Fall 8-15-2010

ENG 1002G-013: Composition and Literature

Letitia Moffitt
Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2010
Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2010/52

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2010 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall 2010 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.
SYLLABUS
English 1002G, Section 013, Fall 2010
Composition and Literature
MWF 12:00 to 12:50pm, Coleman 3150, EIU

Professor: Dr. Letitia L. Moffitt
Office: Coleman Hall room 3861 (south corridor)
Office Hours: Mondays 10-11am and 4:15-5:15pm; Wednesdays 2-3pm and 4:15-5:15pm
(or by appointment)
E-mail: llmoffitt@eiu.edu
(for questions only; do not e-mail assignments without my permission)

Objectives

In this course, students will: 1) write expository and persuasive papers in which paragraphs, sentences, and words develop a central idea that corresponds to the reading of literary works; 2) write focused, adequately developed paragraphs and sentences that are direct, economical, free of ambiguity, and structurally appropriate for the ideas expressed and for the audience to whom it is directed; 3) read poetry, fiction, and drama expressing a wide range of cultural perspectives and think critically and write analytically about them; 4) develop research skills, including effective use of source materials and the principles of documentation; and 5) develop the ability to evaluate, criticize and revise their own and their peers’ writing.

Texts
Additional texts will be provided in class.

Assignments
Fiction unit
Draft work................................................................. 10%
PAPER 1...............................................................................15%

Poetry unit
Draft work................................................................. 10%
PAPER 2...............................................................................15%

Drama unit
Draft work................................................................. 10%
PAPER 3...............................................................................15%
Participation and in-class activities (including potential reading quizzes)...........................................10%
Final exam........................................................................15%
Papers

Drafts: For each of your three papers, you do substantial draft work throughout the unit that you will turn in at a 20-minute conference with me. We will discuss the draft work; I will return the draft to you, and you must attach the draft work with your final paper (don’t forget!). If you miss your conference, your draft won’t count and your draft grade will be “F.” Draft work may be typed or handwritten, but it must be readable.

Format: All final papers must be typed and printed from a word processor in readable font (12 pt. Times New Roman or equivalent), normal margins (1” top and bottom, 1.25” left and right), double-spaced, your name on each page, all pages numbered and fastened together with a staple (don’t do that corner-fold-over thing and expect the pages to stay together). Don’t get cute with margins or font size in order to stretch, say, three pages into four. If you are required to write three full pages, and the third page has any amount of white space, or if the paper fills three pages with a lot of repetition and “fluff,” that won’t be considered three full pages. If you run out of things to say well before three pages, you need to do a lot more than just fill up the empty space; you probably need to go back and put more thought into your paper as a whole.

Final papers also must be free of hand-written corrections or blobs of correction fluid (this does not apply to drafts). It is important that you proofread your final paper thoroughly before you print the final version that you hand in. What this means is that you need to give yourself enough time to look for and correct any typing, spelling, grammar and punctuation errors, rather than dashing off the paper at the last minute. If you have a brilliant paper that is unreadable because of these kinds of minor errors, no one will ever realize its brilliance.

I will provide detailed instruction sheets for each paper, but I won’t repeat anything I’ve already said—that is, I’m not going to tell you every time that you have to double-space your papers; I’m going to assume that you should have learned that already!

Deadlines: Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date. If your paper is late by one day (that is, if you turn it in during the middle or end of the due date’s class, after class, or at the beginning of the following class), its grade will go down one full grade level (that is, from A to B, A- to B-, etc.). If you don’t hand in your paper at the beginning of the class following the due date, I won’t accept it and your grade for that paper will be F. Do not e-mail me papers without my permission, or put them in my mailbox or slide them under my office door or leave them in the classroom if I’m not there, because I might not get them this way unless you have made arrangements with me beforehand. I can’t grade a paper that you honestly tried to get to me but somehow got lost; I can only grade what actually exists, in my hands, by the deadline.

Important note: I accept no excuses for late papers, and I grant no excused extensions—not even for “good” excuses (sick/doctor’s appointment/job interview/wedding/funeral). I am especially not interested in technological glitches (printer not working/computer not working/document lost to cyberspace). You have the class schedule in your hands right now, so you know when the papers are due. If you must miss a due date’s class, for whatever reason, get a friend to hand in your paper or make other arrangements with me.

Remember, it is not my responsibility to get your work from you; it is your responsibility to get it to me. Therefore, do not simply announce, “I can’t be here the day the paper is due!” or “My computer crashed and I lost my paper!” and expect me to come up with a solution. It’s your paper, not mine, and you are the one being graded on it; therefore, it is in your best interest to
figure out how to make the deadline. I don’t make say all of this to be mean, but simply because we are on a tight schedule and it is crucial that you don’t fall behind. If you do, you may never catch up again! Besides, handing the paper in is the easy part; writing it is the hard part. Don’t ace the hard part only to blow the easy part.

