2014

101-16 English Composition

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ENGLISH 101: English Composition
Xavier University Fall 2014

Course Number: ENGL 101.16       Instructor: Rita DiBello
Time: TTh 10:00 – 11:15       Email: dibellor@xavier.edu
Location: SMH 247       Office Location: Hinkle 243
Office Hours: TTh 11:30-12:30

“It is not the answer that enlightens, but the question.” – Eugene Ionesco

“Easy reading is damn hard writing.” – Maya Angelou

Course Description:

This course in English Composition is intended (1) to introduce you to writing as a subject of scholarly inquiry grounded in rhetorical theory and knowledge about the writing process, and (2) to help develop writing skills that you will use in your college courses and beyond—in your personal, professional, and public lives.

Course Goals:

English 101/115 fulfills a Core Curriculum Requirement. It particularly reinforces the first goal, “Students will demonstrate the ability to express themselves articulately, orally and in writing,” and its three student learning outcomes: 1) students will organize and express their ideas in writing and orally; 2) students will formulate clear and arguable theses, supported by evidence drawn from appropriate sources; and 3) students will utilize an effective writing process guided by audience, purpose, cultural context, and disciplinary standards. For further information on goals, means, and outcomes please visit: http://www.xavier.edu/english/Writing-Program.cfm

- Rhetorical Knowledge and Writing Processes – Students will be writers who have developed an effective writing process guided by the rhetorical elements of audience, purpose, and cultural context.
- Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing – Students will understand writing as an art that helps them solve problems analytically, creatively, and rhetorically and as a means of inquiry, thinking, communication, and argumentation.
- Knowledge of Conventions – Students will be writers who understand the role and use of information.
- Writing in Community – Students will be writers who understand the power and ethical responsibility that come with the production of written discourse.
**Required Materials:**

- Selected readings to be made available on Canvas
- Ready and reliable access to a computer, Microsoft Office (especially Word), internet connection, and printer
- A notebook and writing implement to bring to each class meeting

**Course Policies:**

**ON-TIME ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**

English 101 is a discussion-based course, in which all of us – students and teacher alike – are active participants. Since discussion will be an integral part of our class meetings, it is important that everyone be prepared for class, arrive on time, and be ready to offer productive comments based on assigned readings. Preparation involves not only completing the reading before class, but also making notes about the reading so that you are prepared to discuss what you have read. I reserve the right to add quizzes to the class agenda if lack of participation becomes a problem.

**Absences:** In the interest of fairness, I do not make distinctions between excused and unexcused absences. I know that “things” (sickness, family emergencies, car troubles, etc.) often come up in our lives, and with this in mind, all students in this class are allowed two (one week’s worth) absences without penalty. It is up to you when and how those absences are used. Bear in mind that this includes university-sponsored events and extracurricular activities such as sports. *Any absences you may accrue after those two will each result in a loss of 2.5% from your final grade in the course.*

**Tardies:** Tardy means 1-15 minutes past the start of class. Every student will get two tardies without penalty to allow for unavoidable delays. However, to discourage distractions and ensure students don’t miss any required material for each meeting, after the second tardy, students will earn half an unexcused absence for each additional tardy. Students who are 15 minutes late will be marked absent for the day. That absence will weigh against your total number of absences.

Please discuss any extreme circumstances with me that will affect your attendance or completion of assignments.

When you do miss class, **it is up to you** to find out what information you may have missed. Talk to your classmates or talk to me, but definitely talk to someone!

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Your assignments for this course, formal and informal, are due on the dates indicated in the daily schedule below or as alternatively indicated in class. Because due dates in this course reflect the relevance of an assignment to where we are in class, **late assignments are not accepted, except with prior approval.** To be considered “on time,” all assignments need to be handed in at the beginning of class on the day they are due (unless otherwise noted). I know we are all busy adults with lots of obligations and full schedules, so in order to avoid problems in this area, make sure to organize your time, back up ALL work, and try not to wait until the last
minute to start an assignment. Due to problems with virus transmission, I do not accept email attachments of essays or homework—all work must be submitted in hard copy and/or via Canvas.

ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS
In adherence to MLA formatting, all work submitted in this class should be typed in 12 pt. Times New Roman (TNR) font, double spaced, with 1” margins (unless otherwise stated). These are not the default settings in Microsoft Word, so be sure to change them yourself. If an assignment takes up more than a single page, the pages must be stapled together before the assignment is handed in. You should also make proper use of MLA formatting techniques with regard to headings, page numbers, and citations. Helpful references for MLA formatting include the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) and Hacker Handbook. You can also visit the University Writing Center for help and advice at any point in your writing process. And please, before submitting any assignment, edit and proofread energetically.

Finally, keep in mind that assignment length requirements are not a mere suggestion. A page is a full page (not a half page or even ¾ of a page) following all the standards of MLA format. Failing to meet these requirements will result in substantial grade deductions.

