

ENG-W 210: Literacy and Public Life
 TR 4:00 to 5:15pm in KO 175
 Spring 2015
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 803/479.6597

Dr. Paul Cook
 KO 210-B
 Office Hours:
 TR 1:30 to 3:30pm and (virtually) anytime
 by appointment or via technology.¹



The Corporation: Giants among Us

In this multi-disciplinary course, we will explore an entity that is (arguably) the most significant institution of our time: the multinational corporation. The corporation is the largest and most powerful institution in the world today, but many Americans remain unaware of its power and influence over our lives. Students in this course will expand their knowledge of corporate culture by reading, analyzing, and discussing a range of texts, including best-selling novels, compelling documentaries, personal accounts, data-driven studies, and current realities.

By the end of the semester, you will be able to

And here's how you'll learn these skills

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>gain a better understanding</i> of corporate culture, influence, and power; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WPs, Artifact Analysis & Presentation, and discussions (Canvas and face-to-face)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>develop a broad sense of literacy</i>, which in this course means the capacity to think, read, and write about complex ideas and their historical, socio-cultural, and political dimensions; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WPs, Artifact Analysis & Presentation, and discussions (Canvas and face-to-face)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>identify</i> the pros and cons of corporations and their effects, as well as examples of positive and socially-responsible corporate culture; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WPs, Artifact Analysis & Presentation, and discussions (Canvas and face-to-face)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Apply your developing literacy</i> to public life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WPs, Artifact Analysis & Presentation, and

¹ I actively encourage all of my students to visit me during office hours as often as they like. I look forward to meeting each of you and talking about your drafts and your performance in the course—whether in person or online. My office is located on the second floor of the front side of the Main Building (KO). As you walk in the front doors (the main entrance), take a hard right and ascend the stairs. At the top of the stairs, simply turn right and walk halfway down the corridor. My office is in the Humanities and Social Sciences Main Office in the middle of the hall on the left—**KO 210-B**.

and what it means to be an engaged citizen of a democracy;	discussions (Canvas and face-to-face) and weekly reading responses (forums)
▪ <i>Speak and write</i> intelligently and confidently about the historical, cultural, economic, and political development of corporations in the US and abroad;	▪ Course readings, class discussions, quizzes, and weekly reading responses (forums)
▪ <i>Develop and support</i> a compelling argument concerning corporations in your own experience and research;	▪ Final writing project, Artifact Analysis & Presentation, and weekly reading responses (forums)
▪ <i>Recognize and understand</i> how an institutional entity as complex as the corporation must be approached through a multidisciplinary lens (history, cultural studies, literature and language, economics, political science, etc.);	▪ Course readings, class discussions, quizzes, and weekly reading responses (forums)
▪ <i>Read and understand</i> challenging academic texts such as scholarly articles, monographs, and theoretical texts.	▪ Course readings, class discussions, quizzes, and weekly reading responses (forums)
▪ ???	▪ ???

To successfully complete this course, you must...

Show up to class well-prepared and ready to learn. We will have important class discussions, in-class writing exercises and activities, impromptu workshops, etc. every time we meet, and these activities are pivotal to your success in this course. Don't miss class.

Be willing (and able) to read actively and thoroughly. Just "getting through" the assigned readings will not ensure your success in this course. You must "read actively" (more on this later) to be able to understand what you have read.

Be willing (and able) to plan, draft (write), and revise. This is a writing studio/workshop, so you will be expected to write several short essays and reading responses.

Be willing (and able) to actively participate during writers' workshops and give specific suggestions on your partners' drafts and projects.

Textbooks & Required Materials

To successfully complete this course, you need to purchase the following books:

Bait and Switch by Barbara Ehrenreich [ISBN: 978-0-8050-8124-4]

MicroSerfs by Douglas Coupland [978-0-06-039148-5]

The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit by Sloan Wilson [978-1-56858-246-7]

Please be sure to get the correct editions of all three texts (no e-texts or Kindles, please!)

