

# ENGLISH 104: COLLEGE WRITING AND RHETORIC

Missouri Western State University, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism

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Office: Eder Hall 222T

Courses:

ENG104-08 Tuesday & Thursday 11:00a-12:20p at Murphy Hall 104

Office Hours: Tuesday's & Thursday's 8:30am-9:00; 2:00-2:30 (as needed)

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## Course Description

ENG 104 students will complete four formal writing assignments in addition to other graded and ungraded work through which they will learn how to discover ideas, respond to texts, and summarize others' ideas. In these assignments, students will learn how to analyze readings and share information with others by reading and responding to course texts and other materials gathered through research. Final drafts of all formal writing assignments must be word-processed. All students are expected to be prepared for class and participate in class discussions related to reading and writing assignments. In addition, students will keep complete portfolios of all their writings.

For the specific course objectives, please visit the English Department website at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/EFLJ/eng104.asp>

## Course Objectives:

- **Learning to write for different audiences and purposes**
- **Learning to use active reading and critical thinking**
- **Learning to use [the/a] writing processes**
- **Learning written conventions**
- Students should be able to read and listen critically and to write and speak with thoughtfulness, clarity, coherence, and persuasiveness.
- Analyze and evaluate their own and others' speaking and writing.
- Conceive of writing as a recursive process that involves many strategies, including generating material, evaluating sources when used, drafting, revising, and editing.
- Make formal written and oral presentations employing correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics.
- Focus on a purpose (e.g., explaining, problem solving, and argument) and vary approaches to writing and speaking based on that purpose.
- Respond to the needs of different audiences and choose words for appropriateness and effect.
- To develop students' abilities to locate, organize, store, retrieve, evaluate, synthesize, and annotate information from print, electronic, and other sources in preparation for solving problems and making informed decisions.

## Required Materials

### Texts:

- Axelrod, Rise and Charles Cooper. *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*. 8th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008.
- Your choice of a collegiate dictionary, but it should be a behemoth of a dictionary, size really does matter, and must be available to use in class.

### Other:

- A MWSU e-mail account
- Reliable access to the Internet for the websites listed above (or use MWSU computer labs)
- Flash Drives or CD-RWs for revising, saving, and backing up your work
- College rule paper
- A three-ring binder notebook to keep your class notes and materials organized
- A pocket folder in which to submit the final research project
- A sense of what it means to be in college and a reasonably good sense of humor.

## Assignment and exam types:

### Pre-Writings, Responses, Reflections, Rhetoric Exercises (including Essays)

In order to find and develop topic ideas, we will do a number of brainstorming, free-writing, and invention exercises for each project. Students will also develop their skills of summary, synthesis, and argumentation by responding to the readings and to each other. Writing exercises will provide an introduction to the library and other information sources. Essays are the backbone of the course because students should be effective writers who can use rhetorical strategies within the context of an academic argument by the end of the course—practice makes better. If I feel that we're falling down on our responsibilities, becoming lax in our standards, or succumbing to a general apathy for college and its power to enrich all our lives, I may give the occasional quiz. Let's try not to go there; it's best for all concerned to be prepared and be involved in the learning process.

### Formal Rhetorical Essays

Students will complete four formal writing assignments as per the English 104 Course Description. Students will create rhetorical analysis and argumentative essays with a Works Cited page on an arguable issue related to the field he/she wants to be in. The writing assignments increase students' skills in the area of note-taking, summarizing, and synthesizing in support of their arguments or analysis, while the Works Cited assignment expands on students' formal library research skills and provides additional practice in formal documentation.

### Final Exam

If students have shown understanding of the assigned reading, then the Final Exam will be an essay. Otherwise, the Final Exam will contain short-answer questions and an essay covering the assigned reading during the semester. The student will take the exam at the designated time for the class he/she are in enrolled in. If the student will not be able to take the test at the designated time, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor at least 7 days before the first exam given to arrange to take the test during the other scheduled exam times the instructor is available. There will be no e-mailed exam and no scheduled exam outside of the times given by the University. **If the student cannot attend one of the two scheduled times for Mr. Usera's English 108 exams, the student will fail the exam by absentia.**

### Grading

We will do four formal rhetorical writing projects, have class discussions, and a final exam in this course. In addition, the quality of your work, the percentage of the work that you complete, and your efforts at participation will determine your final grade.

A word of caution: don't underestimate the value of small assignments, preparedness, and daily participation. Even if you receive passing grades on your projects, you can fail the course because of poor performance on daily assignments. Occasional lapses are understood, but chronic lapses can only pull your grade downward.

