



*Flaming June.* Lord Leighton

## THE SCIENCE OF HOW AND WHY WE SLEEP

SPRING 2007  
FYS 188-T

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FYS MENTOR: ALESSANDRA BANGE-HALL

SEMINAR: T/TH VALENTINE 117, 8:30 –  
10:00

COMMUNICATION SEMINAR: THURSDAYS,  
VALENTINE 117, 2;20 – 3:50

### SEMINAR DESCRIPTION:

...by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, -- 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, -- to sleep;--  
To sleep! perchance to dream: -- ay, there's the rub:  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come...

-- William Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act III, Scene I

What do we know about sleep? How do we know it? In this seminar, we will look at the many facets of this basic life-sustaining activity: the how, the why, the when, and the where. In fact, what we usually refer to as *sleep* is really *two separate states*, as different from each other as waking is from sleeping. The first state is usually referred to as “stages of sleep” and the second is called “rapid eye movement,” or “REM” sleep. We alternate between the two during what we commonly refer to as “sleep,” but both of these states are embedded in a cycle that takes a full 24 hours to manifest. Thus to understand sleep is to understand, to some degree, the cycle and the context of all states of consciousness: wake, staged sleep, and dream sleep.

Sleep states can be examined through many lenses. For the purposes of this course, we will examine sleep using three different perspectives or lenses. First, we will look at sleep through a physical/biological lens; next, through a psychological lens; and lastly, through a lens of culture. During each we will examine how sleep as a behavior and as a state changes in these domains as a function of developmental stage (sometimes synonymous with age) and of wellness/illness.

In this seminar, you will use what you learn about sleep as the foundation for a series of assignments that will focus on teaching you more about basic communication skills in writing and speaking. In addition to the readings which the entire class will take on, you will also explore some specific area of sleep and some question about sleep that you feel is intriguing, on which you will base a research paper. Your primary output for this course will be a series of tasks that will help you build the research paper, in addition to completing both a group presentation and a “solo” oral presentation. The goal of this course is primarily to take your communication skills, whether written or oral, to the next level, however skilled or unskilled you may be in these arenas.

### **FIRST-YEAR PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS 2006-07**

The First-Year Program (FYP) and First-Year Seminar (FYS) are the first steps in a four-year process of helping you meet the University’s Aims and Objectives and the broader goals of a liberal education. The faculty of the FYP and FYS see themselves as partners and mentors in the process of working with you to acquire the intellectual habits of mind, the writing, speaking, and research skills, and the ethical self-reflexiveness that are at the core of a liberal education. The FYP and FYS will ask you to consider new perspectives on the world and your place in it and will challenge you to confront many of the hidden assumptions you bring to college with you. We hope to open you to new ideas, help you to see the complexity of the way in which knowledge gets produced and used in society, and encourage you to see yourself as an active contributor in making the world a better place. The course topics, the texts you will read, listen to, and watch, the in-class and out-of-class activities you will engage in, and the writing, speaking, and research assignments you will work on are all designed to introduce you to the depth of critical thinking and the quality and complexity of the communication skills that will be expected of you at SLU and as a citizen of an increasingly diverse society.

First and foremost among our goals are those related to your abilities as a communicator. The work of the FYP and FYS asks you to design and deliver written, spoken, performed and/or visual texts that demonstrate basic skills in the relevant modes of communication and with an increasing degree of rhetorical sensitivity. Our focus on “rhetorical sensitivity” means that we expect you to cultivate the awareness that all of your communication, whether formal or informal, involves having to make choices about your messages, whether written, spoken, aural or visual. To become a good communicator, you need to recognize that the creation of meaningful and powerful written, spoken, performed, or visual texts involves both a creator and an audience, and that therefore the voice you adopt in your communication, the audience you imagine yourself communicating to, and the social and ethical context of the content, matter a great deal in creating such texts. One important way to become a better communicator is to become a better critical reader, viewer, and listener, which is why we will ask you to engage challenging materials in a variety of forms and work with you to learn how to interpret them.

