

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

English 108-02 -- College Writing and Research

Course Syllabus -- Spring 2001

Instructor: Bill Church

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Office Hours: 10-11 MWF; 1:00 - 2:00 TTh; and by appointment

Class Meeting Time and Room: 8:00 - 9:20 TTh, MC211

Required texts and materials: *Critical Thinking, Thoughtful Writing*. John Chaffee. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999. *The New Century Handbook*. Christine Hult & Thomas Huckin. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999.

You will also need computer disks formatted for IBM compatible computers, and you will need a spacious journal that will endure heavy use for prewriting and note-taking.

Recommended text: A collegiate dictionary of your choice, a desk variety with at least 200,000 entries.

Students with Disabilities: Anyone who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of her or his potential to succeed in this course must notify me in writing as soon as possible so we may discuss course requirements, options, and accommodations.

Academic Honesty: Most cheating is accidental. If, however, I determine that a student is cheating deliberately or repeatedly, I will minimally award a failing grade for the project. I may submit a failing grade for the entire course if circumstances warrant. In addition, I will forward in writing the names and acts of all involved students to the chairperson of the English department chair and to the dean of students. In this course, given that we will be incorporating many other writers' voices into our papers, proper citations are absolutely essential, and the expectations for accuracy are higher.

Grading: I use portfolio grading, which means that I assign neither a letter grade nor points to any writing assignments until the end of the semester. I respond to each major paper by informing students that it is either "acceptable" or "unacceptable." If I deem the work "acceptable," that assessment will convert to at least a "C" for that paper at semester's end. Further revision is completely at the student's discretion. If I deem a work "unacceptable," the paper in question would be at best a "D" at semester's end and would likely result in a repetition of the course if all other work were of the same quality. Students may resubmit all major papers, acceptable or unacceptable, on the designated dates. I will explain the process fully below in the "Resubmissions" section.

Midterm grades: I submit a "C" for students whose work is complete and passing. I submit a "D" for students whose work is complete but not acceptable. I submit an "F" for students whose work is incomplete or weak. Excessive absences will also lower grades.

Grading Criteria:

* **Quality and completeness** of your **portfolio** (80%) -- by this I mean not only the caliber of your final drafts but also the extent and quality of your working drafts and revisions. No one will pass without completing *all* assignments, regardless of the quality of work submitted.

* **Reflective letters and questions** (10%) – you will write in-class reflective letters on the due dates of all major papers. The caliber and completeness of thought you put into analyzing your project will factor into your semester grade. In addition, you will pose questions you have about your writing. Your letters and questions will frequently provide more insight into your growth as a writer and thinker than the papers will.

* **Participation** (10%) – this means you will have read all assigned readings carefully and have been prepared to discuss them intelligently. It also means you always met deadlines for all stages of each assignment, from posting the earliest working drafts to offering insightful comments on your peers' work during peer review.

* **Quiz scores** – I will regularly reward careful reading as part of "Participation."

* **Timeliness** – students who receive grades higher than C will meet all deadlines for all aspects of the composition process on all writing tasks.

* **Attendance** – given the constant work we will be doing and the invaluable classroom experiences that can't be recreated, your constant attendance is mandatory for your success (please see Attendance Policy below).

The **highest grades** will go to the students whose efforts and intellects allow them to produce the most complete, clear, correct, and insightful writing. Portfolios from these students will contain multiple drafts of every assignment, thoughtful reflective letters with every submission of every draft, and thoughtful questions for me to answer about their writing. In addition, students who receive the highest grades will have completed all assigned prewriting to full length and truly engaged the subject matter thoughtfully. Likewise, students who receive the highest grades will have received the highest quiz scores, contributed meaningfully to class discussions, and met all deadlines for drafting and submitting work, in addition to fulfilling the attendance requirements.

Missing deadlines, major papers, excessive classes, journal entries, and quizzes will result in substantially lower grades, in many cases to the point of failure. Also, journal entries that do not engage the subject meaningfully, superficial, off-topic, or poorly edited papers, or an unwillingness or inability to contribute meaningfully to class discussions will result in lower final grades.

Resubmissions:

* Resubmission during the semester is an option only on the three major research papers. You may revise and resubmit shorter works in your final portfolio.

* Resubmissions will be due one week from the day I return the evaluated drafts.

* Resubmissions must include all of the following in this order:

* A new cover letter in which you thoughtfully analyze your changes

* Your revised draft, accurately dated

* The evaluated draft I returned

* The comments I attached to your evaluated draft

* Resubmissions must be presented to me at the end of class. I will not accept papers submitted outside of class. If you are not present to resubmit your own revision, you may designate a classmate to do so for you.

