

English 101: Writing I

Fall 2003

Part of the “Writing and College Skills” Learning Community

Instructor: Dr. Vicki Byard

Office: Classroom Building 2017

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Course Expenses

The required textbook for this course is available at the campus bookstore: *The College Writer: A Guide to Thinking, Writing, and Researching*. Also, throughout the course, you will also have the expense of photocopying (or printing off a computer) several copies of drafts of your papers so that other students can give you suggestions for revising them.

Course Format

Whereas in many college courses you will be assigned to write papers, the primary goal of this course is to teach you how to write papers better. Therefore, our class sessions will be devoted to guiding you during the process of writing your essay assignments. For each essay you write, we will first discuss the type of essay assigned and possible topics. We will then read and discuss sample essays written by professional writers and by students, analyzing the essays' strengths and weaknesses so that you will know what to strive for and avoid in your own essay. We will also discuss writing techniques and planning and drafting strategies for each type of essay. Once you have written a draft, you will bring copies of it to class and get feedback on your work from a small group of other students in class. You will then have a few days to revise your essay, based on the feedback you have received from classmates, before submitting it for a grade. Thus, we will spend approximately two and a half weeks on every essay assignment. To reinforce the theme of this learning community, all of the essays' topics will focus on college-related issues.

Course Requirements

Because you have many assignments in this course through which you can affect your grade, no extra credit assignments will be offered. In addition, be aware that although in most circumstances a “D” is considered a passing grade, you must receive a “C” or better in English 101 and in all other General Education courses in order to complete the required General Education program. This grading policy is further explained in both the university catalog and schedule of classes. Your grade in this course will be based on the following assignments:

- A “*personal reflection*” essay (15% of course grade): Your first assignment in the University Seminar course that is a part of this learning community is to write an autobiographical overview of the experiences that have influenced your decision to attend college. Your first assignment in English 101 will be an extension of that University Seminar assignment. You will develop a more detailed account of *one* of the experiences you included in your writing assignment for University Seminar, using the descriptive skills we discuss in class to make your autobiographical writing intriguing to readers who don't know you.

- *An “interview report” essay (15% of course grade):* For this assignment, you will choose a major and/or career that you are interested in, use observation and interview techniques to investigate it, and write an essay that fully explains your topic to readers.
- *An essay “taking a position” or “arguing against a claim” (15% of course grade):* Argument and persuasion are essential skills of college success. The topic you choose to argue about in this essay must be related in some way to college issues.
- *A “proposing a solution” essay (20% of course grade):* For this assignment, you will be required to identify a college problem that affects you and other students and then propose a detailed solution to the problem. The assignment will receive the same grade from both instructors in the learning community and will count 20% of your semester grade for each course. Three-fourths of the grade for this assignment (or 15% of each course grade) will be based on the written component of the assignment, while one-fourth of the grade for this assignment (or 5% of each course grade) will be based on the presentation of your project during the final exam period.
- *Test on sentence formation (10% of course grade):* You will be taught how to identify sentence fragments, comma splices, fused sentences, and complete sentences. The test will ask you to identify each of these types and to correct sentence errors to make the sentences complete.
- *Test on commas (10% of course grade):* You will be taught the major rules regarding how commas function in sentences. You will then be tested on your ability to correctly add commas to sentences that are written without commas.
- *Test on apostrophes, semicolons, and colons (5% of course grade):* After being taught the major rules regarding apostrophe, semicolon, and colon use, you will be tested on your ability to recognize the wrong use of these punctuation marks and your ability to use them correctly.
- *Numerous short writing assignments on Blackboard (10% of course grade):* Both teachers in this learning community will take turns posting questions on Blackboard to which you must respond. Expect about six short writing assignments on Blackboard during the semester. At the end of the semester, the teachers will meet and decide what grade to give you for all the Blackboard assignments you have completed during the semester. You will receive the same grade from both teachers, and that grade will count as 10% of your semester grade in each course in the learning community.
- *Computer/information literacy exercises:* One of the university’s requirements for graduation is that all students have computer/information literacy. NEIU students complete this requirement during their English 101 course. On one day this semester (September 27), we will meet as a class in the library, and a librarian will explain and demonstrate the exercises you must complete for this requirement. You will then be given a deadline by the librarian for completing these exercises on your own. The exercises will take approximately forty-five minutes to complete. You will then submit the exercises to the librarian, who will grade them on a pass/fail basis and then inform me of who has successfully completed this requirement. Your performance on these exercises will not be calculated into your semester grade; however, if you do not complete this requirement, I am not permitted to give you a grade in English 101 (you would receive a grade of “Incomplete”).

Policies about Paper Format

Drafts of the papers do not need to be typed; however, writing them on a computer will make revising them easier and will save you the expense of photocopying them for small group critiques. All revisions you submit for a grade must be typed or computer-printed. Double space your papers, with one-inch margins. All papers must be a minimum of four full pages in length (but may be longer), with reasonable font size (10-12 point). For all papers, please staple the pages, rather than using paper clips or report covers.

Policies about Late Work and Incomplete Drafts

In order to be fair to students who turn their work in on time, I do penalize late work. If you are late turning in either the initial draft (due when small groups meet for response), or the revision of a paper, you'll be penalized one letter grade for the assignment. If you turn in a paper more than a week late, the penalty then becomes two letter grades. Also, if your drafts that you bring for small group feedback do not meet the minimum page requirement twice during the course, the second paper that is short will be penalized one letter grade.

