ENGLISH 102: FRESHMAN COMPOSITION

COURSE OVERVIEW

Description

English 102 continues the work of 101; the course includes the preparation of a research paper from library sources. We will use the Norton Introduction to Literature (12th edition) as the primary required text. The current Freshman Composition Course Packet is also required. Familiarize yourself with all of the requirements and guidelines of this packet as well as my Course Policies. English 101 or its equivalent credit is a prerequisite. English 102 has the following objectives:

1. Read selections from the literary genres of short fiction, poetry, and drama.

2. Analyze, interpret, compare, and respond to these selections through written in-class responses.

3. Identify, define, and apply literary terms and concepts at work in the literature.

4. Engage in the research process in order to produce effective college-level essays that reflect the responsible and mature use of credible scholarly sources.

5. Recognize potential weaknesses in your essays and devise strategies to improve those areas.

Requirements

0%  Diagnoistic In-Class Essay

25%  Folder One (poetry, 1 typed essay, 2-3 pages, plus all supporting work)

25%  Folder Two (fiction, 2 typed essays, 2-3 pages each, plus all supporting work)

25%  Folder Three (drama, 1 typed essay, 2-3 pages, plus all supporting work)

25%  Folder Four (1 typed research paper, 8-10 pages, plus all supporting work)

The assigned readings and specific contents of each folder are announced in class only, as are due dates. Each folder contains not only at least one typed essay, but usually in-class responses, outlines, documentation of your research, peer reviews, editing exercises, and other activities as well. If you miss class, you will not be able to complete these daily assignments and your writing folder will be incomplete and therefore ineligible for the full 100 points. You also may be expected to lead the discussion concerning a poem or short story, which would also function as a
required element of one of your folders. Pay attention to the Essay Requirements section of my Course Policies as well as the below descriptions of each essay folder.

**Major Essays**

**Diagnostic Essay**: Read the Hemingway short story entitled “Indian Camp.” Compose an in-class essay that uses evidence from the story to answer the question that the boy named Nick asks his father in the conclusion: “Where did Uncle George go?” 0%

**Folder 1**: Discuss the current cultural relevance of the one poem you have chosen to analyze. Use specific elements of the poem to structure the body of the essay. Five paragraphs. 2-3 pages. One source from Prescott, quoted twice. I must approve the source. Two quotes from poem. Works Cited page. Hand in a photocopy or printout of the title page and the pages of source from which you quote. Circle the quotes. MLA documentation required. 25%

**Folder 2**: Explain how either “Diving Into the Wreck” or “Digging” can be used to explain the act of interpreting one short story of your choice. Using two outside sources from Prescott, first provide two existing interpretations, then offer your own interpretive experience while “diving” or “digging.” Five paragraphs. 2-3 pages. Two quotes from poem. Two sources from Prescott, each quoted 1-2 times. I must approve the sources. Two or more quotes from short story. Works Cited page. Hand in photocopies or printouts of title pages and pages of sources from which you quote. Circle the quotes. MLA documentation required. 25%

**Folder 3**: Probably it is no one’s fault, or maybe, on the other hand, they are all to blame. However, if you had to, which character in the Glass Menagerie would you argue ultimately seems to be the most responsible for the current miserable state in which the family members find themselves? Which character would you argue is the least responsible? The father is not an option. 2-3 pages. Two sources from Prescott, each quoted 1-2 times. I must approve the sources. Two or more quotes from play. Works Cited page. Hand in photocopies or printouts of title pages and pages of sources from which you quote. Circle the quotes. MLA documentation required. 25%

