

ENGLISH 108: COLLEGE WRITING AND RESEARCH

Spring 2009

Missouri Western State University

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Department of English, Foreign Languages, and Journalism

Section 01: MWF 8:00 – 8:50, Murphy 220

Section 04: MWF 9:00 – 9:50, Murphy 220

Section 08: MWF 11:00 – 11:50, Spratt 205

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Office Hours: MW 12:30 – 2:30, Th 10:00 - 12:00, and by appointment.

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

For the specific course objectives, please visit the English Department website at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/EFLJ/eng108.asp>

MATERIALS

A self-selected non-fiction book.

Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2006.

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*. 5th Ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008.

Bookmark the following web sites:

The OWL at Purdue: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>.

Re: Writing at Bedford/St. Martins: <http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/rewriting/>.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This description may be a dangerous document. It may seem overwhelming and lead to lines at the registrar's office. I do want to describe the course and the sequence of assignments. The one point you must remember is that the following work will be accomplished over four months.

According to the English Department website (<http://www.missouriwestern.edu/EFLJ/eng108.asp>)

ENG 108 students will complete three formal research based 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. Final drafts of all formal writing assignments must be word processed. All students are expected to be prepared for class and participate in class discussions related to reading and writing assignments. In addition, students will keep complete portfolios of all their writings.

While I will adapt these objectives somewhat, this course will follow their spirit.

Here's my plan for the semester. This plan, by the way, has been adapted from an English 108 course taught by Dr. Cynthia Jeney.

Part I: Select and Read a Non-Fiction Book

- Your writing and research will be based on a non-fiction book that you will select.
- The book you select must meet the following criteria.
 - ❖ It must be on a topic that will engage your interest for the semester.
 - ❖ It must be on a topic or question you believe should be studied in the university.
 - ❖ It must be a work of non-fiction.
 - ❖ It should include references, notes, and/or a bibliography.
 - ❖ It must be written and published between 2003 and 2008.
 - ❖ It must appear on at least one of the following lists:

➤ New York Times Notable Books, 2004 – 2008

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/07/books/review/100Notable-t.html?em>

➤ National Book Award Finalists, 2004 – 2008

➤ National Book Critics Circle, 2004 – 2008

These lists may accessed at <http://www.amazon.com>. Click on Books. Click on Award Winners.

➤ Pulitzer Prize Finalists, 2004 -2008 <http://www.pulitzer.org/bycat/General+Nonfiction>.

- You will need to purchase a copy of the book since most libraries have limited check out policies. Almost every book you select may be purchased from used book dealer via Amazon.com.
- Read the book by February 4, 2009.
- A personal note: This has been a difficult decision for me. I considered providing a list of five or six books, but that would limit your options to my interests. I considered basing the course on a topic to be researched, but I felt that such a plan may not result in the close study of one text. The self-selection of a text addresses both of these shortcomings and places much more responsibility on you.

Part II: What the Text Says

- Summarize the book. The summary will be based on the suggestions found in *They Say/I Say*. The summary will be 3-4 pages in length.
- Research critical reviews of the book. Read and print at least three reviews.
- Write your own review of the book, citing the previous reviewers. Once again, your work will be based on suggestions from *They Say/I Say*. The review will be 2-3 pages in length.
- A personal note: I originally thought to combine these writings into one paper. I think it will be more instructive, however, if the activities are separate.

Part III: What the Text Means

- Explain a major concept discussed in your book. Select a concept that you know your readers in the class must learn.
 - Research how the author presents the concept.
 - Research the concept beyond the book by examining several (three to five) of the author's references, by researching several (three to five) references since the publication of the book, and/or by conducting independent research.
- Complete an annotated bibliography for the author's references and for your research.
- Explain the concept to an audience of classmates in a documented essay of 5-7 pages.
- A personal note: Once again, I originally thought to combine the Annotated Bibliography and the Concept Essay into one paper. I think it will be more instructive, however, if the activities are separate.

