English 125: College Writing Skills

Location: Phy75 (MW) HUM 62 (TTH) Summer 2013

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**Office Hours**: MWF 10-11 or by appointment

Required Texts and Materials

* Graff , Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say, 2nd ed*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2010.
* A computer and access to the internet and Blackboard

English 125—College Writing Skills, is designed to preparing you for English IA, Reading and Composition. Under the guidance of your instructor, we expect you to work on a variety of different reading and writing strategies. While you learn about how to do research, read well, think critically, and generate effective writing, your instructor will lead you through an investigation of an academic or civic Conversation. In this class you learn about reading and writing *while* you study a particular issue. Learning how to read and write while studying an issue (like the effectiveness of education, or the role that gender plays in human relations) allows you to better understand the purposes behind the strategies I will teach you. It is difficult to understand analytical and interpretive strategies if you don’t have something to analyze and don’t have some investment in your analysis.

My approach to helping you develop successful reading and writing strategies at the college level depends on your *continual self-assessment*, that is, your capacity to reflect on what you are learning and then name what it is you have learned. I will give you guidance and opportunities to think about what you are learning, reflecting upon HOW people read and write at the college level. This kind of reflection –particularly naming the things you learn—should allow you to see the similarity or differences between what we teach and the literacy habits you have already learned.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

In this course you will develop your abilities in 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.

This course has the following three goals and seven outcomes, which guide its structure, philosophy, and activities. By the end of the semester, a student should be able to demonstrate the following in an acceptably proficient manner.

**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 Conversations**

* 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)
* RHETORIC: 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 5A. 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 at the university.

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

Weeks 2-6. **Project 2**: **Consumerism, Media, and Culture”** 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).

Week7. **Final portfolio**: Reflective Letter that uses evidence from student writing to explain what the student has learned about being a good reader, thinker, writer.

Course Portfolio

**IMPORTANT:** ALL STUDENTS who do not pass the final portfolio cannot pass Engl. 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 both the midterm and final portfolios later in the semester, here is what the program expects of the **final portfolio** (the midterm portfolio is approximately half of this material):

**Revised letter of reflection**, addressed to the readers (3-5 pages double-spaced)

**Revised “Best” Project** (3-5 pages, typed), including other materials the student feels will help readers (e.g. previous drafts, possibly with teacher comments; short assignments and documents that led to the creation of the project; etc.)

**Project Description Handout** of best project (or assignment handout)

**Revised Project** (3-5 pages, typed), the final draft of another project the student chooses

**Project Description Handout** of second, revised project (or assignment handout)

Course Grade

Your overall course grade is determined by a course contract. We will cover that in a separate document.

**IMPORTANT:** We’ll discuss and revise the grading contract during the first two weeks of class.

**You MUST attend and participate in at least 87% of the class sessions**. In a Summer class, more than 2 absences means an automatic “No Credit” course grade.

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, etc.),

Participate fully in all activities and discussions, and

Arrive on time to class.

No Cell Phone Use

**IMPORTANT:** Three 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.

Course Policies

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

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 (see “Attendance” section below);

Complete/Do all assignments as directed and in the spirit they are asked of you.

Access to a computer is also a policy for this course,

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, and a **failure of this course**. Please ask questions if you’re ever unsure BEFORE you turn in work. **Ignorance IS NOT an acceptable excuse.**

Disabilities

In all my preparations and planning, I strive to provide an encouraging and dynamic learning environment for all my students and as wide a variety of learning styles as I can. However, there may be better ways I can accommodate those who have special learning needs. Please see me immediately when and if you have trouble fully participating or engaging in the class’s activities and work.