

Missouri Western State College, Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism  
English 104

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**Required Texts:**

*A Pocket Style Manual*—D. Hacker (Bedford) or another handbook if you already own one

*The Things We Carried* - Tim O'Brien

*America Now* - Ed. Robert Atwan

Computer disks for revising and saving all work.

4 manila Folders

Thin notebook with dividers and lots of paper

Reserve material in library

We will use our text in class; be sure to bring it daily. Please have all supplies by the second week of class.

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completion of ENG 104, you should understand the following:

- Writing can be used for different purposes.
- Multiple audiences exist.
- Writing is a recursive process.
- Many productive ways exist to generate ideas and images for your work.
- Common patterns of organization exist.
- Formal distinctions exist among different prose genres.
- Editing skills enable writers to polish their work in order to keep the reader's attention focused on the message conveyed or the experience created.

- Reading is an interactive process that functions in our lives as a pleasurable activity as well as a means of acquiring knowledge.

A more detailed description of the course goals/objectives is available at <http://www.mwsc.edu/eflj/eng104.html>.

## Content

Subject matter, readings and writings in this class will focus on American culture, its morals and values, how these are related to history, and how they are portrayed in media. I expect you to develop insight and knowledge about these issues and be able to express that knowledge in writing.

## Grading Criteria

Grades will come from the following. Point values are approximate, and I reserve the right to alter some assignments.

Journal writing: 10%

Drafts of each major paper: 30% (10% each)

Participation, workshops, quizzes, reflective letters and peer evaluations, short writing assignments: 15%

Portfolio: 45%

*Journals:* We will keep active reading journals. Occasionally, I will direct you to write on certain questions or topics, but often you can write whatever you choose. Some of these entries will include a DEJ for the book *The Things We Carried*. Although the entries have due dates, I will not be collecting them in class. I will not tell you in advance when I will collect or record the entries but will assume you complete all of them on time. I also may assign journal writings in class. Therefore, you need to bring your journal with you at all times. As long as I have not recorded entries, you can make up any missed entries. However, when I do collect them for review or record them, and you can no longer make up any missed entries. We will also use these entries as impetus for class discussion, so if you have not written them, your participation in class will suffer.

As part of your journal entries, I highly encourage you to write your own questions, even if you cannot answer them. This questioning is part of the purpose of a journal, and the questions will also give us prompts for discussion and writing in class, which in turn will lead you to essay topics and development of your ideas.

*Papers and Reflective letters:* Each major paper contains several small process assignments that are just as important as the finished product. Regardless of what the student's point total would indicate, no one will pass this class without completing all parts of these writing assignments. I will give feedback on the papers as they are written and revised, but I do not give final grades until they appear in the portfolios. You also will write in-class reflections from time to time and peer evaluations on the due dates of all major papers. These pieces frequently will provide more insight into your growth as a writer and thinker than the actual papers will. They are very important and should be written with your best efforts. In addition, you will write a final reflection that will serve as the introduction to your portfolio.

*Portfolios:* I use portfolio grading, which means you may revise the major papers as many times as you like until the end of the semester. I respond to each paper with a grading rubric that indicates the degree to which that paper is "PR," or Portfolio Ready, and give points for a reasonable effort to competently complete the task at hand. Work that I deem PR most likely will convert to at least a "C" for that paper at semester's end. Work not "PR" will be at best a "D" at semester's end and likely result in a repetition of the course if not revised successfully. It is the student's decision about the amount of revision s/he wants to do.

Quality portfolios will contain quality revisions of major assignments, thoughtful reflective letters, and thoughtful questions and evaluation of the student's writing. Likewise, students who receive the highest grades will have contributed meaningfully to class discussions and met all deadlines for drafting and submitting all assignments, in addition to fulfilling the attendance requirements. All these factors indicate the student has put forth a strong effort, has developed his/her writing reading and thinking intellect, and can produce complete, clear and thoughtful writing. These qualities will result in an exceptional portfolio. Note that your portfolio is a substantial part of your grade so should not be taken lightly.

**Midterm grades:** I submit a "B" for students who have over 90% of the points at midterm, no absence problems, and all work complete and exceptional, and a "C" for students whose work is complete and passing and whose absences are below the limit. I submit a "D" for students whose work is complete but not acceptable or who has an absence problem. I submit an "F" for students whose work is incomplete or unacceptable and/or who have exceeded the absence limit.

### **Final grades:**

In addition to completion, quality and your portfolio, attendance and participation will all influence your final grade.

