

English 381: Grammar and Writing
Spring 2008 / MW 7:30-8:45 pm / EAST 115

:: Contact Information ::

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:: Course Overview ::

In the BGSU catalog course description, ENG 381 focuses on the “application of grammatical models [. . .] to the teaching of writing.” This simple description highlights the two main features of this course. This course won’t teach you grammar through memorization, or through lecture, or through other (boring) means. Instead, you will learn the basics of English grammar through application. Secondly, this course will also give you an introduction to teaching grammar in the classroom. Since all of you are (or are soon to be) preservice teachers, this course is practical for you in that it not only gives you the knowledge about grammar, but also how to teach it to others. Understandably, that’s a lot to cover in one semester—but let’s give it our best shot!

:: Required Texts and Materials ::

1. Calderonello, Alice, Virginia S. Martin, and Kristine L. Blair. *Grammar for Language Arts Teachers*. Longman, 2003. ISBN 0-205-32527-0
2. Ohio Department of Education. *Academic Content Standards: K-12: English Language Arts*. Center for Curriculum and Assessment, Office of Curriculum and Instruction. [Columbus, OH: 2002.]
**Note: The ODE’s *Standards* is available both online and in print. If you prefer to save some money and rely on the online version, that’s fine. If you prefer the low-tech route and want to buy it from the Bookstore, that’s fine too.
3. Access to a computer for: word-processing, the Internet, iMovie (available on campus)
4. At least one file-storage device to save your lesson plans as a backup
5. Access to our Google Groups site
6. A notebook, for note-taking and brainstorming in class

:: Course Assignments ::

¹ My office, while it is listed as 360 East Hall, is in fact out of numerical order. Instead of being near 359, it is on the opposite end of the hallway—near 319, 326, etc. No, I don’t know why either.

ENG 381 will consist of two kinds of assignments: exams and lesson plan projects. They are detailed below:

Exam 1 (2/27): 50 points. Covers GLAT Chapters 1-5.

Exam 2 (4/9): 50 points. Covers GLAT Chapters 6-9.

Lesson Plan #1: Teaching Grammar in Context. Use the lesson plan format worksheet (posted to our Blackboard site) for more information on how to structure the lesson plan. 15 points. Due 1/30.

Lesson Plan #2: Grammar Minilesson. A mini-lesson (about 10 minutes) presented to our class, on a certain grammar topic we will be covering for Exam 1. 20 points. Due dates based on sign-up.

Lesson Plan #3: GTV (Grammar Television). In groups of 2-3, use technology to create a 5-minute video podcast of a chosen grammar topic we will be covering for Exam 2. 25 points. Due 3/26.

Lesson Plan #4: Final Project. Includes a statement of teaching philosophy concerning grammar, and a corresponding lesson plan which illustrates that philosophy. 30 points. Due 4/28.

:: Course Policies ::

Participation and Attendance

As future teachers, you know that students who attend class on average do much better than their absent counterparts. For this class, you need to be here every day to understand and practice these grammatical concepts, and to get feedback from me and your peers on your projects. Active participation is a must. This entails:

- attending class each day (on time)
- being prepared for class (bringing the correct books and handouts)
- volunteering answers and feedback during class and group discussions
- contributing to the class's learning in a useful way

Participation will be graded, and is worth 20 points in the final grade.

Attendance is also graded, and is worth 20 points.

Of course, emergencies happen, and I understand if you cannot make a class. However, as with any job, you would need to contact me as soon as you know that you will not be able to attend that day.

Readings and Handouts on BlackBoard

Many of our readings and handouts will come from documents that have been posted to BlackBoard. Check the syllabus for updates. You may save these documents in digital format and read them on the computer, or you may print them out. Particularly for the handouts, I'll expect you to print those out in time

for class. I'll be in the lab 15 minutes before class on Wednesdays so you can have some time to print out the next week's readings.

Techno-glitches

In the case of technology, believe Murphy's Law: anything that can go wrong, will. This is not intended to be pessimistic about technology, but be aware that anything can go wrong/delete itself/spontaneously combust the night before your lesson plan is due. So be prepared: make backups during and after every drafting session, saving your work not only on your hard drive but also on an external device.

(Note: if you have MS Works, be sure to save your document as a Rich Text Format—.rtf—so it can be opened in any word processing program. Also, if you have Windows Vista, test your document out on a University computer—documents saved on Vista may not open on XP.)

Checking Email/Casual Surfing

These computers are temptations, I know. You find yourself zoning out in class and might decide to make time go faster by IM-ing a friend or checking your email. This is absolutely not allowed and is actually being very rude towards me. I will be in the lab at least 10 minutes before class, so you can have time to log in and quickly check your email. Otherwise, I should not ever see an email/Facebook/MySpace page open during class. Seeing these pages open, when they are not part of the day's lesson, will quickly lose you participation points.

Food in the Lab

A BGSU labs rule of no food or drink while in the lab applies to this class as well.

Use of iPods, cell phones, Walkmans, etc.

You can have these in class, but they need to stay in your bag—and turned off or to vibrate—at all times. Repeat: I should not see or hear your cell phone during class. This can also lose you participation points.

Workshops

At several points in the semester, we will devote class time to writer's workshop. During these classes, you will present your lesson plan draft-in-progress to other peers, and receive constructive feedback. This helps you in a few ways—one, you receive feedback on your ideas, and two, you get a chance to see what your peers are doing with the same project, which may give you ideas for revision as well. Remember: constructive feedback only, not harsh criticism!

Late Assignments

Always pay attention to the due dates listed on your syllabus. I expect all assignments by the beginning of class on the date they are due. If an emergency arises, let me know and I may extend the due date for you, depending on circumstances. Otherwise, any late work will lose 5 points each day it is late.

Make-Up Exams

You are allowed to make up either of the exams this semester, if you schedule a make-up appointment as soon as you know, and your exam time would then be scheduled during that same week. If an emergency arises, let me know ASAP (that same day) and you will be allowed to make up the exam.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a touchy subject in teaching. Teachers borrow ideas from other teachers, and revise lesson plans to fit their own needs all the time—one of the great things about teaching is the sharing process it encourages. For the purposes of this course, however, you need to be doing all your own work. I encourage you to research and look at other's lesson plans and ideas about teaching grammar, but any lesson plan you turn in needs to be 100% your work. Save the last-minute lesson "borrowing" for your student teaching semester ;-)

If you are revising ideas from other teachers, or if your idea was inspired by a source, I expect you to cite those sources (MLA format is fine).

Office Hours/Review Hours

Every week, I hold regular office hours from 6-7:15pm Wednesdays, a time when you can come to my office without an appointment. If this time doesn't work for you, or you need to meet with me earlier than Wednesday, contact me and we can set up a meeting time. I'm pretty flexible what time I can meet this semester, plus it'll give me an excuse to avoid writing my dissertation :-)

Also, right before both exams, I will hold extended office hours either that same day or the day before, so you will be able to come in and ask any last-minute questions or get extra practice on grammar concepts. I'll remind you of these hours as the time comes.

:: A Final Word ::

Even though it isn't the formal goal of this course, I want you to learn to love grammar (or at least learn to stop fearing it). I'm always available to chat about your progress or about grammar issues (see above). I hope you will be willing to put forth effort and enthusiasm into this class in order for all of us to have a productive, grammatically-correct course. Let's have a great semester!