

**Advanced English Composition Syllabus, Winter 2006**  
**Instructor: Gord Sellar**

**Course Overview:**

Writing is fast becoming a major concern for Korean students of English, and of course it is, in our internet-revolutionized world, an extremely important skill. This course is designed to provide students with solutions for these advanced questions of how to successfully apply their writing skills in English to larger projects than they may have previously completed, and to allow students a chance to really focus on the important step of developing their writing through intense, focused practice. This course assumes that students have a reasonable level of ability in spoken English and have completed some basic work at the sophomore level in developing their writing in English. Competency at the level of the sentence and paragraph are assumed.

While the content of the course will be tailored to the needs of the particular group of students, the main intended focus will be on advanced skills such as research, planning and outlining; logical argumentation; assimilation of model structures for reuse; rewriting, revision, editing; cooperative composition; and proofreading and formatting.

By the end of this course, students will be expected to be able to write thoughtful, interesting, and organized essays in English at an advanced level, and to be equipped with the tools to continue improving their English writing on their own should they wish to do so. Special consideration will be given to academic and other forms of essay-writing, and students will be expected to assimilate a number of standard "forms" or "structures" for use in their own projects, as well as learn how to work cooperatively in the composition and editing process.

To this end, class sessions will consist of lectures, composition practice, group editing and discussion exercises, and so on; homework activities will include daily (Monday-to-Friday) participation a group blog, preparation of writing assignments, and occasional readings or editing assignments.

**Homework**

Homework for this class falls under several different categories.

*Regular writing assignments* of different kinds will be assigned throughout the semester; for shorter homework assignments, such as writing a topic sentence or a brief outline, homework may be due for the next class meeting; for medium-length assignments, I will usually give students a week or ten days to prepare their assignments. Longer assignments may be give up to a month to complete, though often intermediate steps along the way will be submitted to me during the writing process.

All assignments submitted to me must be typed (double-spaced) and include your name, student number, my name, and the course name and number. Submissions consisting of multiple pages should be stapled or paperclipped, but I prefer that students not use plastic folders or binders to submit their work. Any work failing to meet these criteria will be returned to the student immediately for resubmission within 3 days.

Throughout the semester, you will be expected to participate daily in a *group blog* that I will set up in the next week or two. The group blog will allow you not only to practice writing on subjects which interest you, but also to learn from others' feedback, and from the errors and merits you encounter in your peers' writing. You may post as much and as often as you like, of course, and grading for the blog will be ranked from top to bottom, so that the most active posters and commenters will receive the highest grades for their blog participation mark. However, my expectation is that you will contribute to this site daily, whether in the form of posts or in the form of focused and useful feedback to peers. Since the majority of improvement in your writing will come through constant practice, this portion of your classwork is weighted heavily in terms of your final grade.

Your *final portfolio*, due near the end of semester, must be submitted to me with a large envelope that is addressed to yourself, and which has proper postage for the portfolio to be sent to you once it has been marked. Portfolios will not be accepted without a return envelope with sufficient postage.

## **Textbook**

I will announce the textbook which we will use after I receive a preliminary writing sample from class members. The textbook may be supplemented by handouts, readings, and other materials.

Should you wish to explore texts or materials not encompassed in this course, please feel free to ask me for recommendations. I will be more than happy to help you find materials which are suited to your needs and worth exploring.

## **Assessment**

As you can see below, course assessment is not heavily focused on examinations. The majority of your grade (75%) will have nothing to do with the examinations in this course! This is because for your development as a writer, what is important is constant work and practice at writing in English. Regular attendance, in-class participation, completion of homework, and regular contribution to our class blog are all very important to your grade.

10% - Attendance

20% - In-class participation

20% - Assignments & Homework

25% - Daily Participation in Group Blog

10% - Midterm Exam

15% - Final Writing Project/Portfolio

A score of 0% in any of the above marks will result in an incomplete grade. Students must at least attempt all homework/writing assignments, especially the midterm exam and final project and portfolio, in order to pass the course.

## **Contact Information**

Email: [mistergord@gmail.com](mailto:mistergord@gmail.com)

Office N223

Office Hours: TBA (To Be Announced)

Office Phone: 02-2164-4459