*Writing is a great and precious freedom. We are free to discover*

*what we know about the human animal, to reaffirm our belief that we are not alone,*

*to explore the beautiful complications of the human spirit...and no one can stop us.*

*-Monica Wood*

Instructor: Jessica L Hovey

Class: A days, 1st hour, Room 200

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**Course Description**

This course prepares students for college level writing and critical thinking. Students write a variety of essays, practice business writing, and practice timed essays. They will also further develop and refine expression of ideas through revision and gain an awareness of language while working to eliminate grammar and spelling errors through careful proofreading. Research methods and MLA documentation are also studied. Reading and discussion is an integral part of this course to allow students to examine their own writing as well as that of others.

**Goals**

The primary goals of this class are to practice and to gain mastery of writing competencies through critical thinking, critical reading, and critical writing processes. We will build on what you have learned in previous English and composition classes to prepare you for the kinds of academic writing you will encounter in future courses and throughout college.

**Learning Outcomes**

(Adapted from Minnesota State Standards)

Through critical thinking, reading, writing and revision, students will . . .

* produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience.
* plan, draft, revise, edit and rewrite to develop and strengthen writing.
* produce writing over extended and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes and audiences.
* analyze, discuss and evaluate works of others and use critical thinking skills in discussion and journal responses.
* conduct basic research and correctly cite sources to support arguments through study of proper MLA documentation and produce persuasive, analytical, and research essays.
* edit and revise papers through peer revision and collaboration in writing conferences.

**Language Outcomes**

Through critical thinking, reading, writing and revision, students will . . .

* demonstrate command of conventions of standard English grammar and usage, capitalization, punctuation and spelling.
* apply knowledge of language to understand how it functions in different contexts to make effective choices for meaning or style.
* acquire and use a range of academic and specific words and phrases sufficient for writing.
* recognize variations from standard English in their own and other's writing and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.

**Required Texts & Materials:**

-writing journal for brainstorming and reading responses – used ONLY for this class

-laptop (ONLY when needed in class)

**-3-ring binder** (for essays and handouts)

**Recommended:** a good college dictionary

Please bring texts to class on the days they are assigned.

**Course Information**

This course is an advanced writing course and emphasizes writing in preparation for critical thinking and academic classes at the university level. Through writing exercises and assignments, reading, and class discussions, you will be introduced to the elements of critical thinking and college writing.

You will write four major essays throughout the year, including a research paper on a topic of your choice (teacher approved☺). We will also practice writing timed essays for standardized exams, research methods, and MLA documentation.

We will also use a variety of essays, fiction and non-fiction texts to explore ways both to read critically and to strengthen your writing. In writing assignments and class discussions, you will be asked to analyze the effectiveness of arguments and to compare the strategies used by various writers.

Because we will work through drafting, conferencing and revising as you write your papers, projects in this class will overlap, and you should anticipate that you will be revising one paper as you begin another, or reading new texts as you write about other texts. Consult your course outline and assignments regularly and note deadlines; this will help you to anticipate when you will have to allow extra time for this class. (Note: I may alter the schedule from time to time, with plenty of notice, should class progress warrant a change.)

Throughout the term, through close reading and discussions about audience, voice, and point of view, we will look for complexities in the texts we read and examine our own assumptions. This process will help you to define your own positions, to address an audience appropriately in writing or in conversation, and to support your claims in this class and your future.

**Revision vs. Copy-Editing**

In this class we will work heavily on revision. In the revising process we will work on concept and sentence fluency, through individual, paired, group work, and conferences, we will look at your writing and determine what it needs to be a truly enjoyable, cogent, well-written piece. We will, of course, also work to eliminate grammar and spelling errors through careful proof reading (sometimes referred to as copy-editing), the last step in the revision process before your work goes to print.

**Academic Honesty**

Presenting another person’s words or thoughts as your own is illegal and unacceptable in academic writing. If you plagiarize you will receive a grade of 0 for the assignment; if you plagiarize more than once, you will receive a failing grade for the course.

In this course we will discuss how to quote, document, summarize and paraphrase sources, and I will expect you to use sources responsibly.

**Attendance**

Every student’s contributions are valued and important to the success of this class. Expect to attend each class meeting prepared to participate fully in discussion and exercises. Skipping class or failing to prepare will lower your grade. Should an emergency situation arise, contact me as early as possible.

**Conferences**

I will meet with each of you twice during each semester to look over current assignments and review your progress. These conferences are required and a significant part of your class participation grade. You will be responsible for setting up and coming prepared to your own conference. I am always happy to meet with you before or after school if you have additional questions or concerns.

**In-Class Writing**

I will assign several timed in-class essays; I will not always give advanced notice. Students who arrive late will be short on time, students who miss class may not make them up.

**Essays/Writing Topics**

In addition to in-class timed essays, journal writing, and reading responses, you will also have four major writing assignments this year. Throughout the semester we will look at the writing process as we work these essays through conferencing and the revision process.

* College Essay
* Analytical Essay/Response
* Persuasive Essay or Letter/Research Skills/Citing
* Research Paper

**Assignments**

All assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the due date. **Grades will be lowered 10% each day an assignment is late.**  A paper turned in more than five minutes after the start of class will be considered one day late.

Rough drafts and evaluations should be turned in with your papers. Papers should be formatted in MLA style. (See Purdue OWL).

**Final Portfolio**

For the end of the course, you will create a portfolio of your work. It will demonstrate your progress throughout the year and will include drafts, papers, revisions and a cover letter. In order to complete the portfolio, you will have to SAVE EVERYTHING you write for this class.

**Grading**

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Class Participation, including conferences, exercises,

discussions, and work with your peers: 10%

Journals and reading responses: 10%

Timed and short essays: 10%

Papers: 50%

Final Portfolio: 20%

**Major Assignments & Due Dates**

**Fall Semester 2012-2013**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Assignment Due** |
| Wednesday, September 11 | Timed Essay #1 |
| Thursday, October 2 | College Essay: Draft Due |
| **Tuesday, October 15** | **College Essay: Final Draft Due** |
| Monday, December 2 | Analytical Essay: Draft Due |
| **Monday, December 16** | **Analytical Essay: Final Draft Due** |

The following assignments will be due in the spring semester:

\*Persuasive Essay/Letter

\*Synthesis/Research Essay