

**College Writing I**  
42.101.260  
11-12:15 TR, Location TBA

**Fall 2010**

Dr. Susan Kirtley  
Office hours: T & R 12:30-2 and by apt.  
Note: Due to construction I will not have  
an office phone. Please contact me by  
email. Office location TBA  
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**Texts:**

1. *A Pocket Style Manual* by Diana Hacker (South Campus bookstore)
2. *The Declaration of Independence* (to be provided by UML)
3. Class Anthologies
4. Handouts TBA

*Words are a form of action, capable of influencing change.*  
--Ingrid Bengis

### Goals of College Writing

This course will encourage and enable students to engage in a lifetime of writing both in and beyond the classroom. In this class we will seek to cultivate critical thinking skills essential to success in the academic world and in life. We will explore writing as a mode of thinking that invites discovery, as well as a means of communication. Reading and writing are interconnected, therefore we will be sharing and reading our own work as well as the works of outside writers, including *The Declaration of Independence*, as a means of improving writing, thinking, and speaking skills. In addition, College Writing will introduce various *sources of information* that will inform and enrich your writing. We will work from internal sources of information such as memory and observation and from external sources of information such as texts, interviews, and outside research.

This course is *process* oriented. We will focus on the *process* of writing, including prewriting, drafting, revising, workshopping, and copyediting. To this end, the class will be structured as a place for sharing and discussion. We will share and critique our work and discuss assigned readings and writings. Therefore, participation and attendance are extremely important. Revising will be stressed throughout the course as an important part of the writing process, which means much more than simple surface editing. Revising means a new view, a new vision, a new way of thinking about what you wrote before.

**What will you learn in this class?** You probably won't learn the amount of rainfall in Peru in 1953. Nor will you learn lots of facts and figures that will impress your friends at cocktail parties. And technically, you all know how to write. Hopefully, together we will learn to enjoy the process—and make it more productive as well. You may be skeptical—perhaps you have always hated writing. That's ok. We will discuss what good writing is, and how we can achieve it. We will fine tune and examine the *process* of writing, which I sincerely hope will help you learn about yourself, how you write, and how you can improve your own writing. In this class I give lots of room to explore material that is important to you, and I expect you to work hard on it.

Together we will be working toward the following **Learning Objectives:**

- We will engage in the writing process, including drafting, workshopping, revising, editing, and proofreading, considering clarity, purpose, audience, and style through multiple drafts.
- We will practice expository writing utilizing a variety of rhetorical strategies in response to a variety of audiences and will develop an awareness of the proper structure, genre, and conventions for different rhetorical situations.
- We will hone critical reading and thinking skills, and write texts that integrate their own thoughts with the words and ideas of others.
- We will explore their roles as participants in an academic community practicing academic honesty and avoiding plagiarism, in addition to reviewing relevant grammar, mechanics, and style.
- We will exit with an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses as writers, and the self-assessment tools necessary to continue on successfully in their writing careers.
- We will write consistently in various forms, including short responses, summaries, drafts, peer responses, and revisions, culminating in a portfolio of at least four formal essays.

### Grading

Your work in this class will be assessed using the portfolio grading system. Rather than receiving grades on individual papers (or drafts of papers) throughout the term, you will receive letter grades at the end of the term on your final writing portfolio, as well as your participation, attendance, and homework. This approach to assessment is intended to de-emphasize grades, and to free you up from anxiety. It also gives you the opportunity to be graded *after* you have received feedback and have had the opportunity to revise your work. In order to succeed in this course, you *must turn in work and attend class*. You are given points for all homework that meets pre-arranged standards, and these points will make up 25% of your grade. You are also given points for attendance and participation that comprise another 25% of your grade. The portfolio will receive a letter grade at the end of the term, and will account for a full one-half of your course grade.

I know grades can be wrought with anxiety, so if you are curious about your grade feel free to make an appointment with me and I will give you my *best estimate* of where you stand. Honor grades (A, A-, B+) *are reserved for outstanding work and outstanding effort*.

Writing Portfolio	50%
Class Participation and Attendance	25%
Journal and other Assignments	25%

### Basic Requirements of College Writing

1. *Attend class consistently.* Your grade will suffer from excessive absences. If you miss more than four classes you will fail and I will ask you to drop the class. Late minutes will be recorded; a total of 30 minutes will be counted as one absence. For each absence after the first two, your grade will be reduced.
2. *Keep a journal*—this is a place where you can try out new things and write “badly.” Be conscientious about keeping this journal: write at least one hour a week (approximately four pages), plus any additional assignments. I will check journals without warning periodically, so be sure to bring them to class every day. I will not read any passages you mark as private.
3. Complete a *portfolio* of your best writing (approximately twenty to twenty five pages).

