

Roadside America: A First-Year Seminar

Dr. Bob Bednar

**Department of
Communication Studies**

Southwestern University

UST 05-014

Fall 2024



Robert M. Bednar, *Driving, I-35 North at Loop 45, Round Rock, Texas*

CONTACT INFORMATION: bednarb@southwestern.edu; 512-863-1440; office: FWO 119
OFFICE HOURS: Tu-Th 12:10-12:50 and 4:00-4:40pm and by appointment on Google schedule
CLASS MEETINGS: 10:00 – 11:15 Tu/Th, SLC 115

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores the ways that car-based mobility is mapped to ideologies about freedom, agency, and belonging in contemporary American culture. These ideologies speak to and from tensions that are central to identity and culture in the United States today--between stability and mobility, freedom and control, self and society, belonging and exclusion, roots and routes. To understand these phenomena more fully, we will study multiple representations of driving, highway landscapes, and "the road" in contemporary American popular culture and connect them to own personal stories of living in places where cars and car culture are central to everyday life.

As we explore these phenomena of automobility, you will also embark on a different type of mobility: your journey as a student here at Southwestern. As one of several First-Year Seminars, this course is designed to introduce you to the processes of participatory learning in a liberal arts college environment, helping you begin to practice an education that arcs over the whole course of your experience and across the curriculum, connecting the questions and perspectives you encounter and the skills you develop to each other and to the world. While FYS serves first to introduce you to Southwestern, it is a concurrent rather than preliminary experience, focused on exploratory topics or themes that help you think about what you are learning in your other classes and your larger education while working to help you build a strong sense of belonging at Southwestern.

Therefore, through a variety of individual and collaborative assignments, workshops, modules, and discussions, this Seminar will focus on developing your abilities in the following areas that will be useful to you as a student here and as a lifelong learner: formulating cogent questions, forging connections between methods of inquiry, recognizing and challenging assumptions, seeking out and listening to multiple perspectives, creatively approaching the world with curiosity, developing a critical thinking perspective, and rethinking/redefining the role of reading, writing, creativity, and discussion in student-centered learning.

Buckle up. Let's go for a drive...

GRADING:

I design my classes with a number of different kinds of low stakes and high stakes assignments focusing on different communicative forms and assignment formats to make sure that each student has maximum potential to demonstrate existing skills and knowledge while developing new ones. I go into every class, every assignment, and every student encounter with a growth mindset--the belief that every student is capable of both succeeding and improving--and see that my responsibility is to give you the tools you need to succeed and improve while also being clear about my expectations and evaluations.

Grades are given a lot of power in dominant culture, but it is important to remember that grades are not a reflection of your worth as a person but a reflection of your performance under a certain set of defined constraints. To level the playing field and fight against a scarcity model of grading, which reinforces unearned advantages and inherited cultural power, I do not grade on a bell curve to place your graded assignments or final grade into a pre-determined grade distribution, where only a certain number of students can get an A, B, C, D, or F. The grades I assign reflect my evaluation of your performance within the constraints outlined in the syllabus and in assignment handout rubrics. Grades for particular assignments thus measure your performance on that assignment relative to the requirements of the assignment, not relative to other students, and final course grades measure your performance in the class overall.

Based on my goal to both minimize grade focus/anxiety while also teaching you to be independent thinkers and self-advocates, I do not post grades that are calculated in real-time throughout the semester. Increasingly, students are being trained to expect real-time grades computed as courses unfold, which creates an unbalanced extrapolation of a snapshot of your performance, treating your current performance as a predictor of your final grade. I myself do not compute your grades until the very end of the semester unless I see a major concern emerge or a student requests it. Because the work we do continues to build to higher and higher stakes over the course of the semester, I see grades on smaller assignments along the way as signals about what to do in the future, not an accurate prediction of what your final grade will be. The only way they become predictive is if you ignore the feedback you are getting along the way or do not take it as a stimulus for growth.

