

ENG108: College Writing and Research

Section 40 - Internet

Spring 2004

Missouri Western State College

Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism

Instructor: Dr. Donaher

Office: Eder Hall 222 L (aka SS/C Building)

Phone: 271-5964

Office Hours: TTH 9:30-12:00 and by appointment

E-mail: donaher@missouriwestern.edu

URL: <http://staff.missouriwestern.edu/~donaher>

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.

In English 108, you will learn:

- to write for different audiences and purposes
- to use active reading and critical thinking
- to use writing processes
- written conventions
- to write for different audiences and purposes
- to use active reading and critical thinking

You will also fulfill the following State Level Goal Skill Area Competencies :

Communicating:

- Analyze and evaluate their own and others' speaking and writing.
- Conceive of writing as a recursive process that involves many strategies, including generating material, evaluating sources when used, drafting, revising, and editing.
- Make formal written and oral presentations employing correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics.
- Focus on a purpose (e.g., explaining, problem solving, argument) and vary approaches to writing and speaking based on that purpose.
- Respond to the needs of different audiences and choose words for appropriateness and effect.

Higher-Order Thinking:

- Recognize the problematic elements of presentations of information and argument.
- Formulate questions for clarifying issues and solving problems.
- Use linguistic, mathematical or other symbolic approaches to describe problems, identify alternative solutions, and make reasoned choices among those solutions.
- Analyze and synthesize information from a variety of relevant sources and use the results to address complex situations and problems.
- Defend conclusions using relevant evidence and reasoned argument.
- Reflect on and evaluate their critical-thinking processes.

Managing Information:

- Access and/or generate information from a variety of sources, including the most contemporary technological information services.
- Evaluate information for its currency, usefulness, truthfulness, and accuracy.
- Organize, store, and retrieve information efficiently.
- Reorganize information for an intended purpose, such as research projects.
- Present information clearly and concisely, using traditional and contemporary technologies.

These goals and the institutional competencies are clearly articulated at the [General Studies English Courses](#) website. Click on English 108.

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.

To order the textbooks by mail from the MWSC Barnes and Noble Bookstore, call Lisa at 816-271-4458. Bookstore Hours: Monday-Thursday 8:00-5:00, Friday 8:00-4:30.

Other:

- A Student E-mail Account at MWSC.
- To participate fully in this course, you must have ready internet access and be able to complete the assignments in a timely manner. Assignments are due every Tuesday, at noon CST, and no late work is accepted, except as outlined in the Course Policies.
- For word processing, you must use Microsoft Word, or another compatible program. Compatibility means that files converted from some other program to MSWord retain their original format and layout and conform to MLA manuscript guidelines.
- **Access to a college library, not a public library.** College libraries have access to the necessary, and abundant, specialized resources that public libraries do not.
- To get started, read over the Syllabus and the linked Getting Started Instructions and Unit Overview Pages on the Course Schedule below.

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.

Students must find adequate time to go to the college's library to complete assignments. **NOTE:** while public libraries are nice places to gather general information, they are not considered research libraries and so do not often have many specialized research materials. You must have access to a college libraries specialized resources in order to do well in the course.

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.

Course Policies and Requirements

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.

Formats for Submitting Work

All work for this course must be word processed and submitted in the format specified by the assignment. **Be sure to follow submission guidelines provided with each assignment carefully in order to receive full credit for your submissions.**

Late Work

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. **No late work will be accepted, except for the major project components (i.e. the prospectuses and formal essays).** Late prospectuses and essays will not be discounted if turned in within 24 hours of the due date. **After 24 hours, final prospectuses and papers will be discounted one letter grade for each additional 24 hours late (including weekends and holidays).** No work will be accepted after noon CST on May 4, 2004.

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. Work with evidence of plagiarism will receive a zero and may 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. Because this course is conducted without face-to-face encounters, one should be particularly careful to note how tone, rhetoric, and language all contribute to the overall impression of one's communications.

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.

Computer Usage

You must have daily access to a computer with internet capability in order to do well in this course. For this course, you must use your MWSC email account for all correspondence and assignment submission.

Most students can set up their email accounts via the MWSC homepage. Go to: <http://www.missouriwestern.edu> and click on the New Web Mail link for more information.

Time Expectations

As with all college courses, a steady devotion to duty is expected. The readings and assignments are exactly the same as those given in my on campus version of this course, and you are expected to devote the same amount of time to completing the course requirements that you would be required to devote were the class held on campus. This means that you will have three hours of course activities in lieu of three hours of traditional classroom time and that you will have up to nine hours of homework per week. On the average, however, you can expect to spend about an hour per day (7 hours per week) completing course activities and requirements.

Unlike a traditional on campus course, however, you do have greater flexibility in determining how you will distribute your weekly

workload. While assignments are due each week by Tuesday, at noon, Central Standard Time, you can choose to complete your work over several short work sessions or over fewer, longer work sessions. Keep in mind, though, that you cannot hope to do well if you wait until the last minute to complete the week's work--you may miscalculate how long it will actually take you to do the work or you may have computer problems that interfere with the completion of your duties. Remember: no late work is accepted *under any circumstances* , so anticipate that there will be occasional glitches, whether personal or technical, and strive to turn in your work a little ahead of the Tuesday deadlines.

Grading

Students will do a variety of writing assignments over the course of the semester, including pre-writing exercises, research exercises, prospectuses, annotated bibliographies, and formal researched essays. In order to pass the course, students must complete the final projects; in addition, the quality of their work and the percentage of the other assignments completed will determine the final grade.

A word of caution: **don't underestimate the value of small assignments** since no late work (other than final projects) is accepted. Occasional lapses are understood, but chronic lapses can only pull the final grade downward.

Your Final Grade Distribution is as follows:

- Research Project #1 = 30%
- Research Project #2 = 20%
- Research Project #3 = 50%

Some Final Thoughts

This syllabus is of a contractual nature, and by remaining in the course you acknowledge your acceptance of its stipulations. Policies are enforced without exception to ensure uniformity and to facilitate fairness for all students.

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 mess up without it effecting your grade unduly. If, however, what should be an occasional problem completing your work becomes a chronic problem, we need to talk. If I understand what is going on in your life, I can more easily help you achieve your goals.

Course Schedule

A detailed Writing Assignment Calendar is attached to each Unit Overview. Please refer to it for specific dates, details, and instructions.

Getting Started

Day One (January 17)

- Meet on Campus, Saturday, January 17, 2003, MC Building, Recital Hall
- [Getting Started Instructions](#)

Project One

Weeks One - Five (January 21 - February 24)

- [Project One Overview and Assignment Calendar](#)

Project Two

Weeks Six - Eight (February 27 - March 23)

- [Project Two Overview and Assignment Calendar](#)

Project Three

Weeks Nine - Fourteen (March 24 - May 4)

- [Project Three Overview and Assignment Calendar](#)