

English 126: Writing Humanities

Instructor: Mrs. Victoria Scrivner
Office Hours: 11:00 – 12:00 RLC 108
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Course Description:

This is a composition course with collateral readings in literature designed to develop research skills, critical thought processes, and advance critical reading techniques. Skills taught involve close reading of a text through analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. Additionally, we will continue to emphasize and expand upon the basic skills taught in English 110.

Texts and Materials:

Kirschner, Laurie and Stephen R. Mandell. *Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing*. 7th edition

Hacker, Diane. *The Writer's Reference*. 6th edition

Dictionary

Thesaurus

A pocket-style folder for class handouts, rough drafts, returned projects, etc.

Bound notebook for in-class writing and class notes.

Highlighters, pens, and pencils for annotating passages and margins.

Two 3 ½" disks for writing assignments; the second is for a safety backup to protect against the event of damage, etc. to the first.

Mini stapler

Course Objectives:

- Identify the central themes or ideas in the assigned readings.
- Distinguish how rhetorical and literary techniques are used by writers to present central themes or ideas.
- Recognize how on a personal level, positionality, and on a social level, culture bonds the humanities and human experience together.
- Utilize appropriate language specific to the discipline to interpret and evaluate individual works of literature.
- Conceive, develop, and analyze complex ideas appropriate for the humanities.
- Revise and edit rough drafts in order to strengthen writing skills developed in English 110.

Course Requirements:

• Short Story Essay Questions	520 pts.
• Poetry Essay Questions	660 pts.
• Drama Essay Questions	500 pts.
Total	1680 pts.

Success in these areas will be achieved through the following:

- Students will complete a collection of short essays. Keep in mind that the focus should be on analyzing the material rather than summarizing. I am looking for detailed answers in a structured, well thought out format. To that end, topic sentences, paragraph structure, textual evidence, and plausible interpretations shall be stressed all in a work free of grammar, punctuation, mechanical, and spelling errors. Further, I strongly recommend that you re-type the question, and identify the subsections where appropriate. Finally, your journals must be typed and conform to MLA format.
- Students will participate in class. This class is structured so that both individual and group discussion is heavily emphasized. To that end, it is imperative that you come to class prepared to analyze the material due for that day. Students will listen and share responses with other students in a reflective, constructively critical, yet non-judgmental, seminar environment. As such, abusive or sexist language will not be tolerated and you will be removed from class.

- This class is designed to incorporate both class discussion and group activity in a seminar environment. Bring your in-class discussion questions and your answers to every class as this will facilitate effective reasoning and maintain group focus. Keep in mind, however, that this is not an opportunity to answer the essay questions during class time. Your essay questions should be completed before class begins. Rather, this is an opportunity to revise and expand your answers and flush them out with challenging and provocative details. You will be asked whether you are left with any questions, reflections, or comments based upon your reading. This is part of furthering your understanding of what you have read and will engender class room discussion.

Should you, as a group, encounter a student who has not completed the work, or who is not owning up to his or her responsibilities, you have the right to come see me and further action will be taken.

Also, it is assumed that should you encounter vocabulary that you do not understand, you will use the dictionary that is required for this class.

- It is expected that you will make revisions on all your short answer essays due for this class. You should not consider this as a matter of mere editing simply focusing upon punctuation and spelling errors which may or may not have occurred. Revision entails a considerable shift and/or change in your own theoretical positioning according to various comments and suggestions made from your peers and instructor.
- Periodically, you will be involved with class activities to either further a positive classroom environment or your understanding of the text required for this class.
- You are expected to come prepared to class. Please read all assignments before class, using a highlighter and/or other writing utensil to annotate passages that engage or interest you and any and all margin notes. Make sure that you bring all other necessary materials to class – this includes the text, dictionary, thesaurus, paper, and pens / pencils, etc.

General Class information:

- *Assignments*

Be sure to print out two copies of your final projects. Hand one copy to me on the day that it is due, and leave another copy in your folder. Should the unthinkable happen, you have a backup copy on hand.

- *Late Assignments*

I do not accept late assignments.

- *MLA format*

All papers and journals must be typed or generated through a word processor. Use “Times New Roman” style with a 12 pt black font, and double spaced throughout. Your margins should be 1" and do not justify your margins. Begin each new paragraph by indenting or tabbing over five spaces, *and make sure that you have two spaces between each sentence*. Your “Work Cited” page will be on a separate page and stapled to the back of your papers. **Your MLA will be graded as a Pass/No Pass for each essay. Please note that there are MLA problems converting Word 2007 to Word 2003.**

Smith 1

John Smith
Mrs. Scrivner
English 126; __:00
Project Name
Date Due

Center Title Here

- *ADA Statement*

If you believe you qualify for course adaptations or special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, it is your responsibility to contact the Disability Support Services Coordinator in LSC 272 and provide the appropriate documentation. If you have already documented a disability or other condition through the GRCC Disability Support Services Office that would qualify you for special accommodations, or if you have emergency medical information or special needs I should know about, please notify me during the first week of class.

- *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is defined as presenting someone else’s work or ideas as your own. Whether you do this intentionally, buying a paper or copying information from the Internet, or not, **plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the paper and you will not pass this course.** If you are uncertain what constitutes plagiarism at any point in the quarter, please make an appointment with me during office hours. Quite simply, do original work and learn and grow from it. Don’t let the pursuit of a grade compromise your honor and self respect.

- *Cell phones and pagers*

The use of cell phones and pagers in class is disruptive to your fellow students and it inhibits the learning process. Please turn all pagers to “vibrate mode” and turn your cell phones to “silent mode” before entering the class.