If you ever want to compute your emerging overall grade average yourself at any point during the semester, here is what you need to know to compute grades yourself in this class. Final course grades are assigned a final letter grade based on a range of averages for individual assignments based on a 100-point scale. For example, a final average of 88-89% would be recorded as a B+; a final average of 83-87% would be recorded as a B; and 80-82% would be recorded as a B- (extrapolate from there if it is higher or lower than a B). For the purposes of averaging individual project letter grades into a final grade, I use the following system to assign a numerical grade based on a letter grade on an assignment: B+=88%; B=85%, and B-=82% (and so on). For example, if you got a B- on an assignment that was weighted 25% of the final grade, you would receive 20.5 points for that assignment (*or lose the possibility of getting 4.5 points overall*). The only exception for that is if you achieve an A+ on an individual assignment, where it will score as a 100% of the available points, where in this example you would receive the full 25 points.

At any point along the way, if you are curious, you can see how your grade is tracking: multiply the score of an individual assignment grade by the percentage it is weighted and that will reveal the total points you have earned for that assignment grade; add it to other determined grades; and then divide it by the highest potential scores for all the completed assignments combined. For grades that are composite, such as graded Classwork, you can

calculate it the same way to track your ongoing composite score. If Classwork is determined by completion grades instead of scoring, you can average that score based on the number of assignments you have completed divided by the ones you have not. Please note that I do not compute cumulative class participation grades until the very end of the semester, so if you want to get a sense of where this score is tracking before that, you will need to discuss it with me. Finally, if you have absences in excess of the stated policy or a pattern of late submissions, you will need to factor them in as well. If you have questions about this grading system at any time, please consult me.

Here is how each assignment or set of assignments is weighted in this class:

Individual Project #1: Summer Reading, 1 st -week reading, <i>Gun Crazy</i> & <i>Thelma & Louise</i>	10%
Individual Project #2: Nonfiction Road Narratives	10%
Individual Project #3: Automobility Scholarship	10%
Individual Project #4: Final Connections	10%
Collaborative Project: Georgetown Road Stories	10%
Creative Nonfiction Road Narrative	10%
Final Research Project	20%
Classwork and Class Engagement	20%

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Four films: *Gun Crazy* (1949); *Thelma & Louise* (1991); and *Driving While Black* (2020)

All other PDF readings for the class will be located at the course web resource page:

<http://people.southwestern.edu/~bednarb/roadsideamerica>

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

This course shares with other First-Year Seminars the following student learning outcome objectives. Students will demonstrate:

- an understanding of college-level expectations of critical reading.
- an understanding of college-level expectations of writing cogently.
- an understanding of college-level expectations of critical and creative thinking.
- an understanding of college-level expectations of informed discussion.
- an understanding of college-level expectations of information fluency/research.

ASSIGNMENTS, PROCEDURES, AND POLICIES:

We will discuss the class assignments more as the course unfolds, but this short outline will help orient you now:

• **INDIVIDUAL CRITICAL CONNECTIONS PROJECTS:** You will produce four short Individual Critical Connections Projects in this class that critically engage (that is, specifically analyze and reflect upon) the readings and screenings we do for the class. The first 3 of these will be 2-page take-home writing assignments that address a question I give you related to the assigned readings and/or movie screenings with the goal of connecting the different things we are studying to your own evolving perspective. Individual Project #4: Final Critical Connections will be 2 pages long and will reflect on connections you have made between your experiences in the class, your other SU classes, and your extracurricular life experiences before and during this semester. The Individual Projects will be evaluated on a 10-point scale.

• **COLLABORATIVE PROJECT: Georgetown Road Stories:** You will produce one collaborative project in this class. Georgetown Road Stories will be a 5-minute in-class presentation based on fieldwork you do on the road in the city of Georgetown with 1 or 2 other students from the class. The presentations must involve each member of the group; all work presented must be fully collaborative and not simply a series of individual projects. Each member of a collaborative group is responsible for the output of the group, and each member of is responsible for the effective functioning of the group; thus each member will receive the same grade as everyone else in the group. (See note below on Academic Integrity for more details about my approach to managing and evaluating collaborative projects.) Georgetown Stories will be evaluated on a 10-point scale.

