

Jim Neal—001
Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Department of English/Foreign Languages/Journalism
Missouri Western State College

Syllabus

Course: Composition and Reading I (ENG 104-04), fall 2004, in JGM 109 from 9:30 until 10:50 a.m. TTH for three credit hours at Missouri Western State College

Instructor: Jim Neal I have no office hours, but you may meet with me before or after class.

Office and Phone: SSC 222T; 271-4239; my e-mail address is Neal13@kc.rr.com

Text: The Bedford Guide by Kennedy, Kennedy, and Holladay (sixth ed.)

I would also suggest that you check out my English I notes at nealz.tripod.com

ENG 104 Goals/Objectives and Means

See <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/eng104.asp> and
<http://www2.mwsc.edu/eflj/eng104.html#Institutional>

Before any grade appeal will be processed for a student in ENG 100, 104, or 108, the complete portfolio of writings will have to be submitted to the Department Review Committee.

Grading Formula: All students are required to submit all work within the assigned specifications and on time and to come to class prepared. Attitude, effort, and attendance are a must. Students must complete all assigned papers to pass the course. The students' grade will be based upon the scores received on the assigned papers, the final exam, and bonus and penalty points. The following grading scale will be used in this class: 0 - 59% = F, 60 - 69% = D, 70 - 79% = C, 80 - 89% = B, and 90 - 100% = A.

The papers will be graded holistically and receive a letter grade of A for excellent, B for above average, C for average, D for below average, and F for unsatisfactory. This grade will then be translated into a percentile reflecting the grading scale in the previous paragraph. The percentile grade will be recorded. The criteria I will use to arrive at this grade are unity, support, coherence, sentence skills, and following directions. Students must avoid these serious errors, any single instance of which has the potential of lowering a grade one letter: ruptures in paragraph unity, choppiness, sentence fragments, fused sentences, verb ruptures (time and number unity), pronoun ruptures (in unity, ambiguous antecedent, use of improper case), misplaced modifiers, comma splices, faulty or mixed constructions, and rambling sentences (more than two independent clauses joined by a repeated conjunction). Students should also avoid these minor errors: spelling, typing,

or capitalization errors; abbreviations; use of low or improper diction, such as "you," "just," "get," "got," or "a lot"; omitted or repeated words; use of the adjective rather than the adverbial case, or vice versa, such as "secondly," "more importantly," or "hopefully"; ending sentences with prepositions; split infinitives; parentheses; use of double prepositions or double negatives; faulty parallelism or faulty coordination; one-sentence paragraphs; ending a list with a non-specific term or etc.; or punctuation errors. I do not grade on style; opinion; or topic, unless it falls outside the perimeters of the assignment. Assigned papers will be considered late at the end of the class period on which they are due regardless of things like computer problems. Late papers will be penalized ten percentage points for each class session they are late, though I will not accept papers that are more than three weeks late, meaning the student will not pass the course. Penalty points may not be made up. Failing papers may be rewritten once, though the revised grade will not exceed 70%; however, if the paper is very good except for one problem area, I might, at my discretion, allow a student to correct it and split the difference. Rewrites of papers 1-4 must be accompanied by the graded copy and submitted to the instructor within three weeks of the paper's original due date; rewrites of papers 5 and 6 are due by the end of the final exam. Students who simply omit a problem indicated on a graded paper will still be charged for the error on the rewrite. Rewrites that are not rewritten will be recorded as 20%. I claim at least a week to grade papers.

At the conclusion of the term, I will figure a percentage, which will break down as follows: papers 90% (papers 5 and 6 count as two papers each) and the final exam 5%. To this average I will add up to five percentage points for perfect attendance, consistent and constructive class participation, effort, and courtesy. I will subtract up to five percentage points from the averages of those students who have come to class ill-prepared or displayed rude or inconsiderate behavior such as talking other than when called upon, eating, drinking, smoking, eye rolling, desk diving, yawning or sighing loudly and blatantly, winking, blinking, nodding, sitting with feet propped up on chairs or desks, note passing, or sleeping. Tobacco chewing is not allowed. Students who engage in any of these activities will receive two verbal warnings before being required to move to seating assigned by the instructor and/or meet with the dean. Rudeness toward the instructor or fellow students will not be tolerated. These points will be awarded or deducted entirely at the instructor's personal discretion. Cell phones and electronic devices must be turned off, and children are not allowed in the classroom.

Objectionable material: This class may contain frank and open discussions of gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity. There is a possibility that religion, politics, drugs, and alcohol may pop up as well. The class discussions may include words that some consider profane. Occasionally, the instructor might, at his personal discretion, crossdress and/or interject humor as an attempt to enliven the discussion and render the experience more palatable.

