**Syllabus for English 1A, Web, Reading and Composition**

**Class in session from Monday, January 9- Wednesday, May 16, 2012**

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# Contact Information

Mrs. Berg, Instructor Email: emily.berg@reedleycollege.edu

Office: Faculty Annex 6 (directly behind the SOC building) Phone: 638-3641, ext. 3150

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 10am-12pm; Fridays from 10-11am. *Other times may be scheduled outside these hours as needed.*

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**Course Descript****ion**

Reading, analyzing, and composing college-level prose, with emphasis on the expository; studying writing as a process; exploring different composing structures and strategies; editing and revising one’s own writing; conducting research (gathering, organizing, evaluating, integrating, and documenting information,) culminating in a term research paper and annotated bibliography.

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**Mandatory Orientation Sessions**

All students are required to attend one of the orientations listed in the class schedule. The sessions are held on the Reedley College campus: Friday, January 6 in CCI 202 from 2:00-3:30pm; Monday, January 9 from 4:30-6:00pm in LRC 104 in the library; Monday, January 9 from 6-7:30pm in LRC 104 in the library; Wednesday, January 11 from 2-3:30pm in CCI 207.  Failure to attend one of these sessions will result in being dropped from the class.

**Grading Policy**

Your grade is calculated by using the following traditional grading scale during the semester:

**Passing Grades: A=90-100%; B=80-89%; C=70-79% Failing Grades: D=60-69%; F=0-59%**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignments and Their Due Dates** | **Point Value (Approximate)** | **Your Grade** |
| **Essay #1**: Notions of Success (due week 4) | 100 |  |
| **Essay #2**: The Rogerian Argument (due week 8) | 100 |  |
| **Essay #3**: The American Dream (due week 12) | 150 |  |
| **Midterm** (exam on the grammar concepts  from weeks 1-9, taken week 10) | 40 |  |
| **Midterm** (Timed Essay, taken week 9) | 100 |  |
| **Annotated Bibliography** for Essay #4 (due week 14) | 100 |  |
| **Essay #4**: Role of Technology (due week 17) | 200 |  |
| **Final** (Test on the grammar concepts  from weeks 10-17, taken during finals week) | 50 |  |
| **Discussion Boards** (2-3 questions per week, consisting of the original posts plus replies; will be graded every three weeks) | 100 |  |
| **Grammar Quizzes** (1 taken every three weeks, 15 points each) | 60 |  |
| **TOTAL POINT VALUE:** | **1,000** |  |

Grades are promptly posted on Blackboard; please look on Blackboard for your current grade in the class. You are also always welcome to come discuss your progress in the class with me during my office hours.

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**Changes to the Syllabus/Calendar**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes as necessary for the benefit of the class to change policies on the syllabus or dates on the calendar. Not checking Blackboard or your email account is not an excuse for not being aware of any changes that are made to the calendar or the syllabus.

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**Required Texts and Materials**

Kirszner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell. *The Blair Reader: Exploring Issues and Ideas*. 7th Edition. Boston:

Prentice Hall, 2011. Print. ISBN:978-0-205-72845-9

Kirszner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell. *The Concise Wadsworth Handbook*. 3rd Edition. Boston:

Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2011. Print. ISBN: 978-1-4282-9192-8

Walls, Jeannette. *The Glass Castle*. New York: Scribner, 2005. Print. ISBN: 978-0-7432-4754-2

*Please note that I have placed all of these texts on reserve at the Reedley College library.*

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**Weekly Schedule**

In the assignment folders tab in our Blackboard website, you will find a detailed schedule of the due dates for the entire semester. To give you a feel of how the class will work, a typical week looks like this:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sunday** | **Monday**  A New Week’s Work Begins | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday**  **To be Completed by Midnight:**  --all textbook readings  --all videos and additional readings  --all original discussion board posts | **Friday** | **Saturday** |
| **Sunday**  **To be Completed by Midnight:**  --all discussion board replies  --all grammar exercises completed  --grammar quiz completed (if there is one assigned that week)  --final draft of essays due (if there is one due that week) | **Monday**  The Next Week’s Work Begins |  |  |  |  |  |

