

COLLEGE COMPOSITION AND
RESEARCH

COURSE SYLLABUS

ENGLISH 112
SECTIONS 040 AND 120

FALL 2009

MR. BEN SWORD

GENERAL INFORMATION

Instructor: Mr. Ben Sword

E-mail address: sword@tarleton.edu

Office: Humanities 313

Office Hours:

M: 1:00 – 2:00

T: No Office Hours (Contact me via e-mail)

W: 1:00 – 2:00

Th: No Office Hours (I'm in Denton)

F: 1:00 – 2:00

Office phone: 254.968.9750

Course Website: www.tarleton.edu/~sword

COURSE SYNOPSIS

1. *Textbooks.*

The Popken Writer. (2008). Vol. II. N.Y.: Houghton Mifflin.

Clines, Raymond H., and Elizabeth R. Cobb. Research Writing Simplified. Jacksonville: Pearson, 2010.

2. *Course Prerequisite.*

English 112 is designed to follow directly the instruction you received in English 111. Thus, English 111 is a prerequisite to this class. You MUST have passed English 111 or its equivalent in order to remain in this class.

3. *Course Goals.*

Because it is designed to follow English 111, this course continues several of the main goals of English 111 at TSU. For instance, it centers on writing for academic purposes; all writing that you do in this course has a primary goal of expanding your rhetorical experiences so that you can write (and think) more fluently in academic contexts.

The course also continues the goal in English 111 of improving your use of different sources of evidence ("ways of knowing") in writing. Moreover, this course also continues the English 111 goal of improving your composing process. I will expect you, therefore, to take the process you have already developed and to refine it, adapting it to the demands of newer--more complex--writing tasks such as the longer documented study later in the term.

Besides these goals carried over from English 111, this course has some additional ones. Most significantly, it is a "research" course, which means that it intends to help you grapple with the notion

of scholarly inquiry. That is, what is research for? What are its objectives? What are its methods? What are its shortcomings? Along these lines, I want you to appreciate *research as a highly social matter*: that real research must make some kind of contribution to the understanding of people besides just the researcher. An additional goal of English 112 is that it seeks to help you develop some of the technical skills connected with research writing: quoting, paraphrasing, documenting, using research-related genres.

Finally, since English 112 is a university requirement for every discipline, it also has a liberal arts goal: The topics we work on and the ideas we share should contribute to your broader education. The topic we will center on for the first two papers of the semester is a broad one (see "Course Topic" below), but it should benefit everyone in the class. As the semester goes on, I expect each class member to develop his/her own special area of inquiry and, then, to be prepared to pass along knowledge and theories about it to the rest of us.

4. *Course Topics*

First Half of Term.

For the first two papers of the term, you will be writing papers based on readings and topics that I assign. The readings will be provided in class or links to online copies will be made available and the topics and the rhetorical concepts that each paper is focused upon will help build your skills as both a researcher and a writer so that you will be prepared for the requirements of the research paper to come later in the term.

Second Half of Term.

Fairly early in the semester, I will ask you to begin mapping out an area of inquiry or research you would like to work on for Writings 3.0 and 4.0. (See also "PROFILE OF MAJOR WRITING TASKS" below.) As we will discuss in a few weeks, this is not a "term paper" assignment, the likes of which you might have produced in junior high or high school. I am looking for some *significant original inquiry of college level quality*.

In short, after Writings #1.0 and 2.0, the course topic becomes a more general one: "Issues in American Culture." What I mean here is that you will be selecting a topic for your final project (Writings #3.0 and 4.0) that is of concern to modern Americans. It may be in agriculture, animal science, anthropology, business, economics, education, film studies, history, horticulture, literature, medicine, political science, psychology, sociology, technology, the sciences, or any other academic area. You will want to select a subject area (and a narrowed sub-topic of it) that can make a valuable contribution to the knowledge and understanding of the rest of the class—after all, class members will be writing their final examinations by drawing materials from the research presentations of other students.

5. *Course Rhetorical Context.*

You can assume that everything you write this term (especially writings 2.0, 3.0, and 4.0) are for possible publication in the *Popken Writer*, the journal which is required reading for 112 sections. Thus, when you embark on the second half of the term, you should select your area of inquiry and

your method for exploring it with the readers of this journal (other students and 112 teachers) in mind.

