

## West Los Angeles College

English 103: Composition and Critical Thinking (3 units UC: CSU)  
 Section 1017  
 Instructor: Mark Salerno (e-mail: salernoclass@earthlink.net)

Winter 2016  
 MTuWTh 10:45 a.m.–1:20 p.m.  
 Room: GC 250

### DESCRIPTION:

Course Catalog Description: This course, which meets the transfer critical thinking requirement, is designed to develop transfer-ready critical thinking, reading and writing skills beyond the level achieved in English 101. Based on college-level readings, the course will focus on the development of logical reasoning and analytical and argumentative writing skills with a minimum of 10,000 words of student writing submitted over the semester. *Prerequisite: English 101 with a grade of "C" or better.*

Course Description This Section: Building upon skills already acquired in English 101, this course will help students to further develop ideas and strategies for analysis, abstract thought and critical thinking as these apply to college-level texts. We will examine and make arguments related to assigned readings. Some ongoing themes of this class will be: ways to think about texts and arguments; how to ask questions; form vs. content; problem solving. Class format: seminar-style discussion with emphasis on student participation.

### GOALS OF THE COURSE:

In your writing and reading, you will be developing the following critical practices:

- 1) defining the key terms that help explain the topic;
- 2) analyzing the assumptions that inform the text and our culture;
- 3) making appropriate inferences about how these assumptions are used;
- 4) evaluating those texts that examine our culture;
- 5) analyzing the logical practices and fallacies that are used in the texts;
- 6) synthesizing material from a variety of sources in order to formulate a cogent argument.

### COLLABORATIVE AND LARGE GROUPS:

All students will be evaluating drafts of their peers' essays in small groups. At times, we will be examining a student draft as a class. I will be providing you with critical questions that you can bring to your peers' drafts.

The purpose of these collaborative groups and large group discussions is to develop your analytical reading and writing practices. Since this is a second semester writing course, we will be focusing on how well you argue the points you make in your essays and on the kinds of critical practices that you bring to various assignments. The purpose of these discussions is to make you aware of your critical practices and of additional critical options that you can bring to your writing as you analyze various aspects of the text.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The successful student will leave English 103 with a practical knowledge of how to read, critique and discuss (in oral and written form) college-level texts. Students will acquire practice in, and knowledge of, basic college-level reading and composition skills, including reading critically and objectively, and preparing and producing short critical essays and a research paper. Students will know how to use MLA research paper format and will gain mastery of English grammar essentials.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. At the end of the course, the successful student will be able to argue a point and support it (in writing) using extensive evidence from outside sources. Evaluate arguments and rhetorical strategies for effectiveness and detect any logical fallacies.
2. At the end of the course, the successful student will be able to research, evaluate and cite outside sources for uses in the student's own writing.

Drop Date:

Wednesday, January 6, is the last day to drop without a "W."

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*

Walter Mosley, *Devil in a Blue Dress*

Joan Didion, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*

PDF Files Posted on Etudes

Notebook

Dictionary

OPTIONAL TEXTS:

Hacker and Sommers, *Rules For Writers*, 7th ed.

REQUIREMENTS:

- You are required to have a notebook and a dictionary for this class.
- You will be required to speak in class and make oral presentations.
- There will be quizzes on the readings, on vocabulary and on grammar.
- There will be daily reader response in-class essays (essays written in longhand). You are required to bring adequate loose leaf paper and ink writing implements to class.
- You will read approx. 150 pages per week for this class.
- There will be three homework writing assignments of 1,000-1,500 words in length. For every writing assignment, you must hand in a First Draft and a Final Draft. All First Drafts must be in longhand. All Final Drafts must be typed according to the MLA Format. Some of these events will incorporate the use of sources. All of these events will include a correctly formatted Works Cited page. If more than one page, staple in the upper left hand corner. Always include the assignment number on your essays. No plastic covers, folders, etc.
- There will be a 11 page research paper due February 4.
- Homework hardcopy assignments are due on my desk at 10:45 a.m. of the date assigned. A Word file of the Final Draft is due in my Inbox by 10:00 a.m. on the same day.
- There will be a Midterm (January 21) and a Final (February 4).

