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

**Section # 78368, Class in session from Monday, 14 June- Sunday, 8 August**

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# Contact Information

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

Office: Faculty Annex 6 (directly behind the SOC building) Phone: 638-3641, ext. 3150

Office Hours: Appointments by arrangement only (from 10-12 Mondays-Thursdays)

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**Course Descript****ion**

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.

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**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** | **Point Value (Approximately)** | **Your Grade** |
| Essay #1 (Narrative, due week 2) | 100 |  |
| Essay #2 (Exemplification, due week 3) | 100 |  |
| Essay #3 (Comparison/Contrast, due week 5) | 100 |  |
| Midterm (Test on the grammar concepts  from units 1-5, taken week 5) | 40 |  |
| Essay #4 (Research Paper, due week 7) | 150 |  |
| Essay #5 (Classification Essay, due week 8) | 150 |  |
| Final (Test on the grammar concepts  from units 5-8, taken during week 8) | 47 |  |
| Discussion Boards (2-3 questions per unit) | 215 |  |
| Quizzes (1 per unit) | 203 |  |
| **TOTAL POINT VALUE:** | **1,105** |  |

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.

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**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. Not checking Blackboard or your email account is not an excuse for not being aware of any changes that are made to the calendar or the syllabus.

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**Required Texts and Materials**

Kirszner, Laurie. *Patterns for College Writing*. 11th Edition. Boston: Bedford St. Martin’s, 2009.

Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1981.

*Both of these texts are on reserve at the Reedley College Library for your convenience.*

**Supplies Needed**:

* a flash drive
* a set of several different colored highlighters
* plenty of lined paper
* some computer paper
* pencils and blue or black ink pens
* a binder with organizational tabs to keep all of your work for this class

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**Weekly Schedule**

In the assignment folders tab in our Blackboard website, you will find a detailed schedule of the due dates for the entire semester. To give you a feel of how the class will work, a typical week looks like this:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sunday** | **Monday**  **Unit A begins** | **Tuesday**  Due by midnight:  --All discussion board posts for Unit A due (including the work for your essay)  --all readings for Unit A due  --the quiz for Unit A due | **Wednesday**  Due by midnight:  --all other work for Unit A must be complete, including all replies, grammar videos and exercises, all other videos, all replies | **Thursday**  **Unit B begins** | **Friday**  Due by midnight:  --All discussion board posts for Unit B due (including the work for your essay)  --all readings for Unit B due  --the quiz for Unit B due | **Saturday** |
| **Sunday**  Due by midnight:  --all other work for Unit B must be complete, including all replies, grammar videos and exercises, all other videos, all replies | **Monday**  The next unit’s **Unit A begins** |  |  |  |  |  |

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**Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes**

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

1. Write an essay of at least 750 words which includes an introduction, multiple body paragraphs, and conclusion of some sophistication. This essay 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.

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**Computer Requirements**

Skills Needed for this class:

* Familiarity with computers (knowing where the power switch is located, for example)
* Know the basics of word processing (saving files, using spell check, moving text, using the help function, etc.). (See the “Word Processing Formats” section below).
* Know how to access the Internet and navigate the Internet (use a browser, utilize search engines, save and print from the Internet)
* Know how to send e-mail and e-mail with attachments. (See the “E-mail” section below).
* Have some familiarity with Blackboard. We will be using Blackboard as part of our classroom. Our Blackboard site contains documents, announcements and other information needed for our course; in addition, Blackboard allows for e-mailing and online discussions. There are various tabs to the left of the screen in Blackboard. These tabs lead you to necessary and supplementary documents, to all assignments and schedules, and more. You can access our Blackboard directly from the Reedley College Website (click on the “Blackboard” link found under the “Blackboard/WebAdvisor” link; or in the “Quick Links” pull-down menu).

Hardware Needed for this class:

* Pentium (PC) or Mac equivalent
* Home Internet access is desirable. You can use the computers on campus; however, they are not always available, so you will need to find out when each lab is open and available for drop-in use. You should also know if your local library has computers available with Internet access. If your home computer crashes, is in need of repair, or you lose Internet access, you must find an alternative way to complete the required work on time for this class. This means, of course, that you need to constantly back up the work from your hard drive to a disk, flash drive, or other moveable source.

