**English 125: Writing Skills for College**

Reedley College, Spring 2017

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Office Hours: by appointment only

Course: English 125 (4 units)

Meeting Time: M/W, 6:00-7:50 pm

Room: CCI 207

## --CATALOG DESCRIPTION--

In this course, students will develop the process of writing, revising, and finishing essays, which includes the logical development and organization of ideas. Students will avoid common writing errors, develop their writing skills by reading model essays and analyzing rhetorical strategies, develop critical thinking skills by matching the structures of writing to meaning and audience, and by using writing as thinking to explore and express ideas. This course is a companion to English 126 and prepares students for English 1A. Students must successfully complete written course work to receive credit.

## --COURSE OVERVIEW--

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.

## --COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES--

This course has the following goals and outcomes, which guide its structure, philosophy, and activities. By the end of the semester, a student should be able to demonstrate the following in an acceptably proficient manner.

**Learning Goals**

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

* 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 clearly defined thesis statement
	+ Unified supporting paragraphs, which begin with topic sentences
	+ Quotations that support the topic sentences and thesis
	+ Supporting material and ideas, which exhibit critical thinking
	+ Complete sentences which include a variety of sentence types (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex)
	+ Descriptive vocabulary that exhibits growth and sophisticated word choice
	+ 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.
	+ Use of MLA guidelines to set up essays, correctly use in-text citations for at least one course, and complete a works cited page
	+ Writing that is free from plagiarism
	+ Demonstrated awareness of how to write from the 3rd person point of view for a specific audience
* Plan and revise independently, employing all stages of the writing process as necessary and appropriate.
* Complete a multi-paragraph in-class essay with a thesis and support.

**Course Objectives**

In the process of completing this course, students will:

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

## --COURSE CONTENT--

This following topics and subtopics will be discussed in this class:

**Writing a well-developed essay:**

* Introduction
	+ Thesis statements
* Body paragraphs
	+ Topic sentences
	+ Supporting details
	+ Transitions
* Concluding paragraphs
* Coherent development
	+ Focus
	+ Organization
	+ Unification

**Thinking critically:**

* Analyze ideas
* Use supporting details to validate a thesis

**Using the writing process:**

* Prewriting strategies
* Outlining
* Drafting
* Revising
* Editing

**Writing sentences:**

* Sentence variety
	+ Simple sentences
	+ Compound sentences
	+ Complex sentences
	+ Compound-complex sentences
* Crafting sentences
	+ Using parallelism
	+ Eliminating wordiness
* Avoiding and correcting

sentence errors

* + Fragments
	+ Run-ons (comma splices and fused sentences)
* Punctuation

**Understanding purpose, audience, voice:**

* Awareness of audience
* Academic language use
* Third person point of view

**Using MLA guidelines:**

* Avoid plagiarism
* Set up an essay
* Cite direct quotations
* Write a works cited page

## --Required Texts and Materials--

*They Say, I Say with Readings 2016 MLA Update* (ISBN 978-0-393-61744-3)

Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russel Durst

*A Writer’s Reference with Writing in the Disciplines 2016 MLA Update* (ISBN 978-1-319-08708-1)

Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers

* Notebook for class notes and in-class writing
* Lined paper
* Stapler

## --Required Course Work--

* **4 major essays (65%):** You will be responsible for writing 4 major essays of approximately 2-5 pages each. We will have in-class, as well as online workshops where you will work with your peers to give and receive feedback on your writing. Each major essay will go through various drafts which will be Make sure you hold on to all drafts to submit with the final draft.
* **Workshop participation (6%):** We will have various peer review workshops before submitting a major essay. On workshop days, you are required to bring a complete rough draft along with Author’s Notes in order to receive feedback from your peers and myself. Additionally, you will be responsibility for providing your peers with feedback in order to receive workshop participation credit.
* **10 articles (5%)** You will be responsible for reading 10 articles from *TSIS* readings. You must annotate all articles as assigned. Additionally, you will be responsible for submitting a typed summary and response for **5** of these articles. Each response/summary must be a minimum of 1.5 pages. Late responses will not be accepted.
* **5 Quizzes (5%)** Quizzes will be given during the first hour of class and will cover concepts and vocabulary covered in this course. No make-up quizzes allowed.
* **Final examination (10%):** in class timed essay
* **Other homework assignments** **(9%)** You will be responsible for completing questions, responses, discussion posts, etc. assigned from the course textbooks.

