

English 150. English Composition Course Outline

Instructor Information

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Texts

Steve Good & Bill Jensen. *The Student's Only Survival Guide To Essay Writing*. Orca Books, 1995.

Joseph Trimmer. *A Guide To MLA Documentation*, current edition.

Learning Outcomes

There are two parts to the material under this heading. The first part, which appears under the heading "Approved Course Description," consists of information the College requires instructors to include their materials for the purposes of consistency across the sections. The second part, which appears under the heading "English 150 Objectives," consists of material I've prepared for you that echoes the core concepts in the first part.

Approved Course Description

1. Course Abbreviation, Number & Title

ENGL 150 - English Composition

2. Calendar Description

This course centres on organizing and expressing ideas in clear and effective written prose. Instruction and practice in writing college expository prose, based on appropriate models, form the core. Course assignments total 4000-4500 words. (T)

3. Pre-requisites

C+ in English 12, or assessment

4. Co-requisites

None

5. Pre/Co-Requisite (a course that **must** be taken either at the same time **or** before this course)

None

6. Credits

Three

7. Mode and Hours of Delivery

Direct Instruction
Classroom 3; lab 0; seminar 0; no practicum

Estimated out-of-class 5

Number of weeks 14

Distributed education (online, web-based)

Self-paced

8. Is Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) available for this course?

Yes

9. Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will:

Write expository prose for various purposes and audiences

develop a mature writing process which may include prewriting, planning, drafting, conferring, revising and editing/proofreading

select and use rhetorical patterns purposefully

write correct, clear, cohesive and effective English

vary style purposefully through manipulating sentence rhythms, sentence variety, vocabulary and figurative language

read mature expository and persuasive prose by student and professional writers

vary their reading approach for different purposes

analyze expository prose by identifying controlling ideas, supporting ideas, dominant rhetorical patterns, tone and features of style

research topics for expository papers

use a variety of sources, which may include personal knowledge, interview, print, and other media

choose to summarize, paraphrase, or directly quote from sources

integrate the results of research into expository papers

document sources fully and ethically, according to specified bibliographic conventions

10. Grading System (select one)

- Letter grades
- Mastery
- Practicum

English 150 Objectives

The immediate purpose of this course is to help you develop your writing skills in the context

of college papers; that is English 150's mandate. Many of you are business or trades/technical students, and I will encourage you to work with subject matter that relates directly to your work in your main program area. You'll find that the skills and operative principles governing the writing of good essays transfer easily into other disciplines. After all, if writing skills exist and can be taught, then they must exist independently and apply across all disciplines. The global objective of this course is therefore to make you a more efficient writer, one who can apply sophisticated writing skills to any writing task. The ability to write clearly and persuasively is an asset in any field.

More specifically, this course will help you develop the following:

1. an ability to use the structures, techniques and conventions of effective writing: basic essay structure, methods of development, types of order, paragraph coherence, sentence clarity and word choice;
2. a recognition of the importance of audience, and use of audience characteristics in making decisions about content and style;
3. an effective, efficient writing process, including ways to approach any writing task, and helpful strategies you can use to "regularize" this process;
4. a demonstrated ability to organize and clarify in thinking and writing, and an understanding of some of the imperatives underlying effective writing;
5. some basic research skills and documentation techniques;
6. confidence in your growing mastery of the mechanics of writing, with strong emphasis on basic grammar and punctuation.

Methods & Approaches

Classes will involve a combination of instructional methods including lectures, discussion, group work, formal and informal peer review, and class exercises.

This is a demanding course; it requires substantial writing, and involves the acquisition and development of "survival skills." I expect you to have done the assigned readings before coming to class, and to take part in class discussions. Feel free to provide your input by asking questions and contributing from your experience.

Assessment

As the table at the right indicates, there will be two home essays during the term. Each will be a **minimum of four typed (double spaced) pages** in length. The final will be a research paper, and will be due on the first day of the scheduled examination period (unless I advise you other-wise). The final must be **not less than ten typed (double spaced) pages**.