I will post **required** readings and handouts to Canvas; these readings typically will be in .pdf format. I encourage you to **print out** these readings and practice “reading actively.” That is, you should learn to read with a pencil or pen in hand so that you can engage with the text—underline and circle passages, write comments, observations, and questions in the margins, and jot down ideas as they come to you.

You will also need...

*to set up your [IU Box account](#) so you can save readings, research, and drafts of your work in safe, secure cloud storage. If you’ve never used IU Box before, simply click on the hyperlink in the previous sentence (hold down the Ctrl key and click with your mouse) and log in to your IU Box account with your IUK username and passphrase. This will take you right to your IU Box account. From there, it’s fairly self-explanatory: you can create new folders and upload files just as in Windows or MS Word.

** a sturdy notebook, lots of paper, good pens and pencils, and access to a reliable computer. Also, I assume that you will have a *basic* working knowledge of (and access to) Canvas, MS Word, PowerPoint, e-mail, and Adobe Reader. For a detailed user’s guide to Canvas, go to <https://kb.iu.edu/d/bcll>.

***access to the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Luckily, the *OED* is available for all IUK students through our [library](#). Simply go to the “Databases A to Z” link and click on the letter “O.”

Assignments and Grading

Quizzes (15%)

Frequently—typically once each week—you will be asked to complete a short quiz, either in class or in Canvas. These are brief, five- to six-item quizzes designed to test your reading comprehension and to reward those who are keeping up with the readings *and* reading actively. I will drop your lowest quiz grade of the semester (including a grade of “zero”).

Class Participation (10%)

You will receive two class participation grades: one at around midterm and the other at the end of the semester; this way, if necessary, you can work to bring up your midterm participation grade by actively participating in the second half of the semester. ***Baseline (“C”-level) participation requirements are that you come to class every time we meet, complete ICWs, take notes, and complete all assigned readings and in-class activities.*** Contributing thoughtful comments and asking questions will raise your participation grade to a “B.” Consistently contributing interesting and insightful comments and ideas, asking questions, and providing leadership in class discussions will earn an “A.”

Discussions, ICWs (in-class writings), and ICAs (in-class activities) (25%)

Most every other week or so we will have discussions via Canvas on whatever reading or issue we’re covering that week. For detailed information regarding discussion posts, length, format/style, and other requirements, please see the handout “Guidelines for Discussions” in the Files tab in Canvas. We will have between 10 and 12 of these sorts of assignments over the course of the semester.

Artifact Analysis & Presentation (10%)

Each of you will choose an **artifact** that you think epitomizes or embodies some aspect of the corporation, broadly-construed. An “artifact,” in this rather broad definition, could include several different types of texts: you might, for instance, an article about some aspect of the corporation, its history, its culture, a corporate scandal, etc. An artifact could even be a scene from a movie, a Facebook conversation, a TV show, or even a Tweet or even a short video—it’s up to you, so long as you can explain in your presentation how this artifact embodies or reflects or traffics in some aspect of the corporation.

Once you've decided on an artifact to analyze, you will design a brief (7-minute), informal presentation to be given in one of our class meetings (you will have some freedom in choosing when you would like to present). Your presentation should be accompanied by a one-page (front and back is best) handout that you will distribute to the class. Please make plans soon to speak with me or run your idea by me and set a couple of possible dates for your Artifact Analysis & Presentation assignment. We will start these presentations in **Week 5** and we will continue until the end of the semester. (I will send around a sign-up sheet during class in Week 3.)

Short Writing Projects or "SWPs" (40%)

SWP#1 (10%)

Consider some of the major themes that we have encountered in our readings and in *The Corporation* documentary thus far: some of these themes include corporate origins, the power of corporations, mass conformity, deception, searching for purpose, exploitation, and broken relationships. Have you noticed the presence of these themes in our world today? Have you or someone you know been directly affected by such themes (in relation to corporations)?

