# Righting Unrightable Wrongs

USEM 1580-011 (19853)

**Repair and Reconciliation**

**Spring Semester, 2016**

**Instructor:** **E. Franklin Dukes**, Ph. D.; Distinguished Institute Fellow, Institute for Environmental Negotiation (924-2041; 996-6588; FrankDukes@virginia.edu), 2015 Ivy Road (Dynamics Building)

**Fridays 2:00 – 3:50 pm, Pavilion VIII 103**

From indigenous peoples pursuing a return of lands and sovereignty, to Japanese-Americans memorializing the experience of internment during WWII, to South Africans coming to terms with apartheid, to Americans seeking redress for slavery and its aftermath of segregation and discrimination, many groups have sought to right past harms and ongoing injustices. Can individuals, communities and nations ever make right what appear to be irreparable wrongs? This course examines that question for problems ranging from genocide and slavery to environmental contamination and racial discrimination. The literature of reparations and restorative justice will be enhanced by examining specific cases within the instructor’s experience. These include a site affected by severe environmental contamination and Japanese-American internment during World War II (Bainbridge Island, WA); a city coming to terms with killings of labor organizers and civil rights workers through a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Greensboro, NC); and communities in North Carolina and Virginia seeking redress for the impacts of a spill of coal ash from a Duke Energy power plant.

The closing theme of the class will be the question of the legacy of slavery and segregation at the University of Virginia and its impact on the surrounding community of Charlottesville-Albemarle.

Unrightable wrongs, for purposes of this class, refer to past injustices that:

*1) were systematically or intentionally inflicted upon a community or identity group, often shaped by prejudice and discrimination;*

*2) have historic, present and future impacts/consequences for the parties involved and the broader community,*

*3) have come to involve a broad and complex set of issues and stakeholders, thus making efforts at resolution seem daunting or even impossible;*

*4) have spiritual, moral, emotional, social, economic and political aspects and implications.*

Financial reparations for wrongs committed long ago may seem an unlikely prospect. But in 1988, Congress apologized to Japanese Americans interned in camps during World War II and authorized payments of $20,000 each to roughly 60,000 survivors. Canada followed with its own apology and a $230 million reparations package to Japanese Canadians. The German government has paid $60 billion to settle claims from victims of Nazi persecution. Various groups of Eskimos, Native Americans, Aleuts, and survivors of a 1923 massacre in a predominantly black Florida town and the 1921 riot in Tulsa, Oklahoma have also received financial restitution.

However, money, apology, and legal rulings may not serve to address such wrongs with integrity. *Truth*, *understanding*, *repair*, and *relationship* are four components of reparation that may be considered in any situation involving what appears to be an unrightable wrong. Drawing upon the reparations literature as well as literature on restorative justice, this course will provide students with the knowledge and skills to articulate, discuss, and facilitate discussion about repairing injustice in a variety of settings. *Righting Unrightable Wrongs* will include a strong skills component, with exercises and role plays designed to encourage critical thinking and dialogue.

*Course objectives - Class members will be able to:*

* Explain their own views on questions involving reparations for slavery, forced removal from lands, genocide, and other related issues, including in what circumstances and with what efforts repair may be offered;
* Describe what it means to address unrightable wrongs with commitment and integrity;
* Work effectively in small groups while addressing challenging issues;
* Communicate effectively in interpersonal and small group dialogue;
* Understand the legacy of the racialized history of the University of Virginia and adjacent communities;
* Demonstrate critical thinking skills related to collective injustice.

### Course Material

Selected articles and exercises will be provided by the instructor. Readings of current events and other assignments will also be assigned. The following readings will be required as well:

* Shriver, Donald W. 2005. *Honest Patriots: Loving a Country Enough to Remember its Misdeeds*. Oxford University Press.
* Power, Samantha. 2002. *“A Problem from Hell”: America and the Age of Genocide.* New York: Basic Books.
* Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations.” Atlantic Monthly, June 2014. Available online at <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>
* Wood, Karenne, ed. 2006. *Virginia Indian Heritage Trail.* Charlottesville: Virginia Foundation for the Humanities.

**CLASS COMPONENTS:**

The course will combine several forms of learning methods. These include:

* Speakers from groups that have experienced "unrightable wrongs"
* Speakers from groups seeking to address such wrongs (e.g., University and Community Action for Racial Equity) and analysts of such processes
* Readings from restorative justice and reparations literature
* Exercises, simulations and role plays
* Film and video
* A diary of reflections on readings and class topics
* A small-group project will focus on the legacy of slavery, segregation and discrimination, as well as efforts to combat those wrongs, involving the University and the Charlottesville community.

