**English 1A, Web**

**Section # 56791**

**Reading and Composition**

**Monday, August 15- Tuesday, December 13, 2016**

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# Contact Information

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

Office: Faculty Annex 6 (directly behind the SOC building) Phone: 638-0300, ext. 3150

Office Hours: Mondays, 12-1pm (Virtual office hours--call or email to reach me). Tuesdays-Fridays, 12-1pm.

*Other times may be scheduled outside these hours as needed and as mutually convenient.*

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**Course Descript****ion**

Reading, analyzing, and composing college-level prose, with emphasis on the expository; studying writing as a process; exploring different composing structures and strategies; editing and revising one’s own writing; conducting research (gathering, organizing, evaluating, integrating, and documenting information,) culminating in a term research paper and annotated bibliography.

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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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**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** | **Approximate**  **Point Value** | **Your Grade** |
| **Essay #1**: Notions of Success (due week 4) | 100 |  |
| **Essay #2**: The American Dream (due week 8) | 150 |  |
| **Essay Midterm** (timed essay exam, taken week 9) | 100 |  |
| **Grammar Midterm** (exam on the grammar concepts  from weeks 1-9, taken week 10) | 25 |  |
| **Annotated Bibliography** for Essay #3 (due week 12) | 100 |  |
| **Essay #3**: Argument-based research paper (due week 14) | 200 |  |
| **Essay #4:** Rogerian Argument (due week 17) | 150 |  |
| **Grammar Final** (Test on the grammar concepts  from weeks 10-17, taken during finals week) | 25 |  |
| **Discussion Boards** (two questions per week, consisting of the original posts plus replies; graded every three weeks) | 100 |  |
| **Grammar Quizzes** (one taken every three weeks, 10 points each) | 50 |  |
| **APPROXIMATE POINT VALUE:** | **1,000** |  |

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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**Required Texts and Materials**

*Please note that I have placed all of these texts on reserve at the Reedley College library.*

Kirszner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell. *The Blair Reader: Exploring Issues and Ideas*. 8th Edition. Boston:

Pearson, 2013. Print. ISBN: 978-0-205-90184-5

Kirszner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell. *The Concise Wadsworth Handbook*. 4th Edition. Boston:

Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2013. Print. ISBN: 978-1-133-31033-4

Rodriguez, Richard. *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*. New York: Bantam, 2004. Print. ISBN: 978-0-553-27293-2

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**Weekly Schedule Overview**

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**  A New Week’s Work Begins | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday**  **To be Completed by Noon:**  --all textbook readings  --all videos and additional readings  --all original discussion board posts | **Thursday** | **Friday**  **To be Completed by Noon:**  --all discussion board replies  --all grammar exercises completed  --grammar quiz completed (if there is one assigned that week)  --final draft of essays due (if there is one due that week) | **Saturday** |
| **Sunday** | **Monday**  The Next Week’s Work Begins |  |  |  |  |  |

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**Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes**

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

1. Write a documented research paper of at least 1,500 words that includes:
   * a sophisticated introduction, multiple body paragraphs, and conclusion
   * a clearly defined, arguable thesis sentence
   * supporting details that exhibit critical thinking and use credible secondary sources
   * correct usage of MLA format, including a works cited page
   * sentences that exhibit a command of the complex/compound with minimal comma splices, sentence fuses, fragments, and mechanics
   * controlled and sophisticated word choice
   * writing in third person/universal
   * an avoidance of logical fallacies
   * demonstrating an awareness of purpose and audience
   * appropriate and purposeful use of quotations
   * correct in-text citations
   * an annotated bibliography of multiple sources
   * an avoidance of intentional and unintentional plagiarism
2. Complete a timed essay independently in class
3. Summarize and comprehend college level prose (will include a full reading)

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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.). 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.
* 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 are 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 and 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!

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

* **Original Posts (due Wednesdays at noon).** I will post two original posts each week based on that week’s readings and on your essay writing (an outline or a draft)**; you will need to post a substantive post (of at least 300 words per post**) **for each original post**.
* **Replies (due Fridays at noon).** **You** **will need to reply to at least one fellow student’s post for every original post**; each reply needs to be **at least 100 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.