Attendance: Students are required to attend all classes. **Students who miss four consecutive classes or a total of eight classes before November 5 will fail the course, regardless of the reason for the absences.** Students whose total absences in the course exceed 7 absences after November 5 will have their final grade averages lowered five percentage points per absence in excess of seven. Students who are experiencing difficulty with attendance should check with me as

soon as possible. Students entering class late or leaving class early will be considered tardy, and three tardies will count as an absence. Students missing more than twenty-five minutes of class will be considered absent. Students absent for any reason will bear the responsibility for obtaining lecture notes from fellow students. All absences are deemed excused, but that means that the work missed may be made up. An excused absence does not exempt the student from doing the work or from the absence penalty. Students who sleep or appear to sleep or engage in activities other than those being conducted by the instructor during class will be considered absent.

- **Academic Honesty**: Since honesty in the classroom is required, cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the college constitutes a violation. I will not accept papers which are substantially similar to those of other students or the sample papers. I will accept only original work.

Portfolios: Students must maintain a portfolio of graded papers to verify assignments completed or dispute a grade. This must be turned in one week before the final exam, and it will be returned on the day of the final. Course grades will not be issued until the portfolio is handed in.

- **Students with Disabilities**: Any student in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of abilities should contact me as soon as possible so that we can discuss class requirements.

Specifications for Papers in ENG 104

I don't want folders, outlines, or title pages. All papers must be word-processed, laser-printed, and stapled in the upper left-hand corner. There must be a one-inch margin on all four sides of the page. Click off the "widow and orphan control" to make a consistent one-inch margin at the bottom of the page. All papers must be double-spaced. All papers must have the student's name, the assignment number, and the current date in the upper left-hand corner. All pages must have a header which contains the student's last name and the page number in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top of the page. All papers must have a title, which must be centered from left to right. The first and last words in the title must be capitalized, as must all the major words. Articles ("a," "an," and "the"), coordinating conjunctions ("and," "or," "nor," "for," "so," "yet," and "but"), and prepositions may be presented in low case unless they are the first or last word. One may play it safe and simply capitalize the first letter of all the words, but the title must not be presented in all capital letters. The title must not be underlined unless it contains a title; placed within quotes unless it is a quote or contains a quote; or followed by punctuation unless it is a question or an exclamation. All paragraphs must be indented one-half inch. One space between words and following a period is the current MLA style, but two spaces following a period are acceptable. Left justify your papers. Do not right justify. Use a **12-point Bookman or a 14-point Times New Roman** font. All papers must contain a minimum of 600 words. The word count pertains to the text and excludes documentation, name, date, assignment number, and title. Short papers will be penalized one percentage point per word. Penalty points may not be made up. No

paper may contain more than 150 words of quotes. The instructor will assign the topics for the papers. Do not fight your topics. Strive for a smooth, even flow by avoiding a series of simple declarative statements. Replace forms of the verbs "to be" and "to have" with more colorful, active verbs whenever possible. Do not abbreviate. Any paper which has a proof summary in the conclusion will be penalized a letter grade. Please remember that this is not a creative writing class, nor are we involved in a search for truth. Think of these assignments as drills designed to develop a specific skill area.

The Papers

These are subject to change!

All papers may be made up or contain fictional information. I never assume that what students write actually happened or reflects their personal opinions. The students may be as creative or frivolous as they wish, as long as they satisfy all aspects of the assignment. Feel free to add Richard Simmons, Elvis's ghost, and/or flying saucers. These papers can be fun.

All papers will evolve through the following steps: a group discussion of the assigned readings and the assignment itself, peer tutorials, and grading by the instructor. These are the sources of help: the learning center, the computer center, the textbook, fellow students, and family and friends. Still, you are the one who receives the grade, and therefore you are responsible for your paper. Not all advice is good advice. Also, I will be happy to assist students on their papers through, but not after, the peer tutorial class period. There is plenty of time to ask questions in class and plenty of time between when the paper is assigned and when it's due. Also, you may ask specific questions about outlines or drafts of your papers, though **I WON'T PROOFREAD** them.

Paper #1: "Writing from Observation" is an exercise in the use of sensory imagery, specifics, and detail, which is not only the mark of a good writer but also of intelligence. You may use time order, but do not tell a story—it will not fulfill the assignment. Avoid verb shifts, dangling participles, and the word "you." Punctuate your coordinate adjectives correctly. I would recommend present tense. Pretend you are a camera which can hear, taste, touch, and smell as well as see. **Show**—do not **tell**. Introductions and conclusions are optional. Check with me on each use of "lie" and "lay" and "sit" and "set." **Periods and commas always precede the closed quote.** Avoid chopiness by combining sentences, varying sentence structure, and adding more information to your sentences. Watch out for "further" and "farther" and use the superlative correctly.