1. Essay #1	20%
2. Essay #2	20%
3. Various quizzes, peer review, participation	20% (cumulative)
4. Final Research Paper	40%
Total	100%

In addition, there will be formal peer reviews, and various in-class assignments or activities that will require you to explore specific writing techniques, as well as **quizzes on grammar and the readings**. Some of the quizzes will be spot quizzes for which you will be given no “lead time,” so it is important that you stay current with your work. **Please note that in-class assignments and quizzes CANNOT be made up; nor can peer review sessions.**

When I mark your assignments, I’ll use letter grades, rather than numerical scores, except in the case of objective quizzes. The letter grades represent the percentage ranges indicated below. This grading scale reflects Camosun’s official grading system.

When I mark your work, I the first things we’ll be essay you write, for any artificial testing device. which you must be familiar on a given assignment. Too assumptions as to both form then are surprised when (their target audience) had mind. We’ll be discussing you to have an immediate in this course.

Grade	%
A+	95-100
A	90-94
A-	85-89
B+	80-84
B	75-79
B-	70-74
C+	65-69
C	60-64
D	50-59
F	0-49

rely on several criteria. One of discussing is the fact that every instructor, is an exam, an There will always be criteria with beforehand if you’re to do well many students make and content of assignments, and they discover that the marker something entirely different in these issues at length, but I want sense of the criteria I’ll be using

Submission

All assignments (other than in-class work) are to be typed, double spaced, on white 8.5" X 11" paper. Use a standard typeface, such as Times New Roman (13 point). All essays will include a cover sheet displaying your name and student number, the

Requirements

course name and section number, the assignment number and title, and the date of submission. In addition, you will attach to each paper a checklist I'll provide to you. If the assignment has been peer reviewed, you must include all the peer reviewed drafts and review forms when you submit the final draft. You will submit your work in an ordinary pocket folder (about 75 cents at the bookstore). You will submit assignments at the beginning of class on the due dates. **Always keep copies of your assignments** (both hard and soft copies). I haven't yet lost a student assignment, but there's always a first time....

Context, Thesis & Path Statement

Did you tell the reader what your narrowed subject area is? Did you explain why it is important, and how you will organize your paper to facilitate a clear and logical discussion? Note that even perfect grammar and sentence structure can't save a paper that lacks a clear thesis and path statement

Organization

Have you presented your material in a clear and coherent manner, and is your logic evident to the reader? Are your points well made, and supported by reference to primary texts and your own research? Have you made certain that the scope of your subject is appropriate to the length of the paper? Did you follow the structure you promised to use in your thesis and path statement?

Notes & References

You must always give credit where credit is due. In this course, I'll expect you to use the MLA Parenthetical Documentation system, as described in the Trimmer text. I'll also evaluate you on the appropriateness of resources used, and the appropriateness of quoted material to the points you are trying to make.

Grammar & Spelling

The mechanical threshold you must meet is simple: total technical accuracy. You must therefore learn to proofread consistently and effectively, and you must take pains to ensure that you have used correct English and spelling.

Aesthetics

Is your use of language pleasing to your prospective audience? Is your reasoning precise and clearly expressed?

Individual Letter Grade Criteria

The following is a rough breakdown of the letter grade criteria for assignments in this course, and the corresponding marks.