- *Emails*

Please remember that you are emailing your English instructor. If you do not wish me to correct your grammar, spelling, and the like, do not present me with an opportunity to do such. Remember that your Subj Line should look something like this: Engl. __; ____am. Begin your email with Mrs. Scrivner, and hit the enter button. It would be nice if you finished your email with a polite phrase and your name. If you are sick, you may email me your paper or project and it will be accepted. **HOWEVER, PLEASE NOTE THAT YOUR PAPER OR PROJECT MUST BE EMAILED TO ME BEFORE YOUR CLASS.**

- *Facebook*

A Facebook account is not a requirement for this class; however, please note that there are several advantages in having one. First, should you lose the important documentation needed for this class, you can download it from my “Boxes” tab. I have uploaded other, shall we say goodies, that you will not be given in class. You will also find that I might *happen* to be online and available for chat the night before something is due (playing Farmville and Fishville) should you run into difficulties and need a quick question answered. Over the course of the years, I have found that my wall page periodically becomes a temporary blog. Many students use this – especially the week before the final to post questions for me to answer. **Remember to always scroll down and read all the comments before you chat.** I also use FB to keep my humor and you might find a post or link or two that will cause you to smile when you need one. Finally, should I need to cancel class, I will always post before 7 am.

- *School Closures*

Do not assume that just because campus is closed or you are unable to get to class, that class is cancelled. It's not. New campus wide requirements were put into place that require all instructors to continue instructing via Angel. As such, in the case of an emergency -- flooding, snow conditions, the campus is set ablaze, that sort of thing – this class will automatically revert to an online class. I will post instructions via Angel and Facebook so we can continue uninterrupted. If you lose power and cannot access your internet, or cannot travel to a place that does, it is your responsibility to contact your “study buddy” so you can keep up with your classmates.

- *Proviso*

While the syllabus is fairly detailed as to what is due, and we will try to follow it to the letter, I reserve the right to amend this if deemed necessary.

→ *Criterion for Grading Essays*

The **A** paper establishes and maintains a clear purpose, driven by a cogent and precise thesis statement; demonstrates an awareness of the audience; develops ideas logically, with relevance, insight, and clarity, going beyond the obvious and trite statements; supports all examples using apt textual passages combined with plausible follow-up analysis that, taken together, reinforce the thesis; uses effective, appropriate transitions in a smooth, fluent manner; employs the conventions of good grammar, mechanics, spelling, with only a few inconsequential errors that do not interfere with the readers' understanding.

The **B** paper establishes a discernible thesis, though it may not be as provocative nor reflective as with an **A** paper; demonstrates a strong awareness of audience; develops some clear, precise, relevant ideas mixed with a couple of ideas which are safer, more predictable, though not explored to their necessary depth; supporting details and passages are appropriate and mostly effective; follow-up analysis and reinforcement of thesis is evident in almost every body paragraph; well organized, transitions aid in cohesiveness; more than a few errors that detract from the essay, although careful proofreading is apparent.

A **C** paper attempts to establish a thesis, yet it is more of a statement of fact, not a meaningful assertion to show a writer's position; general awareness of audience; most ideas are vaguely developed with mostly safe, predictable interpretations; selection and analysis of textual passages are sparse and sometimes irrelevant to purpose of essay; little to no reinforcement back to essay's purpose; organization / structure of the piece may be confusing in places, thus weakening impact, and focus of essay; transitions are weak; multiple errors in grammar and/or mechanics and/or spelling.

A **D** paper has no evidence of a clear purpose/thesis; no awareness of audience; obvious interpretations with little to no textual references, analysis, and follow-up; significant grammar and punctuation errors throughout paper that inhibit understand.

The **F** paper shows a complete misunderstanding of the assignment.

Grading Conversion:

95% and above is a 4.0	89% = 3.4	79% = 2.4
94% = 3.9	88% = 3.3	78% = 2.3
93% = 3.8	87% = 3.2	77% = 2.2
92% = 3.7	86% = 3.1	76% = 2.1
91% = 3.6	85% = 3.0	75% = 2.0 Lowest Passing Grade
90% = 3.5	84% = 2.9	74% = 1.9
	83% = 2.8	73% = 1.8
	82% = 2.7	72% = 1.7
	81% = 2.6	71% = 1.6
	80% = 2.5	70% = 1.5

A final thought . . .

Most agree that the written and verbal forms of communication are the basic modes of social organization. Through the medium of the written word, we are able to entertain, persuade, inform, and educate ourselves and our readers. On a more personal level, writing enables us to organize, reflect, critique, or merely record our experiences. Above all, writing teaches us to focus and hone our cognitive ability.

Each of us has the ability to write, and for some, write well. Yet, in each new writing project, there is the act of discovery, the cultivation of new ideas, thought processes, and expanded vocabulary.

As writers, you will discover the dichotomy of the written word, for the written word is both a “living” and a “dead” form of communication. The written word is perceived as a “dead” language as the audience has neither the ability to alter the context or go beyond the ideas and knowledge present and articulate opposing viewpoints to the author. The written word is also perceived as “living” because while the artist may have already passed on, their words, their thoughts, and their ideas have lived on and have continued to provoke thought.

If you learn nothing else from this class, remember that when encountered, words have *power*. Words have the ability, if you will, to mold and shape the very core of human existence.

The question that must be asked, and ultimately, you must answer for yourselves, is how one would develop the skills necessary to become a more proficient writer? For myself, it begins with focusing upon two primary concepts: writing as a process and not as a product, and the art of maintaining a concise, analytical, and logical pattern.