

English 125: Spring 2015

College Writing Skills

Reedley College

Professor Carey Karle

English 125-55617
Spring 2015

English 125: College Writing Skills

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.

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.

We use Blackboard as our classroom. You can access our Blackboard directly from the Reedley College Website (click on the "Blackboard" link found under the "RC Online" link).

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:
 - a. a clearly defined thesis statement
 - b. unified supporting paragraphs, which begin with topic sentences
 - c. quotations that support the topic sentences and the thesis
 - d. supporting material and ideas, which exhibit critical thinking
 - e. complete sentences which include a variety of sentence types (simple, compound, complex, and compound/complex sentence)
 - f. descriptive vocabulary that exhibits growth and sophisticated word choice
 - g. 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.
 - h. use of MLA guidelines to set up essays, correctly use in-text citations for at least one source, and complete a works cited page
 - i. writing that is free from plagiarism
 - j. 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 a thesis and support.

Special points of interest:

- Students who utilize the RC Writing Center when taking English 125 have a higher pass rate than those who do not use the RC Writing Center.
- The RC Writing Center can be used online!
- Students who do not procrastinate and are well organized generally do better in online classes.

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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 sentence 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

The act of putting pen to paper encourages pause for thought, this in turn makes us think more deeply about life, which helps us regain our equilibrium."

—Norbet Platt

Lecture Content

All of the following will be included; the instructor will decide the order, and some topics may be studied simultaneously (for example, writing process, critical thinking, sentence and paragraph structure, and reference work will all be included in work on a short reference paper).

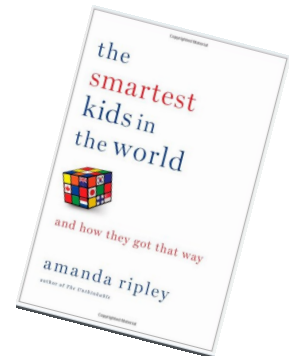
<p>A. Using the writing process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. prewriting strategies 2. outlining 3. drafting 4. revising 5. editing 	<p>C. Thinking critically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. analyze ideas 2. use supporting details to validate a thesis 	<p>E. Understanding purpose, audience, voice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. awareness of audience 2. academic language use 3. third person point of view
<p>B. Writing a well-developed essay:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. introduction <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. thesis statements 2. body paragraphs <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. topic sentences b. supporting details c. transitions 3. concluding paragraphs 4. coherent development <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. focus b. organization c. unification 	<p>D. Writing sentences:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. sentence variety <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. simple sentences b. compound sentences c. complex sentences d. compound complex sentences 2. crafting sentences <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. using parallelism b. eliminating wordiness 3. avoiding and correcting sentence errors <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. fragments b. run-ons (comma splices and sentence fuses) 4. punctuation 	<p>F. Using MLA guidelines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. avoid plagiarism 2. set up an essay 3. cite direct quotations 4. write a works cited page

Required Text and Supplies

Ripley, Amanda. *The Smartest Kids in the World and How They Got That Way*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013.

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

Binder



Required Course Work

Class Participation	Required	Grading Scale
Quizzes	10%	90-100% = A
Discussion Boards, Journals, Etc.	10%	80- 89% = B
Timed Essays (2-3) AND Final	10%	70- 79% = C
Essays (3)	70%	60- 69% = D
		0- 59% = F



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.

The overall Quiz grade is averaged. **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 for late work is for the first two essays.

The first two essays are accepted up to one week late. However, the grade on a late essay is dropped one full letter grade. This means if the essay earns an A, the grade will be dropped to a B. **This policy is only for the first two essays.**

Attendance

Your online contact will be monitored through the Blackboard discussion board, essays, miscellaneous assignments, and e-mail. *You need to make your presence known every week.* You are required to make substantive contributions to the discussions. You may address the topics suggested by me, devise your own topics if appropriate, or respond to your 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 me, will mean that you are no longer participating in the class, which means you may be dropped from the class.

If you do not complete all of the assignments for day one AND weeks one, two, three, and four, you will be dropped from the class.