RESEARCH PAPER:

The research paper must be 11 pages in length. MLA Format required. It must include a correctly formatted Works Cited page. You must have a minimum of four research sources on your Works Cited page (not including primary texts). A hard copy of your Final Draft is due at the Final Exam. A Word file of your Final Draft is also due. No exceptions.

TEXTBOOKS FOR THIS CLASS:

Students are required to bring the following to class: *The Future of an Illusion*, *Devil in a Blue Dress*, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, PDF Files Posted on Etudes, notebook, dictionary, a writing implement (blue or black ink), and several sheets of loose leaf paper. Showing up to class without the appropriate text(s) earns a failing grade for your work that day.

**READING ASSIGNMENTS:**

Reading assignments are required, not optional. You will not be permitted to participate in the class discussion unless you have read the entire assignment.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:**

There are no late assignments. Any assignment that is handed in late earns a failing grade, but you still must complete the assignment. In order to earn a passing grade for the course, you must complete all written assignments.

**FIRST AND FINAL DRAFTS:**

You must hand in a First and Final Draft for every assignment. All First Drafts must be in long-hand. All Final Drafts must be printed according to MLA Format and include a Works Cited page. Staple your Final Draft on top of your First Draft. Always include the assignment number on every assignment. N.B. With regard to First Drafts, I do not want to see a perfect, handwritten copy of your Final Draft. I want to see a working draft that shows some process and revision.

**MLA FORMAT AND WORKS CITED:**

Any assignment that does not exactly follow the MLA Format and include a correctly formatted Works Cited page is an automatic F, and I will not read it. This includes line spacing.

**DIGITAL DEVICES:**

We will make some use of personal digital devices that allow you to access the Internet. However, if you do not have a cell phone, tablet or laptop, that does not mean that you cannot be in this class. I will tell you when to use your digital device. Otherwise, whenever you are in the classroom, all devices should be turned off and out of sight. N.B. If you are using an ebook or digital format version of a text for this class, you will not be allowed to use it during the Midterm and Final, even if the examination is an "open book" event.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Regular class attendance is required of all students. You will be dropped from the class if you are absent from three class meetings. In other words, if you are absent three times, you will be dropped from the class. Tardiness, like absences, is considered an academic matter. Be punctual. You will be marked tardy if you come into class after the instructor has read the roll. You will be marked absent if you come into class 10 minutes or more after the roll has been read or if you leave class early. Three tardies will count as one absence. If you drop the class, it is your responsibility to have your name removed from the roster. Otherwise, you will be given a grade of "F" at the end of the semester.

**ILLNESS:**

Do not come to class if you are sick.

**MISSED CLASSES:**

If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and to make up all work. Do this by contacting a fellow student. If you miss a class on a day that an assignment is due, e-mail the assignment on that day and bring the hardcopy when you return to class.

**CLASS DISCUSSION:**

Class time is your time. Use it wisely and well. If you have questions, ask them. It is likely that there are other students in the class with the same or similar questions. To earn a passing grade, you are required to make at least one significant contribution to each class meeting. In-class participation accounts for 40% of your grade for the course.

**CLASSROOM DECORUM:**

In order to maintain an atmosphere conducive to experiment and creative interchange, it is important that classroom decorum be rigorously observed. Talking out of turn, whispering in class, moving around, leaving the room, doing assignments for another class, texting, or making any extraneous noise is both rude and distracting. Students are required pay attention in class and make constructive contributions at each meeting.

**NOTES:**

You are required have a notebook. Take notes in every class and while you are doing your homework.

**DICTIONARIES:**

It is strongly recommended that you have a full-sized, late-model English dictionary and that you bring it to every class. Electronic dictionaries are not recommended. Electronic translators are not allowed.

**GRADES:**

Your grade for the course will be earned as follows:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Percentage of Grade</u>
Preparation and In-Class Participation	40%
Quizzes	10%
Essays #1-3	30%
Midterm & Final	20%

Note 1: You must complete all written assignments in order to pass this class. If you are sick for an exam, I will give you a makeup assignment or count another grade twice. There are no In-completes. All grades are final. The research paper is required to pass this class.

