

Since its inception in 1967, the Residential College has had the evaluation of students in a narrative form. When students receive written evaluations, it allows them to focus on learning of the subject matter without classroom competition for letter or numeric grades. Evaluations are honest appraisals of the individual's performance in the course, often citing written and analytical abilities as well as the articulation of thoughts and ideas. There is no letter grade conversion of the evaluation, and written evaluations and letter grades (from LSA courses) are included on the student's transcript. Evaluations are not considered a pass/fail option, and students are held to high standards in their RC courses. When students perform well in RC classes, written evaluations often function as mini-recommendations given consideration by employers and graduate/professional programs.

## Narrative Evaluations at the Residential College in Early 2000's

### GOOD

RCHUMS 310 (Medieval Sources of Modern Culture, WN2003)

Excellent attendance and participation; she is a serious, responsible student, well prepared, well read, and receptive to the material. Her papers were consistently outstanding. Her prose style is accurate, sophisticated and individual. She has achieved her own voice not only in style, but also in her analytical approach. Her first paper on the Sinai icon of the Virgin Mary with Angels and Saints in comparison with the Life of Mary of Egypt was not only analytically rigorous, but also displayed an articulate understanding of the pertinent theology. She moved confidently from a presentation of each work in itself to its place in a larger intellectual context. Her second paper on memory in a passage from Augustine's Confessions was a superlative study of both ideas and style. She probed not only the rhetoric of the passage, but also its syntactical verve as the prose leapt beyond memory into the territory of faith. Final paper was a skillful analysis of the feud in Gregory of Tours and Beowulf. Her textual work is very sensitive; she does not generalize but rather tracks the movement of the discourse with unusual attention. Her own style is elegant, firm, and precise. Final Exam: literary material was strong; perfect identifications. She missed the sarcophagus of Santa Maria Antiqua, and was tentative on the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. Otherwise, a competent effort.

### OK

RCCORE 100 (First-Year Seminar, FA01)

Preparation/Attendance: excellent. Class participation: (barely) adequate. Marissa was an enjoyable-although extremely quiet-addition to the classroom. Her emerging enthusiasm and passion for knowledge are encouraging. Rarely a participant in class discussions, Marissa's early writing was generally free from grammatical errors, but frequently displayed a misreading of the texts and followed the restraints of artificial writing "rules" of the past (e.g., the five paragraph essay). One later re-write and her final short paper revealed marked improvement. Her final short paper-an analysis of choice in Hesse's BENEATH THE WHEEL-was quite strong, well-developed with very good use of quotes, and by far the best piece of writing she produced all semester. Unfortunately, her term paper, while a good synthesis of readings and interviews, was in need of substantial proofreading & tightening, more like her earlier writing than her later writing.

### POOR

RCCORE 100 (First-Year Seminar, FA01)

Molly is a very bright young woman whose participation and work in this course was far below her potential. She missed more classes than is acceptable and also did not show up for two individual conferences. Apparently there were extenuating circumstances, but not always. The ideas expressed in her writing were excellent and integrated her interests and knowledge from outside of the course. However, her writing was uneven, appearing rushed and unedited, even the final paper in which run on and sentence fragments marred her presentation. In addition to the disrespect, intentional or not, that missing conferences communicates, these were also missed opportunities for personal writing instruction. Molly's class participation was infrequent, although she clearly had much to contribute.

## Narrative Evaluations at the Residential College in 2010

### GOOD

RCSSCI 260 (Theorizing Knowledge, WN10)

Sari was a very good addition to the seminar. Often an active participant in class discussions, Sari demonstrated ongoing efforts to make sense of the readings. Her struggles in class to find the most precise words for her emerging ideas paid off when she turned to crafting prose. Her written work was consistently of a strong quality, reflecting a solid blend of substantive and methodological understanding. For her final project, Sari outlined a strong research project probing women's choices and attitudes surrounding birthing options, incorporating surveys, interviews, and oral histories. Sari also completed a Social Theory and Practice concentration proposal as part of the Basic Seminar (SSci 290). Course grade: A-

### OK

RCHUMS 360 (Existentialism, WN10)

Although John was not active in class discussions and his worksheets were only adequate, his two examinations were of a high quality and revealed an excellent grasp of the more difficult issues in the various texts. Except in his written work, which was excellent, he did not extend himself in the other aspects of the course. His term paper entitled "Pain and Suffering: The Secret to a Good Life"; treated this complex theme in the Musil's "The Confusions of Young Törless" and Kierkegaard's "Fear and Trembling" and did so with great intellectual insight and many striking observations.

### POOR

RCHUMS 334 (Harlem Renaissance WN10)

J.T. struggled significantly for the majority of this semester. He is an incredibly gifted and curious minded young man who should have excelled in this course. However, personal challenges distracted him and weighed on his heart; clearly, this prevented him from submitting his best work for review. Further, his class preparation was inconsistent: on some days he was completely disengaged while on others it was clear that he not only read our course material but thought deeply about it. To compound this issue, by mid-semester J.T. was routinely fifteen minutes late to class.

J.T.'s final examination is emblematic of his term performance as it is inconsistent and uneven. While he engages in close readings of our texts, and adequately responds to the essay prompt, he fails to seek out deeper meanings from our texts. Further, it lacks the comprehensive analysis expected of a final exam. His arguments are adequate but he does not seem cognizant of the deeper implications of his conclusions. His essay would have undoubtedly proven to be more sophisticated if he had spent more time preparing for it. It is unfortunate that Jun Tai did not earn a higher grade in this course. He has the kind of mind that is ideal for someone in the humanities. With that said, he did show signs of improvement over the course of the term; while his first essay examination earned a "D+", his final exam showed glimmers of his intellectual promise. Indeed, his solid performances on the midterm and the final exam salvaged what could have been a disastrous semester.