### Your Final Grade Distribution is as follows:

- Participation = 30%
- 4 Rhetorical Essays (including all the work leading up to its completion) = 30%
- Thinking Critically assignments = 20%
- Final Exam = 20%

### Course Requirements

#### Attendance and Promptness

Western has a mandatory attendance policy for all 100 and 200 level courses. Attendance is mandatory. The University allows you an excused absence when acting as an official representative of the university, **provided you give prior written verification from the faculty/staff supervisor of the event—it isn't the responsibility of the faculty/staff to get the written verification to the instructor because it is YOUR responsibility.** School functions, illness, and personal crisis do not absolve you from your classroom obligations, so while due consideration is given to the student dying on the way to class, an absence cannot be designated as "excused" or "unexcused"—it simply "is." Lateness and absence counts against the Participation, Rhetorical Essays, and Rhetoric assignment grades. Assignments/exams cannot be absent—ever. **If absent, it is YOUR responsibility to know the who/what/when/where/why/how—the instructor will not re-teach a class day for absent students.**

Regular attendance is an essential part of the student's educational experience and a requirement for an adequate evaluation of student academic progress. You are responsible for material covered or assignments given which you missed because of absence. All out-of-class assignments are due at the beginning of the class.

Quizzes/exams/assignments cannot be made up at instructor's discretion. **Late assignments aren't accepted.**

You should note, however, that mere attendance does not mean you will pass the course. You must perform adequately on the tasks required and show initiative in completing the course requirements, and participate positively in discussions.

**The maximum number of absences allowed for this class before the midterm report is three (based on our twice per week meeting schedule). Thus, when you have four absences I must report you to the Registrar's Office, who will automatically withdraw you from this class.** The Financial Aid Office will reduce financial aid as appropriate.

Finally, if the instructor should be unable to meet class, a secretary, or a fellow instructor will notify you in person-- NOT by a note on the classroom door. Be sure to note any assignments due upon my return.

### **Participation and Preparation**

You will be expected to make significant contributions to the class in the form of participation and preparation. Participation includes the contributions you make to class discussion and the effort you make to be a part of our discourse community. Preparation includes doing the daily readings and responses as assigned, as well as engaging exuberantly in our activities. Keep in mind that live classroom discussion:

- gives you practice arguing with others respectfully and professionally
- gives you opportunities to formulate applications of principles
- gives you prompt feedback on difficult or confusing issues and material
- increases your retention of material through explaining, summarizing, and questioning.

**A pet peeve for me is someone who didn't do the readings or assignment tries "guessing" their way through a discussion. At my discretion, if a student is unprepared for class and tries to dishonestly "get by" in discussions or activities, I will count the student absent and he/she will *earn a zero in participation for the week*. This rule is in relation to Academic Honesty; be aware it could be worse.**

**A student creating their own directions means the student didn't follow the professor's directions--no matter how hard they try to match the original directions. Not following the professor's directions will result in a failing grade.**

### **Sharing Your Work**

Students are expected to share their writings and other work with members of the class and, therefore, should not choose to write on topics they consider of a sensitive nature. Further, all work that a student produces may be shared by the instructor with the class for purposes of example and training. Such work will be as anonymous as possible. Finally, the instructor may share your work anonymously with future classes. Shared work must be individual and original. No one wants to read many essays that sound about the same, which usually results in a common poor grade or a low impression of the writers.

### **Classroom Courtesy**

Practice courteous and respectful exchanges. We should be particularly careful to note how tone, rhetoric, and language all contribute to the overall impression of our words and writings. **The University expects all students to conduct themselves so as to maintain an effective environment for learning; to act responsibly in accordance with good taste; and to respect fully the rights of others. Be mindful courtesy and respect are expectations and require a higher degree of effort and consistency unlike high school. If a student is disruptive or disrespectful, the student will be required to leave class and take an 'F' grade for the Participation week and on any assignments due that week the student was dismissed from class. If Campus Security must be called to remove the student, the student will then be asked to Drop the course as well as have the previous consequence apply ('F' for Participation).**

Students are expected to be respectful, responsible, and mature adults. If the student insists on being disrespectful to the educational setting and those contained therein, the student will earn an "F" for every class session the student doesn't meet with the instructor to resolve the issue including having the student drop the course.

### **Revision**

Revision is an important part of the writing process, and each project that we do will go through an intensive draft and revision stage before being turned in. Drafts will be graded for completion and used for small-group activities, and each final essay will be graded on its merits and appropriateness to the assignment with all drafts turned-in as proof of using the writing process. Since each paper will receive critiques before the final version is submitted for grading, you must consider the final version to be final. However, only two essays that earned more than a 68% grade can be revised and turned in for *up to* 1/3 the original maximum points to be added to the original score for the essay (earning no more than 100%). This high school-like extra point opportunity for revised essays cannot change mid-term grades after mid-term; Exams, assignments and quizzes aren't eligible. More details on this revision opportunity will be given after mid-term week, otherwise ask Mr. Usera before then.

