

Fall 2015

ENGL 1157

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Recommended Citation

Dominguez, Maria, "ENGL 1157" (2015). *University of New Orleans Syllabi*. Paper 406.
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ENGLISH 1157: FRESHMAN COMPOSITION I

MWF: 9:00AM TO 9:50AM, LIBERAL ARTS 320

Instructor: Maria Dominguez

Office: 244, Liberal Arts Building

Office Hours: Thurs.— 3:30 to 4:00 PM and Mon./Wed. – 10:00 to 10:30 AM.

- Phone:
- E-mail: mjdomin1@uno.edu
- *Appointments outside of my office hours may be arranged.

Required Textbook

- Ballenger, *The Curious Writer*, UNO's Second Custom Edition
ISBN: 1-269-88765-3
- Kennedy, *Aunt Alice vs. Bob Marley*
ISBN: 978-1-60801-013-4

Materials

- Pen/pencil and paper
- A journal – either a spiral notebook or marble composition notebook will work.
- Three manila folders
- Handouts and various websites organized in Moodle

Course Description and Goals

In this course, we will explore the many reasons writers write and the many genres they use to express their ideas—with particular emphasis on writing narratives, profiles, and reviews. While we will focus on these three genres as the culmination of each major project of the semester, other modes of expression and examination (such as description, analysis, summary, and visual conceptualization) are just as important in establishing one's own sense of voice, audience, and purpose—all those things that determine how we should write for a particular task. Through these activities, you will develop the skills necessary to express your own ideas across a variety of genres.

The process of writing your essays and projects will include a number of activities: critical reading and writing, pre-writing, discussing, evaluating your audience, determining your purpose, developing a thesis, writing drafts, incorporating sources, refining your thesis, revising your draft, editing your prose, and proofreading. Your final projects and essays should be interesting, thoughtful, well-written pieces of college-level prose. You will complete a series of connected, scaffolded assignments that comprise our three major projects; each part will make up the whole of your project.

By the end of this course, you will form an awareness of (and have practice in) applying these multi-layered and intersecting strategies to be effective twenty-first century thinkers and communicators. You will also learn that these skills transfer to your academic, everyday, and professional life. However, we must not dismiss the importance of traditional academic writing and research. Instead, our course will embrace academic inquiry and broaden its scope to include working within different kinds of

textual environments and genres (including digital media), helping you build a more complex and comprehensive understanding of the purposes and applications of human discourse.

The core of the class is the crafting of three long compositions, three short compositions, and the development of a writing portfolio that contains not just well-developed compositions, but also prewriting, sketches, drafts, and revisions, as well as letters of reflection. Because the writing process incorporates many more elements than simply writing itself, you will be responsible for nearly daily writing *and* reading, and you will respond critically (and constructively) in writing to your own work and to that of your classmates.

While this is a writing-intensive course, lively participation is also expected in each discussion of the reading material. The easiest way to improve your writing is to read often, which allows you to absorb the way language works on a subconscious and often instinctual level. Critical reading is also an integral skill, which is necessary for the uniform development of our own writing powers. In other words, an examination of how others think and write will inform how you write, making your own prose better. You must know what good writing is to do it yourself.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of the English 1157 and 1158 sequence, you will be able to display proficiency in the following areas:

Rhetorical Knowledge

Students should be able to

- Determine purpose and audience in their own and others' writing.
- Understand how purpose, audience, and context affect writing style, voice, and tone.
- Apply appropriate rhetorical strategies for diverse writing situations.
- Demonstrate familiarity with and/or compose in different genres (such as editorial writing, personal narratives, reviews, satires, dialogues, letters, or profile essays).
- Demonstrate familiarity with and/or incorporate different media (such as PowerPoint presentations, web pages, pod casts, or visual essays)

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing

Students should be able to

- Analyze and/or interpret texts and other forms of discourse in multiple genres.
- Use logical reasoning.
- Summarize, analyze, evaluate, and respond to the ideas of others.
- Understand writing as a process that involves invention, drafting, collaboration, and revision.
- Identify and incorporate persuasive techniques.
- Write informative, analytical, and persuasive essays.
- Incorporate the ideas and texts of others.
- Use library and non-library research methods.
- Evaluate sources.

Knowledge of Conventions

Students should be able to

- Use standard grammar.
- Follow conventions for word choice, syntax, spelling, and punctuation.
- Follow conventions appropriate for the given genre and/or medium, such as style, diction, and format.
- Use a variety of sentence structures.
- Document sources in MLA style.

