English 125: Writing Skills for College

**Basic Info**

Instructor: B. Nakamura

Contact email: brice.nakamura@fresnocitycollege.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday After Class

Office: CCI 217 (inside the north end of the building)

Class # 55857

**Course Materials**

Required: Gerald Graff and Kathy Berkenstein, *They Say, I Say*3rd Edition (without readings, but if you have one with readings that's fine too)

Required: Frank Miller and David Mazzucchelli, *Batman: Year One*

Recommended Materials: pens/pencils, highlighters, notebook/lined paper, access to computer/internet, flash drive

**Student Learning Outcomes**

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

A. Prewrite constructively to generate ideas and determine opinions, positions, and ultimately theses and plans

B. Respond to a prompt quickly and independently

C. Write a developed essay with a clear thesis and support

D. 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

E. Plan and revise fairly independently employing all stages of the writing process as necessary and appropriate

F. Recognize and revise common errors such as problems with comma splices throughout a piece

G. Construct idiomatically correct sentences although there may be an accent resulting from a consistent type of ESL error

H. Use a variety of rhetorics and structures, including documented sources

I. Use MLA style with some guidance to set up papers and document sources

**Course Conduct**

*Homework*: Homework will mainly consist of reading the assigned texts and posting to the discussion boards/assignments on Blackboard, along with various other assignments. Please make sure you are keeping up with the homework.

*Warm-Ups & Quizzes*: Warm-ups will typically be an informal response in class, graded on a credit/no credit basis. Quizzes will serve as a way for me to check if everyone is completing the reading assignments. I do not allow quiz make-ups.

*General Writing Assignments*: This is a writing class; as a result, you can expect to do a lot of writing. We will write essays, short responses, and other assignments. The main goal of this class is to accomplish a portfolio of your writing to be turned in at the end of the semester.

*Digital Submissions of Assignments:*Assignments will typically be submitted to Canvas. It is your responsibility to make sure that you submit the assignment to Canvas correctly. If you need access to a computer to complete assignments, they are provided for you on campus in the library or the writing center. You also have access to Microsoft Office software (Word, Powerpoint, etc) through your student email account.  If you are having issues submitting assignments to electronic databases or are not sure if something was submitted properly, the best alternative is **to email me the assignment before the deadline** so that it is not late. Technical difficulties are not something that I have any degree of control over, and are not a valid excuse for not submitting work when there are a number of options available to you. If you need access to a computer, there are a number of computer labs available on campus in the library, writing center, etc. Please save all your work to a cloud drive to avoid losing assignments or coming to class unprepared. It is your responsibility to make sure you have access to online platforms that we will use. If you are having problems logging in, contact the help desk.

*Reading Assignments*: You will be expected to read and be prepared to discuss the materials in class, as well as perform on quizzes. Failure to keep up with the reading will affect your performance in class and ultimately your final grade. If I get the sense that the majority of students are not reading, quizzes will increase in frequency and difficulty.

*Home Groups*: Students will be placed into permanent groups of 5-6 for projects and class activities. These are your allies in class; get to know them, exchange contact info to keep up on assignments, etc. Groups may be formed by students or by the instructor. Throughout the semester, you will have an opportunity to evaluate your group members’ contributions to projects and assignments, and I may intervene or reassign groups as necessary.

*Focus Groups:* After each class, I will ask 2-3 students to remain behind for a few minutes for mini-conferences. This give students an opportunity to chat about assignments and ask questions in a less formal setting, since my office hours on campus are limited. These will continue throughout the semester.

*Peer Response & Workshops*: Throughout the semester, we will use class time to read and suggest revisions on peer drafts. We will look at student submissions, assignments and drafts together from time to time. This gives you a chance to get feedback on your paper before submitting it for grading, as well as helping to keep you on track with assignments. You must have a draft that meets the minimum page requirements to participate in the workshop. If you do not have a completed draft, you may attend the workshop to work on your draft for partial credit.

**Grading**

Grades will be posted and recorded on Canvas. You can access your grades at any time in the semester, and I encourage you to keep track of where you're at. If you notice a discrepancy, please notify me.

Grading will be based on percentages in the following categories:

Essays & Workshops: 60%

Homework and Quizzes: 30%

Midterm & Final Exam: 10%

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

**Course Policies**

*Instructor Contact*: It’s important to communicate with me in and out of class. I'm always willing to meet with students to discuss assignments and answer any questions in person or via email. Please use your student email to contact me to avoid getting blocked by a spam filter. Please properly format emails to me; one-line emails may be ignored. I may respond immediately or it may be several hours before you hear from me. E-mail and Canvas Announcements (sent to your email) will be the two primary ways in which I contact you. If you have not set up your student email account and/or are not checking it regularly, you may miss important announcements that I send outside of class time. I check my email pretty regularly throughout the weekdays, but less frequently on evenings/weekends.