Learning to read, listen, write, speak, do research and/or perform well also requires feedback. As faculty, we submit our work for feedback from colleagues all the time, and giving and receiving constructive feedback from both friends and strangers is central to collaborative work in any field and is itself a form of critical thinking and learning. We further recognize that this feedback process is not linear and that good communication requires that you continually rethink, restructure, and revise your work in order for it to be your best. This is why we require that your writing, speaking, and performance assignments be “projects” that include preparatory exercises and multiple drafts or rehearsals, all of which ask you to continue to reflect critically on the choices you have made in the texts that you produce. Furthermore, we see all of these forms of

communication as complementary and intertwined, which is why many of your assignments will ask you to integrate elements of the written, spoken, performed, and visual. Finally, developing good habits of critical inquiry and communication also means reflecting on the ethical dimensions of how your work represents that of others, thus one of our goals is to help you to understand both the nature of academic integrity and the social processes by which knowledge is produced and represented.

To ensure that the program is meeting its stated goals, all FYP and FYS syllabi are read by other faculty in the program to determine if they include a variety of assignments that foster the writing, speaking, research, and critical thinking goals of the program. All FYP and FYS courses have to be approved by faculty in the program before they are offered.

### **FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR RESEARCH PROJECT LEARNING GOALS**

With respect to research skills specifically, our learning goals for the spring are that students should:

- Be introduced to ways of conducting productive and imaginative inquiry and research in order to become a part of the various conversations surrounding issues.
- Learn to differentiate among the various ways that information is produced and presented, between popular and scholarly journals and books, between mainstream and alternative publications, between primary and secondary sources.
- Learn how to evaluate and synthesize information, whether gathered from traditional sources, such as books and journals, or from websites or electronic media.
- Begin to develop the skills of critical analysis in the interpretation and use of information gathered from any source.
- Be introduced to the ethical obligations that scholars have to both responsibly represent their sources and inform their readers of the sources of their information, as well as learning, and being held responsible for the proper use of, the conventions of scholarly citation and attribution.
- Present the results of your research through writing, speaking, visual elements, or other multimedia forms in such a way that you demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively using the rhetorical conventions of the chosen form.



*The Nightmare.* Henry Fuseli.

### **COURSE POLICIES:**

Attendance: Attendance is expected. As Woody Allen has said, “80% of life is just showing up.” Show up. After three unexcused absences, I will lower your course grade by .25. If you arrive late to class, it is your responsibility to check with me after class to be sure you were marked “present” for class.

If possible, please notify me that you will be absent for class. You do not need to tell me why. If you have an important reason for needing to re-schedule the due-date of an assignment, see me in person – do not request a changed deadline over e-mail.

Interruptions: Please turn cell phones off during class. If you arrive late to class, take the seat nearest the door, not your regular seat. If someone has begun an oral presentation, try to ascertain if it has just begun or if it’s about to end before you come in the class.

If someone’s presentation has just begun, sit in the seat nearest the door; if the presentation is in full swing, wait outside the door until the presentation is over or when you hear a pause or a transition occurring, then come in.

A special note about e-mail etiquette: We all use email quite a bit, and the temptation is to simply start to write. However, it’s much nicer to plow through dozens of e-mails a day if you use basic courtesy here. So, please start e-mails to me with a greeting or my name. Please include your name on all correspondence, at the end.

Preferred:

“Hello Pamela,

I wanted to be sure you had the same time for our appointment tomorrow as I did – 1:00, right?

Erica.”

NOT:

“I wanted to be sure we had the same time for our appointment tomorrow as I did – 1:00, right?”

This helps to keep my correspondence clear in my head when I am composing a response to you.

Late work: Late work will be penalized by 10% of the total points on the assignment for any portion of 24 hours late. Thus, something due at 5:30 p.m. or the time I leave for the day (the usual due date/time) will be penalized 10% of the points if I receive it *after* 5:30 p.m. or after I have left for the day, even if that is only an hour or two.

**REQUIRED BOOKS AND MATERIALS:**

Davis, J.P. (2004). The Rowman and Littlefield Guide to Writing with Sources. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.

Sleep Research Society. (2005). SRS Basics of Sleep Guide. Westchester, IL.

Hacker, D. (2004). A Pocket Style Manual. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

On e-reserve under "Psychology" on the Launders Science Library page:

Spielman, A.J., Yang, C.M and Blovinsky, P.B. Assessment techniques for insomnia. In: Principles and Practices of Sleep Medicine. W.B. Saunders Co.: New York: 2000: pp. 1239 – 1250.

In addition, I will post one or two other journal articles on the e-reserve site for this course, on the Madill/Launders Science Library Website. This site is password protected; I will give you the password as soon as I get it from the library.