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance, as those who move easiest have learned to dance. — Alexander Pope





What you need to know.

“You might not write well every day, but you can always edit a bad page. You can't edit a blank page.”

— *Jodi Picoult*



Know your computer!

Computer Requirements

Skills Needed:

- ⇒ Know basics of word processing (saving files, using spell check, using grammar check, moving text, using the help function, etc.)
- ⇒ Know how to access and navigate the Internet (use a browser, utilize search engines, save and or print from the Internet)
- ⇒ Know how to send e-mail and attachments

Hardware Needed:

- ⇒ Pentium (PC) or Mac equivalent
- ⇒ Home Internet access is desirable. You can use the computers on campus, but they are not always available. You need to know when each lab is open and available for drop-in use. 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. This also means avoiding completing assignments at the last minute.*

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 **Technical: MLA and How To 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 use Pages, you will need to learn to save in Rich Text Format as well. **I cannot read Pages documents.***
- ⇒ Adobe Reader. This can be downloaded for free. Essays may be returned to you in PDF form. Most handouts will be uploaded as PDFs.

Email—Important!

- ⇒ **An e-mail address is essential.** The college now uses only the college email accounts (your last name underscore your seven digit ID@my.sccd.edu). You must use your college account for this and any Reedley College class. You can set your sccd.com email to forward to another email account. Information about school email can be found on the home page of the college website and on the login page for Blackboard.
- ⇒ **I 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, many phone programs do 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 unless you are using your sccd account. *I do not read or respond to email if I do not know the sender.*
- ⇒ **In the subject line, include the class and section number.** I teach four classes and generally at least two are online classes. In order to respond quickly, I need to match you to the correct class—which means you need to add the section number as well (i.e., English 125-55617).
- ⇒ **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”.
- ⇒ **After sending an email, look for a response!** This might sound like common sense, but I am 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.
- ⇒ **One more note about email—do not send email out of anger or frustration.** Do not send an email immediately after seeing a grade if the grade was not what you expected. If you have a question about a grade or comments made on an essay, take some time to think carefully about what you want to ask.



EMAIL Use It wisely!

“10 Steps to Becoming a Better Writer”

Write.
Write more.
Write even more.
Write even more than that.
Write when you don’t want to.
Write when you do.
Write when you have something to say.
Write when you don’t.
Write every day.
Keep writing.”

— Brian Clark

REPORT CARD				
GRADING PERIOD	1	2	3	4
ENGLISH	A			
SCIENCE	C			
MATH	B			
SOCIAL STUDIES	B			
ART	A			
MUSIC	A			
PERSONAL EDUCATION	C			
Overall Average	B			
Attendance	Present	100%		
	Absent	0%		
	Late	0%		

CHECK YOUR GRADE REGULARLY THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER

Do not email me during the final three weeks of the semester for a grade check. Do not email during the final three weeks asking what you need on the final essay in order to pass. Grades are uploaded regularly—and the percentages are on page four.

Checking Grades

I use a program called Micrograde to record grades. I try to upload grades every Friday beginning the third week of the semester.

When I upload grades, the program (Chariot - WebGrade) will send an email to your sccd.com account that includes a link along with a user name and password for checking your grade. The user name and password for checking grades are separate from your Blackboard login. Check your grade regularly.

Even though I use a grading program outside of Blackboard, I am also going to **attempt** to use Blackboard's gradebook as well. This will be my first semester using the gradebook on Blackboard, which is why I will also keep grades on Micrograde. If I find that the gradebook on Blackboard isn't working well, I will stop using it. Sorry, this is my trial semester with Blackboard's grading program!

If you are ever locked out of a quiz, 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.

Updated grades through WebGrade are only available after I've uploaded grades. Weekly announcements will inform you as to when grades have been uploaded.

Weekly and Semester Schedule

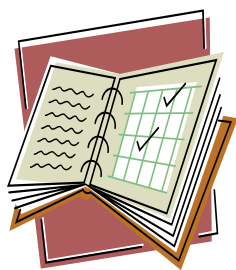
For the most current weekly schedule refer to the announcements page on Blackboard.

