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Course Description

Academic writers, regardless of their discipline, use certain strategies and conventions in their papers that mark their writing as academic. Because the business of universities is the developing and sharing of knowledge, academic writers have had to come to terms with how to do this as effectively as possible. Academic writers must analyze current thoughts with a critical eye, research and read to gain insights into current trends in their disciplines, synthesize the information they gather, develop new and creative thoughts, and argue and support these thoughts effectively. Finally, they must be able to clearly convey their ideas.

To help you acquire an understanding of academic writing, in this class you will have an opportunity to write three papers that are based on three necessary and inter-related skills: analyzing, synthesizing and researching. You will also have an opportunity to read and respond to several pieces of writing over the term. Current research on writing suggests that students write more effectively when they are given an opportunity to rework papers after receiving edited comments. Fellow students will edit all three of your papers. The act of editing also helps writers improve upon their skills so your work as “editor” – while helping your peers - will also assist you as you move from back to the position of writer. Studies also show that students learn to write more effectively in a workshop setting rather then in a lecture setting; this class will mainly be based on a discussion and workshop philosophy. For this reason, it is imperative that you arrive in class prepared to read, respond and discuss each other’s writings, and the assigned writings, fairly and critically.

Texts

Katherine A. Ackley. Perspectives on Contemporary Issues: Readings Across the Disciplines.


Grading

Analysis Essay (15%)  
Synthesis Essay (15%)  
Research Paper (30%)  
Tests (15%)  
Peer editing / Participation (10%)  
Journal Responses (15%)
ENGLISH 109e Course Syllabus – Assignments

1. Analysis Essay (15%)

In this short, 800 word, essay, you will analyze an advertisement found either in a magazine or on a World Wide Web site using tools of analysis (e.g. rhetorical appeals, “weasel words,” or otherwise). Your analysis will develop and support a thesis that expresses your findings. In this essay, you are also responsible for using references (by quoting, paraphrasing or summarizing) to help you support your point. This paper will be peer edited in class by one or two of your peers. I will also edit your paper and return it to you one week later (week 6).

Preparation: Bring 3 ads to class in Week 4. One of these ads will be the basis of your paper.
Draft Deadline: In class Week 5 (two copies)
Final Paper Deadline: In class Week 7

2. Synthesis Essay (15%)

In this 1000 word essay, you should develop a thesis statement that reflects your logically sound, reasonable and well-informed position concerning an issue raised in one of the Ackley chapters 12, 15, 16, 17, or 21. Aside from your own opinion, you should incorporate and synthesize in your paper the positions of at least two other writers from the Ackley chapter you have chosen. You will integrate these authors into your paper using referencing strategies (by quoting, paraphrasing or summarizing) to demonstrate the issue you have chosen to explore. This paper will be peer edited in class by one or two of your peers. I will edit your introduction and one body paragraph and return it to you one week later (week 9).

Preparation: As you read these chapters (weeks 5–7), decide which you are interested in exploring (by Week 7).
Draft Deadline: In class Week 8 (two copies)
Final Paper Deadline: In class Week 10

3. Research Paper (30%)

In this 1500-word research paper, you should develop a thesis (essay) or statement of purpose (report) that is directly related to one issue raised by any chapter in the Ackley text. Feel free to explore chapters that we have and have not read in class for your paper. Do not, however, repeat the topic from your synthesis paper. For this project, you will conduct research, and synthesize information you have gathered from at least six sources. Your sources should include at least one paper from our Ackley text and two articles (papers or reports) from academic or scholarly journals. To help keep you on track, this project is due in several stages:

Six Item Bibliography (at least): In class Week 9. You should use correct MLA (essay) or APA (report) formatting for your bibliography.