**GRADING**

Reflections on readings 10%

Presentations:

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|--|-----|
| Responses to group rehearsals                              |     |
| Peer review  | 3%  |
| Rehearsal of presentation                                  | 5%  |
| Presentation to class on SRS Basics of Sleep Guide Chapter |     |
| Multi-media group presentation grade;                      |     |
| all members of the group will receive a single grade       | 10% |
| Presenting evidence or information visually                |     |
| In-class completion of an assessment of graph and tables:  |     |
| Chartjunk and data-ink ratios                              | 5%  |
| Individual presentation to share your semester's work      | 5%  |

Research paper:

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Research Binder                          | 10% |
| Thesis, Claims and Evidence Statement    | 5%  |
| Notes on sources - I and II (3.5 % each) | 7%  |
| Functional Outline                       | 10% |
| Preliminary Draft of Paper               | 10% |
| Final draft                              | 10% |
| Reflective essay                         |     |

Snoozebowl 5%

**Reflections on Readings:** In the weeks that you do not rehearse or complete a presentation, you will be asked to reflect on the readings before class is held. However, all of you are required to have read the material before class begins, whether or not you are providing us with some questions or commentary. These questions should be posted on Angel to me in the drop box on Wednesday evening by 5:30 p.m.

Commentary and questions will receive a tentative grade when I read them, which may be amended *upwards* after class is over, depending on how much contribution to the discussion you have provided that day. You may not have a chance to contribute each class, so this upward amendment should not be counted on when you turn in your questions.

*Questions will be assessed on the following qualities:*

- 1) Do they demonstrate that you have read the article or assignment thoroughly? Do they tie together pieces of information from the article itself or from other readings? (0, 1 or 2 pts)
- 2) Are they thoughtful and well-presented? (0, 1, or 2 pts)
- 3) There should be no typos, misspellings, or sentence constructions that reveal an “off the top of your head” approach. For each typo / misspelling, etc., I will deduct .5 pts.
- 4) Were the questions there on time? If late they will be given half credit.

Note: Because class begins at 8:30, and because I cannot always read and assign points to your questions before 8:30 in the morning, they will be due in your Angel drop box by 5:00 p.m. the previous night.

### **Presentations:**

Rehearsal of Presentation: See below for the description of the presentation itself; you will be rehearsing it once in front of whoever is scheduled to present next, in addition to the course mentor, Alessandra.. (They will, in turn, conduct a peer review of your rehearsal.) The course mentor will help you prepare for the presentation.

Peer review of class presentation rehearsals: A peer review consists of your letter (minimum of 2 pages) addressed directly to the team whose presentation you are reviewing, that details your reactions to the presentation. Your assessment will be gentle and respectful, telling the presenters where they were strong and what kind of suggestions you might make for them to address the weak parts of their presentation. If your peer review lists only strengths, you will not receive full points; if it lists only criticisms, likewise. This letter should be balanced, fair, and specific.

Presentation to class on SRS Basics of Sleep Guide Chapter (Group presentation grade; all members of the group will receive a single grade)

Each group will present one of the chapters in the *Basics of Sleep* Guide to the class. Each presentation will be “rehearsed” in front of the group that is presenting next; thus, Group 1 will present their rehearsal to Group 2 only, and then to the full class. Group 2 should prepare a peer

review with substantive comments and suggestions for improvements to Group 1 before Group 1 presents to the entire class. Each group will present once and peer review once.

Presentations of the material should take about 45 minutes, and should be planned as interactive, “teaching” presentations. Each group will “rehearse” their presentation once. Groups should assume that the class has read the material but probably not fully comprehended it, and should set up “goals” for their presentations that specify which material of the chapter they are attempting to teach, and should use multi-media to do so (power point, discussion, hand-outs, movie clips, role-plays, web site display, etc.). These presentations will be graded on the following criteria:

- 1) Were the goals appropriate to the material? Were the goals stated clearly?
- 2) Did the group convey the material in an efficient and organized way?
- 3) Were the components of the presentation logically and clearly presented? Could the class follow the pace of the presentation adequately, or was it too fast or too slow?
- 4) Were the mechanical aspects well-executed – could the class see the slides and read them? Could they hear the presenters? Could they follow along? Were the power point slides read rather than used as cues for a conversation/presentation? Did the group have control over the technology they used to execute their presentation?