## Late Work

All assignments are due at the beginning of the hour on the due date, unless otherwise specified. Learning is a cumulative process and each assignment in this course is designed to build on the last assignment; therefore, late work disrupts this important aspect of the learning process. **No late work will be accepted** regardless how many consecutive days absent. Even if you will be absent, your assignment will make it to class because late assignments aren't accepted (hint: have a friend drop it off at the start of class or e-mail it to me with a date/time stamp that precedes the class hour you are enrolled in). Assignments make it to class on time, even if you can't. **If an electronic version is required as part of the assignment, it too is due at the beginning of the hour otherwise the entire assignment is late, and no late work will be accepted.**

## Computer Usage

You will be called upon to read materials online and to use computers in and outside of class time. Further, all papers turned-in for this course must be word processed in **MS Word** to guarantee correct format. MWSU has a number of computer labs to help you complete this requirement. Learn to use the labs early and plan ahead to get into them during the busy parts of the semester. **Submitting papers in any other format than MS Word will count as not turning in the assignment. If you don't have access to MS Word outside of class, use the MWSU computer labs. If you find an excuse not to use the computer labs, drop the course.**

## Time Expectations

As with all college courses, a steady devotion to duty is expected; thus, while much work will be done in class, you must set aside an appropriate amount of time each day to completing your assignments, including time to go to the library and the computer lab. Remember: no late work is accepted, so anticipate that there will be occasional glitches, whether personal or technical, and be sure to allow an extra hour or two in your schedule to handle unanticipated problems.

## Handwriting

Some assignments, like the reflective essay and the Final exam, will be handwritten in class. Because handwriting still has uses in today's electronic environment, handwriting must be neat and legible. **Cursive or print may be used but the end product must be neat and legible; if readability is affected, the instructor will guesstimate the grade in the F or D range for poor penmanship.** Practice writing to keep your handwriting legible.

## Electronic Devices

In this day in age laptops and cell phones have become very convenient tools for work, personal communication, and entertainment. However, these same devices can be sources of distraction and the detriment to one's own personal growth (cheating, plagiarism, etc.). Therefore, **laptops are not allowed in class** unless specifically scheduled for use in an activity as assigned by the instructor. **Cell phones are off during class. If a cell phone is left on** and the student or class is distracted by the cell phone, **the student will be dismissed from class as per Classroom Courtesy.**

## Course Policy on Academic Honesty; University Academic Honesty Policy and Due Process

Academic honesty is required in all academic endeavors. You are responsible for proving that all work turned in for grading is your own original work for *that* enrolled class. Work with evidence of plagiarism, intentional or not, will receive a zero and may result in failure of the course. Violations of academic honesty include any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another's work, falsifying documents or academic records, or any other fraudulent activity. Violations of academic honesty may result in a failing grade on the assignment, failure in the course, or expulsion from the University. Using papers from previous classes/courses is a form of plagiarism. **Turnitin.com will be used on all turned-in research essays and some other assignments at the instructor's discretion. A TurnItIn.com Plagiarism score of 7% or more will be counted as Academic Dishonesty.**

The student handbook is available online at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/handbook/index.pdf>

## Final Thoughts

Despite Einstein's assurances that even the motions of dust motes have pattern, life to us mere mortals is unpredictable. I recognize that at times your outside life may interfere with your classroom life. It is up to you to set your priorities and to realize that "doing it all" is not always possible or even desirable. If you are feeling overly stressed about all you have to accomplish, you need to come see me immediately. The cost of dropping college courses until you have better control over your classroom life may seem difficult, but sometimes choices have to be made that will make life more manageable—life will never be absolutely controlled.

## Course Schedule

Note that not all the assignments are given below. This is a general guide as to the reading schedule and the major project due dates. For all other assignments, you will be given instructions in class. You should have the readings read **by the date indicated.** Reading ahead is permitted; not reading is unwise.

**Textbook Abbreviation: G = *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing***

English 104 Assignments [All of the information on this calendar is tentative and each scheduled day will be confirmed on that day of class]. **H/W = Homework** you need to do.

