

Missouri Western State College
Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Department of English, Foreign Languages and Journalism

ENGLISH 112: HONORS COMPOSITION AND RHETORIC

Section 01/80 - MWF 10:00-10:50 am, JGM 119
Fall 2001

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Course Philosophy and Objectives

I write when I'm inspired, and I see to it that I'm inspired at nine o'clock every morning. -- Peter de Vries

This course is designed to raise your awareness of language as worthy of study and to help you become a better researcher and writer of researched-based prose. To this end, you will read, discuss, and write about a number of essays on the meaning, use, and importance of certain kinds of language use; you will also learn about the nature and process of research, about how to find and use source materials, and about how to write researched essays. Students will complete three formal research projects in addition to other graded and ungraded work. In these assignments, students will learn how to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the thinking of others in order to discover, develop, and test their own points of view.

Honors composition classes will be addressing the Objectives and Means for ENG 104 (<http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/eng104.asp>) and for ENG 108 (<http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/eng108.asp>) in this accelerated course. Thus, at the end of English 112, you will understand that:

- writing can be used for different purposes
- multiple audiences exist
- writing is a recursive process
- many productive ways exist to generate ideas for your work
- common patterns of organization exist
- formal distinctions exist among different prose genres
- ideas are property in our culture and must be correctly attributed to their sources
- reading is an interactive process that functions in our lives as a pleasurable activity as well as a means of acquiring knowledge
- editing skills enable writers to polish their work so that readers are not distracted from the message conveyed or the experience recreated.

Successful completion of ENG 112 fulfills the college's General Studies composition requirement.

Required Materials

Texts:

- Eschholz, Paul, Alfred Rosa, and Virginia Clark. *Language Awareness*. Eighth Edition. Boston: Bedford, 2000.
- Your choice of a collegiate dictionary, but it should be a behemoth of a dictionary. Size really does matter. Must be available to use in class regularly
- Your choice of a handbook or style guide featuring MLA documentation. Must be available to use in class regularly.
- Articles and other texts used in research projects.

Other:

- Disks and Storage Case for revising, saving, and backing up your work.
- A LARGE Binder Notebook with Notebook Paper and Dividers for holding hard copies of your projects, notes, and copies of materials gathered and received. The notebook should be used exclusively for English 112--no history notes or math equations--just English. Love letters are allowable if the content is sufficiently interesting and the language sufficiently literary.

- A Hole Punch, so that articles and other materials may be inserted into your notebook.
- A Pocket Folder in which to submit disks and hard copies of final research papers.
- Photocopies of your work and various sources.
- Stamina and Good Humor.

Assignments

Pre-Writings, Responses, Research Exercises, Quizzes

To find and develop topic ideas, students will do a number of brainstorming, freewriting, 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. Research exercises will provide an introduction to the library and the other information sources. Quizzes will be random, if at all, occurring only when 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. Please don't make me give quizzes; it's best for all concerned.

Project One

For this project, students will create a literacy portfolio and write a language and literacy narrative that reflects upon their histories as readers, writers, and users of language. The language and literacy narrative will provide both personal insights into the writer's past, present, and future as an amateur linguist, but also make contact with, analyze, and respond to some of the course readings.

Project Two

For this project, students will write a profile and analysis of a speech community that they belong to, will belong to, want to belong to, or are just plain interested in. In addition to the class readings and activities for this paper, students will do interviews, fieldwork, and formal research.

Project Three

For this project, students will write a two part, formal research paper on a language issue read about and/or discussed in class or that is tangential to issues raised in class. In the first part, students will provide an overview of the scholarly background of the issue, including an annotated bibliography of important books and articles on the topic. The second portion of the paper is a formal researched essay, in which the student argues for a particular perspective on the issue, appropriately citing critical source material. This paper involves formal library and online research, but may involve other kinds of research, like surveys, fieldwork, or interviews.

Final Exam

The final exam will have a knowledge portion devoted to short answer questions drawn from the reading response questions done for class and an essay portion in which you write intelligently and persuasively on a language issue discussed in class. For the knowledge portion of the exam, students should keep, organize, and review their responses to the readings and discussion questions on a regular basis. Essay questions will be distributed in class and you may choose which question you want to respond to. You may use your text for the essay portion of the final and any notes that fit on one 3x5 card.