• **CREATIVE NONFICTION ROAD NARRATIVE:** Your Creative Nonfiction Road Narrative will be 3-4 pages long and will explore your ideas about automobility by telling the story of a particular personal experience you have had with automobiles and car culture. This Project will be drafted and will involve a peer critique workshop and revision before it is graded on an A-F, plus/minus system.

• **FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT:** You will each produce a 4-6 page researched essay that analyzes and interprets some clearly-focused aspect of American automobility: a road movie, a road novel, a road travel destination, a set of road photographs, a particular highway, a particular crash, a particular traffic-stop death, a billboard ad campaign, a bumper sticker/magnet phenomenon, a particular kind of vehicle, a roadside building, a driver's training film, a set of car advertisements, a car-related subculture, etc. Your project must critically engage at least 7 published sources we haven't read in class (with at least 3 of them being peer-reviewed, scholarly books, book chapters, or journals). This project includes a proposal and a short presentation to the class and will be drafted, peer critiqued, and revised before it is graded on an A-F, plus/minus system. You will also produce a poster and share your project publicly in person with SU community members at First Symposium, an exhibition of work done by FYS and AES students.

• **CLASSWORK and CLASS ENGAGEMENT:** This is not a lecture class, where you come to class every day expecting the teacher to deliver knowledge to you. This is a seminar, where we all will work together to produce knowledge in active and critically engaged dialogue. I will lead the discussion, but the class depends on and rewards your active participation. We will be doing a lot of different things in this class, from screening films to having discussions about readings to critiquing your colleagues' writing to participating in modules other FYS sections will also be participating in. This variety will hopefully keep you on your toes, but it also demands that you have an open and engaged and collaborative attitude throughout the course every day. **Good Class Engagement means** more than merely attending class, which to me is a given. Minimally, it means reading the assigned course materials and coming to class ready to critically engage them—and actively contributing to the class discussion by speaking *and* listening not only to me, but to your classmates as well. More substantially, it means working to make our class a space of open, respectful, responsible, and challenging engagement with ideas, perspectives, and voices both similar to and different from your own. **Good Classwork means** doing everything you can to produce assignments on time, come to class prepared and ready to engage scheduled topics and materials, and provide your colleagues detailed constructive feedback in Peer Critiques. Missing a Critique Workshop will have a significant impact on your Classwork

and Class Engagement grade, but will also have significant impact on your revision process. Classwork and Class Engagement will be evaluated on a holistic 20-point scale.

- **ATTENDANCE:** Because this is a discussion seminar, it is important that you be prepared and in class every day. Remember that attending class is not just about you and me but about your relationship to your colleagues in the class. Put simply: we can't work together if we are not present together. Southwestern University recognizes that it has students from a variety of religious and cultural traditions that have special days of observations or celebration that may take students out of their regular activities on certain days during the school year. Since the academic calendar does not always coincide with these days, you will need to notify me in advance of any such absence. If you will be absent, for whatever reason--because you are observing a religious or cultural holiday not recognized by the normative University schedule, because you participating in an intercollegiate sport or another activity where you are representing Southwestern, or "just because"--you still are responsible for completing all your assignments by the deadline. More specifically, you are responsible for notifying me of the absence in advance and are responsible for arranging the means of making up and turning in applicable work in advance of the absence. I do not enforce a pre-determined penalty for absences as absences, but if you end up missing more than a couple of days throughout the semester, your Class Engagement grade will suffer accordingly.

- **READING ASSIGNMENTS:** All reading assignments must be completed before class on the day scheduled for discussion of the readings.

