

WR 123-02: English Composition – The Research Paper
Clackamas Community College
Spring 2010

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Phone: (503)594-3567
Class meets T/Th 9:00 – 10:50
Location: RR 209
CRN: 193553
3 credits

Course Description

This is an advanced writing course designed to develop the organizational skills necessary to complete the kind of longer research paper required at the university level. This course focuses almost exclusively on the production of a single 12-to-15-page academic research paper. We will focus on correctness, clarity, and style in academic writing; finding and narrowing a topic; developing an arguable, researchable thesis; finding, evaluating, and critically thinking about and responding to sources; organizing ideas and information; using sources to support a thesis; proper citation and documentation formats; drafting; and, finally, revision.

Expectation of student skills upon entering this course

Students should be able to demonstrate the following:

- A passing grade in WR 121 *AND* WR 122
- The ability to complete in-class writing samples, written at a level appropriate to placement in this course
- The ability to read at a level appropriate to the course
- The ability to recognize and use standard English syntax
- The ability to use a vocabulary appropriate to the level and demands of this course

Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing the course, students will be able to:

- Define an original and workable writing topic, and generate questions for research
- Thoroughly research a topic using a variety of tools and sources, both electronic and paper-based, both popular and scholarly (approximately 1/3 of sources used for the final essay will need to come from scholarly, peer-reviewed sources)
- Critically evaluate both paper and electronic sources
- Take effective notes—whether on cards, double-entry style, handwritten or on computer—and organize them
- Compose, revise, and edit a long paper (12-page minimum) that smoothly integrates source material into their own thought and language, as well as demonstrates some original thinking
- Follow MLA or APA format
- Incorporate sources effectively and accurately
- Write clearly, with no basic grammatical or mechanical errors

Texts & Materials

- **Required:** *The Curious Researcher: A Guide to Writing Research Papers* (sixth edition), by Bruce Ballenger.
- **Recommended:** Hacker, Diana, *Pocket Style Manual*, 5th edition (or any other writing handbook with current MLA guidelines). If you prefer to use online grammar and MLA or APA help, links will be provided.
- **Recommended:** A college-level dictionary and thesaurus.

- **Required:** A sturdy notebook or folder for holding and organizing your work. *You are responsible for keeping all of your graded and non-graded work, from both in- and outside of class (including rough drafts) until you have completed the course and have received your final grade.*

Participation

Absences, tardiness, and failure to prepare for or participate in class will directly affect student success on graded assignments, thus affecting the overall class grade. Class attendance and participation are essential for success in this course. Disrupting class with cell phones or other electronic devices is unacceptable. It is the student's responsibility to silence such devices before class begins. Headphones, PDAs, and laptops are also prohibited unless prior permission is approved by the instructor. Text messaging during class will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt class by talking (with the exception of class or small-group discussion) or students who disrupt class in any other way (e.g. with electronic devices) will be warned once and then invited to leave class for the day (and counted absent).

Textbooks and assigned materials are required to be brought to class every day and students should be prepared to discuss assigned readings and participate in class activities. Coming to class prepared to participate in discussions, by completing assigned readings on time, creates a positive and effective learning environment for everyone. I will monitor class preparedness for such discussions by frequently giving pop quizzes on assigned readings and class topics.

Satisfactory classroom participation requires that all members of the class—students and instructor—help to create a tolerant and comfortable atmosphere where all feel welcome to share their views, beliefs, opinions and experiences without fear of ridicule, harassment, or mean-spirited commentary. We will work together, as a class, to create such an environment. If you feel, at any time, that the classroom environment has become uncomfortable or intolerant, you should speak to me privately and immediately so that we may resolve the problem.

Attendance & Tardiness

As stated above, to earn the best grade possible, you should come to class prepared and be on time. Attendance is taken in class when you sign in for yourself on the attendance sheet. You may not sign in for anyone else but yourself. It is your responsibility to sign in each class session. If you do not sign in, your attendance does not count.

There are no excused absences in this course—you are either present or absent. You may miss up to 6 classes with no penalty (other than the fact that the quality of your work will likely suffer due to the class time missed). If you miss 7 or more classes, you will no longer be eligible for a passing grade. *Attending 70% of the course sessions is a course requirement.*

As adult students, I know you live busy and complicated lives. I expect that you may **rarely** be tardy or have to depart class early. **However if your tardiness becomes excessive or constant, each time you come to class late will begin to count an absence** (maybe a partial absence, maybe a full absence, it depends on the excessiveness of your late arrivals).

Drafts, Final Essay, and Other Assignments

As explained in the course description above, the primary focus of this class is on completing a single 12- to-15-page academic research essay. This does not mean, however, that your final grade for the class rests solely upon this single finished product. In addition to the research journal, described below, there will be many process assignments that contribute to the development of your final research essay, including a research proposal and plan, an annotated bibliography, and 5 to 10 pages of notes. These process assignments should be taken seriously as they make up 30 percent of your total course grade.

45 percent of your total course grade will be based upon your performance on the two rough drafts (one 5-page draft and one 10-page draft) and one final draft of the research essay (25 percent for the rough drafts and 20 percent for the final draft). As you can see by the percentages, these rough drafts should also be taken seriously. “Rough” drafts are expected to exhibit your best grammar and sentence structure and to be representative of your best work on your essay at that point in the term. They should be revised and proofread nearly as carefully as you would revise a final draft. The better the draft you provide me, the better feedback I will be able to provide you, which will likely yield a better final draft and a better grade. The final essay that you present me at the end of the term should be one of the most (if not *the* most) polished draft that you’ve ever turned in.

