**CORE106 Fall 2015**

**McDonald’s Composition tips**

* Orwell isn’t just philosophical. His essay is full of writing tips that deserve your attention.   
  + Use English. Forget your thesaurus, unless you have a good reason to use a word that isn’t the obvious choice.
  + Active voice is usually better than passive voice.  
    - Active: “The chicken crossed the road.” Action describes the *subject*.
    - Passive: “The road was crossed by the chicken.” Action describes the *object*.  
        
      See the difference? Which one do you prefer?
    - Active voice forces you to think harder about your verb choices.
    - Active voice is more conversational.
  + Say more with less. The fewer words, the better. You’ll rarely go wrong with short, direct sentences.  
    - You’ll achieve better economy of writing when you revise your draft.
    - You can ALWAYS pack more meaning into fewer words.
  + Violate these guidelines when appropriate.
* Perfection is the enemy of goodness. Start writing, even if you hate your first draft.
* Give yourself time. You won’t be satisfied with a panicked, rushed effort. If you allow enough time, this process can be surprisingly fun, and rewarding without a doubt.
* Ask someone besides the professor to read your work. Your roommate will do. Take advantage of the fact that almost every first year student on campus is taking E&D.
* The number one, most important thing is this: propose a thesis and defend it. **The essay exists only to support a claim, that you should state in the first couple of sentences.** Avoid the mistake of throwing ideas against the wall to see what sticks. The best essays are thematically consistent, with transparent organization and sequence of ideas. They have a beginning, middle, and end that any reader can recognize.