

English 3312- D01 Fall 2014

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Course Description, or Words Matter

Learning to write is a complex, individualized process which takes place over time with continued practice and daily reading. Understanding the complex, recursive nature of enhancing writing and speaking, we will read and write every day. We will focus on developing our own vocabularies and on choosing the most precise, powerful words for papers. This class will be a writing intensive workshop course in which you will develop your reading and writing. You will write a sequence of assignments that culminates in a researched argument for our writing community.

Student Learning Objectives

Learning to write is a complex, individualized process which takes place over time with continued practice. Student Learning Objectives and assessment of how much students learn those objective are as follows:

- Enhanced vocabulary
- rhetorical knowledge (purpose, audience, differences in communicative situations, genre). Assessment: argument essays;
- critical thinking, reading, and writing (locating, evaluating, analyzing, synthesizing primary and secondary sources; reflection). Assessment: in-class writing, argument essays, resource evaluations, peer critiques;
- understanding of and use of writing processes, (multiple drafts, revising, editing, proof-reading texts, peer critiquing and collaborative thinking and writing). Assessment: minute papers, all essays, group work and peer critiques;
- knowledge of conventions (grammar, punctuation, spelling, paragraphing, and appropriate documentation). Assessment: in-class writing, all essays and final exam;
- Understanding of plagiarism, understanding and articulating the ethics of using other people's ideas, understanding the various approaches to documenting sources in the different disciplines, mastery of student's chosen documentation style guide.

Course Texts

- Raimes, Ann. *Keys for Writers*. 6th or 7th ed. Boston: Wadsworth, 2011.
Note: you may purchase, rent, borrow any edition, but the later the better because guidelines for documenting sources seem to change each year. This is the text adopted by the SWTJC English department.
- *Merriam-Webster Vocabulary Builder* by Mary Wood Cornog. New Edition 2010 Paperback. Publisher: Merriam Webster Mass Market. ISBN-10: 0877798559 or ISBN-13: 978-0877798552
- Daily reading from the following newspapers (your choice):

Aljazeera

The China Times

The Christian Science Monitor

Financial Times

The Guardian

The New York Times

The Times of India

USA Today

The Wall Street Journal

The Washington Post

and later in the semester, journal articles and books.

Typical Week's Schedule

Each day: read a minimum of one article (articles must be no shorter than one full screen) in the periodicals listed under Reading Sources, or one journal article or one book chapter. Enter the reading in your growing

bibliography. Write a minimum of one journal entry (in Blackboard or your own notebook). Learn enough words in the *Merriam-Webster's Vocabulary Builder* to complete two units each week.

Mondays: complete grammar and usage exercises, be up to date on vocabulary units
 Tuesdays: Turn in papers (summaries, analyses, response papers, bibliographies, arguments); bring grammar and vocabulary exercises to class

Assignment	Date Due	Points Possible
Reading	daily	C/I
Daily journal entries	daily	100
Annotated Bibliography	every Tuesday	100
Usage & grammar exercises/vocabulary work	every Tuesday	100
Two summaries	9/2 and 9/9	200 (100 each)
One Response paper	9/23	100
Question Essay	9/30	100
Claim, Reasons, & Evidence poster session	10/7	C/I
Outline	10/14	C/I
Argument poster session	10/21	100
Argument	10/28	C/I
Bibliography	11/4	C/I
One Argument	11/11	200
Final Exam	11/9	100

Description of Assignments

Weekly Reading and Discussion

Read daily from the list of periodicals above, and each day write a journal entry of at least half a page/screen on your own responses to the reading. Use your reading and journal entries to develop a question to explore for the semester.

Bibliography

Alphabetically list all the articles you read using either MLA or APA documentation. Bring your evolving Bibliography each Tuesday. I will not grade it each week, but I will offer feedback if your bibliography has errors. I will note that you have documented seven articles each week; if a bibliography does not list seven sources for each week, points will be deducted from the final grade.

Usage and Grammar

See assignments under the "Usage and Grammar" folder in Blackboard. Bring your work to class each Tuesday. Be prepared to put your answers on the board.

Vocabulary

See Blackboard for schedule.

Two Summaries, Response Paper, Question Essay, Poster Sessions, Argument

See assignment handouts, samples, and submission places under the "Papers" folder in Blackboard.

C/I Assignments

The assignments are organized in a sequence to help you write a powerful argument by the end of the semester. You will not earn a passing grade if you do not complete these assignments or if you do not bring them to class.

