ENG 1310  
College Writing I  

Instructor  
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Course Description  
Expository writing as a means of exploring and shaping ideas. Emphasis on critical reading and the improvement of essays through revision.  

Scope and Nature of the Course  
Often, students enroll in this course while believing that writing is an innate talent. They say, "I've never been good at writing. I just can't write well." Others believe that good writing is defined by the teacher. These students say, "I never made good grades because I never figured out what the teacher wanted." Actually, writing well is a skill to be learned, and good writing has specific characteristics that are not defined by one teacher. These facts about writing are good news because they tell you that, even if in the past you have been unsuccessful at writing, you can become a successful writer by learning the skills to write well and the characteristics of good writing.  

To help you learn these skills, you will study the writing process and its conventions. To help you understand the characteristics of good writing, you will read works which employ these characteristics. The works not only illustrate good writing, but they also demand critical reading, a skill that you will also develop. By completing the lessons, you should become a competent writer, a critical reader, and a clear thinker. Educators across the country and around the world agree that the abilities to write effectively, to read critically, and to think clearly are essential to college success. These skills are also necessary in the job world.  

As with any skill, you will become more proficient at reading, thinking, and writing as you learn strategies, practice skills, and receive feedback on your efforts. The activities and assignments included in the 7 lessons of this course are designed to provide these opportunities. In Lesson 1, you will find an overview of the writing process. Then, in Lessons 2 through 7, you will study each part of the process in detail, and you will study acclaimed pieces of writing. In each lesson you will also learn skills through studying the conventions of edited, academic English.  

The writing that you will be doing in this course is essay or expository writing—writing to analyze and explain ideas. Your writing will not necessarily be "creative" in the sense of being fiction or poetry. However, you may utilize personal experiences as one way to develop your ideas. In short, your assignments for this course will be the kind of assignments that you are likely to encounter in many other college courses: assignments that require you to explain, apply, analyze, or synthesize ideas. A sample college essay showing how to revise and a sample final copy are both accessible in the Resources Folder. These essays will help you see clearly what the assignment is asking of you and understand how other writers have utilized standard written English to respond to the
essay prompt. However, the essays that you submit must be your own—organized by your own schema and developed with your own ideas.

Required Materials

The required textbooks for this course include the following:


Both texts are used on campus and in this correspondence course. In addition to reading the assigned sections, you should use *The Bedford Handbook* as a personal reference tool to help you find answers to questions that you have as you write and as you review the grading marks, marginal notes, and final comments offered as feedback to your writing. Lesson 1 will help you become familiar with the text so that you can use it effectively.

The selections in *The Seagull Reader: Essays* will challenge your critical reading and thinking skills because they present ideas that have changed the world. Lesson 2 will furnish an introduction to critical reading that should help you navigate this text.

Course Goals

As stated in the *First-Year English Syllabus* used at Texas State, English 1310 is based on the assumption that "reading . . . and writing are inextricably linked." After you have completed the course, you should be able to do the following:

"Draft, revise, and edit an essay for a particular audience and purpose in which you demonstrate the ability to

1. formulate a central idea (thesis);
2. develop that thesis in an orderly way;
3. form clear and effective paragraphs and sentences;
4. use an appropriate vocabulary;
5. apply the grammatical and mechanical conventions of written English;
6. apply critical reading skills to your own writing and to the writing of others; and
7. *demonstrate critical thinking skills, communication skills, teamwork, and personal responsibility*" (6). *(Identified as the Core Objectives for the Communication Component of the 2014 Texas Core Curriculum)*

Course Procedure

The 7 lessons of this course must be studied in order. Each lesson ends with an assignment that you will submit for grading. You may work ahead, **but do not submit any assignment until the previous one has been graded and returned to you.** As you examine the lessons, you will see the reason for this policy. Each lesson after the first builds on knowledge from the one before it. Also, each lesson asks you to look back at the feedback from the previous assignment and complete an error inventory. You cannot
complete the process without the previous submission’s feedback. As a result, you will not be able to complete this course as quickly as some other correspondence courses.

