

ENGLISH & FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT
ENGLISH 104: FRESHMAN ENGLISH I
SECTION 15, CLASS 70414

Professor: Ryan Leack
Class Times: MWF 2:15 – 3:20
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And by Appointment

AN INTRODUCTION

“Language is often a misleading term; it too often suggests “grammar.” It is a truism that a person can know perfectly the grammar of a language and not know how to use that language. It is not just *what* you say, but *how* you say it. If I enter my neighborhood bar and say to my tattooed drinking buddy, as I sit down, “May I have a match please?,” my grammar is perfect, but what I have said is wrong nonetheless. It is less often remarked that a person could be able to use a language perfectly and *still* not make sense. It is not just *how* you say it, but what you *are* and *do* when you say it. If I enter my neighborhood bar and say to my drinking buddy, as I sit down, “Gime a match, wouldya?,” while placing a napkin on the bar stool to avoid getting my newly pressed designer jeans dirty, I have said the right thing, but my “saying-doing” combination is nonetheless wrong.” – Gee

Writing, then, is not just about learning formats; it’s about assuming a role and gaining ethos *with* that role. Thus, we are here to experiment with “ways of knowing” and “ways of doing,” to try on different *voices* and *identities* in order to engage in dialectics with diverse audiences and cultures, for our primary goal is to become effective *writers* and *communicators*. In this class, the three primary papers will give you opportunities to become different people with different voices while still maintaining your individuality. Hopefully by the end of this course you will feel more comfortable with writing as a language in itself, a way of entering and navigating public discourse.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

- *Acting Out Culture*, James S. Miller (2nd Edition only)
- *Ask the Dust*, John Fante (any edition will do)
- *Blackboard Materials* you must print and bring to class

MAIN OBJECTIVES

- To engage each other in lively discussions which unearth diverse points of view
- Express personal views clearly and effectively to an audience with substantive detail
- Form clear and coherent arguments while responding to the views of others
- Constructively critique your writing, peers’ writing, and the writing of published authors
- Proofread for clarity and correctness, including grammar, mechanics, and style
- Write lucid, well-organized essays that address purpose, audience, and situation

COURSE ACTIVITIES

Participation & Attendance: We are here to *discuss* key issues, readings, and ways of writing and communicating. Our interactive environment depends on you! So be present and *speak up!*

Reading & Grammar Quizzes: Let's face it: reading and studying require motivation, and these short, in-classes quizzes will test you on core ideas, and not on insignificant or minute details.

Peer Workshops: You will be responding to students' papers anonymously and in peer groups. Any written responses and self-evaluations will be turned in with the final draft of each paper. Not attending a workshop will lower your essay's grade by 5%. Missing 1 document will result in a 5% drop in your essay's grade, 2 or more documents in a 10% drop. Stay organized and be prepared!

Personal Narrative: Describe, illustrate, divulge, express, and portray a significant experience of yours. The prompt must be addressed in its entirety, and further instructions will be given on a separate handout. As a general rule, express yourself coherently and logically, and keep in mind that, for this essay, you are writing to unfold an experience that has had a great impact on your life.

Argumentative Essay: The argumentative essay is meant to persuade your peers and me on an issue of your choice, pending my approval. Argue, reason, explain, discuss, analyze: you are seeking to do each of these and more as you describe how your point of view is the most reasonable.

Research Paper: The research paper gives you the opportunity to investigate an area of interest to you, pending my approval. Inform, clarify, explain, summarize, and synthesize information, its significance, and the outlook and future for this topic in our society. Why does your topic matter?

BASIC EXPECTATIONS

- **Participation** – All students, not a mere few, must regularly participate during class discussions for full credit so that our environment remains interactive and elucidating.
- **Attendance** – Your 4th and subsequent absences will result in eternal damnation, or 10% off your entire grade *per absence* – your choice. All emergencies are included as absences!
- **Late Arrivals** – Two late arrivals count as *one* absence; being that you only have *three* absences total, be sure to be on time! Lateness also affects performance and participation.
- **Peer Feedback** – As your professor I will offer every insight, suggestion, and accolade I can muster on your writing. I expect the same from you as a *reader* of others' works.
- **Materials** – This class requires two texts as well as other materials you will print out and bring to class. Most importantly, bring *well-developed drafts* to the peer workshops.
- **Late Work** – Assignments are due at the *beginning* of class. There are *no exceptions* besides documented reasons, like the spontaneous combustion of your house or loved ones.
- **Academic Honesty** – Plagiarism will result in a *failing grade* on your work or in the course. Plagiarism is quoting or stating someone else's ideas or work without proper citation.
- **Courtesy** – No gadgets, side-conversations, doing homework, sleeping, drumming, eating or drinking except for water, or planning trips to the Caribbean or other exotic destinations.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Participation & Attendance:	100 pts	Grading Scale	
Reading & Grammar Quizzes:	100 pts		
Peer Workshop Sheets:	100 pts	1000-930 = A	760-730 = C
Personal Narrative:	150 pts	920-900 = A-	720-700 = C-
Argumentative Essay:	250 pts	890-870 = B+	690-670 = D+
Research Paper:	300 pts	860-830 = B	660-630 = D
		820-800 = B-	620-600 = D-
Total Points:	1000 pts	790-770 = C+	590-0 = F

