



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

ENGLISH 108-05: College Writing and Research
TR 9:30-10:50 Murphy 119
Spring 2009

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Course Philosophy and Objectives

Language is the blood of the soul into which thoughts run and out of which they grow. --Oliver Wendell Holmes

English usage is sometimes more than mere taste, judgment and education--sometimes it's sheer luck, like getting across the street. --E. B. White

Language is a city to the building of which every human being brought a stone. --Ralph Waldo Emerson

This course is about the exploration of language, both oral and written, and about exploring our respective language heritages. We will think, discuss, and write about where our language comes from, how our lives have been shaped by the language communities we inhabit, and what language issues impact our daily lives. Our written assignments will also give us more practice with the formal aspects of academic writing; thus by the end of English 108, we will have experience:

- writing for different audiences and purposes
- using active reading and critical thinking
- using a variety of writing processes
- employing a number of written conventions

Information about the Objectives and Competencies for English 108 can be found through the Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism website at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/EFLJ/eng108.asp>. This course fulfills the University's final semester General Studies Composition requirement.

Required Materials

Texts:

- Palmquist, Mike. *The Bedford Researcher*. 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009.
- Walters, Keith and Michael Brody, eds. *What's Language Got To Do With It?* NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 2005.
- Website for *What's Language Got To Do With It?*: <http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/write/language/>
- Your choice of a collegiate dictionary, but it should be a behemoth of a dictionary. Size really does matter. Must be available to use in class.
- Articles and other photocopied texts used in research projects.

Other:

- A MW email account
- Flash Drives or CD-RWs for revising, saving, and backing up your work
- A three-ring binder notebook to keep your class notes and materials organized

- A hole punch, so that articles and other materials may be inserted into your notebook
- A pocket folder in which to submit final research projects
- Stamina and Good Humor.

Assignments

Pre-Writings, Responses, Research Exercises

To find and develop topic ideas, we will do a number of brainstorming, freewriting, and invention exercises for each project. Students will also develop their skills of summary, synthesis, and argumentation by responding to the readings and to each other. Research exercises will provide an introduction to the library and other information sources. If I feel that we're falling down on our responsibilities, becoming lax in our standards, or succumbing to a general apathy for college and its power to enrich all our lives, I may give the occasional quiz. Let's try not to go there; it's best for all concerned.

Project One: Language Artifact Analysis

For this project, students will analyze a language artifact or group of artifacts and present their findings in a formal research report that includes the use of surveys or fieldwork and formal library research. Students will practice finding sources, utilizing sources in an academically responsible manner, and synthesizing their ideas/opinions with both factual and theoretical source material. Each report will include formal citation and a Works Cited page in MLA style.

Project Two: Prospectus with Annotated Bibliography

For this project, students will create a prospectus with annotated bibliography on an arguable language issue. The prospectus increases students' skills in the area of note-taking, summarizing, and synthesizing in support of their arguments, while the bibliography assignment expands on students' formal library research skills and provides additional practice in formal documentation.

Project Three: Language Issue Research Essay

For this project, students will write a formal researched essay on an arguable language issue. The essay will argue for a particular perspective on the issue, cite appropriate critical source material, and include a Works Cited page in MLA style. This paper involves formal library and online research, but may involve other kinds of research, like surveys, fieldwork, or interviews. Overall, the assignment will fine-tune students' skills in note-taking, responsible source material manipulation, formal writing and argumentation, academic documentation, and library research.

Final Exam

The final exam will test your knowledge of research and writing by asking you to rate statements as "true" or "false." Statements that you rate as false must be accompanied by an explanation of why the statement is false.

Grading

We will do three research projects in this course and a final exam. In order to pass the course, you must complete the projects and take the exam. In addition, the quality of your work, the percentage of the work that you complete, and your efforts at participation will determine your final grade.

A word of caution: don't underestimate the value of small assignments, preparedness, and daily participation. Even if you receive passing grades on your projects, you can fail the course because of poor performance on daily assignments. Occasional lapses are understood, but chronic lapses can only pull your grade downward.

