**Reedley College | English 125, College Writing Skills**

**Fall 2015**

**Section 56313**

**Room Info: HUM 62**

**Monday/Wednesday 2:00pm – 3:50pm**

**Contact Information**

**Instructor: Mrs. Amy Shea**

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**Office Hours: See me to schedule time to meet.**

**“You must write, and read, as if your life depended on it. - Adrienne Rich**

I look forward to helping you work towards becoming better writers. Writing will continue to play an important role in your life beyond your college years regardless of what line of work you go into. You will need to communicate to others in a variety of ways and knowing how to write clearly, effectively, and with confidence will allow you to say what you mean and to be heard and understood by others. The foundation for becoming a strong writer is built upon writing often and reading often, both of which we will be doing in this class.

**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.

**“A word after a word after a word is power.”**

**- Margaret Atwood**

**Student Learning Outcomes**

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

1. Write multiple papers of at least 1200 words, which include an introduction, multiple body paragraphs, and conclusion of some sophistication. This essay will include:
   1. a clearly defined thesis statement
   2. unified supporting paragraphs, which begin with topic sentences
   3. quotations that support the topic sentences and the thesis
   4. supporting material and ideas, which exhibit critical thinking
   5. complete sentences which include a variety of sentence types (simple, compound, complex, and compound/complex sentence)
   6. descriptive vocabulary that exhibits growth and sophisticated word choice
   7. avoidance of 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. use of MLA guidelines to set up essays, correctly use in-text citations for at least one source, and complete a works cited page.
   9. writing that is free from plagiarism
   10. demonstrated awareness of how to write from the 3rd person point of view for a specific audience
2. Plan and revise independently, employing all stages of the writing process as necessary and appropriate.
3. Complete a multi-paragraph in-class essay with thesis and support.

**Course Objectives**

*In the process of completing this course, students will:*

1. learn about writing papers which include introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions
2. learn to write with some sophistication
3. practice writing thesis statements
4. practice writing topic sentences
5. learn about using quotations and in-text citations that support the topic sentences and the thesis
6. practice developing supporting material that exhibits critical thinking
7. develop an understanding of what a complete sentence is and practice using a variety of sentences types (simple, compound, complex, and compound/complex sentence)
8. learn about common sentence errors, such as fragments, comma splices, sentence fuses
9. develop their usage of descriptive vocabulary that exhibits growth and sophisticated word choice
10. learn how to follow MLA guidelines when formatting papers and using quotations and a works cited page
11. learn about avoiding plagiarism
12. write papers in which they will use 3rd person point of view and practice addressing a specific audience
13. practice using all stages of the writing process as necessary and appropriate
14. practice writing in-class essays

**Required Texts and Supplies**

*Books:*

*You can purchase all books listed below at the Reedley College Bookstore*

* Graff, Gerald; Birkenstein, Cathy; and Durst, Russel. *They Say/I Say*. 3rd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014.
* Kincaid, Jamaica. *A Small Place.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000.
* Hemmingway, Ernest. *The Old Man and the Sea*. London: Arrow Books, 2004.

*Supplies:*

* Folder or binder for your work and handouts
* USB drive
* Pencils and/or pens (blue or black ink only)
* Paper
* Examination blue books (size 8 ½ x 11)

Please remember to bring your books, handouts, and supplies to each class. It is essential to be prepared for the day’s activities and discussions. Coming to class without the required supplies means you are essentially absent.

**"It’s worth the work to find the precise word that will create a feeling or describe a situation. Use a thesaurus, use your imagination, scratch your head until it comes to you, but find the right word." – Isabel Allende**

**Required Course Work and Grading**

Required Course Work

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Class Participation | REQ |
| Quizzes | 10% |
| Timed Essays (3) | 20% |
| Submitted Essays (3) | 70% |

*\*\* Class participation is defined as attending class; reading the class assignments; engaging in partner, group, and class discussions; starting up appropriate items for in-class discussion; and most importantly, asking questions. You will be expected to attend, speak, and engage in class fully.*

Late work will not be accepted. You must be in class and do the assigned work – please see the “Late Paper Policy” located in this syllabus for additional details.

Grading Scale

90- 100% = A

80 – 89% = B

70 – 79% = C

60 – 69% = D

0 - 59% = F

Checking Grades

* It is your responsibility to check your grades regularly throughout the semester. Do not forget to do this. If your grade is lower than you would like it to be, please feel free to schedule a meeting with me to discuss how we can work to try and raise your grade.
* I will upload grades after every essay exam and essay. I will also return all graded essays and quizzes in class

**Semester Assignment Schedule**

Please see separate handout given with the syllabus, which details planned assignments for the term. This includes reading assignments, quizzes, exams, essay due dates, workshops, and more. A copy of this schedule will also be posted on Blackboard.

