ENG 1091C-095: Honors Composition and Literature

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COURSE DESCRIPTION, POLICIES, and PROCEDURES

ENG 1091C: Honors Composition and Literature

Instructor: Dr. McCormick
Office: CH 339D
Phone: 581-6121
E-Mail: cffgm@eiu.edu
Office Hours: MWF 9-12 and by appointment

REQUIRED TEXTS:
Prentice-Hall Reader
Pocket Style Manual
St. Martin's Guide to Writing

REQUIRED PURCHASES:
1) theme folder
2) thick spiral notebook, 10" by 8 1/2" (your journal—to be used for this course alone)
3) dictionary (a nice fat one you can use for the next thirty years)
4) a stapler

WHAT A WRITING COURSE CAN DO FOR YOU

Writing is a mental calisthenic. The activity of writing creates a myriad of new neural pathways in your brain—makes you more adept at thinking logically and clearly, enables you to marshal evidence more effectively and persuasively; helps you to become more interesting and persuasive in conversations with teachers, preachers, bosses, underlings, parents, brothers and sisters, boyfriends and girlfriends. (For more on this subject, see Janet Emig, "Writing as a Mode of Learning," in College Composition and Communication, 28 May, 1977—3rd floor, Booth Library.)

Writing is also a money-making skill. In the business or professional world which each of you will soon be entering, effective writers move beyond their entry-level positions into positions of higher salary and status. Ineffective writers usually do not.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF READING

Every time you make the decision to devote a morning, afternoon, evening, or even a spare twenty minutes between classes to the activity of reading, you do something that makes your brain work a little better, and helps you to become the fascinating and intellectually capable person you aspire to be—the sort of person who can attract and keep interesting friends, dates, spouses, and careers.
HOW THIS COURSE WILL WORK

I will do my best to make this a class that you will enjoy attending. In return I'll expect you to attend class regularly, to perform all writing and reading assignments punctually, to read portions of your writing aloud to the class when you are called upon to do so, and to do what you can–by asking questions and offering suggestions in class discussion and by taking an active interest in your fellow classmates' remarks and writing–to make this a lively and morale-building course in which we all inspire one another to do our best work.

If you miss a class, call a friend to find out precisely what was done in the missed class, and try to do the missed work before you come to the next class.

As you work to strengthen your writing this semester, think about past experiences you have had trying to improve other skills. You didn't learn to play the piano by giving recitals in a crowded auditorium once every two weeks, and you didn't learn to shoot a jump shot by practicing it for a half hour the night before a conference game. You learned to do these things by practicing them (without an audience) a little bit every day. Lou Gherig was not a "naturally-gifted" athlete. He just practiced more than other people did.

HOW YOUR GRADE WILL BE DETERMINED:

You will have five major projects for this course. Each project will constitute 20% of your grade. The projects are as follows:

20% **JOURNAL**: to be kept in a 10 1/2" by 8" spiral notebook in which you write at least 200 words, and on alternate days 400 words, before coming to each class meeting. (See syllabus for specification of word length.) You will also be asked to do frequent in-class writing in your journal. At mid term and again at the end of the semester I will evaluate your journal by randomly selecting five entries and assigning you between 0 and 10 points for each of them. I will examine both your before-class and in-class writing in these five randomly selected entries.

To reward faithful attendance and hard work I will conduct frequent unannounced spot checks of your journals this semester. You will receive one bonus point if you have written an entry which meets the minimum length requirement on the day I announce a spot check.

20% **REVISED ESSAY #1**: A carefully revised essay of 750 to 1,000 words based on one of your journal entries/drafts in the first half of the course.

The grading standards I will use in evaluating this and the three other essays described below are set forth in the attached "GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING WRITING ASSIGNMENTS IN EIU'S ENGLISH DEPARTMENT."

20% **MID-TERM IN-CLASS ESSAY**: To be written in three consecutive class sessions near mid term.
20% REVISED ESSAY #2: A carefully revised essay of 750 to 1,000 words based on one of your journal entries/rough drafts in the second half of the course.

20% RESEARCH PAPER: A documented research paper of 1,750 to 3,000 words (7 to 12 pages) on a topic worked out in consultation with me.

