

Course Overview

English 101: College Composition

Instructor: Christine Hammond

Phone: 860-892-5775

E-mail: chammond@trcc.commnet.edu

Office Hours: Mon. 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon, and Thur. 1:00 p.m. – 2:00, or by appointment, in the Shop Wing, Norwich High School Campus

Required Texts:

Open Questions: Readings for Critical Thinking and Writing. Eds. Chris Anderson and Lex Runciman. Bedford/St. Martins: 2005

The Brief Penguin Handbook, Lester Faigley

Necessary Supplies:

A college dictionary, (Webster's or American Heritage preferred) ink pens (blue or black only), plain or lined paper, 3" x 5" index cards, 3 pocket folders

Course Description:

In this course students develop the skills necessary to compose a fully developed critical essay with unity, coherence and clarity. Students read, write, think and talk about writing. But most of all, they write—in class, outside of class, in small collaborative groups, and as a whole class. Reading stimulates the writing process; therefore, students will also read challenging essays, think critically about the issues they address, and write responses to those essays. Other, more formal writing assignments advance students' own ideas about issues covered in the readings as well as events current and past. These more formal writing assignments are essays, compositions that adopt and support a particular stance and/or point of view. Further, students will conduct research and incorporate that research into their essays addressing major themes covered in the course. These research essays use appropriate MLA documentation to identify and credit supporting evidence. Some course time will also be devoted to sharing writing and reviewing the writing of peers in small groups and during whole class discussions.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of English 101, students will be able to:

- Read and understand essays which offer differing points of view on a topic
- Understand how audience, purpose, genre and context shape the meaning and effectiveness of all writing, especially writing done in college settings
- Use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking and communicating in a college setting
- Compare and contrast various perspectives on a topic
- Analyze a particular perspective or argument on a topic and evaluate its merits
- Develop a perspective on a topic and state that perspective clearly in a thesis
- Support the thesis with specific and detailed evidence
- Craft effective sentences and paragraphs
- Employ strategies for effective revision and editing
- Conduct basic library research

- Document information from sources using MLA format
- Collaborate with others in analyzing writing, developing points of view, conducting research and revising drafts

This course is an indispensable one, and demanding, requiring at least two hours of study and homework for every hour spent in the classroom.

Assignments and Grading

Students will work in small groups sharing writing, generating ideas, refining essay topics, and editing drafts. Sharing ideas, both in discussions and in writing, is an important part of this class. It is important that students attend class, come with assignments completed, participate as peer editors, and enter into reading and writing discussions. These shared activities all help writers explore and develop the ideas they want to write about.

The final grade in this course will be based upon the following assignments:

Informal Written Responses

30%

These writings (and there will be many) are usually designed to raise questions about the readings and/or topics discussed in class. This work helps writers clarify their own ideas about the authors' themes or arguments. Some responses may be generated from class discussion, current events, or other activities. Most responses will be assigned as homework, though some may be written in class.

Each informal response should be *at least four well-developed paragraphs* in length.

While this response can be relatively casual in structure and tone, the *thinking* should not be careless or offhanded; your writing should reflect a careful consideration of the issue or the assigned reading. Some of the readings may be difficult, requiring hard work to understand them. A good college dictionary will prove an indispensable tool to aid in this effort. Students are expected to use the dictionary and make themselves familiar with any new words they encounter.

Essay 1 – An Essay Incorporating the Use of Definition

10%

Definition of terms is an important issue in writing an essay, in part, because there are many words over which people can disagree. For example when people talk about “justice” or “freedom” or success” there can be major disagreements about what these terms mean. Writers must be clear about what they mean if they expect to be understood by their intended audience. This essay will incorporate the technique of defining an abstract term (or terms) using very specific strategies for development.

Essay 2 – An Essay Incorporating Causal Analysis

20%

This essay will (among other things) attempt to explain why something happens the way it does, or how one thing can be affected by something else. Some cause and effect relationships are easy to understand. When we touch our damp finger to a hot iron and

snatch it back, it is obvious that the heat caused the jerking motion (and the moisture caused the sizzle). Most events or complex phenomena are not so easily analyzed; they usually have multiple causes and effects and variables, particularly when we are talking about political or social situations.

