

A Course Syllabus for Freshman Composition Classes Using *Essentials of Academic Writing*

Course Syllabus

YOUR UNIVERSITY
Department of English
Freshman Writing Program

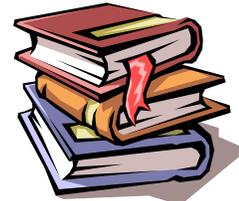
English 100: The Essentials of Academic Writing

Professor: _____

Office: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____



A Checklist for Student Writers

- I understand the requirements of the writing assignment.
- I have done some freewriting or used some other brainstorming activity to reflect upon my topic
- I know what my reader wants, needs, and expects.
- I know what I want to accomplish in this writing assignment; I know what my purpose is.
- I have collected valid and reliable information about my topic from books, journals, and the Internet.
- My thesis (central idea) is clear and straightforward.
- My essay has order and structure: a beginning, middle, and end.
- My introductory paragraph introduces my topic and presents my thesis.
- My body paragraphs are well developed with examples, details, and other data in support of my thesis.
- Each of my body paragraphs focuses on developing one main point or idea.
- My concluding paragraph establishes a sense of closure.
- My essay has cohesive ties, clarifying relationships between and among sentences and paragraphs.
- The tone and voice of my writing are appropriate for an academic essay.
- There is a rhythm and flow to my writing, a blend of sentence types.
- I have checked for and corrected errors in sentence structure.
- I have checked for and corrected errors in sentence grammar.
- I have checked for and corrected errors in spelling.
- I have checked for and corrected errors in punctuation.
- I have cited and acknowledged my sources accurately and completely using the documentation style requested by my professor.

REQUIRED TEXT

Soles, Derek. The Essentials of Academic Writing. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004.

THE GOALS OF THE COURSE

The aim of English 100 is to teach students the components of the process of writing academic essays and reports to help them do well in their college courses that require writing assignments. To meet the course objectives, students will learn how to:

1. Reflect upon a topic, specifically how to assess audience and establish purpose and how to use a variety of heuristics productively;
2. Research a topic, specifically how to access, evaluate, paraphrase, and use effectively information from the Internet and from books and journals in the library;
3. Plan, structure, and outline academic essays and reports;
4. Draft effective introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions for academic essays and reports;
5. Revise writing for content, structure, style, and cohesion;
6. Edit writing to ensure correct grammar, sentence structure, spelling, diction, punctuation, and mechanics;
7. Cite sources accurately, using a recognized and accepted system.

English 100 also includes instruction and practice in those skills and abilities—most notably **active reading** and **critical thinking**—that may not be specific components of the writing process but that help us develop and refine our competence as writers. We will read carefully, discuss, and analyze the model essays to foster active reading and critical thinking skills.

CLASS SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE

Introduction to the Course

What is an Academic Essay?

Getting Started: Consider Topic, Audience, Purpose

Finding a Thesis

Readings:

Saving the Vancouver Island Marmot by Harriet Ng

WEEK TWO

How to Research A Topic

Readings:

The Enron Legacy by Grace Lehen

College Students' Responses to Content-Specific Advisories Regarding Television and Movies by C. Mo Bahk

WEEK THREE

Planning an Expository Essay

Readings:

Freud's Influence by B. Michael Thorne and Tracy B. Henley

Each to His, Her, and Their Own: Gender and Pronoun Agreement in English by Pauline North

WEEK FOUR

Planning a Compare/Contrast Essay

Readings:

The Appeal of the Real: Why Reality Television Is So Popular by Christine Murray

Predictors of Male and Female Servers' Average Tip Earnings by Michael Lynn and Tony Simons

WEEK FIVE

Planning a Persuasive Essay

Readings:

The Spider and the Wasp by Alexander Petrunovitch

Music and Autism by Gordon Graham

WEEK SIX

Drafting a Clear and Specific Opening

Reading:

Second Thoughts: The Genetics of a Brave New World? by Michio Kaku

WEEK SEVEN

Drafting Complete Body Paragraphs

Readings:

The Rise and Fall of the Music Hall by Kate Anderson

Spain's Colonial Empire, 1492-1600 by Thomas F.X. Noble, et al.

