

English 3 Essay and Argument: Critical Reading and Writing Spring 00

Prerequisite: C or better in English 1A; fulfills critical thinking requirement

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Office hours: ~~5-6T, 1³⁰-2³⁰W, 5³⁰-6³⁰Th~~ ~~10:00-10:30Th (in library)~~, and by appointment
email: DLNLNDL@aol.com drop date: 3/10/00

Required: Essay and Argument
your wits, your open mind
Recommended: a separate spiral notebook for this class
ready access to a good college dictionary
your English 1A stylebook

Course Description:

The goal of this course is to sharpen your critical reading, writing, and thinking skills *beyond* the level achieved in English 1A. We will write and read essays on "current issues and enduring questions" of various styles and purposes for various audiences, focusing on logical reasoning (both inductive and deductive), analysis, and argumentation, and we will discuss them as a class or in groups in our unending search for the truth.

Diverse viewpoints are encouraged and respected, especially those which are well-substantiated. Be prepared to read and write, both in and out of class, and to share your writing and ideas with your fellow students.

Course Requirements:

Attendance: I will take roll and may drop you after the equivalent of two weeks worth of classes. Much of the writing and some of the reading will take place in class, as well as essential groupwork and spontaneous learning opportunities, so it behooves you to attend. To enhance attendance, I also recommend taking notes on reading, lecture, and discussion and conversation with classmates, family, and friends. At four points, I will meet with you in small group or individual conferences. If you just don't show up for a conference, your grade on the assignment we are working on will be lowered.

Rather than leave me wondering, contact me if you will have an unavoidable absence; in any case, it is your responsibility to come to class or conference prepared, even after absences. If you must miss class, keep

up in your reading. It is your responsibility to get papers to me or contact me if you are unable to attend; **absence is not an excuse for handing papers in late.** I don't accept late papers.

Grading: For evaluating your work, I use the attached general grading standard and then specific rubrics for most assignments, incorporating attention to content (what you say), style (how you say it), and mechanics (including grammar and MLA documentation, both of which I must assume you mastered in 1A). If you need help with any of these, get it from me during office hours (most successful students have stopped in at least once), from the tutorial center, or from any other reliable source you know. Proofread. Allow yourself time. Talk to me.

It is particularly wise to be prepared with typed completed drafts on rough draft days or conference appointments, not only because your final product will benefit from the input and your most thorough revision, but also because, without it (absences included), you can expect your final grade on the assignment to be lowered. On the other hand, if you have produced a complete typed draft on draft day, and if you have handed in the final draft on time, **and have met with me to devise a revision plan**, you may revise the paper for a new grade (Good deal, don't you think?)

Assignments:

Leading up to a synthesis paper by the end of the term, you will write summaries, deductive arguments, and critical analyses. All papers are typed, double-spaced, MLA style documentation, **with all drafts dated and attached.**

week 1	1/10,12,14	intro, critical reading
week 2	1/19,21	Mon. holiday, Wed 7PM Takaki@Saroyan, summary
week 3	1/24,26,28	summary test Friday
week 4	1/31, ____	Mon. intro deductive essay, conferences Wed, Fri
week 5	2/7, ____	Mon, intro fallacies, conferences Wed, Fri
week 6	2/14, 16	essay due Mon , crit anal demo & assign Wed Thurs 2/17 Phil Levine (poet) 7PM, Fri holiday dedu
week 7	2/23, 25	Mon holiday, critical analysis, bring draft to conf.
week 8	2/28, 3/1, or 3/3	critical analysis conferences Mon Wed, Friday
week 9	3/6, 8, 10	crit anal due Mon , begin synthesis, read, 2nd crit analysis draft due (typed or else) drop date Fri 2/10, ←
week 10	3/13, ____	Mon, intro interview, survey, conf Wed, Fri, Mon on crit analysis 2, 3, and interview
week 11	3/22,24	Wed crit analysis 2 or 3 due , Fri survey results
week 12	3/27,29,31	outline, warrants, support, intro
week 13	4/3, 5, or 7	conferences on synthesis (bring rough draft)

week 14	4/10,12,13,14	conf on synthesis, Thurs- Ron Hansen 7PM Friday all convene
spring break		
week 15	4/24, 26, 28	M-interview due, W-1/2 typed draft, F - typed draft
week 16	5/1,3,5	M-synthesis due , W-bomb shelter, F-
week 17	5/8,10,12	comparative analysis, prep for final, Singer, Hardin
week 18	5/17	takehome final (rebuttal) due Wed noon in A-6