Also, does replying to another students’ work mean you can only agree with that student? Think about how discussions happen in traditional classes. Do students only agree with each other in real-time class conversations? If we did, it would certainly be a dull conversation, and we probably wouldn’t learn much. Think about how you would politely disagree with a student you are having a conversation with (by saying something like, “I appreciate your viewpoint, but have you considered...” “I think I understand what you are saying, but I wonder if you have thought about...”). [*(Return to Table of Contents)*](#_Table_of_Contents)

**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. 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.

Points will be deducted for each of the following:

* 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 (before I grade the posts)

**Please note that I do not accept late work for discussion board posts**; once I have graded the discussion board posts (which I will do every three weeks), you cannot earn credit for made up posts.

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**Grammar Exercises**

Each week focuses on a different grammar concept by providing you a chapter in the *Wadsworth Handbook* to read and some exercises to complete; there is also an answer guide to selected exercises section starting on page 535 in your handbook. While I will not necessarily collect your completed grammar exercises, you need to work on and understand them as practice to prepare for 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 few days 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 contacting me, will mean that you are no longer participating in the class, and you may be dropped from the class. *Note*: Failure to complete the first week’s assignments on time will result in a drop from the class.

**Essay Formatting**

For all work you submit, follow MLA formatting:

* Font set for TIMES NEW ROMAN 12
* Entire essay is DOUBLE line spaced only—no more and no less ANYWHERE
* The margins are set to 1” on all sides.
* In the PARAGRAPH menu, SPACING **BEFORE** and **AFTER** is set for ZERO
* Page numbers have been INSERTED (not typed) into the upper right hand corner beginning with page one. This is formatted into the header, appearing ½ inch from the top of the page
* Student’s last name appears before the page number—AND there is a space between the name and page number.
* On page one ONLY, in the top left hand corner of the page, the following appears 1 inch below the top of the page.
  + Student’s Name
  + Instructor’s Name
  + Course and Section Number
  + Due Date for Essay
* The above information is double line spaced
* The essay has an appropriate title, which is centered—USING the computer’s function to center. The title is a creative one, not merely the assignment’s name. The title has every major word capitalized, and there are no quotation marks around the title. The title is the same size font, and it is not italicized or in all capital letters.
* The Work(s) Cited is the last page of the essay—INSERT NEW PAGE. The works cited page is the last formatted page of the essay, so it also follows all of the formatting details listed above.

**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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**Essays—Getting Feedback and Additional Help**

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 of your outlines and rough drafts. Because of the large number of students in this class, I cannot give you feedback for each essay you write on the discussion board.

Please note that I will not be able to give students who send me an email with a draft attached feedback; **if you want feedback on your draft, send me a copy of the draft in an email and indicate when exactly during my office hours you will call or come by to go over your draft with me. It helps to ask me directed questions for what you would like feedback on (i.e. your use of examples or analysis in a specific body paragraph, or the flow of the transitions in your topic sentences).**

Another excellent source of help is The Reedley College Reading and Writing Center, located in HUM 58 on the Reedley College campus. You can enroll in English 272, a course designed to help you on any writing assignment from any class. You can also take advantage of their walk-in or online tutorial. The Writing Center is open Monday - Fridays: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. If you live closer to another college in the district, you are entitled to seek help from that campus’s writing center as well.

In our Blackboard site, you also have access to **free online tutoring** (look for the “Smarthinking Tutoring” tab). Through this tutoring service, you will submit your writing for review by one of their tutors, who get back to you with feedback in less than 24 hours. There are also live tutors available most hours of the day for immediate feedback and answers to questions regarding writing. You will be required to submit a draft of every paper for this class for feedback.

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**Essays—Getting the Work Done on Time and Turned In**

**I will not accept late papers** unless you have contacted me at least forty-eight hours prior to the due date and I approve your request (which I have done rarely).

**To submit the final draft of your essays, follow these steps**:

1. Name the final draft of your essay with your last name, then your first, the essay number, then the section number. Save your final draft as an .docx, .doc, or .rtf file only. An example of a correctly named file would be: **Smith, Jill Essay 1 51469 OR 51470.docx**
2. Log into our Blackboard class, and go into that essay’s folder. Find the Turnitin.com symbol (usually the last item in the folder), and hit the “View/Complete” link.
3. The computer will walk you through the steps from that point forward.
4. Once you have turned in your paper, you will need to find out what your Turnitin.com originality score is and why you earned the score you did. To access your score, go back to that essay’s folder and once again, hit the “View/Complete” link to view your originality score. Click on the score to download a .pdf file that details which of your work is not your own wording.
5. Immediately after you submit your paper, you need to send me an email at informing me of **what your originality report score is** (given as a percentage, i.e. what percent of your paper was not original work) as well as a few sentences (one or two) explaining **why you received the originality score you did**.  To this email, you will also attach your feedback form from the Smarthinking Tutoring. Once I finish grading your paper, I will reply to your email with the graded paper as an attachment. To give you an idea of what I am looking for in your email, here's an example:  
     
   "According to Turnitin.com, 19 % of my paper is not my own words because I used and cited a few quotations from the essays from *The Blair Reader* in my paper to support my argument. I also provide a works cited page, so that the reader can see where I got my information from."

