

ENGLISH 108: COLLEGE WRITING AND RESEARCH

Spring 2004

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

Section 15: 1:00-1:50 MWF, JGM 105

Instructor: Tom Pankiewicz
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Course Goals

Students will complete three formal research projects in addition to other graded and ungraded work. In these assignments, students will learn to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the thinking of others in order to discover, develop, and test their own points of view.

English 108 is a general studies course. Students will learn to write for different audiences and purposes, to use active reading and critical thinking, to use writing processes and conventions. This course also meets the state level competencies of communicating, higher order thinking, and managing information. For more information on these goals, see the English Department web site for general studies courses at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/genstud.asp>.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Rottenberg, Annette T. Elements of Argument. 7th edition. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003.
Gaines, Ernest J. A Lesson Before Dying. New York: Vintage, 1997.
A notebook for a journal.
A collegiate dictionary.

Course Information

Major Assignments:

This course will focus on reading, researching, and writing argumentative essays. During the semester you will complete a series of brief arguments as well as three specific assignments. A student who does not complete these assignments or submit a course portfolio will not pass the course even if the grade achieved through other work is satisfactory.

The assignments are:

- My Turn: A series of four or five brief arguments.
- An Analysis of An Argument.
- A Lesson Before Dying and the question of _____ .
- A Researched Argument.
- Portfolio.

Portfolio:

The essays mentioned above will be revised and collected in an end-of-course portfolio. The portfolio will account for approximately 70 percent of your course grade. A portfolio allows for your course grade to be based on your best writing; it places you in control of the quality of your writing.

Since writing is a process, I encourage you to revise your essays throughout the semester. I will respond to your essays with written comments; I will hold a series of revision workshops throughout the semester; I will be available to confer with you about your writing throughout the semester. But I will not assign a grade to any essay until it is published in the portfolio.

The portfolio of all of your work will be due at the end of the semester. The portfolio will include published drafts of your essays, previous drafts and responses, selected course writing, and a reflective essay, explaining the contents of the portfolio and discussing your growth as a writer. I will evaluate the portfolio and return it by the final exam.

E, M, L Response:

Since this class requires a portfolio, no grade will be assigned to any essay until the end of the semester. You will have the opportunity to revise your writing throughout the semester. While I will not assign a grade to the essay, I will respond to its quality with a written comment and indicate where the essay is in terms of being developed by using the following descriptions. I will inform you of any task paper that is not ready for the portfolio. I will be happy to meet with you to discuss any essay and work with you as you revise.

- **Early Stage (E).** The draft is not yet complete. Ideas are still being developed and examined. The essay may not have a clear purpose or focus or organization. The writer seems distanced from the topic, not engaged with the ideas. The writer appears to be in the stage of finding a topic and exploring the topic's potential.
- **Middle Stage (M).** The draft has a clear, solid topic but would benefit from revision and editing. Ideas may benefit from more information or additional detail. The organization (introduction, conclusion, order) may be tightened. The writer's voice and engagement with the topic is emerging. Decisions concerning paragraphing, sentence structure, and word choice are being made. The writer appears to be in the stage of putting ideas together and experimenting with ways to express the ideas.
- **Late Stage (L).** The draft is close to being portfolio ready. It has a clear purpose and a strong development with substantial support. The late draft is purposefully organized. The writer's voice is present, engaging the readers. Paragraphs, sentence structure, and word choice are being polished. The late draft may benefit from polishing and editing to make it clearer and more effective.

Essay Format:

Papers must be word-processed, double-spaced and use a 12-point font. Be sure to save each assignment on a computer disk and keep a hard copy of each assignment for yourself.

Late Essays:

Late essays including papers left at home or “temporarily lost” by a computer malfunction will not be accepted unless you speak with me first. If you are facing difficulties in completing an assignment before the deadline, discuss the problems with me in person—not over the phone or via e-mail. If necessary during the conference, we will work out a plan to complete the assignment. No late assignment will be accepted after the due date unless we have worked out an alternative plan. As stated above: A student who does not complete all essays or submit a portfolio will not pass the course even if the grades achieved in other activities are satisfactory.

Process Folder:

Each essay will conclude with the submission of a process folder. No essay will be accepted without a process folder. Each process folder will be graded and returned. The process folder will evaluate work on the essay, but it will not evaluate the essay. No essay will receive a grade until it is published in the portfolio.

The folder will include:

- Polished draft of the essay;
- Working drafts of the essay with peer group responses attached;
- Preliminary plan and revision plan;
- In-class letter and questions.

Journal:

I believe that students learn to write best by writing frequently. Therefore, you will be required to keep a journal throughout the semester. The journal assignment will vary through the course and will be collected periodically throughout the semester.

Quizzes and In-class Participation:

You will be quizzed on most reading assignments and will be expected to participate fully in all class activities. Quizzes and activities will be noted in the grade book with a check or minus. A Check is an indication of that you have met the expectations of an assignment. A minus is an indication that your work is unacceptable. Missing work, of course, is noted with a zero. It is a simple way of responding to a paper without attaching points to the assignment and possibly creating a mad pursuit of points.

Your quizzes and participation will be assessed at the end of the semester and will account for a grade. Missing work and less than expected work will affect the grade.

Final Exam:

An in-class essay will serve as the final exam. The final exam is scheduled for Friday, May 7, from 2:00 – 3:50 p.m.

Grading:

Your grade will be determined by the writings you submit, your progress as a writer, and your class participation over the course of the semester.

The components of your grade in the course are:

- Process Folders, Journal, Quizzes, Participation, Final Exam30 – 40 %
- Portfolio60 - 70%

Conferences:

The most effective and valuable help that I can give you is through a conference or a conversation about your writing. My office hours are listed above if you wish to just drop by. I will also bring my calendar to every class to schedule appointments.

If at any time during the semester, you do not understand an assignment or a task, see me, call me, or e-mail me to discuss the confusion.

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.

Policies

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 three absences (two absences in Tuesday-Thursday courses) before your course grade will be affected. Every absence beyond three (two in T-Th courses) will result deduction of the final grade. More than five absences (four absences in T-Th courses) will fail you. The failure will be recorded on the date of the sixth absence (fifth absence in T-Th courses). **If you know of any circumstances likely to make this policy difficult for you this semester, you should consult with your advisor and me to review your options.**

Due to the noise in the hallway, I will close the classroom door at the beginning of the class. I will also take roll at that time. If you arrive a few minutes late, please knock so we can let you in. Be sure to see me after class so I can adjust my attendance record. I don’t want to forget to change your absence. As a rule if you are more than 10 minutes late, your tardiness will be counted as an absence. In counting absences, I must follow my attendance record, not my memory, so do not forget to see me after class if you are tardy.

If you miss a class session, you are responsible for all material covered and all 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 from your teacher.

Academic Honesty Policy:

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 you have in fact written the paper. 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 stronger penalties. Please note carefully the statement on plagiarism on the departmental web site, found at <http://www2.mwsc.edu/eflj/plagiarism.html>.

Civility and Cooperation:

Missouri Western requires all students to help us maintain good conditions for teaching and learning. All students will treat their classmates, teachers, and student assistants with civility and respect, both inside and outside the classroom. Students who violate this policy may, among other penalties, be counted absent and asked to leave. You should review your Missouri Western student handbook for further information.

Student Disability:

Any student in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expressions of abilities should contact Missouri Western's special needs coordinator, Lois Fox, for possible certification of special needs and expert recommendations for assistance. You should also contact me personally as soon as possible so that we can discuss class requirements.