Paper #2: "Writing from Recall" is a description of a dramatic moment in your life. I want an abundance of sensory imagery, specifics, and detail, just as in paper #1. Use time order and watch for verb shifts. I would recommend past tense. If you wish, you may jump right into the action, but if there is information the reader needs to know to appreciate the significance of the event, then that information should be presented in one or more introductory paragraphs. The incident itself

must occupy at least two-thirds of the paper. Do not jump around in the action. Focus on at least one but no more than three significant moments and describe in detail your **sensory** impressions and feelings. Again, do not merely **tell** me what happened, **show** me. When you have described the incident in sufficient detail, then present in a concluding paragraph or two how you feel about the event as you look back on it now. How did it change you? What insights did you gain? How does this memory make you feel?

Paper #3: "Analyzing" can be approached in one of two ways. In the first, you explain a process. Use present tense, because you are describing a process in general rather than a specific incident. Do not tell a story—it will not fulfill the assignment. You may give background information in an introductory paragraph if you wish, or you may simply state your thesis and begin explaining your process. Remember that your title cannot serve as your thesis. It is conceivable that your paper could be one long paragraph if your steps cannot be developed. Your process must contain at least one time-significant step. You may not use recipes, the word "you," or the imperative case (the "you understood" subject). Five points will be deducted for each use of "you" or the imperative case. Instead of using "you," say "I" or describe the group of people you are talking about, such as "carpenters" or "bricklayers." You may invent a fictitious person to be the vehicle for your thesis, or you may use "one." When you have finished your text, use the search function to make certain you have not used "you," "will," or ", then." Watch out for pronoun ruptures and the "then" comma splice! The second approach is one in which you simply break something down into its component parts and describe them. In this approach, you must have a two-sentence introduction in which you announce the criteria you are dividing the topic into (there must be at least three), and then each criterion must be presented and developed in a separate paragraph in the order the criteria were listed in the introduction, with transitional expressions and topic sentences. Conclude with a two-sentence paragraph containing a transitional expression, a re-affirmation of the thesis, and an editorial comment. A letter grade will be deducted from papers containing a proof summary in the conclusion. If you chose to review a movie, book, or short story, do not retell the plot.

The next three papers must be documented in accordance with current MLA style as specified on pages 604-14 and 616 to the top of 631 in The Bedford Guide. These papers must contain a minimum of four **parenthetical cites** from a minimum of two works cited entries. Of these, one must be a book-length entry other than a reference work or computer-accessed source, and the other must be a periodical entry other than a computer-accessed source. Your own words must make up at least three-fourths of the text. Introduce all quotes and paraphrases and identify your sources. Some of you will be tempted to respond to these assignments by turning in papers written for another class, perhaps written by someone else. This temptation must be resisted! Don't do it! It will not work!

Paper #4: "Writing from Reading." You must base this exercise on one of the essays from The Bedford Guide. The paper must contain three sections. In the first, tell me what you read. Part one must be two sentences. In the second section, without retelling the story, if there is one, describe what you read in terms of the author's use of words, such as exact names; lively verbs;

vividly descriptive adjectives and adverbs; and/or images which stimulate the reader's sense of sight, touch, taste, hearing, and/or smell, giving specific examples. **Or** you may go through the essay and agree or disagree with the author's points. If in section two you discussed the author's use of words, in section three you may agree or disagree with what the author said, **or** you may give your thoughts on the topic in general, **beyond the context of the essay**. If in section two you agreed or disagreed with the author's points, in section three you must give your opinions on the topic **beyond the context of what you read**. If and when you are giving your thoughts on the topic in general, **do not** refer to the essay. Section two must make up at least one-third of the paper. This is neither a report nor a review.

Papers number five and six are, in effect, take-home comprehensive exams and will therefore count as two papers each. Papers number five and six must deal with issues of regional, national, or international consequence. All papers in this course must cover different topics. Papers five and six may contain a prefatory section that will create interest, dispel a negative prejudice, tell a story, educate the reader, or establish the writer's credibility. This section is optional, but if it is included, it is considered a part of the regular text and therefore will follow the title.

Paper #5: "Causes **or** Effects" will be presented in the "standard format," which must include a two-sentence introduction, a minimum of three proof points, and a conclusion, each of which will be presented in a separate paragraph. The first sentence in the introduction must be the thesis. It must clearly show a cause and effect relationship, and it must be followed by a proof summary. Your thesis must be, in effect, "There are many reasons why _____." Your proof summary must be, in effect, "Three of these reasons are _____, _____, and _____." Or your thesis may be, in effect, "There have been many consequences of _____." Your proof summary would be, in effect, "Three of these consequences are _____, _____, and _____." Your thesis cannot be an opinion; in other words, you cannot say "this, this, and this are the reasons I feel this way." Your proof paragraphs must be introduced by transitional expressions and presented in the order in which they were summarized. Watch your paragraph unity! Your conclusion must be two sentences, the first of which must contain a clear transitional expression and a reaffirmation of the thesis, and the second of which must contain an editorial comment. It must not contain a proof summary.