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# Discussion Board Details and Tips

Here’s some hints to help you write quality original posts and responses:

1. Take the time to think about what you are writing so that your comments are well-written and complete.
2. When responding to others, don’t merely say “I agree.” Instead, explain why you agree or disagree. Try to carry on a discussion.
3. Remember that spelling as grammar count; please also watch your language and word choice. Cursing and inappropriate language are not acceptable. If this occurs, action will be taken as necessary per school policy. Make sure that you capitalize “I” and spell “you” correctly. Do not abbreviate words. Make sure you use academic English. “Stupid” is not very academic and doesn’t tell the reader much!

The following is an example of what is not allowed:

i really thing that this is a stupide essay b/c i dont like it i really like the other essay better

This is better:

I thought that the author’s supporting arguments were weak. For instance, the example he used regarding visiting his grandparents did not go into enough detail to really convince me of his point.

Each unit, you will have the following due for your discussion board assignments:

* **Original Posts (1 post per question).** I will post two or three questions each unit based on that unit’s readings and on your essay writing (an outline or a draft)**, you will need to post a substantive post (of at least 200 words per post**) **in response to each of my questions**. The original posts are always due at least a day before the end of the unit to allow people to reply to each others’ postings.
* **Replies (1 reply per question).** Then, **you will need to reply to a fellow students’ post for each question (in other words, you need to reply once to each of the two or three questions, for a total of two or three replies)**; each reply needs to be **at least 50 words**. Be sure to address the person by name that you are replying to, and make sure that you first try to reply to someone in the class who has not had any feedback on his post.

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**How are Discussion Board Postings Graded?**

A thoughtful, well-written response that directly addresses all of the components of the question will earn full credit. The response should indicate that you reflected carefully upon the question; it also indicates that you took the time to edit your work prior to posting. A full-credit posting will have few grammatical errors, and you would need to include the word count (that is above the minimum requirement of the assignment).

**Some tips to earn full credit: Type your responses first in Word**, get the word count added to your post in Word, and then cut and paste the work into Blackboard. This is a good idea for several reasons—first, you can edit your work with the help of spell and grammar check. Also, so many students have told me that they have lost work when their computer crashes or Blackboard freezes. Also, in the subject line of each post, **you will need to title each post** and reply with something catchy, creative, and informative. Think of your title as an advertisement for your thoughts, as you are trying to get students interested enough to read your post.

Each question’s discussion board postings and replies are worth **5 points**. Depending on how many questions there are for that unit, you will be able to earn between 25-30 points for each unit for full-credit work. Points will be deducted for each of the following infractions:

* not addressing all parts of all of the questions
* not having a depth of thought in the response (responding quickly just to get the work done)
* not including the word count or falling short of the word count
* having a large number of grammatical errors or spelling errors, including IM speak (“u” instead of “you”) or slang
* posting the original post but no replies, or posting the reply but no original post
* not creating an informative, creative title to both your original post and replies
* not addressing by name the person to whom you are replying
* choosing to reply to someone else’s post who already been replied to by another student when there are other students who have not had any replies to their posts
* posting your work late

Please note, if you do post your work after I have graded that unit’s discussion boards, I will have no way of knowing you have made the work up. **To get any credit for your late work, you will need to email me, informing me of exactly which unit’s discussion boards you made up (indicating whether you completed the original posts, the replies, or both).** You have until the grammar midterm to make up any discussion boards for weeks 1-5, and the final to make up any discussion boards from weeks 6-8.

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**Grammar Exercises**

Each unit focuses on a different grammar concept by providing you a website to go to for more information, a video in which I review the concept, and some exercises to complete. In the video, I go over the answers to a few problems to help you understand the concept. While I will not necessarily collect your completed grammar exercises, you need to work on them as a practice before the quizzes, the midterm, and final.

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**Attendance Policies**

I will monitor your online contact through the Blackboard discussion board, essays, quizzes, and e-mail. You will need to make your presence known every day by making substantive contributions to the discussions.

Failure to post to the discussion board for two weeks in a row (including weekends) and/or complete assignments, without contact with the instructor, will mean that you are no longer participating in the class, which means you may be dropped from the class.