These policies apply even if you are absent; to avoid any penalties, email your assignment to me at v-byard@neiu.edu or arrange to have someone else turn in your work.

Policies about Attendance

It's imperative that you attend every class session. If you are absent, you must submit an absence sheet as soon as you return to class; oral explanations of absences will not be accepted and failure to turn in a written explanation on the day that you return to class will automatically mean that the absence is unexcused. Absences will be excused only for legitimate illnesses and rare emergencies. All decisions about absences are at the teacher's discretion. In keeping with the university policy, three unexcused absences will lower your semester grade one letter.

In addition, it is very important that you arrive to class on time. If you arrive more than five minutes late, your lateness will be recorded. Every three late arrivals will count as one unexcused absence, and, as stated above, three unexcused absences will lower your semester grade one letter. [However, never skip class just because you know you'll be late. Catching even part of the class will help you better understand your assignments.]

Policies about Academic Honesty

All assignments must be your own original work. It is plagiarism to present anyone else's ideas as your own, whether you use their words directly or put their ideas into your own words without crediting the person or source from which you obtained the idea. In keeping with university policy, plagiarism, cheating, or other academic dishonesty will be grounds for failing you for the assignment or course.

Tutorial Help

Free tutoring in writing for NEIU students is available at the Writing Lab, room 2046 in the Classroom Building. Occasionally, a tutor will be unoccupied and can help even if you don't have an appointment, but to ensure that a tutor will be available, it's best to make an appointment. You can do so in person or by phone (773-442-5480).

Course Syllabus

The readings listed in parentheses indicate the basis of each assignment. Specific reading assignments for each class session will be announced in class.

First Week

- Tues, Aug 26: Introduction to course, learning community, and Blackboard
- Thurs, Aug 28: Introduction to paper 1: a personal reflection essay (chapter 10; this assignment also draws on the skills discussed in chapters 9 and 11)

Second Week

- Tues, Sept 2: Sample personal reflection essays
- Thurs, Sept 4: Techniques for writing a personal reflection essay

University calendar: Thursday, September 4 is the last day to add classes.

Third Week

- Tues, Sept 9: Explanation of small group feedback procedures; critique of sample personal reflection essay
- Thurs, Sept 11: **Due: draft of personal reflection essay, with copies for small group;** small group feedback on drafts

University calendar: Monday, September 8 (7:45 p.m.) is the last day to get a full refund for dropping a course.

Fourth Week

- Tues, Sept 16: **Due: revision of personal reflection essay** (15% of semester grade); grammar lesson on complete sentences
- Thurs, Sept 18: More grammar lessons on complete sentences; review for test

Fifth Week

- Tues, Sept 23: **Test on complete sentences** (10% of semester grade)
- Thurs, Sept 25: Explanation of computer/information literacy exercises—meet in library

Sixth Week

- Tues, Sept 30: Introduction to paper 2: an interview report (chapter 23; this assignment also draws on the skills discussed in chapters 12-16 and chapter 22)
- Thurs, Oct 2: Techniques for writing an interview report

Seventh Week

- Tues, Oct 7: Sample interview reports; critique of sample interview reports
- Thurs, Oct 9: **Due: draft of interview report, with copies for small group;** small group feedback on drafts

Eighth Week

- Tues, Oct 14: **Due: revision of interview report** (15% of semester grade); lesson on

commas

Thurs, Oct 16: Lessons of semicolons; review for test

Ninth Week

Tues, Oct 21: **Test on commas and semicolons** (10% of semester grade)

Thurs, Oct 23: Introduction to paper 3: your choice of an essay taking a position (chapter 18) or an essay arguing against a claim (chapter 20)

Tenth Week

Tues, Oct 28: Strategies for arguing and persuading (chapter 17)

Thurs, Oct 30: Techniques for writing essays taking a position or arguing against a claim

Eleventh Week

Tues, Nov 4: Sample papers taking a position or arguing against a claim; critique of sample drafts taking a position or arguing against a claim

Thurs, Nov 6: **Due: draft of paper taking a position or arguing against a claim, with copies for small group**; small group feedback on drafts

University calendar: Friday, November 7 (7:45 p.m.) is the last day to drop a course.

Twelfth Week

Tues, Nov 11: **Due: revision of paper taking a position or arguing against a claim** (15% of semester grade); lesson on semicolons and colons

Thurs, Nov 13: Lesson on apostrophes; review for test

Thirteenth Week

Tues, Nov 18: **Test on semicolons, colons, and apostrophes** (5% of semester grade)

Thurs, Nov 20: Introduction to paper 4: an essay proposing a solution (chapter 21) (this assignment also draws on the skills discussed in chapters 19 and 30)

Fourteenth Week

Tues, Nov 25: Techniques for writing essays proposing a solution

Thurs, Nov 27: All university classes cancelled for Thanksgiving holiday

Fifteenth Week

Tues, Dec 2: Sample essays proposing a solution; critique of sample drafts proposing a solution

Thurs, Dec 4 **Due: draft of paper proposing a solution, with copies for group**; small group feedback on drafts; students' evaluations of the course

Final Exam Period

Due: revision of paper proposing a solution (15% of semester grade) **and oral presentation of proposal** (5% of semester grade). During the final exam period for this course, we will enjoy food together while each student gives a short presentation of his or her "proposing a solution" project to the class.

NEIU does not mail report cards. To learn your semester grade, beginning December 18, consult www.getgrades.com or call 1-800-227-9201.