 1) All classes should be structured around a linked series of writing assignments which culminates in a substantial research-based essay that is persuasive in intent and grounded in rhetorical analysis and critical reasoning. Three major writing assignments is a reasonable goal for the semester, along with additional writing-for-learning exercises and other shorter pieces of writing.
- 2) All classes should offer both instruction and practice in the process of composing, with particular emphasis on revising (teacher-student conferences, multiple drafts, peer response groups, peer editing). Instructors should make clear the importance of mechanical correctness and careful proofreading, but these should generally be presented as very late or terminal stages in the composing process.
- 3) All classes should require some kind of writing which is primarily intended to help students learn and/or shape their formal writing assignments and their required readings. Journals, free-writes, and informal response papers are a few ways among many others to address this requirement.
- 4) All classes should require a variety of visual and oral strategies in support of the writing and revising that constitutes the spine of the course.
- 5) All classes should offer instruction in the importance of audience analysis, and all major assignments should stipulate a target audience and require students to demonstrate their ability to adjust their communication to the needs of that target audience.
- 6) All classes should require students to work regularly in groups (for the purposes of discussing reading and writing assignments or working on presentations or as part of peer critique and editing). Such group work recognizes the social and collaborative nature of much of how and what we learn.
- 7) All classes should require a major group presentation, probably at the end of the term. For those instructors using a thematic approach, one possibility is a capstone presentation that requires students within a group to use written,

oral, and visual strategies in order to demonstrate the common ground their individual essays share.

8) All classes should require students to read widely in the Williams and George/Trimbur texts (or an approved alternate reader) as well as in other sources of the instructor's choosing as part of 1) the ongoing learning in the class about written, visual, and oral modes of communication, and 2) the research process for major assignments. Class and/or group discussion of selected readings should be a fairly regular feature of in-class dialogue.

9) For purposes of institutional assessment, all GTIs must require students to keep a portfolio of their work structured around an established set of guidelines (see separate document). At term's end these portfolios will be collected. The Director of Writing Programs will select a random sample of these portfolios to be used for assessment in keeping with the requirements of the University General Education Council. GTIs may use these required portfolios to assist them in determining student grades, or they may require a more detailed portfolio for that purpose.

10) Each instructor should establish a process of evaluating individual assignments as well as overall course performance consistent with his/her philosophical/pedagogical perspective. The evaluation criteria should be made clear to students at appropriate points throughout the semester.