



## COURSE OUTLINE

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EN1201 M4

English Composition

Spring 2009

Mon: 1-3:50pm; Tue: 1-3:50pm; Wed: 1-3:50pm; Thu: 1-3:50pm

Room E306A

INSTRUCTOR: D. White

OFFICE: C-401

PHONE: 780-539-2083

OFFICE HOURS: M 10-1; T 10-1; W 10-1

E-Mail dawwhite@gprc.ab.ca

UNIVERSITY EQUIVALENCY: UA\*, UC, UL, AU, AF\*, CU, CUC, KUC

Equivalency Note: Accepted by The University of Lethbridge as junior prerequisite for senior literature courses. Not acceptable by University of Alberta as a prerequisite for senior English courses. If you are transferring to University of Calgary, you will need EN1201 and a 3 credit course in English Literature as prerequisite for senior English courses.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course concentrates on the construction of sentences, paragraphs, essays and application of appropriate punctuation, tone and grammar for formal academic essays. The goal of the course is to strengthen the student's ability to formulate theses and construct supporting arguments to draft coherent essays. Students will also be encouraged to develop writing styles appropriate to their particular disciplines/fields.

COURSE TEXTS

Faigley, Graves and Graves, *The Brief Penguin Handbook* Canadian edition (Pearson Education, 2008).

**E-MAIL:** The instructor will use your GPRC e-mail for all course e-mail, you are responsible for checking this address.

BLACKBOARD

Blackboard will be used for all assignment submissions. Various materials will be posted here including:

- Course Outline
- Reference sheets
- Summaries or Review materials

On the GPRC homepage, use the link at the top right. Once you've logged in, you should be able to access the Blackboard site for this course.

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## **GRADED ASSIGNMENTS**

All graded assignments will be returned electronically (via e-mail) in .pdf (Adobe Portable Document Format). In order to properly view graded assignments, you will need access to a computer with Acrobat Reader installed. Most campus computers likely will, but should you require it for your home computer, you can download it from <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>.

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

Class Participation	10%
Review Presentation	5%
Grammar Quizzes (3 in total)	15% (5% each)
Essay #1	10%
Essay #2	15%
Essay #3	25%
Final Exam	20%

## **GRADING SYSTEM**

Policy with respect to grade changes, letter grades and grade point averages can be found in the college calendar.

<b>Alpha Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>4-point Equivalence</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>A+</b>	<b>95 - 100%</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>90 - 94%</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>86 - 89%</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>Very Good First Class Standing</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>80 - 85%</b>	<b>3.3</b>	
<b>B</b>	<b>76 - 79%</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>72 - 75%</b>	<b>2.7</b>	
<b>C+</b>	<b>68 - 71%</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>64 - 67%</b>	<b>2.0</b>	
<b>C-</b>	<b>60 - 63%</b>	<b>1.7</b>	
<b>D+</b>	<b>55 - 59%</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>50 - 54%</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>Minimal Pass</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Below 50%</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>Failure</b>
<b>WF</b>		<b>0.0</b>	<b>Fail, Withdrawal after the deadline</b>

## **DUE DATES**

Essay #1	May 10
Essay #2	May 17
Essay #3	May 24

Assignments are to be submitted via Blackboard or e-mail before midnight on the due date. Extensions for essays will be made only when students contact the instructor prior to the deadline and present evidence of extenuating circumstances. To encourage promptness and in fairness to those who complete their work on time, late assignments will be reduced 10% for each twenty-four hour period (or part thereof, including weekends and holidays) after the due date. Any essay sent to the mailroom, dropped off at the switchboard, left at my office, or faxed will not be accepted and will not become the responsibility of the instructor.

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## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Date	Grammar	Word Processor	Essay Writing	Common Error	Other
May 4	Parts of a sentence	Save versus Save As	What is an essay?	Colloquialisms	Introduction
May 5	Punctuation	Justification and spacing	Research and citation methods	Apostrophes for plurals	
May 6	Verb Tenses	Referencing	Questions and Theses	Cliches	
May 7	Possessives	When to modify your font	Arranging an argument	Repetition	<b>Grammar Quiz #1</b>
May 11	Subject-Verb Agreement	Headers and Footers	Evaluating Sources	Sentence Fragments	
May 12	Parallelism	Page Breaks	How to Proofread	Misused Homophones	
May 13	Passive Voice	Page Numbering	Writing Introductions	Enumerated quantities	
May 14	Commas	Special Characters	Paragraphs	Problem phrases	<b>Grammar Quiz #2</b>
May 19	Quotation Marks	Handling URLs	Transitions	Long Paragraphs	
May 20	Pronouns	Find and Replace	Handling Numbers	Be definite but not absolute	
May 21	Being Precise	Spellcheck	Avoiding Plagiarism	Abbreviations	<b>Grammar Quiz #3</b>
May 25	Split Infinitives	Tables and Images	Being Concise	Explaining quotations	
May 26	Handling Case	Revision Tools	Gendered Language	Personal Perspective	Exam Review; Review Presentations
May 27	Dangling Modifiers		Cover Pages		Exam Review; Review Presentations
May 28					<b>Final Exam</b>