**Folder 4**: Critical Perspectives Research Paper: Choose one poem or one short story that has not been the subject of one of your previous essays. You may not write about the play. 8-10 pages. Find six sources from Prescott. I must approve the sources. Two or more quotes from the poem or short story. Works Cited page. Hand in photocopies or printouts of title pages and pages of sources from which you quote. Circle the quotes. MLA documentation required. Read and synthesize six sources. Present the idea that your poem or short story can be interpreted in many ways, and that you will be presenting a number of “critical perspectives” that do just that. Develop a thesis that thoughtfully connects or establishes meaningful relationship among your six essays without naming any of the essays. Your introduction should be about one page. Now summarize each source in approximately one page. The first sentence of this one-page summary should introduce the reader to the author and title of the essay. Also in the first sentence, but no later than the second sentence, quote what you believe to be the essay’s thesis. A second direct quotation is required at some point during your summary as well. Choose this quotation from deeper into the essay, and select one that stands out to you for some reason. Perhaps it seems
especially helpful or makes a strong point. Do not use block quotes anywhere in the essay. Your summary should be a fair and useful presentation of a long and often difficult to understand analysis of a short story or poem. Only so much can be accomplished in one page, but you should try to be as accurate as possible. Your summary should be completely objective, with the exception of the last sentence of your paragraph. In the last sentence, offer a brief, subjective evaluation of the essay. Now, by way of a brief transition phrase or statement, begin your next one-page summary. Do this a total of six times, one for each source. Next, and also in about one page, summarize your own unique “critical perspective” of your poem or short story, or explain how it relates to one or more of the previous essays. This should get you to about eight pages. Page nine is your conclusion. Like the others, it should be one full page. What you do with it is important and up to you. Just don’t summarize. You have already done enough of that! 25%

Optional Additional Essay 1: If you made a grade of D or F on Folder 1, 2, or 3, I will add up to one letter grade (10 points) to that folder if you choose another poem, one you have not written about, and submit another Folder 1 Essay assignment on the due date I stipulate.

**Grading Scale**

90-100 = A  
80-89  = B  
70-79   = C  
60-69   = D  
0-59    = F

**Schedule**

Week One: (or M/Ws)

T: Poetry Analysis  
R: Poetry Analysis

Week Two:

T: Rough Draft Workshop  
R: Peer Critiques

Week Three:

T: Fiction Analysis, **Folder One Due**
R: Fiction Analysis

Week Four:
T: Rough Draft Workshop
R: Peer Critiques

Week Five:
T: Drama Analysis—read and watch *The Glass Menagerie*, Folder Two Due
R: Drama Analysis—read and watch *The Glass Menagerie*

Week Six:
T: Rough Draft Workshop
R: Peer Critiques

Week Seven:
T: Source Discovery and Evaluation, Folder Three Due
R: Source Discovery and Evaluation

Week Eight:
T: Rough Draft Workshop
R: Rough Draft Workshop

Week Nine:
T: Film, Folder Four Due
R: Film

Week Ten:
T: Optional Additional Essay Assignment Day
R: Return Folder Four
COURSE POLICIES

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask them before class, during class, after class, or during my office hours. If I do not hear from you within the first two or three classes, I will assume that you understand both the requirements of your syllabus and these course policies and that you agree to abide by them.

Overview

Just be considerate and use your common sense: Set your phone on silent and put it away, be on time, pay attention, take notes, ask questions, work hard on your essays, hand them in on time, read all assignments, and study carefully for your tests. Practice these habits and you should be satisfied with your final grade.

University Policy Statements

1. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students needing testing or classroom accommodations based on a disability should discuss those needs with me during the first week of class and take responsibility for arranging alternate testing times and sites a minimum of two class periods before each exam or major assignment.

2. Honor Code: In accordance with the Academic Honor Code, students pledge the following: “Being a student of a higher standard, I pledge to embody the principles of academic integrity.”

3. Internet Access: If in the event of a natural disaster or other event that prevents the continuation of regular campus classroom meetings, courses will continue and the quarter will be concluded, if necessary, by meeting online through Blackboard, email, Moodle, or other open source software.

4. The Emergency Notification System: All Louisiana Tech students are strongly encouraged to enroll and update their contact information in the Emergency Notification System. It takes just a few seconds to ensure you are able to receive important text and voice alerts in the event of a campus emergency. For more, please visit:

http://www.latech.edu/administration/ens.php

Attendance

Students enrolled in any course who miss more than 10% of scheduled meetings, which is more than two T-Th/M-W classes, more than three M-W-F classes, or more than three Six-Week Summer Session classes, will have one full letter grade automatically deducted from their final quarter averages.

Further, students enrolled in any course who miss a class during which writing or collaboration is required will have up to one full letter grade (as many as 10 points) deducted from the major essay folder or major assignment due immediately following the unexcused absence. In other
words, if a document is required with your major essay or project and you do not have it because you were absent, your work is not eligible for all possible 100 points. Accordingly, students who miss two or three of these assignments within a particular writing process will have as many as two or three letter grades deducted from the folder due at the conclusion of that writing unit.

