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ENG 3001-007: Advanced Composition

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Syllabus: English 3001-007

Advanced Composition
Michael Kuo
TR, 11:00 to 12:15

General Info Books & Materials Policies Grading Workshop

How to Contact Me Other office hours by appointment.

Office Location: Coleman 315G
Office Phone: 581-6301
Home Phone: 348-5529
E-mail: cfmfk1@eiu.edu

General Information

The 1999 catalogue description of this course is as follows: "Advanced application of the principles of expository writing. Attention to development of an individual style. Required of English majors, open to others. Prerequisite: English 1002C."

In addition to doing my best to fulfill the mandate given by these four sentences (one of which dictates a responsibility for your advisor, not me, and another of which tells the registration computer what to do--so we're talking two sentences of directions), I will attempt to hammer home what I believe to be some of the most important hallmarks of good writing (if you're thinking "attention to sentence length" and "exclusion of annoying parentheticals" had better be included in the list that's coming, you have a point . . .): a finely tuned and precise sense of the reader, unquestionable command over the mechanics of writing American English correctly, and the ability to write fresh and imaginative prose.

It is my plan to join you in writing this semester--to write and revise about 5,000 words, to seek your input and help, to share the writing with you. (I won't, however, promise to do this, since my schedule frequently involves spurts of incredible business at inopportune times.)

Books & Materials

You should have a handbook of American English writing.

You should have 5 3 1/2" floppy disks (IBM compatible).

Policies
Students with Disabilities

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

Attendance

Attendance is required. Our class will meet in the traditional way (in Coleman 318 on a Tuesday or Thursday at 11:00) only rarely--about once every three weeks, on average. These full-class meetings will be announced here, on this Web site, and through e-mail, at least one week in advance. Your attendance is also required in your writing group meetings, which will occur by arrangement at least once a week for about an hour, in an arranged location (my office is a bit small and chairless so we'll have to figure it out). Finally, your attendance is required online, on this Web site, in the Workshop section for this course (see "Workshop," below). You should post, on average, two times a week. You don't have to write War and Peace every time, but four sentences isn't going to cut it, either.

If your lack of attendance (to any of the above) becomes a problem, I will notify you, through e-mail and in person (the next time I see you), and tell you clearly what steps you must take to avoid a penalty in your grade, and what that penalty could be (though it would not exceed, in the worst-case scenario a one-letter grade reduction for the course).

Plagiarism

. . . will not be tolerated. The English Department's official plagiarism statement is: "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 immediate assignment of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of NC for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office."

Two-Birds-One-Stone Papers

It will not bother me if some (or even all) of the work you do for this course fulfills your requirements in another course, as long as I have approved the topic, and your revision clearly employs strategies we have discussed. Your other teacher may care, however!

Syllabus Subject to Change

Everything on this syllabus is subject to change, providing we agree. The rules for changing the syllabus are half dictatorial and half democratic; I must vote 'yes' for a change, and more than half of you must vote 'yes.' That way, if you all decide to change my name to Mickey Mouse, it won't happen. Conversely, if I decide to make all your papers 80 pages long, it won't happen, either. Any changes will be posted to the syllabus on the Internet. Though I will announce these changes when and if they occur, you are

Web Pages

I will require that you do your writing for this class as Web pages, saved on a disk. You may use any software you want to make Web pages. You will be excused from this requirement, for computer proficiency or access reasons, only after giving it the old college try.

File Names & Back-Ups
Your files must be saved with the following file names: `paper1.html`, `paper2.html`, and, if you do a third paper, `paper3.html`. You are required to keep back-up copies of your work.

Grading

Papers (60 points)

You should write about 5,000 words for this class. You can divide this up into two papers of about 2,500 words each, or three papers of about 1,650 words. Topics must be approved by me.

Revisions (20 points)

All the writing you do this semester must be carefully revised after consultation with me and others. You must turn in revisions within two weeks of getting the graded paper back from me. (This means that your last paper should be turned in March 22 if you want a full two weeks for revising; the last day I will accept work will be May 6.) "Revision" does not mean "proofreading"; you should pay close attention to global writing issues (focus, organization, development, and so on) as well.

All writing and revision points will be assigned proportionally to the two-or-three-papers plan.

I will use the English Department's Standards for Evaluating Themes at EIU to grade your work, though I will bear in mind that advanced writing strategies sometimes challenge these standards.

Total 80 points. Your final grade will be calculated on the following scale: an A for 72 to 80 points; a B for 64 to 72 points; a C for 56 to 64 points; a D for 48 to 56 points; an F for less than 48 points. "Borderline" grades (72, 64, 56, and 48 points) will be resolved with reference to whether your performance has improved over the course of the semester.

See the attendance policy above.

Note: Writing will be graded on the basis of the EIU English Department Standards, with the following exceptions: Workshop postings and e-mail.

Workshop

You should post regularly--like, twice a week on average--to the Workshop section of this Web site (unless you are excused by me for computer proficiency or access reasons, after giving it the old college try). The audience here is the entire class, not just your Writing Group at any given time. The Workshop is for asking questions and helping one another with topics, writing, research, and other course-related concerns.

Writing Groups

These will probably fluctuate, but they will consist of four or five students. Your group may be constellated around similar writing projects, but it may not. Though you are welcome to do "group projects" (writing and researching together), this is not a requirement. No one's grade will ever be affected by another student's performance. Groups will meet once a week, for about an hour, by arrangement. I will expect you to be very familiar with the writing being done by others in your group, however, and to share your writing with your group.

Note: Class will occur online only (in the Workshop section of this Web site) from February 9 to February 20.