The primary learning tools will be readings, class lectures and discussions, exercises (e.g., simulations), and interaction with classmates and invited guests. Your primary requirements to take advantage of these opportunities are attention, initiative, risk and hard work!

**GENERAL:**

- Attendance and participation in class is very important. Please show up on time, but if you are late don't let that stop you from participating once you arrive. And **please let me know in advance if you will miss a class.** Assignments are often made or revised on a weekly basis, and you will need to make appropriate arrangements.

**GRADED ASSIGNMENTS:**

\* Class participation, including attendance.

\* A series of personal reflections, in the form of a blog, with your thoughts about the reading assignments and class discussions.

\* A final group project involving the legacy of slavery, segregation and discrimination, as well as efforts to combat those wrongs, involving the University and the Charlottesville community.

**GRADING:**

An A is offered for outstanding work; a B is given for work which is truly satisfactory; a C is offered for meeting the basic requirements of the course, and an F is earned for failure to complete the basic course requirements. An incomplete grade will only be allowed for extraordinary circumstances (such as long-term illness).

Grading will be based on:

*40%: An ongoing combnined class journal of reflections based upon course readings, class discussions, and student experiences.*

This journal will be posted in the Now Comments section of Collab. Your journal is a place to explore ideas concerning course readings, lectures, and discussions without worrying about being formally graded. It is a place to experiment and to ask yourself, "How accurately can I explain or describe my/this idea?" The point of the journal is to develop a regular, habitual practice of figuring out what you think of the course materials and your participation in class. If you add to your journal consistently and regularly, you'll find that your thinking and your ability to make connections will deepen.

The journal will have two components:

**Pre-class Reading Reaction:** During the semester, each student will have ONE Pre-class Reading Reaction of 900-1,200 words to post for other students’ responses. Those reflection pieces are always due on Mondays at 5 p.m. See if you can make connections between the readings and your interests, thinking about how they best fit together, and identifying where the discrepancies are:

* Do some of the materials disturb you? Why?
* Which aspect of the readings resonated most with you, and why?
* What else seems important: quotes, images, ideas?
* What questions should the class explore?

Then, each week for 9 weeks, other students will respond briefly – or, should you choose, in more depth - to that reflection by commenting using the NowComment features. Those comments will be due by Thursday at 5 p.m.

**Post-Class Reflection:** Each student will also offer post-class reflections for other students to see, and possibly respond to, 9 times throughout the semester. You may answer these questions:

* Have you changed your thinking at all on the basis of the class discussions?
* Have you understood some of the readings in a different light?
* Are there ideas that were generated in class that you will want to think about more fully?

Exploring some of these paths will allow you to take an analytically critical approach to the readings and class discussions. This is not a long essay! You should be able to do this with two or three paragraphs totaling 500-700 words. The best way to begin this is to pay close attention during class and begin to think of your responses as class discussions proceed. These should be posted to NowComment by 5 p.m. on Tuesdays after the previous Friday's class.

It is very important that you keep this journal on a consistent basis. Your completion of these writings constitutes 40% of your grade. A late reflection will result in .5 percentage point deduction from your grade, and failure to turn in any reflection will result in a 2 percentage point deduction.

*30%: Class attendance and active participation during class.*

30% of the grade is based upon attendance and participation. Active participation in class discussions, assignments, and exercises is expected from each student.

Participation is rated on a scale of 0 to 10 using the criteria below. While your participation is important for any class you take, this class by its experiential nature requires considerable involvement, including interaction with your classmates.

We each learn from what you offer to the class. I encourage you to participate fully for your own and others’ benefit. One unexcused absence will not affect your grade; two will drop it by at least one mark (e.g., from a B+ to a B, or A- to an A); more than two will jeopardize a passing grade.

Participation Grade Basis:

0 Absent or without contribution.

4 Present, but demonstrates very infrequent involvement. Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much. (D)

6 Demonstrates occasional involvement. Offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the case or reading), without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a class). Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on. (C)

8 Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement. Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students’ points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion. (B)

10 Demonstrates ongoing and very active involvement. Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students’ comments, contributes to the cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze which approaches are appropriate, etc. (A+)

*30%: Group Project*

A small-group project will focus on the legacy of slavery, segregation and discrimination, as well as efforts to combat those wrongs, involving the University and the Charlottesville community. The assignment will focus on the question of what constitutes repair, including memorials, histories, public forums, and financial reparations, with focus on key elements of the University of Virginia. The details of this subject will be developed in class.

