

English 3312 T01—Del Rio, 3312 T03—Uvalde, 3312 T04--Castroville

Spring 2015

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Office Hours: By appointment

### Course Description

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 and your own portfolio of revised papers.

### Blackboard

This course requires daily reading and writing and numerous written assignments, all of which *must* be submitted to Blackboard by the published deadline—no exceptions. Please download the Blackboard app to your phone or tablet if you have one. Please bring laptops, tablets, smart phones to each class meeting in order to use Blackboard for submitting group summaries, constructing your writing portfolios, and other tasks. If you do not have a laptop, email me and I will see if RGC has one you could borrow.

### Teleconference Courses

I am teaching this course by teleconference in Castroville, Del Rio, and Uvalde. I won't always be in the classroom that you are in which makes it difficult for you to speak with me before and after class. Also, I will be transitioning to Castroville so I won't always be with my office phone. Please email me (see email address above) to make an appointment for us to meet or to have a phone conversation. My goal is your success and I am very available for students; I will welcome all requests for phone or office appointments.

### 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 objectives 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*. 7th ed. ISBN: 978-1-111-84175-1  
Note: you may purchase, rent, borrow any edition including electronic, 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.

Assignment	Date Due	Points Possible
Reading	daily	C/I
Daily journal entries (Blackboard)	daily	100
Daily participation (vocabulary/group summaries)	books due April	50
Two bibliographies	1/28 and 2/11	100 (50 each)
Two summaries	2/4 and 2/18	100 (50 each)
Question	3/4	100
Response Paper	3/11	100
Page One	4/1	C/I
Argument	4/22	200
Blackboard Portfolio with Reflection	5/6	250

### Assignment Descriptions

Note: All assignments must be submitted to the appropriate submission link in Blackboard

#### Weekly Reading and Journal

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. If you wish to use other periodicals, please discuss it with me first—by email. Summaries of articles from publications outside of the list above may not earn credit. 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. The first bibliography due January 28 should have seven entries. The bibliography due February 11 should have your first seven entries, revised, and an additional fourteen entries (total of 21 entries).

#### Usage and Grammar

We will do group activities that you will record and summarize each week. The group work summaries will be posted to BB at the end of each class.

#### Vocabulary

Complete two units in your book each week. The final exam will test your vocabulary.

#### Summaries, Response Paper, Question Essay, Argument

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

#### Portfolio

Write a reflection of your writing competence and support it with your revised argument as well as two other revised documents (choose from the question essay, response paper, summary). You may include additional documents to support your reflection and portfolio.

#### 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.**

### **Turning in Papers/Assignments**

To pass the class you must successfully complete and turn in to me each assignment by the due date. All assignments must be submitted to Blackboard. If you do not submit assignments to Blackboard, they will be considered late. If you fail to turn in any assignments, even one, you may earn an F for the course. If life gets in the way, and you find yourself turning in two papers late, withdraw from the course and take it in a semester when you have more time.

### **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.

### **Schedule**

#### **Week 1 1/21/2015**

Introduction to course; group introductions and sentence structure exercise; groups submit group summaries to Blackboard. Students will understand and familiarize themselves with Blackboard and procedures for submitting assignments in Blackboard; students will understand the portfolio assignment and the necessity of revising returned papers for the portfolio and for weekly reflection.

#### **Week 2 1/28/15 Bibliography due**

**Week 3 2/4/15** Summary due; questions on returned bibliographies; begin reflections on writing; begin to construct portfolio.

#### **Week 4 2/11/15 Bibliography due**

**Week 5 2/18/15** Summary due  
Vocabulary Builder Units 7 and 8

#### **Week 6 2/25/15**

Class group exercise on Question Essay  
Vocabulary Builder Units 9 and 10

**Week 7 3/4/15** Question Essay due  
Vocabulary Builder Units 11 and 12

**Week 8 3/11/15** Response Paper due  
Vocabulary Builder Units 13 and 14

**Spring Break 3/18/15**

**Week 9 3/25/15**  
Vocabulary Builder Units 15 and 16

**Week 10 4/1/15** Page One due (introduction, next two paragraphs) bring printout to class  
Vocabulary Builder Units 17 and 18

**Week 11 4/8/15**  
Vocabulary Builder Units 19 and 20

**Week 12 4/15/15**  
Vocabulary Builder Units 21 and 22

**Week 13 4/22/15 Argument due**  
Self assessment; revisit initial question  
Vocabulary Builder Units 23 and 24

**Week 14 4/29/15**

**Week 15 5/6/15 Portfolio due**

**Week 16 Final Exam Week** (No final exam; instead, submit portfolios by 5/6/15)