### **Textbook References**

May 4 – Pages 1-26; 439-449  
May 5 – Pages 279-398; 530-537  
May 6 – Pages 463-470; 35-38  
May 7 – Pages 38-41; 520-521  
May 11 – Pages 458-462; 251-259  
May 12 – Pages 60-69; 275-6; 413-419  
May 13 – Pages 401-407

May 14 – Pages 491-504; 43-57  
May 19 – Pages 524-528  
May 20 – Pages 471-478; 548  
May 21 – Pages 262-268; 545  
May 25 – Pages 427-432; 559  
May 26 – Pages 408-412; 541-543  
May 27 – Pages 480-490

### CLASS PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

Students are strongly encouraged to read the relevant sections of the textbook before each class. Course participation grades are determined by students' willingness to actively engage in class by offering comments and raising relevant questions. In order for everyone to have the opportunity to participate, we must strive to create an open, positive, non-threatening atmosphere. Curiosity, honesty, and above all, respect are characteristics inherent in healthy discourse. Listen actively and speak openly. If you tend to be timid, try to share your thoughts,

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however uncomfortable this might seem. If you like to talk, be sensitive to the needs and size of the group. Our culture find periods of silence awkward and unacceptable, but sometimes one simply needs time to think and revise their responses. Raising questions is just as important as providing answers. In fact any response however "wrong" it may seem deserves credit since it takes courage to speak in class and most comments will usually advance the discussion.

### EXAM FORMAT

The final exam will cover material from across the course including grammatical points, approaches to essay writing and common errors. Some of the questions will be similar to the grammar quizzes and ask students to correct sentences; others will ask students to recall key concepts from lessons. Example questions and a review will be provided prior to the exam.

### QUIZZES

The intensive nature of this course can leave students in danger of being overwhelmed. To help improve the retention of information from week to week, there will be three grammar quizzes which will take about 30 minutes to complete. Each of these will count for 5% of your final grade.

### COURSE ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS

As this is a writing course, students are going to be encouraged to write as much as possible. The course assignments consist of three essays of 800 words each. Students are expected to improve their writing throughout the course and as such the essays are progressively weighted, with the final essay worth 25% of a student's final grade. Pending class approval, anonymous peer revision will be conducted for the second and third essays and students will have a chance to revise and resubmit these essays based on the experience. The final grade for these assignments will be the average of the grade before and after revision.

This course is about method rather than content. The content of your essay is not irrelevant, but there is no specific content required. In other words, the topic of your essay is of your choosing. You are encouraged to choose a topic with substance in order to facilitate research and preferably from your field of study.

To ensure that the research and writing experience is as useful as possible, students are required to consult a minimum of three (3) sources when writing their essays. Students are encouraged to use academic sources, but this is not essential. Traditional sources are newspaper or magazine articles, websites, books, and journal articles, but students may draw on others (though they are encouraged to consult their instructor prior to doing so). Students should also keep in mind that sources must be critically assessed for the accuracy and authority of their information. Most encyclopedia articles and dictionary entries are too brief, too elementary to be considered good post-secondary sources.

All essays **must** be properly documented using a citation format of your choosing (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc. – you are encouraged to use the one from your field of study). The essay should also be accompanied by a **bibliography** identifying the sources used in its preparation.

An essay checklist will be provided to students to ensure they have covered relevant points prior to submission. Essays will lose marks if:

- They are significantly (approximately 100 words) above or below the 800 word target length
- They do not have referencing or a bibliography

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Your essay will be graded on the following components:

**Content** – 10% - Are there coherent ideas supported by facts drawn from research?

**Referencing** – 15% - Are facts, quotations and opinions all properly referenced in the paper?

**Sentence Structure** – 30% - Are individual sentences properly structured and grammatically correct? Are they easy to understand?

**Organization** – 25% - Does the paper flow logically and smoothly? Are there proper transitions between paragraphs and ideas?

**Introduction and Conclusion** – 20% - Does the introduction to the paper state a clear thesis? Does it introduce us to the topic without going into excessive detail? Does the conclusion tie the paper together?

### **Points to Consider When Writing Your Essay**

In marking your essay, the reader will consider the following points:

1. The Logical Development of the thesis. Without a general thesis or argument, an essay becomes an incoherent jumble of facts and opinions.

2. Relevance. The essay must deal with the argument, and side issues should be excluded.

3. Consistency. The various parts of the essay should hang together and not contradict one another.

4. Conciseness and Balance. An essay is an exercise in stating an argument in a concise manner. There is certainly no reason for being long-winded or repetitious.