*Absences & Attendance:*

* If you miss more than 3 classes in the first 3 weeks, you will be dropped for non-attendance.
* If you miss more than 7 classes in the first 9 weeks, you will be dropped for non-attendance.
* During each class, you will earn a participation point from various assignments and discussions in class. These assignments cannot be made up if you are absent. The total points for participation throughout the semester will be 65 points (one point for each class). In order to receive a passing grade, you must accrue 56 points by the end of the semester (giving you 9 days of class that you can “miss” for any reason). If I am unable to come to class, I will lower this threshold of points or give an alternate assignment at my discretion.
* Some of these assignments for participation points will be given at the beginning of class, such as a warm-up or other activity. Because of this, it is important that you attend class on time on a regular basis.

*Use of Electronic Devices and Other Non-Attendance Issues:* Unauthorized use of electronic devices in class is a form of non-attendance, and can result in accruing one absence. I may not inform you of the absence. This policy is a matter of fostering an inclusive environment; I do not use my cell phone when you require my attention to ask a question, look at an essay, etc, and I hold you to the same standard. Other examples of non-attendance include sleeping, excessive chatter, or discussing matters not pertaining to the course material during group discussion; as non-attendance, any of these can result in being marked absent (and I will not necessarily inform you about the absence). Please do not take pictures of lecture notes on the board; studies show that you best retain information when you are articulating it for yourself (i.e. writing or speaking). If I see students taking pictures of notes on the board rather than writing them down, I will use any and all methods to encourage you to take notes, including additional in-class assignments, homework, quizzes on the material, etc.

*Revising Your Work*: Any essay that receives less than a passing grade (meaning a D or F) will be eligible for a revision. All other assignments are final. To revise an essay, you will meet with me outside of class time to discuss a revision plan no later than one week after the essay is handed back to you.

*Writing Center:*If you receive a failing grade (D or F) on an early assignment, you will be required to attend the Reading & Writing Center, Tutorial Center, and/or use the online Reading & Writing Center for a total of at least 2 visits/contacts per major writing assignment. This assignment is in your best interest, and is meant to ensure your success in the course (not punish you). If you do not complete this task, you may not be eligible to submit the paper.

*Late Work:*I do not accept late work. Please use any and all methods to keep organized for this class. If you have an extenuating circumstance that would prohibit you from submitting an assignment on time, I may make arrangements for you at my discretion. You will need to clear it with me no less than one week before the due date. At my discretion, I may allow an extension on the assignment on an individual basis for serious and compelling reasons.

*About this Class & Me:* Some of my former students would say that I am a tough instructor, but many students would also say that I reward hard work generously. I wholeheartedly want students to pass my course, and I am always looking for ways to increase the pass rate in my class without compromising on standards and quality of student work. If you are willing to work hard, I am willing to help you in any way that I can. Please take advantage of every tool for success that is offered: come to my office hours, email me, ask questions in class, visit the writing center, and take charge of your education.

College is not like high school; it is supposed to be challenging and rewarding, and students who think it will be easy are misguided in their expectations. Your definition of hard work from high school may be very different from my definition. We are here to challenge ourselves and grow intellectually, like a gym for the mind. We will watch R rated films; we will discuss topics that people can only whisper about in other countries; we will talk about religion, politics, social issues, the economy, and a number of other things that you would not want to bring up on a first date. Some of these things may make you uncomfortable because you disagree with it on a fundamental level; that is good for you. Being outside your comfort zone is how you grow and learn. If something makes you uncomfortable because you feel it is inappropriate for an academic environment, then that is something entirely different, and I would encourage you to speak with me privately about the matter. In this classroom, you will meet many new people who will often have a radically different way of thinking than you do (I am probably one of them). While discussing issues in this classroom, you will be respectful, agree to disagree, and move on; anything less than this will result in your immediate removal from class.

*Accommodations*: If you have any need of special accommodations or materials in alternate media, per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act please notify me immediately. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your needs.

*Plagiarism:*Students at Reedley College are entitled to the best education that the college can make available to them, and they, their instructors, and their fellow students share the responsibility to ensure that this education is honestly attained. Because cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities erode the integrity of the college, each student is expected to exert an entirely honest effort in all academic endeavors. Academic dishonesty in any form is a very serious offense and will incur serious consequences.

Cheating is the act or attempted act of taking an examination or performing an assigned, evaluated task in a fraudulent or deceptive manner, such as having improper access to answers, in an attempt to gain an unearned academic advantage. Cheating may include, but is not limited to, copying from another’s work, supplying one’s work to another, giving or receiving copies of examinations without an instructor’s permission, using or displaying notes or devices inappropriate to the conditions of the examination, allowing someone other than the officially enrolled student to represent the student, or failing to disclose research results completely.

Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating: the use of another’s words or ideas without identifying them as such or giving credit to the source. Plagiarism may include, but is not limited to, failing to provide complete citations and references for all work that draws on the ideas, words, or work of others, failing to identify contributors to work done in collaboration, submitting duplicated work to be evaluated in different courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors involved, or failing to observe computer security systems and software copyrights.

Incidents of cheating and plagiarism may result in any of a variety of sanctions and penalties, which may range from a failing grade on the particular examination, paper, project, or assignment in question to a failing grade in the course, at the discretion of the instructor and depending on the severity and frequency of the incidents. For more information, contact the Vice President of Student Services’ Office or the Vice President of Instruction’s Office.