THE COLLEGE MENTORING PROJECT
SPRING 2010
Bonner Center for Civic Engagement
University of Richmond

Assignment #4: “WRITING TO THINK”
Academic Discipline: Rhetoric and Composition
Professor: Dr. Sylvia Gale

ALL PARTS OF THIS ASSIGNMENT ARE DUE IN CLASS ON SATURDAY, MARCH 20TH.

READING:
Read the selections listed below before our class.

1. READING #1: Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, “Her Point is: The Art of Summarizing,” pages 28-38 (from They Say/I Say)

2. READING #2: Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, “As He Himself Puts It: The Art of Quoting,” pages 39-47 (from They Say/I Say)

WRITING:
The writing assignment due today (March 20th) is a revision of the second writing assignment you completed for February 20th. Below, the writing prompt is presented again, along with expectations for the paper. Please bring a TYPED copy of your paper with you to class.

Paper Prompt: Choose one of the readings you have done so far for this program, either this year or last year, and write a letter to a friend or family member. In your letter, you must recommend this reading to your letter recipient, arguing that it is relevant, important, and even urgent that they read it. Be sure to explain why you think this reading should matter to this person in particular, and use specific examples from the reading to support your argument.

Important Due Dates:
First Draft                  Due 2/20 in class
Second Draft                Due 3/20 in class
Final Draft                 Due 4/23 via email to sgale@richmond.edu

Paper Length: Your second draft should be 4-5 double-spaced, typed pages. If your paper is too short, you probably have too little evidence. If your paper is too long, you may not have focused your analysis enough.

Assignment Goal: The goal of this assignment is for you to learn and practice the skills involved in persuasive, interpretive argument. This paper will necessitate working on careful reading, analysis, and learning to present an interpretive argument.
Additional Sources: Outside research is not required for this assignment. However, if you find that quoting or referring to another source—whether it is a book, article, movie, etc.—would help you make your case, you are welcome to do it. Make sure that you document this source in your paper if you do this.

Guiding Questions—Things to Think About as You Rewrite and Revise:

- **Are you making good use of evidence from the original reading?** “Good use” means you are not only quoting or summarizing; you are also analyzing these quotes, showing why they help to make your point. (The They Say/I Say reading has great advice about how to put your evidence to work for your argument.)

- **Do you have a main point, or argument, in this letter? And is this main argument meaty enough to build your paper around?** In order to avoid making a simple list of reasons your letter recipient should do this reading, you need to have a major point you are making—something that ties all your smaller reasons together.

- **Are you considering potential objections, challenges, or questions that your letter recipient will have about the arguments made by you and by the author whose work you are recommending?** Don’t assume that the person you are writing to is a passive recipient. Imagine you are in conversation with that person; what would they say? How would you respond?

- **Are your reasons for recommending this reading to this specific audience clear?** If you are recommending the reading because you think they “will like it” or “be interested in it,” the answer to this is no. This assignment is asking you to make an interpretive argument about the reading with a specific audience in mind. This means that you will need to explain why this is a worthwhile thing for this particular person to read.