You will join one of three or four class groups assigned during class. By Sunday February 21 at 5 p.m., as a group:

1. Identify your specific objectives for the assignment (what you want to learn, what impact you want to have)
2. Develop a covenant for how you will work with one another in your project group
3. Identify information and/or other resources that you know you will need to conduct the project

Grading criteria for group project:

\* Demonstration of knowledge: are you familiar with the subject matter? Did you do sufficient research such that your knowledge is helpful for your target audience(s)? (up to 15 points)

\* Completing project objectives: did you learn what you indicated that you wanted to learn? Does this work potentially have the impact on that you were striving to have? (up to 5 points)

\* Quality of discussion during and after your presentation: Did you ask evocative questions or make assertions that make people reflect? Did you leave sufficient time for questions and discussion? Did you respond appropriately to questions? (up to 4 points)

\* Presentation style: is your presentation coordinated? Does each group member know what is expected? Do all group members contribute? Does it keep your audience's interest? (up to 3 points)

\* Contribution as an individual to the group project: (up to 3 points) – (added/deducted individually based upon your group members’ assessment and observations in class)

**===============================**

**Course Schedule -** Note: this should be understood as a description of the course sequence rather than a locked calendar, as the actual course content and assignments may vary by student interest, guest schedules, and current events.

**Class 1: Unrightable Wrongs (January 22)**

* Building a community of learning: Introductions and student goals: Who are we, and what do we want to achieve?
* Course overview.
* Introduction to “unrightable wrongs.”
* What do we mean by restitution? What do we mean by reparations? What do we mean by genocide? What other terms are useful?
* Introduce group project topic: Civil War Monuments

*Assignments for Class 2:*

* Read Shriver: Introduction
* Take the Implicit Association Test.https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/ and enter the "Demonstration" tests. Take the "Race IAT". You will  NOT be required to submit your results to the class or professor; we  will instead discuss the test and its implications during the second class. But consider writing about this for your class reflection due Tuesday at 5 p.m. after next week’s class.
* Bring a list of 3 sites of interest w/in 200 miles of Cville [any site that has some meaning for you - it could be a memorial or something else]
* Note for Class 3: Read all of Power book, a lengthy assignment that should be started now.
* BONUS: send me a photo of the UVA building that used to be "Buddy's Restaurant" - 1 bonus class participation point. Hint: until July of 2011 it used to be my office.
* BONUS: send me UVa’s written expression of regret for slavery - - 1 bonus class participation point.

**Class 2: Experience With Unrightable Wrongs (January 29)**

* Class covenant: how we will work together
* De-brief “Implicit Association” test
* De-brief Shriver reading

*Assignments for Class 3:*

* Read Powers book. Possible reflection questions as you read it:

- Imagine yourself 10 years from now looking back on the history that Power details. What turning points in the ways that nations and the international community confront genocide might you envision describing at that time? What might be different?

- Ms. Power argues strongly that nations need to respond on the basis of an enlightened self-interest in promoting justice in the face of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Respond to her arguments, favorably or unfavorably.

- What, if any, responsibility do you have individually to confront genocide occurring in other countries? What actions might this mean taking?

- On a continuum of possible U.S. responses, ranging from official condemnation to armed overthrow of a genocidal government, what actions would be justified upon suspicion of genocide? Upon confirmation of genocide? In other words, how should the U.S. determine which actions are appropriate?

* First reflection piece due Monday Feb. 1 by 5 p.m. on NowComment.
* Possible post-class reflection questions, due Feb. 2: Are there issues in your home town, region, or country that leave lingering problems because the underlying issues that may be due to past traumas have not been addressed?
* BONUS: Find out and email me where the current memorial that mentions the contribution of slaves is (no photo needed) 1 bonus class participation point.

**Class 3: Genocide and the United States Response (February 5)**

* Listening to one another about genocide
* Class debate about U.S. responsibilities relative to genocide – parliamentary style debate

*Assignments for Class 4:*

* Read “Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report: Executive Summary”
* Possible reflection questions:

- What do Truth Commissions actually accomplish, and in what ways might they fall short? What, if any, might be an appropriate use of such commissions for domestic issues?

