

English 100: University Writing

This course is for students who have demonstrated secondary-school-level competence in the reading and essay writing skills required by most university disciplines. Reading and writing assignments will concentrate on non-fictional prose, and will emphasize the processes of reading, analysis, reasoning, documentation and the stages of the writing process.

Instructor: Peter McDonald

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Office Hours & Location:

Salmon Arm Campus, Office 151

Mondays 4:30-5:30

Tuesdays 1:30-3:30

Course Description:

In this course you will be introduced to writing as a practice that requires care, thought, and improvisation in order to make use of grammar and guidelines. You will analyze a number of conventions that academic essays are expected to follow, discuss why those conventions exist, and learn when and how you can break away from them. We will be reading a number of prose essays that highlight tone, contrast concrete and abstract ideas, make truly wacky arguments, and showcase how research can transform our understanding of the world. These essays talk about gardens, book collecting, jazz, Liberace, sleep and wonder among other things. Instead of focussing on the content of each essay, however, we will look at the mechanics of how they persuade a reader. We will build up some of the basic skills of academic writing: concise summary, evaluation of an argument, asking relevant questions, composing a thesis, and conducting research to support that thesis. After this course you will be well prepared to write a paper for a wide range of University subjects.

General Policies:

Because this class is heavily based on writing, talking, and workshopping ideas students are not allowed to bring laptops to class unless as an accommodation documented through disability services. Late assignments will be deducted 3% per day including weekends. If your assignment is late you may email it to me provided you submit a hard copy during the next class.

Required Texts:

Janet Giltrow – *Academic Writing* 3rd Edition

Dave Hickey – *Air Guitar: Essays on Art and Democracy*

Troyka, Lynn Quitman and Douglas Hesse. *Quick Access Reference for Writers*. 3rd Ed.

Assignments:

Participation.....	10%
Word Book.....	5%
Summary (500 words).....	10%
Summary and Evaluation Revision (1000 words)..	10%
Comparative Essay (750 words).....	15%
Research Essay (1200 words).....	20%
In Class Exam 1.....	15%
Final Exam.....	15%

Timeline:

Important Dates:

January 4th, Classes begin
January 14th, Last day to add or drop a course
February 21st-25th, Spring break, no classes
March 4th, Last day to withdraw without academic penalty
April 8th, Last day of classes
April 11th-21st, Exam Period

Week 1: Introduction

January 5th, Introduction, Course Outline + Requirements

Week 2: What is Academic Writing: Words, Sentences, Paragraphs

January 10th, Edgar Allen Poe, Diddling
January 12th, Troyka Section 9 + 56

Week 3: Function of Summary and Levels of Abstraction

January 17th, Giltrow 43-53, Dave Hickey – The Delicacy of Rock and Roll
January 19th, Giltrow (handout 2nd ed) 33-45, 54-59

Week 4: Summarizing and Reporting Speech

January 24th, Giltrow, (handout 2nd ed) 64-71, Giltrow (3rd) 77-81
January 26th Giltrow 29-36, Dave Hickey – A Rhinestone as Big as the Ritz
Summary Due

Week 5: Evaluating and Basics of Arguments, Kinds of Information (Quantitative, qualitative, etc), Types of fallacy (straw man etc)

January 31st, Troyka Sections 1, 2, 3, 11
February 2nd, Francis Bacon – Of Gardens

Week 6: Moving Up from Summary to Thesis and Composing an Outline

February 7th, Troyka Sections 6, 7, 8
February 9th, Dave Hickey – The Little Church of Perry Mason

Week 7: Databases and Library Research (subject guides etc), and MLA

February 14th, Anne Carson – Every Exit is an Entrance
Summary and Evaluation Due

February 16th, Visiting Library
Troyka Sections 29, 30

Week 8: Reading Break

February 21st No Classes
February 23rd No Classes

Week 9: How to Compose a Strong Thesis

February 28th, Dave Hickey – A Home in the Neon (7pg)

March 2nd, Giltrow 242-252

In Class Exam

Week 10: Comparison and Definition

March 7th, Robert Louis Stevenson – The Character of Dogs

Edgar Allen Poe – Desultory Notes on Cats

March 9th, Giltrow Chapter 21-29, Giltrow (2nd Ed) 199-209

Week 11: Readers and Reading

March 14th, Giltrow 155-160, 181-187 (readers), Troyka Section 12 and one of (13-16) depending on your interest.

March 16th, Walter Benjamin – Unpacking my Library

Comparison Essay Due

Week 12: Research Essay 1

March 21st, Troyka Section 23, 24, 25, 28 (optional, section 27 on using sources)

March 23rd, Greg Sarris – Keeping Slug Woman Alive

Week 13: Research Essay 2

March 28th, Giltrow 263-273

March 30th, Dave Hickey – The Heresy of Zone Defense

Week 14: Review

April 4th **Research Essay Due**

April 6th, **Word Book Due**

Assignment Descriptions:

Word Book (Due April 6th): Throughout the course you will come across words and concepts that you are unfamiliar with. Each week you should highlight three words you do not know from the readings, look up their meaning in the dictionary, and write the relevant meaning in your word book. Additionally you should find at least four concepts that you do not understand, ask either a myself or a friend what they mean, and record a summarized version in your book.

Summary (Due January 26th): In a short (500 word) essay, summarize one of the essays that we have read. I will be looking for an understanding of the different levels of abstraction that the essays work with, the links between concepts, and of the way the essay is structured. You need to paraphrase in your own words what the essayist is saying, and avoid just following the order that the essay is written in.

