



English 103: Composition and Critical Thinking
Summer 2014
(Online, June 16 to July 24)

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Course Description

From the 2012-2014 *West Los Angeles College Catalogue*:

103 Composition and Critical Thinking (3) UC:CSU

Prerequisite: English 101 with a grade of "C" or better.

This course is designed to develop critical thinking, reading, and writing skills beyond the level achieved in English 101. The course will focus on the development of logical reasoning, analytical and argumentation writing skills.

We will focus on rhetorical techniques—the structure of arguments—as well as on the underlying beliefs, values, and assumptions of various written arguments. In English 101, you probably looked at opposing viewpoints, and formulated theses in response to perceived conflicts in perspectives. In this course, we will examine not just what is said, but how it is said. We will focus on logic and logical fallacies in written arguments.

Prerequisite Skills

Students must have successfully completed English 101 with a grade of C or better to be eligible to register for English 103. In 101, students should have learned how to read critically and analytically. Additionally, students should have mastered the following writing skills:

- Familiarity with the conventions of academic discourse
- Limiting the scope of an argument
- Establishing a thesis and developing support
- Recognizing occasions calling for research
- Evaluating outside sources
- Citing sources
- Composing fully developed paragraphs that are unified in thought

Student Learning Outcome

At the end of the course, the successful student will be able to research, evaluate and cite outside sources for use in the student's own writing.

Textbooks and Materials

The following books are required:

- Boutry, Katherine, Clare Norris-Bell, and Holly Bailey-Hofmann. *The West Guide to Writing: Success from Community College to University*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2014. Print. ISBN: 978-1465240156.
- Dweck, Carol S. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York: Ballantine, 2008. Print. ISBN: 978-0-345-47232-8.

The following book is recommended:

- Modern Language Association. *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: MLA, 2009. Print.

Student Success

Skip Downing, in his book *On Course: Strategies for Creating Success in College and Life*, notes that successful students are those who:

- 1) accept personal responsibility, seeing themselves as the primary cause of their outcomes and experiences.
- 2) discover self-motivation, finding purpose in their lives by discovering personally meaningful goals and dreams.
- 3) master self-management, consistently planning and taking purposeful actions in pursuit of their goals and dreams.
- 4) employ interdependence, building mutually supportive relationships that help them achieve their goals and dreams.
- 5) gain self-awareness, consciously employing behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes that keep them on course.
- 6) adopt life-long learning, finding valuable lessons and wisdom in nearly every experience they have.
- 7) develop emotional intelligence, effectively managing their emotions in support of their goals and dreams.
- 8) believe in themselves, seeing themselves as capable, lovable and unconditionally worthy human beings.

If you have not already adopted these choices of successful students, this course will help you to do so as you develop your writing and critical thinking skills.

Technical Requirements

You must have *regular and reliable* access to the Internet on a computer that has a word processing program. Your phone or iPod touch will not be sufficient. Relying on your significant other's laptop only works if you do not break up midway through the semester. If you cannot access the class regularly (daily on weekdays, for several hours at a time), you might consider dropping this class and taking an on-campus section instead. Please see <https://myetudes.org/portal/site/!gateway/page/4243c7b4-9b68-45fc-0016-148ad08653aa> for browser requirements and configurations.

Online Student Resources

West Los Angeles College uses Etudes as its course management system for online classes. You can access our class at: <http://myetudes.org/portal>. Log in using your complete student i.d. number (the one that begins with 88) or the first two letters of your last name plus the first two letters of your first name plus the last five digits of your student i.d. number. Your initial password will be your month and day of birth (MMDD). If you have trouble logging in, check the student resources at <http://www.wlac.edu/online/students.asp>. This same link will take you to online student counseling, the West Los Angeles College online library catalog, online textbook ordering, and online tutoring, in addition to other online services.

“Attendance” (Participation)

Your regular and active participation is crucial to your success in this class. We will not meet face-to-face, and there is no set time you must attend class. However, in order to succeed in the class you should expect to log in daily, for at least two hours at a time, in addition to the reading and writing you will do offline. In short, expect to spend—on average—about 26 hours a week on this class.

While there is no set meeting time, there are deadlines for work to be completed. You'll have discussions based on the reading. Each student will be required to write an original discussion posting of one or two paragraphs by 8:00 a.m. on the date due. You will be required to respond to one of your classmates' postings by 8:00 a.m. the following day (unless it is a weekend or a holiday, in which case the response will be due by 8:00 a.m. the next working day). The essays also have strict deadlines; no credit is given for work submitted after the deadline.

Reading and Discussion Requirement

Expect to read an average of 100-200 pages each week for this course. For the assigned readings, I will pose a series of discussion questions. You will be required to choose one question to respond to in a thoughtful, well-supported paragraph or two. After posting your thoughts on the assigned reading, you will read what your classmates have said. You'll choose one of those postings to respond to, again in a thoughtful, well-supported paragraph that extends the discussion. You will earn up to two points per original discussion posting, and up to two points per response.