### **January 19 Week 1**

1. Class introduction; Talk about the text for class 2. What books/articles should students bring? 3. What is rhetoric?

H/W: DUE 1/21

1. **G:** Read and takes notes over p.1-14 and complete Exercises 1.1 through 1.4

H/W: DUE 1/26

1. **G:** 134-163 Complete all "Analyzing Writing Strategies" in order to prepare for discussion

### **January 21**

1. Discuss the readings using the Exercises 1.1-1.4. 2. Four characteristics of a strong thesis statement 3.

Rhetorical Appeals

H/W: Due 1/26

1. **G:** 164-165

2. **G:** 570-583

2. Write a basic thesis statement or a strong thesis statement for any topic.

### **January 26 Week 2**

1. Discuss readings 2. View sample of multi-sentence thesis statement 3. Introduce the "gallery" activity; Thesis statement "gallery" (each person will have at least 3 comments about her/his thesis statement)

H/W: Due 1/28

1. **G:** 166-180

2. Think of a topic (dealing with explaining a concept) for your first rhetorical essay and bring that topic to class where we'll discuss topics; create a possible thesis statement for the topic

### **January 28**

1. Introduce Question-discussion 2. Topic Question-discussion; Share topics 3. Discuss readings 4. **Explaining a Concept Rhetorical Essay #1 assigned [DUE 2/11/2010].** 5. Begin a rough draft in class

H/W: Due 2/2

1. Complete a rough draft, or two, to share in class

2. **G:** 584-600

### **February 2 Week 3**

1. Practice Explaining a Concept: A Collaborative Activity 2. Discuss the reading 3. Work on a new rough draft in class

H/W: Due 2/4

1. Complete another rough draft that uses the Critical Reading Guide on pages 179-180

2. **G:** 181-186

3. **G:** 600-608

H/W: Due 3/2

1. **G:** 610-622

### **February 4**

1. Discuss readings 2. Practice Critical Reading of a Peer's Writing: A Collaborative Activity 3. Work on a new rough draft in class that reflects revision and editing

H/W: Due 2/9

1. Complete a final draft that will be shared with the class

H/W: Due 2/16

1. **G:** 192-219 (be sure to have answers to "Analyzing Writing Strategies")

### **February 9 Week 4**

1. Gallery using final draft: Peer revision/editing using a draft. 2. Review Rhetorical Appeals

H/W: Due 2/11

1. **G:** 189 "Reflecting on Your Writing" Write a one-page explanation using either #1 through #4 as a guide.

2. **G:** 189-190 Be prepared to answer "Reviewing What You Learned From Reading" orally in class.

3. Make any final changes to Rhetorical Essay #1 and have ready to turn-in and e-mailed by 2/11/10.

**February 11 Rhetorical Essay #1 is due before class starts. A paper copy will be turned-in and an electronic copy will be e-mailed to the instructor**

1. Share with the class your answers to "Reflecting on Your Writing" or "Reviewing What You Learned From Reading" (turn-in page 189 "Reflecting on Your Writing" at the start of class) 2. Analyzing an essay for rhetorical appeals (sheet)

H/W: Due 2/16

1. reminder **G:** 192-219 (be sure to have answers to "Analyzing Writing Strategies")

**February 16**

1. Discuss readings and share answers to Analyzing Writing Strategies (turn-in your answers) 2. The Rhetorical Triangle & Analyzing the Message

H/W: Due 2/18

1. **G:** 220-221
2. **G:**222-230

**February 18**

1. Discuss readings 2. Logical Fallacies: The Basics 3. **Explaining Opposing Positions Rhetorical Essay #2 assigned [Due 3/4/2010]**

H/W: Due 2/23

1. **G:** 231-253
2. Create a rough draft
3. Think of controversial issues which there have been considerable debate and have an issue ready to share.

**February 23 Week 6**

1. Discuss readings 2. (Topic/draft sharing) Practice explaining opposing positions: a collaborative activity 3. Features of an Essay explaining opposing positions and begin a new rough draft in class

H/W: Due 2/25

1. Create a rough draft to share

**February 25**

1. Critical Reading Guide for an Essay Explaining Opposing Positions: a collaborative activity 2. Review the four characteristics of a strong thesis statement 3. Work on rough drafts

H/W: Due 3/2

1. Create a complete draft to share
2. Reminder: **G:** 610-622 (the exercises will be referred to in class)

**March 2 Week 7**

1. Discuss readings 2. Gallery using final draft: Peer revision/editing using a draft 3. Work on rough drafts

H/W: Due 3/4

1. **G:** 253 "Reflecting on Your Writing" Write a one-page explanation using either #1 through #4 as a guide.
2. **G:** 254-255 Be prepared to answer "Reviewing What You Learned From Reading" orally in class.
3. Make any final changes to Rhetorical Essay #2 and have ready to turn-in and e-mailed by 3/4/10.

