

ENG K101: College Composition/Spring Semester 2013 CRN#10451

Three Rivers Community College; T/Th Classes: 4-5:15 pm

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SYLLABUS

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.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The McGraw-Hill Reader: Issues across the Disciplines by Gilbert Muller

Portfolio Keeping: A Guide for Students by Nedra Reynolds

The Brief Penguin Handbook: Lester Faigley

A Paperback Collegiate Dictionary

USED TEXTS are okay

COURSE OVERVIEW

Students attending College Composition may come to class expecting to receive a formula for effective writing skills, something that they can memorize or expect to apply to all situations, and always "get right". Learning to write is more complex than that. In order to be able to write well in college, you need to **be able to read and comprehend ideas**, to **think critically** and **make connections**, to understand how others interpret your **word choices**, and to **revise your writing** until your words actually communicate what it is that you want to express. **Learning to write takes hard work, application, lots of practice**, and frequent frustration. In the end, it's worth the effort. As you build your skills as a reader and writer, you strengthen your ability to succeed in college and in the job market. You will become more confident as you realize that **you are developing the skills necessary to express your ideas** in ways that others will understand and respect.

Good writing techniques do not occur in a vacuum. We need a context for our writing practice, **subjects** that we can discuss, debate, and reflect upon---**common topics** that will enable us to **share ideas** and **improve our communication skills**.

During this semester, we will read selections from the 15 chapters in our **McGraw-Hill Reader** text. The **authors and themes** we will explore will be included on your Reading/Re-reading **Schedule**. It will include all dates for drafts/re-writes, assignments due and portfolio and marginal annotation work

All of the reading selections and writing assignments we will focus on this semester will be on various aspects of these topics. They are very broad, so there will plenty of room for us to explore all kinds of ideas and approaches---enough room to accommodate individual differences, styles, and points of view. We will be **re-reading and re-writing** about these topics. **We will begin with fairly informal writing**, some writing that allows for personal reflection and will give you space to write about your own experiences and/or the experiences of people that you know. **Finally, we will work on writing that formally incorporates "outside sources"**. In formal writing, we will utilize library and on-line sources to research and develop an idea, or to support a point of view.

We are going to write a lot in this class! When you first look at the schedule of assignments, you may even begin to panic at how much writing there is. When you read that the final Presentation Portfolio should be twenty pages long, you might think to yourself, "Twenty pages! I can't even fill a page with my writing. . . how will I ever write twenty pages?" Do not panic. **Everything that we do in class and each assignment that we undertake will gradually build into a body of work that will easily fill your portfolio.**

By the time we reach that point in the semester, you will be amazed at how much writing you have produced; and how the quality of your writing has improved. **If you apply yourself** to each assignment as the semester unfolds, you will have no problems coming up with the final portfolio. We will start small and each writing assignment will build on the one before. This will allow you to expand and develop your ideas. You will be surprised at how much you have to say.

ENG 101 is designed to build specific skills and abilities. When you **successfully complete this course** you should be able to:

- ***Read** challenging essays and identify the main ideas and points of view in each one
- ***Compare** and/or **contrast** various perspectives on a topic
- ***Analyze** a particular perspective or argument on a topic and evaluate its relative merits
- ***Develop your own perspective** on a topic and **state it clearly** in a written "thesis"
- ***Support the thesis** with specific and detailed evidence from readings, research, and/or personal observations and experience
- ***Document** information from other sources using **MLA parenthetical format**
- ***Recognize the reader** as an intrinsic element in writing and employ strategies that will engage the reader
- ***Employ strategies** for effective "global" **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 YOUR PLACEMENT TEST, YOU WERE ADVISED TO TAKE ENG 075, OR ENG 108 AND YOU HAVE NOT YET DONE SO, YOU PLACE YOURSELF IN A VERY **SERIOUS** DISADVANTAGE IN THIS CLASS. IT WILL BE VERY

DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS COURSE WITHOUT BASIC SKILLS. I STRONGLY ADVISE YOU TO TAKE 075 OR 108 BEFORE TAKING ENG 111.

GRADING

Your grade will be based on the following.

Mid-semester Working Folder (including reading responses, peer reviews, post-writes, And drafts) 20%

Late-semester Working Folder (including reading responses, peer reviews, post-writes, And drafts) 20%

Class participation and research exercises 10%

Final Presentation Portfolio 50%

THERE WILL BE **NO FINAL EXAM** IN THIS COURSE!