Course Writing

The work in this class will be comprised of three projects, each culminating in a **Long Composition (LC)**. To prepare you to compose each project's LC successfully, you will compose a **Short Composition (SC)** designed to help you understand the genre in which you'll be writing. **Turn in all LC and SC in print AND via e-mail or Moodle.**

These major assignments will be supported with a number of activities, called **Process Work (PW)**, which we will complete both in class and as homework (including fast writing, brainstorming, group work, sketches, drafts, peer review, workshops, research, and more). At the end of each project, you will turn in a project packet that includes the final draft of your LC, your previously graded SC, all of your PW, *and* a **letter of reflection** in which you discuss your writing experience and address what revisions you would or would not make if you had more time.

At the very end of the course, you will compose a final **letter of reflection** in which you look back at your experience over the course. This reflection will serve as an introduction to your portfolio.

Grading and Revision

Projects are graded on a 100 point, A-F scale (an A=90-100, B=80-89, and so on). This should go without saying, but you must submit all the assignments required for this course in order to earn a final course grade higher than F.

An **"A"** represents achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.

A **"B"** represents achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.

A **"C"** represents achievement that **meets the course requirements in every respect.**

A **"D"** represents achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.

An **"F"** represents achievement that fails to meet the course requirements to such a degree that it is not worthy of credit.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you earn a ZERO on any major assignment (Long Composition, Short Composition, or Reflection), you are likely to fail this course.

- **Projects 1, 2, and 3 Long Compositions make up 60% of your final grade**

- **Projects 1, 2, and 3 Short Compositions make up**
25% of your final grade
- **Process work: journals, mini-essays, annotated bibliographies (when assigned), essay outlines (when assigned), short in-class freewriting, presentations (oral and PowerPoint) and conscientious reading of assigned published essays/articles and participation in all classroom discussions and activities, including reading quizzes and grammar quizzes**
10% of your final grade
- **Final reflective essay**
5% of your final grade

I reserve the right to alter or modify any of these weighted percentages.

After submitting the final draft of your LC, if you are unsatisfied with your grade, you may set up a conference with me to discuss revising it for a better grade. Revision will require a conference with me and at least one **documented** visit to the Writing Center. You **must make substantial changes** to your paper in order for your grade to improve. **Your grade will not change** if you merely correct typos and grammar errors. In our conference we will discuss the revision process in more detail.

Papers written at the beginning of the semester are graded under the same standards as papers written at the end of the semester, and a final draft is graded under the same standards as the first draft of an essay. Because of this, grades on drafts at the beginning of the semester will almost always be low, and the goal should be to improve the writing so that the grades improve throughout the semester as you become more adept at incorporating the approaches being learned into your writing.

Course Policies

Classroom as a Safe Space

In a writing class, all participants must behave with civility and respect at all times. Writing—and especially sharing writing—can be a frightening endeavor. Writing can be intensely personal, so we must create a safe and supportive environment in which to share our work. What’s said and/or written about may sometimes be provocative. That’s a good thing; good writers take risks, and you should all feel comfortable enough to do so. Having said that, I expect that even when you disagree with the opinions of anyone in the class (including me), you will respect the right of each individual to *have* those opinions and you will behave with civility and respect at all times. No one in our class should ever feel belittled or undermined by anyone else in the class. **Respect for one another is a requirement of this course.** I will not tolerate speech or behavior that is discriminatory on any basis, including (but not limited to) religion, race, sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation. My classroom is a safe space where everyone can be themselves and should be encouraged to invest in their work on a personal as well as intellectual level.

What can you expect from me as your facilitator? Well, you can expect that I will respect your opinions and that I will behave with civility and respect at all times. Our classroom is—and I hope, always will be—a place where we, as writers, explore ourselves and our world in a safe and supportive environment. Course policies like this one are designed to make sure that happens.

The Public Nature of Writing

Since academic writing (and most writing) is directed toward an audience, you should consider the writing that you do in this course “public,” that is, writing that others will read.

Obviously, I will read what you write. But, in the case of Peer Review, other students will also read your work. This provides a great learning opportunity for both reader and writer but also needs to be considered when picking topics and when writing. If there is a personal subject that you don’t feel comfortable sharing, it would probably be best to write about something else in class. Also, I will periodically display stellar examples of student writing in class. I will use your writing ONLY to demonstrate fantastic examples of what we’re doing. If there is writing that you would rather I not use for this purpose, you can note it on the paper and/or send me an email.

