ENGLISH 151: CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING

SECTIONS 2 & 4

Section 2: MWF: B-9:10-10:10
Section 4: MWF: D-11:30-12:30

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Course Goals
The course is designed as a rigorous but moderately-paced education in critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. The primary goal is to train students to think systematically when faced by a topic, question, or reading, whether in school or in life. The initial unit of the course focuses on the essential skills. Thereafter, the students will investigate several topics, writing papers on each of them. Overlapping other work of the final third of the term will be a research project that will train students to use bibliographies, narrow research questions, integrate sources into original arguments, and avoid plagiarism.

Required Texts
A Writer's Reference, Hacker
The College Essay Owner's Manual, Hilgart
The Mercury Reader
The Shape of Reason, Gage
A standard college dictionary

Participation
Participation in in-class discussion is integral to your education and to that of your classmates. You must prepare for discussion. Just as you work problems or exercises after reading your math, science, or foreign language homework, you are expected to ponder your reading in English 151 and prepare some critical comments and good questions to introduce in class discussion. Anytime you appear unprepared to discuss the material intelligently, you will be counted absent.

Preparation for Class Discussion
As a minimum, you will be expected to have annotated the day's readings such that you can instantly produce a list of the reading's main questions, main claims and thesis. Additionally, you should be able to articulate the relationship between one reading and others on the same general subject (either for the same day or that we have already discussed); our goal is to create ongoing discussions on interesting issues that build from day to day. If Hilgart asks, "Where do Smith and Jones differ in their positions?" or "Do
these readings address the same question or different questions?" you should be able to answer with only a quick look at your annotations/notes. Again, if you appear unprepared to do this with some degree of confidence (and given a few moments to think), you will be counted absent; you aren't doing the basic work of the course.

Attendance:
Students may miss up to 6 class sessions (two weeks). Beginning with the fourth absence, the course grade will drop: missing a 7th class session will result in failure in the course.

Missed Class Responsibility
If you miss a class, it is your responsibility not only to seek but to obtain information regarding what went on -- adjustments to the syllabus, class notes, etc.
If a paper is due, the late-paper clock starts running at the beginning of class and it includes week-ends. Therefore, you should endeavor to get your work to me as soon as possible after the missed class.
If you have some pre-planned responsibility that will take you away from class on a paper-due-day -- such as a plane ticket, an athletic event, or other school activity -- your paper is due in advance of your departure. Soccer games, model U.N. events, and extended vacations do not constitute valid excuses for late papers; they are excuses for early papers.

Presentation of Written Work:
All assigned work is due at the beginning of the class session in which it is due. Any paper that is late without advance permission from me will receive a grade lower than it would have had it been on time.

Every piece of written work -- unless explicitly excepted by me in class -- must:
1) Be a computer print out
2) Be spell-checked & proof-read
3) Be double-spaced (paragraphs indented, no extra spaces between paragraphs)
4) Be in a normal 12 point font (i.e. like you might see in a book).
5) Have pages numbered on the computer.
6) Have your name, the date, and the course number at the top of the first page.
7) Have a clear indication of the assignment at the center top of the first page (no cover pages).
8) Be stapled stapled stapled at the top left-hand corner. No paper clips or fold-overs.

Revisions:
I generally allow revisions of papers that earn a B- or lower. The major exception to this rule is a paper that shows few, if any signs of serious effort. If you waste my time with pages of last-minute chaos, I'm not likely to accept a revision. In some individual cases, I will invite revisions of papers that earned better than a B-. Revisions are due within 7 days of the return of the papers; no exceptions.
**Grading:**
Virtually every assignment will receive a letter grade. Some of the smaller ones will be evaluated on a minus/check/plus basis. Only work of outstanding quality will receive grades of A and A-. The B range indicates good work, with B- being the highest grade possible on a paper with a serious problem. The C range is for work that is seriously flawed or that reflects little serious effort or thinking. D's and F's will be earned by papers that deviate from the assignment, show no impact from the course's ideas, or that are so messed up that they cannot be considered readable college-level work. Grades are affected by late delivery. *All papers begin as “B” work and climb toward an “A” or fall toward a lower grade during the professor’s reading. In other words, written arguments do not begin as an “A” and then fall due to problems; they must truly earn a rise to the “A” or “A-“ level.*

**Books in class:**
Do not ever come to class without the text(s) containing the day's reading. At my discretion, you may be sent home, if you are bookless. The same goes for any book that I have told you to bring that does not contain the day's pre-class reading.

