

English 150 Course Outline

Instructor: Bill Jensen
Office: Paul 318
Office Hours: As Posted

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TEXT:
Good & Jensen, The SOS Guide To Essay Writing

English 150: English Composition

Course Outline

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Bill Jensen
Office Hours: TBA
Office: Paul 318
Email: billjensen@shaw.ca

Texts

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

Other required materials will be identified during class. Most will be available from the internet or supplied by your instructor.

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 have prepared for you that echoes the core concepts in the first part.

150 Essay Requirements

1. I 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 .50 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: quizzes, essays, peer review material, etc., (with my attached comments) with each new essay. I will not accept a folder which does not contain all previous essays, quizzes, peer reviews, etc. **Note:** this means all work-to-date, all previous work, as well as the work for the current essay.
2. Pay attention to proofreading. I 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 be 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. I set my watch by the atomic clock in Boulder, Colorado. This is accurate to the second, so I will not argue about whose watch is correct. Don't put yourself, or me, 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 between you and me.
8. You should always keep a photocopy, or computer copy, of your work. If you, or if I, lose an essay, you will have no trouble providing a copy.
9. I keep your final exams for one year (as required by college policy). I will return them to you at the end of the year, if you request them. However, I 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 this 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 I have provided. If you are unclear about anything, ask me for clarification. I will be glad to help you in any way I 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.

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. You, as students, have a variety of personal and professional interests, and I will encourage you to work with subject matter that relates directly to your work in your main program area, or area of special interest. 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:

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;

a recognition of the importance of audience, and use of audience characteristics in making decisions about content and style;

an effective, efficient writing process, including ways to approach any writing task, and helpful strategies you can use to 'regularize' this process;

a demonstrated ability to organize and clarify in thinking and writing, and an understanding of some of the imperatives underlying effective writing;

some basic research skills and documentation techniques;

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	22.5%
2. Essay #2	22.5%
3. Various quizzes, peer review, participation	20 % (cumulative)
4. Final Research Paper	35 %
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 I advise you otherwise). The final must be not less than ten typed (double spaced) pages - with a proper font size and proper margins!

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, inclass assignments or peer review sessions.

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

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.

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 I mark your work, I 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 I want you to have an immediate sense of the criteria I'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 (12 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 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 paper (not plastic) pocket folder (about .50 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. (Because the current MLA system does not have a consistent, effective means of handling electronic resources, I will provide you with an altered system.) 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’. 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 & 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 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) and, in the course.

Late Assignment Policy

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

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.

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.

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.

NOTE:

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 Classification Essay (min. 3 typed pages), due beginning of second class session of Week 5.

For your first assignment, you will write either a process essay or a classification essay.

While the final copy of 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 'classification' 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 me.

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 I 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 12 (I recommend a TimesNewRoman font).

Assignment 2

Comparison/Contrast 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 comparison/contrast 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 'comparison/contrast' 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 adjusted MLA format (I will explain this in class) for the quotation, the citation and the 'Works Cited' entry. The essay is incomplete without this material.

VERY IMPORTANT: your folder must 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. If you have not included all of this material, your 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).

Final Assignment

Research Essay (min. ten typed pages), due at my office (Paul 318) before 12:00 noon on the first day of the 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 14. At that time, you will participate in a formal peer review of the assignment. 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 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 arguments based on your inquiries. You must also meet the mechanical threshold, as we will have discussed many times in class. On this essay, everything counts. . . .

Please be advised that your research must reflect your location and use of at least two books (I want books, not electronic sources - you must demonstrate your ability to use the adjusted MLA citation system. Once you have two books, further resources can be of any kind - electronic, etc.) 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 adjusted MLA Parenthetical System for documentation and bibliographic notation.

You should begin thinking about this assignment 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 CamLink by the Friday of Finals Week. For security reasons, I will not post grades on my office door, send them out by e-mail, or give them over the telephone.

NOTE:

This assignment is a research paper. You must have at least 4 quotes from outside sources. You must list the sources for your quotations on a 'Works Cited Page'. You must use proper adjusted MLA 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 from professional journals and two other resources must be ISBN published books (simply put, two of your resources must be hard copy, not electronic). 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, earlier peer review materials 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 12 (I recommend TimesNewRoman).

Using MLA Citation System

Notes for MLA Citation System

We will use 3 primary MLA ‘work-arounds’ in this class:

1. When you use a long quote, you will indent and single space the quote.
2. When you paraphrase, you will use an informational footnote to indicate the paraphrase.
3. When you reference an electronic resource you will indicate it as follows:

Your Works Cited Page will look like this:

Works Cited

1. Collins, Ronald K.L., and David M. Skover. *The Trials of Lenny Bruce: The Fall and Rise of an American Icon*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, 2002.
2. Continelli, Louise. “A Place for Owls to Heal.” *Buffalo News* 12 Jan. 2003: C2.
3. Lenny Bruce. <http://members.aol.com/dcspohr/lenny/lenny1.htm>.

Your in-text citation for the Lenny Bruce web page (item 3) would look as follows:

The Trial of Lenny Bruce

For thirty years, many people, from journalists to musicians to artists, who are always quick to jump on the free speech bandwagon, have scrutinized, examined and praised the life of Lenny Bruce. More often than not, he is portrayed as the noble hero trapped in conservative America who is not afraid to speak the truth. “This martyr-like quality often associated and adorned on Lenny and his life conveniently overshadows the flaws and imperfections of his personality, such as his unfair treatment of women or the fact that he would often turn in his friends to police to free himself from drug charges.” (ES 3)