

Writing to Learn and Communicate

ENGL 110 E College Writing

Professor Robert Ring

Spring 2014

Classroom: HH 135	Office: HH 121	Office Phone: 344-7881
Office Hours: MWF 9:30 – 10:00 and 1:30 – 2:30 or by appointment	Email: robert.ring@blc.edu	

Course Description

While learning strategies that promote critical, creative, and collaborative drafting, students practice college level writing in narrative, critical, and persuasive forms, producing a portfolio of five to seven essays including a research paper. In this way, the course supports Bethany Lutheran College's mission by offering students "a challenging student-centered approach to education that fosters spiritual development, intellectual and creative growth, self-understanding, and responsible citizenship" as well as by encouraging them "to make the most of their God-given talents."

Required Texts and Materials:

Lunsford, Andrea. *Everyone's a Writer* W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 2012.

3 ring binder or folder for portfolio contents

Course Overview:

This is a college writing course. As such, there may be demands made upon you that differ greatly from what you have experienced in the past. If you follow the program, you will do very well. If not...! The hope is that you will become not only an accurate writer but that you will become an accomplished writer. The guiding concept of this course is that writers write; there is no substitute for becoming a successful writer. You will learn to write by practicing the writing process. Expect to write every day. Come to class prepared to form ideas, develop ideas, and produce ideas. Most of your writing will be relatively short (700-1000 words, 3-4 pages). However, those shorter writings will lead to a cumulative project at the end of the semester that will demonstrate your progress in this course, your ability to produce a final product that researches a topic and one that accurately reflects your views.

BLC Institutional Objectives

To demonstrate independent critical thinking so that students are not shaken from the eternal foundations on which their moral and spiritual growth is based.

To experience fine arts and literature as an educated individual.

General Education Literature and Writing Goals

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to...

- A. Ask effective questions about texts questions that situate texts in relation to the cultural, social, and historical contexts in which they are produced, as well as in relation to students' contemporary contexts,
- B. Exhibit minimum competency of a foundational knowledge of literature and writing process terminology.

ENGL110 (College Writing I) Course learning Outcomes

1. Students will practice reading texts like a writer, analyzing what each text is communicating in detail, considering how the author chose to achieve his or her purposes, and evaluating the effectiveness of those choices.
Means: Reading assignments from *The Norton Field Guide to Writing* and examining the contents in class to see how they work.
2. Students will produce five paragraph essays written over a short period of time and evaluated 4,3,2,1 using an assignment-specific rubric.
Means: Writing six essays (handouts will explain goals of each essay).

To demonstrate Christian stewardship with regard to their talents and abilities that they be used for the glory of God and the welfare of mankind.

- C. Adjust their use of spoken and written language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences, in a variety of styles, for a variety of purposes,
- 3. Students will practice using a variety of invention and revision techniques in order to compose essays in different genres and to come to see writing as a process of discovery and learning before crafting prose focused on the needs of an audience.
Means: Revising essays multiple times, and individual conferences with the instructor.

4. Students will understand the collaborative and social aspects of writing and practice critiquing their own and others' individually and in small groups.

Means: Peer Review days and conferences with the instructor.

To Demonstrate Proficiency in Written and Oral English

- D. Exhibit familiarity with databases, archives, and scholarly sources, and regularly gather and apply the date contained therein, and
- E. Exhibit familiarity with and apply MLA format to their formal written works.

5. Students will develop a unique, specific question for a personally relevant research project, find several credible sources, take notes on those sources, and produce an essay which uses sources and citations to help readers come to understand and perhaps be convinced of the answer to the research question.

6. Students will learn to carefully revise and edit their essays for the benefit of a real audience, especially working on sentences that are correct and varied in construction, using grammar and mechanics correctly, and paragraphing well.

7. Students will demonstrate a minimum of competency in writing effective thesis statements (a single, declarative sentence which asserts an arguable opinion), and creating a proper MLA Works Cited page and in-text correctly.

Means: Thesis Statement Exam

MLA Citation Exam

Course Components:

Readings from the assigned text
Homework assignments or writing exercises
Personal Essay
Persuasive Essay
Argumentative Essay
Investigative Essay
Critical Review Essay
Annotated Bibliography
Final Informative Essay
Process Letter
Daily writing exercises
A Portfolio of gathered work

Knowledge and Skills stressed in this course:

Writing as a Process of Discovery
The Art of Persuasive Writing
Purpose, Audience, Point of View
Tone and Diction choices
Genre, Form, and Pattern choices
Paragraph Construction choices
Sentence Construction choices
Clichés and Vivid language
Constructing Thesis Statements

Giving Helpful Feedback
Analyzing Text
The Art of the Comma
Finding a Research Question
Narrowing or Expanding
Research Questions
Finding and Evaluating choices
Paraphrasing, Summarizing, and
Quoting sources effectively
Proper MLA Citation Style

Basic Course Requirements:

Students will be required to write and submit seven (7) papers throughout the semester, read and respond to assigned readings, and keep a writing journal that included daily writings, class notes, responses to course activities, process letters, and questions or comments for the instructor.

