Students,

This course is all about making connections. How will we relate to each other? How will you connect with those at your volunteer site? How will you link our readings and discussions with your writing and your service experience? How willing are you to confer with me to discuss your writing? How well can you fight the inclination to keep a writing assignment at arm’s length and instead make it really matter for you? We’ll see.

I have five goals for the course:

1. to improve your ability to write rhetorically strong arguments;
2. to develop your ability to write critical reflections;
3. to promote critical thinking about issues related to community and social justice, with particular emphasis on criminal justice;
4. to familiarize you with the ideas of Wendell Berry;
5. to foster a spirit of genuine community in this classroom.

As we move through the semester together, I hope this becomes a class that changes you in a significant way. Know that the quality of your investment will determine the quality of your experience.

Writing

Ours is mainly a course in rhetoric, the art of persuasion. What rhetorical choices must you make to communicate most effectively with your target audience, given your purpose? We’ll work to properly answer that question throughout the semester. Additionally, this course challenges you to critically articulate the learning (personal, civic, and/or academic) you derived from your class and service experiences. The major writing assignments for this course are the personal narrative, the rhetorical analysis, three different arguments, and a critical reflection. Submit a revision of the rhetorical analysis and of each argument one week after you get the original draft back from me. Further, I require that you submit via email a one-paragraph response to your service experience each week you serve. I recommend that you do so the day after your service visit. Finally, from time to time, I might ask for a brief written response to a film or written piece I share in class.
Reading
Course readings explore a variety of issues, most related to community and criminal justice. What does the pursuit of the “common good” require of us? What are our obligations to those “strangers at our gates”?

You’ll need the following books for the course:
* Course Packet: “Bridging the Gap…” (available 8/21/17 in 131 Decio Hall, 8:30-4:30)
* Between the World and Me. Ta-Nehisi Coates (Bookstore or Amazon)
* They Say I Say. Graff and Birkenstein. 2006 or latest edition (Bookstore or Amazon)
* It All Turns on Affection. Wendell Berry. (Bookstore or Amazon)

Film
Juvies

Service Venues
Dismas House (Monday or Thursday evenings)
Imani Unidad: Peer to Peer Support (Colfax Cultural Arts Center) (Wednesday evenings)
DePaul Academy, R.O.P. (Sunday afternoons)

Course Structure
We meet twice a week in seminar format. We’ll spend most of our time in class laying the foundation for writing assignments, discussing assigned readings, or workshopping essays.

Participation
We have only twenty-nine days to work together in this course, so let’s make the best of the time we have. I expect you to be here every day, on time, fully prepared, ready and willing to engage in whatever the task at hand. Your active participation is crucial to the success of this class. I trust you to invest yourself in reading and discussion. An added word about punctuality and attendance: It matters to me that you come to class on time every day. Please spare me the displeasure of having to dock you for being repeatedly late or absent. N.B. - If you miss three classes, you drop one full grade. If you miss five classes, you fail the course. If you’re late for class more than three times, I will lower your participation grade.

Service
Honor your commitment to those whom you are serving. Show up each time on time. Care.

Theme
As the title “Bridging the Gap” suggests, the theme for the course is community building. I’m counting on you to build community both within and without the classroom, to be responsible for each other and for those community members whom you serve. I argue that we should work to “muffle the voices that affirm individualism” (Kathy Weigert) and take on the responsibility – derived from the privilege that most of us enjoy – to care for those less fortunate than we are.

In “Learning in Community” Parker Palmer defines truth as “an eternal conversation about things that matter, conducted with passion and discipline.” I look forward to engaging in that conversation with you, and I hope that our efforts to bridge the various gaps that divide us, reflect the practice of the community of truth, the model of community in education that he claims best enhances and advances the educational mission of knowing, teaching, and learning.
Grades

Commit yourself to writing improvement, to authentic class participation, and to service. Engage and you’ll do well in here. Don’t and you won’t.

This course emphasizes process, so I’ll defer final grades for your papers until I receive your portfolio at the semester’s end. (If you want to know your provisional grade for any particular paper, come to office hours, we’ll talk about the piece, and I’ll let you know what the provisional grade is.)

