

ENG 101N-02: English Composition for Non-Native Speakers

Fall 2008
MWF 1-1:50 p.m.
MHRA 3207

Instructor: Alan Benson

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Office Hours: noon-1 p.m. Monday and Wednesday and by appointment

Course Description

English 101N is designed to promote your development as readers, writers, and thinkers. In this course, we explore strategies for using language effectively in a variety of writing forms commonly encountered in higher education. We also work together on developing our observational, analytical, and interpretive skills—skills that are beneficial both in and out of the academy.

The theme for this semester's class is drawn from a classic piece of American doggerel, Will Cobb and Gus Edwards' "School Days." This 1907 vaudeville song, written in the voice of a school-bound child, summarizes education as "Readin' and writin' and 'rithmetic/Taught to the tune of a hick'ry stick." The first three items serve to structure our class:

- **Readin':** Reading is not just processing text. Good readers engage with authors' evidence, analyze claims, explore the structures of arguments, and generate new ideas from items that are read. I strongly believe in the postmodern conception of world-as-text, so our readings will not be limited to books.
- **'Ritin':** Obviously, writing plays a major role in a composition class. We will write throughout the class (sometimes several different pieces per day), but in October we will focus on a particular form of writing: writing about ourselves.
- **'Rithmetic:** No, we're not doing math in an English class. By "arithmetic," I'm referring to the strange magic of collaboration. People working and writing in groups generate knowledge in new and unexpected ways. You will work closely with other members of the class on a major research project.

I trust that use of the final item, the "hick'ry stick," will not be necessary.

Learning Goals

At the completion of this course, you will improve your ability to:

- Interpret and evaluate argumentative discourse
- Invent and brainstorm writing ideas
- Construct cogent arguments
- Communicate clearly, coherently, and effectively
- Locate, synthesize, and evaluate relevant information—including online resources
- Demonstrate an understanding of the aims and methods of intellectual discourse
- Weigh evidence and evaluate differing viewpoints
- Work with other writers on collaborative texts

Required Materials

1. Writing materials
2. Loose-leaf binder for your journal (separate from your notebook)
3. Texts and readings:
 - *Guidelines: A Cross-Cultural Reading/Writing Text* (3rd ed.) – Ruth Spack
 - *Writing Matters* – Melissa Richard, Brandy Grabow, and Laurie Lyda
 - Any additional readings required for the day

Attendance

Attendance is vital for success in this or any college class. Participation in class discussions and group work is an important part of your grade; you obviously can't participate if you're absent. I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. You can miss three classes, no questions asked. On the fourth absence, your grade drops one letter. On the fifth, you get an F.

Because of a chronic lateness problem last semester, I also monitor tardiness. Three tardies (more than five minutes late) count as an absence.

Please note that it is **your job** to keep up with your attendance. There is no excuse for being surprised by attendance issues.

Conferences and group work

I will meet with you individually throughout the semester. Attendance at conferences is required. You will meet during class time with your group. Again, attendance is mandatory.

Preparation

Come to class ready to discuss the day's readings, your writing, or other topics. Also be prepared to work. Bring your notebook, books, and any supplemental readings to **every** class unless advised otherwise. Failure to prepare counts against you; if you do not keep up with assignments your grade will suffer. Likewise, failure to participate counts against you; you will not be able to passively sit through class and still receive a decent final grade.

Grading

No piece of writing is ever truly complete; you can always revise. I do not assign permanent letter grades to course work until the end of the semester. However, I will mark your longer pieces with a provisional letter grade; this will help you predict your final grades and identify the amount of revision you can/want to do. If you want, I can provide you with a tentative mid-term grade—and suggestions for raising it (or lowering it, if you want)—during our conferences.

Grading criteria

Your grade will be based on:

Portfolio (30%)

Rather than a final exam, you will submit a final portfolio containing polished versions of the work you've done over the semester and reflective statements about your work as a writer and student in this class. It is a chance for you to show off your best writing and to provide a reasoned argument for your final grade in the class. After mid-term we will begin work on the specifics of putting together a portfolio and reflecting on your work.

