

English 250
Advanced Composition
Spring 2004

Instructor: Thom Bland
Office: Paul 335 Phone: 370-3359 (Messages-24 hours)
Class Times: Monday and Wednesday 1:00 to 3:50 in Fisher 212
Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 8:30 to 9:00 and 12:00 to 12:50 or by appointment
Email: bland@camosun.bc.ca

Electronic Version of Outline and other links:

<http://webct.camosun.bc.ca>

Texts: *Inside Language: A Canadian Language Reader*, Jennifer MacLennan and John Moffat

A novel or non-fiction work selected from the list provided.

The College Style Sheet, Furberg and Hopkins, 5th Edition

Calendar Description: This course offers practice in writing in a variety of prose forms, with emphasis upon the expository essay. Stress is placed on developing the students' ability to order and structure material into its most effective form. Finished assignments **TOTAL** 5000-5500 words and will be written almost weekly over the semester.

Course Objectives: In this course, you will be asked to read almost as often as you will be asked to write. The two acts are inextricably connected, and working on one skill will help you with the other. The readings will also provide you with content--ideas etc. Of course, the main thrust of English 250 is writing, and you will do a great deal of that and approach it from a variety of perspectives.

Evaluation: Your evaluation is based upon the following items:

May 5	Framework of Essay #1	0
May 10	Draft of Essay #1	0
May 12	Essay #1	20
May 17	Framework of Essay #2	0
May 19	Draft of Essay #2	0
May 26	Essay #2	25
May 31	Framework of Essay #3	0
June 2	Draft of Essay #3	0
June 7	Essay #3	25
June 9-16	Framework and Draft of Essay #4	0
Exam Week	Essay #4 (Final Exam, In-Class Format)	30
Various	Individual Seminars and participation	30
Continuous	In-Class Writing	<u>30</u>
	TOTAL	160

NOTE: IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PASS THIS COURSE WITHOUT HANDING IN ALL ASSIGNMENTS.

Due Dates: All work is due on the dates specified. 10% will be deducted for **EACH** of the first two days a paper is late. (Total = -20%) After this period, the work will not be accepted.

Essay Format: Please follow the examples and advice presented in the *College Style Guide* or other MLA style guide; do not submit work in folders. For the first point, see <http://webster.commnet.edu/mla/index.shtml> This is a wonderful guide to MLA style.

You should collect **EVERYTHING** you write for this course, including research documents and outside sources, and save them in some sort of file folder. I may ask to see this folder to clarify your progress as a writer or to assess my evaluation of your writing. This may be a little more “order” than you are used to but it is necessary.

Attendance and Involvement: It is impossible to pass this course without at least 80% attendance. **Please arrive at each class with the reading assignments read and considered.** It is an insult to your fellow students to arrive ill prepared for their discussions.

Plagiarism: This is putting someone else's writings (or ideas) into your work and not saying where you got these materials. You thereby imply that the other person's work is your own. This is a serious offence and will be dealt with accordingly.

Evaluation Guide: As you can see, this does not match the College's grading system. However, I hope it will give you a general idea about my expectations and show you how these translate into rough grade equivalencies.

- F Lack of clear expression makes failure automatic. Subject being discussed is obviously not understood or is obviously inaccurately presented.
- D Several errors in spelling, punctuation, or difficult language expressions. Subject not thoroughly discussed and/or thoroughly understood.
- C Occasional weakness in expression. The basic material is obviously understood, but the sentences are unvaried and simple.
- C+ Very few mechanical errors. The basic material is understood. Some attempt at sentence variety and original expression. Not much creative imagination is involved in trying to put the subject into a new light.
- B Virtually no errors in expression are present; that is, all is very clear. Subject is thoroughly studied and understood. Some degree of originality is involved in the unified fashion.
- A The kind of work that might be expected at the next level up. Complete and clear understanding with a high degree of originality. Logical, clear development; no mechanical errors.

My Philosophy: your academic well-being is one of my responsibilities. If you have ANY academic problems during your studies at Camosun College, come and see me. If I cannot help you myself, I will direct you to people who can.

Camosun College's Percentages and Letter Grade Equivalents:

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

Seminar and Editing Guidelines

Editing:

When you write anything for this class you should have at least **TWO EDITORS**; these people **MUST** be from your English 250 class. They will examine your work in close detail. You should indicate that they have examined your writing by putting **THEIR INITIALS** on the bottom of the last page of your finished essay. As an editor, you are not meant to say just "nice things" about your classmate's work. Neither are you expected to say purely negative things. Your comments should be as constructive as possible. I will be going over editing techniques in the early part of the course.

