English 125 Writing Skills for College (4 Units)

Schedule Number: 50433

**Location:** CCI-207 **Semester**: Fall 2013 8/12-10/11/2013

**Meeting Time**: 8:00AM-9:50AM MTWTH

**Instructor:** Mrs. Laura Bergstrom

**Office Hours:** By Appointment

**Email:**[laura.bergstrom@reedleycollege.edu](mailto:laura.bergstrom@reedleycollege.edu)

Required Texts and Materials

* Graff , Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say*, *2nd edition*. New York: W.W. Norton,

2010.

* Access to a computer and Blackboard
* Please come prepared with paper and blue/black ink pens to class each day

**Course Description and Goals:**

In this course, students will develop the process of writing, revising, and finishing essays, which includes the logical development and organization of ideas. Students will avoid common writing errors, develop their writing skills by reading model essays and analyzing rhetorical strategies, develop critical thinking skills by matching the structures of writing to meaning and audience, and by using writing as thinking to explore and express ideas. This course is a companion to ENGL 126 and prepares students for ENGL 1A. Students must successfully complete written course work to receive credit.

**LEARNING GOALS**

**Reading Strategies, Processes, and Assessment**

READING/WRITING STRATEGIES: Demonstrate or articulate an understanding of reading strategies and assumptions that guide effective reading, and how to read actively, purposefully, and rhetorically

REFLECTION: Make meaningful generalizations/reflections about reading and writing practices and processes

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: Articulate or demonstrate meaningful participation in a community of readers/writers, and ethical and self-conscious practices that address the concerns of that community of reader/writers (e.g. using and giving feedback on drafts in peer response groups

**Summary, Rhetorical Awareness and Entering Academic Conversation**

* SUMMARY/CONVERSATION: Demonstrate summarizing purposefully, integrate “they say” into writing effectively or self-consciously, appropriately incorporate quotes into writing (punctuation, attributions, relevance), and discuss and use texts as “conversations” (writing, then, demonstrates entering a conversation)
* RHETORICAL AWARENESS: Articulate or demonstrate an awareness of the rhetorical features of texts, such as purpose, audience, context, rhetorical appeals, and elements, and write rhetorically, discussing similar features in texts
* INTEGRATING RESEARCH: Demonstrate analyzing research to develop an argument, incorporating others’ ideas (through quotations, summary or paraphrase) into writing effectively or self-consciously, and appropriately integrating citations into text (punctuation, attributions, relevance)

**Language Use, Clarity, and Proficiency**

LANGUAGE COHERENCE: Have developed, unified, and coherent paragraphs and sentences that have clarity and some variety

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

* Students will be able to describe reading as an active process of meaning-making
* Students can list reading and writing strategies that support different stages of the reading and writing process
* Students can describe writing as a process of decision-making as it is informed by the larger context of a civic, academic, or other Conversations.
* Students can write purposeful, accurate summaries.
* Students can effectively situate summary passages in larger sequences of information.
* Students can explain changes they have made to their own texts as a result of workshop, demonstration, teacher response, genre modeling.
* Students can discriminate between writing in the modes (formalist approach to writing) and writing rhetorically (understanding the value of rhetorical situation and placement of information based on purpose)
* Students can outline or map the conceptual structure of an essay.
* Students can cite sources.
* Students can identify sentence sequences that lack variation.
* Students can identify and revise for clarity at the sentence level.
* Students can identify, categorize, and explain key vocabulary in the course.

Work of the Course:

Major Projects

This is an abbreviated description of the major projects for English 125. All projects will be supported by numerous in-class activities, homework assignments, shorter writing assignments, reading, reflection, and assessment. All of this work will directly contribute to your success with the project you are working on and in your overall improvement as a reader and writer.

Week 1. **Project #1: Introductory paper**: **“What is different about English in College versus High School?”:** The purpose of this paper allows students to consider the relationship between attitudes and assumptions about reading and writing students bring to college and the attitudes and assumptions that our program advocates.

Weeks 2-4. **Project 2**: **Education and Empowerment: “What does it mean to be educated and who decides?”** This project focuses on improving your reading performance by asking students generate a series of short summaries, ranging from summarizing one article to summarizing an academic or civic Conversation***.*** This writing assignment is about getting students to demonstrate that after reading a series of articles, they can describe what others are saying about a topic (They Say).

