

ENGLISH 101 – COLLEGE COMPOSITION

Janet Hagen

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

College composition engages students in critical observation, reading, and writing. This course prepares students for the exposition, analysis, and argument required in college writing, and for meeting the conventions of college English. Writing assignments require that students develop their own points of view and demonstrate understanding of complex ideas and issues. Methods for research, including use of the library, appropriate documentation, and incorporation of sources in original papers, will be taught through assigned writings. A placement test is required prior to enrollment.

OVERVIEW OF COURSE

In this course we will be focusing on developing reading and writing skills. Reading is integral to writing well, as in order to write well, you will need to learn to become a critical reader and thinker. The textbook assigned for this course, *Rereading America*, examines some of the dominant cultural myths in the United States and the effects of these myths. In each unit of *Rereading America*, various perspectives are developed that will encourage you to read and think critically to understand what main ideas are being presented in each essay and how those ideas are being developed. Because we will be reading about issues that affect us personally, I expect that the reactions to the readings will be diverse and complicated. Your goal will be to learn how to present your ideas thoughtfully and with good support, without being disrespectful of anyone else's opinions. Throughout the semester, as you practice reading and thinking critically, you will apply these skills to your writing, where you will work on learning to communicate and present your ideas effectively in writing—skills you will need as you continue on in college or enter the work force.

To start off the semester you will be asked to write more informal and personal responses to the essays, which will encourage you to connect with the issues presented as you learn to think critically about them. As the semester progresses, you will learn how to develop more formal essays using outside sources and proper MLA citation format. By the end of the semester, you will have generated a good amount of writing to turn in as part of your final portfolio.

OBJECTIVES

After completing English 101, you should be able to

- read and understand essays that offer differing points of view on a topic.
- compare and contrast various perspectives on a topic.
- analyze a particular perspective or argument on a topic and evaluate its merits.
- develop your own perspective on a topic and state that perspective clearly in a written thesis.
- support that thesis with specific and detailed evidence from readings, research, and/or from personal observations and experience.
- document information from other sources using MLA parenthetical format.
- recognize the importance of audience as an intrinsic element in writing and employ strategies that engage your readers.
- craft effective sentences and paragraphs.
- employ strategies for effective major revision of writing, including attention to organization and paragraph coherence.
- employ strategies for effective editing, including attention to grammar and usage.
- conduct basic library research, including accessing basic print media and electronic databases.
- collaborate with others in analyzing writing, developing points of view, and conducting research.

Please note: If as a result of the placement test you were advised to take ENG 094 or 100 and you have not done so, you place yourself at a serious disadvantage in this class. It will be very difficult for you to achieve the objectives of this course without the skills that are taught in those courses.

Required Texts

- Columbo, Gary, Robert Cullen, and Bonnie Lisle, eds. *Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing*, 6th edition
- Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*, 5th edition
- Reynolds, Nedra. *Portfolio Keeping: A Guide for Students*, 2nd edition

Other Required Materials

A two-pocket folder and a stapler

Suggested Material

Working Folder (which will contain all your in-class writings, notes, outlines, postwrites, reading response papers—anything generated by you in connection to the class)

Grade Percentages

Reading Responses	20%
Class Participation	10%
Peer Review	10%
Final Portfolio	60%

EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENT AND GRADES

A	94-100	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66
A-	90-93	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62
B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	59 --

READING RESPONSES (20%): Throughout the semester I will be asking you to respond to various readings. These responses are to be typed and 1 to 2 pages long, approximately 300 words per page. These responses are a good way for you to begin to think critically about the essays and to respond to them in writing. In other words, they are a sounding board for you to communicate your thoughts in writing in connection to the readings. Sometimes I may assign specific topics for you to focus on, or I may allow you to pick the topic you would like to write about. Some responses may focus on more than one topic. The goal is not to summarize what you have read. (A summary will be graded as unacceptable.) The goal is for you to think about what you have read and to convey your thoughts about the subject matter in writing.