4. *Work cooperatively* in peer groups and pairs. Listen supportively to the writing of others and, when requested by the author or instructor, give them full, thoughtful, and respectful responses.
5. *Participate*. Do all homework assignments and actively participate in discussions and other class activities.
6. Schedule and attend *personal conferences*.
7. *Write*. You will be doing a significant amount of writing in this course, both in and out of class. This may seem difficult at first, but I think you'll be surprised at how fluent you become if you suspend criticism and judgment.
8. *Keep hard copies of everything!* You'll be asked for all drafts of essays you include in your final portfolio.
9. Major assignments need to meet the following conditions:
  - With each draft you hand in, include a process letter (if assigned), all previous notes and drafts, and all feedback you have received. Do this tidily by using a file folder to store everything.
  - Revisions. When the assignment calls for revising, you need to make substantive changes, not just tighten, correct, and clean up. Revision is a new way of seeing, a way of exploring further what has come before.
  - Copy-editing. Your publication draft and your final portfolio need to be free from mistakes in spelling and grammar. It's fine to get help with this, but I will expect mechanics to be impeccable in a final copy.
  - Drafts should show effort, involvement, and thinking. Your draft should demonstrate commitment to an idea and the willingness to work it through.
  - Major assignments from the rough draft on must be typed and conform to the guidelines stipulated in the "Policies" section. Listen carefully for the format requirements of each assignment.

## Policies

Papers (from rough draft on) **must** be typed with one inch margins and a reasonable font. All assignments should be formatted in MLA style. Staple your papers in the upper left-hand corner and number pages. Important—Publication drafts have a separate set of guidelines that will be explained at a later date. In fairness to other students, late papers will not be accepted. Papers will not be accepted unless you attend class on the date they are due. Drafts are due at the beginning of class. If you do not have a draft when it is due, it counts as a zero. Do not get in the habit of turning things in late—they will not be accepted and you will fail. **Assignments not meeting the requirements will be returned unread and will receive no credit.**

Regular attendance, as previously mentioned, is required. When you miss class, you miss valuable instruction both from me and from your fellow classmates. Much is learned from in-class activities and these valuable experiences cannot be made up. If you do miss class, you must get the assigned work from a classmate or from me. **Do not expect to get caught up at the next class session.**

I want to stress that the grade you receive in this class truly will be a matter of your *choice*: your effort, your preparedness, and your productivity. The quickest way to slide to a D or an F is to miss classes, conferences, and/or assignments. Don't let yourself slip through the cracks. Stay in touch with me and we'll work it out together. **Do not expect me to catch you up the day you return; you are responsible for finding out what is due when you are absent.** It is not acceptable to "recycle" essays written for other courses.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is absolutely unacceptable and will result in immediate failure of the course. For additional information on the University policy, see ([http://www.uml.edu/catalog/undergraduate/policies/academic\\_dishonesty.htm](http://www.uml.edu/catalog/undergraduate/policies/academic_dishonesty.htm)).

**Technology**

Beepers, cell phones and pagers are not permitted. If your cell phone goes off during class you will be fined \$2 to be put towards refreshments for the class. If your phone continually disrupts, your class participation grade will suffer (see me for emergency exceptions such as illness or vocation).

You will need to check your email regularly; if I need to provide you with additional information or change the schedule I will do so by email.

**Accommodations:** Please see me during the first week of class if you have a documented disability and I will be happy to make accommodations. The Office of Disability Services (McGauvran 363, (978) 934-4338) will also assist in making arrangements. If you must miss class for religious observances please see me well in advance so we can coordinate what you will miss.

## Schedule #2

For the next few weeks we will be working on our Textual Analysis essay. For this essay we will once again be analyzing and refining our writing process, and we will especially focus on developing our critical reading and writing skills, entering into a conversation with other texts, and creating a strong thesis statement. For this project I will ask you to practice integrating your thoughts and ideas with those of others, and to utilize MLA citation methods properly.

### **Week Four**

R Sep. 23     Four Copies of Ethnography essay due  
Introduction to Textual Analysis, essay, goals of essay  
Intro to *Declaration of Independence*, *Movies of the Mind*  
*Homework* Read *The Declaration of Independence*, fill out dialogic journal sheet

### **Week Five**

T Sep. 28     Discussion *DoI*  
*Homework*: Read Jefferson's account of the *Declaration* (handout) and "*The Declaration of Independence: The Jefferson Draft with Congress's Editorial Changes*," in Pauline Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (1997), pp. 235-241 (handout)

R Sep. 30     Discussion Readings, Intro to citation methods  
*Homework*: Read Jefferson, "Notes on the State of Virginia" (handout), write Position statement

### **Week Six**

T Oct. 5     Position statement due  
Discuss position statement

R Oct. 7     Discussion/ exercises on thesis statements, working with sources  
*Homework*: bring 4 copies of the Textual Analysis Essay due next week

### **Week Seven**

T Oct. 12     No class (Tuesday is Monday)

R Oct. 14     4 copies of the Textual Analysis Essay due