F	Lack of clear expression with respect to content, and/or failure to meet basic mechanical and structural threshold, and/or absence of clear thesis with path statement result in automatic failure. Writer obviously doesn't understand material, or presents it inaccurately, and has serious difficulties with grammar, spelling and punctuation.
D	Paper contains several errors in spelling, punctuation, usage or grammar. Writer doesn't thoroughly understand or discuss subject. Thesis is vague or fuzzy, or writer does not fully deliver on commitments implicit in thesis and path statement.
C	Only occasional weakness in expression. Writer obviously understands basic material <u>well</u> , but there is not much of an attempt to put it into a new light or perspective. Moderate problems with grammar, spelling and punctuation.
C+	Varies. May mean virtually no errors in expression are present; things are clear, but there is little sign of insight. Alternatively, may indicate strong content, flawed by mechanical or structural problems.
B-	Varies. Meets general criteria for a C+, but is somewhat more forceful, original or insightful. There is more of a conscious attempt at expanding the reader's understanding.
B	Virtually <u>no errors in expression</u> are present; all is very clear. Writer has thoroughly studied and understood subject, and this understanding is reflected in thesis, path statement, and general execution. Some degree of originality is involved. The paper is essentially <u>free of grammar and spelling errors</u> .
B+ or A-	A very strong paper - no mechanical or structural errors; competent, worker-like approach; clear execution and delivery based on sound, well presented thesis and path statement. Real evidence of originality/creativity, or of fresh perspective; clear

	grasp of all essential concepts. The better the insight, clarity and strength of the analysis, the higher the grade.
A or A+	Complete, clear understanding and presentation; high degree of originality and no mechanical errors. Less tangible aspects of the writing ('force') become relevant. Work reflects extremely high quality of critical analyses, depth of insight, ability to perceive and create transference, relevance in larger scope of course, etc.

The Marking Code

When I grade your papers, I'll use a marking code consisting of various abbreviations representing the problems or errors I find. The code appears on the first page of the appendix in the **SOS Guide**, and the remainder of the appendix offers explanatory material on each of the error types. I'll expect you to familiarize yourself with the code and the explanations. If you need more detailed explanations, let me know, and I'll refer you to a complete grammar handbook.

Writing, Workload & The Peer Review Process

In this section of English 150, you will be doing much more writing than I'll actually use for grading purposes, and I will expect you to make a corresponding commitment of time and energy. **There will be NO exemptions from course requirements.**

This class consists of two blocks of one hour and twenty minutes each. The second of these two blocks will be given over exclusively to writing practice, whether in the form of work on a specific assignment or otherwise, and to peer editing of your assignment drafts.

You'll see from the materials in this outline that I require two major assignments during the term, together with a final in the form of a research paper. You'll also notice that I've specified due dates by reference to week and class. For each assignment, you'll need a complete draft (three copies) ready for peer editing purposes **two weeks** before your final draft of the assignment is due. You'll engage in a formal peer review process; then you'll revise your draft for the following week, during which you'll engage in a second formal peer review process. One week later, you'll submit the final draft, together with all peer review forms and peer-edited drafts. While you will be graded only on the final draft of each paper, you **must** submit all the peer-edited drafts and meet all other assignment criteria to be eligible for a passing grade. Please note that you cannot submit two sets of drafts peer-edited in the same week.

If this seems like a lot of work -- well, it is. Unfortunately, there is only one way to learn

to write, and that is to write incessantly. You're going to have to keep up with the assignments and the drafts; you're going to have to keep up with the reading load; and you're going to have to keep up with your peer editing responsibilities. This means you're going to have to attend classes regularly. So, if you skip classes, miss peer review sessions or don't submit assignments, the consequences are entirely your responsibility.

Please note that there is no rewrite privilege in this course. Therefore, the work you must do prior to submission of an assignment becomes critical to your success on that assignment.

The peer review process is designed to provide you with constructive criticisms from members of your potential target audience: your fellow students. These are people with whom you share some important characteristics and interests; there are also great differences within the group, not only in terms of attitude and opinion, but in terms of social orientation, political interests, economics, culture, etc. Therefore, the peer review process requires you to adopt a cooperative approach to your writing and to each other.

You may find at first that your ego is a bit more fragile than you would otherwise have thought. That's a natural reaction, but you should try to get over it quickly. This whole process (and the writing process itself) isn't about ego or grades, or even about the correctness of your views on a given subject. It's about the degree to which you are effective in presenting ideas clearly, logically and precisely in an essay or the research paper, and about the level of skills you bring to the tasks confronting you.