Most students require approximately one full semester (four to five months) to finish. Knowing this time frame may help you to set reasonable expectations for your own progress.

Reading Assignments

Each lesson incorporates reading assignments from both *The Bedford Handbook* and *The Seagull Reader: Essays*. Although all reading assignments for each lesson are listed at the beginning of the lesson, they should be read at the points indicated within the lesson text. You will need to read most of the assigned readings, especially those from *The Seagull Reader*, at least twice—once to understand the main ideas and at least one more time to examine more closely how the author develops, supports, and organizes the ideas and how the author uses style to make the essay effective and memorable. In Lesson 2 you will learn about reading critically.

Reading assignments from *The Bedford Handbook* will be of two types. One type will explore the processes of and strategies for drafting, revising, and editing; the other type will review the conventions of usage and mechanics. In addition to the reading assignments in the lessons, I may recommend in my correspondence to you additional pages and sections that address specific concerns related to your writing.

Assignments

The assignments in this course will be of three types:

1. Exercises that allow you to practice writing strategies at various stages of the writing process and to apply conventions of grammar and mechanics;
2. Critical thinking questions over the essays in *The Seagull Reader: Essays*;
3. Six essays, each 500-750 words, plus a brief, ungraded, diagnostic essay. Each essay will consist of an edited and thoroughly revised draft—an early version of the paper—and a clean, revised, edited, carefully proofread final version.

All assignments will be typed in Microsoft Word. Follow the instructions at the end of each lesson for submitting assignments.

Essays must be formatted exactly as the Modern Language Association (MLA) indicates:

- double spaced in 12-point Times New Roman, Times, or Cambria font;
- 1" side and bottom margins;
- last name and page number as a page header, beginning with the first page, 1/2" from the top;
- omission of a title page.

When graded assignments are returned to you from your instructor, print them for easy access and keep them in a folder or portfolio. You will need to have Assignments 2 through 7 on hand when you take the final exam.
Exams

You will take only one exam, a final 500-word essay, written during a 2.5 hour proctored, final exam session. **Again, you will need to have Assignments 2 through 7 on hand when you take the final exam.** Although you must pass the final exam with a C or better to pass the course, if you have successfully completed Lessons 1 through 7, the final exam should pose no problem for you.

Final Grade Determination

Assignment 1: Credit Only
Assignment 2: 10%
Assignment 3: 10%
Assignment 4: 15%
Assignment 5: 15%
Assignment 6: 15%
Assignment 7: 15%
Journal Assignments, Conventions Assignments, and Error Inventories: 10%
Final Exam: 10%

Texas State English Department Grading Criteria

Criteria applied to the grading of your written essays will be rigorous, as specified by the Texas State English Department for all students enrolled in English 1310. Departmental standards (as stated in the *First-Year English Syllabus*) for each grade are as follows:

- **A** indicates outstanding work. It is clearly a superior performance according to the criteria of clarity of expression and logical development of a central idea. It shows originality of thought and imaginative competence in the development of the material. It engages and holds the reader's attention and invites rereading. The style of the writing is consistently fluent, polished, and distinctive.
- **B** demonstrates a higher level of effectiveness in the organization and development of a central idea than the **C** paper. The **B** paper shows greater complexity of thought and development, while sustaining clarity in expression. It has few or none of the common errors in the use of conventional written English. The style of the writing is generally fluent and polished.
- **C** indicates a satisfactory performance. A **C** paper demonstrates positive qualities and avoids serious errors. The positive qualities include the presentation of a central idea that is adequately developed and competently organized. The errors to be avoided include serious flaws in the construction of paragraphs and sentences, in the selection of appropriate words, and in the use of conventional written English. The style of the writing is generally clear.
- **D** indicates an unsatisfactory performance. A **D** paper is flawed by one or more of the following: weakness in establishing or developing a central idea; serious errors in sentence or paragraph construction; serious errors in grammar, spelling, or the mechanics of written expression.
- **F** indicates an unacceptable performance. An **F** paper is flawed by one or more of the following: failure to follow the assigned topic; failure to conceive, state, or develop a central idea; serious repeated errors in sentence construction or paragraph development; serious repeated errors in usage, spelling, or mechanics.
Faculty-Student Contact