Each student will submit a **complete, well-organized** portfolio at the end of the course containing portfolio drafts of the work performed throughout the semester. All assignments will be word processed, double-spaced. Name, course number, section, instructor, and date must be typed in the upper left-hand corner.

Only portfolio drafts must be included with the final papers.

Students will meet periodically with the instructor to discuss assignments and revisions.

Students will peer evaluate all writings and complete peer evaluation forms before handing in any final draft.

Regular attendance is expected, class participation is a given, using your God-given abilities is essential.

Grading and Evaluation:

Your grade is determined by the products you produce throughout the course. The products you produce are dependant upon the process you follow to produce those products. Individual essays will receive a **relative** grade (1, 2, 3, 4). Each will be evaluated and discussed with the instructor. You will always have the opportunity to revise and improve assignments until you and the instructor are satisfied it is your best work. The purpose behind this course is not to determine grades but to develop writers. Good writers develop over the length of the course and individual assignments are markers that suggest progress is being made. The final grade will be determined at the end of the semester on the basis of the following: **product, process, participation**.

Product: 50% what you produce for this class that is specifically evaluated (exercises, drafts, final papers), how well-organized and complete your final portfolio is when presented at the end of the semester.

Process: 25% what you do before class to be prepared, what you do in class to develop your understanding and use of the writing process, and how you respond to corrections progress from one paper to the next. This includes reading the texts, taking notes, completing exercises and drafts *regularly* and *on time*. Following the process of understanding the text and class assignments will be revealed in the final essay.

Participation: 25% what you do *in class* on a regular basis. This includes regular attendance, how much you discuss and participate in in-class discussions, leadership shown in helping others give and receive feedback, and active participation in conferences with the instructor. Activities that are not focused on the advancement of composition instruction will be noted (playing games, texting, surfing the internet, etc.).

Although you will not receive a letter or percentage grade for each individual product, I will continually observe, evaluate, and communicate with you concerning your progress. If you wish to know your *relative* grade evaluation at any time, just ask.

Grading Standards for ENGL 110 Essays

Essays in this class are graded on a numerical scale of 1-4, 4 being the highest grade and 1 being the lowest. These numbers are not equivalent to letter grades. For instance, a “4” may be any letter grade between a B+ and an A+, a 3 tells you that your paper is somewhere between a C+ and a B+, a 2 means a letter grade somewhere between a D and a C. If you receive a 1 on a paper it tells you that your paper is unacceptable and should be completely redone. Note that all of your papers (except the final) can be revised and rewritten as many times as you, the writer wishes, with no penalty, until the final portfolio is handed in at the end of the semester. It is to your advantage to revise and correct all drafts.

Essay Scoring Guide

The **4** essay reflects exceptional performance of the writing task

- Thesis clearly stated, may be compelling or thoughtful
- Organization is exceptionally clear, transitions effective
- Uses appropriate details and analyzes their significance
- Fluent, demonstrating a clear command of the language and varied sentence structure
- Virtually free of errors in sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics
- Excellent documentation; MLA Essay format of paper is correct

The **3** essay reflects adequate performance of the writing task

- A central focus of the essay
- Adequate organization and development
- May have a few problems in sentence structure, diction, and mechanics
- Demonstrates adequate command of the language and some sentence variety
- May have problems with documentation
- MLA Essay Format of paper is basically correct but may need some correction

The **2** essay approaches adequate performance of the writing task

- May have an unfocused or simplistic central idea; poor thesis
- May be poorly organized, lack detail and specificity
- Frequent problems in diction, grammar, mechanics, and sentence structure, which impede meaning
- Lacks documentation or documentation is weak
- MLA Essay Format of paper is incorrect or lacking

The **1** essay is clearly inadequate

- May lack central idea; thesis
- May lack coherence or adequate development although it may address the topic
- Multiple errors in sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics impede understanding
- Documentation may be missing or inadequate; MLA Essay Format is lacking

Attendance and Late Work:

Regular attendance is expected. This is not a lecture class but a writing class and I need to see your progress on a regular basis. I need to understand how you write and how you put ideas together. I can only do this by observation and discussion. **Excessive absences will result in a lower grade or failure.**

(Excessive is defined as more than **three** unexcused, more than **six** absences).

If you must miss class please excuse yourself in advance. If you miss an assignment, there is no going back. Late work will not be accepted unless cleared with the instructor ahead of time. (I am not unreasonable!) Class participation is essential for all students in the class. Writers need feedback and the students in this class provide that feedback for their peers. No attendance; no feedback.

A note for those who are involved in extracurricular activities (athletes etc.)

If you must miss class due to a scheduled event or activity, please excuse yourself in advance. *Do not assume someone else will do this for you.* Any assignments must be handed in by class time, and check with me about any announcements or changes that may have been made during class.