` - Some people suggest that these commissions are a poor substitute for criminal justice, which provides for punishment and removal from society. Discuss that critique.

- What sort of obstacles and challenges might these efforts face? What advice might you offer to Commission members for future efforts?

- Does your home town/county have any incidents of egregious wrongs in its history? Has your home town/county made any efforts to address such wrongs? In what ways, and with what levels of success?

**Class 4: The Greensboro Experience with Truth and Justice (February 12)**

* Film, “Closer to the Truth”
* The role of Truth Commissions.

*Assignments for Class 5:*

* Review Wood, Karenne, ed. 2006. “Virginia Indian Heritage Trail.”
* Chapter 4, Shriver, “Unreflected Absences: Native Americans”
* Possible reflection questions:

- What is your experience with Native American issues?

- What is new in these readings for you, and how does that knowledge influence your thinking now?

- Why do you think that you have your level of knowledge (whether sufficient or insufficient) about Native American and indigenous populations? How has the history been presented to you, and why?

- What, if anything, about Native Americans has been well represented in your formal education to date? What, if anything, has been missing?

- Which, if any, of the arguments discussed by Shriver appear most compelling to you? Why is that the case?

* (3-4 students): Pre-class Reading Reaction

**Class 5: The Native American Experience (February 19)**

Guest: Karenne Wood, Director, Virginia Indian Heritage Program (invited).

* The Virginia Indian Experience

*Assignments for Class 6:*

* Read Shriver, “Germany Remembers”
* In lieu of a reflection piece: From p. 7, *Facing the Truth* handout: make an identity chart similar to the one on p. 7. Explain which of your identities are more important to you, and why. Note that one may have several possible categories of identity: inherent (those you have at birth) and acquired, as well as individual and collective.

NOTE: this does not have to be essay form or essay-length. It can be written as a narrative or as a diagram as shown on p. 7.

**Class 6: Germany Remembers (February 26)**

Guest: Theresa Kruggeler

* The Power of Memory
* Hinzert: a Memorial

*Assignments for Class 7:*

* Familiarize yourself with the Nidoto Nai Yoni Memorial (http://www.bijac.org/memorial.html)
* Review Gene Takahashi web site: http://lcweb2.loc.gov/diglib/vhp/story/loc.natlib.afc2001001.10309/
* Possible reflection questions:

- What, if any, would you see as any continuing harm done as a result of the internment of Japanese-Americans during WW II?

- What, if any, sorts of repair might still be relevant today?

- Do any of us who were not alive then bear any responsibility for righting any wrong done through this internment?

- What lessons learned from the Japanese-American experience with internment might apply to other situations?

**Class 7: The Japanese-American Experience (March 4)**

Guest: Nancy Takahashi, professor, University of Virginia School of Architecture, Department of Landscape Architecture

* The internment experience
* Bainbridge Island and the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial (Nidoto Nai Yoni Memorial)

*Assignments for Class 8:*

* Post-Class Reflection due Tuesday at 5 pm
* Read Shriver, “South Africa: In the Wake of Remembered Evil”.
* Read “Facing the Truth” pp. 2-28, 41-44. Skim pp. 29-40.

**Class 8: The South African Experience with Truth and Justice (March 11)**

* Video: “Facing the Truth”

*Assignments for Class 9:*

* Read Randall Robinson, “The Debt”
* Read Shriver, “Old Unpaid Debt: To African Americans”
* Reflection questions:

- What is new in this question of reparations for you, and how does that knowledge influence your thinking now?

- What part of Robinson's argument makes the most sense? What part the least?

- Using the framework of truth, understanding, repair, and relationship, how might you approach the question of slavery and its aftermath in the U.S.? or in your home community? or at U. Va.?

- What are the most important factors in making meaningful repair of such harms?

**Class 9: The African-American Experience (March 18)**

* Terror and violence in America
* The civil rights experience

*Assignments for Class 11:*

* Assignment in lieu of pre-class reflection:

1) Identify your specific objectives for the assignment (what you want to learn, what impact you want to have);

2) Develop a covenant for how you will work with one another in your project group, beginning first individually with the worksheet format handed out in class (start with "at our worst" based on previous class projects; then "at our best" based upon how you want your group to be; then continue keeping your group in mind);

3) Identify information and/or other resources that you know you will need to conduct the project.

