

English 1121: College Writing and Critical Reading

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Hours: MW 1-2 p.m., RF 10-11 a.m., M 5:30-6:30 p.m., and by appt.

Spring 1999
Section 91

Course Description

According to the A.R.C.C. *1998-1999 Semester Catalog*, English 1121 “provides extended practice in critical reading, writing, and thinking. Course content includes the writing process, essential composition skills, and critical reasoning in various rhetorical situations. The course requires effectively reasoned and supported essays, including an argumentative research paper” (111).

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

- Develop effective essays by practicing writing as a recursive process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading) and by selecting information to support a thesis clearly, concisely, and logically.
- Read analytically both published texts and students' texts, including their own—i.e. identify the thesis, analyze support, and evaluate the effectiveness of the writing for the purpose and audience.
- Recognize and direct writing to a particular audience for a particular purpose.
- Solve writing problems by identifying a purpose or goal, describing the audience's assumptions and expectations, and selecting from a variety of writing strategies the methods appropriate for meeting the writing goal.
- Make language choices appropriate to their audience and context (these choices include consideration of diction, tone, consistent point of view, and style).
- Use edited Standard American English correctly.
- Recognize the basic strategies of persuasion and argument and apply these strategies to specific writing assignments that address a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Analyze the technical elements and logical connections their own argument and those of others. Students will use this analysis in the development and revision of their essays and as a reading strategy.
- Distinguish (in social, academic, professional, and civic arguments) assertions of value from assertions of fact or policy. Students will also recognize the role of emotional, logical, and ethical appeals in support of these assertions.
- Identify an issue, explore their position on the issue, and state their position. Students will then identify potential audiences with diverse values and beliefs, and articulate opposing arguments. Finally, they will select evidence that will persuade their target audiences to accept the assertions made in their essays and research papers.
- Use various information gathering techniques (including library research, electronic sources, interviews, and/or observation) to obtain evidence which they can then use to support their assertions in their argumentative essays and research papers.
- Analyze and evaluate sources to identify the writers' authority, purposes, target audiences, biases, assumptions, and reasoning. Based on these analyses, students will select those sources most appropriate as support for their own assertions.
- Represent sources in their own writing through accurate summaries, paraphrases, and direct quotations. They will use a style manual to cite and document sources correctly.

Required Texts and Materials

Axelrod, Rise B., and Charles R. Cooper. *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*. Shorter 5th ed. New York: St. Martin's, 1997.
Sladky, Paul, ed. *Free Falling and Other Student Essays*. 3rd ed. New York: St. Martin's, 1997.
Troyka, Lynn Quitman. *Quick Access*. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1998.

3x5 or 4x6 index cards or a spiral notebook.
One 3.5" HD computer disk.
Two two-pocket folders.
Loose-leaf paper.

Requirements and Evaluation

Formal Writing (70%): You will write a personal essay (10%), a summary-response essay (10%), an argument critique (10%), a position paper (30%), and an evaluation (10%)—you will receive an assignment sheet for each essay. A rough draft, a peer review, and a final draft are required for each essay to pass the course—see also the peer review and portfolio information below. All rough drafts should be double-spaced, word-processed or **legibly** written; all final drafts must be double-spaced, word-processed, and conform to the directions given in class, including instructions for in-text and end-of-text citation conventions.

Informal Writing (15%): During the term, there will be many informal writing assignments such as reading quizzes, reading responses, exercises, and group work; in-class writing and group work **cannot** be made up if you are absent. For the writings that I collect, you will receive either a “plus,” a “check,” or a “minus” for each one; these marks will be averaged and converted to a grade when I calculate your final grade. In addition, to prepare for the position paper, you will write a research proposal and an annotated bibliography. You will receive an assignment sheet for each of these papers, only a final draft of each paper is required to pass the course, and each paper will receive a letter grade.

Participation and Attendance (15%): Since this “workshop” course is based largely on in-class presentations, discussions, and small-group work (none of which can be reproduced), attendance and participation are essential to your success. If you are not here, you cannot learn and practice information that is not covered in the text, you cannot contribute to class discussions or group work, and you cannot learn from the contributions of your peers. Most importantly, you need to be here to share your ideas and writing with others and to be an audience (a reader and responder) for your peers. For these reasons, attendance is required. If you miss more than **eight** (8) class hours, this portion of your final grade will be lowered one letter. If you miss more than **twelve** (12) class hours, this portion of your final grade will be an “F.” As a **bonus**, if you have perfect attendance, your lowest essay grade will be raised one letter.

Policies

Absences: If you are absent due to a medical or family emergency, please notify me as soon as possible. This will make it easier for you to stay abreast of the class and/or to determine if an incomplete is warranted.

Late Arrivals: Coming into class late is disruptive and disrespectful to both your classmates and me. However, special circumstances sometimes arise. For this reason, everyone is allowed 3 late arrivals; thereafter, each late arrival will be counted as an absence—no exceptions.

Peer Reviews: Workshop groups do work, but you need to be willing to share and talk about your own and others’ writing and to make these small groups comfortable, productive, and worthwhile. When we are “workshopping” rough drafts, you must bring a **completed** rough draft (and copies when requested) with you to class, and you must participate actively, or your essay grade will be lowered one letter.

Portfolios: You will submit each formal essay to me in a writing portfolio. In addition to the revised/final draft, each portfolio will contain all the work you did in the process of writing each essay—all your prewriting, notes, photocopies or printouts of research sources, outlines, drafts, peer comments, and a process memo. If a complete and acceptable portfolio does not accompany each essay, the essay grade will be lowered one letter.

Late Papers: Due dates will be listed on each assignment sheet and on the schedule. Late final drafts and portfolios will receive few comments and the grade will be lowered one letter; after one week, the grade will be an “F.” However, **all** formal essays must be submitted to pass the course.

Computer Lab: We will meet in the computer lab one hour each week. This time will be used for short writing assignments, for doing research, and for working on your current writing project; we may also use this time for individual conferences and/or workshop groups. Please do not abuse this time by working on assignments for other classes, writing e-mail to friends, or downloading non-research-related information.

Conferences: Please see me during office hours or schedule an appointment with me if you have questions or problems at any time during the semester. I am here to help.

Record-Keeping: Please make back-up copies of all your work, and keep all papers returned to you. If questions about grades arise, you will need to produce the original documents.

Incompletes: Incompletes will only be granted to students who have a **documented** medical emergency in the final weeks of the semester. These students must have completed **all** of the other work for the course with an average grade of "C" or better, must not have missed more than 10 hours of class, **and** must demonstrate the ability and willingness to complete the work before the third week of the following semester. It is **your** responsibility to notify me as soon as possible if this scenario applies to you.

Plagiarism: Knowingly presenting another person's ideas or writing as your own without appropriate citation will result in an "F" for the course and notification of the appropriate college officials.

Schedule

Note: A daily schedule will be distributed soon; until then, please note the following important dates:

- **Class Meetings:** Mondays, 6:30 – 10:00 p.m. in T 208 (8:30 – 9:20 p.m. in T 207)
- **No Classes:** January 18, February 15, March 8
- **Last Day to Withdraw:** April 13
- **Final Examination:** Monday, May 17, 1999, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in H 131

Note: This syllabus is subject to change; changes will be announced in class.