**March 4 Rhetorical Essay #2 is due before class starts. A paper copy will be turned-in and an electronic copy will be e-mailed to the instructor**

1. Share with the class your answers to "Reflecting on Your Writing" or "Reviewing What You Learned From Reading" (turn-in page 253-254 "Reflecting on Your Writing" at the start of class) 2. Analyzing an essay (done in class; use Rhetoric notes to complete).

H/W: Due 3/9

1. **G:** 272-295 (be sure to have answers to "Analyzing Writing Strategies")

**March 9 Week 8**

1. Discuss readings and share answers to Analyzing Writing Strategies (turn-in your answers) 2. Read pages 296-301 and think of a topic 3. A collaborative activity: Testing Your Choice

H/W: Due 3/11

1. **G:** 301-310

**March 11**

1. Discuss the reading. 2. Introduction and Conclusion strategies: how do they relate to rhetoric? 3. **Arguing a Position Rhetorical Essay #3 assigned [Due 4/6/2010]** 4. Spring Break from March 14-21.

H/W: Due 3/23

1. Create one rough draft to work on further in class. Have an outline, thesis and introduction done at least.

**March 23 Week 9**

1. Analyzing an essay for rhetorical appeals (done in class; use Rhetoric notes to complete) 2. Read and discuss pages 319-321 3. Work on rough drafts in class

H/W: Due 3/25

1. **G:** 310-318
2. Create another draft to share

**March 25**

1. Discuss reading 2. Propaganda: The Dark Side of Rhetoric 3. Gallery using drafts: Share Introductions and Conclusions 4. Work on new rough drafts based on gallery comments.

H/W: Due 3/30

1. Create a complete draft to share

**March 30 Week 10**

1. Critical Reading Guide for a Position Paper: a collaborative activity 3. Work on new rough draft in class

H/W: Due 4/1

1. Create a complete draft to share

**April 1**

1. Gallery using final draft: Peer revision/editing using a draft 2. Work on rough drafts

H/W: Due 4/6

1. Make any final changes to Rhetorical Essay #3 and have ready to turn-in and e-mailed by 4/6/10.

**April 6 Week 11 Rhetorical Essay #3 is due before class starts. A paper copy will be turned-in and an electronic copy will be e-mailed to the instructor**

1. Complete in class: page 322 Reflecting on Your Writing (choose one from #1-#4 to write about); Complete in class orally: pages 323-324 Considering the Social Dimensions of Position Papers (choose one from #1-#4 to answer orally)

H/W: Due 4/8

1. Think about what type of Rhetorical Essay you would like to write for your fourth essay. Choose one type from this list: Proposing a Solution, Justifying an Evaluation, Speculating about Causes, Interpreting a Story (short story provided by Mr. Usera)

**April 8**

1. **Rhetorical Essay #4 assigned [Due 4/27/2010];** Share what kind of Rhetorical Essay will be written (grouping will occur based on answers) 2. Explain how to complete Essay #4 and how it relates to class-time

H/W: Due 4/13

1. Do the required Reading section for the type of Rhetorical Essay chosen
2. Have a topic to share

**April 13 Week 12**

1. Based on the assigned group, discuss the readings 2. A collaborative activity: Testing Your Choice 3. Work on your rough draft in class

H/W: Due 4/15

1. Do the required Guide to Writing section for the type of Rhetorical Essay chosen
2. Have a rough draft to share

**April 15**

1. Based on the assigned group, discuss the readings 2. Work on a new rough draft in class

H/W: Due 4/20

1. Create a complete draft to share

**April 20 Week 13**

1. Critical Reading Guide for Essay #4: a collaborative activity 2. Work on new rough draft in class

H/W: Due 4/22

1. Create a complete draft to share

**April 22**

1. Gallery using final draft: Peer revision/editing using a draft 2. Work on rough drafts

H/W: Due 4/27

1. Make any final changes to Rhetorical Essay #4 and have ready to turn-in and e-mailed by 4/27/10.

**April 27 Week 14 Rhetorical Essay #4 is due before class starts. A paper copy will be turned-in and an electronic copy will be e-mailed to the instructor**

1. Oral presentation of Rhetorical Essay #4 for extra points
2. Talk about the Final Exam

**April 29**

1. Reflective discussion
2. Study session for the Final Exam

May 4

1. Study day

Final Exam Schedule

ENG104-08 (11:00-12:20) May 11 -- 11:30-1:20pm

The Final Exam won't necessarily match the earlier description of the Final Exam as outlined in the Final Exam section.