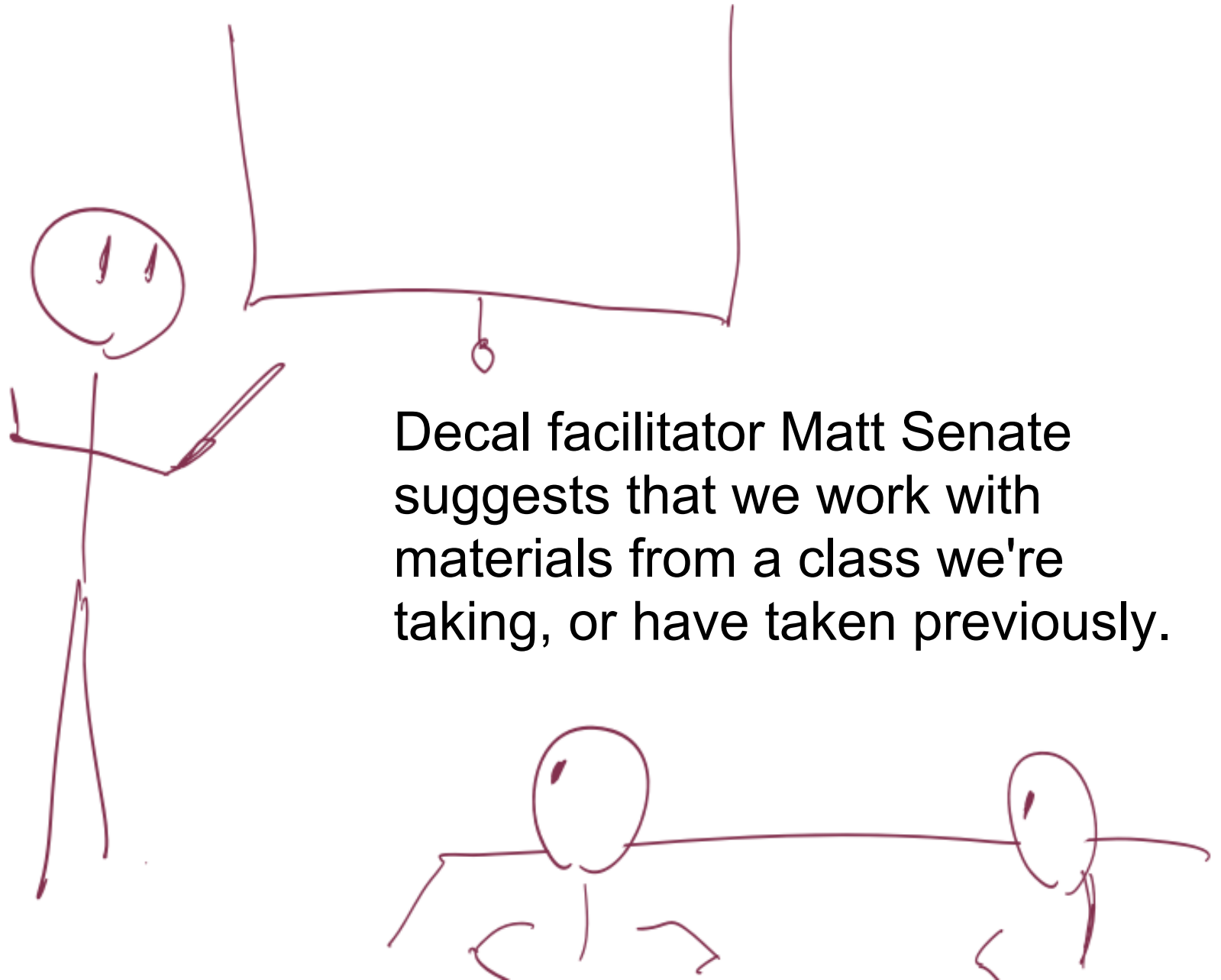# Assorted Rhetoric Course Materials

(assorted course materials, from assorted rhetoric courses)