**Class 10: The Question of Reparations (March 25)**

* Arguments for and against reparations for slavery
* Apology without restitution – the Virginia example

*Assignments for Class 11: TBD.*

**Class 11: School Segregation (April 1)**

* A history of segregation
* The integration movement
* Righting the school segregation wrongs: Virginia examples

*Assignments for Class 12 and later: TBD.*

**Classes 12-14**

TBD: Class assignments and speakers will be determined later in the semester.

* Final reflection:

The final reflection is to be kept within a 1,000 word limit and counts the same as your other essays. It is not due until one week following the last class, at 1 p.m. If it is sent any time after that 1 point is deducted, and for each 8-hour period it is delayed another point is deducted. The questions that I want you to address concern your views about the requirements for repair of "unrightable wrongs". Discussion questions that you NEED to address in this essay (not optional) follow:

Use the class framework of truth, understanding, repair, and relationship to address the question of any one unrightable wrong that we studied this semester, or one that meets the following criteria:

1) were systematically or intentionally inflicted upon a community or identity group, often shaped by prejudice and discrimination;

2) have historic, present and future impacts/consequences for the parties involved and the broader community,

3) have come to involve a broad and complex set of issues and stakeholders, thus making efforts at resolution seem daunting or even impossible;

4) have spiritual, moral, emotional, social, economic and political aspects and implications.

Identify major themes and insights related to your learning of righting wrongs, including readings and class exercises and discussions, and analyze how they have developed over the course of this semester:

* What is their significance for you?
* What have you learned about addressing such wrongs?
* What have you learned about yourself?
* How do your insights connect to your life, your personal values and convictions?
* What will your beliefs mean as you pursue your studies at UVa?
* What actions might you be called to take that might test these beliefs at UVa or beyond?

**Instructor Biography:**

Frank Dukes, Ph.D. is a mediator and facilitator who directed the Institute for Environmental Negotiation (IEN) at the University of Virginia (UVa) from 2000 to 2015. He has convened and facilitated numerous collaborative change processes, including ongoing discussions involving communities affected by the Duke Energy coal ash release in 2014 and Appalachian communities undergoing transition in the coalfields. He is also leading an assessment of stakeholder experiences of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, the largest cleanup effort of its kind.

He chaired a working group appointed by UVa President Sullivan of survivors and parents of survivors, advocates, trauma counselors, alumni, students, and faculty that on April 30 2015 submitted consensus recommendations for how the University of Virginia should respond to sexual violence. He also serves as an advisor to the student group University Mediation Services.

He also is founder of the University & Community Action for Racial Equity (UCARE), which addresses the university’s legacy of slavery, segregation and its impact on the wider community.

His courses currently include PLAN 3250/5250, Mediation Theory and Skills, and PLAC 5240, Collaborative Planning for Sustainability, as well as a University Seminar "Righting Unrightable Wrongs" (issues of restorative justice and reparations). He is co-instructor of an occasional course titled "UVA History: Race and Repair", an outgrowth of UCARE.

He has worked as a mediator at local, state, and federal levels on projects involving environment and land use, community development, education, and health, with a particular emphasis on the Appalachian coalfields and Chesapeake Bay watershed regions.

He is co-founder and core faculty of the Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute. As part of IEN's "Collaborative Stewardship Initiative," he initiated the "Community-Based Collaboratives Research Consortium" seeking to assess and understand local collaborative efforts involving natural resources and community development, and the "Best Practices Guidance Project" resulting in the publication of Collaboration: A Guide for Environmental Advocates and, in 2011, *Community-Based Collaboration: Bridging Socio-Ecological Theory and Practice*.

Another book, *Resolving Public Conflict: Transforming Community and Governance* describes how public conflict resolution procedures can assist in vitalizing democracy. With two colleagues he is co-author of *Reaching for Higher Ground: Tools for Powerful Groups and Communities*, which describes how diverse groups and communities can create expectations for addressing conflict with integrity, vision, and creativity.

His most recent book is *Mountaintop Mining in Appalachia*, written with Susan Hirsch and published in 2014.

He is the winner of the 2012 Sharon M. Pickett Award for Environmental Conflict Resolution, presented by the Association for Conflict Resolution.  
  
He was previously operator of a piano restoration business for over 10 years in Albemarle County.