Formal Writing (30%)

In this class you will prepare two major written assignments on your own. Keep **all** drafts of your papers—both digital and printouts. The drafts are an important element of your portfolio, they help you recognize and document your writing process, and they allow me to see your revision work (an important element of your portfolio grade).

Group Project (15%)

You will collaborate with fellow students on a major research project. Each group member will be responsible for contributing to the final project. Each group member will also grade one another to keep everyone honest.

Journal (15%)

Every week, you will write a short reflection on that week's readings, class discussions, etc. By "short" I mean that each must be a minimum of one full page, double-spaced. Print them out and bring them to class every Monday.

Class and Group Discussions (10%)

Discussing texts and assignments with your peers give you a chance to construct meaning and engage more deeply with the assigned readings by bouncing ideas off one another. They also allow me to see: (1) whether you are reading; (2) whether you comprehend what you are reading; and (3) whether you are making connections between the lectures, class discussions, additional material, and the works we are reading.

Late Work

Does not exist in this class. Seriously, I won't accept it. If you will be absent the day an assignment is due, make arrangements to deliver a paper copy to me **before** class begins. If you have an emergency, contact someone in your group and make arrangements for delivery. **I do not accept emailed assignments under any circumstances.** You will not get credit for a paper I receive only via email.

General Rules and Guidelines

I really shouldn't have to tell you these rules, but here goes:

- **Respect.** Part of your college education is learning to deal with people who have different backgrounds, views, morals, politics, interests, and fan club memberships than your own. I will treat you as adults who have put some thought into your stances—even if I do not agree with them. I ask that you extend the same courtesy to your fellow students and me.
- **Disrupting Class.** Speak in turn. Turn off all cell phones. No texting during class. I allow drinks and snacks within reason (nothing really smelly, large, or preparation-intensive; leave the omelets and pizzas at home please).
- **Tech Support.** If you're having problems with your computer, please contact 6-TECH (6-tech.uncg.edu or 256-8324) for support. "My computer crashed" or "my printer is out of ink" are not valid excuses; the university provides server space and printers all over campus. If you have computer problems, I will listen sympathetically, but I will **not** excuse missed work.
- **Other Policies.** See the Grading Policies handout.

Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty

Don't do it. All verified cases of academic dishonesty (including cheating and plagiarism, the use of another's text or ideas without proper credit and citation) will be reported to the proper university officials. The results will not be fun and may include expulsion. See the university's "Academic Integrity Policy" online at academicintegrity.uncg.edu or in the 2007-2008 Undergraduate Bulletin.

Technology

While reading and writing are often considered to be isolated endeavors, discussion is key to understanding readings and sparking new ideas for writing. Therefore, I've decided to make this classroom a technology-free zone: no cell phones, no Blackberries, iPods, no laptops. No exceptions.

Disability Access

Students in university classrooms who have various disabilities (whether visible or invisible) are, of course, welcome, and their rights protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act. However, it is imperative that students with disabilities register with the Office of Disability Services (ods.dept.uncg.edu or 334-5440) and inform your instructors of any special needs as early as possible so that the necessary arrangements or adjustments can be made.

Resources

The Writing Center

UNCG has an excellent Writing Center (www.uncg.edu/eng/writingcenter/) that can help you brainstorm paper ideas, work on grammatical issues, polish your writing, and earn bonus points in this class. Please visit the Writing Center as often as you like. Take both your work in progress and all documentation relating to the assignment (prompts, comments of prior drafts, research notes) and plan to stay up to an hour.

The Speaking Center

While this course is not speaking intensive, we will discuss our readings in class. The Speaking Center (speakingcenter.uncg.edu) offers workshops, one-on-one consultations, and a wealth of other speech-related information. The center's consultants can help you polish pronunciation, identify issues you want to improve, and gain confidence in yourself.

International Student and Scholar Services

This division of the International Programs Center provides information, guidance, and support to all international students. Learn more at www.uncg.edu/ipg/admin/Int_prog_center_admin.html

International Students Association

The International Students Association (www.uncg.edu/student.groups/isa/index.htm) is a student organization with special interests in cultures and societies around the world. Membership is open to the entire student body.

Learning Assistance Center

This section of the Student Success Center offers free individual and group tutoring; academic skills assessment and enhancement; and academic skills workshops. Learn more at success.uncg.edu/lac

Tentative Class Calendar

ALL READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. Please stay up to date with Blackboard as assignments, supplemental readings, and schedule changes will be posted there.