**Excusable absences** are limited to the following circumstances. If you want me to remove an unexcused absence or you want to be eligible for the points you missed on an in-class assignment, you must meet one of the criteria listed below within one week of your return to class:

1. If you miss class due to a university-sanctioned event, you must provide your original copy of official verification written on university letterhead. Students should only enroll in my courses if their schedules allow them to participate in class activities and assignments during regularly scheduled meetings.

2. If you experience a serious illness or injury that requires hospitalization or prevents you from going to class for a week or more, you must provide documentation such as a dated letter that includes a time period for recovery, your name and the name and phone number of the official writing it.

3. If you are called away by a funeral, you must provide documentation in the form of a dated obituary or announcement or a note from someone presiding over the service that includes your name and the name and phone number of the person writing it.

4. If you have a chronic condition or other special need that requires modification of any of these policies, present your information to Student Services for an official letter of verification.

5. If something unexpected happens, (allergies, stomach ache, car trouble, bad weather), you have the option of missing a class or two without the absence affecting your final grade in the course, assuming it was not a writing day. I don’t need to hear about it. If it was a writing day, then you can explain to me your problem, if you like.

**Punctuality**

Please do not come to my classes late. If a scheduling problem or time constraint prevents you from being punctual, you should not be enrolled in this class. Likewise, please do not leave my classes early. Leaving class early is no less an interruption than arriving late. Possibly the most inconsiderate choice you could make would be to leave in the middle of class to make or respond to a phone call only to return to class a few minutes later. I mark a person who arrives late, leaves early, or leaves in the middle of class and returns as ABSENT.

**Class Demeanor**

You have the opportunity to establish your reputation as a credible, mature writer and serious person worthy of respect, but careless behavior damages a student’s credibility in the same way that careless writing damages a student’s credibility. Your attendance, promptness, preparedness,
willingness to participate in a meaningful way, ability to hand in all the work, foresight to complete the work on time, and basic courtesy are all factors that create a background for the reader of your essays and exams. So put away your phone. Improve your mind. Be kind. Think of others. If, on the other hand, you choose to be inconsiderate, please spend your time elsewhere so the class will not disturb you.

**Missed Work**

If you miss a class, refer to the schedule, contact another class member, or see me during office hours. I cannot, however, repeat or post lecture material, which is often conversational or anecdotal in nature.

1. Quizzes cannot be made up without documentation that qualifies as an excused absence under my attendance policy.

2. If you miss an exam for a reason that qualifies as an excused absence under my attendance policy, you must present the required documentation, make arrangements with me to schedule an alternate test date, and take the exam within one week of your return to be eligible for a grade.

3. If you miss in-class work that is handed in or initialed at the end of class due to an unexcused absence, the work is not eligible for points. Collaborative in-class assignments such as peer reviews and group reports cannot be made up. If you think you have a special circumstance or situation, explain to me your problem.

4. If you are unable to complete daily in-class work because you are unprepared (you do not have your books, or files, or papers), the work is not eligible for a grade. Further, students who come to class unable or unwilling to work seriously on an assignment will not receive credit for attending. In other words, no “going through the motions”: you must be cognitively present as well as physically present.

5. If you add the class late or do not begin attending until the second or third time we meet, you are entirely responsible not only for the assignments you missed, but for these course policies as well. Adding a class or beginning to attend after it has already met is a choice that you make, not one that I make. If you are not prepared to do well on an assignment because you did not attend the first or second class, I am not obliged to repeat course content, modify an assignment or its due date, explain course policies, or make other exceptions or exemptions.

6. If you stop attending before the final scheduled class, you may not take the final exam early (or late) unless you provide documentation that falls within my excused absence policy.

**Essay Requirements**

1. Essays are evaluated on a scale from 0 to 100: 0-59=F, 60-69=D, 70-79=C, 80-89=B, 90-100=A.
2. Essays in all courses must reflect correct MLA format and documentation style as they appear in the most recent edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Essays that do not use correct MLA format and documentation style are not eligible for a grade higher than D.

3. English 102 essays must be 2-3 pages. The 102 research paper must be 8-10 pages. By “pages,” I mean full pages of your writing properly formatted according to current MLA specifications, not half pages, mostly blank pages, title pages, page-length block quotations, or Works Cited pages.

