

English 1A/100 – Principles of Composition
Course Syllabus

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

A course in “expository” writing. Instruction will focus on how to select and narrow a topic, frame a thesis statement, and organize an essay into a logical, coherent composition. Original essays, increasing in level of difficulty and in length, are developed through a process approach, including prewriting and peer-editing techniques. Students will also read several prose examples from various fields and periods that will serve as models of effective writing styles.

“Expository” Writing: A way to convey information or explain what’s difficult to understand.

READING REQUIREMENTS:

1. Hacker, Diana. Rules for Writers, 2004
2. Atwan, Best American Essays, 2004

ASSIGNMENTS:

Typical Reading Assignments

1. Professional expository essays
2. Student essays

Typical Writing Assignments

1. Preliminary drafts of essays
2. Final copies of essays, increasing in length as the semester progresses

Typical Oral Presentations

1. Discussion of student essays in peer editing groups
2. Regular class discussions

Typical Other Assignments

1. Weekly textbook readings
2. Optional library materials

COURSE CONTENT:

1. How to select and narrow an essay topic
2. How to formulate a thesis statement
3. How to select an appropriate pattern of organization
4. Essay structure: Introduction, development, conclusion
5. Review of paragraph development
6. Techniques for creating variety in sentence structure
7. Effective use of transitions
8. Discussion of diction and Standard Written English
9. Prewriting strategies to generate content and pattern of development
10. Peer editing techniques to respond to essays
11. Evaluation techniques using content, organization, style, and mechanics
12. Identify structure, development, and features of writing style in expository prose
13. How to develop a 4-5 page analytical, argumentative, or persuasive paper

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Select an essay topic

2. Narrow an essay topic
3. Formulate a thesis statement
4. Select a pattern of organization appropriate to the topic and the thesis of an expository essay
5. Structure an essay with attention to the three major components: Introduction, development, and conclusion
6. Write unified and coherent paragraphs using a variety of methods of development
7. Write coherent, focused sentences exhibiting a variety of sentence structures
8. Exhibit a command of college-level vocabulary appropriate to the essay subject
9. Write on a variety of topics using Standard Written English (SWE)
10. Use a variety of prewriting activities to generate ideas, focus a topic, and formulate an essay
11. Edit an essay for content, organization, style, and mechanics
12. Analyze the structure, development, and features of writing style in expository writing
13. Write 4-5 page analytical, argumentative, or persuasive papers

EVALUATION METHOD:

Evaluation of the student will be based upon the following items:

1. Write expository essays containing the following elements:
 - a. A well-developed thesis
 - b. A structure developed according to one of the standard patterns of organization
 - c. An effective introduction and conclusion
 - d. Well-developed paragraphs exhibiting coherence and unity
 - e. Coherent, focused sentences exhibiting a variety in sentence structure
 - f. Effective transitions
 - g. College-level vocabulary
2. Select appropriate prewriting activities
3. Edit essays in a small group for content, organization, style, and mechanics
4. Evaluate essays using content, organization, style, and mechanics as criteria
5. Participate in individual oral analyses or group discussions, explaining the structural and developmental elements of expository prose
6. Write 4-5 page analytical, argumentative, or persuasive papers
7. Write in-class essays

Your final letter grade will be calculated based on the following:

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| 1. Written assignments | 60% |
| 2. Midterm examination | 10% |
| 3. Final examination | 10% |
| 4. Class participation | 20% (includes homework, journal, quizzes, discussions) |

Papers and assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. All work should be doubled-spaced and typed. In-class assignments must be written in ink, preferably black.

GRADING METHOD:

1. The A paper makes for compelling reading because it's fresh and provocative. The prose follows easily from point to point, and is solidly supported with the appropriate material and research. Language is handled deftly, often gracefully, with striking phrases. Sentences are effectively crafted with variety and economy. Mechanics are accurate.
2. The B paper is not only competent in all areas, but excels in several. The B paper conveys a clear sense of purpose and audience, supports most ideas fully, reveals a clear structure, contains almost no mechanical errors, and conveys a definite sense of style.
3. The C paper reveals a minimal sense of audience and purpose, written mainly to fulfill an assignment. The writer has stated the thesis generally, organized the paper mechanically, and handled mechanics

erratically, but not horribly. The ideas are organized, even though weakly, and most generalizations are supported, even though thinly and with few mechanical errors.

4. The D paper is deficient in either organization, development, mechanics/usage or content. A writer of the D paper often makes numerous errors, rambles from one point to another without a clear thesis and logical organization, and states illogical ideas.
5. The F paper is seriously deficient in organization, development, mechanics/usage or content. Typically, an F paper is confusing and frustrating to read. It demonstrates no sense of reader or purpose, and contains serious mechanical/usage errors.

WORKING POLICIES:

1. The student is responsible for information dispensed during class: class notes, changes in assignments, etc. Exchange phone numbers with classmates to update yourself when you are unavoidably absent.
2. Plan to carefully follow the schedule of assignments. Late papers receive reduced credit. The only exception will be illness or personal emergency, in which case you should submit your assignment on the day you return to class.
3. Submit typewritten writing assignments on 8 1/2" x 11" paper, double-spaced.
4. Plagiarism is unacceptable and seriously treated in this class. To avoid plagiarism, follow these guidelines:
 - a. Identify direct quotations by quotation marks or other appropriate designations. Give the source either in text or in acceptable footnote form.
 - b. For paraphrasing or summarizing material from another source in your own words, acknowledge the source.
 - c. For borrowed facts or information obtained from your reading or research, acknowledge the source.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance is required: You may miss 4.5 hours of class without grade point deduction. After that, you will lose grade points per hour of class missed. If you miss more than a total of 4.5 hours of class, you will be dropped. If it is after the point at which you can be dropped, you will receive an F in the class. Note: it is not my responsibility to drop you. If you wish to drop the class, you should do so to make sure that you drop before the withdrawal from the class is adversely reflected on your student record.

Excused absence: You may have up to 4.5 hours of excused absence. The only excused absences are where you are required to attend a college function, you have a doctor documented illness or injury, or there is a death of a family member. Contact me as soon as you know you can't come to class. For illnesses, simply send me an e-mail or leave me a phone message before class (unless impossible). Adding the class late, undocumented sickness, car trouble, job conflicts and the like are not recognized excuses.

Late Arrival Penalty: If you are late to class, you will lose grade points. The 4.5 hours of allowed missed class does not apply to late arrival penalties. These penalties are independent of all other absence rules.

Course Changes: I reserve the right to modify the course at any time, including the timing of tests, the due dates and contents of assignments, and coverage of material.