

Syllabus - ENG 101 - **College Writing** - Fall 2003

011-MWF 09:15-10:15 am Leonard 101

030-MWF 02:15-03:15 pm Leonard 205

Dr. Kenneth Sherwood

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Office: Leonard 201F; Hours: MW 10:15-12, 3:15-3:30; F 10:15-11:15



Objectives

This course will help students to: develop effective, organized prose which communicates clearly and demonstrates awareness of audience, adequate level of detail, logical, and overall coherence; select language appropriate for subject and audience; develop a writing process, including pre-writing, revision, and editing that incorporates feedback; use informal writing as a means of discovery and reflection; use formal writing as a means of critical analysis; read a substantial text; become acquainted with library and web-based resources for research.

Texts

Barnet, Sylvan and Hugo Bedau. Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing: A Brief Guide to Argument. 4th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2002.

Hacker, Diana. A Writer's Reference. 5th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2003.

McLuhan, Marshall. The Medium is the Message. (any edition)

Other Materials

Composition notebook; two 3-1/2" disks with case; two double-pocket folders for portfolio and essays; 3"x3" Post-Its.

Other Resources

Regular computer access will be required so that you can make use of the Class Web Page (www.chss.iup.edu/sherwood), library resources, and WebCT discussion list.

Requirements

Participation - preparedness; engagement in class discussion; contribution to group activities; marginal notation; two teacher conferences. Also includes announced or unannounced reading quizzes, as well as any miscellaneous assignments not included in the portfolio.	15%
Informal Writing - (Portfolio and Journal) hard-copies of assigned posts to web discussion board; writing exercises; in-class and informal writing; copies of peer-revision worksheets; portfolio self-analysis essay. (Much of the above should be collected in your portfolio, the remainder will be written in your class journal.)	25%
Essays - two moderate length analyses; one argument; one longer argument with research (double weight); one introductory essay.	60%

Journal - Acquire a composition notebook to keep your journal. Title the first page "Informal Writing;" here you will do in-class exercises, free-writing, and brainstorming toward papers. Open to the last two facing pages of the notebook, then title the left page: Commonplace Quotations, and the right page: Reflections. After you have read and made marginal notations, you will extract one or more meaningful quotations from the reading and write them on the left hand page or verso; on the page opposite you will comment upon it.

Portfolio - In a two-pocket folder, you will collect documents that evidence your writing process.

Essays - You will receive a detailed assignment description for each essay. Generally, however, I will grade essays holistically on the basis of four broad categories: 1) Content - degree of thoughtfulness, richness of information provided or strength of claims made; 2) Organization - effective presentation, including thesis, detail or support, paragraph form, transitions, and coherence; 3) Mechanics - essay format and such sentence-level elements as punctuation, spelling, and word choice; and 4) Revision - evidence of effort and quality of changes made to preliminary drafts, especially in response to peer-critique.

Often I will quickly rate the four areas above on a 10-point scale to give students an idea of those areas in which I judge the paper to be stronger/weaker. Generally, an "A" paper should be strong in all four areas; a "B" paper is strong in at least three areas and not poor in any; a "C" paper should be adequate in at least three areas; a "D" paper is poor in two areas; and "F" paper is inadequate in three or more areas.

Attendance - Presence in class is assumed. Each student is allowed three absences, beyond which the student's final average will be reduced 5% points per absence. On announced peer-revision days, students must arrive with the requisite number of typed-copies of their own draft, or they will not be credited with attending. Students who anticipate missing more than five classes for health, family, or other personal reasons should consider taking the class at another time. Students attending IUP sponsored events (eg. athletes) should notify the professor in advance via email; a typed, 350-word discussion of any assigned reading will be expected within one week of such absences; any pre-scheduled assignments should be submitted in advance. Fairness requires that no exceptions be made.

Cheating, Plagiarism, and Collusion

Scholastic Dishonesty is a serious matter. I am savvy and vigilant in detecting students who use unattributed web sources, "collaborate" with fellows students, or utilize other "clever" methods to enhance their grades. Take the grade you honestly earn on an assignment. Should a classmate attempt to use your work, refuse; I make no distinction between cheaters and those who aid them. A plagiarized assignment will earn you a zero for the assignment and referral to administrators for disciplinary action.