PROFILE OF MAJOR WRITING TASKS (All Dates Tentative)

1. *Writing 1.0: Overview [and Comment] Paper.*

A three- to four-page paper which overviews a cluster of articles (from class assignments) on the idea of class and/or social status in America. **Due: Friday, September 18.**

2. *Writing 2.0: Evaluative Response Paper.*

A three- to four-page paper that reviews and evaluates ("critiques") content(s) of an article chosen from one of several sources. Support for the evaluation comes from at least three sources collected from outside our reading. **Due: Friday, October 16.**

3. *Writing 3.0: Research Prospectus.*

A three- to four-page prospectus, which takes up a question that will serve as the basis for further exploration in Writing 4.0. This paper includes a bibliographic "review of the literature" of previous studies in the area. **Due: Wednesday, October 28.**

4. *Writing 4.0: Documented Project.*

A six- to eight-page paper based on a research question of significance to the entire *Popken Writer* audience. It should be based on appropriate research methods and on suitable written sources. It also will include three smaller assignments: an annotated bibliography; an abstract; and an oral report on the findings. **Due: Friday, November, 20.**

5. *Writing 5.0: Final Examination.*

COURSE GRADING

1. *Overall Grading Distribution.*

Writing 1.0	= 15%
Writing 2.0	= 15%
Writings 3.0 & 4.0	= 45%
Writing 5.0	= 10%
Professionalism	= 15%

2. *Writing Activities.*

Each of the major writing assignments has built into it a series of writing activities. These activities are designed help me provide you with experiences that will hasten your identification with academic research and, thus, with your acquisition of the genres of research. These activities are also deeply embedded in how I read your major assignments and in how I evaluate your work in the course.

3. *Penalties for Missing Activities.*

Since my work with you on writing assignments is so closely connected to these writing activities, I will assess penalties when writers haven't participated in those activities. Normally, two activities = one letter grade. Along with the penalties for missing writing tasks, you need to keep in mind that ***I must see your work in progress at some point during the paper-writing process. If you turn in a paper that I have not seen at some time in process, I will not evaluate that paper and it will receive an F.***

4. *Professionalism.*

I will assign a grade for what I call "professionalism" at the end of the term. It will be calculated on the following elements:

The quality of your participation in class (including your interaction with other class members and with me)

The quality of your performance on in-class tasks

The quality (and effort) of your final oral presentation of research

Your class attendance. On your fourth absence of the term, you lose one-half of your professionalism grade; on your sixth absence, you lose it all. I take attendance at the beginning of the period. Tardies are the same as absences. Of course participating doesn't mean simply attending class. It means taking part in class and/or group discussion. To be successful in this class you must turn off your cell phone, participate in class activities and be a part of what we are examining as a class. Failing to do so will negatively affect your professionalism grade.

5. *Evaluation of Major Writing Assignments.*

For you to get anything at all out of this course, you will have to apply to your own writing the principles and strategies we work on in class (as well as those you learned in English 111). Therefore, when I read your papers in this class, I will evaluate them in light of a clearly laid out set of "evaluation criteria," which I will put on every assignment sheet. Please take note of these because they are what I am looking for when I grade your writing.

My grade scale for the course is the same one used throughout the freshman writing program and most departments in the University: A = superior; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = unacceptable.

OTHER AREAS OF COURSE OPERATIONS

1. *Completing Writing Tasks.*

You may not skip any writing tasks and still pass the course. All writing tasks, in other words, are required. If you fail to turn in ANY of the writings for this class, you will **automatically fail** the course.

2. *Rough Drafts.*

For all writing tasks (except the final exam), you will be required to do a rough draft, which is considered to be part of the assignment. If you prepare your early drafts on a word-processor, print up one of them to hand in. If a **COMPLETE** rough draft is not turned in with the paper, I can't evaluate the paper. I will not evaluate a paper that does not have a COMPLETE rough draft. This means that you should have AT LEAST one complete draft of the paper that has visible signs of revision. Turning in a few paragraphs of text along with your final draft will not cut it and will result in an F for the paper and potentially the course.

3. *Preparation of Papers.*

All final drafts of Writings 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0 must be word-processed. The papers must be double-spaced with 1-inch margins on top, bottom, right and left. The font must be 12 point. Do not turn in papers with fonts larger than 12 or with spacing greater than double.

4. *Late-Paper Policy.*

A major writing task is due on the day listed on the assignment sheet unless for some reason I announce a change or unless you have made special arrangements with me. **I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE PAPERS.** If you fail to turn in a paper by the assigned time on the assigned day, you will not be given credit for that paper. And, as discussed earlier, if you do not receive credit for an assignment, you will not pass the course.

