

English 107: Rhetoric and Writing

This course addresses all seven criteria of the composition requirement as defined in Foundational Studies. Freshmen with SAT verbal scores of 510 or above or ACT English usage scores of 20 or above place into this course.

- 1. Demonstrate fluency in the writing process: planning, drafting, revising, editing, and preparing final papers.** This course focuses on the process of writing documented papers synthesizing information from several different sources. It addresses critical reading skills, research techniques and strategies, as well as drafting and editing. The course places a strong emphasis on multiple drafts and revisions for each assignment.
- 2. Demonstrate competence in the varied elements of writing:** thesis, stance, content, organization, sentences, diction, and technical matters. These aspects of writing are essential to writing documented research papers and receive significant attention throughout the process. These issues are also addressed when training students in the critical reading skills that are crucial for conducting documented research.
- 3. Demonstrate awareness of rhetorical strategies in various forms of writing, with particular attention to audience:** In 107 students must begin to develop strategies of organization that emerge from their responses to sources. They are also instructed in the expectations of a scholarly audience.
- 4. Assess the usefulness and reliability of sources, including Internet sources:** Research writing is a central component of English 107, and instruction gives much attention to source evaluation so that students can discern reliable scholarly sources from sources addressed to a wider audience, whether in print or electronic form. They also learn how and when each type is appropriate depending on the audience and purpose of the paper. In addition to class the discussion, the textbook is heavily focused on these matters. All writing assignments ask students to engage a least one source.
- 5. Synthesize and critique material from a variety of sources with an emphasis on scholarly and professional publications; incorporate sources; document sources properly:** All papers require students to examine and incorporate scholarly sources with correct documentation forms. Both the textbook and class discussion directly address these matters. The final paper of the course requires multiple sources.
- 6. Exhibit critical thinking as readers and as writers:** Critical thinking is modeled and practiced both in the evaluation and use of sources and in the writing of the paper.
- 7. Understand the relevance of writing to real-world situations:** Upon completion of this course students will have a strong understanding of how research writing functions in the university and the world.

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 Spring 2008, TTh 9:30-10:45
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CONTENT

The aim of this course is to train students to write documented papers synthesizing information from several different sources. To conduct this research and to produce an effective final researched essay, the course places particular emphasis on the application of rhetorical principles to critical reading.

All students in this class will have ample opportunity to develop their writing through graded and un-graded assignments. Students will study writing through its various components and structures: the word, the sentence, the paragraph, and the essay. Grammar, syntax, and punctuation will be reviewed alongside various rhetorical modes and strategies. This course will also use model essays and other texts to practice critical thinking and interpretive skills. By giving students a solid foundation in basic reading, research, and compositional skills, the course will enable students to produce substantive and coherent researched essays (FS 1-7, see specific writing assignments below).

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Texts:

- *The Beacon Handbook and Desk Reference* (6th Edition) by Robert Perrin
- *The Creation* by Edward O. Wilson
- A Substantial Dictionary

GRADING

- *Essay #1* 10%
- *Essay #2* 20%
- *Essay #3* 20%
- *Final Project Draft* 10%
- *Final Project Draft* 30%
- *Attendance/Participation* 10%

GENERAL WRITING GUIDELINES

- *Papers will be graded according to both technical matters and content or style. Specific requirements will be discussed prior to each assignment's due date. For the first three essays, while rough drafts will be examined and comments will be offered through peer review sessions, only final drafts will be graded. When drafts of components or the paper as a whole are peer reviewed, all drafts should be included with the final paper. The degree of revision will be essential in determining the final*

grade for such assignments. This is especially true for the final project whose rough draft will be graded (FS 1- 4).

- All papers must be typed and citations of quoted and paraphrased material must be formatted in the MLA style (see handbook). Essays must also be thoroughly edited and spell-checked.
- All written work must meet the minimum word counts—and all papers should include the word count at the end of the document.
- All papers must be stapled and include the page number on all pages except the first.
- Unless otherwise arranged with the professor, papers turned in late will lose a full letter grade for each day they are late.
- All writing should be kept organized for review during individual conferences with the professor.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

- **Diagnostic Paper** (2-3 pages, 700 word *minimum*). Entitled “The Stranger in the Village,” this essay is a personal narrative that will address a real experience of “Strangeness” or “Otherness” experienced by the student. It should be modeled on James Baldwin’s essay.
- **Essay #1** (3-4 pages, 850 word *minimum*). This essay is a personal encounter and reading of a painting of your choice from Terre Haute’s Swope Gallery. Simon Schama’s essay and documentary should be a starting point for your interpretation of a painting that inspires or affects you.
- **Essay #2** (3-4 pages, 850 word *minimum*). This essay is neither a personal narrative nor an interpretive paper but rather an exegetical essay that will clearly and coherently present the argument of Jean Paul Sartre’s essay “Anti-Semite and Jew.”
- **Essay #3** (3-4 pages, 850 word *minimum*). After reading and discussing E. O. Wilson’s *The Creation* in class, this essay will present a eulogy for an endangered species. This will require research into not only the life, behavior, and habitat of a species (plant or animal) of your choice but also the reasons for it having become critically endangered. With this knowledge, you will write the eulogy from the standpoint of the extinction of this life form. In other words, you will write as if it were already gone. One key to this project is to begin to fathom the meaning of *extinction* in practical, moral, and philosophical terms.
- **Final Essay Project** (7-8 pages, 1600 word *minimum*). Building from E. O. Wilson’s book, this project will continue your examination of the human relationship to the planet and the environmental catastrophes we are presently living through. This well-researched essay should explore the current state of a particular on-going