Basically, the peer review process works like this. You'll be given a series of evaluation forms that will focus your attention on particular aspects of the work you'll be reviewing. You'll bring three copies of your draft to the session. During a session, you'll evaluate drafts from three of your colleagues, and you'll complete an evaluation form on each draft you review. Each of them will be reviewing your draft at the same time. At the end of the session, you'll get your three edited copies back, with the forms attached. You get one week to revise between review

...the ultimate in peer editing...

sessions. **When you submit the assignment, you**

MUST include all six peer-edited drafts, with review forms attached, in your pocket folder, or the assignment receives an automatic F.

When you're revising your work, you don't have to agree with the content of the evaluations or the grades you received from your colleagues. However, in making your revisions, you should proceed on the assumption that your critics were correct.. Try to incorporate the changes your reviewers suggested; be objective in determining whether the work is better as a result. If it is, good; if it isn't, you can always go back to the old version or make some other changes as necessary. **DON'T TAKE OFFENCE; DON'T GIVE OFFENCE!**

Please remember that peer review sessions are not optional. You must be in class on time – treat the sessions as if they were part of an exam. Evidence of a lack of interest or commitment in peer review materials will affect your grade

Tentative Course Schedule

The course is designed around the outline and the **SOS Guide**. We'll take a kind of "writing lab" approach for much of the course.

Your tentative work schedule should be roughly as set out on the next page. It is subject to change; but if I decide to alter the course, I'll give you as much prior notice as possible.

Please note that I reserve a substantial proportion of your grade for in-class work and participation. Therefore, attendance is critical.

Week	Topics, Activities & Assignments
1	<p>Concepts: topic identification and narrowing; context; the multiple unit essay and the thesis with path statement. Planning considerations; the essay as testing device. UNITY, CREDIBILITY, COMPLETENESS, INFORMATIVE VALUE, INTERNAL CONSISTENCY. Discussion of Assignment 1, including peer review process. Content/mechanical thresholds. Grammar issues. Reading: SOS Guide Intro through chapter V asap.</p>
2	<p>Grammar: the four sentence types; subordination and coordination. Multiple Ur Model: nature, purpose, components. Writing across the disciplines. Rhetorical Approaches: Process (see SOS Guide). Narrowing: reading and developing college essay topics. Working on Assignment 1. Formal peer review in second session of Week 3. Reading: SOS Guide - chapters V and VI (Process).</p>
3	<p>Introductions - learning to create a meaningful context. Rhetorical Approaches: Comparison/Contrast. Grammar: parts of the sentence - subject, verb, object; sentence types. PEER EDIT - DRAFT 1, ASSIGNMENT 1. Reading: SOS Guide - chapter VI (Comparison/Contrast).</p>
4	<p>Revising - principles and procedures (revising Draft 1, Assignment 1). Rhetorical Approaches: Classification (see SOS Guide). Grammar issues. PEER EDIT - DRAFT 2, ASSIGNMENT 1.</p>
5	<p>Rhetorical Approaches: Cause/Effect (reading: Guide ch. VI re Cause/Effect). Conclusions - the creation of "transference." Grammar: single word modifiers (adjective and adverb). Assignment 1 due, <u>beginning of second class this week</u>. No late papers accepted.</p>
6	<p>Body Units (Development, Detail and Support). Grammar: phrases; multi-word modifiers. Go over Assignment 2 - work on it in this week's second class. Reading: Guide chapter VII (Body Units).</p>
7	<p>Reviewing as necessary for grammar/mechanics/usage. Grammar midterm second session of week. Working on Assignment 2 - peer edit of draft 1 in second session of Week 8.</p>
8	<p>Persuasion and Argument - dealing with logical fallacies. In this week's second session, PEER EDIT - DRAFT 1, ASSIGNMENT 2. Reading: begin reading Guide ch. VIII re research.</p>