**Please remember that computer problems inevitably will occur when submitting your paper online**. I have found that when students wait until the last minute to upload their papers, they will usually end up having problems (such as having the computer crash). Remember, a paper turned in at 12:05pm is considered late and therefore won’t be accepted! I will not be able to respond to a last minute, panicked email to have me clear a failed upload attempt. The smart student will take this warning into consideration and upload the paper several days in advance of the due date, allowing time to get help or make alternative arrangements should computer problems occur.

That being said, if something happens, simply email me your paper as an attachment, then call the next morning during office hours to see what you need to do for your paper to be accepted; at the very least, I will see from the timestamp on your email that you got the essay done in time, and you will still need to submit your paper to Turnitin.com at the earliest chance you can.

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**Essays--Rewriting Policies**

You are allowed to and encouraged to rewrite **one essay over the semester to try to earn up to one letter grade** **higher** than the final grade you received on the paper. Here are the steps you will need to follow:

1. You are welcome to come into my office hours or call in to discuss what you need to do to improve your paper should you have questions.
2. You have up to one week from when I return your essays to rewrite the paper.
3. On the rewritten document, first cut and paste the final graded draft with my comments, then paste your rewritten draft after, making sure to **highlight exactly what you have changed in the rewritten section**.
4. Then, send me an email with this one document attached. In the body of the email, explain exactly what changes you have made and how these changes improved your paper.

Other points to consider:

* You will not have the opportunity to rewrite Essay #4, as grades are due soon after you turn in that final paper.
* If you fail to follow these steps above exactly, I will not read your reconsider your essay’s grade.
* Higher grades will only be awarded for papers that were substantially improved, enough to change the essay’s overall grade (up to one letter grade higher only, even if the paper is of even higher quality than that).

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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 (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.

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**E-Mail**

An e-mail address is essential for this class, and everyone in this class has a SCCCD email account. This email account has been assigned to you and is the one that Blackboard uses, **so you need to check your SCCCD email account daily**. It is the primary way I will be contacting you.

When you send an email, you must be specific in the message and always **sign your name and include your class name and section number in the title of your message**. 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”. I will not respond if I cannot read what you have written, and I certainly won’t respond if you are being disrespectful.

In terms of response time, please keep in mind that you need to give me at least twenty-four hours to respond during the work week only (meaning I will not typically be able to respond over the weekend). Do not send me multiple copies of the same email, thinking this will get me to respond faster. I do not text students, but I will respond to your email as soon as I can. That being said, if I have not responded during the workweek within twenty-four hours, give me a call or email me again to make sure I did get your first message.

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# Quizzes, Midterms, and Final

# You will have quizzes approximately every three weeks based on the grammar concepts, and the midterm and final will also be based on these grammar concepts. Go to our Blackboard website and find these quizzes and exams in the “Quizzes and Exams” tab. The quizzes, midterms, and final cannot be made up; once they close, I will not reopen them. For both the quizzes and the exams, you are encouraged to look up the answers to your questions by looking at the readings and the PowerPoint presentations.

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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. Clear out the cache in your Internet Browser, and 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, which is open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

*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, students meet with an instructor and the class for four hours a week for this class. The average amount of homework for a hour is two-three hours for each hour of class time. It is important to understand the time commitment necessary to be successful in this or any online class; you are expected to spend the same amount of time on this class as would any English 1A student—the benefit to you is that you get to decide when you work on the class, outside of the set due dates. **Plan now to spend at least ten to fifteen hours a week on this class alone.**
2. It is your responsibility to stay informed concerning any changes of assignment due dates, readings, etc. This means **you should check the Blackboard daily and your SCCCD e-mail account daily**.
3. 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!
4. 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.
5. 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 logging into the class, you will earn an F in the course.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. **Important dates** *(Please note that even though the campus has several holidays this semester, our online class doesn’t get a day off: regularly scheduled due dates still apply.):*
   1. **Semester begins: Monday, August 15**
   2. **Labor Day holiday: Monday, September 5**
   3. **Veterans’ Day holiday: Friday, November 11**
   4. **Thanksgiving day holidays: Thursday, November 24-Friday, November 25**
   5. **Last day to drop the class without a “W” on your transcript: Friday, September 2**
   6. **Last day to drop the class (a letter grade will be assigned after this date): Friday, September 14**
   7. **The final will close at noon on Tuesday, December 13.**

