



ENGLISH COMPOSITION

ENGL 110C

Meeting Information

Tuesday + Thursday
8:00–9:15am
Building: ED2
Room: 1114

Professor Information

Dr. Daniel P. Richards
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Office: BAL 5032
Hours: TR 9:30–11:00am
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Course Catalog Description

The principal objective of the course is to prepare students to be effective writers of the kinds of compositions they will be called on to produce during their college careers. By the end of the course, students should be more mature in their understanding and use of language, should develop efficient writing processes, and should know and demonstrate the qualities of effective composition in a given rhetorical situation.

Objectives

The aim of this course is to develop students' writing skills for the dual purpose of preparing students for writing success at the university level and laying the groundwork for students to write effectively in their own lives and future careers. To achieve these two purposes, we in the English department think it best to attend to the following aspects of writing: rhetorical knowledge, critical thinking, compositional strategies, and conventions. Students enrolled in this course will develop:

Rhetorical knowledge by analyzing and composing multiple forms of writing to understand how genre conventions shape readers' and writers' practices and purposes; and practicing purposeful shifts in structure, content, diction, tone, formality, design, and/or medium in accordance with the rhetorical situation.

Critical thinking, reading, and information literacy skills by composing and reading for inquiry, learning, critical thinking, and communicating; using outside materials in their own writing through techniques such as interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design/redesign; and incorporating outside materials through quotations, paraphrase, and summary.

Effective strategies for composing texts by working through multiple drafts of a project and recognizing the role of reflecting, revising, and editing in the process; engaging in the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes, such as learning to give and to act on productive feedback to works in progress, both by and with peers and in one-on-one instructor conferences; and critically reflecting on how they may further develop and apply writing skills in the future.

Knowledge of conventions by demonstrating competency in grammar, punctuation, and spelling; practicing genre conventions for structure, paragraphing, tone and mechanics; and understanding the concepts of intellectual property that motivate documentation conventions through application of recognized citation styles.

Policies

Please review the following course policies closely and email with any questions.

Course Technology

Blackboard and email will be the main methods of communication. Email messages sent during the semester must originate from odu.edu addresses.

In-Class Discussion

Be respectful of others' ideas and allow time and space for open dialogue. This means connecting your ideas and conversation points in meaningful, honest ways to those of your peers. Any student who is disruptive in terms of noise level, aggression, or rudeness may be asked to leave.

Revision Policy

If you would like to revise your essays for an improved grade, you must meet with the professor to discuss your plan for completing the revisions and submit a 300-word summary of your revisions with the revised assignment. Neither in-class activities nor the final exam can be revised. Revisions must be submitted within seven days of receiving the original grade.

Lateness Policy

Late work will not be received; a grade of zero will be given. This policy applies to all work.

Attendance

Attendance will not be taken for this course.

Plagiarism

Writers who use the words or ideas of others are obligated to give credit through proper acknowledgment and documentation. Failure to give credit is plagiarism¹ and a violation of the ODU Honor Code that might lead to failing the course and expulsion from ODU. If you have questions about how and when to acknowledge sources, see the professor for guidance.

Professor Conferences

At least twice this semester, students will be required to meet with the professor for an individual conference meeting. The purpose of these conferences is for students to discuss questions or concerns about the class or a particular writing project they are working on. Students can bring drafts of their work for the professor to review should they seek that type of feedback. Conferences will be 15 minutes in length. Students will sign up on a first come, first serve basis using Google Drive. Missed conferences cannot be rescheduled.

Educational Accessibility

Old Dominion University is committed to ensuring equal access to all qualified students with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) is the campus office that works with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you experience a disability which will impact your ability to access any aspect of my class, please present me with an accommodation letter from OEA so that we can work together to ensure that appropriate accommodations are available to you. If you feel that you will experience barriers to your ability to learn and/or testing in my class but do not have an accommodation letter, please consider scheduling an appointment with OEA to determine if academic accommodations are necessary. The OEA is located at 1021 SSC or at 757-683-4655. Additional information is available at the OEA website: odu.edu/educationalaccessibility.