Weeks 5-8. **Project 3: Identity: “Who are *we* in relation to *others?”*** This project asks you to *summarize* different arguments in a Conversation and *explain* the significance of the Conversation**.** Thus this is like a “something needs to be done” paper. In this assignment you are moving from a more dominant focus on “They Say” to a more balanced focus on “They Say” *and* “I Say.” The “I Say” portion of this essay is about the writer’s advocacy for attention to the issue, especially as it should be recognized by a particular group/audience.

Week9. **Final portfolio**: Reflective Letter that uses evidence from student writing to explain what the student has learned about being a good reader, thinker, writer.

Final Portfolio

Instead of a Final Exam, this course will have a Final Portfolio.

**IMPORTANT:** ALL STUDENTS who do not pass the final portfolio cannot pass English 125, no matter what their progress has been up to that point. Additionally, if a student passes the final portfolio, the teacher of record may actually fail that student because of other grading factors, such as lack of attendance, not doing previous assignments, etc.

Think of the portfolio as a collection of your best work for our class and as a place where you reflect upon your reading and writing practices, giving you a chance to tell evaluators what you’ve learned about reading and writing, how you’ve learned these things, and provide a self-evaluation of your own practices.

While you’ll get more information about the final portfolio later in the semester, here is what the I expect of the **final portfolio**:

* **Revised letter of reflection**, addressed to the readers (3-5 pages double-spaced)
* **Revised “Best” Project** (5-6 pages, typed), as well as other materials the student feels will help readers ( short assignments and documents that led to the creation of the project; etc.)
* **Previous draft of “Revised Best Project”**

Course Grade

**IMPORTANT:** In a nine-week Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday class, more than 4 absences constitute an automatic failure in this course.

Please double-check your schedules and other activities this semester. If you can’t meet the attendance requirement, you simply cannot get credit for taking this course, or pass it. In order for any appearance in class to count each day, you MUST do the following:

* Be fully prepared for class (bring homework, read the selections for each day, bring the appropriate materials to participate in class writing or assessment activities, etc.),
* Participate fully in all activities and discussions in a respectful manner
* Arrive on time to class. (\* This means you should arrive a few minutes early. I take role promptly every day. A few minutes late and you will be considered tardy.)

**IMPORTANT:** Two tardies equals an absence.

If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to check on announcements made while you are away. It is also your responsibility to make sure that your name appears on the daily attendance sheet each day that you do attend class.

Our Grading Contract for ENGL 125

Conventional grading often leads students to think more about grades than about writing; to worry more about pleasing a teacher or fooling one than about figuring out what you really want to say or how you want to say it; to be reluctant to take risks with your writing. Sometimes grades even lead to the feeling that you are working against the teacher or having to hide part of yourself from him or her. For these reasons, I am using a contract for grading in our class.

You will get lots of assessments on your writing during the semester from your classmates and myself so that you may improve your writing. These assessments do not affect your overall grade in the course; however, they should be your guides to how you need to revise or rethink your writing and its practices.

Ultimately with the use of this contract, I’m asking you to reconsider how you do work in our classroom, what your role is as students in a classroom, and what your relationship to one another is as colleagues. All of this really boils down to rethinking “responsibility.” College is different than high school: There are different expectations, different sets of requirements, and different levels of responsibility. In our class, our contract asks you to have a responsibility to yourself and to the class to do the work required of you, to attend and participate during class time, to ask questions of me or your classmates if you do not understand or want more information, and to know what assignments have been turned in and where you stand in relation to our contract. I have the responsibility to be prepared for every class, to answer any questions and consider any feedback, to provide in a timely manner helpful and honest suggestions for revisions on your writing projects, and to make myself available to you for questions and concerns outside of class.

The default grade for the course is a “B.” In a nutshell, if you do all that is asked of you in the manner and spirit it is asked, if you work through the processes we establish and the work we assign ourselves during the semester, and you put together a complete portfolio, then you’ll get a “B.” If you miss class, turn assignments in late, fail to participate during class, or forget to do assignments, etc., your grade will drop.

“B” Grades

You are guaranteed a course grade of “B” if you meet all of the following conditions:

* Attendance/Participation. You may miss (for whatever reason) 2 class sessions. Missing more than 2 classes will result in the lowering of your grade. Therefore it is not enough for you simply to come to class. If you come to class unprepared in any way (e.g. without work done, assignments read, etc.), it will be counted as an absence, since you won’t be able to participate fully in our activities. This means any informal assignment given, or ones not outlined on our syllabus, fit into this category of attendance.