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**Tips for Emailing Mrs. Berg and Other Instructors**

***Mrs. Berg’s note*: Email tends to be the primary way that students contact me in an online or hybrid class, and there are some things I wish you would keep in mind when considering whether to contact me this way. I do welcome contact, but I want you to know that I get at least fifty emails a day. Responding to emails is a large part of what I do in an online class, and reading and following these tips will help me ensure I can help you more efficiently.**

1. **Email using your SCCCD account.**Your instructor does not know who “volfan2014” is, nor is he or she likely to open messages from unknown senders. Reedley College provides you with a professional email address that it expects you to maintain, so utilize it to ensure that you can be identified as a member of the university community.
2. **Always put the Course & Section Number in the subject line.**Many instructors will only accept emails from you in this format. Remember, your instructor has multiple sections of your course and may still be learning your name, so you need to identify yourself to help him or her to help you. A phrase such as “Question about paper” will be overlooked, whereas a professional subject line easily points to your identity as the instructor’s student.
3. **Know your instructor’s preferences and policy regarding email.**Make sure your instructor accepts email, and that email is the best way to talk about the particular subject. If your instructor doesn’t accept assignments via email, don’t send them! If it’s a complicated matter, or if it’s very urgent, a face-to-face meeting during office hours would probably be better.
4. **Format your email properly.**Always use a greeting, and write in complete sentences. Remember to indicate which class you’re writing about (course and section number in the subject line). End with a closing courtesy and signature. If you include an attachment, make sure the file name clearly identifies what the attachment is and who it’s from, so your instructor doesn’t have to guess (e.g. – “sjones-paper1prospectus.docx”). In addition, if you include an attachment, be very specific about what you want done with that document. Above all, proofread! Just because it’s an email doesn’t mean you don’t have to adhere to Standard English! Use capital letters where appropriate, punctuate properly, and avoid “text-talk” (u, thru, lol, etc.). Compose your emails first in a Word document to take advantage of spell- and grammar-check before sending.
5. **Be clear and specific.**If you have a question about an assignment, be sure to specify which assignment. If you’re responding to feedback or other communication from the instructor, make it clear in your email that you’ve read the instructor’s response and are continuing the conversation.
6. **Don’t email in anger.**If you’re dealing with a touchy subject, or you’re lodging a complaint, be careful! Once sent, an email cannot be retrieved. Try having someone else read your message to ensure that you’re not being offensive or inflammatory, and if you’re emotional when writing the email, wait at least an hour before sending it.
7. **Patiently wait for a reply.**If you send an email, check back for a response. Leave plenty of time for your instructor to respond to your email (about 24 hours during the work week), and don’t harass him or her. However, it is perfectly okay to politely follow up on email messages if more than 24 hours has passed during the work week. Sometimes messages get lost in a crowded inbox. But make sure that what you’re asking is reasonable. Don’t send a rough draft at 10:00p.m. the night before the paper is due and expect feedback. Also, keep in mind that a request that takes five minutes to type might take a while to fulfill. Remember, email is the most passive way to contact your instructors. If the matter is very urgent, important, or sensitive, you’re probably better off talking to your instructor face-to-face, or at least calling him or her.
8. **Choose your wording carefully.**If you missed class, don’t ask “if” you missed anything important. It’s a good bet that your instructor thinks everything he or she works hard to impart to you in class is important. Be diplomatic. Even if you feel completely in the right, be smart about how you phrase your message. Remember, your instructor is there to help you succeed and wants to help you succeed. As with most things in life, if you ask nicely, the instructor will be much more likely to try his or her best to help you. Don’t be demanding, and don’t tell your instructors what they “have” to do. Finally, be honest, but don’t over-share.
9. **Be sure that your instructor is the best person to ask before emailing.**If you ask a question that the instructor has already answered multiple times in class, or the information you need is on the syllabus, or you can get the material from a classmate, then your instructor will not look favorably on your email. Remember, if your question is about assignments or class policies, most likely the information you are looking for is available to you in Blackboard, in the syllabus, or in the assignment sheets. Take time to look carefully before asking, and if you don’t find the information, look again to be sure before contacting the instructor.