The University requires that all teachers of first-year students give mid-semester grades. The mid-semester grade that I give you will reflect my best judgment of the overall quality of your performance in my class after eight weeks of observation. I’ll meet with each of you to discuss that grade. However, you should know and your parents should know that neither a low nor a high grade at the midway mark necessarily guarantees a similar grade at the end of the term.

Here’s how I’ll determine your final grade:

- Writing assignments (and final speech) 60%
- Engagement/Participation 40%

See University descriptions of undergraduate grades in the course packet.

Plagiarism  See the course packet for complete definition. Avoid plagiarism at all costs.

Other Honor Code Matters

First, professors assume that any paper submitted by a student for any class was prepared by the student for that specific class. You may not turn in a single paper for two or more different classes/courses unless each professor involved has authorized you to do so in advance. Furthermore, you may not submit for credit a paper that has been used to fulfill the requirements of another course at this or any other school (including high school) without obtaining permission of the current professor in advance. Finally, bogus documentation (claiming information is drawn from a source on a given page when it is not, in fact, drawn from that source or found on that given page) is an honor code violation.

Familiarize yourself with the Honor Code (http://nd.edu/~hnrcode/docs/handbook.htm) on the University’s website and observe its tenets in all written and oral work.

Disability Services

If you are a student with a disability and will need accommodations for this course, please register with Disability Services (http://www.nd.edu/~osd/). After you have discussed your accommodation needs with the Coordinator of Disability Services, please speak with me to finalize whatever arrangements might be necessary.

Keeping in Touch

Office: Nelson Mandela Room, 126 Geddes Hall, CSC (or patio outside, weather permitting)
Office Hours: 6-8 PM on Sundays, 1:30-3 PM on Thursdays, or by appointment
Email: ekelly1@nd.edu     Mailbox: WR Office, 300 O’Shaughnessy
Home phone: (574) 272-7982 (before 10 PM!)
Calendar

Here is a rough schedule for the semester. Know that I will revise this schedule to meet our needs as we move through the course. Keep this and all “updates” in a safe, accessible place.

As far as your papers are concerned, you must submit a cover sheet (see course packet for samples) with each draft of an argument you bring to a writing workshop. When you turn in your portfolio at the end of the semester, be sure to attach a cover sheet for each of the polished drafts of your papers. Include as well the previous draft of each polished draft. Don’t throw anything away!

**WEEK ONE**

**Orientation**

**T 8/22**
HW: Prepare They Say/I Say, Preface and Intro (pp. ix through 13). Write up sample (p. 9) using an issue from Edmundson’s “On the Uses…”

**Th 8/24**
HW: Study PN assignment. Measure student samples against criteria. Prepare McNeill’s “Displacement.”

**Sun. 8/27**
Mini-conferences in Geddes (7-10 minutes each), starting @ 6 PM.

**WEEK TWO**

**Personal Narrative**

**T 8/29**
Clean up Edmundson/Weil. Sm/lg group analysis of student sample PNs. Discuss “Displacement.”  
HW: Write personal narrative.

**Th 8/31**
Model Writing Workshop via “A Long Way to Go.” WW (groups of 3 or 4)  
**Commit to service venue via email this weekend.**

**Sun 9/3**
DePaul Academy R.O.P. orientation (PM time tbd)

**WEEK THREE**

**The Jefferson Lecture**

**T 9/5**
Pose questions regarding RA assignment. Connect Rogers and Berry.  
HW: Re-read the Jeff. Lec. w/ an eye toward RA. “Story of Stuff”?

**W 9/6**
First meeting at Imani Unidad (5:30 – 8 PM, tentative)

**Th 9/7**
Continue discussion of Berry. HW: study/critique Wolf sample RA.
WEEK FOUR  

**Rhetorical Analysis**

**T**  9/12  
Sm/lg group discussion of Wolf: What’s working? What’s not? 
Return to assignment and to Berry: sketch outline for RA of lecture.  
HW: RA (context, audience, evaluation)

**Th**  9/14  
WW: RAs (in pairs) Follow w/ group critique of one RA, time permitting.  
HW: study rebuttal assignment; prepare Coates’s *Between the World and Me* & Alexander’s “The New Jim Crow.” Identify in writing three issues in dispute from either piece and bring list to class on Tuesday.