Your Final Grade Distribution is as follows:

- Research Project #1 (including all the work leading up to its completion) = 30%
- Research Project #2 (including all the work leading up to its completion) = 30%
- Research Project #3 (including all the work leading up to its completion) = 30%
- Final Exam = 10%

Course Requirements

Attendance and Promptness

Attendance is mandatory. School functions, illness, and personal crisis do not absolve you from your classroom obligations, so while due consideration is given to the student struck by lightning on the way to class, an absence cannot be designated as "excused" or "unexcused"--it simply "is." I consider two absences to be reasonable, but keep in mind that any absence can affect your final grade, as you are not here to take quizzes, participate, or turn in your work. Chronic lateness will count toward this total.

Regular attendance is an essential part of the student's educational experience and a requirement for an adequate evaluation of student academic progress. You are responsible for material covered or assignments given which you missed because of absence. All out-of-class assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. No quizzes can be made up or late assignments accepted unless you have a well-documented emergency.

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.

As some of you know, 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 and 200 level courses. The University allows you 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. All other absences will be deemed unexcused. **The maximum number of unexcused absences allowed for this class before the midterm report is three (based on our twice per week meeting schedule). Thus, when you have four unexcused absences I must report you to the Registrar's Office, who will automatically withdraw you from this class.** The Financial Aid Office will reduce financial aid as appropriate.

Finally, if I should be unable to meet class, you will be notified in person by a secretary, a fellow instructor, or by the Lab Manager--NOT by a note on the classroom door. Be sure to note any assignments due upon my return.

Participation And Preparation

You will be expected to make significant contributions to the class in the form of participation and preparation. Participation includes the contributions you make to class discussion and the effort you make to be a part of our discourse community. Preparation includes doing the daily readings and responses as assigned, as well as engaging exuberantly in our activities. Keep in mind that live classroom discussion

- gives you practice arguing with others respectfully and professionally
- gives you opportunities to formulate applications of principles
- gives you prompt feedback on difficult or confusing issues and material
- increases your retention of material through explaining, summarizing, and questioning.

Sharing Your Work

Students are expected to share their writings and other work with members of the course and, therefore, should not choose to write on topics they consider of a sensitive nature. Further, all work that a student produces may be shared by the instructor with the class for purposes of example and training. Such work will be as anonymous as possible. Finally, the instructor may share your work anonymously with future classes or in her own writing and research.

Classroom Courtesy

Practice courteous and respectful exchanges. We should be particularly careful to note how tone, rhetoric, and language all contribute to the overall impression of our words and writings. The University expects all students to conduct themselves so as to maintain an effective environment for learning; to act responsibly in accordance with good taste; and to respect fully the rights of others.

Student Disability

Any student in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of abilities must contact me by the end of the first week so that we can discuss class requirements.

Revision

Revision is an important part of the writing process, and each project that we do will go through an intensive draft and revision stage before being turned in. Drafts will be graded for completion, and each final essay will be graded on its merits and appropriateness to the assignment. Since each paper will receive critiques before the final version is submitted for grading, you must consider the final version to be final.

Late Work

All assignments are due at the beginning of the hour on the due date, unless otherwise specified. 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. **Except for the final projects, no late work will be accepted without a well-documented emergency.** Final projects will not be discounted if turned in within 24 hours of the due date/time. Otherwise, they will be discounted one letter grade for 24 hours past the due date, including weekends and holidays.

Computer Usage

You will be called upon to read materials online and to use computers in and outside of class time. Further, all drafts and final papers for this course must be word processed in MSWord. MWSC has a number of computer labs to help you complete this requirement. Learn to use the labs early and plan ahead to get into them during the busy parts of the semester.

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 digital copies and hard copies should be made religiously at the end of each day's work.

Time Expectations

As with all college courses, a steady devotion to duty is expected; thus, while much work will be done in class, you must set aside an appropriate amount of time each day to completing your assignments, including time to go to the library and the computer lab. Remember: no late work is accepted, so anticipate that there will be occasional glitches, whether personal or technical, and be sure to allow an extra hour or two in your schedule to handle unanticipated problems.

University Academic Honesty Policy and Due Process

Academic honesty is required in all academic endeavors. Violations of academic honesty include any instance of plagiarism, cheating, seeking credit for another's work, falsifying documents or academic records, or any other fraudulent activity. Violations of academic honesty may result in a failing grade on the assignment, failure in the course, or expulsion from the University. When a student's grade has been affected, violations of academic honesty will be reported to the Provost or designated representative on the Academic Honesty Violation Report forms.