WEEK EIGHT

Drafting an Explicit Conclusion

Readings:

Weight Loss Methods of High School Wrestlers by Robert B. Kinningham and Daniel W. Gorenflo

Controlling Communication Apprehension by Michael Osborn and Suzanne Osborn

WEEK NINE

How to Revise Writing

Readings:

Montessori: The Prepared Environment by Allan C. Ornstein and Daniel U. Levine
Advertising to Children by Wayne D. Hoyer and Deborah J. MacInnis

WEEK TEN

How to Revise Writing (Cont.)

Readings:

Henry V (1413-1422) and the War Against France by Lacey Baldwin Smith

WEEK ELEVEN

How to Edit Writing

Readings:

Disney World: Public Use/Private State by Susan Willis

WEEK TWELVE

How to Edit Writing (Cont.)

Readings:

Rapport-Talk and Report-Talk by Deborah Tannen
The Comparative Effectiveness of CAI on Collegiate Academic Performance by Edwin P. Christmann and John L. Badgett

WEEK THIRTEEN

Citing Sources

Readings:

Predictors of Male and Female Servers' Average Tip Earnings by Michael Lynn and Tony Simons

WEEK FOURTEEN

Review for Final Exam

ENGLISH 100 ASSIGNMENTS

ESSAY #1

Write an essay of approximately 750 words, in which you describe “the typical reader” of a magazine with which you are familiar. The articles in the magazine, the ads, and the letters to the editor will give you valuable clues about the target audience at which the magazine is aimed. Include in your essay such information as the gender, age, interests,

and personality of the typical reader. Note that this assignment calls for an expository essay.

This essay is worth 20% of your final grade.

It is due _____.

ESSAY #2

Select one of the following topics on a current social issue or select a current social issue of interest to you, if that topic is not included on the list. Make sure your topic, if you select your own, is not too broad. Note that this assignment calls for a persuasive/argumentative essay.

Find and read carefully two books, two print articles, and two online articles about the topic you have selected. Write an essay of approximately a thousand words on this topic. Cite correctly all sources you have consulted. See Chapter 8 of *Essentials of Academic Writing* for information on citing sources correctly.

Submit the plan of your essay along with your finished product. Remember that you will likely begin with a tentative plan but compose the final plan of your essay only after you have finished writing.

- Why _____ has become an endangered species and what we need to do to save it.
- Why oil companies should or should not drill for oil in the wilderness of Alaska.
- Why school vouchers are or are not a good idea.
- Gay/lesbian couples should or should not enjoy all of the same rights heterosexual couples enjoy.
- Hate crimes should or should not be punished any more severely than crimes motivated by homophobia or racism.
- The tactics of some environmental groups are counterproductive.
- We would all be healthier if we didn't eat meat.
- The lyrics of some popular songs need to be censored by the government.
- Mothers with children under five should not work outside of the home.
- English should (or should not) be, by law, the official language of the United States.

This essay is worth 20% of your final grade.

It is due _____.

ESSAY #3

Write a comparison/contrast essay of approximately a thousand words on a topic related to the subject in which you plan to major. If, for example, you are an English major, you could compare and contrast two poems or two short stories (plays and novels are too long for a thousand word compare/contrast essay). If you are a psychology major, you could compare and contrast two different treatments for one psychological disorder, or two different methods of dream interpretation, or two views on the effect of childhood trauma on career choice. If you are a business major, you could compare and contrast in-house professional development opportunities in two companies or the way in which two similar products or services (hamburgers, watches, long-distance service, diapers, computers) are marketed by two different companies. If you are a biology major, you could compare and contrast the circulations systems of vertebrates and invertebrates. Conference with your professor to make sure your topic is acceptable and that you are on the right track.

This essay is worth 20% of your final grade

It is due _____.

ESSAY #4

Your audience this assignment is your classmates.

Select an error in sentence structure, sentence grammar, or punctuation that has given you some trouble in past writing assignments or that you feel you have never understood as well as you need to. In an essay of approximately a thousand words, define the error, provide examples, explain how and why inexperienced writers tend to make this error, and clearly explain methods by which this error can be corrected.

This essay is worth 20% of your final grade.

It is due _____.