Expectations, Workload, and Help

I hope you will find this to be an enjoyable but challenging course. We will discuss all major readings during class, but I will expect that you have closely read and reflected upon them in advance. Your ability to participate in class discussion depends on this. Unlike some other courses, writing classes at IUP tend to require significant group-work, including peer-critique; your contribution to group activities will not only benefit your classmates but also help you to become a better thinker, editor, and writer. The reading load will not be as heavy as that in a literature class, but you will do a good bit of writing: six essays and a number of less formal assignments.

I have carefully planned a calendar that distributes the work as evenly as possible, but you should be aware that each essay is revised (as the calendar sometimes is). Observing the writing "process" is nearly as important as the quality of the product, so please do not plan to skip the drafts! You will sign-up for two conferences with me over the course of the semester, which will give us the opportunity to discuss your progress as a writer. Should difficulties arise, however, you should schedule an additional appointment or contact me rather than waiting until the regular conference.

Make-up Work, Computer Breakdown, and Other Exigencies

Successful mastery of course material requires students to complete assignments in a timely fashion. Make-up work does not serve the learning process and so will not generally be permitted. Writing assignments should be handed in at the beginning of class on the day due; the grade of a late paper will be reduced by a 1/2-letter-grade for each day or portion of a day it is late; after one week, a grade of F will pertain, though the student should still submit a paper in order to avoid getting a zero. Should you unavoidably miss a class, be sure to convey any assignment to me: leave it in my English-office mailbox; use a classmate as courier or email it (sherwood@iup.edu).

Computers have not saved us from Murphy's Law: anything that can go wrong will. Make paper and back-up copies of work done on computers on at least two different disks (learn how to do this today if you're not computer literate). Keep written notes, but also print and save intermediate drafts (c:/comp-essay1-draft-001, c:/comp-essay2-draft-002, etc.) If you begin work in advance of deadlines, you will have more time to troubleshoot disk errors, virus alerts, and printer problems. I know intimately how unreliable technology can be, but you are responsible for submitting work despite the gremlins.

Cell Phones

Please silence cell phones and beepers during class time.

FAQ (Other Frequently Asked Questions)

What counts as good participation?

Comments sharing insights, posing questions, and responding to classmates. Your readiness to participate in class (attentive listening, informed and thoughtful contribution to class and group discussions, raising of questions) is assumed. Informed and attentive participation is the key. Verbal contributions to class may be combined with electronic contributions to the web discussion.

What is marginal notation?

If you have written nothing in the margins of a text, I will assume you have not read it. Almost all good readers literally interact with the texts they read by making notes in the margin. Students sometimes tell me that they prefer not to write in their books because they want to resell them. My first response is, don't! Hold onto them and you may decide to read them again some day. If you can't resist getting \$10 for a \$50 text, then read with an erasable pencil (hi-lighting is useless anyway) or keep post-it notes handy and write on them. Yes, I'm serious about this!

How do I access the class discussion list?

Our class has an online discussion area accessible on an IUP web server. If you have not previously used WebCT in a class, you will find it easiest to access the discussion area from my web page (www.chss.iup.edu/sherwood), which will also feature links to relevant resources. The discussion is password protected; if you have trouble accessing or registered late for the class, you may need to seek technical help at a computer center. Consider the discussion list an electronic twin to our classroom discussion, with the advantage that you can work out your thoughts before "sending". Address the texts themselves, points raised in class discussion/lecture, or the ongoing web conversation. You may make an argumentative claim or raise a thoughtful question. Work with your classmates, reading their posts and responding, and you may gain further: picking up ideas for your paper or clarifying your knowledge of a text. I will browse your postings and occasionally participate in the discussion, but I will not grade each individual post; instead I will review the full slate of your postings when you submit copies with your portfolio. Participate as assigned; you should not expect to make up for missed postings in the final week of class.

What does he expect us to do when we read these assignments by ourselves?

First, make marginal notation as you read, recording whatever observations you can on your own. It matters little whether your response is clever or confused; the first step to understanding is having a response. Second, do your best to make some sense of them; reading a text is less about getting the right answer than it is about one's experience of the text; if you wait for the professor to teach it before reading, you miss that experience.