Eng 3001-010: Advanced Composition

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English 3001 Advanced Composition
Writing From Personal Experience
Fall Semester 1998
Scheifele

Schedule of Assignments

What to turn in with all completed essay projects:
1. Creating exercise done in class (as they are - no need to recopy) whether used for the essay you write or not. If you missed class on the day these were done, do some on your own before writing your draft, and include them.
2. Rough draft, peer responses, and teacher’s written comments.
3. Revised essay. If you go through any further rough drafts before getting to the final copy as you want it, you may also include these. Be sure to label them so I don’t mistakenly grade them as the finished essay!
4. A short analysis (half a page up to about a page) of the changes made and why. You need not list every misspelling corrected and word substituted, but do comment in some detail on major changes such as added material, deleted material, changes in order of material, rewritten sections and the like, explaining what was wrong with the original and how the revision improves on it.

Place your finished revised draft on top, followed by the analysis, the intermediate drafts (if any), the rough draft with responses, then on bottom, the creating exercises.

Do not enclose the material in a folder or binder. Instead, paper clip the material together.

SCHEDULE

Mon Aug 24  First class day. Distribute and discuss course work, grading system, other policies. Students will write a brief self-introduction to help the teacher get to know them.

Wed Aug 26  Discuss material in Bender 1 - 45, esp. the descriptive essay. Bring Bender book, and also Killgallon, “Sentence Composing.”

Monday Aug 31  Discuss models of descriptive writing in Student Writers text: William Hill, “Returning Home” (233) and Eudora Welty, “The Little Store” (239). In-class creating exercises for description essay.

Wed Sept 2  Sentence work in Killgallon as assigned.

Mon Sept 7  Labor Day. Class does not meet.

Wed Sept 9  Bring rough draft of description essay (target length of all finished essays will be about 750 words or 3 pages average handwriting). Peer group responses. Also bring Killgallon for sentence work.

Mon Sept 14  Group conferences on rough drafts of description essay.

Wed Sept 16  Description project due with all parts listed above. Also prepare to discuss Bender Chapter 3, The Narrative Essay, (46 – 67) and part of Chapter 4, The How-To Essay (to bottom of p 75 only). Bring Killgallon for in-class sentence work as time allows.
Mon Sept 21 Bring topics for personal experience narration as assigned. Study model essay in Student Writers, Paula Sisler, "The Water Lily" (496 - 506). In-class creating exercises for narration essay.

Wed Sept 23 Bring rough drafts of narration for peer group response. Also bring Killgallon for in-class sentence work.

Mon Sept 28 Group conference with teacher.

Wed Sept 30 Completed narrative essay project due, with all parts listed above. Bender Chapter 5, Comparison and Contrast (91 - 110). Also bring Killgallon for in-class sentence work.

Mon Oct 5 Models of contrast essays in Student Writers: Karen Kramer, The Little Drummer Boys" (292 - 98) and John Thatcher, "On Killing the Man" (515 - 20_. In-class creating exercises for contrast essays.

Wed Oct 7 Bring rough draft of contrast essay for peer group responses. Also bring Killgallon for sentence work.

Mon Oct 12 Group conferences with teacher.

Wed Oct 14 Finished contrast essay project due with all required parts. Discussion of Bender Chapter 7, "The Cause-Effect Essay" (132 - 45). Bring Killgallon for sentence work.

Mon Oct 19 Model essay of cause-effect in Student Writers, James Seilspour, "I Forgot the Words to the National Anthem" (472). In-class creating exercises for cause-effect.

Wed Oct 21 Bring rough draft of cause-effect essay for peer group response. Also bring Killgallon for sentence work.

Mon Oct 26 Group conferences with teacher.

Wed Oct 28 Completed cause-effect project due. Exam over the types of essay development studied to date.

Mon Nov 2 Discussion of Bender Chapter 8, "The Definition Essay" (146 - 66). Also bring Killgallon for sentence work.

Wed Nov 4 Model definition essay, Jo Goodwin Parker, "What is Poverty?" in Student Writers (555). In-class creating exercises.

Mon Nov 9 Rough draft of definition essay for peer critique. Also bring Killgallon for sentence work.

Wed Nov 11 Group conferences with teacher.

