

ENG 111—Achievement Requirements

Fall Semester 2007

MWF 10:30-11:20

227 OLSC

Contact Information

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Required Texts and Materials

1. *Writing: A Guide for College and Beyond*. Lester Faigley. 2007.
2. *The Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers*. 8th edition. Lynn Quitman Troyka and Douglas Hesse. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2007.
3. A college-level dictionary.
4. Portfolio of English 111 materials (available at the BGSU Bookstore).
5. Access to a computer for word-processing and internet.
6. Two floppy disks, zip disks, USB drives, or other file storage device.
7. A BGSU email address and a MYBGSU account.
8. One bound notebook (spiral or other, or a Composition Book) to function as a Writing Log.
9. A free account on www.blogger.com. (We'll sign up for this the first week.)

Course Description

The General Studies Writing Program (English 110, 111, and 112) is especially designed for beginning college students to work on polishing writing skills. Through these courses you will gain sufficient practice in all parts of the writing process. You will be able to communicate ideas clearly and effectively to college-educated readers, which is an extremely valuable skill to have in order to be successful in college and beyond.

You may have found through past experience that essays are difficult to write for one reason or another. English 111 introduces you to ways of making essay writing more comfortable and useful. In English 111 and 112, writing is regarded as a process of several steps, rather than something that is created in one try. By writing an essay in stages, you will find your ideas develop and mature. By having peers read and evaluate

your writing, you'll become a more comfortable writer, able to understand your own strengths and weaknesses.

In order to accomplish all this, I will work with you closely throughout the semester and provide you with the help you need as you practice your skills. The major assignments of this course consist of five essays, each focusing on a different variety of writing. You will learn how to analyze your audience; decide which pre-writing technique works best for you; organize and develop your ideas in a coherent, unified way; and draft, revise, and edit your own work so that you can have confidence in your ability to communicate through writing. Throughout the course, you will assemble all of the work you do for each essay in a portfolio to demonstrate your development over the semester and to show what you have done to improve your writing skills.

Some of our class time will be devoted to writers' workshop. Most writers find the opinions of their audience useful as they compose their essays and then are able to revise to communicate ideas more effectively. It may seem awkward at first to have your peers and I read your work in progress, but remember that everyone else will feel the same way. When we share our writing with each other, we'll work to give friendly and helpful feedback. We will also use our workshop time for some of the actual drafting, revising, and editing of essays. Because your peers and I are practicing writers too, we'll all be able to relate to the demands of writing good essays for a college-level audience.

In addition to writing, I will also assign readings from the texts in order to help us understand the various components of successful essays. The readings should also help you generate ideas for your own essays and develop and reinforce your critical reading and thinking skills.

Course Requirements

1. Essays: (75% of your final grade, 323 points) You will write five fully-developed and revised essays this semester. At the end of the semester, you will turn in all five of these graded essays once more in your portfolio folder to be evaluated for proficiency at the English 111 level. This portfolio assessment, which will take place during finals week, will determine whether or not you pass English 111. Each of these essays will be based on a chapter in *Writing* and will make use of the techniques discussed in that chapter, as well as concepts and techniques we will discuss in class and read in *The Simon and Schuster Handbook*.

Essay #1: Making an Observation (40 points)

Essay #2: Arguing a Position (65 points)

Essay #3: Proposing a Solution (77 points)

Essay #4: Speculating About Causes (75 points)

Essay #5: Justifying an Evaluation (66 points)

All rough drafts and final copies of essays must be typed, whether by computer, word processor, or typewriter.

Please follow this format for all of your essay rough drafts and final copies:

- Use MLA (Modern Language Association) format. An example of a paper in MLA format can be found on page 608-25 in *Simon and Schuster*.
 - Essays must be typed, double-spaced, on one side of the paper, with standard 1-inch margins, with 12 point Times New Roman (this font) or a similar readable font.
 - Pages must be numbered with your last name and the page number in the upper right-hand corner. (for this use Insert → Header and Footer)
 - Your essays must have a title, but do not make a separate title page.
 - Rough Drafts will be submitted online, through our BlackBoard site. (more information about this process later.) Final Drafts will be submitted in hard copy format.
 - When you submit a final copy of an essay, please include with it a rubric (found in your 111 folder), the assignment sheet, all of your drafts, and your prewriting.
2. *Blog Homework Responses:* (15%, 64 points) Reading responses are an additional part of our class. During the semester, I will give reading assignments for homework. After each assignment, I want you to reflect on what you have read, not just read the text to get it done. Then I want you to post a response (of about 1-2 paragraphs) to our class blog (weblog), available on www.blogger.com, and read and respond to a peer's posting as well. This will help to extend our conversation outside of class, and enable us to better prepare for class discussions ahead of time. We'll talk more about how to post to a blog in the first week of classes.
3. *Writing Conferences:* (factored in with Attendance grade) Writers generally make great improvements when they have someone to talk to about their writing. Your classmates and I can give you personal, encouraging, and specific feedback. Our class time will be important and useful to you, but I would like you also to schedule at least two conferences during the semester with me outside of class in my office. These times will allow us to consider questions and problems you may have on specific essays. I will pass around conference time sign-up sheets before any rough draft or final essay is due; or you may schedule another conference at any point during the semester by contacting me, or just show up during my office hours.

Along with out of class conferences, we will have an in class peer conference day on the day each rough draft is due. Students in the past have found these conferences to be helpful not only in receiving great feedback from others on their writing, but getting the chance to look at what other students are doing and learning from them. These are very important days to attend class. Therefore, if you for any reason cannot make it to class on those days, I require that you sign

up for a conference at the Writing Center. This is to your benefit, in order to receive extra feedback on your essay from someone other than me.

After each peer conference day, write a summary reflection of one or two paragraphs discussing your overall comments about your peer's paper. Include the following:

- a. *Your overall evaluation of your peer's paper, summarizing briefly what suggestions you made*
- b. *An explanation of what you learned about your own writing or about essay writing in general from reading and evaluating your peer's paper.*

Post this reflection on your blog by the beginning of the next class meeting.

4. *Collaborative Learning:* (factored in with Attendance grade) In week two, I will assign you to a writing group of 3-4 students each. This will be the group you have for most in-class activities, and will work together on peer review days. On our BlackBoard course site, I will set up separate Discussion Board forums for each group to continue collaboration outside of class, if needed. If for any reason you can't contact me or want to see what others are doing on the same assignment, you will be able to contact your group members via email or the Discussion Board.
5. *Self-Guided Library Tour:* (factored in with Blog grade) In order to familiarize yourself with academic library research skills, you will be required to take a self-guided tour of Jerome Library. A labeled packet in your portfolio contains questions and guidelines designed to get you acquainted with research databases, searches for articles, books and periodicals, and general library layout. The answer sheet must be completed and turned in to me by 9/14. We will discuss this further in later classes.

Course Policies

1. *Attendance:* (10% of final grade, 43 points) This course assumes that you are a responsible adult who wants to do whatever is necessary to pass the class. Therefore, daily attendance is required. Much of your learning and work will take place in class, and you will be involved in group work where you will be expected to help your classmates. You will also be introduced to a wide variety of techniques in class that can help you through the stages of writing college-level papers; I will not be able to re-teach these techniques to you in an office "make-up" meeting. Attendance does have an effect; it shows me your level of interest in and commitment to the course.

Experience has shown that students who do not attend class regularly tend not to pass the course. I cannot help you improve your writing if you do not attend class. If you miss classes on a regular basis and therefore are not present to work with your peers, I will not be able to evaluate the essay you are currently working on. Excessive absences will result in your portfolio not being eligible for the

assessment process. Simply put, this course is *not* structured so that all you need to do is turn in essays on their due dates.

I do understand that severe illness and family emergencies can prevent you from coming to class. If a true emergency arises and causes you to miss class, please discuss this with me as soon as possible. I'd be happy to work with you in the case of emergencies, but obviously I cannot do the work for you. Please remember that it is your responsibility to find out what you missed.

