English 125 Online
Sections 53008 / 53184
WRITING SKILLS FOR COLLEGE ~ REEDLEY COLLEGE
SPRING 2011

"The end depends upon the beginning" – *The Emperors Club*

Instructor: Ms. C. Karle	Office Hours
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Table of Contents

Course Description	Required Course Work	Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
Course Objectives	Grading Scale	Helpful Hints
Course Outcomes	Weekly Schedule	Paper Policy
Required Texts	Plagiarism and Cheating	Important Dates
Computer Requirements	Attendance	Final
	Essential Information	

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to assist you on your journey to becoming a better writer. Before you can become a better or stronger writer, you must believe that writing well is important and serves a purpose in your life. You have to be willing to constantly ask yourself, "What am I trying to say?" Then, you must challenge yourself to answer this question honestly and fully.

This course emphasizes the development of the process of writing, revising, and finishing short papers, including the logical development and organization of ideas; avoiding common writing errors; developing reading skills by reading model essays and analyzing rhetorical strategies; developing critical thinking skills by matching the structures of writing to meaning and audience, and by using writing as thinking, to explore and express ideas.

We will use Blackboard as our classroom. Our classroom Blackboard 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 that 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 "RC Online" link).

(Return to Table of Contents)

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

Required Texts and Supplies:

Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1982.

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave Written by Himself.* New York: Dover Publications (Thrift Edition), 1995.

Ream of Paper. You should print the syllabus, schedule, essay guidelines and more.

(Return to Table of Contents)
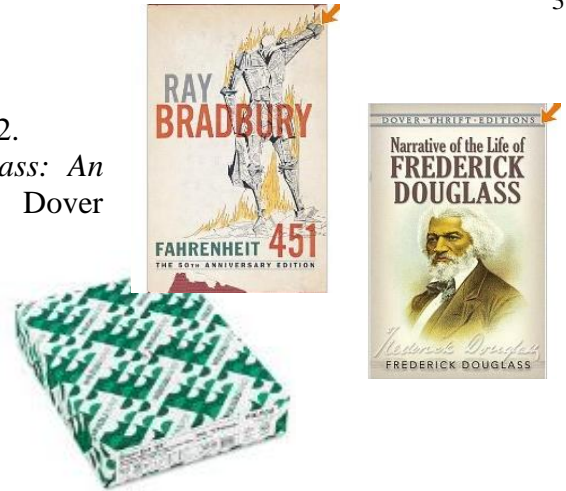
Computer Requirements:

Skills Needed:
- Familiarity with computers (knowing where the power switch is located, for example)
- Know the basics of word processing (saving files, using spell check, using grammar check, moving text, using the help function, etc.)
- Know how to access the Internet and navigate the Internet (use a browser, utilize search engines, save and or print from the Internet)
- Know how to send e-mail and e-mail with attachments

Hardware Needed:
- 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 flash drive or other source.*

Software Needed:
- The most common word processing format is Microsoft Word. If you use another word processing program, 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 **Documents link** 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.*
- Adobe Reader. This can be downloaded for free. All essays will be returned to you in PDF form. Several handouts will also be uploaded as PDFs.

(Return to Table of Contents)

E-Mail
An e-mail address is essential. The college now uses only the college email accounts (your last name underscore your seven digit ID@my.scccd.edu). You must use your college account for this and any Reedley College class. You can set your scccd.com email to forward to another email. Information about school email can be found on the home page of the college website and on the login page for Blackboard.

I will use e-mail to communicate with the class as a whole, with groups, and with individuals. Whether you have Internet and e-mail access at home or on campus, you should plan on checking your e-mail at least every other day—once a day is preferred. DO NOT use your cell phone as the primary means of checking/reading email. Phone screens are too small; therefore, you are not easily able to view the "whole picture" when reading

email. Additionally, most phone programs to not allow for spell check on email messages, so refrain from using your phone as a primary means of communication with me.

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 do not know the sender.*

In addition, remember, when you email me, your instructor—your English 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".

