

ENG 180: College Composition I

Department of English & Journalism • Western Illinois University
Spring 2007 • Section 040 • Simpkins 321 (T) and 324 (Th) • 2:00–3:15 pm
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Introduction

This course is designed to help you learn to write well by reflecting on your writing, by learning techniques experienced speakers and writers have used for centuries, and by writing frequently with revision in mind. While we'll consider all kinds of reading and writing this semester, our focus will be genres you're likely to deal with as a college student.

Learning to write well is a challenge, but the rewards are huge. Because so many people don't take the time to develop their writing skills, good writing stands out from the crowd. I hope you'll build on the foundation established in this course by taking other courses, such as technical communication and writing-intensive courses in your major, and by committing to understanding writing as a challenging but satisfying craft.

Expectations

I have high expectations for myself and for you as well. I work extremely hard to create a well-designed course and to provide the careful instruction, detailed feedback, and out-of-class help you need to grow as a writer. In turn, I expect the following from you:

- Plan for two to four hours of work outside of class every week, and more the weeks before large assignments are due.
- Come to class with your textbooks, ready to talk about *all* the readings and the current assignment.
- Manage your time effectively, so that you begin writing assignments well in advance of final due dates.
- Be prepared to work hard on every level of your writing, completing multiple drafts of every assignment, with an eye towards achieving the course objectives listed below.

If these expectations seem unreasonable, this is probably not the class for you.

Objectives

Through careful reading, writing, rewriting, research, class discussion, collaborative work, and conferences with me, you will learn the following:

- Elementary rhetorical principles, in use for centuries, which can help you understand the audiences and purposes of writing tasks;
- Techniques for revising and rewriting texts to improve their structure, effectiveness, and readability, both individually and when working with others;
- Methods for figuring out what to write about a given topic, or what topic to write about if none is given;
- Techniques for editing texts to improve their clarity and grace, and to conform to conventional syntax, grammar, and usage;
- Strategies for reading carefully and critically, for a variety of purposes, but especially to enhance your academic writing;
- Techniques for managing the difficulty of all stages of writing;
- Common conventions, forms, and purposes of academic writing.

For more information, please see the Writing Program goals sheet for ENG 180 which accompanies this syllabus.

Readings

One text is required. Please purchase it immediately. It should be available at the WIU bookstore. If you wish to purchase texts online or at other bookstores, fine; just check the ISBN number.

- Bean, Chappell, and Gillam. *Reading Rhetorically*. Second ed, brief version. ISBN 0-321-42427-1. (Please note: second edition, brief!)

I will also supply some handouts and copied readings, and recommend other valuable texts, such as a handbook, to you.

Actively engaging with the course readings—reading them multiple times, and taking notes or at the least highlighting—is a must. Our reading load is light to facilitate deep engagement. I will ask that you learn some texts “by heart,” but some you’ll just have to become familiar with, so you can look up the necessary material quickly when writing. I will provide you with more details about my expectations for reading during the semester, and we’ll talk a lot about the different “levels of reading” you should engage in this class and other reading contexts.

Assignments

You'll complete three major assignments this semester:

1. **How-to:** prose which describes how to do an activity you enjoy. Three pages.
2. **Argument:** an argumentative essay on a topic of your choice (with some qualifications), using rhetorical techniques of your choice. Four pages.
3. **Research:** an argumentative essay which uses research, and engages rhetorical techniques structures different than your third essay. Five pages.

Each assignment will involve more drafting, revision, and editing than the previous, and each will make up a higher percentage of your final grade. Detailed assignment sheets will be distributed and discussed in class, and we'll devote some class time to working on drafts and other assignment components. You will be asked to turn in graded drafts with final projects, so plan to keep careful track of your work.

Minor assignments which contribute to your class participation points include group work, library research, and in-class writing. Regular reading quizzes or notes help ensure that everyone is up to speed. We will have a comprehensive final examination on May 8.

Course policies

Please read the following carefully.

Attendance and participation

Please be on time and attend as many classes as possible. You can miss up to three classes for any reason with no penalty, but after that, more absences, for whatever reason, will lower your class participation grade. The sole exception is military service; I will arrange alternative activities for anyone whose service obligations require missing classes.

Everyone should participate actively in class activities and discussions. If you aren't asking to speak in every class, you aren't participating enough. Bring your textbooks to class and be ready to discuss all assigned readings. If you aren't prepared for class, stay home; if you come to class unprepared, I will ask you to leave. I'll evaluate your participation in writing twice: at midterm and the end of the semester.

Ethical and professional conduct

I expect every student to follow the highest professional standards for ethical behavior, especially regarding respect for other students. In class, lively discussion is great, but rudeness or antagonism are unacceptable.