You are probably wondering, "What is a Working Folder?" and "What is a Presentation Portfolio?" These questions will be answered in class, and in depth in your required textbook, Portfolio Keeping. A brief description follows:

The Working Folder is a place where you will keep ALL of your writing assignments for this class---your drafts, peer reviews, post writes, and exercises. It will be collected and graded---once at midterm, and once toward the end of the semester, although I will see each assignment as you do it, and will give you feedback at each step of the process. Keeping up with assignments, completing them thoroughly and some depth, giving them your time and effort---all of these are aspects that I will take into consideration when I evaluate and grade your work.

The components of the Working Folder are:

***Written responses** to the readings (some are short one-or-two-paragraph answers to questions; some longer one-or-two-page answers)

***Essay Drafts**

***Post Wntes and Peer Reviews**

*All of my written **comments** on your work

I will see most of the pieces of writing as they are written; I will comment on them and give them back to you. **You need to submit them on time. Keep them in good order in your folder after I return them to you.** Some of these pieces (but not all) will be revised and polished for the Final Presentation Portfolio. One will include a **MLA "Works Cited" page**. **IT IS NECESSARY TO BRING YOUR WORKING FOLDER WITH YOU TO EVERY CLASS, AS WELL AS ALL TEXTBOOKS.**

The Presentation Portfolio is a collection of your best work, polished and refined to the best of your ability. Toward the end of the semester, you will have an opportunity to review the writing projects that you have been working on during the semester. **You** will evaluate them and make some choices, and then revise them for inclusion in a final "Presentation Portfolio".

Everything that you have learned about writing throughout the semester should be reflected in the works that you present. Although you will have some choice in what you will include (not everything in the Working Folder needs to be revised and included), there are some

requirements.

The **required elements** of the Presentation Portfolio are as follows:

*At least 20 pages of written work on the topics we have been discussing during the semester **MUST** be included.

*Among these 20 pages, there **MUST** be two papers that use specific references from the readings to support and develop your point of view. One of these **MUST** use specifics from the class readings, and the other **MUST** incorporate "outside" research.

The specifics from class readings and from outside sources **MUST** be properly cited using **MLA parenthetical style**.

*A reflective essay or "Cover Letter" **MUST** be included, one that introduces the writing in the portfolio, examines the choices that you have made, and evaluates your performance as a writer in this class. (This piece **SHOULD** be about 2 pages, and is counted as part of the 20 pages.)

*The collection of writing included **SHOULD** show some variety of style and depth of analysis. (In addition to longer, formal essays, you **COULD** also include a shorter response paper, or a "personal experience" essay that you worked on during the semester.)

PLEASE **NOTE**: Although I encourage you to consult tutors in the Writing/Tutoring Center (Appointments: 892-5773) at any time during the semester, please be sure that the writing included in your Presentation Portfolio reflects your own work. Tutors are available to guide you in the learning process, not to edit or revise your work for you!!

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Sharing your ideas with others, both in discussion and in writing, is an important part of this class. It is important that you attend class, that you come in with your assignments prepared on the due date, and that you enter into the discussion. This will help you explore and develop the ideas that you will write about. Being frequently absent or ill prepared will negatively affect your grade.

OTHER EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

*Promptness and Courtesy: We are all **ADULTS** and I do not wish to insult anyone in regard to these issues, however I feel that it is necessary to state classroom policy.

When a person walks into class late, leaves early, or walks in and out of the room, or is rude and disruptive, I consider that to be unnecessary behavior that will not be tolerated. Please arrive on time with all the required materials and be ready to remain in the classroom for the full class. (If you must visit the lavatory just leave quietly and discreetly. If you **MUST** leave class for any other reason, please let me know at the beginning of class.) It is never "OK" to leave class early just 'cause you want to.

*Class Discussion: Courtesy is expected in class discussion as well. We all need to listen attentively to each other, and to be respectful of points-of-view that may differ from each other. We need to make sure that everyone has a chance to participate.

*Format and Promptness of Assignments: Handwritten work will not be accepted. Writing performed in class will naturally be handwritten, but the assignments which are turned in for evaluation **MUST** be word-processed or typed using margins no more than 1", standard type size (about 12 point) and plain font will be used (no italic or script). If you are not yet comfortable with using a computer, please visit the Campus Computer Lab or Campus Tutoring Center (TASC) and get some help. Whenever I

specify number of pages, I mean typed pages of approximately 250 words per page. I expect you to submit all work on time. Late work will result in a lower grade!

