

ENGLISH 125  
*College Writing Skills*

<u>Course Information</u> Tuesday – <b>SOC 35</b> 9-10:50 am Thursday – <b>HUM 62</b> 9-10:50 am 4 Units	<u>Instructor Information</u> Name: Benjamin Ovando Email: ovandoenglish@gmail.com Phone: TBA
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**REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:**

**Textbook**

Kirsner, Laurie and Stephen Mandell. *Focus on Writing*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2008.  
Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2006.

**Other Requirements**

Regular access to a computer (required for readings on Blackboard) with:  
internet access (broadband recommended);  
Adobe Acrobat Reader 7.0 (or later);  
a printer.  
One two-pocket folder  
A USB flash drive

**Recommended Text**

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual; 5<sup>th</sup> ed.* Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2008.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

*English 125: College Writing Skills* is a course created to extend your opportunities for reading, writing, thinking, and inquiry. This course is designed to develop your abilities as a reader and writer – a literacy user – as an active participant in the world of language in which you are already immersed. The primary focus is developing basic college level writing skills such as creating clear, complex sentences, well-developed paragraphs, and expanding the knowledge and use of grammar. The secondary focus is on developing basic essay writing skills including prewriting, revising, and editing short formal essays. With attention to the ways you read and write and through much practice in and out of class, you will develop skills that help you write effectively for many audiences, including your other classes.

The approach to reading and writing we will be engaging is called “rhetorical,” a term we will spend a good deal of time unpacking. The **rhetorical situation**—attention to purpose, audience, genre, stance, and design—will be used to understand the way language shapes our sense of ourselves and our engagement with the communities in which we participate. An important assumption of this class is that thinking, reading, and writing are integral parts of college writing.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

In the process of completing this course, students will:

1. Write complete, appropriate, varied English sentences, using coordination, subordination, and modification to clarify meanings
2. Use punctuation, capitalization, abbreviations, etc., conventionally and spell correctly
3. Use standard dialect noun, verb, and pronoun forms and verb tenses correctly
4. Differentiate between standard dialects and community dialects and slang, and use dialects appropriately
5. Study English sentence structures as they relate to meanings and learn to recognize relationships between the ways words are ordered and grouped and the meanings the reader may grasp. Utilizing punctuation, sentence variety and length, and different styles in modification and diction, the student must say what he or she means and make that meaning clear to the reader.
6. Write in paragraphs that develop topic sentences with adequate, detailed support
7. Use various patterns of paragraph development, such as spatial and time orders in description and narration, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, example or analogy, and persuasion. Decisions about organization must be related to the author’s purpose, to the reader, and to the writer’s resources.

8. Initiate and carry through appropriate use of the writing process: recognizing the affect of purpose and audience, discovering topics, selecting and ordering ideas and the evidence to develop the topic, writing and revising, and editing and finishing the paper
9. Write with coherence and unity, paying attention to reference, agreement, consistency, and transitions
10. Use critical thinking skills in writing, with attention to avoiding fallacies, relating structure to ideas, developing logical support for generalizations, following logical orders, and differentiating between statements of fact and opinion
11. Use basic library sources to find information, and avoid plagiarism in the preparation of a limited paper based on published sources

### **COURSE OUTCOMES:**

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

1. Prewrite constructively to generate ideas and determine ideas, opinions, positions, and ultimately theses and plans
2. Respond to a prompt quickly and independently
3. Write a developed essay with a clear thesis and support
4. Write with some sophistication: introduction should be more than a thesis; a conclusion should be more than a summary; an essay should have ample substance
5. Plan and revise fairly independently employing all stages of the writing process as necessary and appropriate
6. Recognize and revise common errors such as problems with comma splices throughout a piece
7. Construct idiomatically correct sentences although there may be an “accent” resulting from a consistent type of ESL error
8. Use a variety of rhetorics and structures, including documented sources
9. Use MLA style with some guidance to set up papers and document sources

### **MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:**

#### **Reading**

Students are responsible for completing assigned reading *in advance* of each class meeting and to actively participate in discussions, activities, and instructional presentations. Selections of the readings for this class are digital documents located on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to download and read these documents in a timely manner. Also, short writing assignments over the readings will be assigned periodically.

#### **Essays**

There will be 3 formal essays of 3-6 pages in length assigned during the course, and there will be numerous shorter writing assignments that will support the writing process of the essays. For each essay, students will go through the various stages of the writing process, including prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing.

#### **General Assignments and Quizzes**

You will be given a range of assignments throughout the semester. Assignment due dates will be indicated on the Course Schedule and will be due on the days listed. In addition, quizzes will be given randomly during the semester. They will be based on your readings for the week and are generally 10 points each.

#### **Late Assignments**

Late assignments of any type **WILL NOT** be accepted, unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor. If you know you will be absent, please turn in your work early or email the assignment to the instructor no later than the regularly scheduled class time.

