

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

ENGLISH 108: COLLEGE WRITING AND RESEARCH

Section 08 - MWF 12:00-12:50, JGM 119 (M) and 120 (WF)

Section 10 - MWF 1:00-1:50, JGM 119 (M) and 120 (WF)

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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 help you become a better researcher and writer of researched-based prose. To this end, you will 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.

At the end of English 108, 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
- 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.

These goals are more clearly articulated at the General Studies English Courses website at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/genstud.asp>.

As part of MWSC's General Studies program, this course is also designed to help you develop the "skills, knowledge, and characteristics of an educated person," as defined in the College Catalog, page 43.

Required Materials

Texts:

- Manor, Martin. *The Research Process: A Complete Guide to and Reference for Writers*. Second Edition. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2000.

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 108--no history notes, math equations, or love letters--just English.
- 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 and Research Exercises

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 at research by doing a number of exercises designed to introduce them to the library and the other information sources.

Project One

For this project, students will learn how to find topics, generate arguments, find and evaluate sources, and write a prospectus with an annotated bibliography for a formal academic research paper. Researching and writing a prospectus allows the beginning college researcher to become more comfortable with the process of researching, topic formation, and documentation before trying to write the actual research paper.

Project Two

For this project, students will learn how to find write and edit a formal researched essay based upon the prospectus developed in Project One.

Project Three

For this project, students will gain more practice in finding topics, generating arguments, finding and evaluating sources, writing a prospectus with an annotated bibliography, and writing and editing a formal academic research paper. Students will become more comfortable with the process of researching, topic formation, research writing, and formal documentation.

Grading

We will do three research projects in this course and an 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 = 30%
- Research Project #2 = 20%
- Research Project #3 = 50%

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 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 projects, no late work will be accepted. Final projects 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. Save all the work that you do for this class, in both hard and disk copies.

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.

[Course Schedule](#)