

Instructor: Stacy Bell

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Office: Humanities 105

Office hours: TTh 1-4, and by appointment

Required Texts

Clark et al., *Language: Introductory Readings*

Lieberman & Pullum, *Far from the Madding Crowd*

Walsh, *The Elephants of Style*

Yagoda, *When You Catch an Adjective, Kill It!*

Miscellaneous assigned readings

Course Description

An overview of grammar instruction during the last century with a focus on the organic nature of language and how use varies based on socioeconomics, geography and "context," emphasizing the differences between formal (Standard) and non-Standard grammars; grammar practice exercises, including but not limited to sentence diagramming; discussion/debate of the purpose and effectiveness of "prescriptive" grammar, based on group reading of a contemporary style manual. Evaluation through midterm and final, one essay and five brief writing assignments.

Objectives

The student will master the vocabulary for describing the structure of Standard English. The student will demonstrate understanding of structure by diagramming sentences and by discussing and describing grammatical forms in class and in writing. The student will explore effective approaches to teaching grammar, while debating the purpose of teaching grammar at all. The student will examine the structure of English for the sheer joy and pleasure of developing a deeper understanding of the complexities of language, how its varied uses can help or hinder an individual in society, as well as how and why it naturally changes over time.

Responsibilities

Attendance: As per Oxford College policy, class begins at the designated time. If you are not present when class begins, I will mark you absent. If you are not prepared for class, I will mark you absent. You may miss three days of class without penalty, beyond which I will deduct half a letter grade from your final average for each additional unexcused absence. I will excuse absences in the event of a major illness [with a doctor's note], legitimate emergency, or religious observance. Finally, I don't teach in your bedroom—don't sleep in my classroom.

Plagiarism: The work you submit for class must be your own. If you use another author's words, sentence structure or original ideas in your writing, you must give credit to the author by using MLA documentation form as it is presented in *Bedford*. All papers suspected of plagiarism will be turned over to the Honor Council (*Oxford College Handbook* pages 98). If you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, read your handbook and **please see me**.

I am on the Honor Council. Need I say more?

Behavior: The instructor and students will display professional and courteous behavior, including but not limited to respect for the opinions of others. What constitutes professional and courteous behavior is at the discretion of the instructor. I will dismiss and mark absent any student who fails to show respect for his or her classmates and/or instructor. Continued disruptions and/or discourtesy will result in automatic dismissal from this class and referral to the Academic Dean. Dismissal from class may negatively impact the final grade.

Email: Students must learn appropriate uses of email. The best way to communicate with an instructor is in person, during class or during office hours. I accept email for the following reasons:

- To cancel an appointment
- To notify me of an absence
- To ask a legitimate question about an assignment

I will not respond to email requesting information contained in the syllabus. If you don't know what is in the syllabus, you aren't prepared for class. Finally, I will ***never respond*** to email requests for grades or "averages."

* Please note: cell phones, blackberries and iPods are strictly forbidden in my classroom. If you have one with you, it had better be turned off and concealed from my sight. If I hear or see it, I'm going to ask you to remove it from the classroom, and I will mark you absent. Laptops are permitted during the final exam ***only***. Stay off the computers during class unless I have asked you to type a lesson. If I catch you on-line checking email or, heaven help me, *Facebook*, I will mark you absent.

Evaluation:

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 25%

Short written responses: 5% each x 5 = 25%

Essay: 15%

Participation: 10%

If you are absent without an excuse on a day in which an in-class activity is assigned, you will NOT be permitted to make up missed work. ****Note:*** Your essay and exams will be evaluated based on a predetermined set of criteria, including demonstration of competency in the mechanics and organization of writing. This is a college level course; spelling errors will not be tolerated. An essay or exam with more than five spelling errors will receive a failing grade--NO EXCEPTIONS.

Any student who receives a grade of C- or lower on an essay or exam MUST schedule a conference with me during my regular office hours immediately after receiving the evaluated work.

Unless you obtain approval from the Academic Dean, there will be no exceptions to the policies outlined in this syllabus, which represents a contract between student and instructor. The instructor will meet her responsibilities in regard to instruction and evaluation of the student, and the student will meet his or her responsibilities in regard to completion of all assignments and adherence to all class policies.

I have read and understand all components of this syllabus. I agree to adhere to all the policies and guidelines outlined in this syllabus.

print your name

signature

date