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**Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Write a documented research paper of at least 1000 words that includes:
   * a sophisticated introduction, multiple body paragraphs, and conclusion
   * a clearly defined, arguable thesis sentence
   * supporting details that exhibit critical thinking and use credible secondary sources
   * correct usage of MLA format, including a works cited page
   * sentences that exhibit a command of the complex/compound with minimal comma splices, sentence fuses, fragments, and mechanics
   * controlled and sophisticated word choice
   * writing in third person/universal
   * an avoidance of logical fallacies
   * demonstrating an awareness of purpose and audience
   * appropriate and purposeful use of quotations
   * correct in-text citations
   * an annotated bibliography of multiple sources
   * an avoidance of intentional and unintentional plagiarism
2. Complete a timed essay independently in class
3. Summarize and comprehend college level prose (will include a full reading)

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**Computer Requirements**

Skills Needed for this class:

* Familiarity with computers (knowing where the power switch is located, for example)
* Know the basics of word processing (saving files, using spell check, moving text, using the help function, etc.). (See the “Word Processing Formats” section below).
* Know how to access the Internet and navigate the Internet (use a browser, utilize search engines, save and print from the Internet)
* Know how to send e-mail and e-mail with attachments. (See the “E-mail” section below).
* Have some familiarity with Blackboard. We will be using Blackboard as part of our classroom. Our Blackboard site contains documents, announcements and other information needed for our course; in addition, Blackboard allows for e-mailing and online discussions. There are various tabs to the left of the screen in Blackboard. These tabs lead you to necessary and supplementary documents, to all assignments and schedules, and more. You can access our Blackboard directly from the Reedley College Website (click on the “Blackboard” link found under the “Blackboard/WebAdvisor” link; or in the “Quick Links” pull-down menu).

Hardware Needed for this class:

* Pentium (PC) or Mac equivalent
* Home Internet access is desirable. You can use the computers on campus; however, they are not always available, so you will need to find out when each lab is open and available for drop-in use. You should also know if your local library has computers available with Internet access. If your home computer crashes, is in need of repair, or you lose Internet access, you must find an alternative way to complete the required work on time for this class. This means, of course, that you need to constantly back up the work from your hard drive to a disk, flash drive, or other moveable source.

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# Discussion Board Details and Tips

Here’s some hints to help you write quality original posts and responses:

1. Take the time to think about what you are writing so that your comments are well-written and complete.
2. When responding to others, don’t merely say “I agree.” Instead, explain why you agree or disagree. Try to carry on a discussion.
3. Remember that spelling as grammar count; please also watch your language and word choice. Cursing and inappropriate language are not acceptable. If this occurs, action will be taken as necessary per school policy. Make sure that you capitalize “I” and spell “you” correctly. Do not abbreviate words. Make sure you use academic English. “Stupid” is not very academic and doesn’t tell the reader much!

The following is an example of what is not allowed:

i really thing that this is a stupide essay b/c i dont like it i really like the other essay better

This is better:

I thought that the author’s supporting arguments were weak. For instance, the example he used regarding visiting his grandparents did not go into enough detail to really convince me of his point.

Each week, you will have the following due for your discussion board assignments:

* **Original Posts (1 post per question).** I will post two or three questions each week based on that week’s readings and on your essay writing (an outline or a draft)**; you will need to post a substantive post (of at least 300 words per post**) **in response to each of my questions**.
* **Replies (1 reply per question).** Then, **you will need to reply to a fellow students’ post for each question (in other words, you need to reply once to each of the two or three questions, for a total of two or three replies)**; each reply needs to be **at least 100 words**. Be sure to address the person by name that you are replying to, and make sure that you first try to reply to someone in the class who has not had any feedback on his post.