environmental crisis of your choice. The exercise here is to take a very large topic and find a way into it that is particular, detailed, and fact-based. We will go through a process of thesis development, basic research practice, and drafting. Well developed drafts will be turned in and will receive a grade that will constitute 10% of the course grade. The final project must include not only the essay but a comprehensive bibliography and a folder containing the primary research materials and notes used in the paper. I will be grading the process here along with the final written result. It is vital that you pick up these materials from me after they have been graded.

Possible topics might include anthropogenic contributors to global warming such as the current dependence on and new construction of coal-fired power plants; unchecked urbanization; deforestation; the oil-economy; air-travel; ground transportation that burns fossil fuels; agriculture that is dependent on oil for fertilizer, pesticide, and fuel; methane release from feedlots and animal production; inefficient building construction; consumer packaging; etc. etc. Other related issues might include ocean acidification, coral reef bleaching, ocean dumping of waste, desertification, the fresh-water crisis, the disappearance of biodiversity, habitat loss, over-hunting and over-fishing, etc. etc.

The key is to explore your issue through the question of how our human relationship to the planet is out of balance and unsustainable. You may explore solutions to the crisis in question, but the crisis itself should occupy the bulk of your attention.

GENERAL COURSE EXPECTATIONS

- **Attendance:** *Punctual attendance and regular participation in class discussion are course requirements. If absent, be sure to find out what was missed and make up any work. Consistent attendance will be rewarded as follows:*

0 – 1 total absences: A/A-

2 – 3 total absences: B/B-

4 – 5 total absences: C/C-

6 total absences: D

7+ total absences: F

10+ total absences: F for the course

*Students should keep the professor abreast of personal emergencies and severe illnesses that necessitate extensive absence. Any absencing situations in which the university would need to be notified are obviously “excused.” The number of absences will correspond to a letter grade worth 10% of the total grade. In the unfortunate circumstance that a student who does not have a severe emergency or illness misses 10 class sessions or more, that student will **fail** the course.*

- **Classroom Compartment:**
 - **Cell Phones:** Handheld electronic devices are to be turned off prior to entering the classroom. Text Messaging is absolutely prohibited. If a student is observed using a cell phone for any purpose in the classroom he or she will

be summarily asked to leave the room and the student will be marked absent for the day. Repeat offenders will receive an F for attendance and participation.

- Laptops: *Laptops may be used for note-taking. However, if I observe one student at any time using a laptop for anything other than note-taking, ALL laptops will be banned from the class for the entire semester.*
- Packing Up: The class meets for a fixed time. Please do not pack up your things until the class is over. Such shuffling about is rude to the professor and other students.
- Littering: Please make sure you clean up after yourself when you leave the class. I expect respect for the educational process and for this institution.
- Professional Communication with Professor: Students are expected to be professional in all communication with the professor. All email communication should be in complete sentences with a proper salutation and conclusion. Please do not write to the professor in a casual manner. This will guarantee that you will not receive a response.
- **Class Discussion**: Enthusiastic participation is a course requirement. In lectures I will offer context, readings, and questions. But, the real work of textual inquiry falls to the class. If I am speaking, do not feel inhibited to ask questions. At times I will use language or words that are either unclear or unknown. Never be ashamed of asking me what I mean when I say something a certain way. All students will have the opportunity to address issues and pose questions both before the whole class and in small groups. This course will provide an opportunity to try out ideas, to take risks, and to make mistakes. Therefore, the classroom must be a safe place where open conversation is honored and individual persons are respected. **Our classroom is composed of students from diverse backgrounds. You will be expected to conduct yourself professionally and as a scholar in all situations.**
- **Reading**: All students must acquire the course texts listed on this syllabus. Students are expected to bring the relevant course texts to every class session. Repeated arrival to class without the course text will severely impact the Attendance and Participation grade. Obviously, complete preparation of all reading assignments by the date listed is expected. For every class, be prepared to discuss the reading with the whole class and in small discussion groups.
- **Note-taking**: I strongly advise that you take both reading notes and class notes. In my time teaching undergraduates (and graduate students) at various institutions, I am continually astounded by how few students are in the *habit* of taking regular and useful notes. Note-taking is crucial not only for research, obviously, but for any engaged reading or classroom participation. If you are not in the habit of taking notes, now is the time to begin this highly useful intellectual practice.