According to “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education,” faculty-student contact is very important. Even though this is a correspondence course, I encourage you to contact me if you have any concerns, questions, or problems. You are welcome to e-mail me by using the Mail tool in the left menu bar. (It is important to keep all mail related to this course contained within this TRACS site.) My policy is that during non-holiday breaks or announced away times, any email I receive between Monday morning and Friday at noon will receive a reply within 48 hours. Emails received between Friday at noon and Sunday night will receive a reply on the next business day.

Free Tutoring Resources

A variety of free tutoring resources are available for students enrolled in correspondence courses. All correspondence students have access to several hours of free online tutoring from Smarthinking for subjects ranging from grammar and writing to mathematics and Spanish. Free online tutoring for writing-related assignments is also available from the Texas State Writing Center. For information on accessing these resources, please visit the Office of Distance and Extended Learning's Free Tutoring page. Currently-enrolled, degree-seeking students able to visit the Texas State campus are eligible for free in-person tutoring from the Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC) on the fourth floor of Alkek Library and from the Math Lab in Derrick 233.

TRACS Technical Support

Texas State's Information Technology Assistance Center (ITAC) provides phone and LiveChat technical support for TRACS 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. To take advantage of these services, visit ITAC online or call 512.245.ITAC (4822). Note also that a number of online TRACS tutorials are available from TRACS Facts.

Before beginning this online course, it is recommended that you review the minimum hardware and software requirements and other important information available on the ITS Course Information page.

Correspondence Course Information

As a correspondence studies student, it is your responsibility to be familiar with correspondence-related policies and services. To this end, I encourage you to review the Correspondence Course Information (.pdf) page as well as the Correspondence Studies Student Handbook.

Students with Special Needs

The Office of Distance and Extended Learning is committed to helping students with disabilities achieve their educational goals. A disability is not a barrier to correspondence study, and we strive to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals in coursework and test taking. Students who require special accommodations need to provide verification of their disability to the Office of Disability Services, Suite 5-5.1 LBJ Student Center, 512.245.3451 (voice/TTY). Students should then notify the Office of Distance and Extended Learning of any disability-related accommodation needs as soon as possible to
avoid a delay in accommodations.

Academic Integrity

The Texas State Academic Honor Code applies to all Texas State students, including correspondence students. The Honor Code serves as an affirmation that the University demands the highest standard of integrity in all actions related to the academic community.

ENG 1310 Policy

As stated in the University’s Official Student Handbook and Code of Conduct, learning and teaching take place best in an atmosphere of intellectual fair-minded openness. All members of the academic community are responsible for supporting freedom and openness through rigorous personal standards of honesty and fairness. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty undermine the very purpose of the University and diminish the value of an education.

Plagiarizing is submitting work that is in any way not your own. Refer to The Bedford Handbook for more information. Any cases of verifiable plagiarism, whether deliberate or accidental, will result in a failing grade on the assignment and may result in a failing grade for first-year English. (Note: Consultation with your instructor or with a tutor does not constitute plagiarism and is encouraged.)

Final Comments

As you survey the amount of work required for this course, you may feel overwhelmed. However, remember that this class is a one-semester, three-hour course and that, as a correspondence student, you have up to a full year to complete it. To make reasonable progress, plan a schedule and set due dates for yourself. Use the Course Study Schedule (.pdf) to set reasonable goals for completing each lesson and to keep track of your grades.