**English 125**

**Writing Skills for College**

**Section #51438**

**Tuesdays/Thursdays**

**9:00-10:50am in CCI 207**

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**Syllabus: English 125, Writing Skills for College**

# Contact Information

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

Office: Faculty Annex 6 (directly behind the SOC building) Phone: 638-0300, ext. 3150

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 12-2pm; Fridays from 12-1pm.

*Other times may be scheduled outside these hours as needed and as mutually convenient.*

**Course Description**

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. Placement for this course is designated by the college assessment process or successful completion of English 252.

**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** | **Approximate**  **Point Value** | **Your Grade** |
| Essay #1 (due week 4) | 100 |  |
| Essay #2 (due week 7) | 100 |  |
| Essay #3 (due week 10) | 150 |  |
| Grammar Midterm (Test on the grammar concepts  from weeks 1-8) | 25 |  |
| Essay #4 (due week 14) | 150 |  |
| Essay #5 (due week 17) | 150 |  |
| Midterm (In Class Timed Essay) | 50 |  |
| Final (In Class Timed Essay) | 100 |  |
| Grammar Final (Test on the grammar concepts  from weeks 9-17) | 25 |  |
| Homework (Weeks 1-9) | 25 |  |
| Homework (Weeks 10-17) | 25 |  |
| Weekly Grammar and Reading quizzes | 100 |  |
| **APPROXIMATE 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.

**Changes to the Syllabus/Assignment 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.

**Required Texts and Materials**

*Please note that I have placed the text below on reserve at the Reedley College library.*

Kirszner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell. *Patterns for College Writing: A Rhetorical Reader and Guide: BRIEF*

*EDITION*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2015.

**Supplies Needed for Every Class**:

* a flash drive
* a set of several different colored highlighters
* plenty of lined paper
* some computer paper (in case we run out in lab)
* pencils and blue or black ink pens
* a binder with organizational tabs to keep all of your work for this class
* a stapler to turn in your work

Additional materials needed: two examination blue books (size 8 ½ x 11) for the midterm and final.

**Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes**

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

1. Write multiple essays of at least 1200 words that include an introduction, multiple body paragraphs, and conclusion of some sophistication. These essays will include:
2. clearly defined thesis statement
3. unified supporting paragraphs, which begin with topic sentences
4. quotations that support the topic sentences and the thesis
5. supporting material that exhibits critical thinking
6. complete sentences which include a variety of sentence types (simple, compound, complex, and compound/complex sentence)
7. will avoid fragments, comma splices, sentence fuses and other basic skills errors, such as capitalization, spelling, homophone issues, verb tense issues, subject-verb agreement, pronoun agreement, word choice issues, confused syntax, etc.
8. descriptive vocabulary that exhibits growth and sophisticated word choice
9. use the MLA guidelines to setup essays, correctly use in-text citations for at least one source, and complete a works cited page
10. writing that is free from plagiarism
11. will demonstrate awareness of how to write from the 3rd person point of view for a specific audience
12. Plan and revise independently, employing all stages of the writing process as necessary and appropriate.
13. Complete a passing multi-paragraph in-class essay with a thesis and support.

**Homework**

The homework assignments are **checked at the beginning of class only** for full credit. **If you are late (or absent) for whatever reason, your work is late**. If you were late, absent, or you didn’t do your work on time, you still have the opportunity to earn up to half credit. You have until the midterm to make up any homework from weeks 1-9, and the final to make up any work from weeks 10-17. No homework can be turned in after then for credit.

**Attendance Policies *NOTE*: AN ABSENCE IN THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF CLASS WITHOUT DISCUSSING IT WITH THE INSTRUCTOR INADVANCEWILL RESULT IN A DROP.**

Important skills are learned in every class meeting, especially since we only see each other only twice a week—when you are absent, you miss a lot! Please be aware **that more than 2 weeks’ worth absences for whatever reason will result in a drop** from this class (e.g. 5 absences=drop). Keep in mind that this is a college class—an absence, no matter the reason, is still an absence. That being said, it is common courtesy to inform me should you need to miss class, especially if you miss more than one class in a row. There are few things more infuriating for teachers than a student who disappears for a few class sessions and then shows up wanting to know if he has missed anything or expecting to fit right back in. It is your responsibility to get assignments and handouts and to make sure that they are turned in if you are absent. I suggest that you find a reliable person in class to turn in papers for you, get homework assignments, and pick up work for you should you need to be absent from a class.

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 need to be tardy more than 10 minutes of any class or need to leave more than 10 minutes early, that class will count that as an absence.

**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), you will not be allowed to rewrite the assignment, 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.

**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.

# Examinations

**Examinations and quizzes cannot be made up**; if you know in advance that you cannot attend class, be sure to speak with me at least forty-eight hours in advance to make alternate plans before the exam is given. Please refrain from talking during examinations, and you may not leave the classroom unless you have turned in your exam and you have been instructed that you may leave when you are finished. You may only use the materials specified on the directions of the exam, and you may only use your own materials. Absolutely no electronic devises may be used or be on your desk during an exam. Should you be found in violation of these test regulations, you will be immediately dismissed from the exam with no credit.

**Getting Feedback and Additional Help on Your Writing**

Please note that I will not be able to give students who send me an email with a draft attached feedback; **if you want feedback on your draft, send me a copy of the draft in an email and indicate when exactly during my office hours you will call or come by to go over your draft with me. You also can send me a part of your draft (such as a thesis or a body paragraph) and ask a very specific question about that specific part (e.g. Does my thesis make sense? Does this paragraph have enough analysis?)**

Another excellent source of help is The Reedley College Writing Center, located in HUM 58 on the Reedley College campus. You can enroll in English 272, a course designed to help you on any writing assignment from any class. You can also take advantage of their walk-in or online tutorial. The Writing Center is open Monday-Thursdays 8am-2pm.