All assignments for the semester can also be viewed through the semester schedule. Click on the **Syllabus and Schedule** link on Blackboard and find the "Tentative Semester Schedule." Here you will find reading assignments, discussion board due dates, essay due dates, and more.

Each week's assignments will be posted under the various "steps" links on Blackboard and a reminder emailed to you usually by Friday morning (for the following week).

The weekly email always contains the most updated/accurate information.

Print the weekly charts and emails. Read through the information carefully. Check off assignments as they are completed.



Check off assignments as they are completed. This will help you to stay organized.

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.

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. Additionally, a plagiarism report will be filed with the administration. *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 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 through Turnitin.com (through links on Blackboard), so if you do plagiarize, you will be caught.

I know one thing--that a certain amount of pride always goes along with a teaspoonful of brains, and that this pride protects a man from deliberately stealing other people's ideas. That is what a teaspoonful of brains will do for a man--and admirers had often told me I had nearly a basketful--though they were rather reserved as to the size of the basket.

- Mark Twain
"Unconscious Plagiarism" speech, 1879

Paper Policy

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.

- ⇒ 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 demonstrated on Blackboard in the “Technical: MLA and How To” folder) will be docked 5%, which is ½ of a letter grade. This will increase to 10% for the final essay.**
- ⇒ 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 **“Technical: MLA and How To” 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 Pages, you must learn to convert files to so they can be submitted to TURNITIN and read by others.*
- ⇒ 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. Of course, if an essay is due and the Blackboard is down, I will not hold you to the original due date. I will email and post to Blackboard (once it is up again) the revised deadline.
- ⇒ Guidelines for turning in essays through Blackboard can be found on Blackboard under the **“Technical: MLA and How To” link**. All essays will be turned in through TURNITIN through links 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, without properly citing the source or sources, 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.
- ⇒ *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 and/or through GradeMark generally within two weeks after their due date. 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!

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 can 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 your 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.

⇒Rules for Netiquette apply in all emails, journals, discussion boards, etc. To review rules, copy and paste this link: <http://www.albion.com/bookNetiquette/0963702513p32.htm>

Things do not happen. Things are made to happen.

– **John F. Kennedy**

Helpful Hints

⇒ Keep a copy of each of your papers. This protects you if I should happen to lose one of your papers. You should save your work on your hard drive and back 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 semester so you can double check your final recorded grade. Of course, check your grade regularly throughout the semester.

⇒ Should you discover that you are unable to regularly attend class (online) for whatever reason, it is imperative that you discuss this with me as soon as possible. Telling me of work schedule changes, illness, family emergencies, etc. after missing several days/weeks is unacceptable.

PERSONAL
RESPONSIBILITY
IN
DELIVERING
EXCELLENCE



English 125-55617
Spring 2015

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

Office and Office Hours

Office: A-Annex, Room 4

Office Hours:

Monday 11:00-11:50
Tuesday 11:00-11:50
Wednesday 11:00-11:50
Friday– Virtual Office Hour via Email 8:00– 8:50

Additional Office Hours by mutual appointment.

There are no mandatory meetings for this class; however, you are encouraged to visit or call during my office hours.

Important Dates

January 19	M	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day observed (no classes held, campus closed)
January 23	F	Last day to request an Enrollment Fee Refund
January 30	F	Last day to add a full-term class for Spring 15
January 30	F	Last day to drop a fall full-term class to avoid a "W" (in person) for Spring 2015
February 1	SU	Last day to drop a full-term class to avoid a "W" (on WebAdvisor) for Spring 2015
February 6	F	Last day to change a class to/from a Pass/No-Pass grading basis
February 13	F	Lincoln Day observed (no classes held, campus closed)
February 16	M	Washington Day observed (no classes held, campus closed)
March 13	F	Last day to drop a full-term class (in person) letter grades assigned after this date
March 30-April 1	M-F	Spring Recess (no classes held)
May 18-22	M-F	Final exams week