**Office Hours:**

My office is at the Institute for Environmental Negotiation at 2015 Ivy Road, Suite 422. E-mail is not a good medium for questions of any substantive nature. Because of the nature of my work regular hours are not possible; however, students are invited and urged to "drop in" for discussion (you may wish to call ahead at 924-2041 to make sure I am there), or you may set an appointment.

**Writing Well**

Following is guidance for writing from a variety of sources. If you need more, then:

\* Come talk to me – call me at 924-2041 for an appointment, I’m glad to talk.

\* Contact the UVA Writing Center www.engl.virginia.edu/wctr/wcinfo.html – 924-6678. They offer free, individual tutoring and are much better writers and teachers of writing than I am.

\* Buy and read Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style* or another good writing guide.

\* Keep working on your writing and don’t get discouraged – it will definitely improve with practice and reflection.

**26 Golden Rules for Writing Well**

1. Don't abbrev.

2. Check to see if you any words out.

3. Be carefully to use adjectives and adverbs correct.

4. About sentence fragments.

5. When dangling, don't use participles.

6. Don't use no double negatives.

7. Each pronoun agrees with their antecedent.

8. Just between you and I, case is important.

9. Join clauses good, like a conjunction should.

10. Don't use commas, that aren't necessary.

11. Its important to use apostrophe's right.

12. It's better not to unnecessarily split an infinitive.

13. Never leave a transitive verb just lay there without an object.

14. Only Proper Nouns should be capitalized. also a sentence should begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop

15. Use hyphens in compound-words, not just in any two-word phrase.

16. In letters compositions reports and things like that we use commas to keep a string of items apart.

17. Watch out for irregular verbs that have creeped into our language.

18. Verbs has to agree with their subjects.

19. Avoid unnecessary redundancy.

20. A writer mustn't shift your point of view.

21. Don't write a run-on sentence you've got to punctuate it.

22. A preposition isn't a good thing to end a sentence with.

23. Avoid cliches like the plague.

24. Never start a sentence with a number.

25. Always check your work for accuracy and completeness.

[ANON.]

**Guidance borrowed from Prof. Michael Trotti:**

1. Keep your audience in mind; know exactly the knowledge level and scope of interest of those who will read your paper. Speak with the appropriate level of technical language while, at the same time, keeping the line of argument clear and simple.

2. Know precisely the conclusions that you want to state. These are the thoughts that you intend to place inside the reader's mind. State them. These points become the question(s) for the line-of-argument that drives the paper.

3. Make sure your paper has a clearly identifiable beginning, middle, and end. The beginning should go from the sweeping and global to the specific concern of this paper.

4. If your paper requires examples, make them vivid and varied.

5. Picture portions of your argument like a funnel, wide on the top, narrowing on the bottom, and write it that way. Structure your argument to move from the macro (general statements), to the medium, to the more micro (the specific issues addressed).

8. Use transitional sentences to link the preceding discussion to a new discussion of very different material that follows. Make it smooth, make it smooth. When in doubt, smooth it out.

9. Keep a sense of rhythm, of flow in your language. Reading your words should be easy and pleasurable, not hard and stiff.

10. Say plainly what you mean, no more, no less. As a rule of thumb, use short words instead of long ones, and use one word in place of several. For example, never say "due to the fact that," say "because." Instead of saying "they interpreted their findings to mean that...," say "they concluded." There should be no unnecessary words, no words that do no work. Keep it sharp, tight, crisp. You get the point.

11. Know your material thoroughly. Each word and each study cited is there because it does a piece of work. If it doesn’t, then cut it; it’s clutter.

12. Don't say "Second" unless you have first said "First." And Never Never Never say "Lastly" (or "Firstly").

**Important Components to Strong and Effective Writing**

 \* Clarity Don't try to make your argument or your evidence do tricks, but do follow all rules of grammar and usage. A complicated argument is often less clear and effective than a simpler one. The art of good writing is to play by the rules of grammar and usage, and to be concise. Get a copy of Strunk and White's *Elements of Style* for help with this. I read it regularly, just to remind me of what effective writing consists.

\* Evaluation As important as getting the facts straight. A paper needs to be accurate, but as important, it needs to show that you see just what is important, what it is connected to, and what evidence best supports that important point. History is about bringing meaning to past events - you do that through how you characterize those events and what you connect them to.

\* Outline Before you write, spend time thinking about your argument and how to make it flow logically from one point to the next - what points are connected? what is the most important one and why? Think this through before writing.