- **Peer Review Sessions:** Early in the semester, the class will be divided into peer-groups of 3 or 4 students each. The constitution of these groups will be maintained throughout the semester. On the class session before peer-review work, students must provide the instructor and each member of the group with a hard copy of the essay or the component being worked on. Students may choose to exchange email addresses and submit electronic copies to each other, but all documents must be sent a full day before the peer review session. A hardcopy will then be “marked” by each member of the group and returned to the writer after the piece has been discussed during the peer review session.
- **Individual Conferences:** Two sets of individual conferences will be conducted instead of class time over the course of the semester. However, I strongly encourage all students to voluntarily meet me in office hours at other times during the semester to review work, to address questions or concerns, or just to talk about the course material. For such meetings appointments should be made.
- **Special Needs Students:** *If you have a documented physical or learning disability that could affect your work, let me know privately. By federal law you are entitled to and eligible for accommodation through the Student Support Services Program, Gillum Hall, 201E, ext. 7920. Have your contact person there contact me. Such accommodation may include more time on in-class writings or a transcriber for out-of-class work.*
- **Academic Freedom:** *ISU Follows American Association of University Professors’ guidelines: “Teachers are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial matter which has no relation to their subject.” For complete guidelines, see <http://www.aaup.org/aaup/pubres/policydocs/content/1940> statement.*
- **Academic Integrity:** *This course will be using the university’s Turnitin software and other modalities to catch plagiarism. **Work done for this course must adhere to the University Academic Integrity Policy, which you can review in the Undergraduate Catalog.** Because academic integrity is a cornerstone of the University’s commitment to the principles of free inquiry, students are responsible for learning and upholding professional standards in research, writing, assessment, and ethics. In the academic community the high value of honesty mandates a corresponding intolerance of dishonesty. Written or other work which students submit must be the product of their own efforts and must be consistent with appropriate standards of professional ethics. **Academic dishonesty, which includes cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of dishonest or unethical behavior, is prohibited and will result in an F for the course.***

Course Schedule

Week 1 (January 8, 10)

T: Syllabus review, Introductions

Th: Discussion of resources in course texts; the writing process; in-class writing exercise

Week 2 (January 15, 17)

T: Reading: James Baldwin's "Stranger in the Village" [Blackboard]

Th: Reading: James Baldwin's "Stranger in the Village"

Week 3 (January 22, 24)

T: Argument vs. Opinion; Word Choice, Voice (active/passive verbs, Sentence Structure

Due: Diagnostic Paper entitled "A Stranger in the Village"

Th: Reading: James Baldwin's "Stranger in the Village"

Due: Lists of 5 strong sentences from Baldwin's essay with commentary on what makes these strong, admirable sentences

Week 4 (January 29, 30)

T: SWOPE TOUR; Reading: Simon Schama's "Introduction" to *The Power of Art*; Schama's essay "Turner: Painting Up a Storm" [Blackboard]

Th: Reading: Simon Schama's "Introduction" to *The Power of Art*; Schama's essay "Turner: Painting Up a Storm"

Week 5 (February 5, 7)

T: Reading: Schama's essay "Turner: Painting Up a Storm"

Due: Thesis Paragraphs for Essay #1

Th: Peer-Review of Thesis Paragraphs; Introductions, Thesis Statements, Thesis Paragraphs,

Week 6 (February 12, 14)

T: Reading: Sartre's "Anti-Semite and Jew" [Blackboard]

Due: Essay #1

Th: Reading: Sartre's "Anti-Semite and Jew"

Week 7 (February 19, 21)

T: Reading: Sartre's "Anti-Semite and Jew"; Quoting and Paraphrasing; General Grammar Concerns

Th: Punctuation (commas and semicolons) and Syntax (fragments and run-on's)

Due: Essay #2

Week 8 (February 26, 28)

T: Reading: E. O. Wilson's *The Creation*

Th: Reading: E. O. Wilson's *The Creation*

Week 9 (March 4, 6)

T: Reading: E. O. Wilson's *The Creation; Planet Earth* (in-class writing exercise)
 Th: Reading: E. O. Wilson's *The Creation*
Due: Thesis Paragraphs for Essay #3 (peer-review); Class Presentations of Introductions

Week 10 (March 11, 13)
 SPRING BREAK

Week 11 (March 18, 20)
 T: LIBRARY TOUR/RESEARCH
 Th: LIBRARY TOUR/RESEARCH
Due: Essay #3

Week 12 (March 25, 27)
 T: Individual Conferences
 Th: Individual Conferences

Week 13 (April 1, 3)
 T: Research Basics: use of evidence; close reading, note-taking, sources, MLA citation
 Th: Research Basics: observations vs. implications; incorporating source materials; plagiarism
Due: Thesis Paragraphs and Preliminary Source List for Final Project

Week 14 (April 8, 10)
 T: Peer Review thesis paragraphs and sources; Grammar Review
 Th: Paragraphing, transitions, conclusions, incorporation of source material
Due: Draft of Final Project (to be graded)

Week 15 (April 15, 17)
 T: Peer Review Draft of Final Project
 Th: Peer Review Draft of Final Project

Week 16 (April 22, 24)
 T: Individual Conferences
 Th: Individual Conferences

Final Project Due: Tuesday, April 29 (by 4:30 pm)