

English 100
General Syllabus
Smallenburg

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A note about this general syllabus: these are the principles on which the course and your grade are based. Keep this general syllabus, along with your schedule of assignments, in front of the notebook you use for this class.

COURSE OBJECTIVES/Student Learning Outcomes

1. overall: **to develop the basic skills** that will enable you to adapt your writing to the specific requirements of any class or professional discipline you might enter, such as nursing, law, medicine, the sciences, psychology, sociology, political science, engineering, architecture, filmmaking and the other arts, etc. That is, this is not just a course in how to write for one instructor in one section of English 100.
2. **competence with grammar and mechanics**, especially those issues which should have been under control in middle and high school (cf. “The Grammar Hit List”). The goals of clarity, conciseness, organization, focus are universal goals of writing; all rules of grammar, mechanics and punctuation serve those goals.
3. ability to develop ideas into **a formally structured essay** with an interesting, compelling, focused introduction, substantial and detailed development, logical and natural continuity, and a satisfying conclusion.
4. **critical reading**: this means *active* reading, reading with understanding, which requires command of vocabulary, grasp of ideas and how the writer supports them, a sense of how ideas in one book or essay relate to ideas in another, note-taking, writing in the margins. It means you will have to read materials more than once or twice to understand them. Though we live in a film, television and pop music culture where seeing something once is often considered “seeing it,” study of a film, essay, book, or piece of music often takes many active passes, and your ideas about it can often change or develop with time and maturity.
5. **vocabulary development**: all reading develops vocabulary. Look up words you don’t know. That’s how everyone learns, even those professional writers who seem like walking dictionaries.
6. a sense of **the writing process**, in which you begin with a lot of scattered thoughts and slowly, draft by draft, shape them into presentable, error-free communication. This requires you to learn how to rethink and rework your own writing; be critical of what you

put on paper; discover your own habitual problems (the professor helps with this) and learn to correct them. One of the hardest things about writing is to become an objective reader of your own work.

7. exposure to challenging, **college-level reading**, books and essays written by people whose lives are based on observing, thinking and writing, who take a long time to work out, develop and support their ideas. These are the kinds of books that contribute to the advanced consideration, among general audiences, of significant philosophic and social issues. They may be the books that help you determine how to vote, or that change your mind about such important and personal issues as parenthood or what your children should be exposed to at school. Learning to understand ideas at this level elevates your consciousness; you become less ignorant of the world around you, less likely to express yourself in bumper-sticker ideas and sound-byte opinions, like “Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve,” or “America, Love It or Leave It.” Those statements do not open the way for discussion and consideration; they close it off. That is the way people think and talk when their minds are closed, and when they want yours to be closed too.

8. introduction to research: i.e., the ability to summarize, integrate, respond thoughtfully to both expository and literary texts.

Official English Division Student Learning Outcomes for English 100.

Upon successful completion of English 100, the student will be able to

- 1. Write coherent, developed, and clearly constructed thesis-driven in-class and out-of-class essays using a variety of rhetorical approaches.**
- 2. Use effective strategies for pre-writing, composing, and revising of essays, both in and out of class.**
- 3. Read, summarize, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate a variety of texts.**
- 4. Compose grammatical sentences free of major errors in mechanics, punctuation, and spelling.**
- 5. Select credible academic resources from the library to research a topic.**
- 6. Document sources (print, electronic, and other) in MLA (Modern Language Association) format.**

The Essence of College Education: A note about the course objectives/learning outcomes. Your college education is going to require many hours of reading, many hours of writing. Much of your reading will introduce you to new ideas and information; your writing will involve those ideas in any variety of ways—assessing them, showing that you’ve understood them, relating them to other ideas, etc. Your familiarity with a broad range of concepts, and your ability to handle them competently and to express yourself clearly in writing and speaking are what make you more valuable to a future employer than a person who may not have a college degree. This is why, generally speaking, people with college degrees earn more money over a lifetime. A college degree is much more than just “a piece of paper”: it should change the way you think about the world and yourself.

BASIC GRADING CRITERIA:

Written work:

FOCUS (clearly-stated thesis)

ORGANIZATION (discussion that follows plan of thesis)

COHERENCE (effective use of transitional words/statements)

DEVELOPMENT (substantial and compelling support of ideas)

MECHANICS (careful attention to grammar, punctuation, spelling)

SOPHISTICATION OF IDEAS (making the effort to think critically, objectively, analytically, maturely)

CONSISTENTLY CLEAR AND IDIOMATIC PHRASING (essays free of unclear, awkward expressions)

PREPARATION: represented by performance on quizzes

“Responsibility Quotient” (RQ):

A serious, professional attitude—this means, learning from my comments and requirements. If you continue to make the same mistakes, you will continue to get low grades. I’ll assume that you’re not really interested in learning, and I will not pass you in the course.

No use of cell phones (or other electronic media) in class.

No eating in class.

Regular attendance. (The equivalent of two weeks’ worth of absences can result in failing or being dropped from the class.)

Note: it doesn’t matter what your **IQ** is if your **RQ** is low.