5. Presentation:

a) Your language should be clear and precise. Care should be taken to choose precisely the right word or phrase to convey the meaning intended. Vague phrases or ambiguous expressions should be avoided.

b) All students should have a good dictionary and should use it. Incorrect spelling of words is inexcusable and is far too prevalent. Care should also be taken that the names of persons and places are correctly copied in full.

c) The paragraph, not the sentence, is the logical unit in an essay. A paragraph should express a complete idea and offer evidence in support of that idea.

d) Some thought should be given to punctuation. There are punctuation marks other than the comma and the period. College students should be able to use them to write complex sentences.

e) The essay should be a finished piece of work, not a mere draft. Do not use abbreviations, and read your essay over for mistakes before you turn it in. Proofreading is critical to producing a final paper. If possible, have someone else read your paper and offer suggestions. What seems clear to us is not always clear to our readers.

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### Some Common Faults

1. Many essays demonstrate a lack of coherence and a tendency to irrelevance. These weaknesses spring not so much from a lack of knowledge as a lack of judgement. They can be overcome by keeping your subject clearly in focus. This is why students should first make a plan of their essay showing the course they intend to follow in their argument. Too often students' plans are formless, and so naturally are their essays. Some students work with simple charts. Others write detailed outlines, enumerating the major points of the thesis and the supporting evidence. Remember, it is far easier to revise an outline several times, than to rewrite an entire paper. Always keep in mind that your goal should be to introduce the thesis clearly, support it effectively, and then draw meaningful conclusions about it. Within each section of the essay ask yourselves: Does this section follow logically from the preceding one? Does it adequately support and develop the central thesis? Does it establish the necessary background for the section that follows?
2. Most students spend too much of their time reading, and too little time in sorting out and digesting what has been read, constructing an argument and deciding on the form of the essay.
3. Much of the irrelevance in students' essays springs from a failure to see exactly what the question is that they are required to answer. When the essay calls for a comment on a question, careful study should be given to its wording and a decision made as to which are the "key" words. These words should then be made the focal point, or core of your argument.
4. Students often show a lack of discernment in their reading. It is not enough to read a number of different authors. You must show what weight you attach to their arguments, and why.
5. Often there is a lack of judgement in the use of quotations. Quotations should be short and to the point. They should be used mainly because they state pithily some point you wish to elaborate, or some point you wish to cite or discuss. They should not be used in order to make other writers do your work for you, nor should they be left without comment. If the quotation is not poignant, put it into your own words and cite the author of the idea in a footnote/endnote.
6. Many essays do not include an introduction or conclusion. In order to help the reader to understand the thesis of your paper and its structure, you should have a clear introduction and conclusion. In the introduction, you should indicate the thesis, purpose and scope of the paper. In the conclusion, you should summarize your major points, explain how they sustain your central thesis, and discuss the general implications of your essay.

### References

It is important that your essay be well documented. Academic standards require that all source material be acknowledged by the writer of an essay, not merely as a matter of common honesty or as an aid to the reader, but also as a validation of the writer's work. This means that you must give exact sources in your footnotes/endnotes for quotations and opinions taken from your authorities. It is not sufficient merely to give references for direct quotations. You must also give them for major statements of interpretation, paraphrased opinions, and statistics. Footnote/endnotes can also be used to qualify, amplify, or to make some incidental comments on the discussion in the text of the essay. Thus worthwhile material can be included which might otherwise disrupt the flow of the argument if introduced into the text. At the same time, it is necessary to use some discrimination. You do not need to give references for well known facts about which there is no dispute. Essays can have too many footnotes/endnotes or too few.

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## Format

Each essay should include a title page with the author, course number and the name of the instructor. Essays must be typed and double spaced. Single spacing is restricted to lengthy quotes. Don't try to squeeze 12 pages of text in 6, or stretch 2 pages into 6, with the creative use of fonts, spacing and margins. If your paper runs short, it's a good clue that you need more detailed analysis. If it runs long, chances are you've summarized too much.

## Plagiarism / Academic Dishonesty

All sources used in the preparation of a paper which have been quoted or paraphrased must be referenced. Failure to do so is plagiarism. All papers must be the student's own work. Anything else, whether borrowed, purchased or ghostwritten, is plagiarism. Continual and extensive paraphrasing without quotation marks, even if referenced, is also plagiarism. It has no place whatsoever at any level of college work. Unintentional plagiarism is easy to commit. Some students take massive amounts of notes from research materials and forget to identify those passages they copied or paraphrased. Just remember, it is a simple matter for an instructor to recognize the difference between the writing of an average college history student and that of a published author who spent years researching a topic.

College policy with respect to plagiarism states that: "The College expects intellectual honesty from its students. Intellectual honesty demands that the contribution of others be acknowledged. To do less is to cheat. Intellectual dishonesty undermines the quality of academic activity and accordingly, the College has adopted appropriate penalties for student misconduct with respect to plagiarism and cheating. Penalties are levied according to the degree of the infraction. If you are unsure whether a particular course of action might constitute plagiarism, you are advised to consult with the instructor."