*Accommodations for Students with Disabilities*

If you have a verified need for an academic accommodation or materials in an 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. You must submit the form to me detailing what accommodations you will require. It is your responsibility to arrange those services with DSPS.

**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 Fall 2015 Class Schedule (Campus Policies).

*Bottom line:* DO NOT copy someone else’s words or ideas without giving him/her 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 use a paper you wrote for this class in a previous semester. 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) 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.

**Attendance Policy**

* Roll is taken every day within the first five minutes of class.
* There is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences.
* It is your responsibility to stay informed concerning any changes of assignments, due dates, readings, etc.
* Being absent is not an excuse for not knowing what is going on in class.
* Always come prepared, even after an absence. Check the assignment schedule, Blackboard, and/or a trusted fellow student or myself if you have missed a class and need to prepare for the following class.
* Any appointments, interviews, meetings, or other should be scheduled outside of class time.
* If you work, please inform your employer of your class schedule.
* If you arrive late it is your responsibility to check in with me at the end of class so that you are not recorded as absent.
* If you are late, come into class quietly and take the closest available seat to the door. Disruptions to class will not be tolerated.
* If you arrive 10 minutes late AND leave 10 minutes early it will be counted as an absence.

*Take Note:*

* If you are absent the first day of the semester, you will be dropped.
* If you attend the first class of the semester, but you are absent the second day without contacting me prior to class, you will be dropped.
* If you attend the first week, but not the second or third week without contacting me in advance, you will be dropped.
* If you have four absences by the end of Week 9, you may be dropped per the instructor’s discretion.
* 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.**

**Examinations**

Exams and quizzes CANNOT be made up. If you know in advance that you cannot attend class be sure to let me know at least 48 hours before class to make alternate plans to take the exam/quiz.

Refrain from talking during exams and quizzes. You may not leave class unless you have turned in your exam and have been instructed that you may leave when finished.

You may only use material as specified on the directions for the exam.

Absolutely NO electronic devices may be used or be on your desk during an exam. Should you be found in violation of these regulations, you will be immediately dismissed from the exam with no credit.

**Essays**

Essay Formatting

For all work you submit, follow MLA formatting, which can be found on Blackboard:

* Font set for Times New Roman, 12 pt.
* Entire essay is double-spaced only.
* 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 between paragraphs).
* Page numbers have been INSERTED (not typed) into the upper right hand corner beginning with page one.
* Include a Cover Page (this should always be page one) with the following information provided:
  + Student’s first and last name
  + Course and Section # (Ex: ENG 125, 56317)
  + Essay Number and Title (Ex: Essay 2: The Erosion of Free Speech)
  + Word Count
  + Originality Report Score
* 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 should be a creative one, not the assignment’s name. The title should be bolded, and in the same font and size as the essay text. Every major word in the title should be capitalized. There should be no quotation marks around the title, it should not be italicized or in all capital letters.
* ALWAYS run spell and grammar check to help catch errors. These functions should be automatically turned on for all your word documents.
* The Work(s) Cited page is the last page of the essay – do so by inserting a new page. It should follow formatting for the rest of the essay as noted above and on MLA formatting instructions and should be titled ‘Works Cited’.

Word Processing Formats

* You must use Microsoft Word. If you cannot for some reason then you must use a processing program and be able to convert it to Rich Text Formatting (RTF). Microsoft Works and Pages will not be accepted. If you use either of these formats you will need to find a way to convert them to an accepted format for submission.

Late Paper Policy

This policy pertains to all but the final essay and does not pertain to essay exams. Papers are accepted one week after their due date. PLEASE NOTE though if you do this, the grade for any essay received during the one week grace period are read, graded, and docked a full letter grade.

* Be prepared and do your work on time!

Revisions

* Revisions are allowed if you get a C or lower and want to try to improve your grade. Revisions are allowed for submitted essays only.
* Revisions will ONLY be accepted for SUBMITTED ESSAYS #1 and #2 (see your class assignment schedule or dates and details). Revisions are NOT ACCEPTED for Submitted Essay #3 or Timed Essays.
* It is suggested you utilize the services of The Writing Center (located in HUM 58) to work on any revisions.
* REVISIONS FOR SUBMITTED ESSAYS #1 ARE DUE NO LATER THAN MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30TH. Otherwise your original grade will remain in place. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

PLEASE NOTE:

* If you do not submit your essay in a format I can read as noted above in “Word Processing Formats” it will be returned to you and you will have one week to resubmit it. This date will be clearly marked on your paper. You will be docked one grade below what you would have otherwise received if this occurs.
* 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”.
* Papers that do not follow MLA guidelines (as noted on Blackboard) will be docked 5%. This will increase to 10% for the final essay and the final.
* If something happens to your computer and/or Internet and an essay (or other assignment) is due, email me using another device. Do not wait until everything is back up and running to contact me. You should ALWAYS back up your work regularly on a movable storage device. Public libraries have computers with Internet access – work can be completed in places and on computers other than those you have at home!
* All papers must be revised and typed in accordance with MLA guidelines. All work leading to your final paper must be kept. This includes all prewriting, rough drafts, peer responses, and any other work produced that is related to the final paper. **There are no exceptions to this policy.**

