

## ENG103W: Academic Writing and Research

Eureka College

Fall 2009

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### **Course description**

The main purpose of this course is to help you to think about any text—not just those that you will encounter in class—as a part of a conversation, a conversation that you are qualified to enter (as daunting as that may sometimes seem). Responding critically to a piece of writing does not mean simply agreeing or disagreeing with it, but working with the text—and other authors who are engaged in the same conversation—to solve the problem that it sets out to address.

In order to learn how to think of academic discourse as a conversation, we will concentrate on several skills that are necessary for academic reading, writing, and research. One of our initial topics will be developing strategies for understanding and responding to other authors' arguments. We will also focus on conducting ethical research and integrating sources, both of which are essential skills in responding appropriately and authoritatively to others' work and to developing well grounded arguments of your own. The cornerstone of this course is a research paper in which you will develop an original research question and construct a compelling argument in response to that question.

*A note on grammar:* This is not a grammar course; you are expected to have a solid grasp of the conventions of English grammar, punctuation, and spelling. However, I am aware that all of you come from different academic backgrounds and have different abilities. In the first week of the course, I will administer a writing diagnostic and we will address any basic problems that this reveals. I will also comment on mechanical errors in your first paper. After that paper, however, it is imperative that you seek out aid for any mistakes that seem to be recurring in your writing. I am happy to work with you individually, or you can try the Writing Center for additional assistance. There are also many resources available in the library and on-line that can give you guidance with these problems. Grammar *does* count, though. Remember that, in the “real world” as well as in school, people will judge the quality of your argument in part by the way in which it is presented. If you persist in making the same mistakes in paper after paper, you will be marked down for those errors; it would be a real mistake, therefore, not to get help with things that confuse you.

### **Goals**

By the end of this course, students should be proficient in the following:

- summarizing and interpreting quotes correctly and effectively with attention to the quoted material's original context;
- using MLA and/or APA style, both in bibliographies and in in-text citations;
- articulating a meaningful question that will sustain a substantive research project;
- locating and evaluating sources for credibility;

- articulating a thesis;
- recognizing the appropriate conventions for writing to different audiences; and
- revising their own written work in terms of diction, syntax, mechanics, and clarity of organization.

### Course books

Graff, Gerald, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russel Durst. *They Say/I Say: With Readings*. New York: Norton, 2009.

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009.

*Please bring your books, notebook, and writing implements to class **every day**. You will need them.*

### Expectations

**Tardiness:** You are expected to come to class on time. Frequent tardiness will affect your grade.

**Absences:** Much of the work of this course happens in class, so someone who frequently misses class simply isn't getting everything out of the course, even if he or she hands all assignments in on time. Therefore, more than three absences, *for any reason*, will adversely affect your grade. **Eight absences (20% of the course) will result in an F.**

**Participation:** A portion of your grade in this course comes from your participation. By “participation,” I mean, of course, a willingness to speak up in class and to contribute your own thoughts and ideas. But participation also means contributing to the collaborative and communal environment of the classroom. It therefore involves asking questions, listening attentively, taking notes, and responding to others' remarks. All of these things will figure into your final participation grade.

It is possible to receive a failing grade under “participation.” At the lowest extreme would be a student who was visibly bored and/or fell asleep in class, who did not speak even when called on, and who never took out a notebook and pen. This student, even if she were to attend class every day, would likely receive a participation grade of 0. A student who would receive a 95 or 100 in participation, however, is one who pays attention, takes notes every day, asks questions, comments substantively on other students' statements, writes thoughtful and engaged responses on in-class prompts, and volunteers to share his perspective on an issue without dominating the discussion. Such a student would be contributing very positively both to his own learning and to others'.

**Email:** Feel free to email me with questions or concerns. However, I will not accept papers over email unless I have given you explicit permission to submit your papers to me electronically.