Reading Assignments

You will have reading assignments nearly every day. **Always complete the readings!** I cannot emphasize this enough. Reading is not an optional activity in a literature course, even though many students somehow get the idea that if you don’t have to turn something in, it isn’t a requirement—after all, how will the prof know if you’ve done it or not? Trust me, I know, because it shows in the quality of everything you do. If you don’t read, you can’t pass the class, plain and simple. I have chosen works that I think are a little more interesting and accessible than many of the other texts in our books, and many of these are quite short (especially, of course, the poetry), but even if you find the readings incomprehensible or boring, you still need to do them. Moreover, read carefully; don’t just skim. Your efforts will be rewarded because you’ll actually be able to get something out of class instead of wasting your time (and, more importantly, my time). Finally, **bring the appropriate book to class every day.** Yes, they’re heavy, but how could you possibly expect to understand a text if you aren’t looking at it?

A rather lengthy note on attendance

You may have noted that there is no “attendance grade.” This isn’t high school; you don’t get “credit” in college just for showing up and having a pulse. As such, I won’t “call attendance” or have a “sign-in sheet.” Before you get excited and figure on having your afternoons free all semester, read on.

First off, perhaps another instructor has already said this to you, but if not, let me be the first: nothing enrages a professor more than a student asking one of the following questions: “I was absent last time; what did I miss?” or, far worse, “Did I miss anything important?” You may not find the contents of a particular class particularly interesting or useful, but trust me: instructors hate wasting time just as much as you do (after all, it’s our time too, you know). I wouldn’t plan anything in a course that I thought was unimportant. Every day we will do something that “counts,” and a lot of it can’t easily be made up. It’s all important.

Second, every semester students come up to me and announce, “I was absent Wednesday!” or “I’m going to have to miss class Monday!” Then they stand there looking at me. I’ve been teaching for a while now, but I still have no idea what students are thinking when they do this. Am I supposed to applaud, or break into tears, or gasp in shock and horror? The next thing I get is a lengthy description of why they were or will be absent. Still this leaves me puzzled.

There seems to be a bit of a “disconnect” here: these students think the most important thing about absences is making sure the instructor knows the reason why they were absent. They seem to think that getting “excused” for absences is the primary goal. The truth is instructors often couldn’t care less about this—nor should you. If you miss a doctor’s appointment, do you give your doctor a lengthy explanation of why you missed it, because you’re afraid the doctor will dislike you and give you a “bad grade” on your checkup if you don’t have a good reason? Of course not; you reschedule the appointment.
The problem is, of course, that you can’t simply “reschedule” a day of class that you missed unless you have a time machine. And this is precisely what concerns instructors: not whether you have a “good reason” for missing class, but the fact that you are now behind everyone else in class. That is also what should concern you, the student. This should go without saying, but I’ll say it anyway: grades are not based on how I feel about you. Grades are based on the work you do toward a class’s objectives. If you miss class, you’ve missed work toward those objectives, and it doesn’t matter why you missed class—it’s exactly the same if you were at a funeral or at the movies. Moreover, you standing there trying very hard to make sure I know you had a good reason for missing class does absolutely nothing toward you actually gaining what you missed in class. It’s just wasting time.

Therefore, whenever you are absent, instead of doing the “I was/will be absent!” announcement and then launching into a description of why, first consider the following questions:

- What day(s) were you absent or will you be absent?
- Check the schedule: what does it say you missed or will miss on the day(s) you are absent?
- Based on this, what will you do about any assignments that are/were due? For example, if you know you’ll be absent on the day a paper is due, check the syllabus: you’ll see that I don’t give extensions; therefore, in this case you will need to get a friend to hand in your paper for you or make other arrangements.
- Based on the syllabus, what other missed activities can you make up? How do you propose to make up this work, if that is possible? Think of a specific plan, noting what times and days you can make my office hours and how specifically you intend to make up the work. Note that your plan must schedule all make-up work within a reasonable time frame—to be specific, within one class period of the last day of absence, as any longer would constitute an extension (and you know my policy on that).
- What work cannot be made up—for example, because it involves in-class activities that cannot be reproduced, or because I don’t give make-ups for that particular activity? (Read the syllabus carefully to see what work cannot be made up. Moreover, the laws of physics apply to me the same way they do everyone else: I cannot compress a 50-minute class into 20 words or fewer in answer to an off-the-cuff “what did I miss?”)

These questions should give you an understanding of how much work you’ve missed because of a given absence. Use common sense, as always.

Why am I going on and on about this? My point is not that you should slavishly drag yourself to class with a fever of 104. It is natural to expect that events may force you to miss class. My point is simply this: attend as many classes as you humanly can; if you miss class, for whatever reason, make sure you do what you need to do to keep up with the work, and expect there to be consequences that range from negligible (if absences are isolated incidents) to severe (if you make a habit of it).