*Special thanks to the Student Success Center at University of Tennessee at Knoxville for most of the tips in this article.* [*(Return to Table of Contents)*](#_Table_of_Contents)

ESSAY PROMPTS

**Essay #1**

**Write an essay in which you examine how your parents’ (or those in parental roles to you) notions of success have influenced your own experiences**. In forming your ideas about this topic, you should begin by comparing your own experiences to your choice of the assigned essays from Chapter 1, “Family and Memory,” or Chapter 7, “The American Dream.”

The final draft of this essay will be a **minimum of three full typed pages in MLA formatting, in addition to a works cited page**. *Note*: three full pages means that your writing should fall onto the fourth page.

**Introduction**:

In your introduction, begin with an overview of what the paper is about, trying not to announce your intentions (e.g. do not say, “In this paper, I will…”). Then, in a few sentences, provide background on the essay you have chosen as well as your own experience. Include a clear thesis as your last sentence that responds fully to the prompt of this essay.

**Body Paragraphs:**

In each of your body paragraphs, describe a different way that your parents’ notions of success have influenced you, or a different expectation that your parents had of your own success and its influence on you. You should provide a few quotations from the essay you have chosen in most of the body paragraphs. Remember, this essay describes the different ways your parents’ notions of success have influenced you—*it is not a timeline of events.* In other words, do not tell the reader the chronological story of your life—that would be off-topic, which would result in a failing paper.

Consider how you will organize your required information. You need to address **for each topic**:

* 1. What exactly your parents’ notion of success about this topic was.
  2. What affect this notion had on you.
  3. Tie this in with your text.

Students have approached this in different ways: making all of this information fit into one body paragraph (the downside: the paragraph gets very long!); writing one body paragraph about “a” above, and then another body paragraph combining “b” and “c” above; or, writing a separate body paragraph for each one of these (the upside of this organizational strategy that it gives you space to go into depth about each of your topics). Whichever organizational pattern you choose, **just make sure that you follow this pattern for every topic** you choose to write about. Having predictable organization is essential for clarity.

Another pointer to consider within each of these required elements: provide a **specific example** to help prove whatever point you are trying to make. It is fine to begin with general statements in your paragraphs (e.g. “My parents always believed firmly in the value of education.”) but move very quickly into your specific proof (i.e. *When exactly did your parents demonstrate in their own lives that they did indeed value education?*).

**Conclusion:**

In the conclusion, tie in your experiences with the article once again to bring closure to the essay. Discuss the significance of these influences on you and your goals today.

**Essay #2**

Colin Powell, in the article “*Forbes* Special Report: The American Dream” says, “The American Dream…is the ability to go as far as you can in life, limited only by your own dreams and willingness to work hard” (344). **Write an essay in which you use your choice of assigned readings to support or disprove his observation**.

In your analysis of this issue, be sure to use all of the following texts to support your position:

· Richard Rodriguez’s *Hunger of Memory (Note:* because this is the longest text, you should have the majority of your paper focused on this source).

· At least two essays from the assigned chapters from *The Blair Reader* (*Note*: make sure you select essays you have not previously referenced in the first essay).

In your **introduction**, be sure to provide a context by identifying Powell’s statement. Then, transition from that statement to a brief summary of the texts that you will use. Finally, transition to your thesis statement, a direct answer to the essay’s question.

In your **body paragraphs**, give specific evidence from the texts to support your thesis. Make sure that you have more than one body paragraph that discusses most of your sources, particularly the Rodriguez text, and that your body paragraphs have informative topic sentences that accurately tell what that body paragraph is about with transitions in between.

**All body paragraphs in expository essays such as this one need to be focused on topics, rather than the sources themselves**. Consider the different ideas and ways that the authors discuss that support or disprove Powell’s statement. These ideas, topics, not the sources themselves, should be the focus of your organization of the body paragraphs.

In your **conclusion**, make sure you summarize your main points you brought up in your essay, and, more importantly, discuss the significance of the issue. What overall is important about the fact that so many readings support or disprove Powell’s observation?

Your final draft of your essay needs to be **a minimum of four full typed pages, in addition to a works cited page**.

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**Annotated Bibliography and Essay #3**

For this assignment, you will construct your own argument based on a combination of your own research and some assigned sources.

You will need to cite as evidence to support your argument **these sources at a minimum:**

* At least two essays from the assigned chapters in *The Blair Reader* (Note: do not reference any text that you have used already in the first three essays)
* At least one book: Richard Rodriguez, *Hunger of Memory*
* At least three additional scholarly articles from the RC databases (found on RC's library homepage)

You are welcome to bring in other sources (such as additional articles, documentaries or interviews), but you need to make sure that whatever sources you do bring in are scholarly in nature (see Chapter 43 in *The Wadsworth Handbook* for an excellent discussion of "Evaluating Sources").