Michael Pruess

Open Educational Resource Project for
Digital Berkeley Decal, Fall 2010

Project Story

Decal facilitator Matt Senate suggests that we work with materials from a class we're taking, or have taken previously.
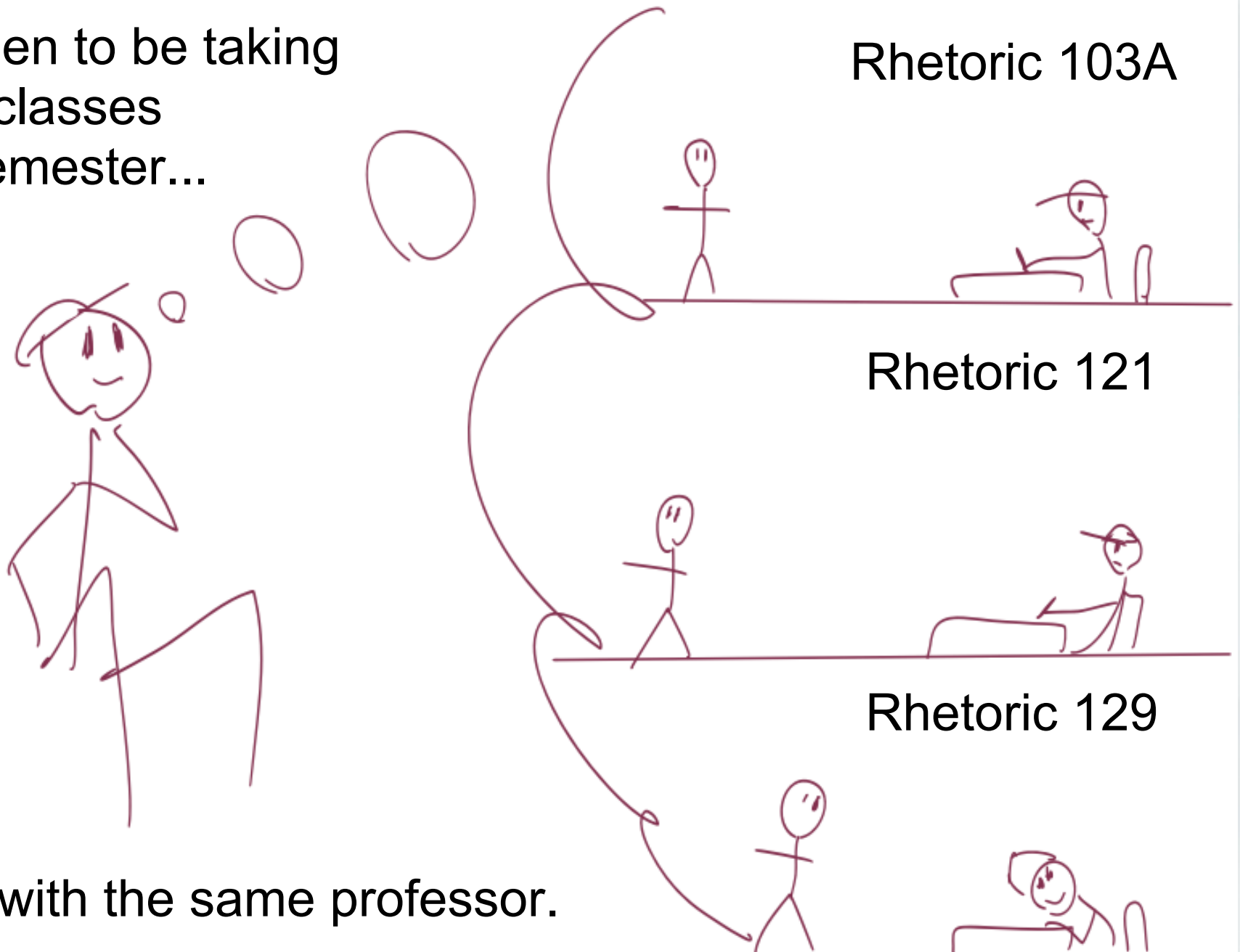
Project Story