*Academic Honesty: **Plagiarism** is a violation of academic honesty. It happens when you take credit for someone else's work and submit it as your own, either intentionally or merely through sloppy documentation of sources. Any plagiarized work in any Portfolio will result in an F on that portfolio, and possibly an F for the semester. In class, we will discuss how to avoid plagiarism, using paraphrasing and proper MLA (Modern Library Association) parenthetical format.

*Time Management: Please be aware that you will need more on-campus time than just class time. You may need to spend time working with a tutor on your writing, or meeting with me at some time to discuss your work progress. You will also need to spend time researching in the library, and you will probably need to spend time in the Computer Center. **PLAN** for this in your schedule.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student with a hidden or a visible disability that may require classroom modifications should see me about this within the first week or two of class. I will request that you meet with one of the Learning Disabilities Counselors on campus so that an appropriate plan can be devised to meet your needs.

WITHDRAWAL FROM CLASS: Any student who is **ABSENT more than 4 times** may be asked to withdraw or receive an "F". A Doctor's note may be required.

I am including dates for you to refer to. They are listed on additional pages at the end of the Syllabus.

MESSAGES AND CONFERENCES

Because I am usually only on campus on the afternoon and night I teach, I encourage you to **set up an appointment with me** to discuss your progress in the course or to talk about any difficulties that you may be experiencing. **Please feel free to talk to me at any time.** I have a **PHYSICAL mailbox on campus** (in the 2nd floor mail/copy room) if you want to leave a note. Please **email me with any problems impacting your attendance (personal or professional)** **I am capable of understanding almost any situation if you choose to discuss it with me!** Let's have an interesting and academically rewarding semester! Remember that **we will be re-reading and re-writing** as we focus on developing our responses to the text. The **Brief Student Handbook** by Faigley is a resource that you will use throughout your college experience. We will refer to it often as a self-editing tool and grammatical guide.

Bring your dictionary to all classes. We will **get in the habit of looking up words** that we do not know, and learn to apply them in context. If there is a word in the readings that you are unfamiliar with, mark it and **look it up before proceeding!** **We will be annotating in our texts!!!!!!!!!!!!!!** **We will be writing RESPONSES to the assigned readings; in our Journal notes.** **Some of these reactions/responses will be developed into ESSAY IDEAS for your Portfolios.**

Final MLA Research Paper, Presentation Portfolio & Reflective Letter will be used to assess your Final Grade. We will use "Rubrics" so that students will know that criteria that they will be graded on. We will also be using "Peer Review", and will have a scheduled Library Night

(to be announced) to guide you through the wonderful quality and quantity of material available to you (in the library and online) as a student at Three Rivers.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS: COMPOSITION 101/ Spring Semester 2013

ORIENTATION: TH 1/24 Introductions. We will review the Syllabus and Schedule and look over the texts we will be using this semester. Short In-class Essays/Short reading assignments for next week will be perused. Autobiographical drafts/Response writing to the Intro EACH Assignment has suggestions for Comprehension, Rhetoric, and Writing at the end of each. We will discuss and choose your topics for responses to the readings/re-readings.

WEEK 1: TU 1/29

Intro to course expectations/Reading assignments/Marginal Annotation

CHAPTER 1: Reading & Responding to Texts in the 21st Century

Reading Due: Intro to McGraw-Hill Reader (2-6)

Portfolio-Keeping: (Intro and exercises/How to keep assignments in a Working Folder

TH 1/31

Reading Due: Lakoff (7-9) "From Ancient Greece to Iraq, the Power of Words in Wartime" AND Adler (13-17) "How to Mark a Book"

We will initiate class discussion and ideas for Reading Responses/Re-Reading and Marginal Annotation Requirements

WEEK 2: TU 2/5 *****NO CLASS ON TH 2/7

Reading Due: Re-Read Lakoff and Adler with Responses and Marginal Annotation
Read (12) and Engaging in Critical Reading and Review (18-30)

Read Thoreau "On Keeping a Private Journal"(30-32) and Martin "Writing is Easy" (33-36)

Consider Synthesizing Classic and Contemporary Approaches as suggested at end of chapter

WEEK 3: TU 2/12

Responses to Lakoff and Martin DUE/Marginal Annotation will be read by me

CHAPTER 2: Writing: Process & Communication Reading Due: (44-71)

*Just peruse these ideas as we will return to them later. I will begin handing back Autobio
We will use some time today for one-on-one discussions (with me) about your progress and expectations so far. People will be able to read and re-write in class, so bring ALL MATERIALS with you. We will discuss applications and ways that we can effectively use the texts in our re-written essay drafts

Reading Due: Munoz (71-75) "Leave Your Name at the Border" and

Tan (76-81) "Mother Tongue"

"Freewriting" Exercise in-class writing

TH 2/14

Re-Reading with responses and marginal Annotation DUE on Munoz and Tan

Reading Due: Elbow (82-85) "Freewriting"

Reading Due: Tannen (100-105) "Sex, lies, and Conversation: Why Is It So Hard for Men and Women to Speak to Each Other?" Look over suggestions at end of chapter....