WEEK FIVE  

**Matters of Race**

**T**  9/19  
Pose questions re. rebuttal assignment. What is critical thinking?  
Leslie Morgan visits: finding scholarly/popular sources on both sides of disputed issues.  
HW: Restudy Coates and Alexander.

**Th**  9/21  
Discuss Coates, Alexander.  
HW: Prepare *They Say…* (51-73) + rebuttal samples of Agarwal and Pine.

**Sun.**  9/24  
Dinner @ my home  5:30-7:30

WEEK SIX  

**Rebuttal Argument**

**T**  9/26  
Sm/lg group analysis and critique of student samples. Workshop in light of *They Say* principles. Extend discussion of Coates and Alexander.  
HW: Prepare Ward’s “A Cold Current.”

**Th**  9/28  
Discuss Ward, using “moment” model.  
HW: Write rebuttal argument.

WEEK SEVEN  

**Juvies**

**T**  10/3  
WW: Rebuttal – in threes or fours (be guided by handout).  
HW: Revise rebuttal argument for Thursday submission.

**Th**  10/5  
Submit rebuttal argument. View *Juvies*.  
HW: two-page response to film: To what extent does film achieve its purpose(s)? What’s going on rhetorically in the film?

WEEK EIGHT  

**Mid-semester Conferences**

**T**  10/10  
Submit response. Sm/lg group discussion of film. Connect w/ service.  
Sign up for Thursday Conferences
Mid-semester conferences: 11 – 12:30 and 1:15 – 3:15
HW: Prepare Gray’s “The Run-On Sentence.”

Fall Break
Enjoy.

WEEK NINE
Guest Visit

T 10/24
Discuss Gray/Ellis interview (“… Run-On…). Connect with service.

Th 10/26
Guest visit: formerly incarcerated man with wife
Lunch with our guests follows at the South Dining Hall.
HW: Write thank you notes to guests. Study Duffy’s “Guided Tour of Causal Argument”: measure student sample causal arguments against criteria set forth therein.

WEEK TEN
Causal Argument

T 10/31
Address questions regarding causal argument. Share critiques of samples.
HW: Write causal argument.

Th 11/2
WW: Causal argument (in threes, mix it up; connect with new partners)
HW: Revise causal argument for Tuesday submission. Prepare Hannon and DeFina (CP). Study narrative argument assignment.

WEEK ELEVEN
Effects of / Responses to Crime

T 11/7
Submit causal argument. Discuss Hannon and DeFina. Pose questions regarding narrative argument. View TED talk “Tale of Two Americas….”
HW: Prepare Davis (CP) and CoSA pieces (CP).

Th 11/9
Discuss Davis (“moment” model?) and CoSA.
HW: Prepare Gay’s “Some Thoughts on Mercy”(CP)

WEEK TWELVE
Narrative Argument

T 11/14
Critique Gay’s piece in light of narrative argument assignment.
Team up to prep for narrative argument.

Th 11/16
WW: Narrative argument (pairs) Submit to me following WW.
Pose questions regarding D.E.A.L. model and critical reflection assignment.
HW: Prepare Wirzba’s “Economy of Gratitude,” Emerson’s “Gifts,” and final speech assignment
WEEK THIRTEEN  Gratitude

T  11/21  Pose questions re. final speech and draw for order. Discuss Wirzba. Draw from “Gifts” for Gift X-C.

Th 11/23  Thanksgiving

WEEK FOURTEEN  Presentations

T  11/28  Revisions of narrative argument (optional).
WW: Critical Reflection. Submit CR to me following WW.
Preview final portfolio requirements. Clean up “E of G.”
HW: Prepare final speech.

Th 11/30  Speeches 1 thru 7

WEEK FIFTEEN  Closure

T  12/5  Speeches 8 thru 15
Questions regarding final portfolio?
HW: Prepare Distler. Ready portfolio and gift.

Th 12/7  Submit portfolios. Discuss Distler. Debrief service experience. Gift X-C.
Closure.

“Be the change you want to see in the world.”
--Gandhi