PLAGIARISM
Please review the Student Handbook for policies on plagiarism and academic honesty. We will discuss this in class, but if you are ever unsure, please ask me and/or visit the Writing Center before turning in your work.

CLASS CONDUCT
My hope and expectation is that English 101 can and will be a fun and enlightening experience for all of us, but it will only be so if we maintain an atmosphere of respect for self and for others and if we all work together as active participants.
With that in mind, I expect you all to be supportive of each other, to listen to others with open minds before offering your opinion, and to refrain from using disrespectful or derogatory language. I also expect you to come to class prepared and on time. As discussed above, being prepared includes having completed all homework and all reading assignments and being ready to actively participate in class discussions and activities.
I assume that when you are in class you will participate fully in all discussions, activities, and lectures. This means I expect you to turn off and put away your cell phones, laptops, ipods, ipads, and other electronic devices before each class session, unless I have given special permission on a given day. I also expect you to refrain from eating, sleeping, reading irrelevant materials, and talking once class has begun unless it is part of a class discussion. Texting, emailing, using Facebook (or other social networking sites), or browsing other sites unrelated to our class is disrespectful to your fellow classmates, to me, and to yourself and will not be tolerated. Engaging in disruptive and disrespectful behavior as outlined in this section of our syllabus will result in a loss of all participation credit for the day on which it occurs.

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT
I imagine you will find the answers to many questions you may have, especially regarding course policies, here in this syllabus, and you should consult the syllabus first when a question does arise. I also know, though, that you will have many questions or concerns throughout the semester that require answers or elaboration beyond the syllabus. Please feel free to come to me in these cases. I
very much want to be available to you and am happy to offer assistance when I can. The best ways to contact me are during my listed office hours or via email.

This semester, my regular weekly office hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:30-12:30. You are welcome to set up an appointment to talk to me during these times, but I also invite you simply to drop by if you want or need to. It’s why I’m there! These hours are the best times for me to meet with you in person, and I ask that you try to make them work whenever possible. If for some reason, though, you would like to meet and are unable to do so during my regular hours, we can try to set something up at another time. Keep in mind that meetings like this will depend on my availability, so it is definitely in your best interest to contact me earlier rather than later.

Email is another good way to get in touch with me with questions, concerns, and general communication. I try to check email at least once a day and to be as speedy as I can in my email response time, but in some instances it can take me a few days to get back to you. Again, contacting me sooner rather than later is definitely in your best interest, especially if your question is a complicated one (or might require a more complicated answer), or if it is time sensitive. With all that being said, if you ask a question about a homework assignment the night before it is due, there is a good chance you won’t receive an answer in time for class. When you do send an email, please make sure to include a brief subject heading that lets me know what the email is about (ie: “homework 9/1” or “project proposal”), tell me your section number (I teach more than one section of English 101), and don’t forget to include your name in the email (usually in a signature).

CLASS CANCELLATIONS
Check the Xavier home page for college closings. On the rare occasion that I need to cancel class, I will notify you by email as soon as possible.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities are available. If you have a documented physical or learning disability for which you require special accommodations, please present official documentation from the Disabilities Services Office.

Grading Policy:

- 90 – 100%: A  Rhetorical Analysis:  15%
- 80 – 89%:  B  Exploratory Research Essay and Bib. 20%
- 70 – 79%:  C  Making an Argument  20%
- 60 – 69%:  D  Into the Public Sphere  15%
- 59% and below  F  Common Assignment:  10%
- Final Reflection:  5%
- Homework/Participation:  15%
Assignments:

RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Purpose
In this 4-6 page essay, you will demonstrate your ability to analyze a text for the meaning-making strategies the author is using. You will be expected to use the rhetorical strategies we will discuss in class (ethos, pathos, logos, fallacies, etc.) to provide an analysis of a written argument. Hint: Select a text that strongly affected you. For example, if it made you laugh, see how the author accomplished that; if it made you cry, see how the author manipulated your emotions; if it made you angry, examine what assumptions you and the author disagree on.

Doing Rhetorical Analysis
Once you’ve selected a text, there are three questions you will want to answer:
• What is the purpose of this text? Or what is the text trying to say/do?
• What techniques does the author use to develop her/his point?
• How does the author use these techniques to manipulate/move/teach the reader?
• In other words, you must not only tell your audience what the text is doing, but HOW and WHY. Don’t just describe the techniques, but show how they create or contribute to the overall meaning and impact of the text. Show that you can distinguish between what the text says and what the text does.

The key in this paper is to focus. Obviously, many of the texts we have read include all the devices we’ll study. Some texts encompass multiple interpretations. You will not be able to discuss all the tools or all the meanings adequately in a 4–6 page paper. Determine the most crucial one or two strategies and formulate a strong guiding thesis. Then develop your analysis in more depth.