Part IV: Why the Text Should (Should Not) Be Studied

- Argue why the topic of the text and the questions raised in the book should be examined in one of the following forums:
 - Griffon Edge reading requirement
 - College 101 reading requirement
 - Freshman Reading Selection
 - "One City; One Book" or "The Big Read" or another community-based reading selection
 - University-wide reading selection
 - Department reading requirement
 - Specific course reading requirement
- Argue for or against using your text for the program.
- Your argument will, of course, use material from all previous writings, but will be addressed to a specific audience, for a specific purpose and with documentation. The argument will be 5-7 pages in length.
- If possible, I would like to arrange for a presentation of your arguments in the class or in a public forum.

Part V

- A series of class readings, class discussions and informal writings both related to and unrelated to your book will be assigned.

Essay Format:

Tasks must be word-processed, double-spaced and use 12-point Times New Roman. Be sure to save each assignment on the university's "P" drive or an Internet storage site as well as on a computer disk or jump drive. Keep a hard copy or a working copy of each draft in your writers' notebook. Every semester at least one student struggles to complete the final portfolio because of computer problems or a disk failure. Save and back up all of your work.

Because of the variety of word processing programs, operating systems, printers and email accounts, it would be best to save material as an rtf (Rich Text Format) file.

Place your name, course, date, and draft number in the upper left hand corner. Center the title. Number the pages.

Conferences:

Writers need readers. Discussing drafts with a close reader is one of the most effective practices writers employ. Therefore, a conference is required for each major essay before it is submitted.

When you come to scheduled conference:

- Be on time with the draft of the essay you wish to discuss.
- Come with a question or concern about your draft or revision. You should initiate the conference, showing your control of your writing and focusing on areas you wish to emphasize.
- Leave with a written revision plan.

Center for Academic Support:

In addition to conferences and writer's workshop sessions, you will find readers who will discuss your writing with you at the Center for Academic Support. There is no cost to students for using these services. I encourage you to make use of these services throughout this course.

Grading Policy:

Each work will be graded on submission. The following grading scale will be used to determine the course grade: A = 100 – 90%; B = 89 – 80%; C = 79 – 70%; D = 69 – 60%; F = 59 – 0% or missing any major assignment.

POLICIES:

Attendance Policy:

In order to improve student learning and to achieve compliance with federal financial aid policies, Western has a mandatory attendance policy for all 100-level courses. English 108 has an attendance policy. **If you miss six class periods during the entire semester, you will receive an F in the class.** 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; however, there are no other excused absences, exceptions or "makeups" for this attendance requirement. Furthermore, **the maximum number of absences allowed before the midterm report, March 18, 2009, for this class is five classes. Thus, when you have six 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.

Late Work:

If you miss a class session, you are responsible for all material covered and assignments given during your absence. All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period. Late assignments will not be accepted.

If you find yourself facing difficulties in completing a task paper, schedule a conference (a phone call, leaving a message on my answering machine or sending me an e-mail are insufficient) to discuss the problems with me. During our conference, we will set a new deadline.

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, Michael Ritter, 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.

Academic Honesty Policy:

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 classroom activity. Cheating and plagiarism are not acceptable. If your teacher finds evidence of cheating or plagiarism, you have the burden of showing that the paper has in fact been written by you. 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 (0 points) for any paper/assignment/exam that shows evidence of cheating and/or plagiarism. You have the burden of proving that a paper/assignment/exam showing evidence of cheating and/or plagiarism has been in fact written by you. You should keep thorough evidence of your writing processes for all papers so that you can meet this burden of proof. If you plagiarize a paper, you forfeit the right to revise that paper; if you cheat on an exam, you will not be allowed to retake the exam. Violations of academic honesty will be reported to the Provost or the designated representative on the Academic Honesty Violation Report Forms. Please see the Student Handbook for specific activities identified as violations of this policy and the student due process procedure. This handbook is also available online at <http://missouriwestern.edu/handbook/index.pdf>.

Civility and Cooperation:

Missouri Western requires all students to help us maintain good conditions for teaching and learning. Specifically,

- Do not disturb the class's work.
- If you arrive late for class and the door is closed, do not disturb our work by knocking or staring in the window.
- Turn off and put away your cell phone.

You should review your Missouri Western student handbook for further information. This handbook is available online at <http://missouriwestern.edu/handbook/index.pdf>.

Final Note

If you know of any circumstances likely to make any of these policies or expectations difficult for you to meet this semester, consult with

me as soon as possible to review your options.