For your convenience, I have also put an ungraded **Question and Answer Forum** in the Discussion Board tab where you can post your general questions here regarding assignments, and check this forum frequently to answer your fellow students' questions, or to seek answers for your own questions.  **This forum is NOT an appropriate place to ask me specific questions about your grade, or to air out frustrations you have.** If you wish to speak with me, email me or call me personally.  This forum was created with the intent to have students helping each other out with assignments or questions about the class rather than having me respond to your questions like an email.  I will check this forum only occasionally, not daily like I do my own email account, so if you do post something and expect me to answer personally, it will take a while for me to find it.  If I find that students are not using the forum as it was intended for, I will remove it.

Also, does replying to another students’ work mean you can only agree with that student? Think about how discussions happen in traditional classes. Do students only agree with each other in real-time class conversations? If we did, it would certainly be a dull conversation, and we probably wouldn’t learn much. Think about how you would politely disagree with a student you are having a conversation with (by saying something like, “I appreciate your viewpoint, but have you considered...” “I think I understand what you are saying, but I wonder if you have thought about...”).

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**How are Discussion Board Postings Graded?**

A thoughtful, well-written response that directly addresses all of the components of the question will earn full credit. The response should indicate that you reflected carefully upon the question; it also indicates that you took the time to edit your work prior to posting. A full-credit posting will have few grammatical errors, and you would need to include the word count (that is above the minimum requirement of the assignment).

**Some tips to earn full credit: Type your responses first in Word**, get the word count added to your post in Word, and then cut and paste the work into Blackboard. This is a good idea for several reasons—first, you can edit your work with the help of spell and grammar check. Also, so many students have told me that they have lost work when their computer crashes or Blackboard freezes. In the subject line of each post, **you will need to title each post** and reply with something catchy, creative, and informative. Think of your title as an advertisement for your thoughts, as you are trying to get students interested enough to read your post.

Points will be deducted for each of the following infractions:

* not addressing all parts of all of the questions
* not having a depth of thought in the response (responding quickly just to get the work done)
* not including the word count or falling short of the word count
* having a large number of grammatical errors or spelling errors, including IM speak (“u” instead of “you”) or slang
* posting the original post but no replies, or posting the reply but no original post
* not creating an informative, creative title to both your original post and replies
* not addressing by name the person to whom you are replying
* choosing to reply to someone else’s post who already been replied to by another student when there are other students who have not had any replies to their posts
* posting your work late (before I grade the posts)

**Please note that I do not accept late work for discussion board posts**; once I have graded the discussion board posts (which I will do every three weeks), you cannot make up posts.

Some of my former students got into the habit of posting blank discussion board work.  Sometimes there was a legitimate reason--there seemed to be a computer glitch that occasionally occurs on some people's computers. Sometimes, however, students were trying to beat the system.  If you post something blank, it will time stamp that you did the work on time, but when you go back to edit your work (and actually post your work instead of blank space), it will restamp your work as being late.  I will notice, and I will dock you points.  Not only that, I will think that you were trying to cheat.  Remember, I can give a zero on an entire assignment for cheating.

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**Grammar Exercises**

Each week focuses on a different grammar concept by providing you a chapter in the *Wadsworth Handbook* to read, a video in which I review the concept, and some exercises to complete. In the video, I go over the answers to a few problems to help you understand the concept (for most of the weekly concepts); there is also an answer guide to selected exercises section on page 499 in the handbook. While I will not necessarily collect your completed grammar exercises, you need to work on and understand them as a practice before the quizzes, the midterm, and final.

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**Attendance Policies**

I will monitor your online contact through the Blackboard discussion board, essays, quizzes, and e-mail. You will need to make your presence known every few days by making substantive contributions to the discussions.

Failure to post to the discussion board for two weeks in a row (including weekends) and/or complete assignments, without contacting me, will mean that you are no longer participating in the class, and you may be dropped from the class.

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**E-Mail**

An e-mail address is essential for this class, and everyone in this class has a SCCCD email account. This email account has been assigned to you and is the one that Blackboard uses**, so you will need to check your SCCCD email account daily**. It is the only way I will be contacting you.

When you send an email, you must be specific in the message and always **sign your name**. I do not read or respond to email if I don’t know the sender. In addition, remember, when you email an instructor, you are not text messaging or emailing a friend. You need to run spell check and think about the way you are writing; for example, do not use lower case i’s when using the first person pronoun “I”.