GENERAL ESSAY RUBRIC

- A** The writing expresses a clear point of view and makes an *exceptional* use of *specific* textual or other evidence to develop it fully. It displays an excellent, *in-depth* understanding of texts, issues, or themes under consideration with *great detail*. The writing also shows *creativity or originality* in the connections it draws or approaches it takes (often *going beyond* ideas or issues discussed in class). The paper is well *organized*, clearly *focused*, and *relatively free* of grammatical errors.
- B** The writing expresses a *reasonably clear* point of view, generally developing it with *appropriate* textual and other evidence and *some detail*. The essay displays a *good understanding* of the texts and issues under consideration, though *additional development* and *detail* (e.g., more specific or concrete use of *textual evidence*) would enhance the writing. The paper is *reasonably focused* and coherent, though there may be problems with *mechanics, usage, and/or sentence structure*.
- C** The writing expresses a *main idea*, but its focus may *need sharpening*. The development is *general* (not specific), and there may also be problems with the *organization* of ideas, the use of *detail*, the *clarity or coherence* of the writing, and/or the *mechanics*.
- D** There are *serious problems* with the *articulation* of the main idea, the use of *detail*, the *development* or coherence of the writing, and/or the *mechanics*.
- F** The paper is *unacceptable, incoherent*, or does not address topics *appropriate* to the course.

TIPS & RESOURCES

- **Office Hours:** If you struggle at any point or have *particular needs*, contact or visit me during office hours. I am here to help and am more than willing to answer questions and review your writing.
- **University Writing Center:** The UWC is located on the second floor of the library in room 2919. Click here for the University Writing Center webpage.
- **E-mail & Blackboard:** It is a college-wide policy *to check your campus e-mail at least once a day*, as you will be notified of changes and messages via e-mail. I will post documents, links, PowerPoints, and readings on *Blackboard*, so check the site for updates and assignments.
- **Just Start Writing:** If you are stuck on an assignment and do not know what to say, just start writing. Write anything. Sometimes just *freewriting* helps the mind generate ideas.
- **Prewrite First:** Before you begin a paper, *think* about it a lot! Think about it while driving, walking, or doing *anything*. Then draft an outline to ease the writing process!

COURSE CALENDAR

*This syllabus is tentative and may change based on the needs of the class.
Please check your CPP email every day to remain current.*

WEEK	DATE	DAY	THEME	ACTIVITIES
	9/21	Friday	Inception	Prelude to writing; <i>How to Get Power through Voice (Bb)</i> .
1	9/24	Monday	Invention	Process theory; voice; finding a topic; <i>Rigid Rules (Bb)</i> .
	9/26	Wednesday	Invention	Nature of good writing; write around; <i>ATD: Chapters 1-9</i> .
	9/28	Friday	Processes	Commas; bringing your narrative to life; F.R.I.E.Ds.
2	10/1	Monday	Peer Workshop	Workshop personal narrative; draft one.
	10/3	Wednesday	Processes	Writing under pressure; <i>ATD: Chapters 10-19</i> .
	10/5	Friday	Peer Workshop	Workshop personal narrative; draft two.
3	10/8	Monday	Feedback	Narrative feedback; idiosyncratic literacy.
	10/10	Wednesday	Voice	Semicolons and colons; the nature of style.
	10/12	Friday	Voice	DUE: PERSONAL NARRATIVE; <i>Post Office Excerpt (Bb)</i> .
4	10/15	Monday	Rhetoric	Artistic and inartistic rhetoric; <i>AOC: 43-51</i> .
	10/17	Wednesday	Rhetoric	Frames of mind; logical fallacies; <i>AOC: 68-72</i> .
	10/19	Friday	Dialectic	The rhetoric of audience; discoursing academically.
5	10/22	Monday	Peer Workshop	Workshop argumentative essay; draft one.
	10/24	Wednesday	Dialectic	Are you convinced? Socratic dialectic; <i>AOC: 286-295</i> .
	10/26	Friday	Peer Workshop	Workshop argumentative essay; draft two.
6	10/29	Monday	Feedback	Argumentative essay feedback; <i>AOC: 331-341</i> .
	10/31	Wednesday	Naysayer	<i>Maxed Out</i> documentary; outline film's reasoning.
	11/2	Friday	Naysayer	Finish <i>Maxed Out</i> ; discussion and response.
7	11/5	Monday	Research	DUE: ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY; strategic reading.
	11/7	Wednesday	Research	Discuss paper; research strategies; <i>AOC: 416-436</i> .

	11/9	Friday	Genre	Topics; in-depth paper analysis; prewriting.
8	11/12	Monday	Veteran's Day	Enjoy the holiday!
	11/14	Wednesday	Peer Workshop	Workshop research paper; draft one.
	11/16	Friday	Genre	Common errors; drafting; citing sources.
9	11/19	Monday	Peer Workshop	Workshop research paper; draft two.
	11/21	Wednesday	Feedback	Paper feedback; <i>Hiding It from the Kids (Bb)</i> .
	11/23	Friday	Thanksgiving	Enjoy the holiday!
10	11/26	Monday	Feedback	In class research paper consultation.
	11/28	Wednesday	Feedback	In class research paper consultation.
	11/30	Friday	Retrospection	DUE: RESEARCH PAPER; introspecting retrospectively.
11	12/3	Monday	Finals Week	1:40-3:40pm: final evaluation consultation.

○ *AOC: Acting Out Culture*

○ *ATD: Ask the Dust*

○ *Bb: Blackboard*