Note 2: You must pass 60% of the quizzes in order to pass the class. There will be no make-up quizzes.

**Grading on Quizzes**

Pass = 3 out of 5 correct answers.

**Grading on Essays**

A = A correct thesis paragraph with 3+ sentences clearly stating and developing a thesis (an abstract noun, a concept word) that responds the question. Each body paragraph is 3+ sentences long and presents 1-2 pieces of evidence (direct quotation from the text). A conclusion paragraph that does more than restate the thesis. Demonstrates a strong understanding of the reading.

B = As above, but needs development of the analysis, further organization and development of paragraphs.

C = This is a functioning essay, but the thesis statement is not clear enough or is underdeveloped, usually because it is a description of an idea instead of the statement of an idea, or it is a summary of the text. Beginning to see some grammar and punctuation errors. Careless presentation. Some ESL or idiom problems.

D = Lacks analysis. Lacks ideas. Grammar and punctuation errors. Significant Basic English problems with sentences and paragraphs. Fails to meet MLA Format and Essay Style Format. Fails to meet minimum assigned length. Fails to provide First and Final Draft. Fails to submit a Word file of Final Draft by e-mail.

F = Fails to meet MLA Format and Essay Style Format. Fails to meet minimum assigned length. Fails to provide First and Final Draft. Fails to submit a Word file of Final Draft by e-mail.

**E-MAIL:**

You must have a functioning e-mail account for this class. All e-mails regarding this class should have "WLA Engl 103" as part of the subject line or will not open them. I will not use e-mail to discuss your grades, or to tell you what your grade for the course is at the end of the semester. You must check your e-mail for messages from me at least once a day. Only contact me at saler-noclass@earthlink.net.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, the following: cheating on an exam, plagiarism, working together on an assignment, paper, or project, when the instructor has specifically stated to not do so, submitting the same term paper to more than one instructor, or allowing another individual to assume one's identity for the purpose of enhancing one's grade. For an examination or assignment that violates academic integrity, the grade will be "F."

**PLAGIARISM:**

Plagiarism is when you use the words or ideas of another without giving proper acknowledgement. The first time you are suspected of plagiarism, you will be given an "F" on the assignment. The second time you are suspected of plagiarism, you will be given an "F" for the course.

**DO NOT BRING THESE ITEMS INTO THE CLASSROOM:**

Food, drink, candy, chewing gum, and nonprescription medicines are not allowed in the classroom at any time.

**FOOD AND DRINK:**

This is a classroom. It is not a restaurant, and it is not your living room. Food and drink are not permitted in this or any classroom, nor are they permitted in any classroom building. Anyone who violates this college regulation gets an F.

**CHEWING GUM:**

Chewing gum is vulgar and disgusting. Anyone who disagrees is invited to stand for two or more hours in front of forty students who are chewing gum. Gum chewing will not be tolerated in the classroom.

**CLASS SESSIONS:**

This class is scheduled to meet from 10:45 a.m. to 1:20 p.m. The college expects that all students will be in class during the designated time. The college does not allow students to arrive late or to leave early. If your work commitments, family commitments or commuting time prevent you from attending the each entire class, you must select a class that better suits your schedule.

**PROPER ENROLLMENT:**

Anyone who is not properly enrolled in this class will not receive a grade for the course. If you are not properly enrolled, your name will not appear on the rosters or on the Grade Collection Form. No one is allowed to Audit this class.

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL ACCOMMODATION:**

If you require special accommodations, please discuss your situation with the professor. To receive accommodations for a special need or disability, students must register with the Office of Disabled Students Program and Services (DSPS) at the beginning of the semester. Tape recording of lectures and discussions will not be permitted without the consent of the instructor.

NOTICE:

Everything on this syllabus is subject to change without warning.

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### Class Schedule

Assignments are due on the date they are listed. This schedule is subject to change at any time. Be certain to double-check all assignments with the instructor.