Grading

We will do three research projects in this course and a final exam. In order to pass the course, you must complete the three formal research projects and take the exam. 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:

- Research Project #1 = 20%
- Research Project #2 = 30%
- Research Project #3 = 40%
- Final Exam = 10%

Course Requirements

Attendance and Promptness

Attendance is mandatory. School functions, illness, and personal crisis do not absolve you from your classroom obligations. So while due consideration is given to the student struck by lightning on the way to class, an absence cannot be designated as "excused" or "unexcused" --it simply "is." I consider three absences to be reasonable; absences beyond three will likely effect your final grade, as you are not here to participate or turn in your work. Chronic lateness will count toward this total.

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 period. No late assignments are accepted, except as noted below.

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.

If I should be unable to meet class, you will be notified by a secretary, fellow instructor, or 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 help you give your fellow writers. Preparation includes doing the daily assignments and research, as well as bringing your drafts and copies or other materials on the appropriate day. If you come to class unprepared, you will receive a zero for any work due that day.

Active and insightful contributions to class discussion are not extra credit. Like attendance and daily assignments, your tactful and substantive comments are part of the minimal requirements for successful completion of the course. If you are a naturally quiet person, force yourself to be more vocal; do not assume that if I do not call on you that you need not participate, as it is your responsibility to voice your observations at appropriate and relevant times. Conversely, if you are a naturally talkative person, you may have to restrain yourself so that everyone has the opportunity to contribute. Since you obviously cannot make up for discussions from which you were absent, attendance is again critical.

Keep in mind that live classroom discussion

- gives me an additional indication of how closely and thoughtfully you have read, enabling me to evaluate your knowledge and abilities more fairly and accurately;
- 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.

Sharing Your Work

Students are expected to share their writings and other work with members of the course 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 or in her own writing and research.

Plagiarism

... it is better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation. -- Herman Melville

Plagiarism is literally the stealing of others' words and ideas and using them as your own. Make every effort to give credit where credit is due, and if you are not sure of "how" --ASK. Students are responsible for proving that all work turned in for grading is their own original work. Plagiarism is a serious offense and, therefore, will receive harsh punishment. Papers with evidence of plagiarism will result in failure of the course. Don't think that you won't be caught; writing style is distinctive and verifiable.

Classroom Courtesy

Students are expected to be courteous and respectful in all of their exchanges with the instructor and other students and students should be particularly careful to note how tone, rhetoric, and language all contribute to the overall impression of their words and writings. The college 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.

Student Disability

Any student in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of abilities should contact me by the end of the first week so that we can discuss class requirements.

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 each final essay will be graded on its merits and appropriateness to the assignment. Since each paper will receive extensive critiques before the final version is submitted for grading, you must consider the final version to be final.

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. **Except for the final papers, no late work will be accepted. Final papers will not be discounted if turned in within 24 hours of the due date. Otherwise, they will be discounted one letter grade for every class period past the due date. No work will be accepted after the last class day before final exams.**

Computer Usage

You will be called upon to submit materials via e-mail and to use the computer facilities in and outside of class time. Further, all drafts and final papers for this course must be word processed, in accordance with Missouri Western's desire for you to become computer proficient. MWSC 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.

Saving Work

Students should save all their work, both graded and ungraded, for this class--from notes to drafts to final papers. There may be occasions when work needs to be re-submitted or grades verified. Back up disk copies should be made religiously at the end of each day's work, and if possible, make a current print copy as well.

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 *under any circumstances*, 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 each day to handle unanticipated problems.

Some Final Thoughts

This syllabus is of a contractual nature, and by remaining in the course you acknowledge your acceptance of its stipulations. If the goals, policies, procedures, standards, expectations, or obligations are unclear, then you should speak with me immediately. If they are clear but unacceptable to you, then you should drop the course.

If you choose to remain in the course, be sure to keep a copy of this syllabus with you and to refer to it regularly. Policies are enforced without exception to ensure uniformity and predictability, to avoid confusion and anxiety, and to facilitate fairness and objectivity for all students. In the interest of efficiency, however, I reserve the right to make necessary alterations to this syllabus and to make announced changes in daily plans.

Life is unpredictable--at least for the most part. 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 stressed about all you have to accomplish, remember that sometimes you can miss class, sometimes you can come to class unprepared, and sometimes you can really mess up--without it effecting your grade unduly. If, however, what should be an occasional problem completing your work becomes a chronic problem, come see me. If I understand what is going on in your life, I can more easily help you achieve your goals.