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**E-Mail**

An e-mail address is essential for this class. If you do not currently have one, you should set one up through Reedley College, Hotmail, or Yahoo immediately. 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. 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.

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”.

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**Word Processing Formats**

The most common word processing format is Microsoft Word. If you use another word processing program or have Office 2007, you will need to learn to save your work in Rich Text Format (RTF). Guidelines for how to save in RTF are found under the **Reference Handouts** folder on Blackboard. *Do not use Microsoft Works or any other program that does not allow for easy conversion*. *Using WordPad is unacceptable. If you have WordPad, you must plan to visit a local library—public or school—to convert your work before sending it for review or as the final product.*

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

For each essay we write in this class, you will create at least one outline and one rough draft before submitting your final draft of your paper. You will post your outline and your rough draft on our Discussion Board for some feedback from your classmates; at some point throughout the semester for at least one of your essay assignments, I will also give you feedback on one outline and one rough draft. When responding to your fellow students’ work, make sure to pick someone who has not had any feedback from other students. Give them specific feedback on at least two things they did well (two strengths) in their outline or their draft; then choose two specific areas they can improve upon (two weaknesses). For ideas on what to give feedback on, reference the English 125 rubric. Also, see page 54 in *Patterns* for some excellent Revision questions to guide your feedback.

Any essays written during the semester will only be **accepted up to 24 hour grace period** after the deadline for any credit, with **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. All of your papers will be submitted on Blackboard, through Turnitin.com. To submit an essay, follow the detailed instructions in each essay’s folder, where the link to submit your paper is located. There is also a video on how to submit your papers through Turnitin.com in the Assignments folder.

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**Essays--Rewriting Policies**

You are allowed to and encouraged to rewrite up to **two essays 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. In order to rewrite your paper, you first need to make an appointment to come into my office hours (or an appointment over the phone) to discuss what you need to do to improve your paper. Then, you have up to one week from when I return your essays to rewrite the paper. When you turn in your rewritten paper, be sure to include the graded paper, so I can see what changes you made to your paper; email me both the revised final draft and the graded essay. I will only give a grade higher for papers with substantial, significant changes in them. **You will not have the opportunity to rewrite Essay #5, as grades are due soon after you turn in that final paper.**

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**Essay Formatting**

For all work you submit, follow MLA formatting (watch my MLA formatting video, or see the student sample research paper on pages 782-788 in *Patterns* for an example):

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 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).

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 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. This information needs to be formatted into your header.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Copy and paste an English 125 rubric so that the rubric is the first page of final draft.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ You will submit this final draft to Turnitin.com; you will find the link in that essay’s assignment

folder in Blackboard.

**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.”

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**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 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.

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# Quizzes/Grammar Midterm and Final

# You will have quizzes based on the previous unit’s readings, the videos, and the grammar concepts; the midterm and final will be based solely on the grammar concepts. Go to our Blackboard website and find these quizzes and exams in the “Quizzes” tab. The quizzes, midterms and final cannot be made up; once they close, I will not reopen them.

Each quiz will have a 30 time limit in which it needs to be completed the first time you begin (usually there are between 10-15 questions). The grammar midterm and final have about 50 questions, and you will have approximately an hour and a half to complete the exam. For both the quizzes and the exams, you are encouraged to look up the answers to your questions by looking at the readings and by looking up the answers on the PowerPoint presentations. You can prepare by completing your reading assignment, taking the comprehension quizzes on our textbook’s web site ([www.bedfordstmartins.com/patterns](http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/patterns)), as well as watching the grammar videos and completing the grammar homework.

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# 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.

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**Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Blackboard**

*What is the little exclamation in the grade book on the Blackboard (Bb) site?*

The exclamation point simply says that your quiz went through properly and is waiting to be graded. Some quizzes are automatically graded as they are multiple choice. If they are not, I will have to go in and grade them myself. This might take a week or so. After I grade them, you will be able to open them through the grade book function, and review the quiz. The correct answers will usually be available at that time.

