

## **English 101: College Reading and Composition**

Instructor: Eric Brach

Spring 2014

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TTh 9:15-10:45

### **Course Description:**

This 3-unit course aims to teach students the reading skills necessary to comprehend texts of all types, as well as the writing skills needed for success in college coursework and the professional world, with a special emphasis on exposition and textual analysis.

This class will place significant emphasis on the written word. Be forewarned that there will be a homework assignment after every class, and you will be expected to read every day and be prepared to discuss what you have read.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

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.

Additionally, upon completion of this course, the successful student will be expected to be able to:

**Write**, having mastered the ability to, among others:

- (1) Compose complete and correct sentences.
- (2) Utilize punctuation properly.
- (3) Employ sentences to build paragraphs.
- (4) Structure paragraphs to create coherent compositions.

- (5) Use diction appropriate to the purpose, occasion, and audience of a composition.
- (6) Papers and reports of appropriate technical quality and insight.

**Reason**, having mastered the ability to, among others:

- (1) Construct an argument based on analysis of a text or texts.
- (2) Evaluate sources for support, logic and/or research.
- (3) Recognize and utilize rhetorical, argumentative, and persuasive methods of writing.
- (4) Formulate and develop a controlling idea/objective for any full composition and to properly order the parts therein in pursuit of that goal.

**Comprehend**, having mastered the ability to, among others:

- (1) Exhibit critical thinking skills.
- (2) Examine arguments and texts from multiple viewpoints.
- (3) Analyze arguments and critique or support them based on their merits.

It is envisioned that, upon completion of this course, students will have reached a place of self-sufficiency in reading comprehension, wherefrom they can confidently read and understand any text, regardless of its source, subject matter, or previous level of familiarity. Additionally, it is envisioned that, upon completion of this course, students will possess the writing tools and skills they need to effectively communicate in professional and academic settings.

**Class Expectations:**

- (1) Conduct yourself appropriate and behave with respect for all.
- (2) Arrive on time. Do not leave early.
- (3) Complete all assigned work, including readings, before entering class.
- (4) Be prepared to engage in lively class discussion. The Socratic Method may often be used when discussing texts.
- (5) Be prepared to contribute and to learn.

(6) Do not utilize any electronic device, including cell phones or computers, while in class.

**Required Texts:**

The following texts will be used in this class in whole or in part. You will be provided with copies of these books:

Haddon, Mark. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Random House, 2013. Print.

Harris, Marvin. *Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches: The Riddles of Culture*. Random House, 1974. Print.

King, Stephen. *Night Shift*. Random House, 1978. Print.

Langan, John. *College Writing Skills with Readings, 8<sup>th</sup> Ed.* McGraw-Hill, 2011. Print.

McGill, Billy and Brach, Eric. *Billy the Hill and the Jump Hook: the Autobiography of a Forgotten Basketball Legend*. University of Nebraska Press, 2013. Print.

Shanley, John Patrick. *Doubt: A Parable*. Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 2005. Print.

Additionally, the following short works and/or excerpts from the following texts will also be used and will be provided directly to students:

Castellanos, Carlos. "Rubber May Hurt, But It Don't Kill." Unpublished, 2009.

“Clarified: Religious Dietary Restrictions.” *CNN*, 20 July 2010. Web. 29 January 2014.

Didion, Joan. “Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream.” *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1968. Print.

Hacker, Diana. *Rules for Writers, 7<sup>th</sup> Ed.* Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011. Print.

Jouve, Pierre Jean. *The Desert World*. Marlboro Press, 1996. Print.

Korb, Alex. “March Madness.” *Psychology Today*, 21 March 2013. Web. 29 January 2014.

McCarthy, Cormac. *All the Pretty Horses*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1992. Print.

Perrotta, Adam. “Down Under.” Unpublished, 2011.

Robinson, John Elder. “Prologue.” *Look Me in the Eye*. Three Rivers Press, 2007. Print.

Still further supplementary materials may also be used; these will be distributed to students at the instructor’s discretion.

Lastly, the students may be asked to provide additional materials themselves. In these instances, it will fall upon students to bring readings to class of their own choosing and by their own volition, subject to the assignment of the instructor.

### **Attendance:**

Attendance in class and completion of homework is mandatory. You must attend class and complete all homework – as well as average an aggregate grade of 60% or higher – to receive credit for this course.

It is expected that you will have and bring a notebook, as well as any assigned reading materials, to class every day.

### **Assignments and exams:**

In addition to readings and discussions, the students will generate significant work product of their own this semester in the form of written assignments, presentation assignments, annotative assignments and exams.

