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ENG 1001G-039-045: Composition and Language

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English 1001: A course description and syllabus

Instructor: Keith Spear, MA
Office: Coleman Hall 3840
Phone: 581-6301 or 345-6819 (home)
e mail: kdspear@eiu.edu
Office Hours: 9:00-12:00 and 3:00-3:30 MWF and by appointment

Required purchases:

a binder to be used as a journal for this class only
two exam booklets (available at the Union Bookstore)

Writing as a Process:

Writing is a teachable skill, like carpentry or painting or playing the guitar. The big difference is that you can have a wonderful life without ever becoming a carpenter or painter or musician, but effective writing is an indispensable skill that will help you along in whatever role you create for yourself. Rumor has it that good writing is the product of inspiration, but this is for the most part a fallacy. Good writing is not really even a product at all; it is a process. And, as Linda Flower says in *Problem Solving Strategies for Writing*, "If a writer's method relies on waiting for inspiration, she may have a long and uninterrupted wait."

The process theory of writing also does away with the old notion that "first you think it up, then you write it down." What happens more often than not is that you write your way toward what you believe: you discover new ideas *as* you write. Writing becomes a thinking process that improves with practice. That is why we will be keeping journals. The journal writing technique is a way of practicing the necessary skills in a way that adds up to many pages without demanding eight or ten page papers from you. It also gives you a no-pressure environment in which to warm up your skills.

Grades:

Your grade will be determined by averaging the scores from seven writing assignments plus an assessment of your attendance and participation. The journal is one of the writing assignments, and there will also be a narrative essay, an expository essay, two in-class essays, and a research paper which counts double.

This may be one of the most memorable classes you take at the university, and it will certainly be one of the most important, because you will find your college career—regardless of major—teeming with writing-centered and writing-intensive classes. I am available by appointment at your convenience if I can help, and I have included my home phone number. Also, there is an excellent—and free!—service available to you at the Writing Center, Coleman Hall 3110. You will walk out the door with a better paper every single time.

Grades (continued):

Except in the case of excused and documented absences, if an assignment is late, it will be docked one letter grade for each day it is late. Papers that have still not been submitted one week after the due date will be regarded as “missing” and will receive a minus two on a four point scale (see below). They may not be made up.

Your grade will be determined by your performance on the following tasks:

| | |
|-------|------------------------------|
| 12.5% | Narrative Essay |
| 12.5% | Expository Essay |
| 12.5% | In-class Essay @ Mid Term |
| 12.5% | Journal |
| 25 % | Research Essay on Dreams |
| 12.5% | Attendance and Participation |
| 12.5% | In-class Essay @ End of Term |

I will use the following values in averaging your grades:

| | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|
| A+ = 4.2 | B+ = 3.2 | C+ = 2.2 | D+ = 1.2 | F = 0.0 |
| A = 4.0 | B = 3.0 | C = 2.0 | D = 1.0 | Missing = -2.0 |
| A- = 3.8 | B- = 2.8 | C- = 1.8 | D- = 0.8 | |

After averaging, I will use the following cut-off points to determine final grades:

| | | |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| A = 4.2 to 3.8 | B = 3.7 to 2.8 | C = 2.7 to 1.8 |
| NC = 1.7 and below | | |

This is an A, B, C, or No-Credit class, so you can't receive a D or F, but if you are assessed NC, you will need to register for the class again. Invest your time and talents in this class now, and you will never regret it.

Journals:

Requiring you to keep a journal is a blessing in disguise. It is a place for you to help satisfy departmental requirements for the quantity of writing you produce, free from some of the limitations associated with producing a “polished rhetorical artifact”☺—an essay. Journal entries can record your impressions of the works you read and serve as practice fields for the essays you subsequently generate. Each assigned entry should consist of at least two hundred and fifty words. Your journal entries will be respected as highly confidential, and you are invited to leave your journal with me anytime you have an entry you'd like me to read.

Information for Students with Disabilities:

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Plagiarism Policy:

I am required to say this about the English Department's policy concerning plagiarism:

"Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism – 'The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and / or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work' (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) – has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including assignment of a grade of F for the assigned essay, and a grade of N/C for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs office.

Pretty strong language for a pretty serious offense; it occurs, and has resulted in some cases in expulsion from the university. We're learning a survival skill here, and a cheater is only cheating himself.