Week	Topics, Activities & Assignments
9	Grammar: clauses and clause modifiers In this week's second session, PEER EDIT - DRAFT 2, ASSIGNMENT 2.
10	Overview of the Research Paper - purposes and principles; governing expectations; identifying appropriate topics. Assignment 2 due at <u>beginning</u> of this week's second session.
11	MLA Parenthetical Documentation - obligations, principles, applications. Using Guide To MLA Documentation. Begin working on finals. Planning the final paper. Ongoing grammar review for grammar final.
12	Special topics and "outside writing." Working on the final paper. Second session of next week: peer edit final, draft 1.
13	Working on the Final. Second session: PEER EDIT - DRAFT 1, FINAL PAPER.
14	First session: grammar final, in class. Working on the final paper. In this week's second session, PEER EDIT - DRAFT 2, FINAL PAPER.
Finals Week	Finals are due in my office, not later than 12:00 noon, on the first day of the scheduled examination period.

Instruction Methods

Classes will use a combination of instructional methods including lectures, discussion, group work, formal and informal peer review, and class exercises.

This is a demanding course; it requires substantial writing, and involves the acquisition and development of "survival skills." I expect you to have pre-read assigned materials before coming to class, and to take part in class discussions. Feel free to provide your input by asking questions and contributing from your experience.

You should begin reading through the **SOS Guide** as soon as possible, and you shouldn't skip or exclude material.

I base my approach on several assumptions about writing. The first of these is that language is a serial experience that occurs through time. We have cognitive and affective

responses to language, and skilful writers differentiate between these responses, shaping language to create a series of related reactions to a continuing message. If this assumption is correct, then we can see that writing is a process requiring one to make conscious decisions about purpose, audience, content, organization and style, while keeping in mind the quality of the reader's experience. When one views writing in this way, one can see it for what it is: a difficult and complex process requiring sensitivity, skill and clarity of thought.

Writing is composed of skills that CAN BE LEARNED. It requires constant practice. This means you must write constantly; it means I must criticize and edit.

Writing without purpose is an empty intellectual exercise. This doesn't mean that everything you write must be perfect or profound. It does mean that you must care about what you're trying to say, and you must want to convince, persuade or even enchant the reader.

You can never stop trying to improve the quality of your writing. If you set goals only in terms of marks, you automatically impose limitations on growth and development. Don't be afraid to experiment and take risks. When you review your own work, be ruthless. For some writers, 90% of the job consists of constant revision.

Assignment Schedule, Topics & Related Matters

Below you will find your major assignments for the course. You'll see that they are open-ended in terms of content, but that doesn't mean you have *carte blanche* to do anything that strikes your fancy. We'll talk about these assignments at some length, but there are two issues we must address first.

Plagiarism

Please note that despite its accidental omission from this year's college calendar, there is an academic misconduct policy in effect at Camosun College.

Plagiarism is the taking of someone else's words or ideas, and passing them off as your own. It is generally considered a deliberate act, a kind of academic fraud for which you can be severely punished. It is therefore extremely important that you recognize your ongoing obligation as a student to give credit where credit is due, and to use the form of bibliographic notation specified in your discipline, department or course. If you plagiarize in an assignment in this course, the result is an automatic fail on the assignment (at the very least).

Late Assignment Policy

In order to get me to accept a late assignment, you must:

1. **have a truly valid excuse.** This does not mean a headache, a rugby game or a kayaking trip, a vacation to Hawaii or a mission to Mexico, Olympic try-outs or a visitor from out of town. It also does not mean a frank admission that “I just couldn’t get my head around it, man....” I’ll accept a medical excuse if it is substantiated (by medical certificate) and sufficiently serious. Other course obligations are NOT acceptable excuses, nor are last-minute computer or printer melt-downs.
2. **speak with me in person or by telephone prior to the time you are to hand in the assignment.** Except in emergencies, I expect proper notice from you.
3. **be prepared to state an alternate time by which you will hand in the assignment.** If I decide that you can submit a late assignment, then I expect a commitment from you.