* The resubmission option during the semester is available only under these stated terms. Students who do not resubmit according to these terms may still, however, submit revisions in their final portfolio. Students who resubmit during the semester may also revise once again for their final portfolio. Regardless of when revisions are submitted, they must have all the information requested above for me to read and re-evaluate them. I will not read incomplete resubmissions.

* Papers that have been resubmitted once may be resubmitted a second time prior to the submission of the final portfolio only as follows: students must first schedule a conference with me; at that conference we will set a new due date. Failure to meet that due date means the work cannot be submitted again until the final portfolio, although continual revision is strongly encouraged.

Attendance Policy:

*you may miss all or part of two classes without penalty beyond missed points;

*the third and fourth absences (more than fifteen minutes of any class) will lower your final grade by one-half of a letter grade per absence;

*the fifth absence results in an automatic "F," and you should withdraw immediately;

*I reserve the right to waive the penalties for extenuating circumstances, though I accept no obligation to do so.

Although all of us will occasionally experience an emergency or illness that causes us to miss, students who succeed will keep absences to a minimum.

Make-up Work: This course doesn't lend itself to make-up work. When we read and discuss a selection, we can't recreate that experience later. Nor can in-class writings and group work be recreated later. And obviously I can't allow make-up quizzes after we've gone over the answers in class, which we will always do. Therefore, in this course, missed work is permanently missed.

Excused Absences: Common sense must prevail over rules. I may grant special consideration to students who can document extenuating circumstances or who are representing MWSC. However, students need to notify me of planned outings in advance and turn in their work or take their quizzes *before each absence*. I will confirm absences representing the college by contacting the appropriate MWSC personnel.

Classroom behavior: Missouri Western requires students to help maintain good conditions for teaching and learning. All students will treat their classmates and teacher with civility and respect, inside and outside the classroom. As stated in the *MWSC Student Handbook*, instructors "may establish additional classroom rules and expectations for conduct in the classroom. Behavior which disrupts the classroom environment or interferes with other students' ability to learn may be grounds or justification for dismissal from the classroom" (29-30). Sleeping or appearing to sleep; conducting private conversations; using computers for other than assigned purposes; eating; drinking; damaging property; and using vulgar or deliberately offensive language are some of the more common acts that can compromise the integrity of the learning environment. Likewise, all telephones and pagers are to be silenced during class time. No head phones may be worn nor music played during class. Let's establish a cordial and respectful atmosphere in which we can have fun while learning together.

Course Description:

ENG 108 students will complete three formal research based projects in addition to much other graded and ungraded work. We will also write numerous summaries, analyses, and letters. 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. 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.

Before any grade appeal will be processed for a student in ENG108, the complete portfolio of writings will have to be submitted to the Departmental Review Committee.

Objectives and Means:

Upon completion of ENG108 ...

You should understand that writing can be used for different purposes. To reach this understanding, you will

- write summaries to distill ideas from texts or people interviewed.
- write syntheses of ideas from more than one text (your own or others).
- analyze the relationship between the claims, warrants, and evidence presented in texts.
- evaluate the soundness of your own and other people's judgments.

You should understand that multiple audiences exist. To reach this understanding, you will

- analyze the needs of different audiences.
- analyze unethical attempts to influence people's beliefs.

You should understand that writing is a recursive process. To reach this understanding, you will

- apply pre-writing strategies to discover what you already know and what you want to learn through research.
- write summary notes in the process of doing research.
- write drafts in which you reconstruct your beliefs on the basis of the wider experience you gained through research.
- reread first and second copies to rethink what you have discovered.
- revise for an organization appropriate to your main purpose and audience.

You should understand that many productive ways exist to generate ideas for your work. To reach this understanding, you will

- familiarize yourself with several reference tools in the library.
- work with the Inlex-System.
- locate books and journals in the library.
- locate source materials on electronic data bases.

You should understand that common patterns of organization exist. To reach this understanding, you will define important terms.

classify objects, events, data, and ideas discovered through research.

make judgments based on criteria that can be supported and explained.

You should understand that ideas are property in our culture and must be correctly attributed to their sources. To reach this understanding, you will

practice research writing conventions as outlined by MLA.

You should understand that reading is an interactive process that functions in our lives as a pleasurable activity as well as a means of acquiring knowledge. To reach this understanding, you will

ask questions in order to discover meaning.

discriminate between fact and opinion.

identify explicit and implicit meanings in a text.

draw correct inferences.

evaluate the intentions and messages of writers, especially attempts to manipulate

language in order to deceive.

recognize problems and find workable solutions.

You should understand that editing skills enable writers to polish their work so that readers are not distracted from the message conveyed or the experience recreated.

To reach this understanding, you will

continue to refine your ability to identify independently your own spelling,

punctuation, and grammatical errors so you can produce "clean" final copy.

Final Exam: Thursday, May 3, 8:30-10:20, MC211.