Mon Nov 16 Completed definition project due. Discussion of Bender chapter 9, argument/persuasion (166 - 89).


Mon Nov 23 Thanksgiving Week - no classes

Wed Nov 25 Thanksgiving Week - no classes
Mon Nov 30  Rough draft of argument/persuasion for peer group response. Killgallon, sentence work.

Wed Dec 2  Group conferences with teacher.

Mon Dec 7  Finished argument/persuasion project due. Peer group discussions in preparation for assembling portfolios.

Wed Dec 9  Possible exam. This may be waived if the class has demonstrated a clear understanding of the types of writing, and ability to demonstrate the ability to write each type.

NO FINAL EXAM
PORTFOLIOS DUE ON WEDNESDAY OF EXAM WEEK - WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 16
Note to Students With Disabilities:

Any student having a documented disability and wishing to receive academic accommodation should contact the coordinator of disability services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Required Course Work and Grading System

I. Writing assignments (55% of term grade).

Students will take a series of six writing assignments (essays organized as narration, description, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, definition, and persuasion/argument) through the "workshop" stages of discovery/creating exercises, rough draft, peer response, instructor response, and revision. All students are expected to complete all six assignments, including the stages outlined above.

None of the assignments will be accepted without the rough draft. The creating exercises and the peer and instructor responses are also part of the assignment; if any of them are missing, the grade on the finished project will be lowered at the teacher's discretion, proportionate to the amount and importance of the missing parts.

Students are expected to attend and participate in all workshop sessions (discovery, peer response, instructor response) unless ill or otherwise excused by the instructor. Roll will be taken every day as a record of participation. It is the responsibility of each student to be sure their presence is marked on a given day, in the event they arrive after roll is called; attendance records are not open to dispute at a later date.

Students are also expected to make significant revisions in their rough drafts after the response sessions. Mere proof-reading corrections are not considered to be significant revision. When the assignment is turned in, an explanation is to be included detailing what revisions were made and why.

Each of the six assignments will be evaluated as a process; the rough drafts will be turned in with the revised drafts and explanation of revisions, in order that the instructor may see what changes were made. The grade on each assignment will be based partly on how well the finished draft exhibits the qualities of the kind of writing practiced in that assignment (e.g. description, narration, comparison/contrast etc.), and partly on evidence that the writer took the process seriously in developing and revising the draft essay.

The finished essay will also be evaluated for its effective use of such elements of good writing as organization, development, paragraphing, sentence structure, word choice, fresh original details, style, and awareness of what is appropriate to its reading audience/purpose. Also taken into account will be improvement of the revised draft over the earlier versions, and how intelligently this is explained in the accompanying analysis of revisions.

Each of the six assignments will receive a letter grade. The instructor will also suggest ways the graded essay could be improved by further revision. Students may do such further revisions on any of the six essays after they have been graded the first time (optional). This newly
revised version may be included in the end-of-term portfolio as evidence of further work and progress if the student chooses. (Time does not allow me to reread/revaluate such revised essays prior to their appearance in the portfolio.)

If an assignment is not done (with its required parts), that assignment will receive a grade of zero (F).

The average of the grades on the six assignments and the test(s) will count as 55% of the semester grade, except that, for each of the six assignments a student has not done, his/her term grade will be lowered by ½ letter grade.

II. Tests

There will be one or two tests requiring students to demonstrate their mastery of some or all of the six types of writing taught in the six projects (narration, description, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, definition, argument/persuasion). These will be given prior to the final exam period; there is no final exam per se.

Students may prepare for these tests primarily by studying the material in Bender and by applying it in the analysis of the required course readings in Bender and in Sommers & McQuade. The tests will require the writing of extemporaneous paragraphs demonstrating the specified types of writing and/or the identification of specified types of writing in prose distributed for the test. Any other matters the instructor deems pertinent might also be included on a test.

A test will count as the equivalent of one essay project.

III. Portfolio (45% of term grade)

The remaining 45% of the semester grade will be assigned to the portfolio which will be turned in by Wednesday of exam week.