**Personal Grammar Problems:**
This is not a grammar course. You are required to pay individual attention to the problems I point out in your papers. I keep track of your bad habits, and I will direct you the appropriate place in *A Writer's Reference* and *The College Essay Owner's Manual* so that you can educate yourself. Often I will require you to read from those books, correct a particular section of your essay, and bring it to me for an office-hours meeting, before your grade on that paper will be recorded.

**Use My Office Hours!**
There is no better way to solve a problem than in 10-15 minutes of face-to-face conversation. I have fairly-extensive office hours. Use them!!! Any time you're confused, come by immediately. If you want to discuss a paper, come by as early in the process as possible. If you need something, and you fail to come by for a chat, it's your funeral. (If my scheduled office hours don't fit into your course/sports schedule, let me know that asap -- we'll make other arrangements.)

**Grade Breakdown**
- Participation: 15%
- First Unit Paragraph: 10%
- Territory Paper: 15%
- Evolution/Music Paper: 15%
- Gender Paper: 15%
- Response Paper: 10%
- Research Paper: 20%
Note: Failure to do a small assignment will also lower your grade on the larger assignment it feeds into.
Syllabus

G: John T. Gage, The Shape of Reason
M: Mercury Reader
W: Diana Hacker, A Writer's Reference

*: Indicates a day on which one or more students will write a response paper.

August
W 22: Introduction
F 24: G: CH 1: "Writing and the College Community"; G: Edmundson (198)

M 27: H: "Hierarchy of Argumentative Elements" (27); H: "Logical Proofs" (31); G: CH 5: Giving Reasons
W 29: WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT (bring a copy for every member of the class, Hilgart, and yourself); peer/group review of your work.
F 31: G: CH 4: "Asking Questions, Generating Ideas"; H: "The Thesis" (72) (peer/group review continues)

September
W 5: G: CH 3: "The Deep Structure of Reasoning" (peer/group review continues)
Th 6: Final copy of your assignment due on Hilgart's door by 12 noon.

M 10: TERRITORY PAPER DUE. Read H: Proof Paragraphs. Peer reviewing w/attn to proof paragraph elements.
W 12: Hilgart brings in some copies of your papers for analysis.
F 14: M: Gould: "Evolution as Fact & Theory"; "Genesis vs. Geology"

M 17: FINAL COPY OF TERRITORY PAPER DUE. Read M: Gould: "The Creation Myths of Cooperstown"
W 19: M: Bloom: "Music"
F 21: M: Bayles: "Body and Soul"

M 24: Gage: CH 6: Developing Structures
W 26: Outline of paper due (see hand-out); peer review in class
F 28: EVOLUTION/MUSIC PAPER DUE

October
Gender Unit:
*W 3: G: Jock Culture readings (224-228)

*F 12: M: Sanders: "The Men We Carry…"; hooks: "Straightening Our Hair"

Mid-Term Break

W 17: The Blues (read hand-out)
F 19: GENDER PAPER DUE; more blues; field trip preparation

SATURDAY THE 20TH: FIELD TRIP TO CLARKSDALE, MISSISSIPPI

M 22: Read Gage CH 8: Implications for Research; Computer Center Day (Due: Topic/Issues; see handout)
W 24: Library Day
F 26: Bibliography of ten scholarly sources due (see hand-out)

Privacy/Cloning Mini-Unit:
*M 29: G: Warren/Brandeis (288)
*W 31: G: Schoeman (301)
F 2: Refined description of research issue/project (see hand-out)

November

M 5: No class - conferences
W 7: No class - conferences
*F 9: G: Healy (313)

*M 12: G: Cloning forum (322-333)
W 14: G: Butler (334)
F 16: Refined description of research with annotated bibliography for best four sources

M 19: Issue, provisional thesis, and background paragraph (but not paper intro) due (16 copies)

Thanksgiving Break

M 26: First proof paragraph due (16 copies)

Civil Authority/Civil Disobedience Mini-Unit
W 28: G: Plato (145)
F 30: G: Thoreau (156)

M 3: G: Van Dusen (188)
W 5: Final Day: RESEARCH PAPER DUE