\* Short Assignments If you are feeling overwhelmed, take a small piece of your paper and work on it, get it done, then move on to another small piece. Divide and conquer. You will need to fit these pieces together - a paper of many small pieces is no paper at all. But it is not only OK, it is the best way to write to divide up a larger issue into more manageable smaller ones. After outlining, simply take one point you plan to make and develop it; move on to the next. Before you know it, you have most of a paper written.

"Thirty years ago my older brother, who was ten years old at the time, was trying to get a report on birds written that he'd had three months to write, which was due the next day. We were out at our family cabin in Bolinas, and he was at the kitchen table close to tears, surrounded by binder paper and pencils and unopened books on birds, immobilized by the hugeness of the task ahead. Then my father sat down beside him, put his arm around my brother's shoulder, and said, "Bird by bird, buddy. Just take it bird by bird."

"I tell this story again because it usually makes a dent in the tremendous sense of being overwhelmed that my students experience. . ." -- Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* (Anchor, 1994), 18-19.

\* Speak it This one sounds weird, but trust me - reading your paper out loud will show you what is not working, where the rough places are. You use a different part of your brain when you hear/speak than when you look, and hearing the words gives you a different perspective.

\* Skim After you write a paper, read the introduction, the first line of each paragraph, and the conclusion. In a clear, concise paper, this should give you the flow of the argument, and such a skim will reveal where you have problems, where the argument is convoluted.

\* Rewrite There is nothing that will improve your work more than writing a draft early, letting it sit for a day, then coming back to it and looking at it afresh. If you want to improve your writing, this is how.

Anne Lamott on First Drafts: "People tend to look at successful writers, writers who are getting their books published and maybe even doing well financially, and think that they sit down at their desks every morning feeling like a million dollars, feeling great about who they are and how much talent they have and what a great story they have to tell; that they take a few deep breaths, push back their sleeves, roll their necks a few times to get all the cricks out, and dive in, typing fully formed passages as fast as a court reporter. But this is just the fantasy of the uninitiated. I know some very good writers, writers you love who write beautifully and have made a great deal of money, and not one of them sits down routinely feeling wildly enthusiastic and confident. Not one of them writes elegant first drafts. All right, one of them does, but we do not like her very much . . ."

So, what is it that I look for when I grade your papers? What I am most eager to find there?

\* thesis - have you answered the question clearly and completely?

\* support - is the essay factually correct and does it refer to the appropriate and relevant names, dates, concepts, sources, and events as needed?

\* argument - is the writing clear, concise, and well-organized around the argument of the thesis?

\* context - does the paper demonstrate your knowledge of the broad range of course materials and concepts relevant to the issue at hand?

**Avoiding Gender Bias in Pronouns**

Achieving unbiased language so that readers will concentrate on what you have to say rather than how you say it is an admirable goal. It's also, I might add, a necessity. For example, businesses and individuals have been sued because job descriptions used "he" and seemed to exclude women -- whether or not the exclusion was intended. Therefore, gender free language is a requirement of the workplace and the university.

It may be easy to avoid gender-biased nouns by replacing sexist nouns with more neutral ones: chairman with chair, mailman with paper carrier, and congressman with senator or representative. But how can you avoid the pronouns he, him, and his when you refer to nouns meant to include both genders?

The following five options will enable you to revise your writing so that your use of pronouns is both gender-free and correct. As you review this list, compare the biased language of the original sentences with the gender-free phrasing of the revisions.

**1. Use the plural form for both nouns and pronouns (preferred).**

*Biased Language:* Studying the techniques by which a celebrated writer achieved his success can stimulate any writer faced with similar problems.

*Gender-free Language:* Studying the techniques by which celebrated writers achieved their success can stimulate any writer faced with similar problems.

------------------------------------------------------------------------

**2. Omit the pronoun altogether (also preferred).**

*Biased Language:* Each doctor should send one of his nurses to the workshop.

*Gender-free Language:* Each doctor should send a nurse to the workshop.

------------------------------------------------------------------------

**3. Use *his or her, he/she, or s/h*e when you occasionally need to stress the action of an individual. Such references won't be awkward unless they're frequent (less preferred).**

*Biased Language:* If you must use a technical term he may not understand, explain it.

*Gender-free Language:* If you must use a technical term she or he may not understand, explain it.