#### Week 1

- Jan 4: Roster. Introduction to the Syllabus. MLA Format. Read Hacker and Sommers 524-527. Read and be prepared to discuss the following PDFs (posted on Etudes): Alexie, Douglass, Malcolm X, King. Print them out and bring them to class. They are required texts for the course. In-class essay.
- Jan 5: Reading and Writing: Tools and Strategies. Alexie, Douglass, Malcolm X, King. In-class essay. Quiz.
- Jan 6: Alexie, Douglass, Malcolm X, King.
- Jan 7: Essay #1 Due. Grammar Workshop: Commas. Read Hacker and Sommers 292-318.

#### Week 2

- Jan 11: Read and be prepared to discuss Didion, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*. We will begin with "7,000 Romaine," "John Wayne: A Love Song," "Marrying Absurd," "Los Angeles Notebook," and "On Keeping a Notebook." In-class essay. Quiz.
- Jan 12: "7,000 Romaine," "John Wayne: A Love Song," "Marrying Absurd," "Los Angeles Notebook," and "On Keeping a Notebook."
- Jan 13: "7,000 Romaine," "John Wayne: A Love Song," "Marrying Absurd," "Los Angeles Notebook," and "On Keeping a Notebook."
- Jan 14: Essay #2 Due. Agreement and Grammar Workshop: Adjectives and Adverbs. Read Hacker Pages 226-231.

#### Week 3

- Jan 18: Read and be prepared to discuss Mosley, *Devil in a Blue Dress*. Student Presentations. In-class essay. Quiz.
- Jan 19: Mosley, *Devil in a Blue Dress*. Student Presentations.
- Jan 20: Mosley, *Devil in a Blue Dress*. Student Presentations.
- Jan 21: Midterm.

#### Week 4

- Jan 25: Read and be prepared to discuss the following PDFs (posted on Etudes): Marx, Galbaith, Reich, Carnegie. In-class essay. Quiz. Student Presentations.
- Jan 26: Marx, Galbaith, Reich, Carnegie. Student Presentations.
- Jan 27: Marx, Galbaith, Reich, Carnegie. Student Presentations.
- Jan 28: Film. Essay #3 Due.

#### Week 5

- Feb 1: Read and be prepared to discuss Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*. In-class essay. Quiz.
- Feb 2: *The Future of an Illusion*.
- Feb 3: *The Future of an Illusion*.
- Feb 4: Research Paper Due. Final Exam.

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**Assignment 1**

Date Assigned: 12/25/16

Date Due: 1/4/16

- 1) Get a notebook. Bring it to class.
- 2) Get copies *The Future of an Illusion*, *Devil in a Blue Dress*, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, PDF Files Posted on Etudes. Bring them to class.
- 3) Get a dictionary. Bring it to class.
- 4) In-class essay. Bring at least three sheets of loose leaf paper and an ink writing implement
- 5) MLA Format. Read and be prepared to discuss Hacker and Sommers 524-527.
- 6) Read and be prepared to discuss the following PDFs (posted on Etudes): Alexie, Douglass, Malcolm X, King. Print them out and bring them to class. They are required texts for the course.
- 7) If you have not done so already, send me an e-mail (salernoclass@earthlink.net) so that I can build an e-mail address list for the class. All e-mails regarding this class must have "WLA Engl 103" as part of the subject line or I will not open them. In the body of this first e-mail, write the full name under which you are registered with the college. Send to salernoclass@earthlink.net.

## English Grammar

### The Ten Most Common Grammar Mistakes

(According to a nationwide survey by Andrea Lundsford of Ohio State University and Robert Connors of the University of New Hampshire)

1. Wrong tense or verb form
2. Run-on sentence
3. Sentence fragment
4. Lack of agreement between subject and verb
5. Wrong word
6. Inconsistent tense
7. Comma errors
8. Missing possessive apostrophe
9. Misplaced modifier
10. Lack of agreement between pronoun and antecedent

## Essay Style Format

**NOTICE** : Failure to follow this format in your essays and exams will result in a failing grade. For example, if you hand in an essay that does not have at least three sentences in the thesis paragraph, the essay will earn a failing grade.

