

# English 150: English Composition

## Course Outline

### Instructor Information

Instructor: Bill Jensen & Steve Good

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### Texts

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

Orca Books, 1995 (reprinted through the Bookstore).

Joseph Trimmer. **A Guide To MLA Documentation**, current edition, or an approved alternative.

### 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 we'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

[3] Direct Instruction

Classroom 3; lab 0; seminar 0; no practicum

Estimated out-of-class 5

Number of weeks 14

[x] 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

**Requirements For All Essays Written in English 150**

1. We will not accept papers for grading which are not housed in a correct folder. Submit your work

in a pocket folder (paper, not plastic). The folders cost about .90 cents and are stocked at the bookstore. Papers which are incorrectly submitted will be considered incomplete and will be given

a failing grade. You must submit all previous work (with attached comments) with each new essay.

***We will not accept a folder which does not contain all previous essays, quizzes, peer reviews, etc.***

2. Pay attention to proofreading. We will expect that you have done a careful last revision for spelling, punctuation and grammar. If you have difficulties with mechanics, you can get tutoring through Graduate Studies at the University of Victoria or on campus (check with Student Services).

3. Run-on-sentences, comma splices and sentence fragments are anathema. If you hand in a paper with three of these errors, in any combination, it will fail.

4. Your 2nd paper must use at least one reference work. Your Final paper must use at least four reference works; two of those must from journals.

5. A late paper for which a medical excuse has not been provided, or for which an extension has not

been negotiated well in advance of the due date, will be given an automatic 'F'. A paper is late if it

is handed in even one minute after the time that it is due. We set our watches by the atomic clock in

Boulder, Colorado. This is accurate to the second, so we will not argue about whose watch is correct. Don't put yourself, or us, in that position. Complete your work, and hand it in on time.

6. All assignments are due within 5 min. of the beginning of the class on the day they are due. If the

class starts at 9AM, no assignments will be accepted after 9:05.

7. All papers must include a checksheet (they will be provided to you). A paper without a checksheet

is incomplete. All boxes must be checked and the sheet signed. Don't just fill out the sheet without

completing the tasks that it documents. It is a contract.

8. You should always keep a photocopy of your work. If an essay is lost, you will have no trouble providing a copy.

9. We keep your final exams for one year (as required by college policy). We will return them to you

at the end of the year if you request them. However, we suggest that if you want a copy of the essay,

you make a copy before you hand it in to be graded.

10. When you go through the outline, please make a note of anything you do not understand, particularly

where assignments and deadlines are concerned. It will be entirely your responsibility to see that your work is done on time and in accordance with the guidelines we have provided. If you are

unclear about anything, ask us for clarification. we will be glad to help you in any way we can.

11. There is a set of submission requirements for each essay included in the assignment description.

Be sure you understand all of those requirements. An essay that does not meet all submission requirements will be incomplete and will receive a failing grade.

12. A 3/12 Floppy disc containing an RTF copy of the essay must be turned in with the printed essay.

If you fail to include the source copy, the essay is incomplete and will receive an 'F'.

### **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 50'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**

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

Total 100%

As the above indicates, there will be two home essays during the term. Each will be a minimum of three 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 we advise you other-wise). The final must be not less than ten typed (double spaced) pages.

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.

**NOTE:** You CANNOT make up missed quizzes, in-class assignments or peer review sessions.

If you miss a lecture, it is your responsibility to recover the information that you missed. We suggest that you have a classmate take notes for you. We will not provide written copies of missed lectures, nor will we repeat the lecture to you privately.

When we mark your assignments, we’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.

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%

When we mark your work, we rely on several criteria. One of the first things we'll be discussing is the fact that every essay you write, for any instructor, is an exam, an artificial

testing device. There will always be criteria with which you must be familiar beforehand if

you're to do well on a given assignment. Too many students make assumptions as to both form and content of assignments, and then are surprised when they discover that the marker

(their target audience) had something entirely different in mind. We'll be discussing these issues at length, but we want you to have an immediate sense of the criteria we'll be using

in this course.

### **Submission Requirements**

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 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 we'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 paper (not plastic) 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). We 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 well, 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 no errors in expression 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 free of grammar and spelling errors.

**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. In the case of an A+, the paper, in some important sense, exceeds the requirements as stated in the assignment description.

### **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.” We 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.

We base our 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....” We’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 us in person or by telephone prior to the time you are to hand in the assignment.

Except in emergencies, we expect proper notice from you.

3. be prepared to state an alternate time by which you will hand in the assignment.

If we decide that you can submit a late assignment, then we 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 us for grading. It’s your responsibility to see that your work meets all requirements.