Formal guidelines that go into more detail will be handed out to the class when the presentation times and topics have been assigned, for both the presentations and for the peer review.

Presenting information visually: Aesthetics and techniques of graphs and tables For this exercise, class members will be given a variety of graphs and tables. Students will learn to assess the pluses/minuses of various styles and approaches to the way that various authors present quantitative data in visual format. You will turn in by ANGEL drop box an assessment of the graphs and data that are in the handout for the day.

Individual Presentations: You will be asked to present your research in a five-minute ‘mini-presentation,’ for which you will be allowed five power point slides, followed by a five minute question and answer session.

### **Research paper:**

Each student will select a topic on which to conduct a semester long library based research paper.

Research Binder: You should be keeping all of your materials on this process in a three-ring binder which you will turn in to me twice during the semester. Although the document I will be grading is identified in the syllabus, all documents in your research binder will be considered as I assign your grade. This binder is meant to be a “breadcrumb trail” that I can follow along so that when you get off the trail, so to speak, I can re-direct you more easily. We all get misled, confused, bored, overwhelmed, etc. as we pursue our topic – even very experienced researchers keep notebooks about the process to avoid losing their way and to establish a record of their thoughts to which they can later refer. I predict you will be surprised by how much you refer back to it as you complete your paper.

Notes on Sources: (NOS I and NOS II) As you begin to formulate your thesis, claims, and evidence, you will be wading through many sources. In completing a short but helpful set of notes on these sources, you will learn not only how to find sources more efficiently, but also to assess

them for relevance and quality. By keeping consistent notes on your sources, you create a written record of your “wading” to which you can refer later. Furthermore, you begin to establish a series of actions/habits for doing scholarly research that will serve as a good foundation for the future. You will construct some notes on sources as you create your Thesis, Claims, and Evidence statement, and you will continue to gather sources and make more notes on them as you refine your thesis and its supporting documentation.

Thesis, Claims and Evidence statement: in the first two weeks of class, we will spend time during the communication seminar time on Thursdays to help you narrow your “topic” to a “question” that addresses a “problem” in the literature. This topic statement is the foundation upon which you will build your paper. After you begin to formulate your thesis (“claim”) you will contextualize it within the claims that you are making and the evidence for your claims.

Functional Outline: In this element of writing a paper, you consult your bibliography and your claim, and begin to construct the actual paper. The concept of what a paragraph “does,” in addition to what it “says” is important as you learn to sustain a longer body of prose that makes a claim (argument) which may be complex and multi-faceted.

Preliminary draft of paper: Here you simply begin the paper in a format (one linked paragraph after another) that should be (almost) simple after all of the steps that have preceded it. Nonetheless, in this step you may identify holes or other problems in your argument, evidence, or writing skills that need to be addressed.

Final draft of paper: An author once stated that, “A piece of writing is never finished... it is merely abandoned at some point.” After this draft, you will be officially, for the purposes of this course, “abandoning” your paper, with or without some relief. At any rate, this is the piece that will culminate your efforts of learning to write a longer piece of writing that should stand alone as a convincing piece of scholarship.

Reflective Essay: In this informal document, you reflect on the act of writing and researching. I am interested in you giving serious thought to what the process of writing and researching was like for you, and how you now construe your strengths and weaknesses as a writer and scholar. What parts of the process did you loathe? Which did you love? Which were you good at? Which parts presented you with a new skill? Etc. This should be written after you have written all or a substantial portion of your final draft of the research paper, and should be turned in with the Research Binder at the end of the semester.

**Snoozebowl:** In this, the first annual St. Lawrence Snoozebowl, held in the last week of the semester, your groups’ members (presentation teams) will be re-organized so that new “teams” are formed to balance the “expertise” in the newly formed teams. These new teams will participate in a game show in which questions devised by the class will be directed to the teams in a round-robin competition, to demonstrate and practice the knowledge base you have acquired in the field of sleep. Partial points are given. The contest will be judged by Prof. Thacher, but random students selected by the class may over-ride Prof. Thacher’s decisions regarding earned or assigned points in certain circumstances. Bribes of an academic nature are particularly welcomed (interesting website addresses, journal article citations, flattering statements about how fascinating the course has been, and arcane and useless information regarding the sleep of famous people) in this, your final bid to become a respected and renowned sleep expert. Extra points given for interesting, sleep-related costumes. Snacks provided, mostly of a caffeinated nature.