- **WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:** Unless indicated explicitly otherwise, you should assume that all writing assignments for this class must be produced and/or revised using a word processor and turned in as an email attachment by the stated deadline. While I am open to most fonts, the page limits assume double-spacing, standard 1" margins, and the default of Times 12-point font. Citations should be rendered consistently either in Chicago, MLA, or Harvard format, with in-text citations in the essay and full bibliographic citations in a separate "Works Cited" page at the end of the paper. For major assignments (The Nonfiction Road Narrative and Final Research Project), late papers will be penalized a full letter grade for each weekday that they are late. Because the more frequent Individual Critical Connections Project assignments are designed to help prepare you to better participate in class discussions and because our discussions will subsequently work through the material in class, you cannot receive full credit for missed Individual Critical Connections Projects made up after an absence or late paper. *Thus make-ups after the fact for missed daily Critical Connections Papers will count for no more than half of the original assignment grade, meaning that you would be able to score at most 5 out of 10 points instead of 10 out of 10.*

- **INCLUSIVITY:** I work hard to create a classroom space that is dynamic, engaging, and inclusive for all students, where we work together from diverse perspectives within clearly-defined expectations for student engagement and performance. If at any time you sense a dynamic emerging in our class that makes you feel unsafe or unwilling to participate fully, please reach out to me by email or after class so that I can address your concerns. I value direct communication and want your feedback about how things are working for you. Also, as part of my commitment to inclusivity, I make regular accommodations for students with documented learning differences that challenge their ability to have equal access to engage and perform in the course. To arrange documentation for these accommodations, contact the Assistant

Director of Academic Success within the Center for Academic Success (Prothro Center room 120; phone 863-1286; e-mail success@southwestern.edu). Students seeking accommodations should notify their office at least two weeks before any services are needed. It is your responsibility to discuss any necessary accommodations with me as well.

- **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** It is your responsibility to understand and live by the Southwestern Honor Code, so you should review its policies and procedures outlined in the *SU Student Handbook*. We will do a short module on the Honor Code in class the first week. Students who violate University policies on Academic Dishonesty by representing another's work as their own or who commit some other academic integrity violation are subject to review by the Honor Code Council, which includes the possibility of disciplinary penalties, including dismissal from the University. For this particular class, all individual and collaborative in-class and out-of-class assignments are subject to the Honor Code. Therefore, any individual writing assignment you turn in must include a full statement of the Pledge ("I have acted with honesty and integrity in producing this work and am unaware of anyone who has not.") followed by your signature. If both the pledge and your signature are not present on your paper, I will assume that you either have committed an Honor Code violation or have witnessed an Honor Code violation and wish to pursue it. The Honor Code also applies to any group Collaborative Projects as well. To act with integrity in a Collaborative Project group is a little more complex than in individual work, but it is no less important. It means not only that you take responsibility for "carrying your weight" by producing your part of the group's work with integrity (as you would with individual work), but also that you have produced the work *as a group*, which means that you have tried your best to make space in your busy life to collaborate with your classmates, that you respect the similarities *and* differences of your group members, and that you take responsibility for working together productively with your group to find common ground. In other words, to act with integrity in a collaborative group, you need to take an active role in the group, find ways to use your strengths as a collaborator, identify and foster the strengths of your group members, make your best effort to make the group itself work as well as it can, *and* produce the group's best work. If collaborative issues emerge in the group, they need to be resolved *within the group*.

- **OVERALL MISSION OF THE FYS PROGRAM:** The First-Year Seminar Program brings new students into the Southwestern community. Each seminar cultivates a sense of belonging and inclusion among students, and exposes them to SU's expectations for their academic work. Though each faculty member organizes a seminar around a different topic, all of the seminars work towards developing a common set of skills. These include information literacy, reading critically, writing cogently, and participating in informed discussion and debate. In their seminars students engage in a liberal arts mode of learning, which exposes them to a wide array of disciplinary approaches and topics. FYS is the student's first introduction to the Paideia philosophy of making connections. They learn how seemingly disparate ways of thinking can be fully interwoven and how to connect liberal arts learning with the extra- and co-curricular activities and organizations in which they engage.