2. Late Work: Please pay attention to the due dates listed on your syllabus. All work -- rough drafts and final copies -- must be turned in on time and during class. I will not accept late work unless you have made a personal arrangement with me. I will not accept or grade late work that is placed in my office, on my office door, in my mailbox, through e-mail, or in my digital-drop box in Blackboard unless you and I have made arrangements prior to the due date. If you are unable to turn in an assignment for emergency reasons, please inform me as soon as possible. Please make use of my e-mail if you are unable to contact me by phone. The decision of whether or not I accept late work, regardless of excuse, is solely mine. If your rough draft is not handed in or is handed in late without prior permission, you automatically forfeit your right to a revision of the final draft (see point #4).
3. Lost Essays: You are responsible for maintaining a back-up or additional copy of each draft of your essays. All of the essays will be returned after they have been evaluated, and all essays must be present in the portfolio at the end of the semester. It is your responsibility to compile these essays in the portfolio folder so a portfolio assessor can review the essays at the end of the semester. Because occasionally essays and diskettes are stolen, lost, or destroyed, you should keep an additional copy of each essay and a back-up disk in a safe place. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to submit a complete portfolio. Incomplete portfolios will not be evaluated; students without portfolios will not pass the course.
4. Revision Policy: Knowing how to revise your writing is an important aspect of being a successful writer; therefore, we will work on developing revision skills in this course. In fact, you will be required to write multiple drafts of each of your papers. I recommend that you put your efforts into working on your essays before turning them in as final copies. Take advantage of our class time, my office hours, and the Writing Center to get the help you need for your essays. You may, however, revise two of your essays (you may choose from essays #2, #3, or #4) once more after their original evaluation. Note that a revised essay is due within one week after I return the original essay, and it should be turned in with the original essay and a new rubric. You are not allowed to revise if you never turned in a rough draft, or turned it in late without permission (see point #2).
5. Plagiarism: Plagiarism, in any form, will not be tolerated. Please consult BGSU's *Student Affairs Handbook* and your GSW portfolio materials for policies

concerning plagiarism and academic honesty. All policies and penalties for violations stated in these materials apply to our class.

Grading System and the Portfolio Assessment Process

1. Essay Grades: I will collect rough drafts and final copies for each essay you write. You are required to submit rough drafts so I can give you helpful written feedback on your progress, but the rough drafts will not receive a grade. I will provide you with written comments and a grade on your final drafts. I will also fill out an evaluation chart (called a "Rubric") for the final draft to indicate the strengths and weaknesses of that essay. The grade for the essays will either be a Pass, Almost Pass, or No Pass.
 - A **Passing (P)** essay shows good control in all of the categories of the Rubric. Although there may be a few minor problems, the entire essay is generally well-written and clearly and effectively communicates its ideas.
 - An **Almost Passing (AP)** essay shows a combination of strengths and weaknesses on the Rubric. There is room for improvement in some Rubric categories of the essay, and the essay does not consistently communicate its ideas clearly and effectively. An Almost Pass means the essay is *not passing*, but it is getting close to being a passing essay.
 - A **No Passing (NP)** essay shows a serious weakness in at least one category of the Rubric, and other categories may need attention, too. The overall quality of the essay is significantly hindered because of these weaknesses.

2. Portfolio Assessment Process: At the end of the semester, your essays will be evaluated for proficiency at the English 111 level. For your portfolio to be submitted for assessment, you must fulfill the following requirements:
 - Write at least two clearly "Passing" (not "Almost Passing") expository essays.
 - Turn in all five fully-developed and revised essays, and all other written assignments, on time.
 - Attend classes and actively participate. (Excessive absences will result in your portfolio not being eligible for the assessment process.)
 - Attend all required conferences with me.

During the last week of class, I will let you know whether your essays are eligible for a Portfolio Assessment. It is important that you save all of your essays in your portfolio folder as you get them back from me throughout the semester -- your portfolio must show all of your work on each essay you wrote.

If you have not satisfied the Achievement Requirements for this class, your work will not be eligible for a Portfolio Assessment. This means that I will not submit your portfolio, and you will be required to enroll in English 111 again.

If your portfolio is eligible, during the last week of the semester your essays will be read by another English 111 instructor (not me) and will be evaluated. The portfolio reader determines whether or not your writing, overall, shows proficiency at the 111 level. Unlike other courses where one or two weak assignments can ensure your failure, the portfolio assessment allows you to make improvements in your writing and grow as a writer. Even if you struggle with an essay or two, as long as your portfolio shows that you can write proficiently at the 111 level, you can pass the class. If your portfolio passes, you will pass this course and will be eligible to take English 112.

If the outside evaluator does not think that your writing, overall, demonstrates proficiency at the 111 level, s/he will not pass your portfolio. At that time, a member of the General Studies Writing staff will evaluate your work a second time, again looking at all of your writing as a whole, and decide whether your writing is proficient enough for you to enroll in English 112 or if you should take English 111 again.

