

# ENGLISH 104: COLLEGE WRITING AND RHETORIC

Spring 2002

Missouri Western State College

Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism

Section –01, 8:00-8:50 MWF, JGM 105

Section –11, 1:00-1:50 MWF, JGM 104

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**ENG 104 College Writing and Rhetoric.** Instruction in reading and writing; emphasizes expository prose. Fulfills first half of the General Studies requirement in English composition.

For a complete course description, objectives and a sample paper, visit to the English Department Web site at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/eng104.asp>

## COURSE PHILOSOPHY

English 104 is about becoming critical readers and thoughtful writers.

### Key Course Questions

(What you should know by the time that you finish this course.)

1. Define thesis. Explain how a thesis controls an essay.
2. How does a writer influence an audience?
3. How do you make specific decisions throughout the writing process? (Decisions about audience, subject, purpose, writer, genre, thesis, development, organization, structure, insight, correctness, revision.)
4. Explain and use specific critical thinking strategies in writing.
5. How do you discover, judge, incorporate, and document outside sources of support?
6. How do you know when an essay is complete?
7. Explain how and why a piece of writing is effective? thoughtful? memorable?

### Instructor's Philosophy

(What I believe about teaching writing and how I will apply these beliefs to this course.)

- o *Students learn to write by writing.* In addition to major assignments, I will assign in-class, at home, and personal writing throughout the semester.
- o *Writing is a process.* I will help you learn and practice ways to state a thesis, develop support, research a topic, influence an audience, revise a work, and discover your own voice.
- o *Writing requires revision.* I expect you to write multiple drafts of all major assignments. Multiple drafting adds focus and detail to your writing.
- o *Writing must have an audience.* I will make extensive use of peer response groups and revision workshops in class. I encourage you to confer with me whenever you have questions about your writing.
- o *Writing requires thought.* As a class, we will study how several principles of critical thinking are used in writing. You will also examine several issues in depth, developing and analyzing your thoughts about them.
- o *Writers must be readers.* We will read and discuss a variety of essays and learn how to analyze and evaluate ideas and opinions.
- o *Writers must be self-reflective.* I will ask each of you to judge your own work by writing reflective letters and taking an active role

in peer response groups and conferences.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

Chaffee, John. *Critical Thinking, Thoughtful Writing*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999.

Hult, Christine and Thomas N. Huckin. *The New Century Handbook*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001.

A good college dictionary

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Attendance

For this class to be successful and for you to be successful in it, attendance is mandatory. I expect you to be on time and ready to participate for every class meeting. I realize that "things" sometimes come up. Therefore, you are allowed two absences before your course grade will be affected. More than two absences may result in a grade deduction. More than six absences will fail you.

If you miss a class session, you are responsible for all material covered and assignments given during your absence. All out-of-class assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. No late assignments will be accepted unless you have received prior permission.

Quizzes, in-class writing and class activities cannot be made up if you are late for class or absent.

If you miss class because of a college-sponsored activity, you will not be penalized. It is your responsibility to contact me before class for assignments.

### Assignments

- o Essays: You will write at least five essays this semester. Most essays will be between 3 and 5 pages in length. All essays must be word-processed, using normal margins and no larger than 12-point type. Specific evaluation criteria will be discussed with each essay.
- o Process Folder: Each essay will be submitted in a process folder. The folder will include: The final draft of the essay, a reflection letter/essay written in class on the due date, prior drafts of the essay, dated and with personal, peer, and teacher responses attached, preliminary writing, and in-class writing, quizzes and written activities. No essay can be accepted without the process folder materials. Task with incomplete or missing process folder contents will receive no grade higher than a C.
- o Late Essays: I expect you to complete all essays on time. Late essays (this is any work that is not submitted on time and includes essays left at home or "temporarily lost" by a computer malfunction) will result in a deduction of that assignment's grade. If you are facing difficulties in completing a major assignment, please discuss the problems with me before the essay is due.
- o Unacceptable Work: Since writing is a process, every paper may not meet all of the requirements by the deadline. It is still in the process of being developed. Rather than assigning a low grade to such essays, I will mark it as unacceptable and ask you to continue working on it. I hope that you recognize the benefits of this policy. It encourages you to learn about the particular assignment. It encourages you to submit only your best work. Finally, since you need a final grade of C or better to move on to English 108, papers receiving a grade below a C will not help you succeed.

If an essay is returned as unacceptable, no grade will be recorded. It becomes your responsibility to schedule a conference to discuss the essay, plan a revision strategy, and set a new completion deadline within one week of the essay's return. If an essay remains unacceptable, it will receive an F. Please note that a revision of an unacceptable essay does not guarantee an acceptable grade.

- o Revision Portfolio: You may revise your acceptable essays throughout the semester. I encourage you to do so. I will re-evaluate all revised essays during the final week of the semester and record the highest score. The revision portfolio must include a detailed letter discussing the history of the essay and analyzing its revision, the revised draft, the previously graded draft, all other drafts, responses, and writings related to this essay. Please note that a revision alone does not guarantee a higher grade.

