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ENG 1091G-095: Composition and Language: Honors

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ENGLISH 1091

COMPOSITION AND LANGUAGE

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In this course, we'll work on matters relevant to writing in college and in life thereafter: developing, organizing, and expressing ideas in clear, concise, well-formed prose. As the work of writing is inseparable from the work of reading, our occasions for writing will develop from reading about culture, education, language, and technology.

TEXTS

Michael Harvey's *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing* is available from TRS. All other reading will be available as .pdfs or photocopies.

REQUIREMENTS

The course will require dedicated daily work (reading, talking, quizzes), occasional conferences, and several pieces of writing.

QUIZZES

Michael Bérubé, who teaches English at Penn State, gives a good explanation:

Most of my students do most of the reading.
How do I know? Loath as I am to admit it, I

have begun giving quizzes.

Quizzes are meant to be easy if you do the reading.

ATTENDANCE

Be here, on time, every time. Students who miss class will find it very difficult to do the work of the course.

LATE, MAKE-UP WORK

Missed quizzes and writing cannot be made up. Late writing is acceptable only if you have my approval in advance. If you have a properly verified absence for illness, emergency, or participation in an official University activity, I'll record a blank for a missed quiz, not a zero.

DISABILITIES

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

OFFICE HOURS

Talking to professors is one of the smartest things a college student can do. Please, come in to ask questions and talk about your work in the class.

If you feel uneasy about talking to your professors, read "How to talk to a professor," available from the URL in the left column.

E-MAIL

Before you e-mail me, please read "How to e-mail a professor," available from the URL in the left column. One guideline you don't need to follow: no need to sign with your class number and meeting (I'll know your name).

DECORUM

The atmosphere in our class should be serious—not somber or pretentious, but genuinely intellectual. No eating, talking, sleeping, wandering, texting, drumming, wearing headphones, doing work for other classes, or other private business. Phones and other devices should be turned off and kept out of sight. Please show proper respect to your fellow learners.

DISCUSSION

Consider what the writer Thomas Merton says about a teacher he admired:

Most of the time he asked questions. His questions were very good, and if you tried to answer them intelligently, you found yourself saying excellent things that you did not know you knew, and that you had not, in fact, known before. He had "educated" them from you by his question. His classes were literally "education"—they brought things out of you, they made your mind produce its own explicit ideas.

I like to ask questions that make people think. I also like it when people ask me such questions. If you say something and I then ask you a question, I'm doing so in the spirit of dialogue. You should be asking questions too, of me and of one another.

GRADING

Your grade will be based on your written work (60%), quizzes (30%), and participation (10%).

Writing assignments receive letter grades. Missing writing receives a zero. Quizzes receive numerical grades. A quiz average of, say, 108% counts as 108 and not as an A (95); a quiz average of, say, 40% counts as 40 and not as an F (55). Participation in

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the course receives one of five grades: 100 (consistent, relevant, informed), 85 (frequent, relevant, informed), 75 (less frequent or less informed), 50 (occasional), 0 (little or no participation). "Informed" participation is simply participation that comes from doing the work. You may check on quizzes and participation at any time.

To calculate semester grades, I use numerical equivalents for letter grades:

A 95 A- 92 B+ 87 B 85 B- 82 C+ 77
C 75 C- 72 D+ 67 D 65 D- 62 F 55

Sometimes when I grade an essay I'll compromise—e.g., B+/A-, which falls between the two grades (89.5).

For semester grades, 90 or above is an A; 80 or above, a B; 70 or above, a C. In Eastern's 1000-level English courses, a semester average below 70 receives a non-grade of NC (no credit).

EWP

Please make sure that you understand the EWP requirements and fulfill them in a timely way. You can find more information about the EWP at <http://www.eiu.edu/~assess/>.

PLAGIARISM

The English Department's statement on plagiarism:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and the representation of them as one's original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty

student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Any breach of academic integrity—from cheating on a quiz to lifting words or ideas without attribution to submitting a wholly unoriginal essay—is a serious matter and will get you a serious penalty. The Student Standards office recommends an F for the course. You will also be required to take a course in ethics administered by Student Standards, whose staff will keep your misconduct on record and notify your other professors that one of their students has violated academic integrity.

You should be familiar with Eastern's statement on academic integrity (posted in classrooms) and should ask if you have any questions about quoting from and/or documenting sources. But because the work of the course is to be an expression of *your ideas in your words* (aside from words and ideas attributed to sources), questions of plagiarism and collusion should never arise. Do not "borrow" work or give your work to anyone (allowing someone else to make use of your work is also a breach of academic integrity and will also get you a serious penalty, up to and including an F for the course).

PROVISIONAL OUTLINE (BY WEEKS)

1

Getting started

2-4

Orwell, "Politics and the English Language"
Roberts, "How to Say Nothing in 500 Words"
Harvey, Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 7, 8
First essay due
Essay workshop, conferences

5-6

Carr, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?"
Responses to Carr
Harvey, Chapters 3, 5
Second essay due
Essay workshop, conferences

7-8

NEH, *To Read or Not to Read*
Harvey, Chapter 6
Third essay due
Essay workshop, conferences

9-12

Benton, "Remedial Civility Training"
Bronson, "The Inverse Power of Praise"
Deresiewicz, "The Disadvantages of an Elite Education"
Gameran, "Legalized 'Cheating'"
Leddy, "*N'allez pas trop vite*"
Pew Internet and American Life Project, "Writing, Technology, and Teens"
Shellenbarger, "Multitasking Makes You Stupid"
Sullivan, "The iWorld"
Wilson, "The Surprising Process of Writing"
Harvey, Chapter 4

13-15

Harvey, Chapter 6, Appendix
Essay workshop, conferences
Fifth essay due