Not only will these responses encourage you to think and write critically about the material, but they will also be used to generate class discussion. (We will be reading them in class and discussing them.) Therefore, these responses will be due at the beginning of class and *may not* be submitted after the due date, and they cannot be made up. Each response will be worth up to 5 points. **You will be graded on how well you follow the directions for the assignments.**

Breakdown of points:

4.5 – 5	A- - A+	3.5 – 3.9	C- - C+	2.9 -- F
4.0 – 4.4	B- - B+	3.0 – 3.4	D- - D+	

CLASS PARTICIPATION (10%): A writing course such as this requires class discussion, with your input vital for the success of the course. Thus, I will expect that you will have read the assigned material before class and will be able to fully participate, individually and, if designated, in a group. Throughout the semester I will be assigning informal assignments, including in-class writing. Unless noted otherwise, you will be able to hand in these assignments handwritten. You will be graded on your work, both verbal and written, and in a group and as an individual. **Missed assignments may not be made up.**

PEER REVIEW (10%): Peer review encourages you to get feedback from others and for you to learn how to read and respond to others' writings in a constructive manner. There will be three peer reviews during the semester. During each day that peer review is scheduled, you will need to bring in copies of your essay. (See syllabus for designated amount.) This draft should be the best essay you can write, and it must be typed or word-processed in the correct format. (I will check, and you will need to meet these requirements or you will not be allowed to participate in peer review. Peer review cannot be made up.) In class I will assign you into groups, and you will be responsible

to give feedback to your peers on their essays based on the requirements handed out during that class period. You may earn up to possible 3.33 points for each peer review. You will be graded on how much effort you put into answering the questions (I will have provided). Just writing, for example, "This essay looks great," will earn you zero points. (*HINT: Do not wait until the last minute to make copies of your essay. Too many times students have shown up empty-handed due to technological difficulties.*)

PORTFOLIO (60%): The rationale behind the development of a portfolio is that it allows you to think more closely about the process you engage in as you work on your writing skills. To put it another way, instead of just writing for a grade (product) to please the instructor, developing a portfolio encourages you to reflect on the writing process so that you can assess your own writing strengths and weaknesses as a writer and therefore better understand what you need to work on to improve your writing, a skill that will help you as you encounter different writing assignments and audiences in your future. Also, since the final portfolio contains only what you think is your best work, you are given more choices in controlling the final products that will be assessed for a grade.

What should be in your final portfolio and how it is graded:

- Two formal essays, 3-5 pages each (10% each, total of 20%)
- One research essay, including outline: research essay, 5-7 pages (15%); outline (5%)
- Any 4-6 pages that you feel best represent your learning or writing strengths, improvements, or interests. (May be brief in-class writings, postwrites, Reading Response pieces, etc.) (10%)
- Reflective Introduction (10%)

FINAL NOTE: All work included in the portfolio must be typed. All original drafts that you revised must be included in your portfolio. (Only include rough drafts of the work you revised.)

The writing in the portfolio that has been revised will be judged primarily on the quality of the product:

1. how effectively you have developed interesting ideas;
2. how fully you have developed your ideas, skillfully organizing them;
3. how well you have used the proper conventions of grammar and MLA documentation where appropriate.

OTHER POLICIES

Paper Format: There is no such thing as a hand-written formal essay. Periodically, I will assign hand-written writings (or will accept them), but all formal essays are to be typed on a computer or word processor, double-spaced (not tripled or two-and-half spaces), with one inch margins and fonts no larger than 12 points. (A good example of what I will be expecting is font the size of Times New Roman 12.) (See page 371 in Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* for an example of the correct format for an academic paper.) Be forewarned that if you include extra spaces between paragraphs or type in extra large margins or fonts, etc., your paper will be returned or it will affect your grade

negatively. All essays **must** follow MLA citation format. (Get familiar with the handbook!) If you need to make last minute corrections, handwriting on your essay is acceptable (as long as there aren't too many mistakes). ***Pet Peeve:** *Sloppy papers. It is your job to proofread your paper. If I can't read your paper because of careless errors such as spelling mistakes, I will return it.*