Getting Feedback and Additional Help on Your Writing

* I am happy to supply feedback. But you must come to me directly and set up a mutually acceptable time to meet to further discuss your work.
* Do not email me with a draft of your essay attached. I will not read it.
* The RC Writing Center, located in HUM 58 on the Reedley College campus is an invaluable resource. Use it!
* You can also enroll in English 272, a course designed to help you on any writing assignment from any class.
* On the Blackboard site you have access to free online tutoring through “Smarthinkng Tutoring” tab. You can submit writing for review by a tutor who will get back to you with feedback in less than 24 hours. There are also live tutors available to give feedback or answer writing-related questions.

Turning in Your Essays

1. Follow the essay guidelines that are handed out in class and MLA formatting guidelines.
2. Attach a cover page with the following information:
   * Student’s first and last name
   * Course and Section # (Ex: ENG 125, 56317)
   * Essay Number and Title (Ex: Essay 2: The Erosion of Free Speech)
   * Word Count
   * Originality Report Score
3. Bring a print out of your essay to class on the day it is due. It must have the cover page stapled to the front.

**“Good writing is rewriting.”**

**– Truman Capote**

**Essential Information**

* *Time commitment*: This course meets every week for four unit hours. The average amount of homework for a unit hour is two-three hours. This means that the time needed outside of class is about 8-12 hours per week. It is important you understand this is needed to be successful in this and any of your classes and to ensure you set aside the appropriate amount of time. Time management in addition to all the content you will absorb, is one of the most important lessons of your college career.
* It is your responsibility to stay informed concerning any changes of assignments, due dates, readings, etc. This means you need to be tuned in to any class announcements. Email a trusted classmate or myself if you are absent and need to find out if any changes to assignments or the schedule have occurred in your absence.
* It is your responsibility to officially withdraw from this and/or any course. Failure to do so may result in an “F” grade being awarded.
* Blackboard generated a class e-mail list. This e-mail list is to be exclusively 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.

**Student Conduct**

* You are expected to behave in a manner that is respectful to others and conducive to learning. You are expected to interact with each other respectfully and to work cooperatively and constructively in group an partner activities and assignments.
* All cell phones MUST be turned off or silenced during class. You MUST put the phone in your bag, purse or pocket. You do not need to look at your phone during class.
* All iPods or similar devices are to be off and put away during class. It is not acceptable to listen to music during class.
* You will get into this as much as you put into it. Invest in yourself and your education. Your future self will thank you.
* I am here to help you become better writers and I will do everything I can to help you succeed. I am invested in you and care about your success. Ultimately though, I am merely here to guide you. The responsibility for your success is yours alone.

Helpful Hints

* Keep an electronic and hard copy of your work. This protects you should I lose one of your papers. You should save your work on your hard drive and back it up to a USB or other storage device.
* Keep track of your work. You should save all of your work until the end of the semester so you can double-check your final recorded grade. You can and should check your grade regularly throughout the semester.
* Should you discover that you are unable to regularly attend class for any reason, it is imperative that you discuss this with me as soon as possible. Telling me of work schedule changes, illness, family emergencies, or other reasons after missing several days or weeks is unacceptable.

**"I write to find out what I'm thinking. I write to find out who I am. I write to understand things."**

**– Julia Alvarez**

**Important Dates**

* Labor Day, September 7th – NO CLASS
* Veteran’s Day, November 11th - NO CLASS

**FINAL: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16TH, 2:00PM – 3:50PM**

The time/date of the final will not be changed to accommodate holiday or travel arrangements or employment schedules. *Do not arrange travel during finals week.*

**Suggested Readings**

Here are a few additional books you may be interested in picking up that you may find helpful in this and other classes:

* Fogarty, Mignon. *Grammar Girls’ Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing*. New York: St. Martin’s Griffin, 2008.
* MLA. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2009.
* Have access to a dictionary (online or hard copy).

Additionally I will provide handouts as I see fit to help you in your writing endeavors. I will also provide a page of common grammar/punctuation errors as a cheat sheet to use when writing your essays and a sample page written in the correct MLA usage.

**Changes to the Syllabus/Assignment Schedule**

The instructor reserves the right to make changes as necessary for the benefit of the class to change policies on the syllabus or dates/content on the schedule. Missing class or not checking Blackboard is not an excuse for not being aware of any changes that are made to the schedule or syllabus.