The Writing Center

The Old Dominion University Writing Center (WC) offers free appointments and walk-in writing consultations to all currently-enrolled students on campus. The WC offers supplemental instruction to help students improve their writing strategies and offers writing consulting sessions that assist students in learning to proofread their own work, in getting projects started, and in developing the

¹ The ODU Catalog defines plagiarism as follows: "A student will have committed plagiarism if he or she reproduces someone else's work without acknowledging its source; or if a source is cited which the student has not cited or used. Examples of plagiarism include: submitting a research paper obtained from a commercial research service, the Internet, or from another student as if it were original work; making simple changes to borrowed materials while leaving the organization, content, or phraseology intact; or copying material from a source, supplying proper documentation, but leaving out quotation marks. Plagiarism also occurs in a group project if one or more of the members of the group does none of the group's work and participates in none of the group's activities, but attempts to take credit for the work of the group."

writing process for a paper. Most tutoring sessions are by appointment; walk-in appointments are provided when tutors are not in a scheduled session. The WC is located in the library, room 1208, and is open Monday through Friday. To make an appointment call (757) 683-4013 during open hours or book an appointment online at odu.mywconline.com.

Essay Grading Scale

Categories of assessment include: quality of argument, depth of analysis, attention to detail, writing quality, clarity of ideas, format, and originality.

90–100%: A, A– (Excellent). You have met all the requirements, exceeded requirements in many areas, and accomplished top-tier work for the expected level.

80–89%: B+, B, B– (Good). You have met all the requirements, and have exceeded a few. You have accomplished stronger than average work for the expected level.

70–79%: C+, C, C– (Average). You have met all the requirements, but have exceeded none. You have accomplished average work for expected level.

69% or below: D (Inadequate). You have fulfilled some requirements, but other requirements remain unfulfilled. You should consult the professor as soon as possible.

59% or below: F (Failing). You have fulfilled few, if any, requirements of the assignment. You should consult the professor as soon as possible.

Texts

Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *“They Say / I Say”: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2007.²

Norris, Mary. *Between You & Me: Confessions of a Comma Queen*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2015.

Assignments

The subject matter for the course is, for all intents and purposes, *your own writing*. The assignments described below reflect this, as they are not aimed at memorization of theories or concepts but at application and reflection. Note: All page lengths are double-spaced.

Assignments	Weight	Due Date	Length
Class Participation	20%	Every class	Varies by activity
Reading Responses	10%	Tuesdays, 8:00am	1 page each (x10)
Essay I. Interpersonal	15%	February 6	3 pages
Essay II. Public	20%	March 15	4 pages
Essay III. Academic	25%	April 19	5 pages
Final Exam	10%	April 26	3 pages

² This text might also be listed as *“They Say / I Say”: The Moves that Matter in Persuasive Writing*—either version is fine, as they are the same.

Class Participation

This motley category encompasses the work students do while in class session. Examples include but are not limited to: peer review sessions, essays drafts (vomit drafts or “darlings in the dustheap”), workshops of essay drafts, presentations, class discussion, group activities, and writing activities. There will be a total of 20 in-class activities to be completed, so each one is worth about 1% of your grade; in Blackboard, these will be labeled as “CP1, CP2” and so on up to “CP20.” Each in-class activity will be graded as strong (1 point), average (0.75 points), inadequate (0.5 points), or incomplete (0 points). If you come to class prepared, engage with your peers, participate in discussion, and complete the activities, you should do well in this category. These activities cannot be made up after the fact.

Reading Responses

Students will compose 10 one-page responses to their reading of Mary Norris’s *Between You & Me: Confessions of a Comma Queen*. There are 10 chapters in the book, and students will respond to each chapter in a way they see fit. Responses will be hard copy and submitted at the beginning of class on the assigned day of the chapter. For example, Ch. 1 is allocated under January 23 on the schedule, so students must submit the response the morning of that class, in person. No electronic versions will be accepted. What I am looking for in the responses are two things: first, a summation, in your own words, of what you thought the chapter was about (what was the main argument? what was the issue being discussed? why is the topic important?); and second, a personal response from you about your experiences, opinions, or questions about the topic. These responses will be free-form, with no guidelines on style, grammar, or format. Do not put in MLA or APA format. The only thing I ask is that you include your last name and chapter number being discussed in the header of the document (i.e., Richards, Ch. 3). The submissions can only be one page and one page only (double spaced), with one inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman typeface. In Blackboard, these will be labeled as “RR1, RR2” and so on up to “RR10.” They will be graded as strong (1 point), average (0.75 points), inadequate (0.5 points), or incomplete (0 points).

Essay I. Interpersonal / Mixtape

This essay asks students to consider the following question:

How do context and audience play into the compositional decisions we make?

