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ENG 2901-002: Structure of English

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Structure of English

Spring 2019 | (3 credits)

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the grammar of English. This section of the course is designed to help you learn to describe and analyze the structure of sentences in English and, as such, focuses primarily on syntax—though phonology (pronunciation), morphology (word forms), and semantics (meaning) will also be covered. Because most of the students enrolled in this course plan to become teachers, journalists, or professional writers, we will discuss applications for teaching and implications for prescriptive grammar (the "rules"), but the course itself is more concerned with describing how English works than with teaching rules for writing. Ideally, this course will heighten your understanding of the complexity of the English language and help you develop strategies for communicating clearly and effectively in speech, writing, and teaching.

Learning Objectives

This semester, you will learn to:

- diagram phrases and sentences
- employ concepts and technical terms related to grammar and linguistics
- describe and analyze how sentences are constructed in English
- recognize and appreciate varieties of English
- use grammatical and linguistic knowledge to make careful choices in your own speech and writing and/or to improve your ability to teach oral or written English

Required Course Materials

- van Gelderen, *An Introduction to the Grammar of English*, revised edition (provided by TRS)
 - Rickerson and Hilton (eds.), *The 5-Minute Linguist*, 2nd edition (provided by TRS)
 - Individual articles as assigned (available as PDFs on D2L)
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Course Requirements

Reading homework: This class will operate in a modified flipped format. Rather than learning course material through in-class lectures and then working problems at home, you will be asked to study the course concepts at home and then work problems in class as a group. To facilitate out-of-class learning of the concepts, you will answer questions about the reading assignments. In many cases, you will read an assigned reading twice, answering a different set of questions each time. The reading questions will be corrected, but your grade will be based not on correctness but on thoughtful completion of all the questions.

Exams. You will take four exams over the course of the semester. Each exam will be cumulative. Provided you have met the requirements, there will be an option to retake the first three exams.

Textual analysis paper: You will choose two texts and analyze their linguistic patterns and draw conclusions based on that analysis. Your analysis and conclusions will be presented in a paper.

Idiolect essay: An "idiolect" is the variety of language used by an individual. After learning about different varieties of English, you will write an essay about your own idiolect and what influences have shaped your own speaking and writing of English.

Assessment

The grade breakdown for assignments is below. Note: I reserve the right to make additions and alterations to this assessment breakdown should the need arise. Students will be informed in class and in writing prior to any changes being made.

Assignment	% grade
Homework and participation	30
Exam 1	10
Exam 2	10
Exam 3	10
Final exam	15
Analysis paper	15
Idiolect essay	10

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

90–100	A
80–89.9	B
70–79.9	C
60–69.9	D
59.9 and below	F

At the end of the semester, if a student's grade is within 0.9% of the next highest letter grade, I will use the following to determine whether the grade will be rounded up:

- Student missed no more than four class periods. Student had no more than one instance of significant tardiness or early departure.
- Student met all homework and assignment deadlines. All work was complete at the time of submission.
- Student took regular, timely advantage of optional opportunities for practice (e.g., optional self-assessments and quizzes posted to D2L, office hour sessions with Dr F)
- Student received positive feedback from peers regarding the *process* of collaboration during the team project

Attendance

According to the *Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills* published by the Department of Labor, the number one reason employers cite for firing employees in their first post-collegiate jobs is absence and tardiness. Your classes, therefore, offer you an excellent opportunity to practice the professional skill of prompt attendance.

- You may use up to four days of vacation and sick time as needed. Each additional absence will reduce your semester grade by 2%.
 - If you must miss a class, you are still responsible for completing reading homework questions, meeting project deadlines, and completing in-class work. Submit assignments via D2L, as appropriate.
 - Exams must be taken on or prior to the scheduled date for the exam; if you know you will be absent on the date of an exam, it is your responsibility to arrange an alternate, earlier time to take the exam.
 - In-class worksheets, handouts, and assignment sheets will be posted on D2L. Consult with a classmate for notes you may have missed. If there is any material from the handouts or notes that you do not understand, please come to my office hours to ask questions. (Pro tip: "Can you tell me what I missed in class?" is not a good question.)
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Deadlines

Due dates for homework and assignments are available in the course modules on D2L.

Reading homework questions must be completed on D2L prior to the beginning of class time on the date listed. In most cases, the computer is set to remove access to the homework questions at the start of class time. (NOTE: D2L calls the reading homework "quizzes.")

Other assignments will have specific deadlines that will be listed on the assignment sheet and/or in the module. Late papers or projects will be docked 5% for each day they are late.

Expected Conduct

In addition to the policies pertaining to attendance and deadlines, pay attention to the following course policies:

- Class correspondence (e.g., emails, discussion posts, text messages) should be written professionally. At some point in the semester, I may offer you feedback on the style, content, and organization of your emails, texts, etc.
- Keep copies of all work you produce for this class, including handwritten work, as they may be useful in preparation for exams and the final project. Do not store assignments only on a single flash drive. If I have given you a hand-written evaluation on an assignment or activity, save that evaluation until you have received your final grade in the course.
- Class time is for doing work related to the course. Limit your use of email, the internet, cell phones, etc. to course-related work during class time.
- All major assignments listed on this course policy sheet must be completed in order to pass the course.

- Scholarly integrity and ethics--students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct. Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards. If you are in doubt of the appropriate way to identify your source, check with me before turning in the assignment. If you have any questions regarding appropriate handling of sources, collaboration, or past work, talk with me before turning in an assignment.

If circumstances arise that may impact your ability to maintain our course policies, address the situation as you would in the workplace—professionally, courteously, and in advance.

Contact Information

You may reach me in one of the following ways:

1. Come to my **office hours in** [REDACTED]. A face-to-face meeting is best for addressing complex questions or concerns; you should also schedule a face-to-face meeting if you would like me to review a draft before submission. Office hours at the following times:
[REDACTED]
2. **Email** me through D2L at [REDACTED]. If you need to send me a large attachment or a link in Google Drive, send it to [REDACTED]. I try to respond to emails within 24 hours Mondays through Fridays. If it has been more than 24 weekday hours since you emailed me, feel free to contact me again.
3. If you have a question or concern that is time sensitive, you may **call or text** me at [REDACTED] during the following times: Monday–Thursday 8:45 am–9 pm; Friday 8:45 am–3 pm; Sunday 5 pm–9 pm. If you text me, please identify yourself by name and course. (The course is especially important for those of you who have multiple courses with me this semester.)

Writing Intensive Course

Any individual written text-based assignment of 750 words or more may be submitted from this class to the Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP). Depending on the format you choose for your final project, you may be able to submit this assignment to the EWP. The deadline for submitting a project from this class to EWP is Wednesday, April 24.

Information for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 206, or call (217) 581–6583 to make an appointment. After you meet with OSDS, come meet with me, and we'll put together a plan to maximize your success in the course.

The Student Success Center / Writing Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call (217) 581-6696, or go to Ninth Street Hall, Room 1302.

Students who would like assistance with writing assignments from this or any other course may go to the Writing Center. The Writing Center works with students from all disciplines, majors, and academic backgrounds at any stage of the writing process. To make an appointment, call (217) 581-5929, or go to Coleman Hall, Room 3110.