I happen to be taking three classes this semester...
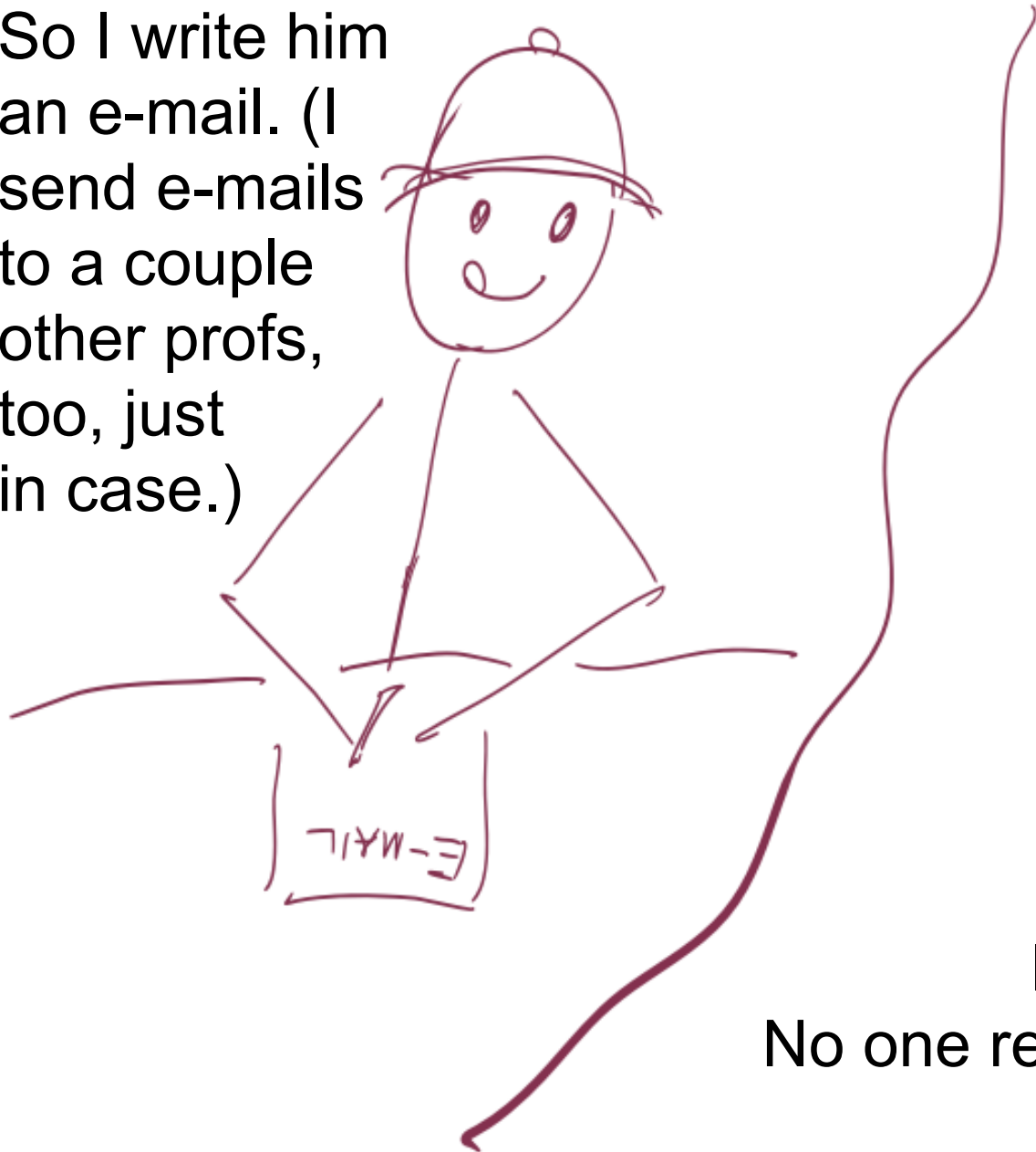
Rhetoric 103A

Rhetoric 121

Rhetoric 129

... all with the same professor.

Project Story

Project Story

So I go to my rhetoric professor's office hours, explain the project, and ask if he's interested.