### Conferences

I believe that the most effective teaching occurs through conferences over specific essays. My office hours are listed above. I bring a calendar to every class to schedule appointments. I encourage you to make use of this opportunity.

Center for Academic Support

In addition to conferences with me, you may find help with your writing at the Center for Academic Support. The CAS, which is located at the northeast corner of the library building, provides trained tutors for students requiring additional reading and writing instruction. There is no cost to students for using these services. I encourage you to make use of these services throughout this course.

### Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is an act of theft. It is taking another's words or ideas and calling them your own. That does not mean you cannot use another's words or ideas to illustrate and to support your thoughts, but it does mean that you must give credit to the one whose words and ideas you are using.

If I find evidence of cheating or plagiarism, you have the burden of showing that the paper has in fact been written by you. You should keep thorough evidence of your writing processes for all papers so that you can meet this burden of proof. You will receive a grade of F for any paper that shows sufficient evidence of cheating and/or plagiarism. Stronger evidence proving flagrant cheating and/or plagiarism may lead to even stronger penalties. Please note carefully the statement on plagiarism on the departmental website, found at <http://www2.mwsc.edu/eflj/plagiarism.html>.

### Disabled Student Policy

Any student enrolled in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of abilities or that prevents or hinders the completion of class requirements as stated in the syllabus should contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss class requirements.

### EVALUATION

What I owe you in evaluating your work.

- o *My time*. I will return your work with my comments in a timely fashion.
- o *My attention*. I will listen for your voice and study your ideas.
- o *My voice*. I will raise questions, share reactions, and offer suggestions.
- o *My honesty*. I will try to be clear and open about my evaluation. You need to know when your work is strong and progressing and when it is not. When you do not understand my comments (and that will occur), you must ask me to explain.
- o *Hope*. Unfortunately, evaluation sometimes discourages more than motivates. With an open office door, conferences, an unacceptable work policy, and a revision portfolio, I try to provide opportunities for improvement.

The assignments for this semester include:

- o Five essays - 100 points each
- o Process folders - 25 points for each essay
- o Mid-term essay - 50 points
- o Assorted writing tasks (Check method) - 100 points
- o Quizzes - ???
- o Final Exam - 100 points

All work will be evaluated on a point basis. Letter grades will be awarded according to the following averages:

- o 100% - 90% = A
- o 89% - 80% = B
- o 79% - 70% = C
- o 69% - 60% = D
- o Below 60% = F

### DEPARTMENTAL GOALS

## **English 104: College Writing and Rhetoric**

### **Learning to write for different audiences and purposes**

Students will...

- make journal entries to explore their minds and to extend the range of their personal lives.
- write essays to communicate ideas and impose order on their thoughts and experiences;
- use organizational methods and genres appropriate for different purposes;
- construct academic essays that meet criteria for thesis, rhetoric, organization, development, and language.

### **Learning to use active reading and critical thinking**

Students will...

- identify the main concepts and locate supporting details in written works;
- read actively for greater understanding;
- develop their ideas and concepts with specific details, examples, and explanations;
- write summaries that accurately reflect the main ideas and supporting reasons of written texts.
- explain the organization of written works;
- analyze the needs of different audiences.

### **Learning to use writing processes**

Students will...

- practice various invention techniques;
- use prewriting to recreate and reflect on their experiences;
- use prewriting to generate information and discover ideas;
- move easily from writing for self-expression to writing for readers;
- write at greater length more easily, more quickly, and more usefully;
- reread early drafts to rethink what they want to write;
- revise for clear presentation of their ideas;
- revise for depth of insight, clarity of organization, and suitability for different purposes.
- identify and correct their own spelling, grammatical, and mechanical errors, especially in the final stage of the writing process.

### **Learning written conventions**

Students will...

- use thesis statements, topic sentences, and transitions;
- apply all types of common developmental and organizational forms;
- identify the main qualities of effective sentences;
- practice active sentence style and rich, efficient modification;
- practice systematic approaches to editing sentences;
- craft more effective paragraphs.

## **Missouri Transfer and Articulation General Education Standards**

English 104 is also a primary site for students to work toward the following statewide General Education goals.

### Communication:

- A. analyze and evaluate their own and others' speaking and writing;
- B. conceive of writing as a recursive process that involves many strategies, including generating material, evaluating sources when used, drafting, revising, and editing;
- C. make formal written and oral presentations employing correct diction, usage, grammar, and mechanics;
- D. focus on a purpose (e.g., explaining, problem solving, argument) and vary approaches to writing and speaking based on that purpose;
- E. respond to the needs of different audiences and choose words for appropriateness and effect.

### Higher-Order Thinking

- B. formulate questions for clarifying issues and solving problems;
- C. use linguistic, mathematical, or other symbolic approaches to describe problems, identify alternative solutions, and make reasoned choices among those solutions;
- E.. defend conclusions using relevant evidence and reasoned argument;
- F. reflect on and evaluate their critical thinking processes.

#### Managing Information

- E. present information clearly and concisely, using traditional and contemporary technologies