4. Essays less than the required length for a particular course level or assignment are not eligible for a grade higher than D. If 8-10 pages of writing are required, for example, do not hand in 7½ pages.

5. Essays in any course with more than one major error in grammar, punctuation, or documentation are not eligible for a grade higher than D. Major errors include fragments, fused sentences, incorrect case or mood, and subject-verb agreement errors. Other important but less serious errors include misused apostrophes, lack of pronoun-antecedent agreement or incorrect pronoun reference, misuse of adjectives/adverbs, comma splices, and lack of parallelism, among others. Essays that contain more than one such second-order error are not eligible for a grade higher than C.

6. Essays in any course that do not address the specific assignment are not eligible for a grade higher than D.

7. Late essays are penalized one letter grade (10 points) for each class period they are late. Essays are considered late after I call for them at the beginning of the class they are due. So if you hand in an essay, for example, ten minutes after I have collected them, the essay has lost one letter grade.

8. In-class Freshman Composition Diagnostic Essay or Folder One handed in without a signed current plagiarism statement (contained in the *Freshman Composition Course Packet*) will be returned ungraded to students. Essays or Folders that I return without a grade because they are missing one or more of these items are subject to the late policy of one letter grade for each class period they are late.

9. All required essays must be handed in to pass the course, even if an essay is so late it will receive a grade in the F range (0-59). If your syllabus, for example, states that five essays are required but you only hand in four, you fail the course. It makes no difference what grades you received on the essays you handed in or their percentages of the final grade.

10. All MLA essays you write must directly quote from outside scholarly sources (more than just your anthology or course texts) that you obtain through Louisiana Tech’s *Prescott library database*. You must include each source’s title page and page or pages from which you quote in your folder. If not indicated on the source’s title page, you must also include a legitimate title page or cover page providing evidence you obtained the source through Tech’s library database.
(and not simply through the Internet). See my sample student essays. Essays that fail to meet these requirements are not eligible for a grade higher than a D.

11. I will give you instructions about submitting each essay to Turnitin.com. Essay grades will not be recorded until you have uploaded your essay and I have approved it. If I suspect an essay written for another class has been handed in as an original assignment written specifically for my class, I will send it through an additional plagiarism website as well as access your transcript to see which English courses you have completed and then circulate the work to the appropriate faculty members. If academic misconduct is confirmed, I change the essay grade to zero, you receive a F in the class, and I send a letter reporting you to Tech’s Academic Honor Court, which could ultimately lead to suspension.

12. I keep your graded exams and term papers in my office for thirty days into the following quarter. You are responsible for keeping all work during the quarter. You may be required to submit this work behind your final in-class essay.

**Suggestions for Revising and Editing Your Essays**

The following suggestions reflect some of the most common pitfalls of college writing. Many are obvious, while others you may not always consider. All of them, however, go toward establishing the credibility of your essay. Use them as a checklist before handing in your paper:

1. Follow all requirements concerning MLA format and documentation as well as my Essay Requirements state above.

2. Hand your essays in on time.

3. Proofread your essay for word-processing errors such as duplications of words, missing words, unnecessary spacing, or needed spacing between words. Correct mistakes of any sort, no matter how small.

4. Check the spelling of your finished work using your WP program. Now look up every word in your essay that you are not absolutely certain has been used correctly. Many homonyms are commonly confused, and word-processers usually do not recognize these errors. Some of the most obvious include the following: its / it’s, their / there, to / too, affect / effect, accept / except, and so on.

5. Avoid beginning your sentences with “it” or “there.” Beginning a sentence in this fashion often reflects repetition, carelessness, and lack of control in an essay.

6. Unless otherwise specified, write using a formal or semi-formal tone. The register, or level of formality, should be appropriate for the essay’s purpose and audience. This means that you want to avoid slang, regionalisms, and colloquial or cliché language.

7. Cut words and phrases from your essay that are not needed to develop a thought. You want to be specific, but you also want to be concise. A good way to begin cutting dead wood from your
writing is to look for words we often use in our informal, everyday speech patterns but that do not belong in essays when used unconsciously. Some examples include “basically,” “really,” “definitely,” “totally,” “very,” “a lot,” and “thing(s).”