The expectation is that all work will be completed ***and turned in*** on time, and at the highest level of quality of which the student is capable. No late work will be accepted, except in extreme circumstances and with signed consent from the class DI.

All written assignments to be turned in must be typed, printed, and for multiple-page assignments, stapled in the top-left hand corner. Additionally, these assignments must be presented in standard MLA format: double-spaced and with 1-inch margins, produced in 12-point Times New Roman font, and with a header stating your name, my name, the class/assignment, and the date written.

Putting your name on something is a promise that it is the best work that you can do. Half-complete or carelessly done work will not be looked upon positively. Similarly, ***you must proofread***. Work riddled with errors shows that its author didn't bother to read it before turning it in – and if the creator of a work can't be bothered to read it, why should anybody else?

### **Grading:**

Grading for the course will be on a standard A-F scale, out of 100.

A	90—100	B	80—89	C	70—79
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D 60—69

F Below 60

Students must turn in \*all assignments\* to receive credit and a grade in this course. Assignments not turned in by announced due dates will receive a grade of zero, except in extraordinary circumstances and when accompanied by a signed not from the class DI, as noted above.

Extra credit work may be available on an ad hoc basis; however, the onus for creating these assignments will be upon the students.

End-of-semester grades will be assigned via the following weighting:

Attendance & Participation, including class discussion:	40%
Written work, presentations, and other work product generated:	40%
Midterm and final exams:	20%

Pop quizzes may be given to ensure that students are keeping up with their assigned work.

**Plagiarism:**

Don't do it. Cheating is one of the biggest mistakes you can ever make. The risk of destroying your integrity and good name is not worth saving time when attempting to complete an assignment. Better even to take a zero on an assignment than to risk ruining all you've worked for by cheating.

Plagiarism is, at its essence, written cheating, and it includes:

- Copying other people's work (whether you know them personally or not)
- Doing work for other people or in their name
- Presenting others' thoughts, ideas, or words as your own

If you copy and paste sentences from the internet, that's plagiarism.

If you use ideas from a research source and neglect to cite that source, that's plagiarism.

If you ever use any research tool or source when you are completing your work, regardless of what it is, cite it. You will never get in trouble for being up-front about using others' ideas or thoughts as a jumping-off point; you will, however, find yourself in trouble if you base your ideas on other people's thoughts or words and fail to make clear that you have done so.

Remember, "I didn't know" is not a valid excuse. Could a murderer or thief use lack of knowledge of the law as a defense in court? Of course not. The same rules apply here.

If you ever have any question, feel free to ask. [Plagiarism.org](http://Plagiarism.org) is also a strong resource for understanding more.

West Los Angeles College has a stringent academic integrity policy (as does the LAPD and our school), and I will uphold it.

**Course Schedule / Scheduled Readings:**

What follows is the expected course schedule of readings in this class, subject to modification as needed as the semester progresses.

**Note:** this schedule *does not* include dates of written assignments or the specific order of the grammar, mechanics, and other technical aspects of writing we will cover this semester, as those dates will necessarily be dictated by the knowledge, skills, abilities, and pace of progress of the students in the class. Bear in mind that students will be expected to be cognizant of deadlines as announced and to prepare, produce and present all written work as assigned.

Feb 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>: Jouve and McCarthy. Stephen King: Introduction.

Feb 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>: John Patrick Shanley.

Feb 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>: Stephen King: The Ledge. Carlos Castellanos.

Mar 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>: Stephen King: Trucks. Adam Perrotta.

Mar 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>: Stephen King: I Know What You Need. McGill: Ch. 1-9.

Mar 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>: McGill: Ch. 10-23; Ch. 24-31

Mar 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>: McGill: Ch. 32-38; Ch. 39-44

Apr 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>: McGill: Ch. 45-finish. **MIDTERM EXAM.**

Apr 7<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> \*\*\***Spring Break**\*\*\*

Apr 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>: Stephen King: Quitters Inc. John Elder Robinson.

Apr 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>: Haddon: Ch. 1-79; Ch. 83-149

Apr 29<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup>: Haddon: Ch. 151-197; Ch. 191-finish

May 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>: Stephen King: Children of the Corn. Joan Didion.

May 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>: Alex Korb. Marvin Harris: Introduction.

May 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>: Marvin Harris: Mother Cow; Pig Lovers and Pig Haters

May 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>: TBD; final review

June 3<sup>rd</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>: **FINAL EXAM.**

## **STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

To be returned to instructor on the first day of class:

“I, \_\_\_\_\_ have completely read and understood this syllabus, and I agree to the course requirements set forth herein.”

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate below any special needs or circumstances you face that may have some impact on your ability to perform the work expected in this class, and for which you may require special accommodations:

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