Essay 3 –Research-based Argumentative Essay 40%

This essay incorporates information from the work of others to support the writer’s main claim (thesis). Evidence (facts, data, statistics, examples, opinions of experts, etc.) from several different kinds of sources must be included in the final paper. The subject of the essay will be one of the writer’s own choosing, developed from and addressing a topic related to the readings and discussions during the course. This research essay must be a *minimum* of 6 pages in length.

Attendance

Regular attendance is essential for success in the course. Any student’s absence undermines the effectiveness of the whole class. Your classmates expect and deserve your contribution. **If you must miss a class meeting, you are still responsible for the work of that day. Late papers will be penalized.**

Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is a violation of the academic code of honor. This violation occurs when a writer takes credit for someone else’s work and submits it as his/her own. Plagiarism can also occur unintentionally through sloppy documentation of sources. Any plagiarized work will result in an F on that writing assignment and may well result in an F in the course.

A Few More Notes of Importance

1. Any student with a hidden or visible disability that may require classroom modifications should see me about this right away. I will refer you to one of the learning disabilities counselors on campus so that together we can work out an appropriate plan to meet your needs.
2. I encourage all students to visit me during my office hours to talk about their progress in the course or difficulties they may be having with an assignment. If my office hours are inconvenient, ask to set up an appointment at another time.
3. All work must be word-processed. I will not accept handwritten work. Only exceptions: In-class writing assignments.

Schedule of Assignments

Week 1

Introduction to Course and Writing Assessment

Ethical Systems and Critical Thinking: A Discussion.

Informal Write #1 “Getting Started.”

Week 2

Reading: OQ, “Stone Soup” by B. Kingsolver, p. 64

Informal Write #2 – Respond to “Stone Soup”

Week 3

Reading: OQ, “Welcoming the Stranger” by S. Carter, p. 111

Informal Write #3 – Respond to “Welcoming...”

Week 4

Reading: OQ, “The Authentic Trail” by J. Daniels

Informal Write #4 – Respond to “The Authentic...”

Draft Due – Essay #1 – Definition
Peer Review of drafts

Week 5

Reading: OQ, “Lifeboat Ethics: The Case Against Helping the Poor”
by G. Hardin, p. 130

Final Essay #1 Due

Reading: OQ, Hardin, cont. – Informal Writing #5 in-class

Week 6

Reading: OQ, “The Boston Photographs” by N. Ephron, p. 433

Informal Write #6 – Respond to “Boston Photographs”

Beginning the Research Process

Week 7

Reading: OQ, “Big and Bad” by M. Gladwell, p. 441

Informal Write #7 - Respond to “Big and Bad”

Continue exploring the Research Process

Week 8

Draft of Essay #2 Due – Causal Analysis
Peer Review of drafts

Week 9

SPRING BREAK

Reading: OQ, “The Good Doctor” by T. Kidder, p. 645

Informal Write #8 on Kidder Due at Conference

Week 10

Final Essay #2 Due

CONFERENCES

Week 11

Developing A Research Log for Final Essay

Research Topic → Research Question → Thesis

Strategies for Research: Theory to Action – Library presentation

Week 12

Writing Workshop - Effective Argument

Informal Write #9 – In-class

Week 13

Writing Due: Research proposal (including two sources)

Writing Workshop – Documenting Sources

Informal Write #10 – Quiz Documentation

Week 14

Draft of Research Essay Due

Writing Workshop – Revising Research Draft

Reading: OQ, “On Compassion” by B. Ascher, p. 657

Week 15

Reflective Letter- Begin drafting

Writing Workshop – Editing Research Drafts

Informal Write Due #11 – Respond to “On Compassion”

Week 16

Informal Write #12 - Reflective Letter Due

Essay #3 – Research Paper Due

Final Writing Assessment