

Syllabus – English 101/ Fall 2007

Instructor: Jennifer L. Seelhorst

Meets in MOH 306 on Thursdays from 6:30-9:15 p.m.

Office Hours: Mon./Wed. 2-2:30 p.m. (MOH 304); Mon./Wed. 8:15-8:45 p.m. (MOH 306); Thurs. 5:00-6:00 p.m. (The Writing Center); 6:00-6:30 p.m. and 9:15-9:45 p.m. (MOH 306)

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Course Goals

Welcome to English 101, one of the most important courses you'll take in college. The required courses in the English Composition program are designed to give you guidance and practice in understanding language and its uses – that is, rhetoric. Skills in rhetoric will be essential not only for your college work, but also for your future work on the job, and as an informed and active citizen. Keep in mind that writing is a skill you can improve, not an inherent talent.

In a concrete sense, becoming a better writer means being able to write with a reasonably clear sense of **audience and purpose** – being versatile enough to tailor your writing to the specific need (or exigency) for a given piece of writing. To help us do this, we'll learn to read, as well as write, rhetorically – with a critical and open-minded awareness of the techniques used by writers. We'll investigate the key connections between reading and writing: By reading rhetorically – that is, by examining the techniques used by other writers and speakers – we can attain further options for our own writing. By writing rhetorically, we will learn to use language to effectively think through, expand upon, organize, and present our own ideas to a specific reader (or group of readers). To learn these skills, we will focus on the parts of the **writing process** – the activities which writers use to produce an effective piece of writing:

- invention (getting ideas),
- planning (deciding what to do with those ideas),
- collecting (gathering facts/information on your topic),
- arrangement (deciding the best order for presentation of your ideas),
- drafting (early attempts to put your ideas into clear, focused writing),
- revising (analyzing drafts and formulating a more effective presentation),
- editing/polishing (improving grammar, spelling, punctuation).

It is important, however, to remember that the writing process isn't as simple as just following a set of steps. Still, if you learn to use the activities described above, by the end of the course you should be able to write more clearly, more convincingly, and more confidently. To accomplish these goals, however, you must commit yourself to the large amount of effort that effective writing requires – avoid shortcuts (in writing, there really are no shortcuts).

Objectives

Upon successful completion of ENG 101, students should be able to:

Read and think critically

- demonstrate an understanding of the intrinsic connection between reading, critical thinking, and writing
- demonstrate the ability to read and understand academic writing with differing points of views and be able to recognize and analyze the merits of each position
- evaluate the accuracy and validity of a specific perspective or argument
- understand how audience, purpose, genre, and context shape the meaning and effectiveness of all texts, especially texts presented in college settings

Write critically and analytically

- demonstrate an understanding of the organizational skills required for academic writing, such as pre-writing activities, outlining, paragraph development, revising, and the ability to thoroughly edit
- demonstrate in reading and writing an understanding of the rhetorical concepts of audience, invention, style, organization, and delivery
- develop their own perspective into an academic argument that reflects critical analysis

Demonstrate information literacy

- conduct research using library tools, print and electronic media, and any other sources that enhance academic writing
- evaluate sources for accuracy, validity, and academic relevance
- use information to support and develop their assertions through paraphrasing, quoting, and summarizing
- cite sources using MLA citation style
- learn and employ strategies for avoiding plagiarism

Apply the foundations of strong academic skills

- develop and use broadened reading and speaking vocabularies
- use tools appropriately related to reading and writing, such as writing handbooks, dictionary, and thesaurus
- utilize word processing programs, including proofreading software, in the writing process
- produce documents according to MLA formatting conventions
- employ strategies for effective editing, including attention to grammar, mechanics, usage, and the conventions of standard American English
- collaborate with others in developing points of views and analyzing writing
- employ effective annotation skills
- use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating in a college setting
- formulate appropriate questions and hypotheses

Methods of Instruction

In this class, you can expect to:

- Write every day, in a variety of formats: responding to readings, doing pre-writing activities for essay drafting or revising formal papers.
- Spend class time in writing workshops, practicing various rhetorical strategies of other people's writing.
- Analyze the techniques and strategies of other people's writing.
- Look closely at your own strengths and challenges as a writer through individual conferences.
- Learn new stylistic options in a number of ways: through lecture, as well as by analysis of readings, your own writing, and writing done by your peers.
- Work in small groups to discuss your own and peers' writings.

Required Texts, etc.

Bachman, S., Barth, M. Between Worlds: A Reader, Rhetoric, and Handbook. 5th Edition.