- **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** At Southwestern, we collectively acknowledge that Southwestern University is located within the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Native peoples. The University resides on land that was cared for and called home by the sovereign nations of the Tonkawa, Comanche and Jumano people. It was also a site of trade, travel, gathering and healing for the Sana, Wichita, Kickapoo and Lipan Apache, among other

Native peoples, from time immemorial. This land still holds great historical, spiritual, and personal significance for its original stewards. As part of our commitment to diversity, inclusion, belonging and equity, we as a University commit to work towards building stronger relationships with Native communities, increasing visibility in the curriculum and investing in Native student success.

PLANNED SCHEDULE

Welcome Week, August 19-23 [meet in PRC 147]

Aug 19 (Mon, 10-12):

Introductions; "Roadside America Geography Challenge"

REVIEW/FINISH READING: Summer Reading

Aug 20 (Tue, 9-12):

Screen *Gun Crazy* (1950)

Module: Honor Code 11-11:30; Library Escape Game 11:30-12:00

READ: Brigham, "Introduction" [Course Webpage]

REVIEW/FINISH READING: Summer Reading

Aug 21 (Wed)—No Class

Aug 22 (Thu, 9-12):

9-12 Screen *Thelma & Louise* (1991)

READ: Laderman, "What a Trip"; Graff & Birkenstein, "The Art of Quoting" [Course Webpage]

REVIEW/FINISH READING: Summer Reading

Aug 23 (Fri, 10-12):

Discuss *Gun Crazy*, *Thelma & Louise*, and all readings so far

READ: Man, "Gender, Genre, and Myth in *Thelma & Louise*" [Course Webpage]

REVIEW/FINISH READING: Summer Reading

DUE: Individual Project #1: Critical Connections Analysis of *Gun Crazy*, *Thelma & Louise* and all readings so far (Albert, Brigham, Laderman, Man, and Sorin)
[printed and signed submission, due at beginning of class]

[Note: After Welcome Week, unless otherwise indicated in the Syllabus Schedule, we'll meet from 10:00-11:15 Tuesdays and Thursdays in our regular classroom, SLC 115]

Week One

Aug 27 (Tue): Review Orientation Week; Discuss Georgetown Road Stories Project; Module: Learning Commons

[Bring your laptop and meet in Library Learning Commons]

READ: Dietz, "Hip to Be Square" [Course Webpage]

Aug 29 (Thu): Discussion: American Road Nonfiction Narratives

READ: Steinbeck, excerpt from *Travels with Charley*; Smith, "Through the Windshield"; Dembling, "The Bus Stops Here"; Gough, "Travels with Chester" [Course Webpage]

DUE: Individual Project #2: Critical Connections Analysis of American Road Nonfiction [printed and signed submission, due at beginning of class]

Week Two

Sep 3 (Tue): Discussion: Gender, sexuality, and automobility

READ: Lezotte, "Born to Take the Highway"; and Lezotte, "Out on the Highway" [Course Webpage]

EXPLORE: Library Research Guide for FYS: Roadside America

Sep 5 (Thu): Presentations of Collaborative Project: Georgetown Road Stories

Week Three

Sep 10 (Tue): Module: Academic Success; Discussion: Cars as public/private space

READ: Bloch, "Policing Car Space" [Course Webpage]

Sep 12 (Thu): Module: Exploring Majors and Careers; Discussion: Memory and Automobility

READ: Cann, "Moving the Dead" [Course Webpage]

COMPLETE: TypeFocus Self-Assessment Context Questionnaire

Week Four

Sep 17 (Tue): Screen *Driving While Black* (2020)

DUE: Individual Project #3: Critical Connections Analysis of Automobility Scholarship [printed and signed submission, due at beginning of class]

Sep 19 (Thu): Screen and Discuss *Driving While Black* (2020)