Research Journals

As part of your course grade, you are responsible for keeping a research journal. There are two options for your research journal: (1) creating a WordPress blog and keeping an electronic research journal on the Internet or (2) typing your journal entries on a word processor and bringing extra copies to class to share with the instructor and up to two classmates (this might often mean printing up to four copies of each entry, so I recommend the electronic option). We will often spend time in the computer lab, which will allow you, at times, to work on your research journals during class time.

Assignments & Grading

Process assignments	30%	<u>Final Grade:</u>	
Exercises & Research Journal	20%	90-100	A
Draft 1	10%	80-89	B
Draft 2	15%	70-79	C
Peer Review	5%	60-69	D
<u>Final Draft</u>	<u>20%</u>	<u>0-59</u>	<u>F</u>
Total	100%		

Assignment	Point Value
Exercises & Worksheets (4 @ 10 points each)	40 points
Entries for Research Journal (8 sets @ 20 points each)	160 points
Research Proposal & Plan	75 points
Annotated Bibliography	150 points
Notes (5 to 10 pages)	75 points
Research Essay Draft 1	100 points
Research Essay Draft 2	150 points
Peer Review	50 points
Research Essay Final Draft	200 points
Total Points Possible = 1000	

Late Work

I am not obligated to accept late work, so please do not automatically assume that I will accept your late assignments. **In the event that you are not able to meet an assignment deadline, you should contact me as soon as possible.**

I will accept late work only from students who do not have a problem with chronic lateness. Please be aware that if you continually turn in late work (more than two to three weeks in succession or more than two to three times throughout the term), I will probably contact you to inform you that I will no longer accept late work from you. If this happens, it means that late work will automatically be entered as a zero in your gradebook from that point forward.

If I do decide to accept your late work (contacting me in advance is a good way to improve your odds), **I will deduct ten percent for every class meeting that your work is late for a maximum 20% grade reduction.** I do not accept assignments that are more than one week past due, and all work for week ten and finals week must be submitted on time.

I do, on rare occasions, make exceptions to the late work policies listed above in the event of personal emergencies or illnesses. I will often require formal documentation of an illness or emergency. Please don't be offended if I ask you for documentation; it's simply an item of business that allows me to separate your valid excuse from the numerous excuses that I receive each term. Once I establish a student's valid need for extra time to complete assignments, I'm happy to work out a revised schedule of due dates for completing outstanding work. **Please note, I only grant incompletes in cases where coursework is near 80% complete or greater.**

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another's words or ideas as if they were your own. This includes copying and/or pasting from a book, magazine, newspaper, or internet source, and failing to use quotation marks or proper citation. It also includes purchasing pre-written assignments and paying or allowing others to write your assignments for you. Due to the focus on the writing process in this course, and the amount of in-class writing, it would be extremely difficult to plagiarize any of your assignments and your efforts would be better served in meeting the requirements of the assignments by completing them yourself. Intentional plagiarism is grounds for immediate failure of an assignment and possibly the course.

Special Needs

CCC offers students with special needs many options. If you have a documented disability and/or wish an accommodation, please see me early in the term to make arrangements for your specific request.

Diversity Statement

In this class community, we respect the rights of all persons, regardless of race, class, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation, physical ability or size.

Email

I check my email often and generally respond within 24 hours. Feel free to leave me voicemail, but please know that email is the best and quickest way to contact me. I'm happy to speak with students on the phone from time to time. If you would like to arrange a telephone meeting, please email me with your telephone number and a number of convenient times to reach you. I'll get back to you as soon as possible. Please be aware that I block my number when calling students from home or from my cell phone. Don't take this personally; it's just a general practice that I've adopted.

When you write an email to me, please use professional writing skills and a descriptive subject line.

It's helpful if you include the course number in the subject line as well as the topic of your email, (for example, "WR-123-02": Question about Research Journal Entry 1"). Many students forget to include a **greeting** as well as some kind of **closing salutation and signature** (for example: "Hi Monique/Mrs. Babin"; and then "Thank you, Lisa Smith"). Please do not expect me to remember that you are "trippin_dude_68"; signing your email is simply a common courtesy. As a rule, I do not respond to anonymous and/or vague emails, those that read something like: "I'm confused about our assignment. Can you help?" It's common courtesy to be polite, clear and to the point when writing email in a professional or academic setting. If you don't tell me the specific problem that you're having with an assignment (for example, what part of the assignment, what about it is confusing, give me a page number in the text, or explain your specific concern), it can be very difficult for me to help you.

Changes to Syllabus and Course Calendar

Assignments, due dates, and exam calendars may be changed due to institutional changes, as a result of weather-related closures, or to suit class needs. Changes to the syllabus or course calendar will always be announced in class and/or posted to our class blog. Students may also receive class updates via the email accounts that they provided to the instructor at the beginning of the term. Students should check email regularly during the term.

In the event of a school closure, it is the student's responsibility to check the course blog and their email. Any work assigned prior to a campus closure should still be completed as scheduled and turned in at the next class meeting. Late work policies will apply to any assignments assigned and due prior to or during the closure that are not turned in at the next class meeting. Students should also keep up with the reading schedule regardless of any campus closures and will be responsible for any readings assigned during the closure.

The Syllabus as a Contract

This syllabus acts as a contract between the students and instructor. By continuing to attend and participate in this class, you are agreeing to the terms presented in this document regardless of whether or not you have read the document or whether or not you understand the expectations and policies presented in this document. If you do not understand anything in the syllabus, you should ask the instructor to explain it to you. If you do not want to agree to the policies and expectations of this syllabus, you should drop the class.