NOTE: Assignments not turned in because of an absence, either ones assigned on the schedule or ones assigned on earlier days in class, will be late, missed, or ignored (depending on when you turn it in finally, see the guidelines #4, #5, and #6 below).

Any absence due to an university-sponsored group activity (e.g., sporting event, band, etc.) will not count against the student, as long as the student has FIRST provided written documentation in the first 2 weeks of the semester of all absences. This same policy applies to students who have mandatory military-related absences (e.g., deployment, work, duty, etc.). Again, the student must provide written documentation, stating the days he/she will be absent beforehand. This will allow me to determine how he/she will meet assignments, participation, and the responsibilities of our contract, despite being absent.

If you will be absent because of university-sponsored events or military service for more than the number of days stated above (2), then you need to see me in the first two weeks of the semester, so we can make sure you can participate enough in this course in order to get full credit for it.

* **Participation: Students will be graded on their participation in this course. This means they need to come to class prepared to participate in class (i.e., having done their homework, come to class prepared to discuss any readings or activities, and brought the appropriate materials to class) as well as participate in class discussions and activities. It is not enough to show up to class, but you must participate in the spirit of which activities and assignments are given. If students fail to meet the standards set for participation points for any reason, they will be given a warning. On the second warning the student will be asked to leave the class and will be given an absence for the day.**
* Lateness. You’ll come on time or early to class. If you are late to class, you are still responsible to find out what assignments or instructions were made, but please don’t disrupt our class by asking about the things you missed because you were late. Tardies and early departures are disruptive and will not be tolerated; **two tardies or early departures of more than 5 minutes will result in one absence**. **If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to check in with me at the end of class, or your absence will remain on your record**. Please come in quietly and take the closest available seat by the door to minimize disruptions to the class.

Should you discover that you are unable to regularly attend class 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

* Sharing and Collaboration. You’ll work cooperatively in groups. Be willing to share your writing, to listen supportively to the writing of others, and, when called for, give full and thoughtful assessments that consistently help your colleagues consider ways to revise according to our class-defined rubrics.
* Late Assignments. You will turn in properly and on time all essays, assessments, evaluations, portfolio evaluations, reflections, and other assignments. Because your colleagues in class depend on you to get your work done on time so that they can do theirs on time, all late assignments are just as bad as missed assignments. However, depending on what we agree to in the first week or two of the semester, you may turn in a late assignment or two (see the “Breakdown” table below). In order for an assignment to be considered a **“late assignment” it STILL must be turned in, at least 2 days (24 hours) after its initial due date, no exceptions, and it should be complete and meet all the assignment’s requirements (e.g. if an essay was due on Friday, Sept 20 at noon, a late essay must be turned in by noon on Sunday, Sept 22).** Please note that a late assignment may be due on a day when our class is not scheduled to meet.
* If you are turning in a late assignment, please send it to my email address so that it may be time stamped.
* **Missed Assignments. A missed assignment is NOT one not turned in; it is one that has missed the guidelines somehow but is still complete and turned in at some point in the semester.** In order to meet our contract for a “B” grade, you cannot have any “missed assignments.” Please note that assignments not turned in at all are considered “Ignored Assignments” (see #6 below).

**Note:** If you have done an assignment wrong, but have turned it in on time, I will give you one chance to fix it within a 48-hour deadline. If however, you do not fix this assignment it will remain a “missed assignment.” It is up to students to address “missed” assignments.

* Ignored Assignments. Any assignments not done period, or “ignored,” for whatever reasons, are put in this category. One of these in the grade book means an automatic “D.” Two acquired gives you an “F.”
* All Essays (both short and long) need to meet the following conditions:
* Complete and On Time. You’ll turn in on time and in the appropriate manner complete essays that meet all of our assignment guidelines.
* Revisions. When the assignment is to revise, you will reshape, extend, complicate, or substantially clarify your ideas – or relate your ideas to new things. You won’t just correct or touch up. Revisions must somehow respond to or consider seriously your colleagues’ assessments.
* Copy Editing. When the assignment is for the final publication draft, your paper must be well copy edited – that is, free from virtually all mistakes in spelling and grammar. It's fine to get help in copy editing. (Copy editing doesn’t count on drafts before the final portfolio.)
* Thinking. Having found a perplexity, then use your paper to do some figuring-out. Make some intellectual gears turn. Thus your paper needs to move or go somewhere--needs to have a line of thinking. It shouldn’t be formulaic, random, or freewritten.