Please see the 2006-07 Student Handbook and Calendar on page 21 for specific activities identified as violations of this policy and the student due process procedure. This handbook is also available online at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/handbook/index.pdf>

Course Policy on Academic Honesty

. . . 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. You are responsible for proving that all work turned in for grading is your own original work. Work with evidence of plagiarism, intentional or not, will receive a zero and may result in failure of the course. Students who cheat will receive zero for the assignment and it may result in failure of the course. Further, all incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to the the Provost as required by the official University policy and may result in additional consequences for the student.

Final Thoughts

Despite Einstein's assurances that even the motions of dust motes have pattern, life to us mere mortals is unpredictable. 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 overly stressed about all you have to accomplish, you need to come see me.

Course Schedule

Note that not all the assignments are given below. This is a general guide as to the reading schedule and the major project due dates. For all other assignments, you will be given instructions in class. You should have the readings read **by the date indicated**.

Textbook Abbreviations: L = *What's Language Got To Do With It?*; R = *The Bedford Researcher*

Website for *What's Language Got To Do With It?*: <http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/write/language/>

January

13 (T)

Introductions/Describing Ourselves

[Project One Assignment: Language Artifact Analysis](#)

15 (Th)

Reading Assignment: Willer, "Welcome to Your World, Baby" L, pp 336-346 and Rothman, "A Welcome Mat for Lesbian and Gay Customers" L, pp 42-46

20 (T)

Reading Assignment: R: Chs 1, 2, and 3 and "Playing with Words to Sell Cars" L, p 90

22 (Th)

Reading Assignment: R: Chs 8 and 9 and Haberman, "The Oys of Yiddish" L, 237-241

27 (T)

Reading Assignment: R: Ch 13

Bring all the materials you've generated to date for your project

29 (Th)

Reading Assignment: R: Ch 14

Bring all the materials you've generated to date for your project

February

3 (T)

Reading Assignment: R: Chs 15 and 20

Bring all the materials you've generated to date for your project

5 (Th)

Peer Critique Day - Must have 4 copies of Draft

10 (T)

Revision Workshop

12 (Th)

Project One Due

Language as a Way to Profile.... <http://www.uiowa.edu/~c103112/profile.html>

[Project Two Assignment: Prospectus with Annotated Bibliography](#)

17 (T)

Reading Assignment: R: Chs 4, 5, 6

19 (Th)

Reading Assignment: Erard, "Can You Be Discriminated Against Because of the Way You Speak?" L, pp 294-298 and Baugh, "Linguistic Pride and Racial Prejudice" L, pp 302-312

Thinking about MLK's Dream, L pp 330-331

24 (T)

Reading Assignment: R: Chs 7, 10 11; Review R: Ch 9; and Rickford, "Suite for Ebony and Phonics" L, pp 278-285

26 (Th)

Reading Assignment: Scott, "Foreign Born in U.S. at Record High" L, pp 197-198 and Zentella, "The Hows and Whys of Spanglish" L, pp 213-228

March

3 (T)

Reading Assignment: Lee, "I Think, Therefore IM" L, pp 152-156 and comics in L, pp 157-158

5 (Th)

Reading Assignment: Nunberg, "Reimagining America" L, pp 482-500

10-12 (T-Th) Spring Break

17 (T)

Tentative Topic Proposals Due

19 (Th)

Meet in Library

24 (T)

Meet in Library

26 (Th)

Reading: Review Chs 3 and 20

Prospectus/Annotated Bib Workshopping

31 (T)

Prospectus/Annotated Bib Workshopping

April

2 (Th)

Project Two Due

[Project Three Assignment: Language Issue Research Essay](#)

Drafting Workshop

Bring all the materials you've generated to date for your project

7-9 (T-Th) Paper Drafting

14 (T)

Reading Assignment: R: Chs 16 and 17

Revising Workshop

Bring all the materials generated to date for your project

16 (Th)

Peer Critique Day - Must have 4 copies of Draft

21 (T)

Reading Assignment: Review Chs 7, 15, and 20

Revision Workshop

23 (Th)

Final Papers Due

Review for Final Exam

30 (Th)

Final Exam - 8:30 am - 10:20 am