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ENGL 151-02, Critical Thinking and Writing, Fall 1998

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English 151, Fall 1998
Dr. M. E. Pitts
Palmer 317; 843-3293

Course Description:

English 151 develops 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. Several papers will be required, at least one of which will involve use of the library and proper documentation.

Texts:

Lewis Meyers, ed. Readings for Critical Writing. Lexington, MA: Heath, 1996.

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

Goals:

To develop the ability to read and think critically

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

To express ideas in effective prose

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

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 help students discover how discourse links disciplines

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

To introduce students to the writing requirements and research methods of the college-level documented essay

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

Approaches to Writing:

Reporting, explaining, reflecting, **analyzing, arguing**

Class Procedures:

The course is based on the writing process. For each essay, students will have a workshop session in which they edit each other's papers and ask questions about their work in progress. **Participation in editing sessions is integral to the learning process and will constitute part of the grade on each paper.**

Class discussions will focus on materials read, problems encountered, and the writing process. Each assignment leads into the next assignment. A student who misses class misses an experience that can never be recalled.

Assignments:

Readings. Each week, students will read selected essays from Findings: Reading for Critical Writing, ed. Lewis Meyers. We will discuss rhetorical conventions in the readings, as well as the role of the discourse community in shaping the writer's work.

Journals. Students will write summaries and critiques of assigned and chosen essays, personal reactions to the readings, and notes on their progress on the formal project. Journals will be collected every other week.

Essays. Students will write six papers; five will be 500 to 750 words each, and the sixth will be a longer, documented essay on which students will work closely with the instructor. One of the five essays will be a collaborative project, with the class divided into groups working together.

Oral Reports. Each student will be responsible for presenting one of the assigned essays for class analysis. Near the end of the course, each student will present a brief oral report based on the research project:

Syllabus:

Week

- 1 Introduction to the course and to one another; discussion of the writing process. Introductory interview and writing.
- 2 Critical thinking; writers as problem solvers. Findings, Introduction; "Myths of Existence" through Mason's essay; proposal for first essay (position paper).
- 3 Thinking through writing; planning in writing. Findings, Bullfinch, Guerber, Ross, Capek, and Kafka (linked readings on myth). Draft of first essay for in-class editing.
- 4 First essay due. Strategies in planning and organizing. Findings, readings from Buzzati through Astroff.
- 5 Strategies in planning and organizing; analyzing the audience; writer-based and reader-based prose. Findings, "Personal Identity" through Mukherjee. Proposal for second essay (position paper).
- 6 Steps in analyzing a problem and developing a thesis. Draft of second essay for in-class editing., Findings, "The Natural World" through essay by the Audubon Society.
- 7 Second essay due. Discussion of the research process (Hacker). Discussion of paraphrase and summary (Hacker). Findings, "The Natural World," Strutzel through Stegner.
- 8 The research process (Hacker, Chap. R 1); first library visit. Proposal for research paper due. Findings, "The Natural World," Da Vinci through Lawrence.
- 9 Individual work on research paper (Hacker, Chaps. R 2 and R 3). Second library visit. Draft of critique (using paraphrase and summary) for in-class editing.
- 10 Critique (third paper) due. Findings, "Social Reality" through Chiaromonte. Writing collaboratively.

- 11 Proposal for collaborative essay (explanation or response). Group work on collaborative essay. Findings, “Social Reality,” Shapiro through Patricia Williams.
- 12 Draft of collaborative essay for in-class editing. Findings, “Social Reality,” Waikuny through Meltzer et al.
- 13 Collaborative essay (fourth paper) due. Revising and editing for purpose, organization, and style. Findings, “Moral Action and Spiritual Life,” Smullyan through Momaday.
- 14 Catch-up on research paper work. Draft of research paper for in-class editing. Findings, “moral Action and Spiritual Life,” Heinrich Boll through Joan Didion.
- 15 Research paper (fifth paper) due. In-class presentation of research paper findings. Writing the synthesis paper. Proposal for synthesis paper.
- 16 Draft of synthesis paper for in-class editing. Findings, “Moral Action and Spiritual Life,” Eileen Whitehead through Chuang Tzu.
- 17 Synthesis paper (sixth paper) due. Review and catch-up.
- 18 Final Exam. Reflective essay on the individual’s writing process (self-evaluation).

Summary of Papers

Essay I—Position Paper

Essay II—Position Paper

Essay III—Critique (Using Paraphrase and Summary)

Essay IV—Collaborative (Explanation or Response)

Essay V—Research Paper

Essay VI—Synthesis

Final Exam—Reflection on Writing

Grading Summary

Essays: 80% (The documented paper will count as two essays.)

Journals: 10%

Class participation and oral presentations: 10%

Honor Code

The Honor Code will apply to all work except as exempted.