KEY: [BB] = Blackboard article
 [G] = Guidelines: A Cross-Cultural Reading/Writing Text
 [LWG] = A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier
 [WM] = Writing Matters

Week	Dates	Topics	Major Readings
1	August 25-29	Course introduction/syllabus and policies Introductions Blackboard Classmate writeup	Pages 4-12 [G] (Read by Friday)
2	September 3-5	Classmate writeup due Rhetoric: Basics, terms to know, the triangle, the appeals First paper assigned	Rhetoric Primer (Duffy) [BB] Everyday Use (Roskelley and Jolliffe) [BB]
3	September 8-12	First journal due Analyzing an argument Invention exercises Citations Set up groups	“The Art of Reading: Active and Rhetorical Reading” (Morehead) [G] “We Should Cherish Our Children’s Freedom to Think” (Ho) [G] “Teach Knowledge, Not ‘Mental Skills’” (Hirsch) [G] Pages 52-64 [G]
4	September 15-19	Second journal due Continue work on analysis, structuring and focusing Library research session	“Grades and Self-Esteem” (Moore) [G] “Confusing Harder With Better” (Kohn) [G] “Re-Thinking ‘Research’” (Marsh) [WM]
5	September 22-26	Third journal due First draft due Draft workshop Begin group meetings	“What Do We Talk About When We Talk About Flow? Revising, Editing and Proofreading” (Smith) [WM] “Shitty First Drafts” (Lamott) [BB]
6	September 29-October 3	Fourth journal due Polished draft due Second paper assigned Group project begins	“My English” (Alvarez) [G] “Mother Tongue” (Tan) [G] Chapters 1-2 and Chronology [LWG]
7	October 6-10	Fifth journal due	Chapters 3-9 [LWG] “How to Write About Africa” (Wainaina) [BB]
8	October 13-17	Sixth journal due Proposal for group project due	Chapters 10-16 [LWG] Pages 206-227 [G]

9	October 22-24	Seventh journal due First draft due	Chapters 17-21 [LWG] <u>Hotel Rwanda</u> , <u>The Last King of Scotland</u> , <u>Blood Diamond</u> , <u>Invisible Children</u> , or <u>God Grew Tired of Us</u> [films – group chosen]
10	October 27-31	Draft workshop Polished draft due	“Making the Move from ‘Peer-editing’ to Writing Workshops” (Gibson) [WM] Pages 96-109 [G]
11	November 3-7	Eighth journal due Progress report for group project due	“The School Days of an Indian Girl!” (Zitkala-Ša) [G] Pages 206-219 [G]
12	November 10-14	Ninth journal due Outline of group project due Portfolio assignment	“Social Time: The Heartbeat of Culture” (Levine and Wolff) [G] Pages 184-203 [G] “Hindsight, Foresight, and Insight: Reflection in the Composition Classroom” (Womick) [WM]
13	November 17-21	Tenth journal due Draft of group project due	“Intercultural Communication Stumbling Blocks” (Barna) [G] Pages 220-231 [G]
14	November 24	Group meetings with Alan to update progress	
15	December 1-5	Group presentations Portfolios due	
16	December 8	Group presentations Wrap-up, final thoughts, assessment	

All major readings MUST be completed by the first day of the week they are due. For example, by September 3 you will have carefully read the two rhetoric readings listed for Week 2. You should come to class Monday (or, in two cases, Wednesday) prepared to discuss what you’ve read. I do not normally give reading quizzes, but I reserve the right to institute them.

Please note that these are not the only readings you will be doing. I will assign additional articles from Writing Matters throughout the semester.

Important dates

August 29	Last day to drop or add classes
September 1	No class; Labor Day
September 19	Library session: Meet at Jackson Library
October 17	Last day to drop class without academic penalty
October 20	No class; Fall Break
October 30	Ishmael Beah at Aycock Auditorium, 2 and 7 p.m.
November 26	No class; Thanksgiving
November 28	No class; Thanksgiving
December 8	Last day of class
December 10	Exam day, 3:30-6:30 p.m.; portfolios returned