\*\*\**Extra credit*: You will have various opportunities throughout the semester to obtain extra credit. Most of these will consist of attending readings on our campus, Fresno City College, & Fresno State. You will be required to submit 1 paragraph of writing where you discuss the event and what you thought about it. You may submit up to **5** extra credit assignments.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT EARNING A “D” OR AN “F” ON THE REQUIRED COURSEWORK MAKES YOU INELIGIBLE FOR EXTRA CREDIT. I WILL KEEP TRACK OF ALL EXTRA CREDIT SUBMITTED AND WILL ADD THEM TO YOUR FINAL COURSE GRADE AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER IF YOU EARN A “C” OR HIGHER.**

## --Grading--

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Points** | **Your Grade** |
| Essay 1 with draft | 100 |  |
| Essay 2 with draft | 150 |  |
| Essay 3 with drafts | 200 |  |
| Essay 4 with drafts | 200 |  |
| Essay drafts and Workshop participation  | 60 |  |
| Article Response & Summary  | 50 |  |
| Quizzes  | 50 |  |
| Final (in-class essay) | 100 |  |
| Weekly Homework Assignments | 90 |  |
| **Total Points** | **1000** |  |

**GRADING**

**A = 1000-900: excellent**

**B = 899-800: very good**

**C = 799-700: average**

**D = 699-600: needs improvement (not passing)**

**F = 599-0: fail (not passing)**

You are responsible for checking your grades and keeping track of your points. Grades can be accessed on Canvas. If at any time you have questions about your grade, please talk to me after class or via email. Do not wait until the end of the semester to try to improve your grade.

## --Class policies and procedures--

**Attendance:**

Your attendance is crucial for your success in this class. Keep in mind that every time you are absent, you miss out on a lot of essential information, announcements, and possible changes to the syllabus. For our class, attendance equates participation, which means that you need to come to class with the homework done and be prepared to participate in the activities of the class. This means if you come to class, but your homework is not done, it can count as an absence. The following attendance policy has been implemented:

* If you do not attend the first ***or*** second day of class, you will be dropped.
* If you miss any class sessions during the first 2 weeks of instruction, you will be dropped.
* If you have accumulated 4 absences by the end of the ninth week of instruction, you will be dropped.
* If you are more than 10 minutes late or leave class more than 10 minutes early, I will mark you as tardy. Please be aware that 2 tardies equal one absence. If you are late, you need to let me know at the end of class so I can make a note of it otherwise it will remain as an absence. If you know you must leave early, please let me know before class and sit close to the door to avoid any disruptions.

I understand that life happens, and there may be a time when you will not be able to attend class. If you have to be absent, please contact me via email.

\*\*\*If you are absent on a date when an assignment is due you must have someone drop the assignment off for you *or* you can email it to me before 6 pm, otherwise it will be considered a missing/late assignment.

**Computers and Cell Phones**

Using computers for things unrelated to the class focus is unacceptable. Please turn off or silence your cellphones before entering the classroom. **Cell phones are not to be used during class time.** I have the right to ask you to leave if I see you using your cell phone or causing any other form of disruption during class.

**Late Work**

You will agree to turn in properly and on time all required coursework. We will have several small group assignments, which means your colleagues depend on you to get your work done on time so they can do theirs. Late work will not be accepted for this class.

**\*Exception: You may turn in 1 late essay during the semester. Late essays are due 48 hours after their initial due date (e.g. if the essay was due on Monday at 6 pm, it must be turned in by Wednesday at 6 pm.).**

**Academic Dishonesty**

Plagiarism and cheating are not allowed and will lead to consequences for this class and potentially the college. When writing papers or submitting an assignment, make sure you are using your own words. When using information from another source, be sure to give them credit by citing the source appropriately.

* Examples of plagiarism:
	+ Using another student’s paper and submitting it as your own.
	+ Submitting a paper you wrote for another class.
	+ Having someone else write a paper for you.

Note that cheating, copying, or plagiarizing others’ work may result in a failing grade on the assignment or course as described in the Reedley College Catalog. If you have additional questions on this topic, please be sure to contact me right away.

## --submitting papers and revisions--

**Essay Formatting**

All essays (rough drafts & final drafts) must be submitted in the following format:

* Times New Roman, size 12
* Entire essay must be double spaced
* 1 inch margins on all sides
* Page number must be INSERTED (not typed) into the upper right hand corner (header) beginning with page one. Your last name must appear before the page number.
* Use the following heading (top, left-hand corner):
	+ Student’s Name
	+ Instructor’s Name
	+ Course and Section number
	+ Due Date for Essay
* Appropriate title (centered) in the same font as rest of essay

**Please be sure to proofread your papers before submitting them. Having too many grammatical errors hinders the reader from understanding what you’re trying to say.**

**Please note:** The guidelines above are the standard for writing in MLA format. Not following them and/or not proofreading your paper before submitting may result in points being deducted.

\*\*\*You are allowed to rewrite one of the four major essays and earn up to one letter grade higher. If you choose to do so (and I strongly encourage that you do), you must set up an appointment to meet with me to discuss your essay. Your revised essay must demonstrate substantial revision in order for you to receive a higher grade.

\*\*\*Revisions for essays 1 and 2 must be submitted before the midterm examination. Revisions for essays 3 and 4 must be submitted before the final examination.

## --Accommodations--

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 talk to me as soon as possible. Contact Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S) at (559) 638-0332 or visit their website for more information: <http://www.reedleycollege.edu/services/dsp/LD.htm>.

## --College Resources--

This class consists of a lot of reading and writing assignments. Since this is a 4-unit class, you should count on 8-12 hours of work per week. Make use of the following college resources to assist you in successfully passing this course:

* Reading and Writing Center
* Tutorial Center
* Library