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All papers are due on the assigned dates unless the dates are changed in class. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, with normal margins (usually the default margins on your word-processing program), in 12-point type.

All assignments must be completed to pass the class.

Note also: there will be in-class as well as out-of-class essays. You must pass the in-class essays with a grade of C or higher in order to pass the class, regardless of your grades on out-of-class essays.

Saving papers: save all papers, once they're graded and returned, until you receive your grade notification from the college and it is the grade you expect on the basis of your work. I am careful with papers and grades, but if I accidentally omit a grade from the record, you will have to have the graded paper to show that you completed the assignment. This is true for all classes: it's called CYA.

Drops: If you should decide not to continue the course, you are responsible to drop. If your name appears on the grade sheet at the end of the class, you will receive a grade.

Protocols for communication: for this class, all written communication is in formal English--no texting abbreviations, either in papers or e-mails.

Grading criteria:

Quality of writing, attendance, intelligent participation, general readiness for each class meeting, performance and businesslike attitude determine the final grade. Two weeks' worth of absences will result in your being dropped from the class with a failing grade, as per PCC policy stated in the catalog. Excessive tardiness will also be counted against you.

A note about attitude: attitude is assessed in a variety of ways, including attendance, readiness, participation, attentiveness, even such a seemingly small item as use of cell phones during class. You can be failed for lapses in any of these areas, especially if your attitude in any way constitutes a distraction or disruption of the conduct of the class, either for the instructor or for the other students. I do not assign percentage weights to the various grading criteria, so don't ask "How much are the quizzes worth?" I assess all the evidence and grade you on the whole of your performance.

The bottom line: I have to believe that your work and your attitude in this class qualify you for English 1A, the composition class that transfers to four-year colleges/universities, and that your work in 1A will be on a par with students at UCLA, CSULA, etc., your peers and colleagues.

Community college is sometimes referred to as a "high school with ashtrays." Please be advised that this is the idea some students have, not the professors. To the extent that students act on the basis of that idea, they tend to fail. This is *college*.

English 100 focuses on mechanics. Even if your ideas are great, you can fail for careless proofreading, comma splices, sentence fragments, subject/verb disagreement, punctuation mistakes, and other straightforward errors in writing. You can also fail for not formulating your ideas in a clear thesis and following up with clear and coherent support in the body of your essay. This is not a matter of individual style: These are mistakes, and they're wrong.

English 901 (Writing Center):

English 901 is a co-requisite class for all students enrolled in English 100. The English Division policy states that any student who is not already enrolled in one section of English 901, the Writing Center, by Monday of the fourth week of the semester, **will be dropped from English 100**. There will be no exceptions. This means you might need to enroll in a section of the Writing Center that is not convenient for your schedule.

Attendance is reported to the instructor at the middle and end of the term, so failure to attend regularly can result in your grade being lowered, regardless of your grades in English 100. English 1000X constitutes 20% of your class grade.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism is the undocumented use of someone else's ideas, whether directly quoted or paraphrased/summarized, giving the impression that this is your own work.

A plagiarized paper fails automatically, with no possibility of resubmitting. A letter will also be sent to the Division Dean and the Dean of Students for your file.

The instructor reserves the right to submit any paper suspected of plagiarism to internet scan for use of undocumented materials. You may be asked to submit your computer disk for scan as well.

FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES:

1. When you quote, always give a citation in the following form:

(Harris 62).

- Note:
- a) there is no comma between the author's name and the page number
 - b) the period at the end of the sentence comes *after* the citation
 - c) if you've named the author in the text, you only need to give a page number
 - d) do not insert "p." before the page number

2. Always underline or italicize titles of books, magazines and journals; titles of articles, poems, or short stories should be put in quotes. When in doubt, consult the *Modern Language Association Style Guide* (optional, available at Bookmart). This information is also in your grammar/rhetoric book.

3. Quote accurately, including exact spelling and punctuation.

4. Memorize the "Grammar Hit List."

5. Learn and apply the simple rules for basic punctuation.

6. Be concise: One of my functions is to help you develop ideas fully and persuasively on the one hand, but also to make statements as efficiently and economically as possible.
7. In general, avoid the words “thing,” “something,” “everything,” etc. Make your statements clear and specific.
8. Develop vocabulary by looking up words you don’t know. Don’t complain that a writer uses too many unfamiliar words. Just learn them. That’s what the writer did.
9. Always give your paper a clear focus (thesis), continuity, and substantial development, a sparkling introduction, and an effective conclusion.
10. If you have questions, don’t hesitate to ask.

TO PASS THIS CLASS:

1. Attitude
2. Attendance both in class and in the Writing Center
3. Preparation and participation
4. Consistently improving performance
 - a. no Grammar Hit List errors
 - b. no comma splices, fused sentences, fragments
 - c. no errors of subject-verb or pronoun agreement
 - d. no errors of pronoun reference
 - e. well-written introduction/ body paragraphs
 - f. clear and sustained focus
 - g. good comprehension as represented by your ability to write cogently about the readings
 - h. clear and coherent phrasing, continuity of ideas