*I have a question mark or a lock next in my grade book next to a quiz or exam. What does this mean?*

This means that for some reason the quiz or exam did not go through properly. This usually results from either you dropping off line, having a power failure, exiting the program before you have finished the quiz or exam or hitting the enter button instead of clicking on the submit button at the bottom of the page. If this happens, you must email me immediately to clear the lock. I check my email several times a day and can usually clear it within 24 hours or less.

*I can’t access Blackboard. What do I do?*

Wait and try again. If you keep having trouble accessing Blackboard, try all of the following in order before emailing me:

1. Turn off your computer entirely and unplug it. Let it sit for 5 minutes. Then plug it back in and try accessing the web site again.
2. Check the URL for the site and be sure you are entering it correctly. The URL you should use is http://blackboard.reedleycollege.edu .
3. Try accessing another website from your computer that you have not accessed recently. This will clarify if the problem is with Blackboard or with your own browser or internet service provider.
4. Hit the refresh button. Sometimes a “page not found” screen gets stuck in the browser’s cache. Refreshing the page will sometimes clear it.
5. Turn off any parental control or other content filters. Sometimes these filters, as valuable as they are, can filter out good content as well as bad.
6. Call 1-866-401-7784. This is the Bb help desk.

*Can I call you if I need help with my computer?*

I am not a computer technician, nor is my job as an instructor to act as computer support. While I might be able to help with small issues here and there, you really need to know how to use your computer and get computer support elsewhere. Often, the Bb help desk will be able to help you.

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**Reminders/Tips for Success**

1. When this class is taught face-to-face during the summer eight week session, students meet with an instructor/class for eight hours a week for this class. The average amount of homework for a week hour is two-three hours. **This means that the time needed for this class during the eight week summer session, when taken online, is about twenty-four to thirty-two (24-32) hours per week.** It is important to understand the time commitment necessary to be successful in this or any online class. In addition, this course is still controlled by the eight week summer session confines of the college. This necessitates deadlines for essays and other assignments. While online classes do offer flexibility, there are limitations. I cannot have students complete work in any order and at any time during the eight week. Assignments, skills, and knowledge are expected to build on one another. And, for my own sanity, I can’t have students turn in a semester’s worth of work during the last unit or two of the semester.
2. 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 e-mail daily.
3. Because this is an online class, and we are using Blackboard, a class e-mail list is generated. This 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.
4. If an essay is due and you cannot access Blackboard, probably Blackboard is down. Don’t stress—wait a little bit and try again. When this happens, watch for email messages from me. I will let you know the revised due date. Of course, if an essay is due and the Blackboard is down, I can’t hold you to the original due date.
5. Check your email daily. If you do not send your essay in RTF and you are using a word processing program other than Microsoft Word, or your essay is saved using Office 2007, and I can’t open your essay, I will be sending you an email requiring you to resave and resend your essay.
6. If something happens to your computer and/or Internet and an assignment is due, ***call me or email me (of course using another computer)***. Do not wait until everything is back up before contacting me. Moreover, you need to back up your work on a moveable storage device (CD, flash drive, USB, etc). Public libraries have computers with Internet access—work can be completed in places and on computers other than those we have at home!
7. In this class we will occasionally read, view, and discuss controversial subject matter. This is college, so adult topics should be expected. These could include issues such as race, sexuality, gender, and cultures different from your own. When you are faced with new ideas, ideas that are different than your own, or issues that make you uncomfortable, I expect you to keep an open mind and never to lower yourself into discriminating or using a mocking, harassing, or belittling tone to others.
8. If you choose to withdraw from the class, please keep in mind that **it is your responsibility to drop from the course before the final day to drop**. If you do not drop yourself and simply stop attending the class, you will earn an F in the course.
9. Set up a current, readily accessible working email account as soon as possible and ensure that this current email is entered into Blackboard (as I communicate frequently through Blackboard).
10. 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.
11. Should you discover that you are unable to regularly attend class online 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.
12. 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.
13. For each essay, you will be asked to share your work with each other. Please don’t write about topics you don’t want others to know about.
14. **Important dates:**
    1. July 5: Independence Day observed, campus is closed, but our class is still open.
    2. The Grammar midterm and final’s dates are listed in the Quizzes folder in Blackboard.

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