**In addition, remember, when you email me, you are not text messaging or emailing a friend.** You need to run spell check and think about the way you are writing; for example, do not use lower case i’s when using the first person pronoun “I” and address me in a considerate, respectful manner. I will not respond if I cannot read what you have written, and I certainly won’t respond if you are being disrespectful.

In terms of response time, please keep in mind that you need to give me at least twenty-four hours to respond during the work week only (meaning I will not typically respond over the weekend). Do not send me multiple copies of the same email, thinking this will get me to respond faster. I do not text students, and I will respond to your email as soon as I can. That being said, if I have not responded during the workweek within twenty-four hours, give me a call or email me again to make sure I did get your first message.

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**Word Processing Formats**

The most common word processing format is Microsoft Word 2007. If you use another word processing program, you will need to learn to save your work in Rich Text Format (RTF). Guidelines for how to save in RTF are found under the **References** folder on Blackboard. *Do not use Microsoft Works or any other program that does not allow for easy conversion*. *Using WordPad is unacceptable. If you have WordPad, you must plan to visit a local library—public or school—to convert your work before sending it for review or as the final product.*

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**Essays—Getting the Work Done on Time**

For each essay we write in this class, you will create at least one outline and one rough draft before submitting your final draft of your paper. You will post your outline and your rough draft on our Discussion Board for some feedback from your classmates; at some point throughout the semester for at least one of your essay assignments, I will also give you feedback on one outline and one rough draft. Because of the large number of students in this class, I cannot give you feedback for each essay you write. If you need extra help, you are encouraged to sign up for English 272, the Writing Center’s tutorial class, and you are also welcome to come in (or call) during my office hours for individual feedback.

When responding to your fellow students’ work, make sure to pick someone who has not had any feedback from other students. Give them specific feedback on at least two things they did well (two strengths) in their outline or their draft; then choose two specific areas they can improve upon (two weaknesses). For ideas on what to give feedback on, reference the English 1A rubric. Also, see pages 48-49 in *Wadsworth Handbook* for some excellent revision questions to guide your feedback.

All of your papers will be submitted on Blackboard, through Turnitin.com. Before you upload the file, double check to make sure that you are submitting the correct draft of this assignment. Upload the file to the Blackboard site (find it in this essay’s details folder). Save your file with your first and last name plus the essay number in it (e.g. the file should be called “John Smith Essay #1.docx”), and make sure you save this file as a **doc or .docx or .rtf** file (I do prefer .docx). To submit an essay, follow the detailed instructions in each essay’s folder, where the link to submit your paper is located.

**I will not accept late papers** unless you have contacted me at least forty-eight hours prior to the due date and I approve your request (which I have done rarely).

**Please remember that computer problems inevitably will occur when submitting your paper online**. I have found that when students wait until the last minute to upload their papers, they will usually end up having problems (such as having the computer crash). Remember, a paper turned in at 12:05am is considered late and therefore won’t be accepted! I will not be able to respond to a last minute, panicked email to have me clear a failed upload attempt. The smart student will take this warning into consideration and upload the paper several days in advance of the due date, allowing time to get help or make alternative arrangements should computer problems occur. That being said, if something happens, simply email me your paper as an attachment, then call the next morning during office hours to see what you need to do for your paper to be accepted.

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**Getting Additional Help**

The Writing Center is located in HUM 58 on the Reedley College campus. Stop by to enroll in English 272, a course designed to help you on any writing assignment from any class. Or take advantage of our walk-in or online tutorial. The Writing Center is open Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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**Essays--Rewriting Policies**

You are allowed to and encouraged to rewrite **one essay over the semester to try to earn up to one letter grade** **higher** than the final grade you received on the paper. Here’s the steps you will need to follow to rewrite your paper:

1. You are strongly encouraged to make an appointment to come into my office hours (or an appointment over the phone) to discuss what you need to do to improve your paper should you have questions.
2. You have up to one week from when I return your essays to rewrite the paper. On the rewritten draft, **highlight exactly what you have changed in the document itself**.
3. Then, after the works cited page, include a separate typed paragraph explaining exactly what changes you have made and explaining how these changes improved your paper. I will only award a grade higher for papers with substantial, significant changes in them and for people who have followed these directions.
4. Emailing the rewritten copy with the highlighting and your explanation of what you changed.
5. **You will not have the opportunity to rewrite Essay #4, as grades are due soon after you turn in that final paper.**

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**Essay Formatting**

For all work you submit, follow MLA formatting:

* Font set for TIMES NEW ROMAN 12
* Line spacing set for DOUBLE
* Entire essay is DOUBLE line spaced only—no more and no less ANYWHERE
* The margins are set to 1” on all sides.
* In the PARAGRAPH menu, SPACING **BEFORE** and **AFTER** is set for ZERO
* Page numbers have been INSERTED (not typed) into the upper right hand corner beginning with page one. This is formatted into the header, appearing ½ inch from the top of the page
* Student’s last name appears before the page number—AND there is a space between the name and page number.
* On page one ONLY, in the top left hand corner of the page, the following appears 1 inch below the top of the page.
  + Student’s Name
  + Instructor’s Name
  + Course
  + Due Date for Essay
* The above information is double line spaced
* The essay has an appropriate title, which is centered—USING the computer’s function to center (not tabbed or spaced into the center). The title is a creative one, not merely the assignment’s name. The title has every major word capitalized, and there are no quotation marks around the title. The title is the same size font, and it is not italicized or in all capital letters.
* The Work(s) Cited is the last page of the essay—INSERT NEW PAGE. The works cited page is the last formatted page of the essay, so it also follows all of the formatting details listed above.

**Please note:** Should I discover while reading your essay that you have not followed the above formatting expectations, run spell check, or sufficiently proofread and edited your work, I will discontinue reading and return the essay to you. You will then have until the following week to revise the paper and resubmit it with the first paper you submitted. The highest grade such a “returned” paper can receive is a “C.”

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**Cheating/Plagiarism**

***Bottom line***: do not copy someone else’s words or ideas without giving them credit. Do not use another student’s paper as your own. Do not use a paper you wrote from another class in this class. Do not have another person write the paper for you. All of these are forms of cheating. You will receive a zero on the assignment (whether it is something plagiarized on your papers or on the discussion board) and a report will be filed with the administration for their review. Please be advised that you will submit your final drafts of your papers in Turnitin.com, so if you do plagiarize your papers, you will be caught.

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# Quizzes/ Midterm and Final

# You will have quizzes approximately every three weeks based on the grammar concepts, and the midterm and final will also be based on these grammar concepts. Go to our Blackboard website and find these quizzes and exams in the “Quizzes and Exams” tab. The quizzes, midterms and final cannot be made up; once they close, I will not reopen them.

Each quiz will have a 30 time limit in which it needs to be completed the first time you begin (usually there are between 10-15 questions). The grammar midterm and final have about 50 questions, and you will have approximately an hour and a half to complete each exam. For both the quizzes and the exams, you are encouraged to look up the answers to your questions by looking at the readings and by looking up the answers on the PowerPoint presentations.

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# Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a verified need for an academic accommodation or materials in alternate media (i.e., Braille, large print, electronic text, etc.) per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please contact me as soon as possible.

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**Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Blackboard**

*What is the little exclamation in the grade book on the Blackboard (Bb) site?*

The exclamation point simply says that your quiz went through properly and is waiting to be graded. Some quizzes are automatically graded as they are multiple choice. If they are not, I will have to go in and grade them myself. This might take a week or so. After I grade them, you will be able to open them through the grade book function, and review the quiz. The correct answers will usually be available at that time.

*I have a question mark or a lock next in my grade book next to a quiz or exam. What does this mean?*

This means that for some reason the quiz or exam did not go through properly. This usually results from either you dropping off line, having a power failure, exiting the program before you have finished the quiz or exam or hitting the enter button instead of clicking on the submit button at the bottom of the page. If this happens, you must email me immediately to clear the lock. I check my email several times a day and can usually clear it within 24 hours or less.