Paper #6: "Proposing a Solution" must be presented in the same format as paper #5. The thesis must be either "We should do this" or "We should not do this." If the thesis is the former, then the proof points may explain **why** we should do this or **how** we should go about doing this, but you may not combine whys with hows, and your paper must not be a process paper. If the thesis is "We should not do this," then the proof points can only explain why you feel as you do.

Course Outline for ENG 104

This is subject to change!

All readings are assigned as of the beginning of the course. Students will be responsible for

assigned readings any time after the class period when the readings are assigned. A finished draft, one which could theoretically be handed in, is due on the day of the peer tutorial.

Weeks 1-4: "The Honeymoon": Everyone likes everyone else; school is new, fun, and interesting. Everyone should try it. We're lucky to be here.

Week	8/31	We become acquainted, handouts distributed and explained
1	9/2	basic writing concepts reviewed
2	7	basic writing concepts reviewed
	9	paper #1 assigned, read pp. 52-64
3	14	assignment reviewed, readings covered
	16	assignment reviewed, readings covered
4	21	peer tutorials
	23	paper #1 due, paper #2 assigned, read pp. 36-50
5	28	assignment reviewed, readings covered
	30	assignment reviewed, readings covered

Week 6: "The Days of Rage": You've just received your first paper back. You hate me. You say bad things to and about me. You glare at me and mutter in class. I don't seem to realize that you may not be as fascinated by this boring, stupid subject as I am. I don't realize that you have other classes and other interests and that you have to work to pay your bills. You fabricate a Voodoo fetish doll in my likeness and stick pins into it while burning a black candle and chanting a litany of all the terrible things you hope will happen to me, most of which already have.

6	10/5	peer tutorials
	7	paper #2 due, paper #3 assigned, read pp. 379-96

Weeks 7 and 8: "The Doldrums": You lapse into a mute apathy. You no longer hate me, and we're minimally friends again, though not as we were during "The Honeymoon."

7	12	assignment reviewed, readings covered
	14	last day rewrites for paper #1 are accepted
8	19	peer tutorials
	21	paper #3 due, paper #4 assigned, read pp. 397-409

Weeks 9-12: "The Black Hole": You hate school. You're sick and tired of the teachers, the assignments, going to class, studying—the whole thing. Your relationships and health are suffering. You've lost your sense of humor. You're behind on your bills, and your car needs work, but you can't afford to have it fixed. The attendance policy is catching up with some of your fellow students, and they are dropping like flies. Some of your classmates have appealed my grading criteria and attendance policies but have lost, and now they're considering hiring a lawyer. You

would rather fail—let's be honest, you'd rather die—than have to write another paper or sit through another boring lecture. That job at McDonalds doesn't sound so bad any more, and in some moments it is downright appealing. All is darkness. No end is in sight. You've gone into the "ultraglide" mode. The clutch is in, and you're coasting. This will basically continue until the end of the term.

9 26 assignment reviewed, readings covered
28 documentation lecture, last day rewrites for paper #2 will be accepted
29 (no class) **This is the last day to withdraw without academic assessment. If you are failing the course, I would advise you to withdraw**

10 11/2 peer tutorials
4 paper #4 due, paper #5 assigned, read pp. 412-27

11 9 assignment reviewed, readings covered
11 last day rewrites for paper #3 will be accepted

12 16 peer tutorials
18 paper #5 due, paper #6 assigned, read pp. 428-40

Weeks 13-16: "There's Light at the End of the Tunnel!!": All those people who were complaining are gone. Christmas vacation is just around the corner! Finals are only a couple weeks away, and I'll be done! Can I make it? Are you kidding me? Are bears Buddhists? Heck yes I can make it!

13 23 assignment reviewed, readings covered

25 Thanksgiving vacation

14 30 peer tutorials, last day rewrites for paper #4 will be accepted
12/2 paper #6 due

15 **Reminder: students who do not complete all assigned papers will not pass the course**

7 Final lecture

9 review for final exam, portfolios due

Final Week: Give thanks! Rejoice! Praise your God, Allah, Jehovah, Buddha, Confucius, Baal, Tophet, Emanuel Kant, and/or whom/whatever. It's over! It's Over!! IT'S OVER!!!!

Final Exam: Thursday, December 16, 8:30 a.m. to 10:20 a.m.