We will discuss your response ideas in class. *** Carefully read Synthesis: Connections for Critical Thinking (118) These will assist you in relating to and writing about assignments

thus far....And your annotations, journal entries and Written Drafts...Reading is Reading and Writing is Re-Writing

WEEK 4: TU 2/19

Chapter 3: Reading and Writing Effective Arguments. Peruse 120-147. We will discuss in class. Reading Due: McCarthy (155-157) "Oh, What a Tangled Web We Weave"

TH 2/21: Reading Due: Chaudhry (157-164) "Mirror, Mirror on the Web" We will discourse on this in class. The usual reading responses including suggestions for Synthesis at the end of Chapter 3 will be drafted.

WEEK 5: TU 2/26

We will review ALL Working Portfolio contents that we have developed thus far. We will have **One-on-One** meetings to decide which ones are to be **rewritten and discuss possible themes** for Individual ideas using cross-chapter interests and correlations. Please bring your organized Working Portfolio including first drafts of each assignment so far, Peer-Review Sheets and Rewritten essays.

READING DUE: Chapter 4. Peruse MLA sample papers (232-252, and 269): Synthesis. "Learn to Read and Write" (Douglass, 258-263). "The Lonely, Good Company of Books" (Rodriguez, 264-268).

TH 2/28 PART 2: Issues Across the Disciplines. Chapter 5: Education and Society. Carson, (285-293). "Two Cheers for Brown v. Board of Education". Gelernter, 278-281. And Gelernter (278-281) "Unplugged: The Myth of Computers in the Classroom". Usual end of chapter questions for responses.

REREADING DUE: Re-reads and marginal annotation. Responses due that you are still reflecting on. We will use time to explore connections between the writers that we have read and reread.

Ideas for MIDTERM PORTFOLIO ORGANIZATION WILL BE DISCUSSED. USE TIME TO RE-READ AND MARGINALLY ANY TEXTS THAT YOU HAVE NOT YET COMPLETED. DISCUSS SOME PROJECT THEMES THAT ARE BEGINNING TO INTEREST YOU AS FINAL, SHORT, FOCUSED, MLA RESEARCH TOPICS. MAKE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN YOUR OWN METACOGNITION, WRITERS AND THEMES. ONE-ON-ONE DISCUSSIONS WITH ME ABOUT YOUR PROGRESS. BRING ALL MATERIALS TO CLASS!

WEEK 6: TU 3/5

Go to the library and The Writing Center for Independent Study
Become **Reflective Readers/Writers...**

CHAPTER 6: Family Life & Gender Roles (294-297) READ Brooks (321) "Love, Internet Style"

Reading Due READ Kingsolver (304-311) "Stone Soup" Annotate and use suggestions at end of chapter in Response Paper, as usual.

TH 3/7: Chapter 7: History, Culture & Civilization (348--351) Read REED: (356-361) "America: The Multinational Society" Usual Re-read with Annotation and Reader Response

WEEK 7: TU 3/12

Chapter 7: Reading Due Cofer (365-370) "The Myth of the Latin Woman" Usual Suggestions at end of chapter for Reading Response and Marginal Annotation

TH 3/14: Reading Due Silko (375-382) "Yellow Woman & a Beauty of the Spirit"(394) Synthesis

WEEK 8: NO CLASSES !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! SPRING BREAK ((3/17 -3/24).

Catch up and be ready to submit MIDTERM PORTFOLIOS on return!