EXPLORATORY RESEARCH ESSAY AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Purpose
At this point in the semester, we are turning our attention to academic research and argument. We have talked about the ways that writing will reappear throughout your college career and beyond, and completing this essay will equip you with another skill: research writing. In this exploratory essay, you will be writing to find out about a problem and to form some preliminary conclusions about how it might be solved. This exploratory essay is essentially a retrospective of your writing and thinking process as you work through a problem, and you will have to be introspective and aware of your thinking process. The goal of this assignment—among others—is to help you see research as a process of inquiry and asking questions. Rather than searching for the sources or quotes that support your point, you will be searching for sources that interest you and that help you explore your topic in more depth. All of your research in this paper will help you form an argument for our Making an Argument assignment.

The Assignment
For this assignment, you will select a public controversy that is currently in the news at the local and national levels. When choosing an issue, keep in mind that you will need to find at least seven sources (three of which must be academic books or articles) that will help you explore the
controversy. These sources can be both original documents produced by those involved in the controversy and secondary sources written about the controversy. You will document your exploration in two ways:

**Part One: Exploratory Essay**
In an essay of 6-7 pages, you will write a first-person narrative of your thought process as you investigate your question through academic research. It is important to remember that beyond summarizing each source, you need to analyze how it shaped your thinking and generated new questions. We will discuss ways to approach this assignment as the semester progresses. Remember that you will want to include an MLA formatted Works Cited page with this essay, in addition to the annotated bibliography of part two.

**Part Two: Annotated Bibliography**
Separate from the essay, you will create an evaluative annotated bibliography in MLA format. Each entry should include both the bibliographic information and a summary/evaluation of the source (2 paragraphs per source). All sources from Part One should be included here, and vice versa. We will look at some examples of annotated bibliographies together as we work toward this assignment.

**MAKING AN ARGUMENT**

**Purpose**
Together we have discussed how writing is rhetorical, or how writers all make arguments to a particular audience. In this essay, you will construct your own argument, one that takes the same arguable topic from your Exploratory Research project, looks for truth, and aims to persuade an audience.

It is important to remember two things about argument as it applies to this class: first, argument does not create unpleasant conflict or polarize people but instead promotes understanding, new knowledge, and change; second, the goal of argument is not winning (as in a pro/con debate) but persuasion, an open and respectful process of inquiry where you advocate the validity of your position and add your voice to a larger conversation. In other words, classical rhetoricians would not call you weak for changing your mind when you hear a really good argument—they might say that you have participated in your community to find a better solution or course of action.

**The Assignment**
In this 7-8 page essay, you will construct an argument intended to persuade an audience of your peers. The essay should follow one of the argument structures we will discuss in class, either Rogerian or Classical Oration.

Your first challenge in this essay will be to carve out your own argument from all of the research you have done in the Exploratory Research assignment—to enter scholarly and public conversations about the issue. Because you have researched this topic widely, you will need to focus on an arguable area of the topic that interests you. In building your own argument, you will utilize five outside sources (2 of which must be scholarly). These five can and likely will come from the sources you found during the Exploratory Research project.
INTO THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Purpose
In the last two assignments, you researched a topic and wrote an argument for an academic audience. You did the kind of writing that you are regularly expected to do in college, for an audience that shares much of your expertise and values. This assignment extends from the last two: you will now take your research and your argument and present them to a public audience in a genre/media of your choice.

You will begin this assignment by defining an audience for your work, and based on your analysis of that audience, you will choose the genre/media for your final product.

This assignment is designed for you to understand that specialized knowledge can be communicated to multiple audiences; to explore different genres and media; to learn how to adapt your purpose, content, and argument to the needs, values, and expectations of a public audience; and to reflect on how the needs, values, and expectations of a public audience affect your rhetorical choices.

The Assignment
STEP ONE: After identifying your target audience, write a proposal to your instructor. This proposal should identify the target audience and outline what your final product will look like: What genre will you use, what media will you use, and what is your plan for making an argument to the target audience? How will you appeal to ethos, pathos, and logos? How will you appeal to the needs and values of the audience?

STEP TWO: Recast your classical argument for a specific public audience. Your final product may take many forms—including print and digital—but the genre, media, and style should be appropriate for your audience. Your final product may take these or other forms: editorial, podcast, advertisement, website, web-based video, or other public advocacy texts.

STEP THREE: In a written rationale, explain and reflect on the rhetorical choices you made in your product. Using examples from your product as evidence; make an argument for how well you adapted your argument to the needs, values, and expectations of your target audience. The rationale should be between 1-3 pages.

Although there is not a word length requirement for the recast part of this project, you do need to consider genre conventions: how long are most podcasts? How long are editorials or other public advocacy texts—in print or digital forms? How much text should be displayed on a website or video?

COMMON ASSIGNMENT
Guidelines for the Xavier University ENGL 101 Common Assignment will be provided to you in a separate assignment sheet.