Deadlines: There is no such thing as late work. **All assigned work will be due on the day it is assigned.** However, because I do understand how illnesses and personal or family problems can keep you from attending class or finishing your work, I am giving everyone **three** days of grace. What this means is that if you have to be absent from class on a day when an assignment is due or you need more time to complete it, you can turn it in the next day without being penalized, or if necessary, up to 2-3 weekdays later. (Weekend days do not count, only week days.) You can pick and choose the three days to your advantage; however, you cannot use your grace days for the research assignments. Take note, too, that once you have used them up, there will be no more "grace days." Late work will not be accepted. Therefore, if you must miss class on a day an assignment is due, the paper needs to be placed in my mailbox on the Mohegan Campus **before** class for it to be accepted and counted as turned in on time. *(Please do not e-mail assignments to me. They will not be accepted unless you have made prior arrangements with me to turn your work in via e-mail.)*

Attendance: In order for the class to be successful it is important that you attend regularly. You will be allowed up to three unexcused absences. After that your grade will be affected negatively. For 4-5 unexcused absences, your grade will be lowered one full letter grade. 6-7 unexcused absences will result in your grade being lowered two full letter grades, 8-9 unexcused absences three full letter grades. If you miss 10 or more classes, you will automatically fail the course. (An excused absent includes, for example, illness and/or injury and will only be excused with documentation, such as a doctor's note. Missing class because you have to work does not count as an excused absence.)

**Please keep in mind that if you must miss class, you will still be held accountable for the material covered in class and all assignments that are due that day. Also keep in mind that the work we do in class, such as in-class writing or group work, cannot be made up, and it is a part of your in-class participation grade.

Tardiness and leaving class early: *Please be in class on time and please refrain from leaving class while it is in session.* It is very disruptive for everyone already engaged in an activity to have to stop because of late arrivals or because someone is leaving. Therefore, within the first five minutes of class, I will take attendance. If you arrive after the five minutes, you will be marked as late. Cumulatively, 4 late marks will equal one unexcused absence, 5-6 late marks, two unexcused absences, and for 7-8 marks, three unexcused absences. *Leaving class early or taking a break to leave the class and return will not only affect your participation grade but it will also be counted towards an unexcused absence.* Therefore, each time you leave I will mark your departure and

count it as a tardy. Please note that leaving class early to go to work counts as an unexcused departure.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism—the copying or misrepresenting of someone else’s work as your own—will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for this course.

Cell Phones and Beepers: School regulations require that all cell phones and beepers be turned off in learning environments. If it is imperative for you to be available by cell phone or a beeper, please speak to me before class to arrive at a suitable agreement.

Tutoring: Three Rivers has tutors trained to assist students in developing better writing skills. The center is located in room 106 on the Mohegan Campus. I *highly* recommend that you take advantage of this service; just don’t wait until the last minute to get help with your essay, as good writing is a process that takes time. (Tutors are also available through email at TRWritingCenter@trcc.commnet.edu.)

Students with disabilities: Any student with a hidden or visible disability which may require classroom modifications should see me about her/his disability within the first week or two of class. I will ask you to see the learning disabilities counselor on campus, Chris Scarborough, so that together we can work out an appropriate plan to meet your needs.

Bad weather: On stormy days please call the school to see if school is canceled. Also, listen to the radio or television for announcements. Since I commute long distance, if it looks like I will not be able to make it in, I will email all of you. Please make sure your email address is correct and current as listed in the Registrar’s office. If class is canceled, continue to follow the syllabus unless instructed otherwise.

Final Note: I have listed my office hours, phone number, and e-mail address. Please contact me at anytime, and I will get back to you as soon as I can. Remember that it is to your advantage to come to me at any time with questions, concerns, or just to discuss your progress in the class.

**The syllabus may change at any time, so it is your job to stay on top of the happenings, whether you are in class or not.*

COURSE OUTLINE

Please bring your books to class every day. If you do not have the text we are working out of in class, then you will not be allowed to participate in class activities and assignments. Unless noted by the author's name HACKER or REYNOLDS, all readings assigned are from Rereading America.

- **Week One**

January

- 23 Introduction to the course. What constitutes good writing? Why do we need writing classes?
- 25 Setting ground rules for discussion. REREADING AMERICA – “Thinking Critically, Challenging Cultural Myths” 1

- **Week Two**

- 30 REYNOLDS: Read all of Part One: The Process of Portfolio Keeping (Chapters 1-5); **Harmony at Home: The Myth of the Model Family** 18; “A Family Tree, Freedom from Want, and Freedom from Fear” 21

FEBRUARY

- 1 “Looking for Work” 26, and “Envy” 118.
**READING RESPONSE ONE DUE: Write a response to both Soto’s and Campbell’s essays. Describe the outside forces that shaped their ideas of what being a “family” meant. Describe your thoughts about these influences.