Write a 3-4 page (750-1,000 word) essay that illustrates one or more examples of these themes that you have noticed in our world today; or one or more examples of you or someone you know being affected by one or more of these themes in relation to corporations. Be sure to clearly identify the similarities of your example(s) in relation to what we have learned in class so far. You can do this by referencing specific examples from the documentary, the articles you have read, or the novel that you read; be sure to identify the similarities of the examples. Please use either MLA or APA format for your citation and formatting guidelines: more information can be found in Canvas in the Files tab and on the Online Resources page.

SWP#2 (15%)

Consider the themes that we have encountered up to this point:

1. Homogeny
2. Likability
3. Perception
4. Dishonesty
5. Conformity
6. Being Superficial
7. "Rationality"
8. Efficiency
9. Predictability
10. Control
11. Calculability
12. Hierarchy
13. Conflict between work and home life
14. Finding purpose for life
15. Searching for something to believe in
16. Family relationships
17. Work relationships

In a 4-6 page (1,000-1,500 words) essay, discuss how the themes of "McDonaldization" (Efficiency, Predictability, Calculability, Rationality, and Control) were represented in *Bait and Switch*, *MicroSerfs*, and "The Secret Recordings of Carmen Segarra." Choose one of the above themes (or choose another of your own) and discuss how it was represented in the other books, as well as the effects they had on the characters, situations, their relationships with others, and their lifestyles.

SWP#3 (15%)

Consider corporate culture and how successful corporate cultures are formed and maintained. Now that you know what makes a successful corporate culture, write a 5-8 page (1,250-2,000 words) essay that “corrects” or attempts to propose a solution to one of the faulty corporate cultures we’ve examined. You can choose from any of the organizational examples that we’ve explored. Once you choose an organization:

1. Define in 3-5 paragraphs what is wrong with the culture;
2. Identify in 3-5 paragraphs what negative effects arise from the culture;
3. Define in 3-5 paragraphs what you believe the values and goals of the organization should be;
4. Describe in 3-5 paragraphs how you would go about hiring those goals and values;
5. Describe in 3-5 paragraphs how you would live and apply those values, and how you would go about achieving your organizational goals;
6. Provide a concluding paragraph that describes why you chose your specific value changes and how those changes will impact the company.

Readings

The weekly reading assignments in this course will be challenging and (occasionally) quite long. We will be reading texts ranging from fiction from the 1950s to contemporary academic scholarship and theory to popular bestsellers, news and magazine articles, web stories, and pretty much everything else in between. These readings are fun and exciting, but they will require you to practice a mode of patient, careful, *attentive* reading to which you may not yet be accustomed.

For instance, when you come across a word you don’t understand, look it up in an online dictionary (the *Oxford English Dictionary* is best and free for IU students through <http://www.iuk.edu/academics/library/>); when you find a concept or reference with which you’re unfamiliar, look it up on Wikipedia and read the entry until the passage you’re wrestling with starts to make sense. Mark any and all passages in your books that you would like to discuss in class, that you think are particularly noteworthy, or that don’t make sense to you. We will discuss these passages in class. In short, you will need to read closely, carefully, and *slowly*.

You should expect to *read*—in the manner I’ve just briefly described—between **25 and 50 pages** each week. And a few times during the semester the reading load will be heavier. Please get into a weekly if not daily reading habit that works for you and stick to it. This will be key to your success and learning in this course. If ever you have any questions or concerns about our readings, please don’t hesitate to let me know.

Attendance and Participation

While there will be *some* lecture in this course, this is definitely *not* a lecture-only course. Ongoing, stimulating class discussions and in-class group activities are vital to the success of this course and to your overall learning experience. In short, it’s important that you come to class regularly, complete all assigned readings each week, take time to reflect on what you’ve read (and then go back and re-read), take careful notes on the readings (in your notebook and textbook), ask questions, and participate actively and enthusiastically in class discussions and in-class exercises.