To begin, students will think of an event or person of importance to them. Then, students will curate a song playlist to either be played at the selected event or sent to the chosen person. The playlist must be exactly nine songs in length and span at least two genres of music. The playlist can be curated using YouTube, Spotify, iTunes, compact disc, cassette tape, or any other technology that allows for easy sharing. When curating the playlist, students should consider: what is the theme of the event or the story of the person? what ambience best reflects the event or person? what “message” do you wish to communicate at the event or to the person? Particular attention should be paid to the lyrics, tone, tempo, genre, and meaning of the songs, as well how they are sequenced together. Students will then write a -page rationale (MLA format) for why they selected certain songs, how the songs connect to the chosen event or person, and how interpersonal reception played into their decisions. Essentially, students will make an argument for how their playlist communicates a given message.

Essay II. Public / Argument

This essay asks students to consider the following question:

What makes for a good argument in a public setting?

To begin, students will identify and research an area of inquiry of significance to them, but that also is of relevance to a wide group of people. From this inquiry, students will select an issue about which reasonable people disagree, one that is narrow enough to write a brief argument about but broad enough to garner reader interest. Students will “enter into” the debate by identifying the various argumentative strains of the topic—revealing an understanding of each—and inserting their own voice into the fray. This essay must be 4 pages in length (MLA format) and meaningfully integrate at least three sources. The sources can be books, articles, web articles, research studies, or other data-based resources. The type of evidence used (e.g., census data, personal experience, history, research studies, etc.) must be appropriate for the nature of the topic and scope of the argument. An electronic version of the essay will be shared on a class website.

Essay III. Academic / Paper

This essay asks students to consider the following question:

How do you credibly enter an academic conversation in your field?

To begin, students will develop a research strategy in order to identify a topic, issue, event, or person that scholars in their field of study (e.g., oceanography, philosophy, business) find to be of importance. Once the topic has been identified, students will conduct research in their field of study to determine what constitutes as evidence, how arguments are made, what type of research gets included, and what styles are used in their writing. Students will collect six academic sources (books or journal articles) within their field and write a synthesis of the ideas presented, followed by an argument for the continued importance of the topic, issue, event, or person. In all, the 5-page paper will consist of:

- an *introduction* providing scope and context;
- a *review* of the relevant scholarship;
- an *argument* for the continued importance of the topic, issue, event, or person; and
- an identification of a *future* path for research.

What these sections will look like will depend on the chosen field of study, but they are rough categories that generally serve as the sections of an academic paper. The paper can be in MLA, APA, or Chicago formatting style, depending on the preference of the field of study or discipline.

Final Exam

This exam will ask students to consider a single question about the nature of writing, as discussed in class, and how it connects to their own writing practice. A rather unconventional exam, students will have six days (from April 20 through April 26) to respond to the exam question. The exam will be graded for its attention to detail, depth of reflection, and application of ideas. The exam will be submitted by sharing a Google Drive folder with the professor that includes all three essays written during the semester and a separate document that includes the student’s response to the exam question. The link to the shared folder will be submitted through Blackboard. Students that do not complete these tasks will have their exam marked as incomplete.

Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. Note: *TSIS* refers to Graff and Birkenstein's *They Say/I Say* book.

Week I	January 9	January 11
Week II	January 16	January 18 <i>TSIS</i> (pp. 133-36)
Week III	January 23 No class: Conferences; Norris, Ch. 1	January 25 No class: Conferences
Week IV	January 30 Norris, Ch. 2	February 1
Week V	February 6 Due: Essay I; Norris, Ch. 3	February 8 <i>TSIS</i> (pp. ix-14)
Week VI	February 13 Norris, Ch. 4	February 15 <i>TSIS</i> (pp. 15-48)
Week VII	February 20 Norris, Ch. 5	February 22 <i>TSIS</i> (pp. 49-98)
Week VIII	February 27 No class: Small Group Meeting	March 1 <i>TSIS</i> (pp. 99-132)
Week IX	March 6 No class: Spring Holiday	March 8 No class: Spring Holiday
Week X	March 13 Norris, Ch. 6	March 15 No class; Due: Essay II
Week XI	March 20 Norris, Ch. 7	March 22
Week XII	March 27 Norris, Ch. 8	March 29
Week XIII	April 3 Norris, Ch. 9	April 5
Week XIV	April 10 No class: Conferences	April 12 No class: Conferences
Week XV	April 17 Norris, Ch. 10	April 19 Due: Essay III
Exam Week	April 24 No class meeting	April 26 Due: Final Exam