WEEK 9: TU 3/26 MIDTERM PORTFOLIOS ARE DUE TO HAND IN! Begin Chapter 8

Government Policy & Social Justice READING DUE: (396-399)

Jefferson (400-404) "The Declaration of Independence" AND

King (405-409). "I Have a Dream"..... Attendant suggestions and reader responses/marginal annotations

TH 3/28: We will discuss all work so far. Bring everything to class. I will begin to give back Midterm Portfolios with Assessments as per our Rubric. Reading Due: Wolfe (424-429) "Obama vs. Marx"

Holiday Recess (3/29-3/31)

WEEK 10: TU 4/2 We will use today for one-on-one discussions and "Catch Up"

Reading Due: Wolfe (424-429) "Professions for Women" and BEGIN Chapter 9 Government, Politics, and Social Justice (452-455)

TH 4/4 Reading Due: Reich (485-497) "Why the Rich are Getting Richer and the Poor Poorer" Attendant responses and annotations

WEEK 11: TU 4/9 Begin Chapter 10 Reading Due: Media & Popular Culture (508-511)

Reading Due: Gates (523-525) "2 Live Crew Decoded" Usual suggestions and responses

TH 4/11 Reading Due: Baldwin (440-451) "Stranger in the Village" (Chapter 8)

WEEK 12: I will determine our progress and time left to work on final assignments*****

WEEK 13: Essay topics for short, focused MLA PAPERS....Library research

Recheck all Weeks, dates, Chapters and Assignments.....

WEEK 14:

This is your "FINAL" You will hand in your "polished" Folder, your Reflective letters and your MLA Research Paper. Since we do not have a final exam, ALL students must attend the FINAL CLASS!

DUE TODAY INCLUDING MLA PAPER WITH PROPER WORKS CITED PAGE
AND REFLECTIVE LETTER 2 COPIES OF EACH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! FINAL GRADES
DUE IN BY 12/20

Let's have an interesting and academically rewarding semester, one in which we create "NEW
KNOWLEDGE"

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

SPRING 2013

Jan 21	Martin Luther King Day - College Closed
Jan 23	Professional Day
	Last Day for Full Tuition Refund
Jan 24	Classes Begin/Late Registration Begins
	Add/Drop Period Begins
	First Day of First 5 – Week Mod Session
	First Day of First 7 ½ -Week Mod Session
Jan 31	Instructor Signature Required to Add Classes
Feb 6	Last Day of Add/Drop and Partial Tuition Refund
Feb 7	All College Professional Day – Classes Not In Session
Feb 12	Lincoln's Birthday - Classes In Session
Feb 18	President's Day Observed – College Open Classes Not In Session
Feb 25	Last Day to Select Audit Option
Mar 4	Last Day of First 5 – Week Mod Session
Mar 5	First Day of Second 5 – Week Mod Session
Mar 15	Last Day to Apply for Summer 2013 Graduation
Mar 18-24	Spring Break - Classes Not In Session
Mar 27	Last Day First 7 ½ -Week Mod Session
Mar 28	First Day of Classes Second 7 ½ -Week Mod Session
March 29-31	Spring Recess – College Closed
Apr 1	Student Online Course Evaluations Open for completion 15 week Session
	Continuing Student Registration for Summer Session and Fall Semester
Apr 12	Faculty System Professional Day – Classes In Session
Apr 15	Last Day to Select Pass/Fail Option – 15 Week Session
	Last Day to Submit Incomplete Work from Fall '12 semester and Intersession '12.
	Last Day of Second 5 – Week Mod Session
	New Student registration for Summer Session and Fall Semester
Apr 16	First Day of Third 5 – Week Mod Session
Apr 26	Student Online Course Evaluations Closed for Student Input 15 Week Session
May 13	Last Day to Withdraw from Classes
May 20	Last Day of 15 Week Session
	Last Day Second 7 ½ -Week Mod
	Last Day of Third 5 – Week Mod Session
May 21	Make-up/Supplemental session - Instructor Discretion
May 23	Final Grades Due
May 27	Memorial Day - College Closed
May 31	Student grades available on Web
June 1	Commencement

SPRING 2013 MODULAR COURSES

SEVEN AND A HALF WEEK - MOD 1

Jan 23	Last Day to drop classes for a full tuition refund
Jan 24	First day of Class for Tuesday & Thursday Classes
Jan 28	First Day of Class for Monday & Wednesday Classes
Jan 30	Last Day for a Partial Refund
Feb 6	Last Day to Select Audit Option
Feb 28	Student Online Course Evaluations Opened for completion
Mar 4	Last Day to Select Pass/Fail Option
Mar 11	Student Online Course Evaluations Closed
Mar 13	Last Day to Withdraw from classes
Mar 26	Last day of Class for Tuesday & Thursday Classes
Mar 27	Last Day of Class for Monday & Wednesday Classes