Then, after sending an email, look for a response! This might sound like common sense, but I always surprised by students who send an email with an "urgent question" or an important question about an essay or grade, to which I reply in a timely manner with a question or further information, and it takes three or four days for a response from that student.

Required Course Work:

Class Participation	Required
Quizzes	10%
Discussion Boards, Blogs, Etc.	10%
Timed Essays (3)	10%
Essays (3-4)	65%
Final	5%

Class participation is defined as reading the class assignments; joining in the exchange of opinions in group and/or whole class discussion; starting appropriate new items for discussion; and, perhaps most important of all, asking questions.

When figuring your final Quiz grade, I will drop the two lowest grades and average the remaining scores. ***A missed quiz is equal to a zero, and no make-ups are allowed.***

I do not accept late work, nor do I allow for make up work. This means you need to be in class (online) and do the work as assigned. The only exception to this policy is the one-week grace period given for all but the last essay. The late paper policy is described in detail on page seven.

Grading Scale:

    90-100 % = A
    80- 89%   = B
    70- 79%   = C
    60- 69%   = D
     0- 59%   = F

I use a program called Micrograde to record grades. I will upload grades every Friday beginning the third week of the semester. When I upload grades, the program (Chariot - WebGrade) will send an email that will include the link along with a user name and password so you can check your grade. The user name and password for checking grades are separate from your Blackboard login.

Even though I use a grading program outside of Blackboard, you will need to utilize the grade book on Blackboard to review graded quizzes. When you open the grade book on Blackboard you might see exclamation points, questions marks, or a lock symbol.

The exclamation point simply means 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 the quizzes 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.

If you see a question mark or lock symbol, this means that for some reason your quiz or exam did not go through properly. This usually results from either you opening multiple pages (such as PowerPoint presentations), 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 on the bottom of the page. If this happens, you MUST email me immediately to clear the lock. I check email several times a day and can usually clear a quiz within 24 hours or less. HOWEVER, if you wait until the day a quiz is due, I may not be able to clear the quiz AND I cannot give you extra time to complete the assignment.
(Return to Table of Contents)

Weekly Schedule:
For the weekly schedule refer to the **Syllabus** tab on Blackboard. Then click on "Tentative Semester Schedule." Here you will find reading assignments, discussion board due dates, essay due dates, and more.

Each week's assignments will be emailed to you by Friday evening (for the following week) and will also be posted on the announcements page of Blackboard. ***The weekly email always contains the most updated/accurate information.***
 (Return to Table of Contents)

Plagiarism and Cheating:
If it is discovered that you have cheated or plagiarized on an assignment—at any point during the semester—you will receive a zero on that assignment and perhaps a failing grade in the class. *Plagiarism of the final essay for the semester will result in a failing grade in the class.*

Plagiarism means to pass off the work of others as your own. Plagiarism is dishonest and represents an attempt to obtain the benefits of a college degree without doing the work. For more information about plagiarism and cheating, refer to the Spring 2011 Class Schedule (Campus Policies). There is also additional information about plagiarism on Blackboard. Click on the **Documents link** and then look for the Plagiarism document.
(Return to Table of Contents)

Attendance Policy:
Students' online contact will be monitored through the Blackboard discussion board, essays, miscellaneous assignments, and e-mail. Students need to make their presence known every week. Students are required to make substantive contributions to the discussions. Students may address the topics suggested by the instructor, devise their own topics if appropriate, or respond to their classmates—depending on the particular discussion forum.

Failure to post to the discussion board for two weeks (excluding 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.
(Return to Table of Contents)

Essential Information:

- When this class is taught face-to-face, students meet with an instructor/class for four unit hours. The average amount of homework for a unit hour is two-three hours. This means that the time needed for this class is about twelve to sixteen (12-16) 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 eighteen week semester confines of the college.   This necessitates deadlines for essays and other assignments. While online classes do offer flexibility, there are limitations. Students should not complete work in any order and at any time during the eighteen weeks. Assignments, skills, and knowledge are expected to build on one another. Final grades are due the Monday after final exams; therefore, deadlines for assignments during the semester must be respected.
- 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 weekly basis and your e-mail daily (or at least every other day).
- It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw from this and/or any course. Failure to do so may result in an "F" grade being awarded.
- 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.