Project Story

Fairly enthusiastic about OER even prior to my explanation of the decal, my professor gladly hands over the documents for all three classes.

Project Details

- Materials received: syllabus, assignments.
- Materials denied: lecture notes.
  - "too sloppy" / "not very professional"
  - Professors beginning their careers or otherwise looking for jobs might be reluctant to hand over anything that isn't very polished.
- Licensing: "let's go with what's most open"
  - Professor didn't seem to care much about the differences between open licenses.
  - Ultimately, CC Attribution-Share Alike selected.

Edits I Made to Materials

- Readings
  - took tables of contents from readers and added them to the "required texts" sections of the syllabi.
- Dates
  - only relevant for Fall 2010 incarnations of the courses.
  - removed them, kept week numbers for the syllabi.
- Other Specifics
  - excised GSI names from assignment handouts
  - changed assignment deadlines from dates to lessons
  - left date of class (so it is evident when the course was first taught)
- Added open license info

Sample

The Rhetoric of Biography and Autobiography
Rhetoric 129 – Fall 2010

James Harker

Course Description:

Biography and autobiography are ostensibly "true" genres, but they are highly subject to rhetorical pressure. In this course, we will examine how the rhetorical tropes for depicting a life are influenced by differing understandings of human subjectivity. We will open with seemingly far removed early Christian sources, hagiography and confession. Following the hagiographic tradition, we will look to the orthodox Victorian biography. With Foucault, we will turn to the darker side, and consider the significance of modes of confession for the "other" Victorians. The majority of the course will then look to twentieth-century innovations such as the "psychobiography" of Freud, the "new biography" of the Bloomsbury Group, and the contemporary tell-all memoir as consolidations of the hagiographic and confessional impulses.

Required Texts:

The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas. Gertrude Stein.
The History of Sexuality, Vol 1. Michel Foucault.
Biography: A Brief History. Nigel Hamilton.
The Confessions of Saint Augustine.
"The Life of Christina Mirabilis." Thomas de Cantimpré.
"Prostitution in London," from *London Labor and the London Poor*. Henry Mayhew.
"Fictional versus Historical Lives," from *The Distinction of Fiction*. Dorrit Cohn.
Leonardo da Vinci: A Memory of His Childhood. Sigmund Freud.
"The New Biography," from *Granite and Rainbow*. Virginia Woolf.
"Florence Nightingale," from *Eminent Victorians*. Lytton Strachey.
Mother Teresa: A Complete Authorized Biography. Kathryn Spink.
The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice. Christopher Hitchens.

The end result...

Name
rhet-103a-first-paper.rtf
rhet-103a-second-paper.rtf
rhet-103a-syllabus.rtf
rhet-121-final-paper.rtf
rhet-121-first-paper.rtf
rhet-121-syllabus.rtf
rhet-129-final-paper.rtf
rhet-129-first-paper.rtf
rhet-129-syllabus.rtf

... nine rich text files.

Not the most impressive-seeming collection of materials.

Why so little?

- These classes are low-tech
  - No lecture slides, audio, video, etc.
- "Unideal for OER?"
  - Most rhetoric classes are like this.
  - Similar situation for many humanities.
  - Should these classes not get 'out there?'
- Materials useful for:
  - Educators who could recycle syllabi and assignments
  - Students interested in a professor's past courses
  - Anyone who wants to structure their hobby reading
- Materials not suitable for:
  - Replacing a class

Thoughts For The Future

- Getting professors onboard:
  - Talk to them in person.
- Working with materials:
  - I didn't have any educational experiences on this front.
- Creating OER for humanities courses:
  - Tricky question—implicates goals of OER.
  - OER as course replacement:
    - Is it even possible for classes like these?
    - (Learning driven mostly via discussion.)
  - OER as reusable material for educators:
    - Syllabi & assignments valuable.
  - OER as free information for everyone:
    - Syllabi & assignments only useful as a guide for further learning.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Matt Senate for putting this decal together.

Thanks to Professor Brian Carver for sponsoring this decal.

Thanks to Professor James Harker for providing me with materials from his rhetoric courses and giving me the go-ahead to use them in my project.