

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

## **Syllabus**

**Course:** Composition and Reading II (ENG 108-013), fall 2008, in 202 Popplewell Hall from 2:00 until 3:20 p.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:** Eder 222T; 271-4239; my e-mail address is Neal13@kc.rr.com

**Texts:** there are no required texts for this class; however, I recommend that you check out my English II notes at nealz.tripod.com

### **ENG 108 Goals/Objectives and Means**

See <http://www.mwsc.edu/~engdept/eng108.html>

#### **Basic writing requirements in ENG 108:**

Students will engage in exploratory writing exercises in which they learn how to

- \*analyze,
- \*synthesize, and
- \*evaluate the thinking of others in order to
- \*discover,
- \*develop, and
- \*test their own points of view.

Students will complete a minimum of three researched writing projects and a final exam in ENG 108.

Students will keep complete portfolios of all writing that is done in ENG 108.

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.

**Objective:** The primary objective in Comp II is to develop a proficiency in proper research and documentation. The secondary objective is to continue to develop the student's writing skills

beyond what was learned in Comp I and to focus on any lingering areas of deficiency in basic skills. The tertiary objective is to develop a skill and proficiency in persuasive techniques, with a sensitivity to style and semantic nuance.

**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, which means the student will not pass the course. Penalty points may not be made up. Papers may be rewritten to improve the grade as many times as the student wishes until the end of the peer tutorial period for that particular paper. Once the papers are handed in for grading, failing papers may be rewritten once, though the revised grade will not exceed 60%; 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 1-3 must be submitted to the instructor within three weeks of the paper's original due date, and rewrites of paper 4 are due by the end of the final exam; all rewrites must be accompanied by the graded copy. 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 3 and 4 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 discretion, crossdress and/or interject humor as an attempt to enliven the discussion and render the experience more palatable.

### Western Attendance Policy for All 100 and 200 Level Courses

In order to improve student learning and retention as well as to achieve compliance with federal financial aid policies, Western has implemented a mandatory attendance policy for students in all 100-level courses beginning Fall Semester 2006 and all 100- and 200-level courses beginning Fall Semester 2007. Instructors are required to monitor and track student attendance. A student will be given an excused absence when acting as an official representative of the university, provided the student gives prior written verification from the faculty/staff supervisor of the event. Any additional excused absences are at the complete discretion of the instructor.

Maximum allowed unexcused absences accrued before the reporting of midterm grades, March 19, are:

Class meetings/week	Maximum unexcused absences
1	1
2	3
3	5
4	7
5	9

When a student **exceeds** the maximum number of unexcused absences, instructors must report the student to the Registrar's Office, who will administratively withdraw the student from the

course and notify the Financial Aid Office to reduce financial aid as appropriate. From the midterm to the end of the course, faculty will assign grades according to their grading policies with regard to absences and record an FA when a student fails due to absences.

Students experiencing illness or other serious personal problems will be allowed up to three additional excused absences. Whether these absences are deemed excused will be left to the discretion of the instructor.

All other absences will be deemed unexcused. The maximum number of unexcused absences allowed for this class before the midterm report, October 13, is three. Thus, when you have 4 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. 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. 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.

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**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.

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**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 108**

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. The first paper must contain a minimum of 600 words, and papers 2-4 must contain a minimum of 1,000 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 250 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 or refutation 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 answer specific questions on papers through, but not after, the peer tutorial class period, though **I WON'T PROOFREAD** them. 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. Students who wish to achieve a grade of B or higher may do so by selecting a topic and preparing a rough outline and then showing me the outline as soon as possible. The student should show me the paper at each stage of the composition process, having a complete paper, one which is ready to be handed in, no later than the day of the peer tutorial. Students who wish to achieve a grade of C or lower may do so by handing me a "midnight special," one I see for the first time when it's handed in for grading.

Papers 2-4 inclusive must be documented in accordance with current MLA style, and I want

**parenthetical** cites. Each must contain a minimum of six cites from a minimum of two works cited entries. Of these, at least one must be from a book-length source other than a reference work or a computer-accessed source, and one must be from a periodical source other than a computer-accessed source. Introduce all quotes and paraphrases and identify your sources. Some of you may 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! Papers 2 and 3 must contain and develop with a minimum of three proof points a thesis which says, in effect, "this is bad," "this is good," "we should do this," or "we should not do this" and be organized in the "persuasive appeal" format presented in class.