Faigley, The Penguin Handbook 2nd Edition

A college dictionary of your choice.

A stapler, a box of paper clips and a reliable method for backing up your work on a computer

Three folders with pockets (one to keep handouts and two for handing in essays).

A notebook with three sections (notes/ journal).

Attendance and Withdrawal Policies

- Students are expected to attend all classes. If a student misses classes it will reflect in a lower final grade, regardless of when these absences occur and the reason(s) for which

they occur, including illness. After three absences, a student may not be able to successfully complete the course.

- This class begins on time, and I appreciate when students are ready to begin on time.
- If a student will be absent, late or have to leave early, she/he must tell me in advance. For every three times that a student arrives late or leaves early, it will count as an absence.
- It is the student's responsibility to find out and do the assignment for any missed class.
- Quizzes and tests cannot be made up unless previously arranged with me.
- If you plan to withdrawal from the course, it is your responsibility to complete the proper paperwork, and bring it to my office to be signed.

Late Work

All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Work submitted later will receive a penalty of one full letter grade for each class period the assignment is late.

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism

All work submitted must be original. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's words or ideas in your writing. If you use any ideas, thoughts, writing, quotes, or even paraphrase some other writer's thinking, you must acknowledge that person. Whether conscious or unconscious, plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Any student who willfully presents another persons' work as his or her own will be subject to discipline. Penalties that may be imposed are failure for a particular assignment or course and/or dismissal from this course.

Students with Disabilities

To receive accommodations in class a student must make an appointment with the Learning Disability Specialists, Mr. Chris Scarborough (office in Mohegan library) or Judy Hilburger (office in the Registrar's office) who will justify the special modifications that are needed to facilitate learning for the student. I will be glad to speak with a student regarding this or any special medical needs.

Papers

You will write three formal papers in this course. You should keep two folders specifically for turning in your papers, and all of your pre-writing activities must be handed in with each draft, final draft, and rewrite (if you choose to rewrite any or all of your papers). This not only helps to keep you more organized, but it will enable me to better understand you as a writer. Although we will often be working as a community of writers, I will still be searching for ways to help address your individual writing concerns. In addition, no "rewrites" will be accepted unless all corrections from your "final draft" are addressed.

Paper 1: Exploratory Essay (research paper)

The key to this essay is to choose a question, problem or issue that truly perplexes you. You will write an essay with an exploratory purpose; its focus will be a question rather than a thesis. The body of your paper will be a narrative account of your thinking about the problem – your attempt to examine its complexity, to explore alternative solutions, and to arrive at a solution or answer. The paper will be relatively easy to organize because it follows a chronological structure, but you will have nothing to say – no progress to report – unless you discover and examine your problem's complexity. Your exploratory essay will be composed using the "in-process" strategy, where writers compose the body of their essays during the actual process of thinking and researching (3-5 pages).

Paper 2: Classical Argument (research paper)

For this paper, you will use a classical way of arguing, in which you take a stand on an issue, offer reasons and evidence in support of your position, and summarize and respond to alternative views. Your goal is to persuade your audience, who can be initially perceived as either opposed

to your position or at least to regard it more openly. Argument is both a process (truth seeking) and a product (persuasion). Truth seeking makes you an informed citizen who delays decisions until a full range of evidence and alternative views are aired and examined. Persuasion gives you the power to influence the world around you (3-5 pages).

Paper 3: Rhetorical Analysis/Evaluative Response

The rhetorical analysis is designed to give you practice as a careful and critical reader of other writers' work – and to provide you with some ideas on how you might improve your own. You will be asked to carefully analyze an article that you find while researching your topic, and discuss how the author's writing style helps to support his or her argument (3-5 pages).

Research:

For all three of your papers, you will read some resource material on the topics, and then articulate your own informed ideas on this topic in various forms. The major activities we undertake together are aimed to help you become involved in an already ongoing conversation about your topic. These include:

- gathering resource materials or “research” on this topic from many diverse arenas and perspectives;
- reading these materials critically, exploring the many distinct ways in which others think and write about the issue;
- critically evaluating those different perspectives which constitute the issue;
- critically evaluating any appropriate electronic sites;
- coming to terms with your own position on the issue in context of others' positions;
- and finally, articulating all this in various rhetorical forms, including that of the academic essay.

Note that we will consider the terms “resource” and “research” in a fairly full sense. For instance, depending on your topic, we may encourage you to interview others, to use artifacts from your daily life such as community newspapers or campus literature, to consider some of the magazines you routinely read ... We will discuss this issue at length!