5. *Plagiarism Policy.*

If you have someone else plan, draft, revise, edit, or even recopy your papers, you have committed plagiarism. This is true no matter what your relationship is to this "helper": he or she may be your paid tutor, unpaid tutor, team mate, mother, father, stepfather, stepmother, sister, brother, cousin, aunt, uncle, grandfather, grandmother, husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend, best friend, fraternity brother, sorority sister, room mate, house mate, soul mate, high school English teacher, minister, priest, rabbi, guru, senator, attorney, veterinarian, hair stylist, barber, insurance agent, stock broker, real estate agent, tax consultant, literary agent, acupuncturist, coach, plumber, psychotherapist, physician, dentist, chiropractor, physical therapist, or auto repair technician.

Moreover, "dictating" your paper to another person who "just recopies it" is also not acceptable. And, if you use someone else's paper, buy one from a "professional" source, or take material without documenting it, you have still committed plagiarism. (This issue is covered in further detail in the

Tarleton State University Student Handbook.)

If I discover that a student has committed intentional plagiarism, the paper that has plagiarized materials will receive a zero, and I will recommend to the English Department Head that the student fail the course.

6. *Returning Papers.*

In order for me to record a grade for any writing, I must have the paper on file in my office. In other words, all major assignments have to be returned to me within a week after I give them back to you. You may have all these major assignments back after a semester has elapsed, or, of course, you may make Xerox or computer copies of your own work to keep.

7. *Writing Center.*

Tarleton State University staffs a free-of-charge Writing Center designed to give you in-depth help with writing problems. The Writing Center is located in O.A. Grant Humanities 210.

LEGAL AND BEHAVIORAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. *Classroom Civility.*

It is extremely important for respect to exist in college classes—respect for the course content, respect of students for each other, respect of students for faculty, and respect of faculty for students. If such respect is disrupted, I am granted the right by the University and the State of Texas to remove students from the classroom.

2. *Learning Disabilities.*

If you have a certified learning disability, please be sure that it is on record with the Office of Student Disability Services. *I cannot legally consider a student's disability (or even talk about it) unless it is a matter of official record.* Therefore you must make sure to take all necessary steps to make sure that the university as well as I am aware of your situation. Then you can come to me and we can talk about what steps can and will be taken from there.

3. *Attendance Requirements.*

Class attendance is required. If for any reason your absences reach a total of 9 (three weeks of the semester), I will assume that you have given up on the class, and I will stop reading your writing tasks. In short, you will have missed so much of the class that I won't be able to evaluate your work, and, thus, **you will fail the course.** I will at that time counsel you to drop the course.

If you do go on to miss more than eight times, you have these options: (a) withdraw from the course; (b) stay in the course and take an "F" grade; (c) file a petition to remain in the course and have me evaluate your writing. These options are explained in detail below:

The University limits the number of drops you can have during your time here. Furthermore, according to University regulations, students can withdraw from first-year composition between the dates of midterm. (Check your *Catalogue* for exact dates.) Within these dates, the student receives a “W” for the course, which doesn’t figure on a grade point average. *Thus, this dropping-the-course option will only work during this small window of time, but it is the option I recommend to you.*

Occasionally—because of eligibility requirements for scholarships or financial aid—a student does not want to drop the course because he/she will then go below twelve hours. In this case, you may remain on the course roster and receive an F grade. I will be glad to counsel with you about the work you had been doing in the course, and I would be glad to discuss composition faculty whose class you might consider enrolling in next term. However, please note, that if you are taking an F, you need not come to class, and I will not evaluate your writing since by this point it impossible for you to pass the course. It would also under these circumstances make no sense for you to resume attending the course.

If—despite missing more than eight times--your work through Writings #1.0 and 2.0 has been A or B level, I will consider a petition for you to continue in the class. This petition is due at my office within three days of your last (ninth) absence. It ought to include (a) a detailed explanation for each of your absences and (b) an extensive (about five page) discussion of the principles of written discourse that we discussed in class each of your absences. In other words, you’re going to have to prove to me that, despite your absences, you have a conscious knowledge of what went on in class sessions.

I make no guarantees that the petition will prove to me that your absences were legitimate and unavoidable and that you’ve amassed a conscious knowledge of the contents of the course, despite your not attending.

COMPUTER RESOURCES

1. *Computer Laboratory.*

Part of your process of acquiring discourse this semester will involve writing your papers on a computer. Several days during the term will be computer lab days. Class on those days will not be in our regular classroom but, rather, will be held in a computer classroom. There are two ideas behind having a lab for the class: (a) so I can be available to help with a writing project and (b) so I can be there to evaluate your writing in process.

These computer class periods I will usually expect you to come with your paper currently in process and to get the most out of the specific issues I ask you to work on that day.

Also, unless you have one already, you will also need to get a student user ID in order to log on.