Week Five

Sep 24 (Tue): Module: Library Research

DUE: Research Project Proposal [electronic submission, by 9:00am]

NOTE: Bring your laptop and meet in Library Lobby

Sep 26 (Thu): Research Workshop

Week Six

Oct 1 (Tue): Module: Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging, & Equity; Research Workshop

Oct 3 (Thu): Module: High-Impact Experiences; Informal Research Project Presentations

DUE: Research Project Draft [electronic submission, by 9:00am]

Week Seven

Oct 8 (Tue): Writing Critique Workshop for Work Group 1

DUE (WorkGroup 1 only): Your critiques of Research Project Drafts from WorkGroup 1

NOTE: Only WorkGroup 1 attends class this day

Oct 10 (Thu): Writing Critique Workshop for Work Group 2

DUE (WorkGroup 12 only): Your critiques of Research Project Drafts from WorkGroup 2

NOTE: Only WorkGroup 2 attends class this day

Week Eight

Oct 15 (Tue): [No Class--Fall Break]

Oct 17 (Thu): Discussion: Creative Nonfiction Road Narratives and Final Research Project Posters

DUE: Final Research Project

[electronic submission, by 9:00am]

Week Nine

Oct 22 (Tue): Writing Workshop

Oct 24 (Thu): Writing Workshop

DUE: Creative Nonfiction Road Narrative

[electronic submission, by noon]

Week Ten

Oct 29 (Tue): **First Symposium** (Exhibition of your Research Projects alongside other FYS/AES students), **9:00-11:15am, Bishops Lounge**

DUE: Poster and presentation outline

Oct 31 (Thu): Discussion: Our Roadside Americas; Course Evaluations

READ: Your classmates' Creative Nonfiction Road Narratives

DUE: Individual Project #4: Final Critical Connections

[electronic submission, by 9:00am]

Course Webpage Reading Citations

- Albert, Dan, *Are We There Yet?: The American Automobile Past, Present, and Driverless* (New York: Norton, 2019), pp. 1-11.
- Bloch, Stefano, "Policing Car Space and the Legal Liminality of the Automobile," *Progress in Human Geography* 45/1 (2021), pp. 136–155.
- Brigham, Ann, *American Road Narratives: Reimagining Mobility in Literature and Film* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), pp. 1-16.
- Cann, Candi, *Virtual Afterlives: Grieving the Dead in the Twenty-First Century* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2014), pp. 81-104.
- Dembling, Sophia, "The Bus Stops Here," in Marybeth Bond (ed), *A Woman's World: True Stories of Life on the Road* (San Francisco: Traveler's Tales, 1999), pp. 62-73.
- Dietz, Dan, "Hip to Be Square: An Austin Hipster Digs Downtown Georgetown," *Austin American-Statesman XLENT Magazine*, June 9, 2005, pp. 35-43.
- Gough, Laurie, "Travels with Chester," in Marybeth Bond (ed), *A Woman's World: True Stories of Life on the Road* (San Francisco: Traveler's Tales, 1999), pp. 349-367.
- Graff, Gerald, and Birkenstein, Cathy, "As He Himself Puts It: The Art of Quoting," in Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Persuasive Writing* (New York: Norton, 2007), pp. 39-47.
- Laderman, David, "What a Trip: The Road Film and American Culture," *Journal of Film and Video* 48/1-2 (1996), pp. 41-57.
- Lezotte, Chris, "Born to Take the Highway: Women, the Automobile, and Rock 'n' Roll," *The Journal of American Culture* 36/3 (2013), pp. 161-176.
- Lezotte, Chris, "Out on the Highway: Cars, Community, and the Gay Driver," *Culture, Society & Masculinities* 7/2 (2015), pp. 121–139.
- Man, Glenn, "Gender, Genre, and Myth in *Thelma & Louise*," *Film Criticism* 18/1 (1993), pp. 36-53.
- Sorin, Gretchen, *Driving While Black: African American Travel and the Road to Civil Rights* (New York: Liveright/Norton, 2020), pp. ix-xviii.
- Smith, Alfred Edgar, "Through the Windshield," *Opportunity: Journal of Negro Life* 11/5 (1933), pp. 142-144.
- Steinbeck, John, *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* (New York: Bantam, 1961), pp. 3-9.