8. Avoid using “etc.” to conclude a sentence. “Etc.” is the abbreviated form of et cetera, meaning “and other things.” However, the contemporary college use of the term often means “I can’t think of another example to add to this list at the moment so this is how I will stop.”

9. When you use a direct quotation, ALWAYS introduce it or attach it to your own writing in some way. At the very least, use the relative pronoun “that” or a colon (“So-and-so argue that” or “He argues the following:”). Do not let a quotation stand alone in the middle of the paragraph. Better yet, vary the sentence structure and verbs you use when integrating your direct quotations within your prose. Make the sentences read naturally.

10. Within the framework of the assignment, choose a topic or approach that you think is original. That way, your essay is less likely to be judged against twenty other papers with a similar thesis.

11. If the essay treats literature, be certain that your thesis forces you to analyze the work in some way rather than merely summarizing events. Assume your reader has read the material you are discussing.

12. Always use specific references and direct quotations to support your work, but do not cite passages in lengthy block quotations without a good reason. In fact, avoid over-quoting sources in any manner. Your instructor wants to see that you can use sources judiciously and with a rhetorical purpose, not merely that you can quote from a source.

13. Avoid referring to your own essay: ‘This essay will argue three things.” *Think* in those terms, but don’t write it down.

14. Avoid making general, unsupported statements that do not progress your line of reasoning: “throughout history,” “in today’s society,” “everyone knows that,” or “this has always been the case.”

15. Do not title your essay “Essay #1” or “A Rose for Emily” or “Essay on ‘A Rose for Emily’.” Give your title some thought. After all, it is the first part of your essay that your reader evaluates.

16. Conclude in a manner that does more than simply repeats what you said in the introduction. Give your conclusion serious thought. After all, it is the last part of your essay that your reader evaluates.

17. When writing a timed in-class essay, use all of the time you are allotted. If you write for thirty minutes and then decide you are finished, you may want to reconsider. The purpose of an in-class essay is to respond as specifically and thoroughly as you can within the time you are given. It is your chance to show off what you know and how you are able to apply that knowledge and writing skill to a particular exam topic. If your hand is not cramped and you are
not struggling to finish just one more sentence before I call time, then you probably did not prepare well enough to earn a grade of A or B on the writing.

The following suggestions are more advanced, but should also be followed:

1. Do not use initial or terminal ellipses. Only use them to indicate elided material within the quotation you present.

2. Ensure that all bibliographic material is contained in the works cited page or pages, but never in the essay itself or in the footnotes.

3. Use notes sparingly, if at all. If you use them, the reader should clearly understand why the remarks do not belong in the essay itself but provide helpful context.

4. Avoid expletive constructions (For example: It is important to note . . . There are . . .)

5. Don’t ever end paragraphs with quotations from critics. Only rarely end with a quotation from an author whose work you are analyzing. In most cases, paragraphs should end in the voice of the writer.

6. Avoid demonstratives without a noun prior to the verb (For example: “This is . . .” rather than “This book is . . .”)

7. Avoid incomplete comparatives (For example: This was a better strategy—better than what?)

8. Avoid parenthetical comments in sentences. Include remarks in the sentences outright or relegate the information to a footnote if tangential.

9. Use em-dashes (—) for long dashes and en-dashes (-) for hyphens.

10. Punctuation following an italicized word, as in a book title, is roman (as in Who wrote Absalom, Absalom!? or Who wrote The Descendant?).

11. Indicate decades numerically, without an apostrophe (The 1850s experienced a renascence in American writing). Do not abbreviate (the 1850s, rather than the ’50s).

12. Write out the names of centuries, such as the twentieth century, rather than the 20th century.

13. Works Cited: Only include sources actually cited in the body of the essay.

14. Avoid using abbreviations, particularly for titles (Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, not Huck Finn).

15. Always observe distinction between that/which, where/in which, and then/than.
16. Use italics for emphasis only to point to a word or phrase as such, draw attention to syntax, or clarify meaning; do not use italics merely to stress a main point.

17. Use only one space, not two, between sentences.

18. Cite the best texts for all of your quotations and references: a scholarly edition or a first edition.

19. Always cite original texts unless impossible to do so.

20. Avoid, when possible, corrupting quotations by inserting or interspersing words, especially at the beginning of passages. For example: it “is not possible,” rather than “[it] is not possible.”