I shall use the following values in averaging your grades:

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
A+ &=& 4.2 & B+ &=& 3.2 & C+ &=& 2.2 & D+ &=& 1.2 & F &=& 0.0 \\
A &=& 4.0 & B &=& 3.0 & C &=& 2.0 & D &=& 1.0 & Missing &=& -1.0 \\
A- &=& 3.8 & B- &=& 2.8 & C- &=& 1.8 & D- &=& 0.8
\end{array}
\]

I will use the following cutoff points in determining final grades:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
A &=& 4.2 \text{ to } 3.8 & \text{ B } &=& 3.7 \text{ to } 2.8 & \text{ C } &=& 2.7 \text{ to } 1.8 \\
\text{N/C } &=& 1.7 \text{ and below.}
\end{array}
\]

To receive credit for this course you must have a final average of 1.8 C- or better (or 1.6 for students who have no more than 3 unexcused absences). Final grade averages that fall below the C- cutoff point will be recorded as "N/C" - "no credit."

NOTE THE FOLLOWING INCENTIVE TO ATTEND CLASS FAITHFULLY:

If at the end of the semester your average falls 1 to 2 decimal points below the cutoff for the next higher grade category, I will assign you the higher grade if you have had no more than 3 unexcused absences. For example, if your average were 3.6 or 3.7 (i.e., 1 or 2 points below the cutoff for an A), you would receive a final grade of A if you had had no more than 3 unexcused absences. If you had 4 or more unexcused absences, your average of 3.6 or 3.7 would earn a final grade of B.

LATE AND MISSED WORK

Papers and journals are due at the beginning of the class period on the dates indicated by an asterisk (*) on your syllabus. Late papers and journals will be penalized one-half letter grade for each class session they are late. For example, if a paper were due on Monday and you submitted it on the following Wednesday, the grade of a "B" paper would be lowered to a B-. Papers that have still not been submitted two weeks after the due date will be regarded as "missing" and will receive a -1. They may not be made up. (See HOW YOUR GRADE WILL BE DETERMINED, above.)
WHERE TO GO FOR HELP WITH THIS COURSE

1. Come to see me in my office in 339D during my office hours or by appointment.
2. Go to the Writing Center, CH 301, where friendly and knowledgeable tutors are eager to answer questions and to help you get unsnagged.

PLAGIARISM

Note the English Department's statement 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 course.

HOW TO CORRECT YOUR GRADED THEMES

I will ask that you correct the errors I will mark on your graded papers. Specifically, I will ask you to correct all errors of grammar, spelling, and punctuation that I may note in your margins.

How? Use pencil. Make the corrections directly above (or beside) the error marked in red. But before you attempt to correct an error you will need to study the relevant section of your Pocket Style Manual or St. Martin's Guide to Writing. For an explanation of the abbreviations I will sometimes use in your margins, see the next-to-last page of your St. Martin's Guide—the page entitled "Correction Symbols."

Here are some errors I typically mark on student papers. If you'll study them, perhaps you can spot and correct any such errors in your own writing before you submit your themes to me for grading.

A. Each of the men are afraid.

B. They were tried, they went to jail.

C. Lucasta says nothing. Until after her man has finished speaking.

D. He was trying to show that even though he was older, he can still be careful.

E. He excepted him. There tough guys. Their experiences effect them deeply.
## Guidelines for Evaluating Writing Assignments in EIU's English Department

Grades on written work range from A to F. The categories listed below are based on rhetorical principles and assume intellectual responsibility and honesty. Strengths and weaknesses in each area will influence the grade, though individual teachers may emphasize some categories over others and all categories are deeply interrelated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Has clearly stated purpose or main idea/thesis quite thoughtfully and/or originally developed within the guidelines of the assignment</td>
<td>Has clearly stated purpose or main idea/thesis developed with some thoughtfulness and/or originality within the guidelines of the assignment</td>
<td>Has a discernible purpose or main idea/thesis which is not very clearly stated and is developed with limited originality and/or thoughtfulness; may have missed or failed to conform to some element of the assignment's guidelines</td>
<td>Has no apparent purpose or main idea/thesis; shows little thoughtfulness and/or originality; may not conform to significant elements of the assignment's guidelines</td>
<td>Has no purpose or main idea/thesis; shows little or no thoughtfulness and/or originality; may not conform to the guidelines of the assignment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Organization | Is logically organized but without overly obvious organizational devices; has unity, coherence, strong transitions; has well-defined introduction, body, conclusion | Is logically organized; has unity, coherence, competent transitions; has well-defined introduction, body, conclusion | Is organized, but not necessarily in the most logical way; has unity & coherence but may make inconsistent use of transitions; has introduction, body, conclusion, one of which may be weak | Is somewhat organized, but is confusing to readers; shows significant problems with coherence, unity, transitions; no or poorly written introduction, body or conclusion | Is not organized; has little or no coherence and unity; poor or no use of transitions; no or poorly written introduction, body or conclusion |