All Assessments and Peer Responses need to meet the following conditions:

* Complete and On Time. All assessments should be complete and submitted on time and in the appropriate way so that your colleagues will get your assessments of their writing the way the class has predetermined.
* Content. All assessments should focus their comments on our rubrics, following the directions established by our handout on assessments and our evolving class discussions about them.
* Courtesy and Respect. All assessments should be courteous and respectful in tone, but honest. It’s okay to say something doesn’t seem right in a draft, or that something doesn’t really work. Respect means we are kind and truthful. It’s not the “golden rule” (treat others as you would have them treat you), but a modified one: treat others as you believe they want to be treated.

**Course Portfolio**.

You’ll turn in complete and on time your final course portfolio according to our portfolio handout. “Complete” also means that you’ll participate fully in our in-class portfolio assessment sessions during the final week of classes, and come on time and prepared for our final conference (in which we discuss your portfolio and its evaluations) following those activities.

NOTE: Because the final course portfolio is the last major assignment you’ll do in the semester (at the very end), and because it is a culminating assignment that should demonstrate all that you’ve learned, it fits differently into our contract. Treat it with the seriousness that you treat all our assignments. In order to get full credit for the final portfolio, you must:

1. Turn it in complete, on time, and in the manner prescribed in class, on the syllabus, and in any additional handouts provided you. The same penalties for late or missed assignments will occur for the final portfolio.
2. Revise the final versions of all documents appropriately, considering both your colleagues’ and teacher comments on past drafts (remember, this is not copy-editing, but deeper, more substantive changes discussed). If you do not show appropriate revisions, or ones that address the comments made on your writing, then your final portfolio is incomplete, and will be considered “late,” but will still be evaluated.
3. Discuss clearly the revisions/changes you made on final drafts, or didn’t make (if you choose not to follow my or your colleagues’ advice), showing how your goals for those drafts demonstrate program outcomes. If you do not discuss adequately any changes (or the lack of them) in drafts, then you’re final portfolio is incomplete, and will be considered “late,” but will still be evaluated.
4. Receive a passing mark on your final portfolio (achieved by receiving a rating of 3 or higher on our 1-6 scale). If your portfolio is deemed late for one of the above reasons, then the highest rating you can receive on the portfolio will be a 4.

“A” Grades

As you see, the grade of B depends primarily on behaviors. Have you shown responsible effort and consistency in our class? Have you done what was asked of you in the spirit it was asked? Grades of “A,” however, depend on acknowledged quality. Thus you earn a B if you put in good time and effort; we should push each other for Bs. But to get an “A” you have to make your time and effort pay off into writing of genuine, recognizable, excellence that responds in some way concretely to your colleagues’ and my concerns (and also meets the conditions for a B), seen in your final portfolio. This means that not only is revision important, but a certain kind of revision: one that demonstrates a reflective writer listening, making decisions, and moving drafts above and beyond our expectations (delineated by our rubrics). Writing in the “A” category will respond to assessments, and be reflective itself. In brief, to get an “A,” you must meet the contract for a “B” and receive a 5 or 6 on your final portfolio.

Notice that for grades up to B, you don't have to worry about anyone’s judgments or standards of excellence, how any of us translate our rubrics and your use of them, or necessarily what revision decisions you decide to make; for higher grades you do. We'll have class discussions about excellence, rubric translations, audience responses, and how to respond to divergent and conflicting assessments. Your final portfolio will play a big role in decisions about excellence in your writing and revision.

**Knowing Where You Stand**

This system is better than regular grading for giving you a clear idea of what your final grade looks like at any moment. For whenever you get feedback on any essay, your assessors should clearly tell you where you stand in terms of meeting the expectations of our current essay rubric and assignment guidelines. I will also guide some of these discussions in class. But if you’re doing everything as directed and turning it in on time (no matter what anyone says), you’re getting a B. As for absences and lateness, you'll have to keep track of them, but you can check with me any time.

**Grades Lower Than B**

I hope no one will aim for lower grades. The quickest way to slide to a “C,” “D,” or “F” is to miss classes, not turn in things on time, and show up without assignments. This much is nonnegotiable: you are not eligible for a passing grade of “D” unless you have met the attendance requirement and meet the guidelines above. And you can't just turn in all the late work at the end. If you are missing classes and behind in work, please stay in touch with me about your chances of passing the course.