Pronouns and Possessives:**its = possessive pronoun**

e.g. the essay's point of view => its point of view

it's = contraction of it + is

e.g. It is a fine day => It's a fine day

their = possessive pronoun

e.g. Hondo and Jo Jo's dog roams the neighborhood => Their dog roams the neighborhood

there = adverb indicating place

e.g. Their dog usually leaves its mark on that tree over there.

they're = contraction of they + are

e.g. Hondo and Jo Jo are looking for their dog => They're looking for their dog.

Punctuation/Sentence Structure Problems:**fragment (frag)**

A fragment is an incomplete sentence that lacks a subject, a verb, or both.

e.g. Washing the car. (no subject, incomplete verb, and incomplete thought)

comma splice (cs)

A comma cannot, on its own, join two independent clauses.

e.g. Jo Jo likes barbecue, Hondo prefers tofu => Jo Jo likes barbecue; Hondo prefers tofu.

=> Jo Jo likes barbecue, but Hondo prefers tofu.

=> Jo Jo likes barbecue. Hondo prefers tofu.

fused sentence (fs)

A fused sentence lacks the punctuation necessary to separate two independent clauses.

e.g. Jo Jo likes barbecue Hondo prefers tofu => see comma splice corrections above

semicolon errors

A semicolon can only be used in an extensive series or to separate two independent clauses.

e.g. Hondo stumbled; washing the car => Hondo stumbled; he was washing the car.

=> While he was washing the car, Hondo stumbled.

run-on

A run-on sentence proliferates verbs and subjects and objects without attention to grammatical structure.

awkward (AWK)

An awkward sentence stumbles over itself as it tries to communicate its point, rendering the writing confused/confusing. Often the fix is to "write to the point" more directly.

using the word "however"

The word "however" is not an interchangeable synonym for the word "but" or "although." It cannot be used to indicate contradiction unless you use punctuation to interrupt the flow of the sentence. If a sentence begins with the word, it must be followed by a comma; if a sentence ends with the word, it must be preceded with a comma. If it is used in the middle of a sentence, it must be set apart either with a set of commas before and after it or with a semicolon and a comma (see also **fs**, **cs**, and **run-ons**).

e.g. Winefred says she does not know how their dog gets out; however, I know that she does.

e.g. Winefred says she does not know how their dog gets out. However, I know that she does.

e.g. Winefred says she does not know how their dog gets out. I know, however, that she does.

Apostrophes:

A singular noun that does not end in "s" takes "'s" to indicate possession.

e.g. the woman's dog (the dog belongs to one woman)

A plural noun that already ends in "s" takes an "'" only to indicate possession.

e.g. the boys' dog (the dog belongs to more than one boy)

e.g. the ladies' house (the house belongs to more than one lady)

A plural noun that does not end in "s" takes "'s" to indicate possession.

e.g. the children's dog (the dog belongs to all the children)

e.g. the women's house (the house belong to the women)

A singular noun that ends in "s" takes either "'" or "'s" to indicate possession.

e.g. Charles' spaniel or Charles's spaniel (the spaniel belongs to Charles)

Punctuating quotes and citations:

I expect you to critically engage other writers as you develop your own arguments. Document all citations (including direct quotations, paraphrases, and "general indebtedness") using MLA, Harvard, Chicago, or some other standard in-text citation format within the essay and then list all of your cited sources in a Works Cited section at the end of the paper. Notice that the standard format for documenting a quote ends the quote, includes the citation, and only then provides the sentence's end punctuation, as in the following example: As Patrick Phillips argues, "There is a fine line between determining and overdetermining the meaning of a film text" (Phillips, 157).