*I can’t access Blackboard. What do I do?*

Wait and try again. If you keep having trouble accessing Blackboard, try all of the following in order before emailing me:

1. Clear out the cache in your Internet Browser, and turn off your computer entirely and unplug it. Let it sit for 5 minutes. Then plug it back in and try accessing the web site again.
2. Check the URL for the site and be sure you are entering it correctly. The URL you should use is http://blackboard.reedleycollege.edu .
3. Try accessing another website from your computer that you have not accessed recently. This will clarify if the problem is with Blackboard or with your own browser or internet service provider.
4. Hit the refresh button. Sometimes a “page not found” screen gets stuck in the browser’s cache. Refreshing the page will sometimes clear it.
5. Turn off any parental control or other content filters. Sometimes these filters, as valuable as they are, can filter out good content as well as bad.
6. Call 1-866-401-7784. This is the Bb help desk, which is open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

*Can I call you if I need help with my computer?*

I am not a computer technician, nor is my job as an instructor to act as computer support. While I might be able to help with small issues here and there, you really need to know how to use your computer and get computer support elsewhere. Often, the Bb help desk will be able to help you.

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**Reminders/Tips for Success**

1. When this class is taught face-to-face, students meet with an instructor and the class for four hours a week for this class. The average amount of homework for a hour is two-three hours for each hour of class time. It is important to understand the time commitment necessary to be successful in this or any online class; you are expected to spend the same amount of time on this class as would any English 1A student—the benefit to you is that you get to decide when you work on the class, outside of the set due dates. **Plan now to spend at least ten to fifteen hours a week on this class alone.**
2. It is your responsibility to stay informed concerning any changes of assignment due dates, readings, etc. This means **you should check the Blackboard daily and your SCCCD e-mail account daily**.
3. If something happens to your computer and/or Internet and an assignment is due, ***call me or email me (of course using another computer)***. Do not wait until everything is back up before contacting me. Moreover, you need to back up your work on a moveable storage device (CD, flash drive, USB, etc). Public libraries have computers with Internet access—work can be completed in places and on computers other than those we have at home!
4. In this class we will occasionally read, view, and discuss controversial subject matter. This is college, so adult topics should be expected. These could include issues such as race, sexuality, gender, and cultures different from your own. When you are faced with new ideas, ideas that are different than your own, or issues that make you uncomfortable, I expect you to keep an open mind and never to lower yourself into discriminating or using a mocking, harassing, or belittling tone to others.
5. If you choose to withdraw from the class, please keep in mind that **it is your responsibility to drop from the course before the final day to drop**. If you do not drop yourself and simply stop logging into the class, you will earn an F in the course.
6. Should you discover that you are unable to regularly attend class online for whatever reason, it is imperative that you discuss this with the instructor as soon as possible. Telling the instructor of work schedule changes, illness, family emergencies, etc. after missing several days/weeks is unacceptable.
7. Be sure to keep all of your work during the semester. Accidents happen, teachers lose papers, gradebooks get stolen—protect yourself by keeping copies of your work, both hard copies and electronic copies.
8. Turning in the work is not enough: just doing the assignments does not warrant a passing grade. You need to be doing passing work to pass the class.
9. **Important dates** *(Please note that even though the campus has several holidays this semester, our online class doesn’t get a day off: due dates still apply. The only exception is during spring break, during which we will take a one-week break from the due dates):*
   1. **Semester begins: Monday, January 9**
   2. **MLK holiday: Monday, January 16**
   3. **Lincoln holiday: Friday, February 17**
   4. **Washington holiday: Monday, February 20**
   5. **Last day to drop the class without a “W” on your transcript: Friday, January 27**
   6. **Last day to drop the class (a letter grade will be assigned after this date): Friday, March 9**
   7. **Spring break: Monday, April 2- Friday, April 6**
   8. **Final: will close at midnight on Wednesday, May 16**

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**Tips for Emailing Mrs. Berg and Other Instructors**