Electronic Writing Portfolio:

The university requires you to submit one sample of your writing each year for four years; usually it is an essay they are looking for. These essays are to be submitted online in an electronic form. The office on Ninth St. (the same building as Academic Advising) keeps copies of your essays in their data base to form a portfolio of your work.

The first submission usually comes from English 1001 G or English 1002 G, so please let me help you satisfy this requirement by calling to my attention to any questions you might have about the process.

Syllabus for English 1001 G, Fall Semester, 2009

- Aug. 24 Introduction to the class. Invention strategies. Listing.
- Aug. 26 Diagnostic Essay.
- Aug. 28 MLA Format. Looping. The Narrative Essay Assignment.
- Aug. 31 Clustering. Up Drafts and Down Drafts. A One Inch Frame.
- Sept. 2 In-class reading of Maya Angelou's "Uncle Willie." Discussion of Dominant Image in Narratives. Formation of Writing Groups.
- Sept. 4 Tools of the Trade: The Art of Creative Revision
- Sept. 7 Labor Day—No class.
- Sept. 9 * Please turn in a 3-5 page typed draft of your Narrative Essay.
- Sept. 11 Assessments and Evaluations.
- Sept. 14 Mandatory conferences this week—no class.
- Sept. 16 Mandatory conferences this week—no class.
- Sept. 18 Mandatory conferences this week—no class.
- Sept. 21 * Turn in your 3-5 page revised Narrative Essay.
Introduction to the Expository Essay on Selected Music.
Strategies of Invention applied to the Music Paper.
- Sept. 23 Memo to Identify the Focus of your Expository Essay.
- Sept. 25 Brainstorming the Charts. Bring a CD to class.

- Sept. 28 The A B C's of Focus Applied to Expository Writing.
- Sept. 30 Using Direct References to Illustrate and Support.
- Oct. 2 MLA Documentation and the Skillful Incorporation of Quotes.
- Oct. 5 * Turn in Expository Essay. Peer Review.
- Oct. 7 Editing in Reverse: Sentence Level Revisions.
- Oct. 9 Fall Break—no class.
- Oct. 12 Mid-term Essay—to be written during class.
- Oct. 14 Mid-term Essay—to be completed during class.
- Oct. 16 Mid-term Essay—to be completed during class.
- Oct. 19 Introduction to the Research Assignment on Dreams.
- Oct. 21 Three Distinct Directions available to Dream Researchers.
Group work to narrow focus for the Dream Paper.
- Oct. 23 The A B C's of Focus, tailored to a new purpose.
In-class Workshop: Dreams and Directions. Group Work.
- Oct. 26 Using Direct References to Illustrate and Support.
- Oct. 28 MLA Documentation and the Skillful Incorporation of Quotes.
Please read pages 230-36 in *The Blair Handbook* and bring it to class.
- Oct. 30 Collaboration during in-class workshop.
Incorporating Process and Discovery as Structural Elements.

- Nov. 2 Writing as a Recursive Process.
Editing in Reverse: Recognizing Patterns of Errors.
- Nov. 4 * Turn in a 5-7 page draft of your Research Assignment.
- Nov. 6 Peer Review.
- Nov. 9 Mandatory conferences this week—no class.
- Nov. 11 Mandatory conferences this week—no class.
- Nov. 13 Mandatory conferences this week—no class.
- Nov. 16 * Turn in your revised Research Assignment on Dreams.
MLA Documentation. Building the Works Cited page.
Please read 755-67 and 775-77 in *Blair* and bring it to class.
- Nov. 18 * Turn in revised Works Cited page.
- Nov. 20 Field Trip.
- Nov. 23-27 Thanksgiving Break—no class.
- Nov. 30 Debating Culture: Writing to Advocate and Persuade.
- Dec. 2 Evaluating Credibility and Agenda in Contemporary Film
- Dec. 4 Class Discussion: Assuming Responsibility and Authority.
- Dec. 7 Final Essay—to be written entirely in class on consecutive sessions.
Please bring an exam booklet or two to class.
- Dec. 9 Final Essay continued.
- Dec. 11 * Revise and complete Final Essay.
- Dec. 14-18 Finals Week—no final in this class. Good luck on your other finals.