**Late policy:** Each student has 5 “grace days” that can be spaced out over the semester in any way that you like. Grace days can be applied to final papers and other short written assignments. Weekends count as grace days—thus, if a paper is due on a Friday and you hand it in on Monday, you've used up three of your grace days. Once these grace days have been exhausted, any late papers will receive a one letter-grade penalty for every day that they are late. If you do not complete one of the three major papers, you will fail the course. **Grace days do not apply to drafts.** Failure to bring a draft to class on the date that it is due will

result in a major reduction of your final grade for that paper. **It is your responsibility to keep track of your grace days.**

**Papers:** All papers should be printed in Times New Roman 12-point font or the equivalent; please do not use Courier. Please **staple the pages of your papers together** and **number the pages**. Papers should be double-spaced with normal margins (no wider than 1.25” on the left and right and 1” top and bottom).

### Grades

The grading scale for this course is as follows: 90-100% = A, 80-89.9% = B, 70-79.9% = C, 60-69.9% = D, 0-59.9% = F.

Grades will be calculated according to the following rubric:

Short paper no. 1: .....	10%
Short paper no. 2: .....	10%
Short paper no. 3: .....	10%
Short paper no. 4: .....	10%
Research paper version 1: .....	20%
Research paper version 2: .....	20%
Reflective letter (due at end of course): ....	5%
Participation: .....	5%
Homework: .....	5%
In-class activities and other assignments: ...	5%

Total: 100%

### Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty constitutes a major breach of the trust that exists between the instructor and the student. It includes passing off another's ideas as one's own, any attempt to gain information about a test or exam prior to the test or exam date without the instructor's consent, and providing unauthorized assistance on a test, exam, paper, or other assignment to another student. Copying text directly off of the Internet, or rewriting materials found on-line in one's "own words" but without proper attribution, constitute cheating.

**Cheating on any assignment—no matter how seemingly trivial—will result in a failing grade for this course.** Students who fail for academic dishonesty will not have the option of withdrawing. If you are in doubt about what plagiarism means, or about how to appropriately document sources in your work, please contact me; I will be happy to help.

### Learning Center/ADA Statement

The Learning Center, located on the first floor of Alumni Hall, provides academic services to all Eureka College students. Consultations are available in the areas of math and writing. Study groups, individual academic counseling and course-specific tutoring are also available by contacting Jason Zimmerman at x6520 or jzimmerman@eureka.edu. *I highly recommend that you use the Writing Tutors at the Learning Center (a free service offered to Eureka students).*

Any Eureka College student with a disability or other special circumstances requiring accommodations or other consideration in order to successfully complete the requirements of this course is requested to identify himself/herself to the instructor and discuss the matter privately. This disclosure should be made within the first week of the course so proper accommodations can be made.

**Course synopsis (subject to change)**

	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Due in class</i>
W 8/26	Introduction	
F 8/28	Templates	<b>Read:</b> pp. vii-14 <b>Write:</b> Diagnostic essay. Topic: p. 14, ex. 2.
M 8/31	Thesis and audience	<b>Read:</b> Section 4 (pp. 135-148)
W 9/2	Summarizing	<b>Read:</b> Chapters 1 and 2; Zinzchenko, “Don't Blame the Eater” (153-55) and Balko, “What You Eat Is Your Business” (157-60)
F 9/4	Summarizing	<b>Write:</b> Summary ex—email it to me by 5 pm Thursday <b>Read:</b> Orbach, “Fat as a Feminist Issue” (200-04)
M 9/7	<b>Labor Day—no class</b>	
W 9/9	Asserting your view	<b>Short paper # 1 due</b>
F 9/11	Integrating quotes	<b>Read:</b> Chapter 3 <b>Write:</b> P. 47, ex. 1
M 9/14	Responding to arguments	<b>Read:</b> Ch. 4; Obama, “A More Perfect Union” (360-76)
W 9/16	Synthesizing arguments	<b>Read:</b> Intro to ch. 15 (305-7); Sklar, “The Growing Gulf” (308-11); Bartlett, “The Truth About Wages” (312-15) <b>Write:</b> For both Sklar and Bartlett, produce a concise (no more than three sentences) restatement of the author's argument, with three specific supporting details for each
F 9/18	Synthesizing arguments; documentation	<b>Read:</b> EITHER The Economist, “Inequality and the American Dream” (316-20) and Krugman, “Confronting Inequality” (322-40), OR Olsson, “Up Against Wal-Mart” (342-54) and Mallaby, “Progressive Wal-Mart. Really” (356-59) <b>Write:</b> Common Ground exercise

