

English 101 Syllabus

Instructor: Andy Maines

Office Hours: Mon. and Thurs. 12:30-2, and Wed. 1:30-3, or by appointment

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Learning Outcomes:

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

- Read and understand essays which offer differing points of view on a topic
- Compare or contrast various perspectives on a topic
- Analyze a particular perspective or argument on a topic and evaluate its merits
- Develop a personal 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
- Employ strategies for effective 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

IF AS A RESULT OF THE PLACEMENT TEST, YOU WERE ADVISED TO TAKE ENG 094 OR ENG 100 AND YOU HAVE NOT DONE SO, YOU PLACE YOURSELF AT A SERIOUS DISADVANTAGE IN THIS CLASS.

Course Materials:

Colombo, Gary, Robert Cullen and Bonny Lisle. eds. Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing. 7th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007.

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 WebCT in order to be successful in this class.

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 possess some creativity of analysis. An A paper must make me think and engage the text in an interesting way. I do not want summaries, and I do not want papers that simply agree or disagree with what the author of the selection has written. An A paper must also present a logical argument supported by textual evidence

and be relatively free of grammatical and typographical errors. Furthermore, papers must be reasonably logical and coherent, have a limited number of sentence level errors, and have some point they are trying to make in order to pass. A paper that fails in any of these areas (structure, grammar, argument) will not pass. That said, I understand that English 101 presents an uneven playing field. Future English majors share a class with those who have no interest in writing. In order to make the field a little more equal, 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.

Minimum Writing Standard: Although there are a lot of ways to enhance your grade that do not require you to write well (e.g. participation, journals, etc.), this is a class designed, in part, to ensure that students are able to write at a college level. Therefore, **any student who has not received a C- or better on 2 of the 3 critical essays and passed the revision assignment by the end of the semester (after all revisions are turned in) will fail the course.**

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 that will be due on Thursdays when you have no paper due that week. 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. If your handwriting is legible, I will even accept hand written journals, which should be the equivalent of at least a full typed page. If you get four check pluses, you will get an A for this assignment. If you have three, you will get an A-, etc. A check minus subtracts one check plus and not turning a journal subtracts two.

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 critical essays. What I need to avoid, however, is for students to hand me a stack of re-writes on the last day of class. I will accept no more than one non-assigned paper per week. By non-assigned, I mean a rewrite or a late paper. So, if you want to re-write all four critical essays you need to turn in one paper per week for the last four weeks. **The research paper cannot be re-written once it is submitted for a grade.**

Late Papers: I will only accept one late paper per semester. Papers that are late will be lowered one letter grade (on the initial assignment and all subsequent rewrites).

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.

Revision Paper: What you will be graded on here is how much effort you have put into your revision and how effective that revision has been. You should turn in the original paper, the revised version (this may be a paper you have turned in, or are turning in, as a re-write), and a process paper that explains things like the problems you had writing the original paper, what you learned since the original attempt, what changes you made, what issues you are still struggling with, etc. Your revision process paper should be at least 2 pages long.

Research Paper: This will be a major (min. 7 pages) paper. You must research a topic that will be directly relevant to your life. What I mean by this is that you can research information about your intended major (What you need to do to get into the major, what are the job prospects, etc.) or something else that is directly relevant like some disease or disorder you have. The research should be information that will be useful to YOU. My contention is that topics that are important to YOU tend to make good papers. One thing that applies to both the literary papers and "I-search" papers is that your own ideas should be the heart of the paper. You are using research to enhance **your** discussion. I don't want a summary of what other people have said.

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

Attendance: 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 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.** I will also say that if you miss more than three classes, you have not participated well enough to get an A for participation. The best you can hope for is an A-. If you miss more than four classes, the best you can get is a B+, etc. However, showing up for every class does not guarantee an A. **You must participate. Please note that missing a peer conference day or not turning a draft in for peer review counts as 1.5 absences. If you do not have a paper to exchange, you will not be allowed to participate in peer review. You will be allowed to sit in class and do other work and this will count as 1 absence rather than 1.5. Please also not that consistent tardiness will have a negative effect on your participation grade.** 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.

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 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.

Grade Breakdown:

Participation: 20%

Journals: 10%

Research Paper: 15%

Revision Paper: 15%

Three Other Critical Papers: 12% Each

Final: 4%

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 do better, and you might even enjoy yourself...a little bit.