When you miss class, you miss important information, and classmates miss your input and ideas. **If you are absent, you are responsible for finding out what we covered in class and for submitting in advance any assignments due on that day.** I reserve the right to change the course schedule at any time,

and it is your responsibility to stay on top of these changes. If ever you do miss class, you should use the “Questions about the Course” Discussion in the “Discussions” tab in Canvas to find out what you missed. See “**Getting in touch with me...and each other**” below for more information.

Your course grade will drop by one letter grade (10%) if you miss more than 10% of our classes (**or 4 class periods**); you will fail the course if you miss 20% of our classes (**6 class periods**). If a *bone fide* emergency forces you to miss several class periods, please contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss your options. Documentation will be required.

Phones, Food, and other (necessary) distractions

Please be courteous with your smart phones and other mobile devices. Opportunities to “unplug” from the matrix are increasingly rare; let’s use our time together for writing, discussion, reflection, and exploration (not Candy Crush Saga and idle Facebook stalking).

Also, while I don’t really have a problem with most types of eats, let’s try to remember that this is a classroom, not the back room at Uncle Buddy’s Family Feedbag. Coffee, sodas, and water are fine; please try to keep foodstuffs to something manageable, not-too noisy, and non-odorous (granola bars, fruits and veggies, snacks, etc.)

Late Assignments

Late work will not be accepted under *most* circumstances. (If you miss a quiz due to absence, for example, you will receive a zero.) If a *bona fide* emergency forces you to miss class, please let me know as soon as is reasonable so that we can discuss your options.

Inclement Weather and Instructor Illness

As we all know, the weather in Indiana in the spring semester can be nothing short of brutal. Luckily, I live in Kokomo, and I don’t often get truly sick; anything can happen, however, so my pledge to you is that if ever I do find it necessary to cancel class for any reason, I will send a Canvas announcement either the night before or the morning of the cancellation.

Here’s a good idea for each of you: go into the “Settings” tab in Canvas (top right when you first log in), click on the “Notifications” tab, and then set your preferences to receive Canvas messages and announcements directly to your mobile phone. Let me know if you need help setting this up.

Getting in touch with me...and each other

You will have several avenues of communication for this course:

- If you have **general questions about the course** (assignments, due dates, course policies, etc.), please post your questions on the “Questions about the Course” Discussion in the “Discussions” tab. I will check this Discussion regularly (usually twice a day from Monday through Friday and at least once on the weekend) and answer any questions you may have. If you have a question that concerns the entire class, please use this space.
- “The Coffee House Lounge” site in the Discussions tab will be an **informal space for you to meet your fellow students** and get to know one another over the course of the semester. This is a **social gathering place**. I will not monitor this site on a regular basis unless students express concern to me about the content being posted.
- If you have questions of an **individual or personal nature** that you do not wish to share with the rest of the class, you can contact me by sending a message through the message center in Canvas (in the “Messages” tab). ***This is the best way to get in touch with me.*** You are also always welcome to visit me in my office (during and outside of office

hours), call me in my office during office hours (765/455.9229), or call me at home on my cell (803/479.6597) before 9:00pm on weekdays. I want to discuss the class and your work with you, and utilizing office hours is an excellent way for us to address any concerns you might have about the class, your progress or performance, and/or any of your questions about the course material and your projects and interests.

Technical Requirements and Student Disability Assistance

This course requires that you have access to the IU Kokomo computer network, access to the Canvas course management system, and some basic familiarity with Canvas. The IU Kokomo Instructional Technology department (IT) provides guidelines for hardware and software for all students. This course requires primarily word processing (MS Word 2007, 2010, or 2013), printing capabilities, and access to Canvas. See <http://iuware.indiana.edu> for free downloads and discount prices on hardware and software exclusively for IU students.