Academic Honesty Policy:

“Bethany Lutheran College is committed to upholding high academic standards. Plagiarism, cheating, assisting others in acts of dishonesty and the like will not be tolerated...Students shown to have committed acts of academic dishonesty are subject to penalties ranging from reduced grades to suspension from college” (BLC Faculty Handbook 38-39). As Diana Hacker explains in her handbook, research “is a collaboration between you and your sources. To be fair and ethical, you must acknowledge your debt to the writers of these sources. If you don’t, you are guilty of plagiarism, a serious academic offense” (110). She also lists three different acts of plagiarism a writer can commit: “(1) **failing to cite quotations and borrowed ideas**, (2) **failing to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks**, and (3) **failing to put summaries and paraphrases in your own words**” (110). The only information you do not need to cite in academic work is “**common knowledge**,” information your readers can find easily in general sources because many people know it (Hacker 110).

Don’t even think about using another person’s work as your own! **Any student who has any part in plagiarism is subject to failure of the course.** I can’t state the case any more clearly than that. Intellectual integrity is a hallmark of Bethany Lutheran College and all students are expected to live up to that standard. Check your text (the blue section) for ways to cite another’s work.

Computers and Cell Phones

Computers are provided for your use and convenience. Wireless internet is a part of that convenience and should be used as part of your research and information seeking however, do not use class time for games, personal correspondence or surfing. All of the computers are Macs, if you prefer using your own laptop you will need to bring it to class with you. It is a note of common courtesy that you not disturb other class members with ring tones, vibrations, or conversation; that also includes text messaging.

How does this course work?

Class will begin with 7-10 minutes of free-writing based on a prompt that will be provided for you. This writing is important because it sets your mood for the class and adds to your creative flow. Following this activity, we will participate in a short, whole-class information/discussion time or the writing assignment for the day. After that you may meet with your peer editor to discuss projects, share information about your drafts, or continue working on the current project. The class is designed to allow you to spend a majority of your time working on your next project or revising past projects.

Page Heading for Assignments

All work done for this class will use the following MLA modified format in the upper left-hand corner of the first page.

Bob Smith

ENG 110D

Professor Ring

January 15, 2014

Personal Essay Draft 1

All pages should have the page number following your name (header) one half inch from the top in the upper right-hand corner (Smith1).

Staple in the upper-left hand corner all documents that contain two or more pages.

Writing Assignments:

Ten Defining moments in my life

Make a list of ten important events in your life that have caused you to stop and think about the world around you. These are personal events such as your first day at school, your confirmation, first driver's license, local events such as high school, jobs, family, world events such as government decisions, medical news, discoveries, etc.

Personal Essay

This will be a short paper about a subject you know very well -- you. The first essay will give us a chance to experiment with the writing process and will give me a benchmark to evaluate your progress throughout the course. The essay will give some personal background and allow you to get a start on areas of interest and possible topics for future papers.

Persuasive Essay

Choosing one of the topics or interests you formulated in the last paper. You will develop an essay that addresses the issue and formulates a personal opinion you wish to pass along to your audience. Choose a topic you are truly interested in, and will not become bored with, because *you may be working with it for the rest of the semester*. Research is required.

An Argumentative Essay

This essay takes your topic one step further and allows you to research the opinions and facts that support and contradict your position. Research is required.

An Investigative Essay

An investigative paper allows you as the writer to **explore a problem** in depth and provide plausible solutions. This will require both primary (interviews, surveys, experiments, original investigating) and secondary sources (library sources, electronic sources).

A Critical Review

A critical review assesses a work someone else has done. In this case it will be an artist's rendition of a piece of art located in the YFAC. The review points out the subject and how the artist dealt with it. It gives a description of the artist's intent and your evaluation of how that intent was achieved. *Documentation from the art selection is necessary.*

Annotated Bibliography

An annotated bibliography includes the bibliographical entry and an explanation of the content. Meaningful information from all of the secondary sources used in your final paper will be summarized in paragraph form to show the importance of that information to your topic. Eight to ten sources will be needed.

Cumulative Project

This final paper takes all of the information you have accumulated from your sources chosen for this project. This will be an informative essay written in MLA format about a topic of your choice and is due on the last day of class in May. It will be counted as your final exam and will serve as a test of all that you have learned during the semester. The essay will be 1000 to 1500 words in length (5-7 pages).

Final Thoughts:

How you mentally approach this class will have a huge effect upon how and what you glean from this course. Writing is not a task that comes easily to some people yet others seems to have words waiting to drop off their fingers onto the word processor. No matter which writer you are, you will get something positive from this course. Learning to write effectively may be the single most important course you will take this year or any year. Throughout your college career you will be asked to communicate your knowledge through essays, papers, tests and

written projects. If you learn how to use the writing process, the outcome you want to achieve will become that much easier and closer at hand. This is a collaborative course; we are all learning together and using our knowledge to help others grow intellectually. Don't look on writing as an unpleasant chore; it is an opportunity to explore both your creative and analytical sides. Accept the challenge to use all of your God-given gifts to the utmost.