#### **Final**

There will be an in-class timed essay final at the end of the semester which will be based on your readings and test your ability to apply the skills we learned in class. More details will be given towards the end of the semester.

## **GRADING/EVALUATION:**

The grading for this class will be broken down as follows:

General assignments, reading responses, and quizzes – approx. 400 points	<u>Approx. Grade Scale</u>
Essay 1 – 150 points	A= 900-1000 pnts
Essay 2 – 150 points	B= 800 – 899 pnts
Essay 3 – 200 points	C= 700-799 pnts
Final Exam – 100 points	D= 600-699 pnts
	F = 0-599 pnts

Total Points: approx. 1000 points (Total points may change during the semester)

Although you receive a “letter” grade from the instructor, this class is a Credit/No Credit based class. Therefore, you only need to achieve 70% of the total class points to receive a “Credit” grade.

## **CLASSROOM POLICIES**

### **Subject to Change**

This syllabus and schedule are subject to change. You will be notified of any changes.

### **Attendance**

This course is discussion and activity driven. A good deal of time is spent discussing and modeling, working together and demonstrating. Missing more than **Four (4)** classes **BEFORE the drop deadline** will result in automatic withdrawal from the class. Tardiness in excess of 15 minutes will be counted as half an absence unless cleared with the instructor prior to class.

**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.

If you require an extended period of absence due to extenuating circumstances, **please advise the instructor as soon as possible.** I will make special arrangements based on the situation that will allow you to continue to participate in class. Please remember you will need to provide documentation of these circumstances (i.e. medical records, police records, etc.). Absences due to extenuating circumstances will not affect your grade in class if proper procedures are taken.

### **Religious Observances**

Students who will be absent from class due to a religious observance must provide notice of the date(s) to me, in writing, by the end of the second week of classes.

### **Blackboard**

You must have regular internet access, since we will be using Blackboard. On Blackboard I will post daily announcements, comments and assignment changes. Additionally, your major assignments and the syllabus will be available there when you need them. We may also conduct discussion forums there.

### **Turnitin.com**

This campus subscribes to the Turnitin.com plagiarism prevention service, and you will need to submit written assignments to Turnitin.com. Your work will be used by Turnitin.com for plagiarism detection and for no other purpose. You may indicate in writing to the instructor that you refuse to participate in the Turnitin.com process, in which case your instructor can use other electronic means to verify the originality of your work.

### **Cell Phones/Pagers**

PLEASE TURN OFF OR SILENCE CELL PHONES AND PAGERS DURING CLASS. Also, text/instant messaging, checking voicemail/email or answering calls during class are strictly prohibited.

## **COLLEGE POLICIES**

### **Students with Disabilities**

Upon identifying themselves to the instructor and the college, students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluation. 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.

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

All work in this class is assumed to be the original work of the student. Any student who “borrows” essays or class work, improperly cites works or authors, or performs any other type of misrepresentation will receive an automatic “F” for that assignment and risks failing the class, as well as possibly receiving suspension, probation, or expulsion from the college.

### **Disruptive Classroom Behavior**

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 (including excessive talking, making rude or derogatory comments, answering cell phones, and leaving class early) shall not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class.

## **Tentative Topic and Paper Schedule**

### **Unit 1 –College Writing Skills [Weeks 1-5] – Short Writing Assignments**

Thursday, August 28 – Narrative Paragraph due  
Thursday, September 4 – Descriptive Paragraph due  
Thursday, September 11 – Compare and Contrast Paragraph due  
Thursday, September 18 – Revised Paragraphs due

### **Unit 2 – Language and Identity [Weeks 6-9] – Essay: 3-4 pages**

Thursday, October 2– Working Thesis due  
Thursday, October 9 –Proposal due  
Thursday, Oct 16 – Peer Workshop: Rough Draft 1 due (at least 3 pages)  
Tuesday, October 21 – Final Draft due

### **Unit 3 – Issues of Work [Weeks 10-13] – Essay: 4-5 pages**

Thursday, October 30 – Working Thesis due  
Thursday, November 6 – Proposal due  
Thursday, November 13 – Peer Workshop: Rough Draft 2 due (at least 3 pages)  
Tuesday, November 18 – Final Draft due

### **Unit 4 – Research and Argumentation in America [Weeks 14-17] – Essay: 5-6 pages**

Tuesday, November 25 – Focused Topic Paper Due  
Thursday, December 4 – Peer Workshop: Rough Draft 3 due (at least 4 pages)  
Tuesday, December 9 – Final Draft due

## **Important Dates**

Friday, September 5 – Last day to add or drop without a “W”  
Friday, October 17 – Last day to drop with a “W” (letter grade assigned after this point)  
Tuesday, November 11 – Veteran’s Day **NO CLASS**  
Thursday, November 27 – Thanksgiving Break **NO CLASS**  
Tuesday, December 16 – **Final Exam 9-10:50 am**