Project Parameters:

- Essay format: All essays are to be 3-5 pages in length (unless otherwise indicated) and are to be submitted typed, double spaced (12 pt. font and standard margins), and stapled. We will discuss manuscript form early in the semester.
- Use of resources: In each *research paper*, you are required to use at least three different resources in each assignment, and these must be different *kinds* of resources. (For instance, not all of these can be web-based. Interviews, no matter how many, will count as one resource).
- Use of resources: In each *research paper*, you are required to paraphrase, directly quote and summarize. You will use appropriate methods for citation (MLA style) including in-text citations and works cited references.

Please note the series of deadline on our syllabus that will result in your turning in the final draft of each project.

Final Portfolio

A Final Portfolio showcasing the strongest revision of each of your three papers will be collected at the end of the semester. Specific directions regarding the organization and formatting of the portfolio will be discussed in class. Each portfolio will include a cover letter and reflective writing exercises.

Grading Policy

(Note: All formal papers and your final portfolio must be completed for you to pass this course)

Your final grade will be based on the following:

- 10% Paper One
- 15% Paper Two
- 15% Paper Three
- 15% Journal
- 20% Research Log/Peer Reviews/Participation
- 25% Final Portfolio

Late Papers

Each paper is to be submitted on time, or the paper will drop a letter grade for every class day it is late. Because there can be genuine emergencies, you may turn in one paper one class day late with no penalty. You must, however, specify to me that this is your “late” paper. *Late Final Portfolios will not be accepted.*

Evaluation – Criteria for Grading of English 101 Essays

“A” paper

- Precise, focused thesis statement generating college-level development
- Supporting points that clearly relate to the thesis
- Logical and appropriate structure
- Specific, appropriate evidence and detail to explain, illustrate, or advance the argument
- Well-developed paragraphs (topic sentence, development)
- Engaging introduction and strong conclusion
- Clear transitions within and between paragraphs
- English usage: precise and accurate word choice; few and minor grammar or punctuation errors; mature and varied sentence structure

“B” paper

- Thesis statement less precise and insightful, but still clear statement of main idea
- Supporting points clearly related
- Development not as vivid or convincing, but adequate
- Some transition weakness
- English style: Occasional problems with spelling, word choice, sentence clarity; occasional punctuation or grammar errors; no more than four major errors (fragment, run-on, subject/verb agreement, pronoun/referent agreement, shift in point of view, etc.)

“C” paper

- Weakly stated thesis (Reader must work to find it or grasp the meaning)
- Supporting points that may not directly advance thesis
- Inadequate paragraph or idea development (too little; irrelevant; less than minimal length)
- Boring or non-existent introduction and conclusion
- Transition weakness
- More than four major errors or many minor errors

“D” paper or “F” paper

- No thesis statement
- No discernible sequence of supporting points
- Incoherent or poorly developed paragraphs
- Serious and frequent grammar or punctuation errors

Notebook

In addition to taking notes in class, you will use your notebook for outlining the textbook readings that are assigned for homework. I will review your notebooks when I check your journals, and your work on outlining the readings will be included in your participation grade.

Journal

"I never travel without my journal. One should always have something sensational to read."

-Oscar Wilde

You will be required to keep a journal over the course of the semester. The journal topics will be based on readings from your textbook and should be approximately one page long. Journals will be checked at random during the semester, as part of your participation grade. No late journals will be accepted. At the end of the semester, your completed journals will be collected for your journal grade.

Tentative Schedule

8/28 Introduction to the course/ Diagnostic writing/Social and Political Topics Discussion
9/4 Introduce Research Logs
9/11 Library lesson (TBA)/ Research Logs/ Groupwork
9/18 Work on Research Logs/ Review <u>Between Worlds</u> outlines
9/25 Research Logs Due / Introduce Paper 1
10/2 Paper 1 Draft Due for Peer Review
10/9 Paper 1 Final Draft Due /Introduce Paper 2
10/16 Paper 2 Drafting/ Read drafts aloud
10/23 Paper 2 Draft Due for Peer Review
10/30 Paper 2 Editing Workshop
11/6 Paper 2 Final Draft Due / Introduce Paper 3
11/13 Paper 3 Draft Due for Peer Review/Review Final Portfolio Directions
11/20 No Class
11/27 Paper 3 Final Draft Due/ Journals Due/ Work on Final Portfolios
12/4 Final Portfolios Due

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

This syllabus is subject to change by the instructor.