M 9/21	Asserting your view	<b>Read:</b> Chapter 5, Johnson, “Watching TV Makes You Smarter” (213-30), and Stevens, “Thinking Outside the Idiot Box” (231-34)
W 9/23	Synthesizing arguments; documentation	<b>MLA people: Read</b> handbook pp. 110-119 and skim 119-148 <b>APA people: Read</b> handbook pp. 161-165 and skim 165-185 (APA) <b>Write:</b> Work on paper
F 9/25	Style day	<b>Short paper # 2 due (synthesis and documentation)</b>
M 9/28	Conducting ethical research	<b>Read:</b> Schlosser, “Your Trusted Friends” (182-97)
W 9/30	Evaluating sources	<b>Read:</b> Draut, “The Growing College Gap” (378-90) <b>Write:</b> Evaluate essay according to the handout
F 10/2	Evaluating sources	<b>Read:</b> Handbook pp. 92-102 <b>Write:</b> Paragraphs about three ideas for a research topic; according to guidelines distributed in class <b>Hand in library worksheet at end of class</b>
M 10/5	Organizing arguments	<b>Read:</b> Friedman, “The World is Flat” (421-440)
W 10/7	Organizing arguments	<b>Read:</b> Amr, “Kidnapped in Pakistan” (459-462)
F 10/9	<b>Homecoming—no class</b>	
M 10/12	Research paper topics	<b>Short paper # 3 due (locate and evaluate sources)</b>
W 10/14	Anticipating objections	<b>Read:</b> Chapter 6 and Rockler-Gladen, “Me Against the Media” (284-91) <b>Write:</b> List objections that you may have to deal with in your paper
F 10/16	<b>Fall break—no class</b>	
M 10/19	Making it matter	<b>Read:</b> Chapter 7 and revisit Friedman or Rockler-Gladen's essay <b>Write:</b> One paragraph on why your topic matters. Incorporate template from p. 97, ex. 2.
W 10/21	Style	<b>Write:</b> Template handout on your topic
F 10/23	Peer workshops	<b>Topic proposal draft due</b>
M 10/26	<b>Conferences (no class)</b>	<b>Short paper # 4 due (topic proposal)</b>
W 10/28	<b>Conferences (no class)</b>	<b>Short paper # 4 due (topic proposal)</b>
F 10/30	Introducing your argument	<b>Write:</b> Three versions of your introduction

M 11/2	Peer workshops	<b>Write:</b> First three pages of paper
W 11/4	Style	<b>Read:</b> Chapter 8
F 11/6	Style	<b>Read:</b> handbook pp. 1-19
M 11/9	Peer workshops	<b>Research paper draft</b>
W 11/11	<b>Conferences (no class)</b>	Revision worksheet
F 11/13	<b>Conferences (no class)</b>	Revision worksheet
M 11/16	Style	<b>Research paper version 1 due</b>
W 11/18	Style and voice	<b>Read:</b> Chapter 9; Will, "Reality Television" (293-96)
F 11/20	<b>Conferences (no class)</b>	
M 11/23	<b>Conferences (no class)</b>	
W 11/25	<b>Thanksgiving (no class)</b>	
F 11/27	<b>Thanksgiving (no class)</b>	
M 11/30	Peer workshops	<b>Write:</b> First four pages, revised
W 12/2	Revision	<b>Write:</b> Bring in a question about revision and last pages, revised
F 12/4	Wrapping things up	<b>Research paper version 2 due</b>
M 12/7	<b>Research presentations</b>	
W 12/9	<b>Research presentations</b>	

**Reflective letter due in my office on Friday, December 11, by 3 pm.**