

ENGLISH 104: COLLEGE WRITING AND RHETORIC

Identity: Self and Culture

TTh 2:00-3:20 / JGM 120

English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism / LAS / Missouri Western State College

COURSE SYLLABUS

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Anna Leahy

OFFICE: JGM 309-H / 271-4316 / amleahy@griffon.mwsc.edu

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday 3:30-5:00, Wednesday 1:00-3:00, and Thursday 3:30-5:00

English 104: College Writing and Rhetoric serves as an introduction to formal, academic writing and introduces students to different approaches to and techniques for writing essays. Students learn to analyze readings, share information with classmates, and develop critical ideas into thoughtful, interesting essays. This section of English 104 uses a focus on a particular topic--identity--as a way to organize readings, discussions, and writing assignments so that the class as a whole can embark on an ongoing exploration of and conversation about a single, complicated subject. Moreover, the topic of identity offers each student the opportunity to use writing skills to examine and explore both a cultural, critical concept and his or her own life. This way, each writing assignment can clearly build upon the previous assignments and conversations, and each individual student's essay becomes part of a larger written cultural context as students work together. The main goals, in no particular order, for students in this section of English 104 are as follows:

- to form a supportive and critical community of academic writers
- to learn to read and respond thoughtfully and critically
- to write a variety or original, thoughtful essays
- to move beyond what you already know
- to put ideas and thoughts into words effectively and originally
- to make active, informed choices about writing and revising
- to recognize strengths and possibilities as thinkers and writers

In addition, students have individual goals and should actively work to bring individual goals and course goals together to become more effective, more interesting, more confident writers. The instructor in a

writing course is an expert guide and evaluator: however, the individual student must negotiate the territory.

To see a more thorough description of English 104, including a list of course objectives, refer to the department web site (<http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/eng104.asp>).

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

To Be Announced

CENTER FOR ACADEMIC SUPPORT:

I encourage students to take advantage of the Center for Academic Support (LRC 213). Though the Center is not responsible for a student's performance and will not "fix" papers, tutors can assist in various stages of the writing process. If you do visit the Center, have a list of specific tasks to accomplish and keep a list of things you have learned and need to continue working on. The Center is willing to work with students in this course individually or in small groups. Feel free to let me know if you need assistance contacting the Center, need guidance developing a list of tasks to accomplish in a session, or would like to form a small group to work on a specific writing difficulty or assignment. Keep in mind that the Center has specific hours of operation and that you may need to make an appointment.

GRADING AND OTHER POLICY MATTERS:

The course requires four essays, as follows:

- Definition
- Summary and Response
- Argument Component
- Personal Narrative

Each essay is weighted as 20% of the final grade, and you will receive a separate assignment sheet for each essay. If essay grades reflect steady improvement, the last two essays will be weighted slightly more heavily than the first two. In order to pass the course, all four essays, including all required drafts, must be completed. In order to fulfill the "portfolio" aspect of the course and show evidence of "process," you must turn in required drafts with each final essay when it is due.

The remaining 20% of the final grade is determined by participation, including peer workshopping, written responses as preparation for class discussion, in-class exercises, small-group discussions, and various other activities. Strong participation depends on active, considerate, diligent involvement in the course.

A C-range grade represents acceptable, college-level work; merely completing all work on time does not

guarantee at least a C unless the work is also reflective of college-level writing and response. A- and B-range grades are earned by producing work above the standard, whereas D-range and failing grades are reserved for substandard work. You will receive separate evaluation criteria for essays.

All assigned work must be completed before the class meeting for which it is due and must be available to be handed in at the beginning of the class meeting. Late participation work is not accepted and lowers your participation grade; not all written exercises and responses are collected, but many are. All drafts of essays must be turned in on time and, when necessary, with the appropriate number of copies. A late *rough* draft of an essay lowers your final course grade by a full letter for each day late and receives no written comments or workshopping; lack of enough copies is treated the same as lateness. A late *final* draft is unacceptable, except in the most dire and documented circumstances (such as hospitalization or a death in the family). In other words, a late final draft or a missing draft for any essay can result in failing the course.

Arriving late, leaving early, or being absent lowers your participation grade. For any absence beyond four (for whatever reason), your final course grade falls by a full letter.

While some guided collaboration is encouraged in this course, plagiarism is not tolerated and will result in a zero for the entire essay assignment (20% of the final grade) for any individuals involved. A zero is calculated as less than an F and will make it mathematically much more difficult for the student to pass the course. Refer to your student handbook or the instructor for more information.

Out-of-class written work must be typed (double-spaced), unless designated otherwise in class. All word limits are strict so that all students attempt common tasks. Written work that does not meet these minimal guidelines will not be accepted.

I hold some required group and individual conferences and encourage additional conferences as needed. You should determine whether additional conference conversation should be part of your writing process. Conferences should be scheduled or canceled 24 hours in advance. Missing a conference is treated as an absence.

Students with disabilities that inhibit work in this course should notify me in writing within the first two weeks of this semester so that accommodations can be considered.

No food or beverages (other than water) are allowed in carpeted areas of JGM.

Other relevant policies are covered in your student handbook.

GETTING STARTED

Tuesday, January 16

Creation of the course. Introduction to each other.

Thursday, January 18

NO out-of-class work assigned. The syllabus. Discussion of identity. Discussion of definition.

Tuesday, January 23

Tatum handout on identity. Bring a one-page statement of your own identity based on at least three ways of defining (categorization, example, denotation, analysis, etc.).

Thursday, January 25

Bring a thesis statement for Essay #1 and one page of focused freewriting (you can hand-write this assignment). Discussion of possible topics and controlling ideas.

Tuesday, January 30

Bring a complete draft (copies for the entire class) of your essay.

NOTE: For each class meeting, the schedule lists what is due on that day so you need to accomplish out-of-class reading and writing before class.

ESSAY #1

Purpose: to define

Length: 550-600 words (~2 pages, depending on font and type size)

Topic: a well-known person

First Draft Due: Tuesday, January 30 (bring copies for the entire class)

Revisions/Final Draft Due: to be announced on the next schedule installment

Goals:

- to define a complicated idea (in this case, the idea of a person who you do not know personally but who is part of a larger culture)
- to narrow a topic for a short writing assignment
- to choose appropriate organization for a topic
- to develop a simple, clear organization to support a thesis statement (the thesis statement is your core or controlling definition for the entire essay)
- to explore relevant, detailed content to build and explain your definition
- to work on clarity at the sentence level
- to find ways to express your individual voice and a knowledgeable opinion
- to understand the importance and power of individual words
- to consider the ways in which defining ideas is important as a writer, particularly because definition is a form of argument if the idea is complicated

Possible Ways to Define:

denotation/dictionary example

categorization/classification narrative

negation analogy

comparison and/or contrast other ways? (think of some)

NOTE: For this essay, research is prohibited in order to focus on your own concepts and definitions, rather than adapting ideas from other sources. This essay requires your own interpretation of meaning; you must be the expert (or expert enough) on the person about whom you write. Because of this, you should pick a famous person you know something about or can assess on your own based on what you already know or can observe. Otherwise, research could become a temptation, or your essay could fail to be specific enough to define well.