- Attendance -- your constant presence is mandatory for your success (please see "Attendance Policy" below). Missing excessive classes, deadlines, and assignments will result in substantially lower grades, in many cases to the point of failure. Also, superficial, off-topic or poorly edited papers, or an unwillingness or inability to contribute meaningfully to class discussions or to revise papers effectively, will result in low final grades.
- Participation—A student is participating when s/he does all the writing assignments, who attends class regularly, and who can discuss and write about the reading in a thoughtful manner. Just showing up is not participating.

**Please Note:** If a student grade is borderline, other factors such as effort, class participation, attendance, and attitude will be used to determine the final grade.

### **Late Work and Make-up work :**

It is nearly impossible to make up work in this class. Class discussions cannot be recreated, nor can in-class writings and group. If you do not have your paper done, you cannot write a reflective letter. If something should happen that prevents you from submitting your paper on time, you must make arrangements with me before the paper is due, not

afterwards. At this time, we will plan a date by which the work will be completed. Should you fail to contact me, I will not accept late work. I also do not accept daily work, journal entries, or workshop evaluations and reflections late under any circumstances.

Remember that regardless of the quality of your portfolio, you will not pass the class unless you write all papers throughout the semester.

### **Attendance and Tardies:**

In order to improve student learning as well as to achieve compliance with federal financial aid policies, Western has a mandatory attendance policy for all 100-level courses. You will be given an excused absence when acting as an official representative of the university, provided you give prior written verification from the faculty/staff supervisor of the event. An excused absence merely means you may make arrangements to hand in our work at a prearranged time. It does not excuse you from any work or from communicating with the teacher in advance about the absence.

All other absences will be deemed unexcused. The maximum number of unexcused absences allowed for this class **before** the midterm report, October 17, is **five**. Thus, if you have six unexcused absences, you will be reported to the Registrar's Office, who will automatically withdraw you from this class. The Financial Aid Office will reduce financial aid as appropriate.

Regardless of the date, during anytime during the course, I will allow each student four absences. Excessive (more than two) tardies or leaving early will count as an absence. For each of these allowed absences you do not use, you will receive five extra points. However, after you use the allowed four absences, I will deduct five points from your final grade for each additional absence or its equivalent. Because you are given these "free" absences, there are no excused absences. If you must miss, notify me in advance and be sure to have a buddy whom you can contact to find out what we did in class. Do not expect me to rehash the class. Also, please do not ask me if we "did anything." This question irritates me.

Often we may need to change things, and even locations, so it is imperative that you keep in sync with the class. Excessive absences will prevent you doing so. Repeatedly, I see that chronic absences result in

lower grades. You should note, however, that mere attendance does not mean you will pass the course. You must perform adequately on the tasks required and show initiative in completing the course requirements.

If I should be unable to meet class, a secretary, fellow instructor, or a note on the classroom door will notify you. Be sure to note any assignments due upon my return.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is claiming another's words, writing structure, images, or ideas as your own. Plagiarism and cheating of any kind will not be tolerated and may result in your failing the assignment or the course or being suspended or dismissed from the college. Please note carefully the statement on plagiarism on the departmental website, found at <http://www2.mwsc.edu/eflj/plagiarism.html>

**Classroom behavior:** I expect you to respect everyone in this class. Part of learning to read and write well is exploring ideas. There will no doubt be people who have ideas different than yours. One of our goals is to learn to understand and respect different ideas. Remain open-minded; you may even change your own ideas. Understanding and developing ideas is a natural outcome of the reading and writing, and therefore of this class, and thus I consider these an accomplishment and evidence that you are becoming an educated and mature reader and writer.

I also expect you to behave respectfully in class. This means: do not interrupt, walk in front of anyone who is talking, enter the room or a workshop late, or leave your seat or the room while class is in session unless it is an emergency. It also means that you turn off cell phones before you enter the classroom, and that they remain off until you have exited the classroom.

**Academic Support:** The Center for Academic Support, located in LRC 213, offers you assistance with your reading or with papers at any stage of the game. Contact the Center at 271-4624 or Coral Dawson, the Writing Director, at 271-4531. I highly encourage you to use this free service regardless of your abilities.

**Important Note:** I reserve the right make changes in the syllabus or course schedule if necessary.

## Reading Schedule

8/27- intro

8/29-Reading, writing, and thinking: AN 3-16; in class writing

8/31: AN 17-32; journal writing

9/5: AN 33-46