YOUR JOURNAL

A journal—strictly speaking—is a daily written account of activities you have done or insights you have had that you consider to be significant enough to commit to writing. In your English 100 journal, you are to record your responses to assigned readings or to other topics your instructor assigns. You are required to make at least one entry in your journal each week, except for the first and the last weeks of the course.

Your journal is worth 10% of your final grade. It will be graded less for grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation and more for creativity and insight. You may use a plain or fancy notebook for your journal and include in it artwork, pictures,

poetry. Your instructor will collect your journal to grade in the last week of class but may ask you to submit it as well other times throughout the term.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

If, in a written assignment, you use the words and/or the ideas of another writer, you must acknowledge those words and ideas. If you fail to acknowledge the words and/or ideas of another writer, you are guilty of plagiarism. There are a variety of acceptable ways of acknowledging the work of other writers. Your instructor will discuss this issue with you in more detail and will teach you one or two acceptable methods of citing sources in academic writing.

If, in any of your assignments for English 100 you plagiarize the work of another writer, you will fail that assignment.

If you plagiarize the work of another writer a second time, you will fail the course.

Note that you are plagiarizing if you quote directly from another's written text without acknowledgement OR if you use the ideas of another writer without acknowledgement.

LATE PAPER POLICY

The dates your writing assignments are due are indicated clearly in this course outline.

You must make every effort to hand your assignments in on time.

If you submit a paper after the deadline, attach to it a letter to your instructor clearly indicating why you are handing your essay in late. Include documentation such as a doctor's note if applicable.

Your instructor will accept late papers without penalty if he or she decides the reasons outlined in your letter are valid.

Your instructor will penalize or will not accept papers handed in late without a valid excuse.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This class meets three times a week for a total of 40 meetings (factoring in holidays). You are allowed four unexcused absences. If a student has more than four unexcused absences, his or her grade for the course will be reduced. If a student has more than five unexcused absences, he or she will not get credit for the class.

Note that an **excused absence** is defined as one that is the result of a condition or circumstance beyond the student's control, such as illness, a family crisis or emergency, essential travel, or some other serious and important personal circumstance. Normally,

an absence will be excused only if there is some documentation verifying the circumstances that caused the absence.

Students who have more than ten excused or unexcused absences cannot get credit for English 100.

THE YOUR UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center is located in _____. Qualified tutors in the Writing Center will help you work through any writing assignment you are having trouble understanding or completing successfully. Call or visit the Writing Center and make an appointment for a conference with a tutor. If you cannot get to the Center in person, you may submit a draft to e-writer via the Writing Center's Web page:_____.

FINAL GRADE EVALUATION

Essay #1	20 points
Essay #2	20 points
Essay #3	20 points
Essay #4	20 points
Journal	10 points
Attendance/Participation	10 points
Total: 100	-----

A Four-Trait Analytic Scoring Guide for Evaluating Student Essays

A plus sign in a box indicates good work. A minus sign in a box indicates a need for further work and improvement. An unmarked box indicates satisfactory work.

Trait One: Ideas

- the essay has a clear, strong, straightforward thesis or central idea
- the ideas are thoughtful, interesting, creative, informative
- there are no errors in logic (especially important for a persuasive/argumentative essay)
- ideas borrowed from secondary sources are properly acknowledged
- _____

Trait Two: Development

- the points and ideas are adequately supported and/or developed
- sentences in paragraphs support the paragraph's topic sentence
- the writer meets the needs and expectations of his or her readers
- the writer has used current and reliable sources to develop, authorize, and validate his or her ideas
- _____

Trait Three: Clarity

- the essay has a sound organizational structure
- the essay is free from errors in grammar
- the essay is free from errors in sentence structure
- the essay is free from errors in punctuation
- the essay is free from errors in diction
- the essay is free from errors in spelling
- the writer uses cohesive ties between sentences and paragraphs
- _____

Trait Four: Style

- the writer has an effective voice, appropriate for the reader, the rhetorical mode of the essay, and the essay's purpose
- the sentence structure is varied
- the writing has some energy, some flair
- the diction and vocabulary are varied, but not ostentatious
- the writer uses figurative language effectively
- _____

Mark/Score/Grade: _____