

English 106: Composition II Spring 2015

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: Welcome to phase two of college rhetoric. In Composition II, we will continue to delve into the world of argumentation. You will develop a means for articulating the opinions, views, and knowledge that belong in the public discussion.

COURSE MATERIALS:

1. Access to Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* or *A Pocket Style Manual* 6th or 7th edition.
2. A spiral bound notebook for journal entries and quick writes
3. A college thesaurus and dictionary
4. A library card
5. Depending on computer availability – All of the above items may be accessed online.
6. *Elements of Argument: A Text and Reader*. Rottenberg and Winchell 8th edition

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

Work for the Course:

Reading: Though this is a writing course, we will devote significant time and attention to the practice of carefully and critically reading non-fiction prose argumentative texts. There are several reasons for this emphasis on reading. First, effective reading of non-fiction prose, though not often explicitly taught, requires practice and is a crucial skill in college preparedness. Second, in order to succeed in academic and professional settings that frequently require composing arguments about and in dialogue with texts already written, one must learn to read those texts accurately and thoughtfully, developing strategies for responding to and incorporating others' ideas. Third, reading others' texts, over time, makes one a more sensitive and careful reader of one's own writing. As the second and third reasons suggest and as educational research seems to show, it is very difficult (if not impossible) write effectively without first becoming an effective reader.

Reading for the course will be of two primary types. First, we will read and discuss in class a number of short to medium-length prose arguments (mostly supplied in our main textbook, *The Elements of Argument*). These readings will form the basis of your first three major writing assignments in the class, providing material that you will critically analyze, incorporate into your own arguments, and use as a stimulus to independent research. You will be required to write brief informal responses to these reading assignments, as well as to discuss their content and rhetorical features in class. Also, a smaller number of readings from *Elements* (and a little from Hacker's *Rules for Writers*) will be assigned covering important terms and concepts in critical reading, argumentation, analysis of visual texts, and research.

Finally, I will from time to time ask you to read selections from the textbook during class in order to provide a framework for discussions of strategies in writing and argumentation.

Writing: The major written work for the course will include four (4) **formal essay assignments**. Essay #1

will require a **critical analysis** of one or two short prose arguments read and discussed by the class. For essay #2, you will write a paper making and defending a **claim of fact or a claim of value**, in which you draw upon assigned readings and limited outside research. Essay #3 will require you to write a paper making a **claim of policy** based on independent library and internet research. You will also write a brief **annotated bibliography** in preparation for essay #3. For essay #4, you will compose an **analysis of a visual text** (e. g., a picture, an advertisement, a painting, a web site, etc.). For each of the four major essays, you will write both draft and revised versions.

In addition to these formal essays, there will be two types of informal writing assignments. As previewed above, you will complete ten (10) **journal entries** responding to assigned readings that will serve as the starting points for class discussions and the formal essay assignments. Also, you will complete some 10-15 **in-class writings**, unannounced exercises that will serve a variety of purposes, including responses to sample drafts, editing exercises, drafting of thesis statements, etc.

JOURNAL ENTRY FORMAT:

Once you've read the assigned essay, write a paragraph summarizing it. Make sure to address what you think was the writer's main idea and what evidence was used to support it. How did the writer conclude?

Next, write a paragraph about the writer's argumentative style. What choices did the writer make in crafting this argument? Focus on 1-2 techniques. Here are some examples of style elements you might address: How does the writer gain audience attention? What kinds of words does the writer use to relay the message (academic, conversational, emotional, plain...)? How does the method of organization help relay the message? How has the writer established his or her credibility? How does the writer address the counterargument?

If you'd like to write a third paragraph responding to the writer's argument, this is encouraged but is not required.

Each journal entry should be one half typed page, single-spaced. Use Google docs to set up the document and share it with me only once. Each entry needs to be dated, and please include the journal number. Journal entries will be assessed with a \checkmark system. A \checkmark is 10 points, a $\checkmark+$ is 11, and a $\checkmark-$ is worth 8.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS:

Below is our schedule of assignments and activities for the semester. Formal assignments due dates are italicized. Readings must be completed by the day indicated (for example, for next class you are to read selections the opening chapters and two short articles from *Elements of Argument* or handout and complete the journal indicated).

Notes: All assignments are due on the days indicated. I reserve the right to change syllabus and assignments as needed. Please check mskeck.com for articles. Assigned readings are to be completed before class. Surprise quizzes are always a possibility.

Jan 6/7 – Introduction to the course, sample writing, et al. Read George Orwell's *Politics and the English Language* in *Elements* p. 785 and complete the discussion questions. *Practice Journal* – on Orwell

Jan 8/9 - Actively read: Rottenberg and Winchell about basics of argumentation (EA 3-5, 11-22) and critical reading (EA 25-38); begin reading and discussion. *Journal 1* on Jefferson and Diggins (16-27)

Jan 12/13 – Continue readings and begin reading for first essay assignment, critical analysis of argument (EA 39-50). *Journal 2* on Kohn (39) and Paige (667)

Jan 14/15 – Continue reading for first essay assignment; read Vickers (659) and Elmore (661). *Journal 3* on Vickers and Elmore. Essay #1 assignment posted on mskeck.com.

Jan 16/20 - Read EA on writing argumentative texts (373-391). Write a summary paragraph of “Testing Trap”, and upload to turnitin.

Jan 21/22 – Workshop of student essays; revision strategies (EA 391-393). Bring a copy of the article you have selected with you to class, and be prepared to discuss its argument.

Jan 23/26 – Workshop of student essays and peer edits discussed.

Jan 27/28 – Workshop of student essays. Use Hacker to edit.

Final version of Essay 1 due – Jan 29/30 (whether or not there is a snow day)

Feb 3/4– Claims “What are you trying to prove?”

Feb 5/6 - Begin reading for second essay assignment, fact/value argument (topic: “What is the role of sex and violence in popular culture”); read arguments on content in films and television on pages (692-729), *Journal 4 on Doherty*.

Feb 9/10 – Continue reading and discussion on second essay; read arguments on body image (499-511), *Journal 5 on Spiker*.

Feb 11/12 – Claims of Value/Fact (be sure to read 104-128 in *Elements*). Read 128-147 to prepare for class discussion.

Feb 13/17 – Debate - the rise in college costs affects everyone. Is it becoming too expensive for average income earners? Who is responsible for the college cost crisis? Read pages 148-153 and be prepared to debate the issue.

Feb 18/19 – Begin drafting Essay #2, if you haven’t done so already. Your essay will be either a claim of value or fact on the role of sex and violence in popular culture. Refer to Essay #2 handout for detailed instructions and rubric.

Feb 20/23 – 1st Draft of Essay #2 Due

Feb 24/25 – 2nd Draft of Essay #2 Due – please bring a printed copy with you to class for peer edits.

Feb 26/27 – Essay #2 Due and uploaded to turnitin.com (we will be working on this during class).