Final Exam

Essay exam

Grading

A: 90 – 100
 B: 80 – 89
 C: 70 – 79
 D: 60 – 69
 F: 0 - 59

To earn a C, writing must be free of issues that interfere with readability, some of which include:

- Sentences that do not have clear subjects and verbs
- Unclear vocabulary: wrong words, unclear words
- Unclear pronouns (it, they, them)
- Major sentence structure errors: fragments, run-ons, comma splices
- Lack of agreement between subject and verb and between verb and object
- Inconsistent capitalization (i for I, use of capital letters for common nouns, etc)
- Failure to show possessive case with apostrophes
- Spelling errors or inappropriate abbreviations (u for you, thru for through, etc)

Standards for Grading Writing at RGC

The grade of B (very good): The B paper is significantly more than competent. Besides being almost free of mechanical errors, the B paper delivers meaningful information--that is, information that raises a new awareness for the reader. Its specific points are logically ordered, well-developed, and unified around a clear thesis that is apparent *early in the paper*. It may develop an idea fully and accurately but some of the B paper's content may be saying the obvious, what the reader already knows, or it may not develop discussions about the supporting details as fully as the A paper does. The opening paragraph gets the reader's attention; the closing paragraph is conclusive and connects nicely to the opening. The transitions between paragraphs are mostly smooth, the sentence structures varied. The vocabulary is more concise and precise than that of the C paper.

A paper (superior): The A paper includes all the positive qualities of the B paper listed above. The A paper definitely teaches readers a new perspective on the literature. The A paper persuades readers that its points should be seriously received. The A paper is original, imaginative, creative. The A paper is written in the student's own voice, so the quotations are integrated into the student's sentences without undermining his or her voice. The A paper fully develops and discusses the thesis and how each supporting detail connects to the thesis so that the reader feels significantly taught by the author, sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph. The A paper is also engaging without unclear passages or errors that distract the reader. The title and the opening get the reader's attention and make sense; the transitions clearly connect paragraphs to the thesis; the sentences are clear and correct; the vocabulary is varied and precise. The reader wishes the A paper were longer because the reading is so engaging and interesting and clear.

C paper (good; does the job): The C paper is generally competent; however it generally tells the reader what is obvious so that the reader does not gain a new perspective on the topic or the literature. The C paper satisfies the assignment, does not have too many distracting errors and is mostly well-organized and developed. The thesis may be overly general or vague so that the supporting references to the readings don't always connect well. Some of the supporting details may not be explained or discussed very fully and ideas may be unnecessarily repeated. The paragraphs may not be organized as logically as another revision might have achieved. It may have a pattern of sentence structure errors or other kinds of error. Vocabulary may be too general or repetitious. The C paper may be capable of becoming a B or A paper, but it just needed more revising of ideas and paragraphs, editing of sentences and words, and proofreading of mechanical errors and formatting.

D paper (Unsatisfactory): This paper is largely faulty, often because of errors of form or mechanics, but it does not warrant complete disregard. It may contain little or no content, it may simply restate arbitrarily selected material from the sources, or it may lack coherent organization. It does, however, have some saving graces: a spark of originality, some mastery of sentence skills, or relative grasp of organization.

F paper (Not acceptable): Its treatment of the subject is superficial; its theme lacks discernible organization; its prose is garbled or lacking in clarity or style. Mechanical errors are frequent. In short, the ideas, organization, and style fall far short of acceptable college writing in English.

Course Policies

Scholastic Honesty

All work submitted must be your own and must be written exclusively for this class; the use of sources must be appropriately, correctly, and consistently documented. Quotations, paraphrases, or summaries that are not documented and the use of papers written by others constitute plagiarism.

Three different acts are considered plagiarism:

- (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.

A grade of "F" for the course is earned if the work exhibits any of these kinds of scholastic dishonesty.

Late Papers/Assignments

To pass the class you must successfully complete and turn in to me each assignment by the due date. If you fail to turn in any assignments, even one, you may earn an F for the course.

Grade Changes

Please discuss your grades with me during the semester. Once the semester is over and I have entered grades into the system, however, I will not consider grade changes unless I, myself, miscalculated. Please do not ask for extra credit or chances to revise after the fifteenth week of class because I will refuse such appeals. You should know that you have the right to appeal your grade. According to the *Sul Ross Rio Grande College Student Handbook*, "if you disagree with a grade you received, you should discuss it with the instructor of the course. If you are not satisfied with results of that discussion, make an appointment to discuss it with the Chair of the Department [in this case, Dr. Roche]" (17).

ADA Statement

SRSU Rio Grande College is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Disability Services Coordinator assists students with disabilities in gaining opportunities for full participation in programs, services and activities. The Disability Services Coordinator is the Director of Student Services 830-758-5006 in Eagle Pass, Texas.