3. *Policy for GSW Portfolio Appeals*: Students may appeal an instructor's decision not to submit their portfolios if they have evidence that they have met their instructor's Achievement Requirements and that they have fulfilled the minimum criteria for passing the course. Likewise, students may appeal no-passing portfolio assessments if they have reason to believe that the two evaluators (both of whom are trained, experienced GSW instructors) have overlooked important evidence that their portfolio, in fact, successfully meets the learning outcomes/established criteria for passing the course. Students should not, however, routinely appeal no-passing portfolios simply because they are unhappy with their instructor's or the portfolio evaluators' decisions.
4. Appeal Timetable for Fall 2007:

Monday, December 10, 5 p.m.: Deadline for appealing an instructor's decision not to submit a portfolio for assessment. Appeal forms are available in the GSW Office, 215 East Hall.

Thursday, December 13: Afternoon on which students are *required* to retrieve their portfolios and evaluation results during the specific time period designated by their instructors. If students are absolutely unable to retrieve their portfolios at the appropriate time, it is their obligation to make alternate arrangements for doing so, well in advance of this date. It is mandatory that students obtain their portfolio results at the designated time because, on occasion, students have been surprised by the outcome.

Friday, December 28, 5 p.m.: Deadline for appealing a non-passing portfolio result. Appeal forms are available in the GSW Office, 215 East Hall.

5. Course Grades: If your work passes the portfolio assessment, you will receive an **S** (Satisfactory) for this class. An **S** will appear on your transcript, but it will not be calculated into your grade point average.

Because writing is a skill that takes some people longer than others to master, and because English 112 is challenging and focuses exclusively on argumentative academic writing, it is necessary for a student to enter into English 112 with a good grasp of the writing skills taught in English 111. Therefore, if your work does not pass the Portfolio Assessment, you will receive an **NR** (No Record) for English 111. An **NR** is just what it sounds like—there is no record that you ever took this class and didn't pass. An **NR** is designed to allow a student to repeat English 111 without affecting his or her transcript or grade point average. Neither your transcript nor your grade card will show that you took English 111 this semester if you receive an **NR**. While you may have put forth effort and made improvements in your writing, if your work is not eligible for the Portfolio Assessment, or if you have met all of my requirements, but your work does not pass the Portfolio Assessment, you will receive an **NR**.

It is possible to receive a **WF (Withdraw Fail)** in this course. If you should stop attending this class for any reason without going through the University's official procedure for dropping a class, you will receive a **WF** for this course, the grade will appear on your transcript, and an **F** will be calculated into your grade point average.

6. Passing English 111: In summary, to pass English 111 and go on to English 112, you must meet the following requirements:
1. Have a total score over 301 out of 430 total points (70%).
 2. Turn in all five essays, and all other written assignments, on time.
 3. Attend classes. (Excessive absences will result in your portfolio not being eligible for the assessment process.)
 4. Actively participate in everything we do in class.
 5. Attend all required conferences.
 6. Write at least two "passing" essays.
 7. Pass the Portfolio Assessment at the English 111 level.

Campus Resources for Writers

Writing Center Services: The Writing Center is a free service that allows all students to receive individualized help with their writing needs at BGSU. It is located in 303 Moseley Hall, and the phone number is 372-2221. Please call ahead to make an appointment to guarantee that a tutor will be available to meet with you. More information about the Writing Center, including handouts on common grammatical problems and other writing issues, is available in their office and on-line at

<http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/acen/writerslab>

Online Information about BGSU's Library Resources: The BGSU Library Services has created a web page to help familiarize students with what our library has to offer. Several links are available from the main web page to help you learn more about the library and effective research strategies. Another great source of information is the Undergraduate Circulation Survival Guide, which explains the ins and outs of using Jerome Library:

http://www.bgsu.edu/colleges/library/circ/undergrad_guide.html

Try this site for basic information on library use, including how to check out materials and how to renew materials on-line. Library personnel are always ready to help with any questions you might have about library use. Stop by the Information/Reference Desk with your questions or concerns.

A Final Word

I hope to make this class a place where you can work to improve your writing. Though many students are uncomfortable with writing, understanding how to go through the writing process will help you achieve your writing goals. To assist you in this endeavor, I encourage you to take advantage of the resources around you and keep in touch with me as we go through the semester.

If you have any questions about these Achievement Requirements or other class matters, please feel free to talk to me. I look forward to working with you and helping you become a better writer. Let's have a great semester!