

Syllabus for ENG 108 College Writing and Research

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

ENG 108-103 – College Writing and Research

Instructor: Dawn Terrick

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MWF 8:00-8:50 JGM 108

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Required Texts:

- Community Matters: A Reader for Writers*. Ford, Marjorie and Elizabeth Schave. Longman Publishing Company. 2002
- The Bedford Researcher*. Palmquist, Mike. Bedford/St. Martin's. 2003.

Both texts are vital to your success in this course. *Community Matters* is a reader and will help you to refine your summarization, analysis and evaluation skills. Moreover, every essay we read can provide you both with a topic for your own project as well as a reference to the various kinds of research you will be doing and how you can synthesize all of your research and sources into one coherent and unique research essay. *The Bedford Researcher* will take you through the entire research process, from finding a topic to editing your final research essay. We will use the text in class (be sure to bring this text to class) and you will also be required to complete exercises from the text and its accompanying website and CD.

Required Materials:

- Computer disks for revising and saving all work.
- Folders

Recommended Texts:

- A writing handbook or style guide of your choice (i.e., *The New Century Handbook*)

Course Description:

Research is "the spirit of inquiry. The habits of mind that good research writers develop is something we can teach that is truly multidisciplinary. That spirit is charged with curiosity, of course -- the itch to know and learn and discover. But it also involves the ability to ask researchable questions, the instinct to look in the right places for answers, a willingness to suspend judgment, and an openness to changing one's mind." -Gary Goshgarian

"Writing [is] both a personal and social process. The writing process often begins with expressive writing: writing for oneself to articulate and clarify thoughts and feelings. Making one's thoughts public through writing then initiates a connection between the writer and his/her audience. Writing can empower us. As writers we can effect change within ourselves and the communities to which we belong." -Marjorie Ford and Elizabeth Schave

We live in an information society, a society that is dominated by language; therefore it is imperative that we, as human beings, understand the information around us. Those who think critically about their own and others' ideas, sort through this information that is available to them and effectively convey their thoughts and ideas will be able to successfully function in this society. In order to achieve these goals as a class, we will:

- Improve our reading skills through extensive reading and participating in discussions regarding the readings.
- Summarize, analyze and evaluate written works
- Revise our written work. We will write drafts, reread first and second copies to rethink what we have discovered and revise for an organization appropriate to our main purpose and audience.
- Collect, sort through, determine the validity of and synthesize research and information. We will have to familiarize ourselves with several reference tools in the library, work with the Inlex-System, locate books and journals in the library and locate source materials on electronic databases.

For common objectives/means and institutional competencies for ENG 108, also refer to the English department website at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/eng108.asp>

Course Structure:

I have structured this course so that everything you read, discuss and write is connected in some way.

A large part of research is reading and truly understanding what you read and, as a result, the first weeks of the course will focus on refining your evaluation and analysis skills. Your reading and writing assignments will reflect this. Then, we will begin to narrow our focus to the final research project. Your research project will involve exploring your topic from different perspectives and utilizing a variety of sources. Moreover, the reading and research you complete for this project will allow you to obtain new information and points of view and, as a result, you will be able to develop a more informed and substantial perspective on your topic. You will be able to decide the topic/issue of this project (although there are certain topics I will not accept and your topic must be approved by me). Your topic can be related to your major, intended career, an issue that you have read about or have been involved in within your community, etc. I will review the details of this project in class. You will also be required to write “smaller,” but equally important, papers and these papers are some of the different stages in the process of the final research project (project proposal, observation, background report and interview paper). Each paper will be submitted and graded and you will have the opportunity for revision. These assignments will then be synthesized and expanded into your final research project. Although you must meet certain deadlines, you will also be given the opportunity to work at your own pace on your project. By breaking down a large writing and research project into smaller steps, it will make the entire process less intimidating and easier to manage. However, be aware that this course entails extensive writing and researching and, as a result, requires that you remain aware of due dates and stay on schedule.

Methods of Instruction:

Methods of instruction include textbooks, lectures, class discussions, group work/in-class workshops, informal writing assignments and formal writing assignments. Students will be expected to participate in peer revision groups and in-class exercises. Students will also be required to give an oral presentation regarding their research project at the end of the semester.