In our Blackboard site, you also use **free online tutoring** (look for the “Smarthinking Tutoring” tab). Through this tutoring service, you can submit your writing for review by one of their tutors, who get back to you with feedback in less than 24 hours. There are also live tutors available most hours of the day for immediate feedback and answers to questions regarding writing

**Essay Formatting**

For all work you submit, follow MLA formatting:

* Font set for TIMES NEW ROMAN 12
* 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 (i.e. there should be no extra spaces in between paragraphs)
* Page numbers have been INSERTED (not typed) into the upper right hand corner (header) beginning with page one. This is formatted into the header, appearing ½ inch from the top of the page. The 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 with this information double spaced.
  + Student’s Name
  + Instructor’s Name
  + Course and Section number
  + Due Date for Essay
* 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.
* Run spell and grammar check to help you catch errors.
* 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.”

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

For each essay assignment, you are required to submit outlines and several drafts before the final draft is due. To receive full credit for your work, your drafts need to be on time and of **substantial length** –the same page requirement as the final draft assignment**. If you are absent for whatever reason on the day a final draft is due, it is nonetheless your responsibility to turn in the work on time**. You will need to submit the paper to me, in class, by email, or in my mailbox **before class begins** to receive full credit for the assignment.

Any essays written during the semester will only be **accepted up to one week** after the deadline for any credit. For each class meeting that you submit the essays late, **a full letter grade will be deducted** from the overall grade. If you turn in a paper late, you will not have an opportunity to rewrite the paper.

**Essays—Turning in the Final Draft**

The following work must be done before class to submit a final draft of a paper for your paper to be on time:

1. **Submit the final draft of the paper in our Blackboard site to 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. Take note of the percentage score you got, and open the report to find out why you got the score you did. Papers must be uploaded at least one hour before our class begins.
2. **Prepare a packet to be submitted at the beginning of class**. The packets must be stapled together in this order:
   1. Rubric on top. Write your name on the rubric, and on the bottom of the rubric, write your Turnitin.com originality score and a few sentences explaining why you got the score you did.
   2. Your completed Checklist of Required Elements for that paper.
   3. Final draft of your paper. Highlight on the final draft your thesis and the topic sentences for all body paragraphs.
   4. All other work done on that paper (include all of the following: Smarthinking Tutoring feedback; freewrites and discussion questions; outlines; rough drafts).

**Essays--Rewriting Policies**

You are allowed to and encouraged to rewrite only **one essay over the semester to try to earn up to one letter grade** **higher** than the final grade you received on the paper. Please note **you can only rewrite your work if you turned in the final draft of the paper on time**. **You have up to one week** from when I return your essays to rewrite the paper. Here are the steps you will need to follow to rewrite your paper:

1. Once I have returned the essays to the class, you have up to one week from then to rewrite the paper. On the rewritten draft, **highlight exactly what you have changed in the document itself**.
2. 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.
3. Turn into me the rewritten copy with the highlighting and your explanation of what you changed.
4. **You will not have the opportunity to rewrite Essay #5, as grades are due soon after you turn in that final paper.**

**Reminders/Tips for Success**

1. **Electronic Devices**: **Please turn off cell phones and pagers during class and put them away, off your desk**. It is unacceptable to set your phone on discreet and leave it on top of your desk, or to text during class—it is disruptive to you, your fellow students, and your instructor when you check your messages and calls during class, and I reserve the right to dismiss you from class if you are more interested in your phone than our class. Please do not use or have on any other electronic equipment during class (I-pods, cell phones, laptops, etc.), including during lab time. Without a doubt, do not answer your phone in class.
2. **Disruptive behavior** during class will not be tolerated for the sake of our learning environment; I reserve the right to ask you to leave the class with an absence if you are disruptive of other’s learning. Disruptive behavior includes (but is not limited to) talking, passing notes, arguing, eating food, sleeping during class, working on assignments for our class or other classes other than the one being covered in class at the time, receiving cell phone calls during class, text messaging during class, having your cell phone on your desk, not having the materials needed for class, or having your head on your desk. **The first time a student violates these rules, he will receive a verbal warning from the teacher. The second time (and any time thereafter), the student will be dismissed from the class with an absence**.
3. It is your responsibility to stay informed concerning any changes of assignment due dates, readings, etc. This means you should check the Blackboard announcements on a daily basis and your SCCCD e-mail account daily.
4. Always be prepared for class. If you show up unprepared for class and unwilling to work, I will ask you to leave with an absence for the day.
5. 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.
6. Showing up to class is not enough; it’s true that being present helps you to learn, but if you do not do the assignments, you will not pass. Likewise, 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.
7. **Important dates:**
   1. **Semester begins: Monday, January 11**
   2. **Labor Day holiday: Monday, September 7**
   3. **MLK holiday: Monday, January 18**
   4. **Presidents’ day holidays: Friday, February 12-Monday, February 15**
   5. **Last day to drop the class without a “W” on your transcript: Friday, January 29**
   6. **Last day to drop the class (a letter grade will be assigned after this date): Friday, March 11**
   7. **Our final will be held on Tuesday, May 17 from 9:00-10:50am in CCI 207.**

**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.

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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 a while 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.

1. **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.

**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. *Special thanks to the Student Success Center at University of Tennessee at Knoxville for most of the tips in this article.*