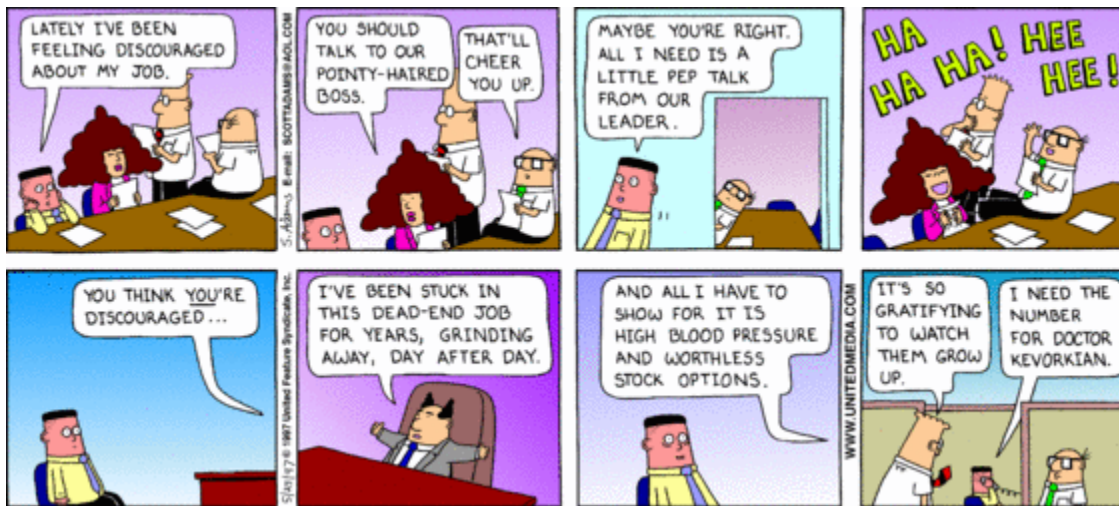


DISC 1313—May Term 2015

Prof. Diana C. Blackman

108 Clements Hall

Inquiry Seminar  
The Daily Grind: A Consideration of the World of Work



In this seminar course, we will read both classic and contemporary examinations, critiques, and representations of the workplace. Why is the working world a worthy subject to consider? It merits our time and attention because the workplace becomes, outside of our homes, the setting where we spend most of our time and energy. Finding meaning in work plays an enormous role in life satisfaction; and the conditions we meet with on the job impact us financially, psychologically, intellectually, and even physically—every day.

**Course outcomes**—By the end of this course:

- Students will continue to be able to meet the Student Learning Outcomes from Foundations of Written Discourse and from the Introduction to Academic Discourse (1311 and 1312)
- Students will be able to produce significant research texts, utilizing all aspects of the research process from rough draft to edited product
- Students will be able to research topics following the stated research protocols of the discipline or various disciplines represented in the course, including analysis, evaluation, synthesis, and/or integration of the students' own ideas

**Course texts:**

Caro, *North Country*\*

Chandor, *Margin Call*\*

Chaplin, *Modern Times*\* (clips)

Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed* (chapters; on Blackboard)

Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

Miller, *Death of a Salesman*

Stone, *Office Space*\*

Terkel, *Working*

Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (excerpt; on Bb)

Plus several short essays, articles, and poems that I will post on Blackboard

\*designates a film; these will be on reserve in library

**Grading:** Your grade will be based on four essays (one will be written in class but will count as a formal essay); an oral presentation; and such shorter writings as the professor deems appropriate. **Because this course is being offered in the May term, please be aware that you cannot afford to get behind; and part of the class requirement will be to have completed reading/viewing of certain texts before the term commences.**

**Grade break-down:**

Essay 1: 10%

Essay 2: 20%

Essay 3 (an in-class essay): 20%

Essay 4 (research project): 30%

Quizzes/Participation/Attendance/Presentation: 20%

**Course Drop Policy:** This is a required course, and it cannot be dropped. Students must pass the course with a grade of C- or better to complete their D & D requirements.

**Laptops:** The nature of this class is one of interactive discussion, not lecture and note-taking. To that end, focusing on your laptop screen, trying to get down every word uttered in class, will work detrimentally to the course's design and intention. At the same time, because of the compressed nature of the May term, it is my intention that we will work on short assignments and drafts in class, both independently and collaboratively, every day. **Please plan to bring your laptop, charged, to every class meeting. This is a course requirement.**

**Disability accommodations:** Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact the DASS office (214-768-4557) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements. (University Policy No. 2.4).

**Religious Observance:** Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and they should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence (University Policy No. 1.9).

**Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities:** Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity will be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of each student to make arrangements with the instructor for making up the work prior to any missed, scheduled examination or other missed assignment (University Undergraduate Catalog).

## **Course Reading and Assignment Schedule**

**\*\*\*Always bring texts and printed copies of readings with you to class.\*\*\***

### **Unit I Topic: Working for “the Man”**

Writing Concern: “Boot camp”-style review of 1312 material, including the thesis sentence, paragraphing, elements of good style, audience, and the rhetorical situation

TH, May 14: Introduction to the course; diagnostic writing; clips from *Modern Times* and discussion; *Communist Manifesto* (chapters 1 & 2)

FRI, May 15: Short writing on *CM*; Blake’s “The Chimney Sweeper”; discussion of *Office Space*; receive essay #1 topic and begin note-taking and drafting

M, May 18: View and discuss portions of Studs Terkel’s *Working*; draft review and time to work on drafts independently

TU, May 19: Student conferences in my office

### **Unit II Topic: The Glass Ceiling and Other Roadblocks in the Workplace**

Writing Concern: The big picture—organization, evidence, citation

W, May 20: Essay 1 full draft due; Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of One’s Own* (excerpt); Slaughter, “Yes, You Can.”; Miller, “An Elusive Jackpot”; short writing in class

TH, May 21: Library visit to gather research materials; discuss *North Country*; Perry, “Hiring Blacks: Does it Make a Difference?”; Berman, “Breaking the Pink Ceiling”; receive Essay #2 topic

FRI, May 22: *Death of a Salesman*, watch portions and discuss; Draft work on Essay #2 in class; out-of-class individual conferences

### **Unit III Topic: Modern Problems in Today’s Workplace**

Writing Concern: Honing Your Writing Craft

TU, May 26: Ehrenreich’s *Nickel and Dimed* (chapters); Johnson, “Seattle Approves \$15 Minimum Wage,” and Medina, “Hardship Makes a New Home in the Suburbs; research paper work—bring all materials

W, May 27: *Outliers* (excerpt); Swarns, “Degree? Check. Enthusiasm? Check. Job? Not So Fast”; research paper presentations

TH, May 28: *Margin Call* discussion; prep for in-class essay (Essay #3); research presentations

F, May 29: In-class essay; individual conferences on research paper draft  
MON, June 1: Optional conferences in my office re: research paper  
TU, June 2: Research projects due at my office by 5pm.

**\*\*\*Please note: You will note your initials next two 2 class meetings. What does this mean? This means that on those days, you will come to class “especially prepared” for that day’s discussion. You will come to class with 3 observations/questions/points of interest about the texts for that day. This will be part of your participation grade. Be creative! Have fun with this....**