Please review the grading and other criteria (including submission requirements) described earlier in this outline before you submit work to me for grading. It’s your responsibility to see that your work meets all requirements.

Assignment 1 - Process or Comparison and Contrast Essay (min. four typed pages), due beginning of second class session of Week 5.

For your first assignment, you will write either a process essay or a comparison/contrast essay. While the essay is due at the date and time noted above, **you will need three copies of a complete draft of your paper (typed and double-spaced) for the beginning of the second class session of Week 3.** At that time, you will participate in a formal peer review of the assignment. You will revise the assignment over the following week, and **you will bring three copies of the revised draft (typed and double-spaced) to the second class session of Week 4.** You will again participate in a formal peer review of the second draft. The following week, Week 5, you will submit the final draft of the assignment, with cover page, checklist, and all edited copies of both earlier drafts with peer review forms attached, in a pocket folder. The assignment is due at the **BEGINNING** of your class session.

While we’ll be discussing process and comparison/contrast in class, you should immediately read the appropriate sections in the **SOS Guide**. You may raise questions in class or during regular office hours.

Assignment 2 - Classification or Cause and Effect Essay (min. four typed pages), due beginning of second class session of Week 10.

For your second assignment, you will write either a classification essay or a cause/effect essay. While the essay is due at the date and time noted above, **you will need three copies of a complete draft of your paper (typed and double-spaced) for the beginning of the second class session of Week 8.** At that time, you will participate in a formal peer review of the assignment. You will revise the assignment over the following week, and **you will bring three copies of the revised draft (typed and double-spaced) to the second class session of Week 9.** You will again participate in a formal peer review of the second draft. The following week, Week 10, you will submit the final draft of the assignment, with cover page, checklist, all edited copies both earlier drafts with peer review forms attached, in a pocket folder. The assignment is due at the **BEGINNING** of your class session.

While we'll be discussing classification and cause/effect in class, you should read the appropriate sections in the **SOS Guide** as soon as possible. You may raise questions in class or during regular office hours.

Final Assignment - Research Essay (min. ten typed pages), due at my office before 12:00 noon on the first day of the Fall '98 scheduled examination period.

Your final in the course is a formal research essay. While the essay is due at the date and time noted above, **you will need two copies of a complete draft of your paper (typed and double-spaced) for the beginning of the second class session of Week 13.** At that time, you will participate in a formal peer review of the assignment. You will revise the assignment over the following week, and **you will bring two copies of the revised draft (typed and double-spaced) to the second class session of Week 14.** You will again participate in a formal peer review of the second draft. The following week is Finals Week, and you must submit your final at the time and place noted above. You will submit the final draft of the assignment, with cover page, checklist, all edited copies of both earlier drafts with peer review forms attached, in a pocket folder. **Your folder should also contain the marked copies of the first two assignments.**

Your research paper ought to reflect the best work you can do. You have free choice of topic and approach, but the usual criteria apply: you must have a **narrow, clear and appropriate thesis and path statement** in the form of an arguable assertion, and you must develop that thesis through analysis, evidence and explanation. You must also meet all submission requirements. You must demonstrate your ability to provide sound, well-researched support for your ideas, and to produce logical argument based on your inquiries. You must also meet the mechanical threshold, as we will have discussed many times in class. On this one, everything counts. . . .

Please be advised that your research must reflect your location and use of **at least two books and two academic articles** (from juried academic journals), in addition to any primary material you may require. There will be **no exceptions** – omissions in this area will be viewed as a failure to meet part of the assignment's basic criteria for success. Note that you **MUST** use the **MLA Parenthetical System** for documentation and bibliographic notation.

You should begin thinking about this assignment reasonably early in the term. As usual, I will be available in class time and normal office hours to deal with any questions you may have. Good luck with your final!

Note: college policy requires that I retain your final papers for one year. Please be sure to keep a copy of your final for your records. I'm normally able to post final grades in the course on the Friday of Finals Week.

1.

Words Words Words Words