Editors should try not to get too upset if the writer chooses to ignore their helpful advice. It is, after all, the writer's creation and therefore in his or her hands. I hope this editing will get you to examine other people's work with a critical eye, looking for such things as the development of ideas, grammar, usage and transitions. Writing, as you know, is a highly complex act with an array of individual differences. However, the amount of time you have for each writing assignment is fixed so you should learn to pace yourself to the course requirements early in the semester. For example, as you may see from the above dates, your work must go through three distinct phases with three specific dates:

1. For the "**framework**" date you should bring a fully developed outline to the editing class. This outline should specify thesis, modes of development, support used, paragraphing etc.
2. For the "**draft**" dates, you should bring a fully developed essay to the editing class. Here editors should comment on the entire essay, noting everything from surface errors to problems with the logical development of ideas.
3. As you may have guessed, this is the date for the submission of your **finished, polished essay**. **SUBMIT TWO COPIES OF EACH ESSAY: ONE HARD COPY AND ONE ATTACHED TO AN EMAIL**

Please note that your work during the editing sessions will have a direct impact on your participation grade.

Seminar:

You will be assigned a seminar topic on the first day of class. The seminar is meant to generate discussion from the rest of the class. You may choose to do this in a number of ways. Generally speaking, the seminar should look at such things as the content of the piece (what the writer is writing about) and the writer's techniques (how he or she goes about putting the piece

together). For the latter, you should look at such things as a writer's presentation, logical development, rhetorical design, construct of arguments and transitions. This term the pieces you read will all be from professional writers. Of course, this does not mean that they are, by definition, perfect.

You should arrive at the seminar with a favourite passage or two. These can be passages that don't work or that work particularly well or that stand out for some other reason. What the rest of the class will expect from you is that you have thought about the piece in some depth. You may expect the same of the rest of the class. See me for any help you might need. By the way, you will most likely want to use some of this material for one or two of your essays.

Reading List for Essay Four—Choose ONE.

Behind the Scenes at the Museum, Kate Atkinson
True History of the Kelly Gang, Peter Carey
White Teeth, Zadie Smith
Autograph Man, Zadie Smith
The Peppered Moth, Margaret Drabble
The Horses Mouth, Joyce Cary
After Rain, William Trevor
Paddy Clark, Ha Ha Ha, Roddy Doyle
The Son of the Circus, John Irving
Family Matters, Rohinton Mistry
Shakespeare's Dog, Leon Rooke
River Town: Two Years on the Yangzte, Peter Hessler
The Concubine's Children, Denise Chong
The God of Small Things, Arundhati Roy
Into Thin Air, Jon Krakauer.
Things That Must Not Be Forgotten,

Michael David Kwan.
The Shackleton Boat Journey, Frank Worsley
The Imaginary Indian, Daniel Francis.
No Great Mischief Alistair MacLeod.
A Gesture of Life, Chang-rae Lee
Larry's Party by Carol Shields
White Noise Don DeLillo
The Shipping News, Annie Proulx
Snow Falling on Cedars, David Guterson
Red Azalea Anchee Min
Angela's Ashes Frank McCourt
'Tis Frank McCourt
Life and Death in Shanghai, Nien Cheng
A Hundred Years of Solitude Marques
The Mysterious Incident of the Dog in the Night, Haddon

Once you have selected and read one of the above works, follow these instructions for essay number four.

Essay Number Four English 250 Spring 2004

This essay, as you know, will be created, edited and polished in the week(s) **before** the final exam. It will then be written as in-class assignment during the exam week. No dictionaries, notes, or primary reference materials will be allowed.

The framework preparation for this essay is slightly different from what you have done in your previous essays. In fact, it has three parts.

1. Write a one-page summary of the work itself. This should be typed and in a reasonably finished condition since the rest of the class will be reading it.
2. Copy out a one-page excerpt from the work, which you see as important to the work in general, and to your essay specifically.

3. Write a one-page description (typed please) of your planned essay, outlining your thesis and a general plan of attack.

You should be prepared to present this to the class according to the number you receive from the foul and ever-demanding Thom.

My number is _____.

Reading List Tentative

Author	Date
MacLennan 37 Booth 314	May 05
Fry, 33 Orwell, 204	May 10
Hyakawa 9 Lakoff in library	May 12
Shoveller 57 Kostash 62 Lutz 267	May 17
O'Neill in library Berger in library	May 19
Nash 220 Rushdie and Jonas 217—215	May 26
Tannen 180 Wente 190	May 31
Orkin 79 and Davidson	June 02
English in library Bosmajian in library	June 07
Student Final Paper Presentations	June 09, 14, 16

Essay Assignments

I will be discussing each of these in more detail as the class progresses.

Essay One: interview at least two advanced writers (third year and above or someone who writes for a living) and compare their writing techniques. Integrate your commentary with references to the writers from the first part of our writing list: Orwell, Booth, etc. This essay should be in formal, academic voice and approximately 1000 words.

Essay Two: compare any two writers from our text who discuss similar issues. You have many from which to choose. This essay should be in formal, academic voice and approximately 1500 words.

Essay Three: write an analysis of a VERY recent political speech. You will be deconstructing these speakers using some of the ideas presented by writer from our textbook. This essay should be in formal, academic voice and approximately 1500 words.

Essay Four: compose a carefully crafted essay in a three-hour in-class exam. See the extensive discussion above about your preparation, presentation and discussion of this essay topic. This final essay will be based upon a work from the list above. You will have no access to the text, dictionaries or any other reference work. This essay should be in formal, academic voice and approximately 1500 words.