

English 100 Reading/ Writing Connection

Instructor: K. Benzing

Meets: Tuesday 5 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.

Texts: Axelrod, Rise B. and Charles R. Cooper. *Axelrod & Cooper's Concise Guide to Writing*. 5th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009.

Sections of:

Funk, Robert W. et al. *Short Prose Reader*. 5th ed. Prentice Hall, 2008.

Faigley, Lester B. *The Brief Penguin Handbook*. 3rd ed. New York: Pearson/ Longman, 2009.

Course Description:

This course emphasizes the close relationship between reading, writing, and critical thinking. Compositions will be assigned in response to reading non-fiction prose. This course is preparation for ENG 101 and other college-level courses.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

Read and think critically:

- Understand the connections between the reading and writing processes
- Recognize different genres of non-fiction, such as editorials, speeches, and essays
- Recognize common organizational patterns in reading and writing
- Comprehend and summarize college-level reading material to develop their own ideas
- Identify and defend logical inferences based on textual evidence

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
- apply various writing processes in composing unified, coherent and fully developed paragraphs and short essays
- use an effective thesis or assertion in order to develop more complex essays
- demonstrate an understanding of the positive and negative impact of word choice
- choose appropriate language for a given context

Demonstrate information literacy:

- 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 to avoid plagiarism

Apply the foundations of strong academic skills:

- develop and use academic reading and speaking vocabularies
- use tools appropriately related to reading and writing, such as dictionaries, thesaurus, and writing handbooks
- produce documents according to MLA formatting conventions
- employ strategies for effective editing such as: 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

Grading:

The final grade will be a letter grade, A - F.

Students must get a “C” or better to pass this course.

Grading is based on:

Class Participation.....20%

Participation is extremely important because we learn from each other. Participation includes:

- attending all classes
- participating in class discussions,
- small and large group work,
- in class reading and writing,
- coming to class prepared by doing the required reading and assignments on time.

Assignments, Journal Response, tests and/or

quizzes.....25%

❖ demonstrates knowledge and critical thinking skills.

Essays/ Portfolio.....45%

Exit/ Assessment Exam.....10%

Journals:

Journals are short (1 to 1½ pages) papers. I want you to write at least a solid page of writing, and I want you to put some thought into them. However, grammar and structure will not be a focus of this assignment. We will likely have one journal response a week, in addition to any other writing that is due.

Portfolio:

The portfolio will demonstrate your best work. You will include the most recent drafts of two papers and all the drafts that you made along the way. You will also have a cover sheet of at least two pages, which will describe the work that went into the papers. You will discuss your

original versions, what the problems were, how you worked to change them, what you learned, why these version are now much stronger, and what you are still concerned about. You will be graded on the quality of your papers and on the quality of your cover letter, and on the work that went into the rewrites.

Peer Groups:

This is the most important aspect of participation. When I am assigning participation, the first thing I consider is how hard you worked to help your classmates. In order for peer group to be successful, you must be willing to give and receive criticism. Saying a paper is "good" or "not good" is not decent criticism. Your job is to help your classmates write better papers. One of the hardest things for some students to do is to write longer papers. You should be able to come to peer group and get help finding ways to expand your paper. Maybe the way that I've described something doesn't "click" with you, but maybe one of your classmates can help. If you want to impress me with your participation, this is a great place to start.

Attendance:

- ✓ **Students are expected to attend all classes.** You are allowed to miss two classes for any reasons. Any missed classes after this allowance will result in ONE (1) letter grade reduction, regardless of when these absences occur, and the reason(s) for which they occur, including illness.
- ✓ It is the student's responsibility to follow the syllabus and hand in assignments for any missed class.
- ✓ Make ups of any kind must be arranged with instructor.

Late Work:

If a paper is late (not turned in by the end of class) it may be turned in the following class, but it will be marked down one letter grade. Any work turned in after one week will not be graded.

Plagiarism:

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. Consequences for plagiarism can range from failing the assignment to failing the course.

Our Classroom:

Think of this class as a reading/writing workshop: A place where we meet to read/write, talk about reading/writing, and read one another's writing. I urge you to help me create a kind and encouraging environment, so that we may share ideas and learn from one another. We will be reading and discussing controversial topics, and I propose that we avoid debating issues and, instead, try to enter into points of view in order to understand them. "Debate" too frequently consolidates one in a previously held point-of-view, rather than opening up a receptiveness to new ideas and perspectives. Moreover, complex ideas generally have so many sides that an antagonistic approach to discussing them merely simplifies them out of their richness. This does not mean that we will always agree with one another, but we should try to disagree in ways that do not assume fixed and absolute positions. In addition, we shouldn't forget that thoughtful questions are as valuable as conclusive statements.

Note on Reading and Writing:

Reading and writing are an important means of communication. Just as there are different skill levels in any sport, reading and writing have different skill levels and achievement as well. This course will introduce you to different kinds of text and learning how to read and write critically will help you improve these communication skills. When you read and think critically, you will write better. This course will connect critical reading and writing skills to help you produce interesting, thoughtful and well constructed papers. By working together, we can accomplish our goals.

A Word about Process:

This class teaches writing as a process. Papers are never perfect or "finished." You just turn in the best paper you have at the time the paper is due. The more work you have put into the process, the more likely the paper will get the grade you want. You will not write a great paper on the first try. That is not what we teach here. We teach that you should re-write a paper as much as you can. Give a paper to anyone who will read it for you.

Rewrites:

The purpose of this class is to make you better writers. The problem with this idea is that you probably are not ready to write a successful paper at the beginning of the semester. Therefore, I do allow, and even encourage, re-writes on your essays. What I need to avoid, however, is for students to hand me a stack of re-writes on the last day of class. Therefore, I will accept no more than one rewrite per week, and the only rewrites you can turn in the final week of class will be in your portfolio.

This course will involve a large amount of work, in both reading and writing. You will be better at both by the end of it. Please don't ever hesitate to ask a question or ask for help; that's how learning happens. While we do have a lot to do, it is also my hope that we enjoy ourselves along the way.