

## **ENG 185 – Critical Reading and Writing**

Spring 2011

**Instructor:** Elizabeth Bell Canon

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**Office/Office Hours:** Humanities Bldg. Rm. 204/ MW 2:00-3:00, T 11:00-12:00, or by appointment

**Course Description:** An introductory course in composition. The course will emphasize writing practice in various rhetorical modes with focus on all stages of the writing process and writing as a thinking process.

**Course Outcomes:** When you complete ENG 185 with a C or better, you will be able to:

- 1) Use Standard Academic English (inflection and syntax, spelling, punctuation and mechanics)
- 2) Make coherent links between ideas
- 3) State your claim explicitly, and support it with examples, statistics, anecdotes, and authorities of various kinds
- 4) Carefully document all your sources
- 5) Consistently use the appropriate level of formality in your written English
- 6) Use conventional academic formats, such as research projects, literary analysis, and position papers.

(adapted from *The Everyday Writer*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., by Andrea Lunsford)

**Texts:** *A Writer's Reference*, by Diana Hacker (sixth edition)

*Why I Write*, George Orwell

*The Lord of the Flies*, William Golding

Various readings provided by the instructor

### **Course Requirements:**

**Formal Essays:** Three essays of approximately 3-5 pages, to be broken down as follows:

- 1) Essay 1: **Evaluate an argument (“Politics and the English Language”).**

In this assignment, you will read the argument George Orwell presented in “Politics and the English Language” and assess it based on criteria we will discuss in class. This will help you think critically when evaluating the arguments of others and help you create a well-formed argument of your own.

- 2) Essay 2: **Construct an argument, [+ annotated bibliography].**

This is the biggest assignment of the semester. Over the course of a few weeks, we will discuss what a contestable topic is and how to present a logical argument based on credible proof. This assignment will require quite a bit of careful research. To make sure students are on track, we will be having one-on-one conferences to discuss your progress.

- 3) Essay 3: **Evaluate a text (*Lord of the Flies*).**

Why do the lists of banned books in the United States contain so many texts intended for young adults? What is it that parents and community members

don't want young people to know? We will read *Lord of the Flies*, a book that has been required reading in many high schools and banned in many others, and evaluate it based on both points of view. In order to successfully evaluate the book, you will need to do some research on the history of book banning and the problems surrounding our text in particular.

**Tests:** Two essay exams.

- 1) Midterm Essay exam: This will be an opportunity for you to work on essay exam skills. The test topic will be chosen by the class.
- 2) Final Essay exam: This will be a very low-key, open-notes essay exam. After discussing some effective note-taking strategies, we will watch a documentary on the dialects of American English. You will have the opportunity to take notes and ask questions for clarification during class. Then, you will bring those notes to the final. Careful, well-organized notes will ensure a passing grade.

Notes on Final Exams: If a student has 3 exams on the same day, the student in conjunction with their professor may schedule one exam on the CONFLICT EXAM day. Students must have the permission of the Dean of Academic Affairs to take an exam earlier or later than scheduled. Permission is normally granted for medical reasons or for participating in educational programs. **Important:** Leaving early for rides or flights, vacations, relatives' or friends' weddings or graduation, jobs, or having more than one exam on one day are not considered valid reasons to request an earlier or later exam.

**Please note:** All essays (excluding essay tests) must be typed and formatted according to MLA specifications. We will discuss how to do this in class.

**Preliminary Essays:** You will have the opportunity to have preliminary essays reviewed by a group of your peers before the final draft of that essay is due. I will not read the preliminary essays unless you ask me to. You must bring this draft to class on peer review day to get credit for it. If it meets the requirements of the assignment, it will receive a *Pass*, if not, a *Fail*. The only exception to this is the first draft of the argument paper. I will grade and discuss that one with each of you privately.

**Homework, quizzes, and class discussions:** Some homework assignments will be from our textbook's companion website: [www.dianahacker.com/writersref](http://www.dianahacker.com/writersref). We will also have short readings, provided by the instructor, requiring short written responses. At one point in the semester, we will prepare for a debate on the issue of "official English." This will require careful reading and some preparation. More on this later. Quizzes will be over the homework, a reading assignment, or a previous lecture. They are all pop-quizzes, so stay on your toes!