***Mrs. Berg’s note*: Email tends to be the primary way that students contact me in an online or hybrid class, and there are some things I wish you would keep in mind when considering whether to contact me this way. I do welcome contact, but I want you to know that I get between 50-100 emails a day (or more!). Responding to emails is a large part of what I do in an online class, and reading and following these tips will help me ensure I can help you more efficiently.**

1. **Email using your SCCCD account.**Your instructor does not know who “volfan2014” is, nor is he or she likely to open messages from unknown senders. Reedley College provides you with a professional email address that it expects you to maintain, so utilize it to ensure that you can be identified as a member of the university community.
2. **Always put the Course & Section Number in the subject line.**Many instructors will only accept emails from you in this format. Remember, your instructor has multiple sections of your course and may still be learning your name, so you need to identify yourself to help him or her to help you. A phrase such as “Question about paper” will be overlooked, whereas a professional subject line easily points to your identity as the instructor’s student.
3. **Know your instructor’s preferences and policy regarding email.**Make sure your instructor accepts email, and that email is the best way to talk about the particular subject. If your instructor doesn’t accept assignments via email, don’t send them! If it’s a complicated matter, or if it’s very urgent, a face-to-face meeting during office hours would probably be better.
4. **Format your email properly.**Always use a greeting, and write in complete sentences. Remember to indicate which class you’re writing about (course and section number in the subject line). End with a closing courtesy and signature. If you include an attachment, make sure the file name clearly identifies what the attachment is and who it’s from, so your instructor doesn’t have to guess (e.g. – “sjones-paper1prospectus.docx”). In addition, if you include an attachment, be very specific about what you want done with that document. Above all, proofread! Just because it’s an email doesn’t mean you don’t have to adhere to Standard English! Use capital letters where appropriate, punctuate properly, and avoid “text-talk” (u, thru, lol, etc.). Compose your emails first in a Word document to take advantage of spell- and grammar-check before sending.
5. **Be clear and specific.**If you have a question about an assignment, be sure to specify which assignment. If you’re responding to feedback or other communication from the instructor, make it clear in your email that you’ve read the instructor’s response and are continuing the conversation.
6. **Don’t email in anger.**If you’re dealing with a touchy subject, or you’re lodging a complaint, be careful! Once sent, an email cannot be retrieved. Try having someone else read your message to ensure that you’re not being offensive or inflammatory, and if you’re emotional when writing the email, wait at least an hour before sending it.
7. **Patiently wait for a reply.**If you send an email, check back for a response. Leave plenty of time for your instructor to respond to your email (about 24 hours during the work week), and don’t harass him or her. However, it is perfectly okay to politely follow up on email messages if more than 24 hours has passed during the work week. Sometimes messages get lost in a crowded inbox. But make sure that what you’re asking is reasonable. Don’t send a rough draft at 10:00p.m. the night before the paper is due and expect feedback. Also, keep in mind that a request that takes five minutes to type might take awhile to fulfill. Remember, email is the most passive way to contact your instructors. If the matter is very urgent, important, or sensitive, you’re probably better off talking to your instructor face-to-face, or at least calling him or her.
8. **Choose your wording carefully.**If you missed class, don’t ask “if” you missed anything important. It’s a good bet that your instructor thinks everything he or she works hard to impart to you in class is important. Be diplomatic. Even if you feel completely in the right, be smart about how you phrase your message. Remember, your instructor is there to help you succeed and wants to help you succeed. As with most things in life, if you ask nicely, the instructor will be much more likely to try his or her best to help you. Don’t be demanding, and don’t tell your instructors what they “have” to do. Finally, be honest, but don’t over-share.
9. **Be sure that your instructor is the best person to ask before emailing.**If you ask a question that the instructor has already answered multiple times in class, or the information you need is on the syllabus, or you can get the material from a classmate, then your instructor will not look favorably on your email. Remember, if your question is about assignments or class policies, most likely the information you are looking for is available to you in Blackboard, in the syllabus, or in the assignment sheets. Take time to look carefully before asking, and if you don’t find the information, look again to be sure before contacting the instructor.

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