Summary and Evaluation Revision (Due February 14th): Revise and expand upon the summary essay that you wrote. You should fix any problems that I mentioned in the first draft as well as take a critical stance that evaluates the arguments of the essayist you are writing about. Interweave the two elements so that every paragraph has at least one sentence of summary and one of evaluation. Underline the sections that you feel are evaluating an argument.

Comparative Essay (Due March 16th): Using any two essays you have not written about, write a comparative essay (750 words) using the principles we will discuss during week 10. The essay should have a clear and concise thesis, which I would like you to underline, and should be in MLA format. Your essay should look at elements of style, tone, grammar, and vocabulary to discuss how the two essays function to produce their meaning for a specific audience. Additionally you should include an outline of the paper, the outline can be as rough as you like and will count directly for marks, but I will use it as a supplementary tool for places in your essay that are not as clear.

Research Essay (Due April 4th): In an essay (1200 words) using MLA format find an article on an internet database that references one of the authors that we have read during the course and that you have not written on. Your essay should use all the skills you have learned over the semester: it should include a summary and evaluation of the article, a strong thesis stating your own view on one issue in the article, a comparison between your view and one in the article, and an argument about how both of these relate to the original essay. If you are having difficulty with this assignment I will have a list of topics, but encourage you to come up with your own.

Policies

The college's grading system:

A+:90-100%	B+: 76-79%	C+: 64-67%	D: 50-54%
A: 85-89%	B: 72-75%	C: 60-63%	F: 0-49%
A-:80-84%	B-: 68-71%	C-: 55-59%	

The department's policy for grading consistency:

Categories for Essay Evaluation:

1. **Content:** thesis/argument, insight, grasp of concepts, originality
2. **Organization:** logical structure, coherent paragraphs, transitions, introduction, conclusion
3. **Development:** relevant evidence, sufficient detail and quotation, integration of secondary sources
4. **Mechanics:** diction, sentence structure, grammar, spelling, punctuation
5. **Format:** MLA manuscript format, documentation, Works Cited

Letter Grade Profiles:

An **A range (80-100%) Outstanding** essay displays excellence in all (or almost all) five categories: a spark of individuality or originality in the argument; an interesting discussion well supported with evidence from the text; effective integration of secondary sources; a fluid, sophisticated style. Any technical errors must be minor.

A **B range (68-79%) Good** essay reveals strengths in all of the Evaluative Categories but does not always succeed in all areas. It demonstrates an ability to develop an argument with relevant details and integrate secondary sources appropriately. It may have minor mechanical or format errors but not enough to distract the reader from the content.

A **C range (55-67%) Satisfactory** essay meets university standards in most Evaluative Categories. It reveals an effort to structure an argument, but its thesis may be tentative and insufficiently developed. There is a tendency towards vagueness, generalization, and repetition of class material. Support from secondary sources may be awkwardly handled. Mechanical and format problems are sometimes distracting.

A **D range (50-54%) Marginal** essay reveals problems in many of the Evaluative Categories. Although it attempts an argument or focus, discussion of the topic is vague, incomplete, and lacking supportive detail; it displays more summary or paraphrase than analysis; the handling of secondary sources may not adhere completely to the rules of MLA referencing; mechanical and format errors impede readability.

An **F range (0-49%) Unacceptable** essay lacks an argument or focus; it may fail to address the topic or draw evidence from required sources; it may reveal a serious misunderstanding of the text or be of insufficient length. Such a paper may contain too many writing errors to be acceptable at the university level, or it may receive a failing grade due to plagiarism.

Attendance:

Attendance is essential to keeping up with the readings and ideas presented in the class. Students who miss more than two days of classes without relevant documentation will lose 5% of their participation grade per missed day. Please see the College policy on valid reasons for excused absences and holy days at <http://webapps-1.okanagan.bc.ca/ok/calendar/Calendar.aspx?page=Attendance>.

Participation

In addition to attending classes students are expected to contribute to class and group discussion. Students contributions will be graded based on their relevance to the course material, engagement with

other students, clarity, and insight. Students who are less comfortable with speaking in groups will have opportunities to participate by taking notes or sending in discussion questions online.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's work or ideas without proper or complete acknowledgment. Acknowledgment for English papers includes using quotation marks around wordings taken from a source and parenthetical citation including the author's name. There are different forms of plagiarism:

- Intentional plagiarism is the deliberate presentation of another's work or ideas as one's own.
- Unintentional plagiarism is the inadvertent presentation of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgment because of poor or inadequate practices. Unintentional plagiarism is a failure of scholarship; intentional plagiarism is an act of deceit.
- Self-Plagiarism is the submission of work that is the same or substantially the same as work prepared or performed by the student for credit in another course (except in instances where the instructor receiving the work has given prior permission). Although self-plagiarism may not involve the intellectual theft that characterizes plagiarism, it is a form of academic misconduct and is subject to the same disciplinary actions as plagiarism.

Penalties

Penalties for plagiarism may include a warning, the rewriting of the assignment or the submission of some other assigned work, the imposition of a reduced mark for the assignment, or the assignment of a mark of zero in the course. For more serious or repeat offenses, the student may be denied admission or re-admission or that the student forfeit Okanagan College financial aid. In any of these cases students have the right to an appeal.

Students who are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism should see the College's policy on academic offenses at <http://webapps-1.okanagan.bc.ca/ok/calendar/Calendar.aspx?page=AcademicOffenses> and refer to the UBC publication *Plagiarism Avoided: Taking Responsibility for your Work*. This guide is available through the College bookstores or online.