SEVEN AND A HALF WEEK - MOD 2

Mar 27	Last Day to drop classes for a full tuition refund
Mar 28	First day of Class for Tuesday & Thursday Classes
Apr 1	First Day of Class for Monday & Wednesday Classes
Apr 8	Last Day for a Partial Refund
Apr 10	Last Day to Select Audit Option
Apr 30	Student Online Course Evaluations Opened for completion
May 1	Last Day to Select Pass/Fail Option
May 8	Student Online Course Evaluations Closed for Student Input
May 13	Last Day to Withdraw from classes
May 16	Last day of Class for Tuesday & Thursday Classes
May 20	Last Day of Class for Monday & Wednesday Classes

This is an in-class essay. Write a "bio" about yourself. Please include details about yourself.

1. Describe yourself. Give the reader enough details to be able to identify you (name, height, weight, hair color, eye color, gender, age, and etcetera). Do you have a nickname? Please state what name you'd like to be called by? What are your features like? What do you think about yourself and your own physical characteristics? What kind of personality do you possess? What is your best trait?

2. Why are you enrolled at in college? Have you decided on a "major" or program of study yet? If so, explain. What inspired you to attend class? What are your career goals? How do you imagine yourself five years from today? What do you see yourself doing? What are your career and academic goals?

3. What are your hobbies? What is your day to day routine usually like, now? How do you imagine your "ideal" lifestyle?

4. What were your prior experiences in "English" class like? Were they good, bad, frustrating, or rewarding? What do you like the best about English? What do you hate about it? What is the title of the last book you've read? And, what is your favorite book of "all-time"?

5. What do you see as your own strengths and weaknesses in English? Are you a person who thinks that he/she is an avid reader? Do you enjoy reading and writing? What do you think you need to focus on more? What are your expectations for this semester?

6. What is the craziest or most daring thing you've ever done? Did you learn anything valuable from the experience? Please give the reader some details!

Please use separate piece(s) of paper. Take your time and please be thorough. Do not bother to re-write.

Please include today's date, your name, e-mail, address, and telephone number (at the top of the page) as I may need to contact you at some time. This information will be kept confidential.

In Class Diagnostic Assignment

For this assignment, you will write an in-class essay to help your teacher assess the skills you already have, as a reader and writer. Your essay will not count towards your grade.

Please do not spend time copying your essay over. A readable first draft only is required. If you make a mistake, feel free to cross it out and move on. Use all your time to read, plan, write, and respond.

PLEASE READ THE PASSAGE:

Reading involves a fair measure of push and shove. You make your mark on a book and it makes its mark on you. Reading is not simply a matter of hanging back and waiting for a piece, or its author, to tell you what the writing has to say. In fact, one of the difficult things about reading is that the pages before you will begin to speak only when the authors are silent and you begin to speak in their place, sometimes for them—doing their work, continuing their projects—and sometimes for yourself, following your own agenda.

This is an unusual way to talk about reading, we know. We have not mentioned finding information or locating an author's purpose or identifying main ideas, useful though these skills are, because the purpose of our book is to offer you occasions to imagine other ways of reading. We think of reading as a social interaction—sometimes peaceful and polite, sometimes not so peaceful and polite.

We'd like you to imagine that when you read the works we've collected here, somebody is saying something to you, and we'd like you to imagine that you are in a position to speak back, to say something of your own in turn. In other words, we are not presenting our book as a miniature library (a place to find information) and we do not think of you, the reader, as a term-paper writer (a person looking for information to write down on three-by-five cards).

When you read, you hear an author's voice as you move along; you believe a person with something to say is talking to you. You pay attention, even when you don't completely understand what is being said, trusting that it will all make sense in the end, relating what the author says to what you already know or expect to hear or learn. Even if you don't quite grasp everything you are reading at every moment (and you won't), and even if you don't remember everything you've read (no reader does—at least not in long, complex pieces), you begin to see the outlines of the author's project, the patterns and rhythms of that particular way of seeing and interpreting the world.

When you stop to talk or write about what you've read, the author is silent; you take over—it is your turn to write, to begin to respond to what the author said. At that point this author and his or her text become something you construct out of what you remember or what you notice as you go back through the text a second time, working from passages or examples but filtering them through your own predisposition to see or read in particular ways.

REQUIRED ESSAY:

In a single, unified essay, answer both of the following questions:

What do you understand the passage to be saying?

What is your response or reaction to the passage?

