ENG 1001G-020: Composition and Language

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Textbooks:

- The Bedford Reader, 7th ed. (BR)
- The Blair Handbook, 3rd ed. (BH)
- The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing, 6th ed. (SM)

Materials:

- Green pen or pencil
- Webster’s Dictionary
- A folder for the essays

Goals:

Obviously, the main goal for this course is to make you a better writer. To this end, the course work is designed to help you to develop a more mature and lively style, to organize your thoughts more effectively, to sharpen the strategies to be used for argumentation and exposition, to shape your prose into clear and concise sentences, to master the various rhetorical modes, and to select the appropriate rhetorical strategies for the task at hand.

Papers:

During the semester, you will write seven essays ranging from 400-1200 words. Assigned lengths should be observed; extremes at either end of the assigned length will be discouraged. All writing should be submitted in the following manner:

1. Unless you are otherwise instructed, all essays are to be typed.

2. Your name should come below the title on the first page, all subsequent pages to be numbered in the upper right margin. On the back of the final page will come the date of the essay and a description of the paper type (e.g. narration).

3. All papers are to be submitted at the beginning of that class period on the due date. Paper submitted afterwards will be deemed late, as will papers that are incomplete (e.g. lacking an assigned rough draft). Late papers suffer a
penalty of the loss of a letter grade per class day until the assignment is satisfied.

4. Newly written essays are to be submitted in a folder that will contain also all previously written essays fully and properly corrected. I will show you the proper methods of correction early in the term. An essay submitted without the previous essay fully corrected will suffer a loss of a letter grade.

5. Unless I have been informed of compelling reasons for your absence, none of your essays will be accepted from a student other than you. If you are forced to miss a deadline because of an unforeseen emergency and are unable to inform me of your absence, I will require some documentation of those compelling reasons.

Class Meetings:

During our class meetings, we will discuss methods of organization, rhetorical patterns, techniques of style, grammatical principles, model essays, and the like. All are critical to your development as a writer. A small part of your grade (about 5%) will be based upon your class participation. Because we frequently do group work and exercises and because the development of a writer depends upon the mastering of a series of skills and abilities, class attendance is essential. Therefore, any student with more than six unexcused absences will be subject to a grade of “F” for the course.

Grades:

In such a course in which improvement is imperative and individual styles are so variable, commenting on grades with any precision is quite difficult. We will follow the English Department’s “Standards for Grading Essays” (a separate page accompanying this policy statement). For the course grade, one can assume that the exams and paper grades will be counted as roughly equal, excepting, of course, the final research paper, which, because of its length and complexity, will count double. That said, I want to emphasize that I also reward improvement. While the early essays will not be ignored, the last 4-5 essays will weigh most heavily in the determination of your final grade.

Final Comments:

At first glance, these policies, I admit, seem to come from the keyboard of a dour professor whose flexibilities have disappeared as his arteries have hardened. They may seem oppressive, “nit-picky” even. But this is not the intent. Freshman composition is difficult for most students, and handling dozens of essays at a time is no easy task for me. If the class adheres to these policies, however, students’ anxieties will ease because they know what is expected, and the uniformity of the essays will allow me to spend more time with your essays and less with matters of format.
Aug.  
20   Introduction to the Course  
22   Paragraphing: *BH* 364-71  
24   Paragraphing: *BH* 371-75  
27   Description: *SM* 589-600  
29   **In-class paragraph writing**  
31   Narration: *SM* 573-87  

Sep.  
3    Labor Day—No Classes  
5    "Champion of the World," *BR* 52-55; "Salvation" (to be provided)  
7    Comma Splices and Fused Sentences: *BH* 513-23  
10   Punctuation: *BH* 667-77, 695-96  
12   Punctuation: *BH* 699-704, 707-10  
14   Exemplification: *SM* 627-28; *BR* 137-42. **Narration Essay Due**  
17   Introductions and Conclusions: *BH* 376-90  
19   Thesis Writing: *BH* 58-60; *SM* 623-27  
21   "As Well as I Do My Own," *BR* 160-66; "In Defense of Talk Shows," *BR* 283-85  
24   Comma Usage: *BH* 640-48  
26   Comma Usage: *BH* 648-66  
28   Classification: *SM* 609-15. **Exemplification Essay Due**  

Oct.  
1    "I Want a Wife," *BR* 275-77; "Predictable Crises of Adulthood," *BR* 294-301  
3    Sentence Writing: *BH* 396-409
5 Fall Break—No Classes

8 Sentence Writing: BH 410-24

10 Sentence Writing: BH 432-35

12 Comparison and Contrast: SM 617-22, BR 175-80 Classification Essay Due

15 "Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts," BR 196-201


19 Sentence Writing Review

22 Sentence Writing Exam

24 Cause and Effect: BR 361-69 Comparison/Contrast Essay Due


29 In-class Causal Analysis exercise

31 Using Internet Sources: BH 224-32, 249-51

Nov. 2 In-class critiquing exercise

5 Argumentation: BR 453-65 Causal Analysis Essay Due

7 “Live Free and Starve,” BR 504-08; “How to Fix the Pre-med Curriculum (to be provided)

9 Definition: BR 409-15


14 In-class definition exercise

16 Proposal Writing: SM 293-94, 298-302, 313-14, 319-20

19-23 Thanksgiving Break—No Classes

26 “A Modest Proposal,” BR 621-29 Definition Essay Due
28  In-class proposal exercise
30  Using Sources: SM 693-701

Dec.  3  MLA Documentation: SM 703-717
5   In-class critiquing exercise
7   Course Evaluation

Note: We do not meet during final exam week