**The final draft of this research paper will need to be at least seven full typed pages, in addition to a works cited page**.   You do not need to turn in the annotated bibliography again with the final draft, but of course, you will need a works cited page with the final draft.

**Annotated Bibliography (The first project due for this assignment):**

One of the first steps in writing your research paper is to write an annotated bibliography of all of the sources you will reference in your writing (listed above).   Included in Essay #3’s folder are several important references to help you on this assignment, including a rubric for annotated bibliographies, samples of student annotated bibliographies, and notes to remind you of what an annotated bibliography is and does.

Besides the works cited entry for each of the sources listed above, each source will need to have four important pieces of information (and remember that all of the information after the works cited entry begins on that same line and has the same MLA formatting that the entry does):

1.   The source citation (MLA works cited entry) and the credentials of the author (make sure, when you provide the author’s credentials that you do not plagiarize. Rephrase the wording of the author’s biographies to avoid plagiarism.).

2.   The content (a one-sentence summary of the source’s main idea/thesis)

3.   A brief explanation of how the author supports his or her main idea.

4.   A brief explanation of how it will be used in your research paper.

The annotated bibliography needs to be **at least three pages in length**.

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**Essay #4**

The Rogerian Argument begins with this question: “Does Social Networking Connect Society or Keep It Apart?" and ends with a compromise which takes into consideration the needs, fears and concerns of both sides.   You will select two articles that have opposing arguments on this issue from the articles you select from Chapter 4, “Media and Society” as well as the additional articles located in Essay #4’s folder. The final draft of this paper will be **at least three full pages, in addition to the annotated bibliography**.



**Introduction:**

In your introduction, begin with an overview of what the paper is about, trying not to announce your intentions (e.g. do not say, “In this paper, I will…”). As you summarize each opposing article in your **introduction**, attribute each argument and example to its source, the author (Taylor argues…According to…).  Your **thesis** will restate both positions you are analyzing and will hint at the conclusion you will reach at the end of your paper.

**Body Paragraphs:**

In your **body paragraphs**, begin with a summary of each position as stated in the article, and then include an analysis of each argument afterwards.  These ideas would most effectively be broken down into separate paragraphs per article, for a total of four body paragraphs (article one summary for body paragraph #1; article one analysis for body paragraph #2; article two summary for third body paragraph; article two analysis for the fourth). Make sure, for however many paragraphs you have, to have a topic sentence for each that accurately represents what you will discuss in that body paragraph, and of course, you will need transitions between each body paragraph.

For your **summary** section for each article, make sure that you, after having a topic sentence with a transition, provide enough summary to represent accurately the author’s main idea and most important supporting details. Provide at least one short piece of textual evidence from each article. Remember that the emphasis here should be on the fact that these ideas are the author’s, so every sentence should emphasize this point (e.g. Silver writes…The author argues…).

In the **analysis** section, you are **flaws in the author’s argumentation** (see *The Wadsworth Handbook* Chapter 6, "Thinking Critically" for **terms and definitions** to include in your analysis--you will need to use at least one of these terms for logical fallacies in your analysis of each article.) Make sure you bold and underline these terms in your paper; make sure, too, that you define the terms in your own words. Most importantly, show evidence of this flaw from the article and then explain through careful analysis how your evidence shows that this author has committed this fallacy.

**Conclusion:**

The **conclusion** is your compromise which takes into consideration the needs, fears, and concerns of both sides. Since you have established the flaws in both arguments, you get to come up with a "solution," your compromise between the two positions.   You may delve into research to back up your compromise (although it is not a requirement), but if you refer to ideas others have come up with, attribute the idea to that source.