For the portfolio, students will select, from the work done for this class, examples of what they consider their best. Each student’s portfolio should include

- At least two examples of their best discovery/creating exercises done at some point in the process of developing the essays
- One of the essays written for the course, which has had further significant revisions made on it after it was previously graded. The parts revised should be marked with a highlighter, and on separate page, explanation given of what revisions were made and why.
- The three other finished essays of theirs that they consider to be the best of their work previously accepted and graded during the course. Along with this should be the first draft and any subsequent drafts they wrote as they revised and polished these three essays. If desired, any of these three might be versions further revised after the instructor first graded them (optional), with revisions highlighted and an explanation of such revisions attached.
- A cover essay of about 750 - 1000 words presenting (1) a rationale for the inclusion of the above material, (2) a
discussion of the process by which the writer worked through the problems and revisions to finish the essays, and (3) explanation of how other course materials and activities, such as the readings assigned, the work or comments of classmates, etc., contributed to the development of the chosen best work.

The portfolio will receive a letter grade, which will not necessarily be the average of the grades previously assigned to the essays included. In evaluating the portfolio, the instructor will consider, in addition to the quality of the finished work included, such matters as:

- whether above list and instructions for the portfolio are accurately followed;
- the quality of the selections included;
- quality of revisions, and intelligence of the rationale for such revisions;
- evidence that the student used the workshop process to improve his/her work;
- evidence of having studied and benefited from the model essays assigned, and from peer and instructor responses;
- quality of the rationale and other commentary in the cover letter.

Attendance, reading, and class participation are a factor in the grade insofar as they are included in the activities outlined above. Further, in the event that any student's grade, figured according to the 55%/45% formula given above, falls between two letter grades, attendance and class participation will be determining factors in the final decision.

Note on Modifications of Course Syllabus

In the event the instructor deems it necessary to make adjustments in the schedule of assignments or other aspects of the course work, these will be announced in a timely manner. It is the responsibility of each student to keep informed of all such adjustments. Ignorance of announced assignments will not be considered an excuse for not being prepared.

Unannounced quizzes over assigned reading may be given to determine how well assignments have been prepared. In addition, daily assignments may include exercises to improve mastery of such matters as paragraphing, sentence structure and style.
English 3001 - Advanced Composition
Fall Semester 1998 - Writing From Personal Experience

Textbooks:

- Sheila Bender, Writing Personal Essays: How to Shape Your Life Experiences for the Page.
- Nancy Sommers and Donald McQuade, Student Writers at Work and in the Company of Other Writers, 3rd Edition.
- Don Kilgallon, Sentence Composing for College.
- A college handbook.

Course Objectives:

- To increase mastery of skills involved in the writing of essays.
- To increase awareness of qualities and techniques of good essay writing through reading, analysis and discussion of a variety of examples, including the work of students and of professional writers.
- To produce a portfolio of writing consisting of the best work done for this class along with other items specified in the handout, "Course Work, Grading System, Portfolios."

Methods:

As implied under Objectives, students will develop their writing ability by writing a great deal, much of it being preliminary exercises designed to help discover suitable material for personal experience essays, some of it being early drafts, some of it sentence exercises, and the remainder, revising and finishing essays.

Students will also develop their writing ability by studying examples of good and not-so-good writing, discussing specific qualities and techniques that make writing good, and using some of these in producing their own work. Unannounced quizzes may be used to test student preparation of this material.

Much of the class will be conducted as a workshop, with students doing writing of exercises and drafts, reading and responding to each other's work in small groups or pairs, and meeting with the teacher in small groups to discuss work in progress.

Exercises working with sentences, paragraphing, and other aspects of writing will be assigned and discussed in class.

One or two exams will require students to demonstrate an ability to recognize the various specifically studied methods of developing ideas (narrative, description, comparison-contrast etc.) and to produce passages extemporaneously using specified methods.
IMPORTANT NOTE: All students are expected to take part in all the workshop activities, including readings, discussion, exercises, rough drafts, group sharing/responding to drafts, and meetings with the instructor. Only essays that have been produced through this workshop process will be accepted as fulfillment of the assignments or as part of the portfolio due at the end of the semester. If a student misses parts of the workshop process for any given assignment, the grade on the finished essay will be penalized, at the discretion of the instructor, proportionate to the amount and significance of the missed parts.

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