Most of all, it is up to you to figure out what to do about your absences, not me. Do not expect me to propose solutions as to how you can get your assignments done. You’re the one taking the class, so you need to do the work, and you should be keeping track of your work throughout the semester so you’ll know if you’ve stayed on top of things. People who understand this tend to do well in college. People who don’t...don’t. (And if you do miss lots of classes throughout the
term, please don’t bother coming to me on Week 14 and asking how you can make it up. You know the answer to that already: build a time machine. That’s the only acceptable solution.)

Keep this in mind as well: attendance means substantially more than having a pulse, and the point of coming to class isn’t just to “get credit” for being there. If you show up to class but then fall asleep, send text messages, work on assignments for other courses, etc., you might as well have stayed home, because you aren’t really “attending.” (Look it up in Webster’s: the first definition for “attend” is “to pay attention,” not “to be present.”)

**Plagiarism Warning**

Plagiarism means word-for-word unacknowledged copying of another writer’s work or unacknowledged paraphrasing of another writer’s ideas. This can range from something as small as using a sentence from a website without properly acknowledging the source, all the way up to turning in someone else’s paper as your own. The minimum penalty is a grade of “F” on the assignment. In addition, you may fail the course, be placed on probation, or even be expelled.

Most students would never even think of turning in someone else’s paper as their own. But this is not the only way plagiarism occurs. It is important to understand that plagiarism is based not just on intent but on deed. This means that it is not acceptable to say, for example, “I didn’t mean to plagiarize; it just so happens that what I wrote sounds very similar to this source I read. I went to this website to get ideas for my paper, and what I read must have influenced me without me realizing it.” Does that sound familiar? Well, guess what: that’s still considered plagiarism, because you paraphrased someone else’s ideas without citing the source.

It is very easy to avoid this problem. If you look at any source during your writing process, be aware of how influential that source may be. If you think that the source may make its way into your paper in any way, whether word-for-word or as a paraphrase of a general idea, *cite the source* using proper MLA citation format. If you don’t know how to use MLA format, ask me for help (and we will go over this in class as well). That way, the worst you can be accused of is using an inappropriate source (if, for example, you used Wikipedia or a blog)—and you aren’t likely to get an “F” for that, whereas you will definitely get an “F” if you don’t cite the source.

The bottom line: absolutely do not consider plagiarizing any part of any assignment, in any way. It’s simply not worth it. If you are having trouble writing an assignment or meeting a deadline, or if you aren’t sure what might be considered plagiarism, please come and talk to me about it.

**Extra Credit**

There is none—don’t even bother asking. Every semester around Week 14 or so, a few panicky students will realize that they are in danger of failing and will frantically ask, “What can I do to get my grade up?” My advice is that you ask yourself that question now; don’t wait until Week 14, because...well, duh, obviously it will be too late by then. The semester starts *today*, so your work begins today, not the last two weeks of class. And what exactly can you do to get your grade up? The answer, I’m afraid, is another “duh”: do the reading, come to class, pay attention, participate, put care and effort into your papers and turn them in on time.
Final Word

This is probably not the most exciting document you’ve ever had to read in your life, but please: *Keep this syllabus!* Refer to it whenever you have any questions about the class, because I guarantee you that a good half of the questions that are asked during the course of a semester have already been answered here. In particular, look at the syllabus every day for reading assignments and every time you have to write a paper. Do not let this document somehow fly out of your hands the second you leave the room; it contains important information. Also, if you ever have questions about anything in this document (or, really, anything at all related to the class), *ask them*. *You* are responsible for doing what needs to be done in this class; it is not an acceptable excuse for you to say, “I didn’t understand what you meant so I couldn’t do the work.” If you don’t understand, find out. That’s what you’re here for, after all!
Grading Criteria for Papers

Purpose:
“A” range: The essay has a clearly focused purpose and is sufficiently narrowed for a short essay.
“B” range: The essay has a fairly clear purpose and, but the writer doesn’t always consistently craft the essay toward that purpose.
“C” range: The essay has a purpose, but that purpose may be too broad.
“D” range: The essay has little clear sense of purpose; instead of focusing on a single topic, the essay jumps from one topic to another and makes no clear point.

Reasoning and Supporting Evidence:
“A” range: The writer provides specific, clear supporting details, offering enough evidence to make a point convincingly. The reasoning is valid, and there are no irrelevant details.
“B” range: Reasoning and evidence are fairly clear and appropriate but not always vivid and convincing.
“C” range: The writer’s evidence may be too general to fulfill the essay’s purpose effectively. The essay may offer a few specific details but not enough to be convincing. There may be a few irrelevant details or flaws in reasoning.
“D” range: Evidence or supporting details are few and possibly irrelevant, and there may be several flaws in reasoning.