- 1) In the first sentence of the first paragraph, introduce the name of the thing you are discussing, and, if appropriate, its author. For example, in an essay on *In Our Time*, you might begin: "In Ernest Hemingway's collection of short stories, *In Our Time*, . . ." This way, your reader immediately knows what is to be discussed in your essay.
- 2) The "thesis" is the main idea of an essay. Always introduce your thesis in the first paragraph of your essay, preferably in the first sentence. For example: "In Ernest Hemingway's collection of short stories, *In Our Time*, the character Nick Adams progresses from one story to the next through three stages of development and growth."
- 3) The first paragraph of your essay should be at least three sentences long. It should not only present your thesis, but develop it. State what other ideas are important to your thesis, and let the reader know what direction your essay is headed in. For example: "In Ernest Hemingway's collection of short stories, *In Our Time*, the character Nick Adams progresses from one story to the next through three stages of development and growth. The first stage is comprised of a series of 'initiation' experiences. The middle can be thought of as Nick's 'experience of the world' stage. In the last stage, we see that Nick has in some way come to rest, and he pauses to gather his strength and face his future."
- 4) A topic sentence is the first sentence of a paragraph and introduces the main idea of that paragraph (you could think of it as the "thesis" of a paragraph). Every paragraph should have a topic sentence. Every subsequent sentence in a paragraph should relate directly to the paragraph's topic sentence.
- 5) Do not simply summarize. Do not retell the "story." It is enough to refer to the parts of a text that you are discussing and that are relevant to your thesis. The best way to refer to a text is to quote it.
- 6) Do not use slang in your essay. Use only standard English. Slang is imprecise and too casual, and they weaken your essay. Allow yourself to be serious in your essay.
- 7) Do not use contractions in your essay. A contraction is a word compounded of two words, like "don't" instead of "do not," or "won't" instead of "will not." Contractions are a form of spoken language, and therefore have no place in a written essay. Furthermore, they are too casual, and they tend to destroy a serious and objective tone.
- 8) Remember that mere opinion is not a thesis, nor is it an argument. We are not interested in opinions. We are interested in whatever ideas you may have that, by strong argument, you prove are worthy of our attention. A strong argument is an argument that logically presents an idea and evidence to support that idea.

9) Since your essay is about your ideas, and not about you, there is no need to introduce yourself into the fabric of your writing. For example, do not bother to say "I feel that the character Nick Adams progresses from one story to the next through various stages of development and growth." It is better to leave out the "I feel that," and simply state your idea: "The character Nick Adams progresses from one story to the next through various stages of development and growth."

10) Always be consistent in your use of verb tenses. If you begin using the present tense, then maintain it throughout your essay. If you begin with the past, then stay with that. Switching back and forth is bad style because it confuses your reader. When you make reference to a story, it is usually best to employ the simple past. For example, do not say: "In 'Indian Camp,' Nick and his dad go across the lake, where his dad delivers an Indian lady's baby." Rather, say: "In 'Indian Camp,' Nick and his dad went across the lake, where his dad delivered an Indian lady's baby."

11) Titles of poems, short stories and essays are placed in quotation marks. Titles of books and movies should be underlined or *italicized*.

12) Revise and carefully proofread. If you are unsure of something, consult a reference text (like a grammar book or a dictionary) or ask someone for help.

13) Neatness always counts. Carefully type your essay. Set your space and margins according to MLA Format. Don't expect people to read your work and not be negatively impressed if it is sloppy and carelessly put together.

14) Quotations must be exact. If they are part of one of your sentences, they must fit grammatically into that sentence. Follow MLA Format.

15) Do not use "I" or "you" in your essay. When you use "I," you make yourself the subject of your sentences. Do not make yourself the subject of your sentences in a critical essay. Make your ideas the subject of your essay. Furthermore, when you use "you," you are addressing somebody who isn't there or you are referring to the generic "one."

16) Plagiarism is when you use someone else's words or ideas without giving them proper credit. It is all right, and often very good, to refer to the ideas of others. However, you must make it clear in your writing whose ideas they are and where they came from. Having someone else do your work and putting your name on it is also plagiarism. Plagiarism is not a custom of the culture of the United States and will not be tolerated in this institution.

17) Do not ask questions in your writing. This device is called the Rhetorical Question. There are better strategies to use.

18) Avoid using semicolons.