IU also offers students, faculty, and staff free access to Lynda.com tutorials on everything from MS Word 2013 to the latest version of Dreamweaver. To access Lynda.com, follow this [link](#), scroll down and click on the Lynda.com link. This is a subscription service, so you must access Lynda.com through the IUK website.

Students should contact the IU Kokomo Helpdesk with technical questions. The Helpdesk offers technical support to faculty, staff, and students for all IT-related requests. The Helpdesk provides assistance to users, as well as maintains a tracking system that places each user's request into a queue. You can send an e-mail request to the Helpdesk at kohelp@iuk.edu or call 765/455.9315. Local phone and walk-up support at the Helpdesk in the Library is available Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm. If you're having any technical difficulties, please contact both me and the Helpdesk right away so we can get your problem solved.

Students requiring accommodations for disabilities or special needs should contact the IUK [Office of Disability Services](#) and/or refer to this [handout](#). If you have a documented disability on file with the IUK Office of Disability Services, it is imperative that you let me know as soon as possible so that we can discuss arrangements for your success in this course.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

"A student must not adopt or reproduce ideas, words, or statements of another person without an appropriate acknowledgement. A student must give due credit to the originality of others and acknowledge an indebtedness whenever he or she does any of the following: (a) quotes another person's actual words, either oral or written; (b) paraphrases another person's words, either oral or written; (c) uses another person's idea, theory, or material unless information is common knowledge." Source: Indiana University Code of Student Ethics. (Note that "intent" is not a factor here.)

"Double dipping," or submitting a writing project for two or more courses (whether they're IUK courses or not), constitutes plagiarism and will result in a grade of zero and possible disciplinary action. If you have an idea for a writing project from another class that you would like to further develop in this class, please consult with me. I'm more than willing to help you develop your ideas and plan writing projects that will do work for you, but simply *submitting the same essay for multiple classes is not acceptable under any circumstances.*

Knowing the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable uses of other's work, texts, or ideas can be tricky sometimes, and we will spend some time in class discussing the boundaries of acceptable use, the nature of research, and when, where, and how to appropriately document source materials.

Writing Center (Library KA 128)

Don't forget to utilize the Writing Center that your tuition dollars support! The IUK Writing Center is open Monday through Thursday, 9am to 7pm, Friday, 10am to 2pm, and Saturday, 12:30 to 4:30pm. Remember, many of IUK's very best students understand that seeking out a response to their writing is a necessary part of the learning/writing process. Stop by or call for a 30-minute appointment: 765/455.9425, Option #1.

You can now instant message the tutors your quick questions (grammar, citing, etc.) using campus contacts. Visit our website at <http://www.iuk.edu/writing-center> where you can

- Ask a more detailed question online by using Ask a Tutor email option;
- See a list of *Grammar Girl* podcasts on hundreds of usage and other English language concerns;
- Discover which helpful documents and other sources are available at the Center;
- Find out when your favorite tutor is scheduled to work.

Federal Sexual Misconduct Statement

What you should know about sexual misconduct: IU does not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and all forms of sexual violence. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help. It is important to know that federal regulations and University policy require faculty to promptly report complaints of potential sexual misconduct known to them to their campus Deputy Title IX Coordinator(s) to ensure that appropriate measures are taken and resources are made available. The University will work with you to protect your privacy by sharing information with only those that need to know to ensure the University can respond and assist. If you are seeking help and would like to speak to someone confidentially, you can make an appointment with a Mental Health Counselor on campus (contact information available at <http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/employee/confidential.html> (Links to an external site.)).

Find more information about sexual violence, including campus and community resources at <http://stopsexualviolence.iu.edu/> (Links to an external site.).

Course Schedule (Spring 2015)

I reserve the right to alter reading assignments and due dates depending on how quickly we're moving and other considerations. I will *always* give advance notice of any changes to the course schedule through a Canvas announcement and, wherever possible, during class meetings.

T, 1/13: Course introductions, ice-breakers, etc.

In-class activity: "What do we already know about corporations?" "What is literacy?"