If you must use a technical term he/she may not understand, explain it.

If you must use a technical term s/he may not understand, explain it.

------------------------------------------------------------------------

**4. Vary pronoun choice when you want to give examples emphasizing the action of an individual (less preferred).** Ideally, choose pronouns that work counter to prevailing stereotypes. *Growing Child Newslette*r (1982) decided to use this strategy throughout its publication, which focused on children's developmental levels.

*Biased Language:* Gradually, Toddler will see the resemblance between block creations and objects in his world, and he will begin to name some structures, like "house," "choo choo," and "chimney."

*Gender-free Language:* Gradually, Toddler will see the resemblance between block creations and objects in her world, and she will begin to name some structures, like "house," "choo choo," and "chimney." [THE NEXT EXAMPLE WOULD USE “HE” AND “HIS”].

*Biased Language:* The kitchen can serve as a center for new experiences, an interesting place where important things happen, and where she has a chance to learn about the way big-people things are done.

*Gender-free Language:* The kitchen can serve as a center for new experiences, an interesting place where important things happen, and where he has a chance to learn about the way big-people things are done. [THE NEXT EXAMPLE WOULD USE “SHE” AND “HER”].

------------------------------------------------------------------------

**5. Switch from the third-person (he) to the second-person (you) or a (you) understood when this shift is appropriate for what you're writing. (also preferred)**

*Biased Language:* Each manager should report his progress to the undersigned by May 1.

*Gender-free Language:* You should report your progress to me by May 1.

Report your progress to me by May 1.

------------------------------------------------------------------------

© 1997, 1998, 1999 The Write Place

This page was written by Sharon Cogdill and Judith Kilborn for the Write Place, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN, and adapted by E. Franklin Dukes of the Institute for Environmental Negotiation, University of Virginia, and may be copied for educational purposes only. If you copy this document, please include the copyright notice and the name of the writer; if you revise it, please add your name to the list of writers.

Original: http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/style/genderbias.htm

# Revision vs. Editing

Posted by Dennis G. Jerz, on October 2nd, 2011: http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/academic1/revision-vs-editing/

My first semester as a freshman writing instructor, I jotted the word “redundant” several different places in the margins of a student’s paper, and gave her the opportunity to revise. She returned the paper, having faithfully inserted the word “redundant” wherever I had written it. (Clearly, I should have first taught this student about the purpose of revising a paper.)

If you are expected to **revise** your own document, but all you do is a quick **edit** job, that means you have made specific surface changes to correct obvious mistakes.  Editing can be difficult and valuable work, but typically **editing involves local rearrangement** of what is already on the page. By contrast, **revision calls for big-picture, global changes** — that is, you actually change what you say, rather than rearrange it.

**“Revision” means “the act of seeing again.”**

Editing, when done by professionals, is a painstaking and thorough job of helping a writer improve his or her final product. When done as a quick way to add points to an assignment by making corrections your instructor has marked on a draft, it’s a shortcut that prevents you from actually learning how to be a better writer.

What are students doing, then, when they are revise a multiple-draft paper? They are not correcting unauthorized deviations from a single “perfect” paper that is in the back of my instructor’s manual; instead, they are building on what they did well in their draft, and taking their learning to the next level.

Examples of **surface-level editing**:

* deleting needless words
* correcting spelling or awkward phrasing
* changing, standardizing punctuation
* moving sentences or paragraphs
* adding or improving a transition
* converting a paragraph to a bulleted list (and vice-versa)

Examples of **thorough, big-picture self-revision**:

* changing a whole paragraph from [passive to active voice](http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/grammar-and-syntax/active-and-passive-verbs/)
* reorganizing to provide a single, clear, over-arching [structure to your paper](http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/academic/blueprint.htm)
* refining a [thesis](http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/academic/thesis.htm) statement and supplying new evidence to support it
* improving the [argument](http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/argument/index.html)
  + introducing opposing evidence (by citing authors who make points that challenge yours)
  + …and by refuting that evidence (by citing additional evidence that answers the challenges)
* moving your writing up the [cognitive ladder](http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/style/taxonomy.htm) — deleting paragraphs that do nothing to advance your argument, and replacing them with additional paragraphs (supported with evidence) to fill the space
* in a [technical writing document](http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/technical-writing/what-is-it/), offering a troubleshooting guide, or writing a new “experts” and/or “beginners” section to address the needs of that specific group.