

Essay 4: Radical Revision

Interviewer: How much rewriting do you do?

Hemingway: It depends. I rewrote the ending of *Farewell to Arms*, the last page of it, 39 times before I was satisfied.

Interviewer: Was there some technical problem there? What was it that had stumped you?

Hemingway: Getting the words right.

(Ernest Hemingway, "The Art of Fiction," *The Paris Review* Interview, 1956)

There's no reason you shouldn't, as a writer, not be aware of the necessity to revise yourself constantly. More than a half, maybe as much as two-thirds of my life as a writer is rewriting. I wouldn't say I have a talent that's special. It strikes me that I have an unusual kind of stamina. I can rewrite sentences over and over again, and I do. . . . And I think what I've always recognized about writing is that I don't put much value in so-called inspiration. The value is in how many times you can redo something.

(John Irving, National Book Award Interview, June 3, 2005)

This essay is about closely reading, re-reading, and revising your own writing.

More specifically, for Essay 4, you are to choose Essay 1, 2, or 3 and revise it thoroughly. What this means is that you need to alter the entire essay, from the introduction to the conclusion.

You will be graded on the number of changes, not necessarily on the quality of the changes—although grammar and punctuation do count. In fact, the more time that you take with the small nuances of your own language, the better the result. This essay is about moving slowly and experimenting with different ways of writing what you want to write. Why? Because more than one way to write an idea exists (Because there exists more than one way to write an idea); there are an infinite number of ways to write an idea (Writers can choose from an unlimited number of ways to write what they want to say). In order to revise your own writing, one of the most important factors is your ability to alter your words and writing without taking it personally.

Grading Rubric:

1. Changed title, thesis, method, and introduction (25 points)
2. Changed Topic sentence, organization and paragraph structure (25points)
3. Changed conclusion (25 points)
4. Worksheet attached documenting changes to each sentences and to the overall structure (25 points)

**Make sure to include the original essay with my comments and grading rubric attached.

Due Dates:

Nov ~~20~~²⁰: Draft of Essay 4 due in class for peer review NOV 20

Nov ~~20~~: Final draft of Essay 4 due in class in a folder with process work (original essay) NOV 27

27 After Thanksgiving, 19