R, 1/15: Course syllabus overview: expectations, assignments, due dates, policies & procedures, SWPs.

Purchase textbooks and Read Franzen's "Introduction" to Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*

Unit I: Background(s): History, Ideas, & Literacy

T, 1/20: *The Corporation* (2004) and discussion

Read Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, pp. 1-54 (Ch.1 through Ch. 9)

R, 1/22: *The Corporation* (2004) and discussion

T, 1/27: *The Corporation* (2004) and discussion

Read Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, pp. 54-143 (Ch. 11 through Ch. 20)

R, 1/29: Frank, “The God that Sucked” (Canvas) and discussion

T, 2/03: What the heck is “neoliberalism”?

Read Harvey, “Freedom’s Just Another Word...” from *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Canvas) and Read Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, pp. 144-203 (Ch. 21 through Ch. 29) discussion

R, 2/05: Harvey, “Freedom’s...” (cont.) and discussion

*T, 2/10: **Artifact Analysis Presentations begin**

Read Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*, pp. 204-76 (Ch. 30 through Ch. 41 and Afterword)

R, 2/12: Unit Review

***SWP#1 due (graded draft)**

Unit 2: Corporate Culture and Its Influence(s)

T, 2/17: What is “corporate culture?”

Read Ehrenreich, *Bait and Switch*, pp. 1-63 (Introduction and Ch. 1 and Ch. 2)

*R, 2/19: **no class** (library day: instructions in Canvas)

Read Ehrenreich, *Bait and Switch*, pp. 64-94 (Ch. 3)

T, 2/24: Ehrenreich & Investigative Journalism

Read Ehrenreich, *Bait and Switch*, pp. 94-172 (Ch. 4 through Ch. 6) and Listen to “The Secret Recordings of Carmen Segarra” (Canvas)

R, 2/26: Ehrenreich & Segarra

Re-listen to key parts of “The Secret Recordings...” (Canvas). Take good notes!

T, 3/03: Business & Spirituality

Read Ehrenreich, *Bait and Switch*, pp. 173-248 (Ch. 7 through Afterword) and TBA

R, 3/05: SWP#2 in-class workshop

Read Ritzer excerpts from *The McDonaldization of Society* (Canvas)

T, 3/10: **Library Day** (meet in front of the IU Kokomo library at least 5 minutes before class time)

R, 3/12: **Unit Review**

***SWP#2 due (graded draft)**

*T, 3/17: **no class (Spring Break!)**

*R, 3/19: **no class (Spring Break!)**

Unit 3: The Corporation in Popular Media (Movies, TV, web, etc.)

T, 3/24: *Mad Men* & the Business of Cool

Read Frank, "Ad absurdum and the Conquest of Cool: Canned Flattery for Corporate America" (Canvas)

R, 3/26: *Mad Men* (cont.)

T, 3/31: *MicroSerfs* & Office Drones

Read Coupland, pp. 1-42 (Ch. 1)

R, 4/02: *Office Space*

Read Coupland, pp. 43-63 (Ch. 2)

T, 4/07: *Office Space* (cont.)

Read Coupland, pp. 64-105 (Ch. 2, cont.)

R, 4/09: *MicroSerfs* & Office Drones (cont.)

Read Coupland, pp. 107-43 (Ch. 3)

T, 4/14: *MicroSerfs* & Office Drones (cont.)

Read Coupland, pp. 144-222 (Ch. 3, cont. & Ch. 4)

R, 4/16: Special Guest Lecture (speaker TBA)

Read Coupland, pp. 223-54 (Ch. 5)

T, 4/21: *MicroSerfs* & Office Drones

Read Coupland, pp. 255-335 (Ch. 5, cont. & Ch. 6)

R, 4/23: *MicroSerfs* & Office Drones

Read Coupland, pp. 337-71 (Ch. 7)

T, 4/28: Unit Review

***SWP#3 due (graded draft)**

*R, 4/30: Last day of class: course review, course evals, etc.