Title Pages of Two Academic Journals: In class Week 9
Short (3–5 minute) Oral Report: In class Week 10. Summarizes (briefly) your research findings.
Conference / Thesis and Sentence Outline: Week 11. 10 to 15 minute private meeting with prof.
Draft Deadline: In class Week 12 (two copies)
Final Paper Deadline: December 13th.
4. **Tests (5% each x 3 = 15%)**

I have scheduled three short take-home tests over the term to see your progress in areas concerning style and grammar. Each test is worth 5 marks.
*Week 3 - Summarizing, Paraphrasing, Quoting*
*Week 6 - Grammar*
*Week 12 - Punctuation*

5. **Journal Responses (15% - 1% per entry)**

Each week you are asked to respond to some or all of the readings you have done for class or for your own research (see schedule above for a description). These journals are meant to be a place for you to record your initial reactions to and summaries of these readings. Each brief entry (about one half page per reading) should be thoughtful and reflective, but need not “answer” or “solve” the issues contained in the readings. Rather, this is your place to explore, and develop ideas without commitment. I will grade these journals for completion only. In other words, as long as you submit 15 approximately half-page journal entries that formulate a response, you will receive 15 marks.

*Bring your Journal Responses (complete) to each class.*
*Bring your compiled Journal Responses to our final class Week 12 to hand in to me.*

6. **Participation & Peer Editing (10%)**

I will derive this grade not only from your presence in class (and attendance is very important because of the workshop nature of the course), but also by your participation in our workshops and your involvement in assisting your peers in the peer edits. The quality of your responses to the peer edit sheets will directly effect this grade.

*Hand in your partner’s in-class editing of your work with your draft on draft due dates (Analysis - Week 5, Synthesis – Week 8) and hand in your partner’s editing of your Research paper with the final version on December 13th (note: I do not draft edit your Research paper).*
1. Late Drafts and Final Papers
   As you might have noticed, this course is highly scheduled. If you fall behind in one assignment, there is a good chance that it will effect your handing-in of the next one. For the reason, I expect that papers will arrive on time. All late drafts will be penalized up to 10% of the final grade. Late final papers will be penalized at a rate of 5% per day late. This said, I do recognize that “life” happens and extenuating circumstances may prevent you from completing a final paper by the deadline. Therefore, you are entitled to one late final paper (with no explanation) under the condition that you attach a sheet to your paper which states “this is my one late paper for the course” and gives the original due date. This policy only applies to final papers and not drafts for workshop.

2. Attendance
   Your attendance at the classes is extremely important. Because the philosophy of the course is based on discussing, reading, responding and editing in class, missing class will likely effect your learning. Furthermore, it will effect your participation grade and the grades on your assignments if they arrive late. If you are unable to attend a class, I appreciate advance notice.

3. Drafting
   Draft-writing is an essential part of the course mainly because current research in writing suggests that developing, editing and revising drafts leads to more effective writing. I suggest that you prepare well thought out drafts so that we (you, your peers and me) can concentrate on the nitty-gritty of helping you develop your academic writing skills. You should also note that you are, in the end, solely responsible for your writing. I will not (and could not) comment on each and every problem in your drafts (and nor will your peers). However, that said, you still are responsible for the problem which you will hopefully discover yourself as you edit your own work.

4. Grading
   I will provide you with detailed comments on both your Analysis and Synthesis Drafts, and at this time, I will assign these drafts a tentative grade. This grade will in no way effect your final mark on these papers except that the final grade will not fall any lower. Rather, if you made absolutely no changes to your draft you would receive the draft grade as your final paper mark. While the comments on your drafts will be substantial, the comments on the final versions will be relatively few. With personal conferencing to assist you with your research paper, comments on your research paper will also receive short commentary.

5. Office Hours (or appointments)
   I am here to help you. Please feel free to come with questions to my office hours or call me for an appointment.

6. Plagiarism
   Plagiarism is the copying of someone else’s ideas or style without giving credit to the author. This is a serious academic offence and can result in serious consequences: your paper would fail, you may fail the course, and you will be reported to the Dean’s office. Other forms of cheating, such as double submitting a paper, are not acceptable.