Policies:

Attendance and Class Preparation/Participation: Students are expected to attend every scheduled class meeting. Each student will be allowed five absences. More than five absences will likely affect your final grade. However, please feel free to speak to me about any extenuating circumstances for I reserve the right to excuse some absences. If you are going to miss class due to a school-sponsored event you must notify me in advance. Also, arriving to class late is disruptive. As a result, chronic lateness will likely affect your final grade. Students are also expected to come prepared to every class meeting and participate in class discussion for this is the only way we can all share ideas, ask questions and learn.

Late Work: All writing assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the due date. Each student is allowed one late paper (and only one late paper) and this must be discussed with the instructor. I will not accept/grade any other late papers. This is important because you must complete, turn in and receive a grade for all papers in order to pass this class. Consequently, if you submit more than one late paper, you will fail the course. If you are not in class on the due date you are still responsible for submitting your assignment on time. Late in-class writing assignments will not be accepted.

Revision: All formal, graded writing assignments, except your final research project, can be revised and resubmitted for a “new” grade. You will have two weeks from the date the paper is returned in class to revise and resubmit each paper. However, you cannot revise other portfolio work. If you miss the two-week deadline, you forfeit the right to revise that specific paper. It is required that your original, graded essay accompanies your revised essay. Revision is important because each paper covers important skills that you will need to know for the next paper. Although you cannot revise your final research project, you will write it in “stages” and those stages can be revised. You will also have ample opportunity to obtain feedback from your peers and from me regarding your final research project.

Grading: Your final grade will be based upon your portfolios (which include your formal writing assignments, in-class exercises, peer revision work and research process), oral presentation and final examination. Please remember that you must complete all assignments in order to pass the course. Also note that smaller assignments and class preparation/participation are very important and do affect your grade.

- Paper/Mini-portfolio #1: 100 points
Rhetorical Precis/Summary, Analysis, Evaluation
- Research group work/essay: 100 points
- Paper/Mini-portfolio #2: 100 points
Project Proposal
- Paper/Mini-portfolio #3: 100 points
Background Report
- Paper/Mini-portfolio #4: 100 points
Interview Paper
- Mini-portfolio #5: 50 points
Observation Notes
- Final Research Project/Portfolio: 350 points
- Oral Presentation of Project: 100 points
- Final Exam: 100 points

Due Dates: Please be aware of due dates for all assignments. It is important that you plan your time and decide upon whom you are going to interview and what site you are going to observe before the assignment is distributed. It is also important to schedule your own time to go to the library and engage in research (not only library research but research on the computer and in the field); some class time will be allotted for this but it will not be enough time for you to complete your research.

- Research group work: January 22 OR January 27
- Paper/Mini-Portfolio #1: January 31
- Paper/Mini-Portfolio #2: February 14
- Paper/Mini-Portfolio #3: March 7
- Paper/Mini-Portfolio #4: April 2
- Observation Assignment: TBA
- Final Paper/Mini-Portfolio: April 28

Academic Honesty Policy: Cheating and plagiarism are not acceptable. You will receive a grade of F (0 points) for any paper/assignment/exam that shows evidence of cheating and/or plagiarism. Please make sure to correctly document all borrowed information and ideas on all of your writing assignments. You have the burden of proving that a paper/assignment showing evidence of cheating and/or plagiarism has been in fact written by you. You should keep thorough evidence of your writing and researching processes for all papers so that you can meet this burden of proof. Stronger evidence proving plagiarism may lead to further penalties. Please note carefully the statement on plagiarism on the departmental website, found at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/EFLJ/plagiarism.asp>.

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

Miscellaneous: All drafts and final papers for this course must be word-processed. Please note that you must complete all major assignments in order to pass this course. In addition, all research, notes, outlines, drafts, etc. must be submitted with your written work. It is also important to save all work on disks, keeping back-ups if necessary.

Please feel free to come see me if you have *any* problems or questions. I believe communication is very important between an instructor and her students and, as a result, I will make myself available to you for any reason.