

**English 155, Spring 2001**  
**Dr. M. E. Pitts**  
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## **Course Description**

English 155 is an alternative to English 151 offered to outstanding first-year writers. Like English 151, Daily Themes focuses on the ability to read and think critically, to employ discussion and writing as a means of exploring and refining ideas, and to express those ideas in effective prose. Students will meet as a group once a week and individually with the instructor once a week. Students will turn in 5 one-page themes each week, and the daily themes will be the basis for one longer paper—a limited research paper near the end of the semester.

## **Texts**

Andrea Lunsford and John Ruskiewicz, *Everything's an Argument with Readings*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001. (LR)

Diana Hacker. *A Writer's Reference*. 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford, 1995. (WR)

## **Goals**

To hone the ability to read and think critically

To use discussion and writing as vehicles for exploring and refining ideas

To develop skills in expressing ideas in effective prose

To develop skills in analyzing and building arguments

To help students define problems of a variety of writing projects, including the documented essay

To explore a variety of forms and voices in the quest for a unique voice

## **Objectives**

To help students write with a sense of audience beyond the teacher

To help students use writing as a tool for learning

To introduce problem-solving strategies for writing

To lead students in writing sound, polished arguments

To help students discover how discourse links disciplines

To lead students to examine and use effectively their own patterns of thinking and writing

To help students polish their skills in extrapolating and synthesizing material from a variety of sources

To help students explore new understandings of the writing requirements and research methods of the documented essay

To develop college-level specialized skills, such as paraphrasing and summarizing, needed in processing new material

To help students develop editing and proofreading skills necessary for standard, written English

### **Approaches to Writing**

Narrating, explaining, reflecting; analyzing arguments; structuring arguments; synthesizing arguments; some opportunities for creative writing

### **Class Procedures**

This course emphasizes exploration of ideas, voices, vehicles of expressing ideas. We will strive for a balance of writing and process. Each week the group will explore a theme, and the individuals will choose their own approaches to that theme.

Class discussions will focus on the larger writing themes, materials you have read, problems you have encountered, and the writing process. We will share writing in the group sessions.

### **Readings**

I have correlated the assigned readings with the weekly themes that will structure your writing. The selected texts from LR will expand your background in rhetoric and problem solving through writing, and the readings will provide contexts for writing. We will spend some time discussing rhetorical strategies in the readings, the role of the discourse community in shaping the writer's work, and the content of the readings. As part of each week's writing, I will also expect you to report, in one of your daily papers and/or in class, on one text (essay, story, play,

poem, visual text) that you have discovered which is related to the theme of the week.

## **Essays**

You will write five 1-2-page papers each week. You may leave each day's paper outside my office at any time; I will comment on the papers and put them in the pocket by early afternoon. About the middle of the semester and near the end, you will combine materials from your portfolio to create longer essays, one of which will be a documented essay; these longer papers will be about five pages, plus the list of works cited. Although I will not edit your papers for you, I will work with you to help you plan and organize each paper (I find it much more rewarding to help students do their best than to mark problems). Once each week you will meet with me to discuss your writing, and at least once each week you will meet with one of the tutors in the Writing Center for help and/or discussion.

## **Oral Presentations**

When we meet as a group, you will share some of your papers, the outside text that you have discovered that week, and other insights. The outside texts that you share may be articles in magazines, scholarly articles, books, plays, poems, stories, or Internet materials. At the end of the course, you will present a brief oral report (under ten minutes) based on your documented essay.

## **Syllabus**

### January

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|-------------|--|
| Th 11       | Overview; discussion of essay sequences; introduction to one another; housekeeping matters           |
| T 16, Th 18 | Critical thinking, reading, and writing; readers and contexts<br>LR, Chaps. 1, 2, 3, plus pp. 375-90 |
| T 23, Th 25 | Visual rhetoric and stereotypes<br>LR, Chaps. 15 and 18, plus pp. 391-425                            |
| T 30, Th 1  | Rhetorical analysis<br>LR, Chaps. 4, 5, and 6, plus pp. 425-47                                       |

### February

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|-------------|---|
| T 6, Th 8   | Rhetorical analysis<br>LR, Chap. 7, plus pp. 447-77 |
| T 13, Th 15 | Structuring arguments; definition                   |

LR, Chaps. 7 and 8, plus pp. 478-534

T 20, Th 22 Evaluation  
LR, Chap. 10, plus pp. 550-76

T 27, Th 1 Intellectual property; referential writing  
LR, Chap. 20

### March

T 6, Th 8 Spring Break

T 13, Th 15 Using sources; language/identity  
LR 21, plus pp. 570-603  
Library lecture on Thursday

T 20, Th 22 Language/identity; research paper conferences  
LR, Chap. 22, plus pp. 604-28

T 27, Th 29 Fallacies; beliefs  
LR, Chap. 19, plus pp. 629-48

### April

T 3, Th 5 Style and humor  
LR 13, plus pp. 671-93  
Draft of research paper for in-class editing

T 10, Th 12 Technology; bad writing; research paper due  
LR, pp. 696-706  
Easter break is Thursday.

T 17, Th 19 Technology; figurative language and argument  
LR, Chaps. 13, 16, and 19, plus pp. 707-58

T 24, Th 26 Causality and proposals; voices  
LR, Chaps 11 and 12  
*OED* Reports

EXAM: Growth paper

## **Grading Summary**

Daily Themes: 65%

Longer Essays: 25%

Class participation and oral presentations: 10%

## **Honor Code**

The Honor Code will apply to all work except for peer editing and collaborative writing; in all cases, work is expected to be your own and to be original work for the course.

## **Attendance**

A copy of the English Department's policy statement on attendance is attached. If you miss more than three classes, I may urge you to drop the course.

## **Completion of Work**

You must complete all work to complete the course. If you are sick or have a reasonable excuse, I will work with you. However, if you fail to keep up with the writing process, particularly with the research paper, you may fall so far behind that you cannot complete the course. Your grade in English 151 is based on *process*, not just on product.

## **Timeliness**

Part of the college experience (and any life experience) is planning so that you complete your work in a timely fashion. Knowing the stresses you encounter during the first year of college, I will allow you to skip four daily themes. Use this policy wisely; once you have skipped four short papers, your grace period is over, unless you have a medical excuse.

## **Level of Sophistication**

As a student at a highly respected liberal arts college, you are expected to act appropriately at all times and to show respect for others. Wandering in and out of the classroom or behaving inappropriately in class will not be tolerated.

## **Office Hours**

I will be in my office during the hours listed below. Each of you will have one conference with me each week. In addition to the posted office hours, I will be available on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after class and on Thursday afternoons starting at noon to meet with Daily

Themes students. If you make an appointment but cannot come, please send me an email message so that I will not expect you. If you need to see me at another time, please ask for an appointment.

**Mondays and Wednesdays: 1:15-4:15**

**Tuesdays: 2:45-4:15**

**Thursdays: 2:45-3:45**

**And by appointment**