**Paper #1:** "Contrasting Views" This is a warm-up paper, in which students contrast the political views of **two groups of people** in response to a certain problem. Or, if the students wish, they may discuss a minimum of three differences between **two groups of people** based on socially significant criteria such as race, gender, nationality, political persuasion, or sexual orientation. Documentation is neither required nor desired, even if the paper contains statistics or quotes. This is your basic five-paragraph paper (I'm referring to the format rather than the number of paragraphs—a "five-paragraph" paper must have at least five paragraphs, but it may have more than three proof paragraphs if the student desires). The paper must have an introduction, a minimum of three proof points, and a conclusion. I want two sentences in the introduction: a thesis statement and a proof summary. The thesis statement must be "This group (women, Democrats, pro-lifers, etc.) is different from this group (men, Republicans, pro-choicers, etc.)," or "Americans and Mexicans have different opinions concerning NAFTA." The proof summary would be "Three (or more) ways in which men (or whatever) are different from women (or whatever) are x, y, and z. I want the proof paragraphs developed in the order in which the proof points were summarized, with transitional expressions; clear topic sentences; and unified, detailed support. I want the first part of each proof paragraph to cover certain criteria regarding that category from one group's perspective, followed by a transitional expression, followed by an explanation of how the second group's response differs regarding those same criteria, in the same order they were covered in the first half of the paragraph. I want a two-sentence conclusion, the first of which must be introduced by a transitional expression, followed by a re-affirmation of the thesis. The next sentence is an editorial comment. I **DO NOT** want a proof summary in the conclusion. Though the papers must cover differences in two actual, distinct **groups of people**, the main proof points as well as the minor support points may be inaccurate, stereotypical, or even silly. As students write about the differences in any two groups, I think they will conclude that no group is monolithic, that the differences between groups are more apparent than real, and that these differences shrink to insignificance when compared to the similarities. Be careful of your pronoun references in this paper.

**Paper #2:** The conclusion of this paper must present a **specific object** which will elicit a specific emotional response from the reader. The introduction and/or refutation may contain the same or similar objects as well.

**Paper #3:** The conclusion of this paper must contain one of the "short cuts" presented in the

“ethical appeal” lecture. You may, if you wish, present one in the introduction and/or refutation as well. In addition, this paper must be accompanied by a separate piece of paper upon which the argument will be reduced to the form of a syllogism.

**Paper #4:** This paper must follow the “two-scenario appeal” format presented in lecture. The text of this paper must also contain a **labeled** figure of speech (at least as specific as scheme or trope).

**Course Outline for ENG 108**  
**This is subject to change!**

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.		
<b>1</b>	8/ 26	We become acquainted, syllabi distributed and explained (the riot act read)
	8/ 28	More of the same
<b>2</b>	9/ 2	More of the same
	9/ 4	Paper #1 assigned, standard format lecture
<b>3</b>	9/ 9	Research and documentation
	9/ 11	Research and documentation
<b>4</b>	9/ 16	Research and documentation
	9/ 18	Peer toots
<b>5</b>	9/ 23	Paper #1 due, paper #2 assigned, persuasive appeal lecture
	9/ 25	Lecture continued
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.		
<b>6</b>	9/ 30	Assignment reviewed
	10/ 2	Emotional appeal lecture

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."

<b>7</b>	10/7	Assignment reviewed
	10/9	Assignment reviewed
<b>8</b>	10/14	Peer toots, last day rewrites of paper #1 will be accepted
	10/16	Paper #2 due, paper #3 assigned, logical appeal lecture

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.

<b>9</b>	10/21	Ethical appeal lecture
	10/23	Assignment reviewed
<b>10</b>	10/28	Assignment reviewed
	10/30	Peer toots
	10/31 (no class)	<b>Last day to change from credit to audit. If you are failing the course, I would advise you to change to audit.</b>
<b>11</b>	11/4	Paper #3 due, paper #4 assigned, two-scenario appeal lecture
	11/6	Last day rewrites of paper #2 will be accepted
<b>12</b>	11/11	Figures of speech lecture
	11/13	Assignment reviewed

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? Are bears Buddhists? Heck yes I can make it!

<b>13</b>	11/18	Exotic dancers and pizza buffet (actually, we'll probably just review the assignment)
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	11/ 20	Peer toots
<b>14</b>	11/ 25	Paper #4 due, “writer’s tools” lecture
	11/ 27	Thanksgiving vacation—no school
<b>15</b>	12/2	last day rewrites of paper #3 will be accepted
	<b>Reminder: students who do not complete all assigned papers will not pass the course</b>	
	12/4	Review for final exam, portfolio 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: Tuesday, December 9, 2008, from 2:00 to 3:50 p.m.