**Speech:** Toward the end of the semester, each of you will prepare a 10 minute talk about the argument paper you wrote for this class. It isn't meant to be a thorough treatment of the topic, but a brief introduction to your work on that topic. You might discuss how you

came to the topic, how hard it was to research, whether or not your own point of view changed as a result of your research, or the conclusion you drew in the end. This is NOT a formal speech.

**A note on plagiarism:** A student who submits a paper which in whole or part has been written by someone else, or which contains passages quoted **or paraphrased** from another person's work without proper documentation is guilty of plagiarism. This is a serious offense and will have very serious consequences. Each student is encouraged to ask questions to clarify the issues related to plagiarism and academic integrity. **The bottom line is this: if you have the slightest doubt that what you are turning in might be considered by someone else to be plagiarized, it probably is.** We will devote a full week to the discussion of plagiarism and how to avoid it.

**Grading Policy:**

Final drafts of essays 1, 3:	20%
Final draft of essay 2:	20%
Midterm exam:	10%
Preliminary drafts, speech:	20%
Homework, participation, quizzes:	20%
Final exam:	10%

**Grading scale:**

A = 90 - 100%	B+ = 87 - 89%
B = 83 - 86%	B-/C+ = 77 - 82%
C = 73 - 76%	C-/D = 60 - 72%
F = any score of 59 or less.	

**Class Format, Instructor Expectations:** This course will involve a combination of lecture and discussion. In order to discuss the assigned readings, students **MUST** prepare beforehand. Attendance is critical as there will be a considerable amount of material presented in class from sources other than the text. Since attendance is so crucial to student success, students with more than 6 absences (excused or unexcused) will receive a failing grade for this course. Unless there is a dire emergency, absences must be cleared with the instructor **beforehand**. Attendance will be taken only once – at the beginning of class. This means that if you are late, you will be marked absence. It is each student's responsibility to keep up with class work, even if he/she isn't in class that day. Make sure you get that day's assignments. **Tests/quizzes missed due to absence can't be made up.** All work is due at the beginning of class on the day for which it was assigned. **\*\*Late work will be penalized as follows: First, the paper will be graded based on its own merit. Then, for each day the work is late, 10% will be cut from that grade. DO NOT FALL BEHIND, OR IT MAY BE CURTAINS FOR YOU!!!** Students with perfect attendance and excellent class participation will have 5 points factored into their final grade. This is a gimme, so take it!

I believe that all students who enrolled in an institution of higher education did so to pursue a higher level of scholarship. With that in mind, I expect that students will behave in a respectful manner toward the instructor (and vice versa!) Additionally, I expect that

class discussions will be lively but civil. Cell phones, laptops, and MP3 players aren't welcome – please turn them off before class.

**Religious Holidays:** Students wishing to observe a religious holiday must let me know of their intentions during the first week of school.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Any student with a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, or hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

**Schedule highlights: (*subject to change*)**

***Internet homework is assigned each day in class.***

Week 1: Introduction to course.

Week 2: *Grammar Workshops*.

Week 3: *Evaluate an Argument* first draft due. Peer review.

Week 4: Plagiarism tutorial. *Evaluate an Argument* second draft due.

Week 5: In-class debate on assigned reading.

Week 6: *Midterm exam*.

Week 7: Turn in annotated bibliography for *Argument*. Peer review.

Week 8: *Argument* first draft due. Mandatory teacher conferences to be scheduled during class time.

Week 9: Teacher Conferences.

Week 10: *Argument* final drafts due.

Week 11: *Evaluate a Text* first draft due. Peer review.

Week 12: *Evaluate a Text* second draft due.

Week 13: Deliver a speech based on an essay you wrote. More on this later.

Week 14: *Do You Speak American?* More on this later.

**\*\*This is important: I am very approachable. Please come see me when/if you have concerns or problems related to the class. Really.**