Organization:
“A” range: The arrangement of ideas in the essay is appropriate for the writer’s subject and purpose. The introduction is engaging; the conclusion is satisfying. Transitions are effective, clear and varied. The reader can easily understand the direction of the essay.
“B” range: The essay is usually easy to follow, though introduction, conclusion, transitions and/or overall arrangement of ideas may be less than completely effective.
“C” range: Some thought has been given to the arrangement of ideas, but supporting points may not be in their best order. Introduction and/or conclusion are present but not well thought out. Lack of transitions may make the essay hard to follow.
“D” range: Organization is confusing. The reader may have great difficulty following the essay.

Writing Style:
“A” range: Writing is under the writer’s control. Wording is thoughtful, varied, and precise. The writer has obviously edited and proofread, and there are few if any grammatical, punctuation, spelling or typographical errors.
“B” range: Writing is competent, perhaps not varied and accurate enough for the “A” range, but effort is there.
“C” range: Wording is generally correct but “bland,” or perhaps the essay contains exaggerated language, wordy structures, or clichés. The essay also likely contains errors of grammar, punctuation, and/or spelling.
“D” range: Essay bears the clear markings of something the author dashed off without giving sufficient thought (typos, grammatical mistakes, redundancies).

F papers: An “F” assignment either doesn’t exist (meaning that the writer didn’t turn it in on time as specified), or did not meet any of the minimum requirements of the assignment, or was plagiarized (in part or in whole).

Note #1: An “A” grade is the top grade that can be achieved and does not simply reflect good effort; it reflects a combination of strong effort and superlative results. There are no “easy A” grades.
Note #2: All grades are final. I do not negotiate grades. Never begin a conversation with me with “I know you don’t negotiate grades, but...”
General Course Schedule (subject to change as necessary)

Mon., Aug. 23 .......... Introductions; syllabus Read Beattie, “Janus” in Fiction 100
Wed., Aug. 25 ........ Discuss “Janus” Writing response on “Janus”
Fri., Aug. 27 .......... Discuss “Janus” Read Gilman, “Yellow Wallpaper”
Mon., Aug. 30 .......... Discuss “Wallpaper” Writing response on “Wallpaper”
Fri., Sept. 3 .......... Discuss “Necklace” Writing response on “The Necklace”
Mon., Sept. 6 .......... Labor Day; no class
Fri., Sept. 10 .......... Discuss “Things” Writing response on “Things They Carried”
Wed., Sept. 15 .......... Discuss “Good Man” Writing response on “Good Man”
Fri., Sept. 17 .......... Discuss “Good Man” Read Jackson, “The Lottery”
Mon., Sept. 20 .......... Discuss “Lottery” Writing response on “The Lottery”
Fri., Sept. 24 .......... Discuss “Cathedral” Writing response on “Cathedral”
Mon., Sept. 27 .......... Discuss “Cathedral” Read Hemingway, “Hills Like White Elephants”
Wed., Sept. 29 .......... Discuss “Elephants” Writing response on “Elephants”
Fri., Oct. 1 .......... Discuss “Elephants” Write draft and prepare for conferences
Mon., Oct. 4 .......... Conferences; no regular class Write Paper 1
Wed., Oct. 6 .......... Conferences; no regular class Write Paper 1
Fri., Oct. 8 .......... Midterm Break; no class
Mon., Oct. 11 .......... Paper 1 due; begin poetry unit (details forthcoming)
Wed., Oct. 13 .......... Poetry set 1
Fri., Oct. 15 .......... Poetry set 2
Mon., Oct. 18 .......... Poetry set 3
Fri., Oct. 22 .......... Poetry set 5
Mon., Oct. 25 .......... Poetry set 6
Wed., Oct. 27 .......... Poetry set 7
Fri., Oct. 29 .......... Poetry set 8
Mon., Nov. 1 .......... Poetry set 9
Wed., Nov. 3 .......... Poetry set 10
Fri., Nov. 5 .......... No class
Mon., Nov. 8 .......... Conferences
Wed., Nov. 10 .......... Conferences
Fri., Nov. 12 .......... Paper 2 due; begin drama unit (details forthcoming)
Mon., Nov. 15 .......... Film part 1
Wed., Nov. 17 .......... Film part 2
Fri., Nov. 19 .......... Catch-up day if needed
Mon., Nov. 22 – Fri., Nov. 26: Thanksgiving Break
Mon., Nov. 29 .......... Play Act I
Wed., Dec. 1 .......... Play Act II
Fri., Dec. 3 .......... Play Act III
Mon., Dec. 6 .......... Play Act IV
Wed., Dec. 8 .......... Play Act V
Fri., Dec. 10 .......... Paper 3 due; prepare for final

Wed., Dec. 15, 10:15am–12:15pm: Final exam