I also expect academic honesty. Plagiarism (use of another's ideas, data, and statements with little or no acknowledgment), collusion (unauthorized or undocumented collaboration), or re-submission (presenting an assignment previously completed for course credit) are not permissible. These ethical lapses will be reported to CAGAS in accordance with WIU policies, and can result in an F grade for the course.

Feedback

Final course evaluations—required by WIU—are May 3. But I'd prefer feedback from you much earlier than that. I always shape courses through student suggestions—I'm willing to change almost anything to help you learn more effectively. That's why we do midterm evaluations.

Help me be a better teacher by telling me when you enjoy a class or benefit from an assignment. If something doesn't go well, I'd also like to know. If you want to remain anonymous, put a printed note in my mailbox, or contact me through Dr. David Booker, Chair of the Department of English & Journalism.

Grading

You earn points for each completed assignment. Some assignment sheets break down the number of points even further than the distribution printed below. A ten percent per letter grade scale is used for all assignments and final grades. Since there are 1,000 points in the semester, it's easy to figure out where you stand at any time. (See the course web site for a more detailed explanation of the way I calculate percentages for letter grades.)

Please keep track of your grades and keep all graded assignments.

assignment	points
How-to (H2: Essay 1)	150
Argument (ARG: Essay 2)	250
Research (RES: Essay 3)	300
Reading quizzes	100
Class participation	100
Final examination	100
Total points	1000

grade	points
A	900-1000
B	800-899
C	700-799
U	699 or fewer
F	599 or fewer and incomplete work

Help

I want to help you achieve success in this class and all your studies at Western. If you have a concern which you think others might share, please bring it up in class discussions. Please ask me when you need some assistance. For individual help, come to my office hours. I hope to see everyone at least once in my office during the semester. I'm happy to talk to you about this course or other things related to your studies in my department or in general at Western.

Students with special learning needs requiring pedagogical accommodation should speak with me as soon as possible.

Late work

Generally speaking, I don't accept late work. If you know you are going to miss a class, turn in any assignments early. If you would like to turn an assignment in after the due date, please speak with me about it in advance. Late work will not be accepted after three calendar weeks.

Course grades of "incomplete" will only be given for documented medical emergency.

Privacy

By law (20 USC § 1232g, commonly called the “Buckley Amendment”), educational records must be kept confidential. So I will only discuss your progress in the course with you in my office, where your privacy can be ensured. I will never post grades in public in any form.

There is no need to put your social security number or WIU ID number on any work turned in to me; your printed name will suffice.

WIU brings you the following announcements

In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. For the instructor to provide the proper accommodation(s) you must obtain documentation of the need for an accommodation through Disability Support Services and provide it to the instructor. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor’s attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Support Services at 298-2512 for additional services.

It is the responsibility of the student to comply with the prerequisites/corequisites for a course that he/she plans to take. Instructors who place the appropriate information on the syllabus and emphasize it during the first three class periods may exclude a student from the class who does not meet the prerequisites/corequisites by sending a note to the student with a copy to the registrar within the first two weeks of the term.

Course schedule

This schedule will almost certainly change. Please see the course web site for an up-to-date schedule which includes more details and links to course assignments.

wk	dates	readings	activities
1	Jan 16, 18	Course syllabus	
2	Jan 23, 25	Hjortshoj, "Footstools and Furniture" How-to assignment (H2)	
3	Jan 30, Feb 1	<i>Reading Rhetorically</i> 1 (3–19)	H2 draft 1/30
4	Feb 6, 8	<i>Reading Rhetorically</i> 5 (101–117)	
5	Feb 13, 15	<i>Reading Rhetorically</i> 2 (20–35) <i>Style</i> 2 (7–23)	
6	Feb 20, 22	<i>Reading Rhetorically</i> 3 (36–70) Argument assignment (ARG)	H2 final 2/20
7	Feb 27, Mar 1	<i>Style</i> 3 (24–36)	ARG prospectus 2/27
8	Mar 6, 8	<i>Style</i> 4 (37–52) Research assignment (RES)	ARG draft 3/8
SB	Mar 13, 15	None	None
9	Mar 20	None	
10	Mar 27, 29	<i>Reading Rhetorically</i> 4 (71–97)	ARG final 3/29
11	Apr 3, 5	<i>Reading Rhetorically</i> 6 (118–132)	RES prospectus 4/5
12	Apr 10, 12	<i>Reading Rhetorically</i> 7 (133–166)	
13	Apr 17, 19	<i>Reading Rhetorically</i> Appx (167–194)	RES draft 4/17 Conferences
14	Apr 24, 26	None; no class	Conferences
15	May 1, 3	None; review & workshops	Course evaluations 5/3
EX	May 8	None	Final exam 5/8 3:00pm RES final 5/8