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Syllabus

English 220: Advanced Composition: Expository Writing

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Office Hours: M 5-6 p.m., T 8:30-9:30 a.m., Th 2-3, and by appointment

Course Website: engl220sense.wordpress.com

Course Description

From the University Catalog: Practice in the techniques of exposition to promote effective writing. Class activities include intensive discussion of student papers. Model essays and other works are examined to study strategies of expository writing.

From the instructor: Writing is a process, and this class is designed for you to discover that process for continued writing success throughout college. We will work through numerous drafts using freewrites, peer reviews, and conferences. A submitted paper will be a culmination of many thoughtful hours of work over the course of 3 or 4 weeks, not many frantic hours the night before the paper is due. That paper will then be revised for the final portfolio. Commit to discovering your writing process, and you will find success in the class and in future writing experiences in college.

Service Learning with SENSE and Second Story

To enhance our own writing style and process, the class will serve 4th and 6th graders at the SENSE school in Fountain Square near campus. We'll lead seven writing workshops with the 4th and 6th graders in conjunction with Second Story, a local non-profit that aims to improve writing attitudes in kids 6-18. (I've served on the board and in other capacities for the past three years. Teaching writing in the schools and community is something I've been passionate about for a decade.) Every student in this 220 class will develop and lead a writing seed, and every student is expected to attend all service-learning sessions.

Required Textbooks

Atwan, Robert, ed. *The Best American Essays 2010*. Boston: Mariner-Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010.

Collom, Jack, and Sheryl Noethe. *Poetry Everywhere: Teaching Poetry Writing in School and in the Community*. Second Edition. New York: Teachers & Writers Collaborative. 2007.

Eggers, Dave, ed. *The Best American Nonrequired Reading 2010*. Boston: Mariner-Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing With Power*. Second Edition. New York: Oxford University Press. 1998.

University Learning Goals

- **Critical Thinking:** Every word you write shows a critical decision, and that critical thinking will only be refined throughout the semester by focusing on the writing process.
- **Creativity:** What is central in the writing process is creating thorough writing topics that lead to successful research and a developed paper.
- **Performance:** Talking is central to class discussion and peer review. Students will also lead and participate in writing workshops with the SENSE 6th graders.
- **Social Responsibility:** From discussing assigned readings to choosing paper topics, this class welcomes and encourages a focus on the local community. To that end, the class will be serving SENSE 6th graders as workshop leaders and assistants.

Our Class Blog

Our wordpress.com blogging website will allow us to centralize much of the writing that we would do on our own computers or on paper. We will use the site for freewrites of all kinds, journal assignments, initial drafts, and many other things. Keep in mind that other students in the class can read your work, so this is continuous practice in dealing with audience. The website is public, but your work is protected from search engines and unwanted visitors. I will be using the website for my own writing and research, and it may be used for teaching other professors to use WordPress.

Class Requirements

Paper 1: History, Culture, or Current Event Research Paper – Due September 27

This paper will address a topic of historical or cultural importance. More than just a simple research paper, this paper can utilize many styles that we will analyze in class to write about your topic. Research is important in this 6-8 page paper, but discovering the appropriate writing style for the topic is paramount. Preferably, you will pick a topic that will coincide with your topic for Paper 2. You can also write about literacy, writing, education, or related topics.

Paper 2: Writing Seed – Due October 13

This 4-6 page “paper” will be the writing seed (or prompt) you use when you lead a workshop with SENSE students. Roughly two pages will be the seed with prompts, directions, examples, 6+1 traits, and State Language Arts Standards (the traits and standards will be similar for everyone). Another 1-2 pages will be a write-up of your research with citations that went into developing the seed. The final 1-2 pages will be a reflection on your process in developing your seed and on how you see it being used by students.

Paper 3: Problem and Solution Paper – Due November 15

This paper will tackle a problem in the local community and can continue earlier research, writing, or service-learning. In providing a solution, you will have to gather research from local sources, including an interview of a relevant and informed person on the topic. This 6-8 page will be similar to Paper 1, but you want to develop ability in another writing style.

Paper 4: Service-Learning Reflection – Due December 1

This 6-8 page paper will use research, interview, personal experience, and reflection to summarize your service-learning experience at SENSE. Preferably, this paper will be modeled after the more creative genres of expository writing, like creative non-fiction, new journalism, or other narrative-driven genres. Another goal is to explore a new kind of writing style that you haven't worked in before.

Portfolio – Due December 15

Because revision is so important in this class, we will have a final portfolio of all four papers. You will submit a finished version of all four paper for a small amount of course credit, and then you will revise all of them for the final portfolio.

Interaction and Your Blog

We will have many various blog topics throughout the semester. You must complete these regularly and on time. These are a way to brainstorm, respond, think, create, experiment, explore, and generally type your many thoughts on the many aspects of reading, writing, and research that we will cover this semester. Please use **categories** when posting your blogs.

Drafting, Conferences, and Peer Review

A key component of discovering your writing process is committing to peer reviews and conferencing. For each peer review session or conference meeting, you must have a draft of the required length and 5-10 questions for your reviewer or for the instructor.

Service-Learning

Our service at SENSE is an integral part of this class. You need to prepare for every workshop during our class on the Tuesdays before our Thursday session. On Thursdays, you need to participate in every workshop, lead your seed on your assigned day, and help local children be better writers. After each Thursday session, you need to write a 200-300 word reflection about that day's experiences.

Grading

Your semester grade will be based on your performance in the work listed above. The papers, day-to-day work, and portfolio are roughly equal in weight. The percentages for each assignment are listed below:

Paper 1 = 10%

Paper 2 = 10%

Paper 3 = 10%

Paper 4 = 10%

Drafting, Conferencing, and Peer Reviews = 10%

Service-Learning = 10%
Interaction and Your Blog = 10%
Final Portfolio = 30%
Total = 100%

I will use the grading scale below when assigning grades. On paper assignments, I will respond with a letter grade and a number percentage.

A 95-100
A- 90-94.99
B+ 86.67-89.99
B 83.34-86.66
B- 80-83.33
C+ 76.67-79.99
C 73.34-76.66
C- 70-73.33
D+ 66.67-69.99
D 63.34-66.66
D- 60-63.33
F < 59.99

Schedule and Attendance

Throughout the semester, we may meet in different classrooms or computer labs. We will be at the SENSE school 6 times throughout the semester as part of class. We will also have a few online classes. You are expected to attend and participate in all of these sessions. Failure to do so will affect your interaction grade, service-learning grade, and your blog.

Late Papers or Assignments

You must submit drafts and final papers by the specified time. A penalty of one letter grade per day will be assessed on all late work until it is submitted or completed.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when you pass off someone else's words or ideas as your own, and it is a form of stealing. I don't expect to see plagiarism in this class. If I do, each case will be dealt with on an individual basis and referred to the English department for review. For a first offense, the MINIMUM penalty will be failure for the assignment in question. If you turn in plagiarized work a second time, you will fail the course. All confirmed cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean, the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Director of Campus Life, and the Provost, as required by the University Handbook. If you are doing research and are unsure how to incorporate someone else's work into your own in a valid manner, please ask—I'll be more than happy to help you out so that there is no danger of confusion.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please inform me immediately so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. Students with a disability must register with the Services for Students with Disabilities office (SSD) in Schwitzer Center 206 (317-788-6153 / www.uindy.edu/ssd) for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations. You are responsible for initiating arrangements for accommodations for tests and other assignments in collaboration with the SSD and the faculty.

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