

Class Description:

This is a course in essay writing, covering the absolutely necessary basics in the writing process, from planning and generating ideas to the stage of proofreading. It also will familiarize students with the standard expectations of academic writing, including in-text citation of sources, the use of a Bibliography or Works Cited page, formatting, and skills involving summary, paraphrase, and argumentation.

It is assumed that all students taking this course have successfully completed the sophomore level course Understanding English: Reading & Writing (or equivalent), and have adequate ability in English to begin study of this area. I will make a strong effort to alert those who seem unprepared for the course in time for them to enroll in the more basic course if necessary.

Course Content:

The content of the course will be tailored to the needs of the particular group of students. However, this course will proceed as follows:

- a quick review of rules regarding plagiarism and necessary word processing skills for work with English texts
- a few basic essay formats
- a brief review of informal logic and approaches to written argumentation
- textual-model structure studies and assimilation
- mastery of summary, paraphrase, and quotation/citation methods
- occasional collaborative writing projects integrating group planning, research, and editing on assigned or student-designated topics
- rewriting, revision, and proofreading techniques

Course Objectives:

The purpose of the course is enable students to write thoughtful, interesting, and organized texts -- essays or otherwise -- in English at an advanced level, and equip them with the tools to continue improving their English writing on their own after the course's end (should they wish to do so). Special consideration will be given to academic writing and collaborative 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.

Class Activities:

Lectures, composition practice, group blog, group preparations and discussion, and occasional readings of students' own work to the class for critique.

Assessment:

- 10% - In-class participation & preparation
- 30% - Assignments & Homework
- 10% - Peer Evaluation of submitted work, and of participation in Peer Workshops
- 20% - Participation in Group Blog
- 15% - Midterm Project
- 15% - Final Writing Project

Textbook:

TBA. Photocopies and online resources will be used to supplement our textbook, and students must complete any assigned readings in a timely manner; failure to do so will be reflected in the student's participation grade.

My contact information:

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Course Outline:

The following is somewhat vague and subject to changes at any time, but it should give you an idea of what I'm planning for you. As you can see, the course is separated into 4 larger sections, and each of those sections will involve a writing project completed with a partner, or a group.

Your midterm and final writing projects, on the other hand, will be completed individually, though of course help, criticism, and proofreading by classmates is not only acceptable: it's a great idea. Therefore some time will be provided to allow for editing, proofreading, and other help. In addition, Open Workshops beginning in Week 5 will allow students to have their work analyzed by their peers in terms of style, structure, grammar, content, argumentation, clarity, and so forth.

Week 1: Intro & Paperwork

Part 1: Purpose & Organization

Week 2: Purpose & Organization 1: How? Where? (On Starting Out)

Week 3: Purpose & Organization 2: What? Why? (Thesis, Research, and Purposive Writing)

Week 4: Purpose & Organization 3: Who? (Audience and Why It Matters)

Part 2: Filling the Page

Week 5: The Perils and Pleasures of Outlines

Week 6: Beginnings, Middles, and Ends

Week 7: The Modular Form & Smoothing It Out - Editing and Proofreading

Week 8: Midterms (Midterm essays due Monday)

Part 3: Resources & How To Use Them

Week 9: Individual Conferences

Week 10: Paraphrase and Quotation

Week 11: Citation & Your Works Cited Page

Part 4: Credibility

Week 12: Is This Good Evidence?

Week 13: Argumentation and Logic

Week 14: Argumentation and Logic 2

Week 15: Developing a Style

Week 16: Wrap-up