Attendance, Preparation, and Participation

You are expected to attend class every day and to arrive on time. Students may be excused from approximately 225 minutes of class time over the course of the semester, which translates to **five MWF class periods**, three TTh class periods, and two evening class periods. Beyond that, your final course grade will be lowered by 10% for every day you are absent. Please note that students who are consistently tardy will be counted absent. Being tardy for class three times will count toward a single absence.

In accordance with UNO policy, “A student who is not present to answer roll call is marked absent.” You are responsible for being in class, being on time, and having all writing, reading, or other assigned work completed. If you are absent, you are responsible for finding out what you missed and for having all assignments completed for the next class, regardless of the reason you were not present. If you wish to find out what was covered in the class in your absence, you must come to my office to see me. Do not e-mail me or call to ask about missed material. Your assignment’s grade will be lowered by a letter for every day it is late. **Any failure to have an assigned draft for a peer review workshop will also be counted as an absence, since you will not be able to participate in class.**

If your absences exceed the number allowed for this course, you must make an appointment with me to discuss a way to make up the time. **I do not guarantee that you can recover your grade**, but I am open to discussing it. This may include documented appointments at the Writing Center, or extra credit assignments. In our meeting, we will decide if and how you can recover credit for excessive absences.

In addition to writing essays and major projects, you will read and respond to the writing of others (both professional writers and your classmates). You will complete grammar assignments, take quizzes on reading, writing, grammar, etc., participate in peer group workshops, write drafts, and complete other assigned work. Failure to participate in or satisfactorily complete any significant portion of this work is serious enough to result in an F for the course.

Not only is attendance required, but so is presence of mind. The body alone cannot learn to write well; for that, presence of mind is required. Be present; be prepared; be nice. (Note: It is not nice to attempt to send or read text or e-mail messages when the instructor’s eye is turned).

Academic Integrity

We all share the responsibility of protecting the free exchange of ideas that is fundamental to the college experience. If we fail to safeguard the academic integrity of our institution, severe disciplinary action is taken. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, plagiarism, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty.

This class is a place where the intellectual property of others is consulted in order for us to form our own opinions through insightful, intelligent prose that adds to the academic dialogue. If we fail to credit the ideas of these other authors, we are committing the act of plagiarism, which is an egregious ethical violation that is dealt with harshly. Acts of plagiarism undermine the entire process of academic inquiry. Using papers from other classes, passing someone's writing off as your own, or failing to credit sources come with serious consequences. If I discover solid evidence of plagiarism, I will follow the University guidelines and file an Academic Dishonesty Report. If you think you may be crossing the line in how you use sources, ask me or one of the tutors in the Writing Center.

Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information: www.studentaffairs.uno.edu.

Completion of all major projects is required to pass the course. A plagiarized project constitutes an incomplete project and results in failing the course.

Project, Essay, and Journal Submission

Students must type (double-space) all essays, both LC and SC. **Turn in BOTH a print copy of the final draft AND a digital copy via e-mail or Moodle.** Pages must be stapled. Before turning in the final draft of a project, students should also put all early drafts, process work, and peer review comments (anything that contributed to the writing of the essay or project) in the manila folder. Journals will be checked for participation periodically throughout the semester, but they are more casual--you need not worry about grammar and other formalities in your journals, because I won't be grading for that.

Deadlines

All work must be typed and submitted by the assigned deadline on our course schedule, which is displayed on Moodle. No late work will be accepted without prior permission or valid excuse (like My house burned down or I broke my arm). Any in-class essays written after the scheduled deadline must be made up during my next available office hours. Each out-of-class paper **will be penalized a full letter grade** for each class period it is late, without any exception, unless you contact me before said paper is due to explain your reason for failing to come to class.

I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE LOW-STAKES ASSIGNMENTS, SUCH AS QUIZZES AND JOURNALS.

Presentations

You are also required to give/produce oral and/or digital presentations in this course (using PowerPoint or other software if you wish). These presentations will be part of the sequenced/scaffolded assignments leading up to your major projects/essays. Giving presentations will not only help you work through your ideas before you complete any high-stakes writing assignments; they will also help you refine a valued skill that should belong in the repertoire of any professional.