**REFERENCE MATERIALS**

Informal Outline for Expository Compositions (Use this outline for Essays 1, 2, and 3)

Essay’s Prompt: *(Find what the essay is about. If there is a couple of sentences, find the most important sentence, or combine the ideas into one sentence).*

Essay’s Question: *(Take the essay’s prompt, if it is written as a statement, and turn it into a question. Be sure to write the question as accurately as possible—use the exact words that the teacher has given you to ensure accuracy.)*

Your answer—the Thesis: *(Answer the essay’s questions, and include the reasons why the question is true, a.k.a. the “plan of development”, into your thesis as well).*

Body paragraphs: *(Each one of your reasons why your thesis is true--the plan of development--will have at least one entire paragraph for you to explain with examples. You do not need to write complete sentences at this point.)*

Reason #1 your answer is true: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Reason #2 your answer is true: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Reason #3 your answer is true: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Reason #4 your answer is true: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Rogerian Argument Outline—use this for Essay #4

1. Introduction paragraph
   1. Question: **Does Social Networking Connect Society or Keep It Apart?**
   2. Brief summary of Article #1 (first viewpoint, the “pro” side)
   3. Brief summary of Article #2 (second viewpoint, the “con” side)
   4. Thesis that refers to the authors and their essays and suggests the compromise you will reach
2. Article #1 (this could all be one paragraph or divided into multiple paragraphs; make sure you have got a topic sentence that tells specifically what the paragraph is about no matter how many you have).
   1. summary of Article #1 (first viewpoint, the “pro” side)
   2. analysis of Article #1 (looking for bias, appeals, fallacies, vested interests, omissions). You will need to have at least **one specific term** named in this section of a logical fallacy or bias; you need to bold and underline that term when you use it. For each term, show a specific example from the text of a logical fallacy or bias that the author has done.
3. Article #2 (this could all be one paragraph or divided into multiple paragraphs; make sure you have got a topic sentence that tells specifically what the paragraph is about no matter how many you have).
   1. summary of Article #2 (first viewpoint, the “con” side)
   2. analysis of Article #2 (looking for bias, appeals, fallacies, vested interests, omissions). You will need to have at least **one specific term** named in this section of a logical fallacy or bias; you need to bold and underline that term when you use it. For each term, show a specific example from the text of a logical fallacy or bias that the author has done.
4. The conclusion paragraph
   1. Your compromise between the two sides, taking into consideration the needs, fears, flaws, and concerns of both sides. Remember, your job in the essay was to show how very flawed the authors’ arguments were, so their flaws pave the way for your superior compromise.

Informal Outline Structure for Composition Classes—Comparison Essays (use this for the midterm)

Essay’s Prompt: *(Find what the essay is about. If there is a couple of sentences, find the most important sentence, or combine the ideas into one sentence).*

Essay’s Question: *(Take the essay’s prompt, if it is written as a statement, and turn it into a question. Be sure to write the question as accurately as possible—use the exact words that the teacher has given you to ensure accuracy.)*

Your answer—the Thesis: *(Answer the essay’s questions, and include the reasons why the question is true, a.k.a. the “plan of development”, into your thesis as well).*

Body paragraphs: *(Each one of your reasons why your thesis is true--the plan of development--will have at least one entire paragraph for you to explain with examples. You do not need to write complete sentences at this point.)*

Reason #1 your answer is true (the first essay) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Reason #1 your answer is true (the second essay) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Example/Details

Reason #2 your answer is true (the first essay): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Reason #2 your answer is true (the second essay): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Reason #3 your answer is true (the first essay): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Reason #3 your answer is true (the second essay): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

Example/Details:

**Reedley College, English 1A Essay Rubric**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Content** | **Organization** | **Conventions** |
| **A** | * Strong, original, and arguable thesis statement * Strong topic sentences in all body paragraphs * Strong examples/details/reasons that are well-chosen, thoughtful, original and balanced which support the thesis * Each example is developed fully * Thoughtfully, critically, and logically addresses the essay prompt * Demonstrates a complex, sophisticated treatment of the topic | * Strong essay structure with informative introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion * Strong paragraph structure * Strong use of transitions within the paragraphs and between paragraphs * A strong sense of logic in the paragraph’s organization | * Sophisticated, varied sentence structure * Excellent control of sentence structure * Sophisticated choice of vocabulary and appropriate level of formality * Few if any surface errors (spelling, mechanics, punctuation) that do not interfere with understanding * Accurate, precise word choice * MLA formatting followed correctly for parenthetical source citations and Works Cited * Quotations are always chosen effectively and integrated into the essay correctly and smoothly * Textual evidence has strong signal phrases * Sources are of collegiate level |
| **B** | * Clear, arguable thesis statement * Clear topic sentences in all body paragraphs * Clear examples/details/reasons that are mostly well-chosen, original, and balanced and support the thesis * Each example is developed * Clearly and logically addresses the essay prompt with some degree of depth * Meets the essay’s requirements | * Good essay structure, with a clear introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion * Good paragraph structure * Good use of transitions within the paragraphs and between paragraphs * Good sense of logic in organization | * Complex and varied sentence structure * Good control of sentence structure * Appropriate choice of vocabulary and level of formality * Few surface errors that do not hinder understanding * MLA formatting followed correctly or nearly correctly for parenthetical source citations and Works Cited * Quotations are often chosen effectively and integrated into the essay correctly and smoothly * Textual evidence has signal phrases prior to quotations and correct parenthetical citations with slight errors * Sources are of collegiate level |
| **C** | * Clearly-defined but simplistic arguable thesis statement * Adequate topic sentences in most paragraphs * Adequate supporting examples/details/reasons that support the thesis * Each example is developed * Adequately addresses the essay prompt * Meets the essay’s requirements | * Adequate introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion * Adequate paragraph structure * Some use of transitions within the paragraphs and between paragraphs * A basic sense of organization, perhaps with some discrepancies in logic | * Attempts made at times to vary sentence structure * Adequate control of sentence structure, although there may be errors * Simple vocabulary and adequate level of formality * Some surface errors that do not hinder understanding * Some word choice errors that do not hinder understanding * MLA formatting followed adequately * Quotations are often (though not always) chosen effectively and integrated into the essay correctly and smoothly * Most of the textual evidence have signal phrases prior to quotations and parenthetical citations with errors * Sources are of collegiate level |
| **D** | * Unclear or confused thesis statement * Missing or unclear topic sentences * Supporting examples/details/reasons present, but are weak, poorly developed, disconnected from the thesis, repetitive, or very unbalanced * Examples are not developed * Attempts to address the essay prompt, but may be incomplete and/or demonstrate lack of understanding of the prompt * Does not meet most of the essay’s requirements | * Weak essay organization * Weakly organized paragraph structure * Few or improperly used transitions * Little sense of organization, with major discrepancies in logic | * Simplistic sentence structure * Limited control over sentence structure * Simple or inappropriate vocabulary * Significant surface errors that may hinder meaning * Significant word choice errors that may hinder meaning * MLA formatting followed inadequately * Quotations are seldom chosen effectively or integrated into the essay correctly and smoothly * Errors in following citation rules * Most of the textual evidence used are missing signal phrases * Non-collegiate material used |
| **F** | * No thesis * No specific evidence provided or most of the example, reasons, and details are very weak and/or off topic * Essay is incomplete or doesn’t address the prompt | * No sense of organization * Major errors in essay and/or paragraph organization * No use of transitions | * Lack of control over sentence structure * Major problems with surface errors that obscure meaning * Frequently inappropriate * Numerous and significant word choice errors that obscure meaning * No MLA formatting * Lack of citations or major mistakes * No signal phrases used before quotations (or no textual evidence provided) * Plagiarized |

**Reedley College Annotated Bibliography Rubric**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A** | **B** | **C** | **D** | **F** |
| Correct MLA citation | Correct MLA citation | Correct MLA citation | Citation errors | Citation errors |
| Signal phrase and **author’s thesis** in first sentence(s) of summary | Signal phrase and author’s thesis in first sentence(s) of summary | Signal phrase and author’s thesis in first sentence(s) of summary | First sentence(s) of summary does not include signal phrase or author’s thesis | First sentence(s) of summary does not include signal phrase and author’s thesis |
| Plagiarism is avoided | Plagiarism is avoided | Plagiarism is avoided | A suggestion of plagiarism | A suggestion of plagiarism |
| Sophisticated word choice, free of grammatical and punctuation errors | Intelligible word choices with minor grammatical and punctuation errors | Sufficient word choice with few grammatical and punctuation errors | Inappropriate word choice and frequent grammatical and punctuation errors | Word choice and convention errors which impede understanding |
| Summary contains essential details and is an accurate representation of source | Summary is an accurate representation of source. | Adequate choice of summary details**--**gist of article is understood | Insufficient summary details | Incomplete or incorrect summary details |
| A sophisticated assessment of   * audience, * purpose, * credentials, * reliability of source, * method of support, * how the text will be used in the student’s paper | A clear assessment of   * audience, * purpose, * credentials, * reliability of source, * method of support, * how the text will be used in the student’s paper | An adequate assessment of   * audience, * purpose, * credentials, * reliability of source, * method of support, * how the text will be used in the student’s paper | An insufficient assessment of   * audience, * purpose, * credentials, * reliability of source, * method of support, * how the text will be used in the student’s paper | An incomplete assessment of   * audience, * purpose, * credentials, reliability of * source, * method of support, * how the text will be used in the student’s paper |

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