| Development | Supports purpose or main idea with abundant, fresh details; details are specific and appropriate; uses sources well when sources are called for in the assignment | Supports purpose or main idea with sufficient details; details are fairly specific and appropriate; uses sources adequately | Supports purpose or main idea with details, but some parts of the paper are inadequately/ inappropriately developed or vague | Makes an attempt to use details to develop purpose or main idea but is, for the most part, inadequately/inappropriately developed | Does not develop main idea; may use sources inadequately/inappropriately |

| Style & Awareness of Audience | Word choices show consideration of purpose and audience; shows thoughtfully and imaginatively constructed sentences; incorporates sources well | Word choices are appropriate to purpose and audience; sentences often constructed thoughtfully and imaginatively; incorporates sources adequately | Word choices are mostly appropriate to purpose and audience; sentences aren't particularly thoughtful or imaginatively constructed; sources may sometimes be awkwardly incorporated | Word choices may be inappropriate to purpose or audience; sources incorporated poorly | Word choices are generally poor; sources are incorrectly or very awkwardly incorporated |

| Mechanics | Has very few grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors; uses appropriate documentation style correctly when necessary for assignment | Has minor grammatical, punctuation or spelling errors that do not interfere with reading of essay; uses appropriate documentation style correctly | Has some grammatical, punctuation and/or spelling errors that occasionally interfere with reading of essay; uses appropriate documentation style but may have some errors | Has grammatical, punctuation and/or spelling errors that make reading difficult; documentation style may be poorly used | Has grammatical, punctuation and/or spelling errors that make reading very difficult; documentation style poorly used |

| Process | Shows abundant evidence of careful planning and drafting and attention to peer and teacher comments | Shows evidence of careful planning and drafting and some attention to peer and teacher comments | Shows some evidence of planning and drafting, though some drafts may be less considered, and some attention to peer and teacher feedback | Shows only a little evidence of planning and drafting and attention to peer and teacher feedback | Shows little or no evidence of planning, drafting, or attention to peer and teacher feedback |
Three Preliminary Remarks

1. I welcome your questions about any of our assignments for this course. Ask and I'll be happy to clarify.
2. If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.
3. You need not bring all three of your 1091C textbooks to each of our class meetings, but please but DO bring the textbook in which we have an assignment. ALWAYS bring your journal.

AUG 24 Introduction to the course.

AUG 26 Study your handout entitled "COURSE DESCRIPTION, POLICIES, and PROCEDURES." Bring your questions to class.
Read "The Name is Mine" in Prentice, pp. 48-50.
Write a journal entry of at least 200 words in response to one or more of the "Writing Suggestions" on pp. 51-52. (Notice, for example, item #4--a suggestion "For Research." Later this semester you will be asked to prepare a documented research paper. You may dream up a research topic on your own (in consultation with me), or you may elect to pursue one of the "Research" suggestions which appear at the end of each of our readings in Prentice.

AUG 28 In your journal write a draft of an essay of at least 400 words in which you examine an important decision you have made about some aspect of your life. (Things you might explain: What was the decision? Why did you make the decision? What were/are the consequences?) Date this and all future journal entries, upper right corner. Use our SYLLABUS date.

AUG 31 Read "Cut" in Prentice, pp. 53-58.
Write a journal response (minimum 200 words) using "Writing Suggestions" 1 and/or 2, p. 59.

SEP 2 In your journal write a draft of an essay (minimum 400 words) in response to "Writing Suggestion" 3 ("For an Essay"), pp. 59-60.

SEP 4 Read the discussion of "Clarity" in A Pocket Style Manual, pp. 1-16. As your read, take careful notes in your journal. For a portion of your journal entry (min. 200 words) create sentences of your own to illustrate the author's 9 points and subpoints concerning "clarity."