I'll average the grades through week 6 for your midterm grade report. Each grade is weighted equally (except the synthesis which is double), so averaging your own grade at any time is easy. Skipping a major paper can slaughter your grade (1/7th); skipping the synthesis means an automatic D or less. Plagiarism is presenting any part of anyone else's work as your own. It's against the law and will result in a grade of F in the class. Remember: because we use typed drafts for classwork and because I know they are essential for your growth, your paper grade will be lowered if you do not have, are absent and haven't handed it in ahead of time (so we can still use it for classwork), or if it is not typed, finished, or a serious attempt at the assignment. Same goes for conferences

Class participation:

I expect you to participate in class with respect and accuracy. Your participation in class discussion is not only what makes this class fun, but it is essential to your whole critical thinking experience. We are a diverse group of individuals, each with valid, and challengeable, opinions. This class needs to be a safe for for the generation, consideration, and expression of ideas. If you ever feel this is not the case (even a little bit), tell me or write me a note.



JIM WASSERMAN

New agenda for a new millennium

Now that the hoopla is over, with resolutions made and noisemakers lost beneath the couch cushions, we should think of a few simple things to make this a better millennium.

To set the agenda for the next 1,000 years, let me suggest we:

■ **Drop capital punishment.**

You have to admit, even though most people approve of the death penalty, it doesn't stop crime and costs a holy fortune to carry out. Even when an execution does happen, it takes 10 years of court to clear the way. The process always exhausts the victim's family and greatly, unnecessarily, prolongs their suffering.

Give it up. Most civilized, industrial nations have abolished electric chairs and lethal injection. But politicians in the United States still campaign on a litmus test of favoring capital punishment. Watch this in 2000.

California used to be a progressive state, a beacon that halted executions for 25 years. But its barbarism resumed in 1993 and shows no signs of ending with Gov. Davis.

In the 20th century, we stopped hangings. If we want a better 21st, we should stop executions altogether.

■ **Change our drug policies.**

Give this up, too.

Well-meaning but dumb drug laws have our country so screwed up there's only one way to fix it: Back off. A certain percentage of people have always used drugs and they always will. A century ago, we were more tolerant and progressive about drug use. Now that we've declared war on this timeless human behavior, our prisons are filled with nonviolent drug users. And our inner cities have declined into drug-dealing violence.

The solution — drug treatment — remains a poor stepchild compared to military budgets for police agencies. Meanwhile, worthless DARE programs come into schools, pretending to stop drugs, and send our kids home newly conversant in 25 names for marijuana. Thanks.

In the 20th century, Prohibition of alcohol bombed. It created a landscape of gangsters and crime, much like today. Now that they're in power, baby boomers should be ending this madness, decriminalizing and legalizing most drugs. But instead they're the biggest kind

of hypocrites, keeping the drug war going stronger than ever.

■ **Get Fresno moving.**

Days ago Fresno got walloped again nationally for being a basket case and missing the boat, a lost city in the American west where dreams never come true. ABC News broadcast a report that Fresno can't get its economic act together, even while the rest of the country is a booming success story.

The city looked clueless and petty, and frankly it's getting ever harder to defend it. Fresno has planned and talked, studied and stalled itself into a declining spiral of disinvestment and brain drain. Capital can go anywhere and it is going everywhere but here. Everybody sees it now but us. We have good things in this city. But it isn't moving like cities where leaders *do* things and take chances. The 21st century is a blank slate and this is an election year. You want a theme? Repeat this over and over: It's quality of life, stupid.

Ah, a new start! I feel better already about this millennium.

■ **Jim Wasserman is a Bee staff writer. For a sneak preview of his column, which runs Sundays, call BeeLine at 443-2400, ext. 2160. You also can e-mail him at jwasser@fresnobee.com**