**The Breakdown**

In a nutshell, here’s the way grading works in our class. In order to get the grade on the left, you must meet or exceed the requirements in the row next to it. I’ve highlighted the default grade that you achieve if you meet our contract obligations.

Note: This breakdown does not include any warnings or failings to meet the expectations of participation standards during class or the final portfolio. If you have questions where you stand in this course, please feel free to ask me.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | # of Absences | # of Late Assigns. | # of Missed Assigns. | # of Ignored Assigns. |
| A | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| C | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| D | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| F | 4 or more | 4 or more | 3 or more | 2 or more |

NOTE: All assignments that are turned in as “late” (see above guidelines for assignments considered “late”) after the 2nd are considered “missed.” All “missed” assignments after the 2nd are considered “ignored.”

By staying in this course and attending class, you accept this contract and agree to abide by it, as do I (the teacher)

**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. Missing class or not checking Blackboard is not an excuse for not being aware of any changes that are made to the calendar or the syllabus.

Course Policies

The common policies we’ll all be expected to adhere to in order to get credit for this class include:

* Take full and active responsibility for your participation, writing, input in discussions, and progress in this course
* Give courtesy and respect to everyone;
* Participate in each session’s discussions and activities;
* Come to each session on time and prepared for class: this includes having done all homework and bringing the appropriate materials to participate in class activities
* Complete/Do all assignments as directed and in the spirit they are asked of you.
* Portable electronic devices (ipods, cell phones, mp3 players, etc.) must be turned off before class begins. Talking/texting during class is unacceptable. **If you are caught with your phone out (even if you are not texting) you will be given one warning. If phone is seen again, you will be given an absence for the day and you will be asked to leave the class.**
* Classroom conduct will reflect a sense of respect and adherence to the learning process. The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and growth. It is essential to this learning environment that respect for the rights of others seeking to learn, respect for the professionalism of the instructor, and the general goals of academic freedom are maintained . . . . Differences of viewpoint or concerns should be expressed in terms which are supportive of the learning process, creating an environment in which students and faculty may learn to reason with clarity and compassion, to share of themselves without losing their identities, and to develop an understanding of the community in which they live . . . . Student conduct which disrupts the learning process shall not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class. (from the Policy on Disruptive Behavior)

**Essay Formatting**

For all work you submit, follow MLA formatting

* Essays must be typed in size 12 standard font (such as Times New Roman) with no bold, capitalized, or italicized fonts.
* It should be double-spaced throughout.
* Margins should be 1” on all sides of the paper and justified on the left.
* All documentation in the essays must follow the parenthetical citations in MLA format.
* All essays must be stapled.
* On the top left hand side of the paper, you should include (in this order):
  + Your name
  + The teacher’s name
  + The class (with the section number)
  + Submission date
* After the header, put your title, centered, on the next line. Make sure you don’t make the title a bigger font than the rest of the paper; don’t put the title in quotes, bolded or italicized font. Give your title a creative spin (not the name of the assignment).
* No cover page or plastic cover sheet is needed for any assignment.
* All pages (including the first) are numbered with the number in the upper-right corner, one half-inch from the top. The page number is preceded by your last name.

**EMAIL**

An e-mail address is essential. If you do not currently have one, you should set one up through Reedley College, Hotmail or Yahoo. These accounts are free and available through any computer that has Internet access; however, the Reedley College account must be activated first from campus. I will use e-mail to communicate with the class as a whole, with groups, and with individuals.

When you send an email, you must be specific in the message and always sign your name. Your email address does not necessarily identify who you are. 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”.

If you change your email address during the course of the semester, you MUST update your email address on Blackboard and WebAdvisor. You should also notify your instructors of email changes as well.

Keep in mind that the class e-mail list is to be used for school related messaging only. Any other use of the e-mail list can result in your being dropped from the course. Continued sending of unsolicited e-mail could be viewed as a form of harassment. Appropriate action will be taken as necessary per school policy.

Plagiarism

Remember to always quote and cite your sources appropriately, even if they are unpublished or from friends or classmates. An unacknowledged paraphrase, a patchwork from several sources, as well as the submission of someone else’s work (published or not), all constitute plagiarism in the eyes of the instructor and Reedley College. Plagiarism in any form will result in a **failure of this course**. Please ask questions if you’re ever unsure BEFORE you turn in work. **Ignorance IS NOT an acceptable excuse.**

# 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.