

English 100 Syllabus

Instructor: Andy Maines

Office Hours: MWF 11-12, and by appointment (and I will usually try to have my lunch in the cafeteria from 12-1 on MW...feel free to join me or ask a question).

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Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of English 100, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a strong competency in grammar, spelling, and sentence structure
- Utilize the writing process to construct compositions
- Compose well-organized paragraphs with specific topic sentences and examples
- Write using different stylistic modes
- Develop a basic understanding of the traditional academic essay
- Improve their abilities to read and to understand a text
- Understand the connection between critical reading and writing
- Develop a greater sense of confidence in their ability to express their ideas through writing

IF, AS A RESULT OF THE PLACEMENT TEST, YOU WERE ADVISED TO TAKE ENG 094 AND YOU HAVE NOT DONE SO, YOU PLACE YOURSELF AT A SERIOUS DISADVANTAGE IN THIS CLASS.

Course Materials:

Graff, Gerald, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russell Durst, eds. **They Say/I Say: with Readings.** New York: Norton, 2009.

Faigley, Lester. The Brief Penguin Handbook. 3rd ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2008.

You must be able to use access the internet, use e-mail, and log on to Blackboard Vista in order to be successful in this class. Most work will be submitted electronically, so you must be able to use Blackboard Vista successfully. Furthermore, those assignments assigned on Blackboard Vista MUST be submitted on Blackboard Vista.

Failure: This is a class that counts on you to fail. You will learn through doing...through writing and rewriting...which means that you will learn by failing and trying again. A basic premise of this class is that true and ultimate success can only be reached through failure. You need to be aware of that and recognize that failure is a sign of learning and that it does not reflect poorly on you. I need you to keep working and fighting, and, if you do, I am confident that you will ultimately be successful in this class.

Active Learning: This class may be very different from those that you are used to. You may be used to being passive and receiving information. This class demands that you are active learners. You do the reading and you come prepared with questions. You guide the discussion and decide what we will cover, and I will act as a facilitator and moderator, rather than as a lecturer. It is not my responsibility to “go over” the reading.

Grading: The emphasis for the grades in this class will be on writing. You need to write well in order to get an A for the class. As far as what I expect of papers I will say that an A paper must be well organized, have a point it is making, and be relatively free of grammatical errors. A paper that fails in any of these areas (structure, grammar, argument) will not pass. That said, I understand that English 100 is not for everyone, and I believe in rewarding effort. Therefore, I place a large emphasis on participation. If you are worried about your writing skills, you can, to a degree, compensate by coming to class regularly (and on time) and participating.

Grade Breakdown:

Participation (Attendance, online and in-class participation, quiz grades, and general comportment): 16%

Journals: 10%

Portfolio: 15%

Three Papers: 13% each

In Class, Timed Writing: 20%

Minimum Writing Standard: Much of your grade is dependent on effort alone. However, in order to pass this class you need to show that you are ready to write college level papers. Therefore, in order to pass, your portfolio (and the two papers in it), must be passing.

Participation: School is your job. I expect you to behave as professionals. Although you can, technically, fail participation and still pass the course, I don't recommend it. This is a writing seminar and it is designed for me to work closely with you to help you improve your writing.

In order to receive an A for participation, you need to be in class pretty much all the time. Tardiness or absenteeism will quickly begin to erode your participation grade. If you miss more than three classes (**FOR ANY REASON**), you are unlikely to receive an A for participation. If you are constantly late or absent, don't expect me to make a big deal. You are adults. *Being late or absent is your decision, but be aware that it will be noted and you will be held accountable for the decisions you make.* I realize that events happen that may force you to miss class. However, if events conspire to force you to miss several classes, then you have a good reason why you won't get the grade you want. Unforeseen events are not a reason for me to give you the grade you want.

When I am formulating the participation grade at the end of the semester I will consider these factors:

- 1.) Attendance and punctuality
- 2.) Peer review—Did you work hard in peer review and provide useful comments?
- 3.) Class comportment—Are you respectful of your peers' opinions, do you pay attention, and do you seem prepared to discuss the text?

4.) Work and Effort—Did you take your work seriously, have work in on time, and make an effort to improve?

5.) Quizzes—I use these mainly to confirm what I already know about your preparedness, but I certainly look at your quiz grade when I am assigning a participation grade.

If you do miss class, check with your classmates to find out what you missed. Your absence should not mean more work for me.

Attendance: A lot of what we do in this class will stem from class discussions. So, you need to be here in order to succeed in this class. Also, in addition to class work and conferences, I am willing to put extra effort forward to help you achieve the level of writing necessary to succeed. However, **there is a direct correlation between the amount of work you put in and the amount I am willing to give back.** If you want me to take my time to help you, because you missed class, I will quickly become annoyed. If you missed class, find out what you missed from your classmates. It is not my responsibility to make sure you have the information that you are missing because of your failure to attend.

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. I often have students come to me and say they are excited about taking English because they want to learn how to 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 people on your floor to read. Bring it to me, or (I can't emphasize this enough) **Bring your paper to the Writing Center.**

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. There will be six journal assignments scored 0-3. If you get 16 points and turn in all journals, you will get an A. 15 points is an A-, 14 a B+, etc.

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 three 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.

Late Papers: If a paper is late (i.e. not attached to the assignment function of Blackboard Vista at the time it is due), I will accept it up to one week later, but it will be marked down one letter grade. If the paper is not in within one week of the assignment, it will receive an F and may not be rewritten. **All papers must be submitted through Blackboard Vista.**

What should I change in my re-write?: This is the question that I hear most often from students. My answer is simple: change what needs to be changed to make it a good paper. I will say that this never means just correcting a few grammar mistakes that I already marked on your

paper. I try not to even mark little grammar errors unless I see a pattern of errors that I want to point out to you. However, YOU should look over the paper to find any mistakes you can. Furthermore, the emphasis for my grading is on things like logic of argument and organization of ideas. Make sure your paper makes sense and that your argument can be understood. If this means moving a couple of paragraphs around and doing a little polishing, do that. If your paper needs an entire new thesis and argument and you need to completely start from scratch, do that.

Portfolio: The portfolio will demonstrate your best work. You will include the most recent drafts of two papers (again, two of the first three papers-not the resumé assignment), 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.

Conferences: Will be scheduled as necessary, but you are always welcome to schedule an appointment with me.

Peer Groups: This is the most important aspect of participation. When I am assigning participation, the first think 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 good 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 lessons that I give you aren't sinking in, but maybe one of your classmates can help. If you want to impress me with your participation, this is a great place to start.

A Word About Plagiarism: It is bad. Willfully trying to pass off someone else's work as your own will result in an F for the class and can lead to further disciplinary action. It's just not worth it.

Final Words: I know that for a lot of people English class is no fun. I do understand. There is a lot of hard work we need to get done, but I think if you loosen up and relax you will have do better, and you might even enjoy yourself...a little bit.