Emails and Instructor-Student Correspondence

Just as you should take care to behave professionally in the classroom, so too should you take care before sending emails—particularly if you are feeling upset or frustrated by a grade (see “Discussing My Comments on Your Work”). In your emails to me, I ask that you refer to the course in the subject line of your message, before your message’s specific subject (e.g., Subject: ENGL 1157: Question about Essay 1). Remember: tone of voice and body language—aspects of communication that help clarify a writer’s intent—do not come across in emails. Please read your email carefully and critically before clicking on “Send.”

I check my UNO email account at least once per day. I ask that you allow a twenty-four-hour response-time for any reply. It would be helpful, if your e-mail is urgent, to send me a text that alerts me to check my inbox. Emails sent after 5 pm will not be read until the following day.

Discussing My Comments on Your Work

I am happy to clarify or discuss my written comments on your work but only after 24 hours have passed since I returned your work to you. That will give you enough time to consider my comments carefully and make an appointment to meet with me during my office hours.

Revision of Essays and Projects

You will choose which projects or essays you will revise for an improved grade. I will assign due dates from which you can pick. I will not grade your revision unless the original essay or project (with my comments and annotations) accompanies the revised version in your portfolio folder.

I also want to stress that revision constitutes rewriting (and possibly rethinking) the entire essay or project, not just making surface changes or correcting my editorial suggestions. The revision will replace the grade you received on the original essay or project. The most effective way to revise is to come to my office to discuss the revisions as you are working on them. The Writing Center is also a wonderful resource for you to get a fresh outlook on your paper.

Revision of at least one project or essay is a requirement, not an option.

Portfolio Collecting and Final Exam

Students must keep ALL the work (graded and ungraded) they produce for each project, and at the end of the semester, they must submit this writing as their portfolio of work from the semester.

In each of your three manila folders, you will collect final, graded drafts of your major projects and ALL the other writing (formal and informal, high stakes and low stakes, in-class and out-of-class) contributing to the completion of these projects.

A **final essay** will be submitted at our final exam period. This reflective essay is a medium for the student to analyze his or her own writing from the semester. The reflective essay will be submitted as part of the final portfolio and should include comments on each of our major projects. Since we’re turning the reflection and portfolio in on the date of the final exam, **no late portfolios will be accepted.**

You must submit your complete portfolio to me at the end of the course or you will receive an F. I will keep the portfolio for one semester. After that time, you may pick it up in my office.

Conferences

You will meet with me for a private conference at least once during the semester. However, I commonly call students in for conferences more often. This time will enable us to discuss specific issues in your writing in a one-on-one setting.

Moodle

This course will use Moodle extensively. Supplementary readings, assignments, and digital content will be posted regularly, and I will notify you through your UNO e-mail account whenever I do so. If you have never used Moodle, don't worry. I will give you a tutorial during our second class meeting.

You will be responsible for checking Moodle on a regular basis and for completing all assignments, quizzes, or other work I assign on it. Also, you should make a habit of regularly checking your UNO e-mail account.

You can gain Moodle access by following this link: <http://uno.mrooms3.net/login/index.php>

Writing Center

I have posted my office hours. Please feel free to stop by if you need help with your essays. If I am not available, the Writing Center is another option. Tutors are available to help you with your writing in LA 334 (280-7054). I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity, but remember that it is not their function to correct, revise, or edit your essays—only to help you learn strategies and skills to strengthen and improve your writing on your own. <http://www.uno.edu/lrc/writingcenter>

Computer Labs

Out-of-class essays must be typed and double-spaced. If you do not have a computer at home, utilize one of the many labs around the main campus.

Cell Phones

I understand that cell phone use has become a way of life. However, **in this class, you should turn off your phone and put it out of sight completely.** If I see you text messaging during class, or anything of that nature, I will be forced to deduct credit from your participation grade. Our class is not long: you can be disconnected from the outside world for that time without harm.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individual basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet

course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations.

<http://www.uno.edu/disability-services>

Course Schedule

The complete course schedule is a work in progress, but I will make it available to you via Moodle as soon as possible. Tentative deadlines for the Short and Long Compositions are as follows:

Short Composition One: September 9th

Long Composition One: September 25th

LC1 Revision: October 2nd

SC2: October 9th

LC 2: October 23rd

LC 2 Revision: October 30th

SC 3: November 9th

LC 3: November 25th

Final portfolio and Reflection: December 9th