- **Week Three**

- 6 No class. Watch TV and find three current shows that are about families. Take notes on your findings. (Look for patterns.)
- 8 Read “What We Really Miss about the 1950s” (31) and complete worksheet. (Due at the beginning of class.) Also bring in findings from watching TV shows.

- **Week Four**

- 13 **READING RESPONSE TWO DUE: Compare the photos in “Visual Portfolio” (84) to the photos in Norman Rockwell’s collection. In your introduction, write a thesis that identifies the main idea that sums up what the differences between the two collections suggest or encourage us to think about. Then respond to these two questions: What is your response to the differences? What questions does the comparison raise?
- 15 “Talking Freaks: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Families on Daytime Talk TV” 91; “The Truly Invisible Hand” 54

- **Week Five**

- 20 Worksheets due on “Talking Freaks . . .” and “The Truly Invisible Hand.” Finish discussion.
- 22 Read HACKER, all of C: Composing and Revising. Writing workshop. Bring to class gathered information. (See handout.)

- **Week Six**

- 27 **PEER REVIEW.** "WRITING ABOUT FAMILY," FORMAL ESSAY ONE: Bring three typed (double-spaced) copies of your essay, along with Hacker's and Reynold's texts.

MARCH

- 1 **FORMAL ESSAY ONE DUE.** (Submit in folder with three peer reviews.) **True Women and Real Men: Myths of Gender** 412. "Girl" 421

- **Week Seven**

- 6 "Becoming Members of Society" 424. Answer questions 1.-5. under "Engaging the Text," page 432; "Visual Portfolio" 451.
- 8 "Two Ways a Woman Can Get Hurt" 455; "Center of Attention: The Gender of Sports Media" 477. ****READING RESPONSE THREE DUE:** Write a one page response to Kilbourne's essay and then a one page response to Messner's essay; you choose the topics.

- **Week Eight**

- 13 Continue discussion. How to cite. (Make sure you have Hacker's text.)
- 15 **PEER REVIEW ON "THE CULTURAL MYTH OF GENDER."** Bring in three typed copies of your essay, along with Hacker's and Reynold's texts.

***** Spring Break – No classes March 19-23**

- **Week Nine**

- 27 **FORMAL ESSAY TWO DUE.** (Submit in folder with three peer reviews.) Read **Money and Success: The Myth of Individual Opportunity** 293. Video *Country Boys*.
- 29 *Country Boys* continued
- April 30th is last day to withdraw from a class without instructor's signature.

- **Week Ten**

APRIL

- 3 Read "From *Ragged Dick*" 297; "Horatio Alger" 303; "Class in America: Myths and Realities" 331; "Good Noise: Cora Tucker" 353.
- ***RESPONSE FOUR DUE:** Based on the video and the readings, write a response to class in America. Is "individual opportunity" a myth? Cite examples from the materials to support your ideas.
- 5 Library Orientation. Meet in regular classroom.

- **Week Eleven**

- 10 Meet in library
- 12 Bring to class *all* research materials and plain index cards (3x5 or 4x6)

- **Week Twelve**

- 17 Workshop. Bring all materials to class and draft of research essay.
- 19 **PEER REVIEW—FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH ESSAY DUE.** Bring to class three copies of your research essay along with Reynold's and Hacker's texts.
April 23 is the last day to withdraw with instructor's signature.

- **Week Thirteen**

- 24 Workshop
- 26 **FIRST RESEARCH ESSAY DRAFT DUE.** (Submit in folder with peer reviews.)
Read REYNOLD'S: ALL OF PART II.

- **Week Fourteen**

- 31 Individual conferences
- MAY
- 2 Individual conferences

- **Week Fifteen**

- 7 **Portfolio due,** including Reflection Letter. No exceptions. Due in my office between 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

*Final grades will be posted on the web January 2. Please leave a SASE with correct postage if you would like your portfolio mailed to you. Otherwise, please make arrangements to pick up your portfolio next semester.

**The syllabus may change at any time, so it is your job to stay on top of the happenings, whether you are in class or not.*