Grading Rubric for Original Posts

2 points = answers the question in full with support drawn from the text and follows the conventions of Standard Written English

1 point = answers only part of the question or does not use Standard Written English

0 points = off-topic or not supported by the text

Grading Rubric for Follow-up Posts

2 points = responds directly to the comments of a classmate and adds new information or new ideas to the discussion

1 point = provides justification for agreeing or disagreeing with a classmate's original post

0 points = merely agrees or disagrees, without providing justification, or is off topic

Although you will be posting your responses in a discussion forum, I strongly recommend you compose your original postings and responses offline in a word processing program, save the file, and then copy and paste the contents into the discussion tool. This will save you the hassle of losing all your work when your connection times out or you click the wrong button. If you prefer to do all your work online in real time, that is okay too; however, most people move to word processing programs once they've had to reconstruct an hour's worth of labor. (Word processing programs have the added benefit of spell-check and grammar-check built in.)

Writing Requirement

All students in English 103 are required to write a minimum of 10,000 words. You will achieve this word count by completing two timed essays (including the final exam) and three offline essays (including a research paper) in addition to reading discussion, quizzes and writing exercises. Your essays should follow the conventions of academic discourse and use MLA style for format and citations. The specific requirements for each essay will be provided in "Assignments, Tests, and Surveys" in Etudes.

You will be required to provide feedback to some of your classmates on their rough drafts and to elicit feedback on yours using the discussion forums. You will submit your final drafts electronically through "Assignments, Test, and Surveys." I will run all submissions through turnitin.com to ensure no one has plagiarized. I will comment on essays online and return them to you through Assignments, Tests, and Surveys.

Grading

Since this is a writing class, 90% of your grade is based on the quality of your written assignments. I evaluate your writing for its cogency, support and structure, as well as if it addresses the complexities of the issue. Of lesser importance, but still a factor in your grade, are style and grammar/mechanics.

Your final grade will be determined by your performance in each of the following categories:

	Discussions:	20%
Classwork (Peer Critiques/Prewriting Exercises/Drafts):		10%
	Logical Fallacies Exercise:	10%
	Timed Essays:	20%
	(Visual Analysis)	(10%)
	(Final Exam)	(10%)

Offline Essays:	40%
Rhetorical Analysis	(10%)
Transfer Statement	(10%)
Research Paper	(20%)

Important Deadlines

All assignments count toward your final grade; however, some assignments count more significantly than others. The essays and logical fallacies exercise are worth a combined total of 70% of your semester grade. Here are the deadlines for final drafts of each essay:

Monday, June 23	Rhetorical Analysis
Monday, June 30	Transfer Statement
Tuesday, July 8	Logical Fallacies Exercise
Thursday, July 10	Visual Analysis (two-hour, timed online essay)
Tuesday, July 22	Research Paper
Thursday, July 24	Final Exam (two-hour, timed online essay)

Communication

If you have questions of a general nature, ask them on the Questions discussion board (Discussion Home -> Main -> Questions). If you have questions of a personal nature, the best way to reach me is by email through the mail feature in Etudes. (Etudes is a more reliable means of communication because it does not filter messages within the system.) You can also contact me via my work email at mannerke@wlac.edu. If you choose this option, please put "English 103" in the subject line. I will respond within 48 hours except over weekends or on holidays. (If you email me on a Friday afternoon, you might not get a response until Monday afternoon or Tuesday morning.) If you do not hear back from me after two working days, it means I did not receive your email.

Late Work Policy

I do not accept late work. The deadlines are at 8:00 a.m. instead of midnight to allow you eight extra hours to get work in. If you have schedule conflicts or travel arrangements, plan to get your work in early. I will make an exception to my late work policy one time, with the No Questions Asked coupon found at the end of the syllabus. You can email me notification that you would like to use the coupon for an extension. Just ask for the extension before the deadline has passed. If you choose to use your NQA coupon, you will have two days to turn in your late work with no grade penalty. The NQA coupon cannot be used on work due after July 17.

Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism—passing off another’s work as your own, **either intentionally or unintentionally**—is a very serious offense; it is also easy to detect. If you plagiarize, you will receive a zero on the assignment and your essay will be forwarded to Student Services for disciplinary action. If you do not remember how to cite sources, consult your *MLA Handbook* or Chapter 22 in your textbook for a review. I would rather mentor than police; please ask me for help if you are having problems with an assignment.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities--whether physical, learning, or psychological--who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disabled Students Programs & Services (DSP&S) as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. Authorization, based on verification of disability, is required before any accommodation can be made. The phone number for DSP&S is (310) 287-4450, and they are located in SSB 320.

And finally...

I look forward to working with each of you this term. If you have any questions, please ask. If I don’t know the answer, one of your classmates will.

NO QUESTIONS ASKED COUPON

This coupon entitles the bearer to a two-day extension on an assignment, no questions asked. Each student may use his/her coupon only once during the semester. To use the coupon for an extension, email the professor at mannerke@wlac.edu. The subject of the email should be No Questions Asked Coupon. In the body of the message, state which assignment you are using the coupon for and when you will submit the assignment (must be within two working days of the original deadline). If the assignment is not submitted by the extended deadline, it will earn a zero and the coupon will be forfeited. Unused coupons may be redeemed for extra credit at the end of the semester.

Expires: July 17, 2014

Valid only in Dr. Manner's class