### **Assignment 1**

*Process or Comparison and Contrast Essay (min. three 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.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.

**NOTE**

You must submit the assignment in a proper paper (not plastic) pocket folder. If you are in

doubt as to what a proper folder is, see us.

If you do not have a check sheet, filled out and signed, attached to the final version of the essay, the essay is incomplete.

Three pages in length means three complete pages, not 2.9 pages. If your paper is less than

three full pages in length, it does not meet the submission requirements and we will not accept it. You are, of course, free to write more than three pages.

Margins must not exceed 1 inch, all around. Typeface must not be larger than size 13 (we recommend TimesNewRoman).

You must include a 3 1/2 floppy disk with an RTF version of the essay in your folder.

Failure to

do this will result in an 'F' on the assignment.

**Assignment 2**

*Classification or Cause and Effect Essay (min. three 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.

**NOTE:**

This assignment introduces the use of secondary sources. You must have at least one quotation from an outside source. You must list the source(s) for your quotation(s) on a 'Works Cited Page'. You must use proper IEEE format for the quotation, the citation and the 'Works Cited' entry. The essay is incomplete without this material.

***If your folder does not contain the Peer Review material for the 2nd essay, all draft copies***

***of the second essay, all material related to the first essay (including peer reviews and the***

***graded copy of the 1st essay) and all tests and quizzes, then the 2nd essay is incomplete.***

If you do not have a check sheet, filled out and signed, attached to the final version of the essay, the essay is incomplete.

Three pages in length means three complete pages. If your paper is less than three full pages in length, it does not meet the submission requirements and will not be accepted.

Yes, I am repeating myself -- so take the hint....

Margins must not exceed 1 inch. Typeface must not be larger than size 12 (I recommend TimesNewRoman).

You must include a 3 1/2 floppy disk with an RTF version of the essay in your folder.

Failure

to

do this will result in an 'F' on the assignment.

### **Final Assignment**

*Research Essay (min. ten typed pages), due at my office before 12:00 noon on the first day*

*of the Winter '04 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 must 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. . . .

You must include a 3 1/2 floppy disk with an RTF version of the essay in your folder.

Failure

to

do this will result in an 'F' on the assignment.

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 IEEE 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!

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.

### **NOTE**

This assignment is a research paper. You must have at least four quotes from outside sources. You must list the sources for your quotations on a 'Works Cited Page'. You must

use proper IEEE format for the quotes, the citations and the 'Works Cited' entries. The essay is incomplete without this material. At least two of your sources must be professional

journals. You may also draw material from any other sources you feel are appropriate, after

giving proper consideration to issues of specificity and credibility.

***If your folder does not contain the Peer Review material for the final essay, all draft copies of the final essay, and the graded copies of the first and second essays, then the final essay is incomplete. You do not need to include tests and quizzes with the final.***

If you do not have a check sheet, filled out and signed, attached to the final version of the essay, the essay is incomplete

Ten pages in length means ten complete pages. If your paper is less than ten full pages in length, it does not meet the submission requirements and I will not accept it.

Margins must not exceed 1 inch, all around. Typeface must not be larger than size 13 (I recommend TimesNewRoman).

### **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 1:** Topic identification/narrowing, context, thesis and path. Attributes of good writing.

**Week 2:** Grammar: the sentence types. The multiple unit model. Process; Comparison/Contrast.

**Week 3:** Introductions and context. Grammar: sentence parts, sentence types. **Peer review of assignment 1, draft 1.**

**Week 4:** Revising - principles and procedures. Classification. **Peer review of assignment 1, draft 2.**

**Week 7:** Persuasion and Argument - purposes and principles. Criticism, logic and emotion.

Grammar review. Working on assignment 2.

**Week 8:** Persuasion and Argument - dealing with logical fallacies. **Peer review of assignment 2, draft 1.**

**Week 9:** Business Writing - purposes and principles; business and the adversarial model. The business letter. **Peer review of assignment 2, draft 2.**

**Week 10:** Overview of the Research Paper - purposes and principles; governing expectations; identifying appropriate topics. **Assignment 2 due at beginning of second class this week.**

**Week 11:** MLA Parenthetical Documentation - obligations, principles, applications. Using

Begin working on finals. Planning the final paper.

**Week 12:** Working on the final paper. Second session next week: **peer edit final, draft 1.**

**Week 13:** Working on the Final. Second session: **peer review of final paper, draft 1.**

**Week 14 :** Working on the final paper. Second session: **peer review of final paper, draft 2.**

**Week 5:** Rhetorical Approaches: Cause/Effect. Conclusions. **Assignment 1 due at beginning of second class this week.**