(Return to Table of Contents)

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 Disability Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please contact me as soon as possible.
(Return to Table of Contents)

Helpful Hints:

- Always keep a copy of each of your papers. This protects you if the instructor should happen to lose one of your papers. You should be saving your work on your hard drive and backing up your work to a USB or other storage device.
- Keep track of your work. You should save all of your work until the end of the fall semester so you can double check the grade recorded by the instructor.
- 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.

(Return to Table of Contents)

Paper Policy

- All papers must be revised and typed in accordance with MLA guidelines. All work leading to your final paper must be kept—for example, all prewriting, rough drafts, peer responses, and any other work produced. *There are no exceptions to this policy.*

- *Papers that do not follow MLA guidelines (as discussed on Blackboard) will be docked 5%, which is ½ of a letter grade. This will increase to 10% for the final essay and the final.*

- Word Processing Formats: The most common word processing format is Microsoft Word. If you use another word processing program, 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 **Documents link** 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.*

- If you do not turn in an essay on time, you can turn it in up to one week after the due date. After this one-week "grace" period, you can not turn in the essay. Any essay turned in during this grace period will be read and docked one full letter grade. This policy DOES NOT apply to the final essay OR the timed essays. The final essay MUST be turned in on time—NO EXCEPTIONS.

- 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 will not hold you to the original due date.

- Guidelines for turning in essays through Blackboard can be found on Blackboard under the TURNITIN tab. All essays will be turned in through the TURNITIN tab on Blackboard. *TURNITIN is a website that detects plagiarism.* This means that if you copy and or copy/paste writing from a website, another published source, or from a previous student of mine, the plagiarism will be detected. You will be "caught."

- Should I discover while reading your essay that you have not 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 (the return date will be clearly marked for you). The highest grade such a "returned" paper can receive is a "C".

- You will be required to share some of your essays in progress for peer review. We will have at least one type of Writer's Workshop for each essay. All students are required to post a rough draft or outline (as directed) for each Writer's Workshop (with minimum writing completed as announced in weekly emails). The Writer's Workshop will take place on the discussion board in a forum set up specifically for each essay.

- We will be doing various types of writing assignments this semester—and each essay will be based on a reading. Before beginning an essay, a discussion will be completed. The discussion boards receive a grade separate from the essay.

- With all our writing assignments, process will be focused upon as well as final product.

Paper Policy Continued

- *At my discretion, sentences and/or paragraphs may be taken from essays or other assignments and shared with the class to help illustrate grammar concepts, writing concepts, MLA guidelines, and more.*

- *Graded papers are returned to you via email. It is expected that you open, print, and read all returned essays. They contain comments about the essay and about writing to help you grow and improve as a writer.*

- If something happens to your computer and/or Internet and an essay (or other assignment) is due, ***email me, of course, using another computer or your phone***. Do not wait until everything is back up before contacting me. Moreover, you need to back up your work on a moveable storage device. Public libraries have computers with Internet access—work can be completed in places and on computers other than those we have at home!

ATTENTION:
Failure to turn in the first essay will result in being dropped from the class.
It is not possible to pass this class unless all essays are completed.

Important Dates:

January 17	(M)	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – No Classes, Campus Closed
January 21	(F)	Last day to drop a full-term class for a refund
January 28	(F)	Last day to register for a full-term class
January 28	(F)	Last day to drop a fall full-term class to avoid a "W"
February 11	(T)	Last Day to change a fall class to/from Pass/No Pass grading basis
February 18	(F)	Lincoln Day – No Classes, Campus Closed
February 21	(M)	Washington Day – No Classes, Campus Closed
March 11	(F)	Last day to drop a full-term class (letter grades assigned after this date)
April 18-22	(M-F)	Spring Recess – No Classes
May 16-20	(M-F)	Final Exams week

FINAL

DUE to TURNITIN BY 11:00 PM
Friday, May 13th

Late Work Not Accepted – No Exceptions