

CAMOSUN COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCE
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
ENGLISH 151– ENGLISH COMPOSITION
COURSE OUTLINE

1. Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Nigel Brooks

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday: 1:30 – 2:20

Tuesday and Thursday: 10:30 – 11:20

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Form critical responses to ideas.
 - Distinguish between fact and opinion.
 - Analyse and articulate the reasoning behind an argument.
 - Demonstrate a critical examination of ideas through close reading, inquiry, divergent thinking, evaluation of evidence and interpretation, as well as an understanding of rhetoric, reason, logic and word usage.
 - Produce writing under exam conditions, as well as outside class.
 - Differentiate academic and non-academic writing.
2. Write in an academic style common to multiple disciplines.
 - Approach writing as an active exploration of multiple perspectives on a topic.
 - Compose effective summaries.
 - Select and use rhetorical patterns purposefully.

- Employ a comprehensive writing process, which includes prewriting, focusing, planning, multiple drafting, conferring, revising and editing/proofing.
 - Develop an argument with a controlling thesis; write unified, coherent paragraphs, including effective introductions, transitions and conclusions in correct, clear, effective English.
 - Develop effective, focused research questions.
 - Demonstrate control, clarity and cohesion in the development and organization of ideas.
 - Vary style purposefully for planned rhetorical strategies.
 - Write for specific results.
 - Critique his/her own and others' writing.
3. Read and analyze complex texts from various academic disciplines.
 - Vary reading approaches for different purposes, such as personal response, persuasion, and criticism.
 - Participate and engage in a dynamic, stimulating exchange of ideas based upon close textual readings.
 - Discuss and debate text using terminology appropriate to the discipline and context of those texts.
 - Analyze textual readings, which may include visual texts, by identifying controlling ideas, supporting details, dominant rhetorical pattern, subtext, tone and stylistic features.
 - Summarize readings to reflect coherently the original's ideas, purpose, organization, and tone.
 - Critically read your own and others' writing.
 4. Demonstrate information literacy skills.
 - Determine the nature and extent of the information needed.
 - Know and use what information resources are available, in different formats.
 - Use print and electronic resources effectively and efficiently.
 - Evaluate sources for authority, relevance, reliability, currency and other criteria.
 - Incorporate and integrate research through correct use of summary, paraphrase and quotation.
 - Document sources fully and ethically, according to specified bibliographic conventions.
 5. Develop self-awareness as an academic writer and contributor.
 - Articulate one's position in a critical debate of ideas.
 - Reflect on one's own writing for continuous improvement.

3. Required Materials

(a) *Strategies for Successful Writing: a rhetoric, research guide, reader, and*

handbook. FIFTH Canadian Edition. Edited by Reinking, von der Osten,

Cairns and Fleming.

(b) A dictionary

4. Course Content and Schedule

Purpose of Course

The overall purpose of the course is to turn the student into a clear and effective writer by emphasising the stages through which an essay evolves: brain– storming on a subject, choosing a thesis, drawing up an outline, prewriting a

rough draft, revising the draft, producing a more polished version of the essay and realising that further improvements can be made to this version. The other basic premise of the course is that the ability to write well stems from the ability to read effectively. Active reading and writing activities will occur in class and all such work will count towards the final grade. There may be occasional supplementary essays to read—essays that are not in the main text.

From the outset of the course there will be recourse to discussion groups and peer reviewing so that the student is made aware of how he or she can write for different audiences and not just for the instructor. The role of the instructor is to facilitate the writing process in a workshop environment and thus the instructor does not lecture exclusively but fosters discussion in a seminar situation. Study period time will be devoted to various projects, both group and individual. Students will also assess their own progress in the course and voice any concerns they may have; these study periods provide an opportunity for feedback from student to instructor.

There will be analysis of essay writing successes and failures drawn anonymously from the students' own work. From the very first week, preparation will begin for the research paper; close attention will be paid to research techniques and a library orientation tour will be organised in the second week. Students will give oral progress reports to the class as whole, in the form of the oral report. Later in the semester there will be debates to help students organise a coherent argument.

Because of the active participation of the students in classroom strategies, regular class attendance is crucial. If a student is frequently absent from class, he or she is missing much of vital importance and will be asked to drop the course. To end on a positive note, however: this course is designed to let students explore many of their own interests through writing, reading and discussion, thereby creating greater self-awareness and self-confidence for all future endeavours.

Assignment Schedule

Week One

Course Introduction.

In-class narrative essay—weighting of 5%.

Week Two

Introduce peer-reviewing and establish discussion groups.

Submit research essay topic proposals.

Week Three

In-class test on Moses Milstein's *Memories of Montreal—and Richness* and Evelyn

Lau's *An Insatiable Emptiness*—with weighting of 5%—and other class exercises.

(In-class activities during the semester—four tests and an advertisement—will carry an overall weighting of 25%).

Library orientation tour.

Week Four

In-class exploration of the evolution of the English language.

In-class test on Candace Fertile's *The Oldest Profession: Shopping* and Mark Kingwell's *Ten Steps To A Modern Media Icon*—with weighting of 5%.

Week Five

Review grammatical errors and create a grammar check list.

In-class brain-storming exercise.

Week Six

In-class group work on an advertisement that promotes some aspect of Camosun College—it could be something the College has or should have

In-class test on Celia Milne's *Pressures To Conform* and

Robert M. MacGregor's *I Am Canadian: National Identity in Beer Commercials*—

With weighting of 5%.

Week Seven

In-class expository essay on a hobby or recreational activity—with a weighting of 10%.

In-class instruction on how to give an oral report.

Week Eight

Conferences with students

Sign up for the oral progress report.

Week Nine

Oral reports on progress in the research essay project begin—with a weighting of 10%.

Week Ten

Oral reports continue.

300-word outline of the research essay due in—with weighting of 10%.

Week Eleven

In-class test on Julie Traves' *The Church of Please and Thank You*

And Neil Bissoondath's *No Place Like Home*—with weighting of 5%.

Form debating teams and start preparing debates.

Week Twelve

Debate preparation continues.

Research essays due in—with a weighting of 20%.

Week Thirteen

In-class debates begin with weighting of 10%

Week Fourteen

Finish debates if necessary.

Final in-class argumentative essay on debate topics—with a weighting of 10%.

5. Basis of Student Assessment

To summarise: there are three in-class essays of between 500 and 750 words each, four in-class multiple choice tests, an advertisement, a debate in which each participant must speak for a minimum of 5 minutes, an essay outline of 300 words, an oral report of 7 to 10 minutes and a research essay of between 1000 and 1500 words

6. Grading System

The following percentage conversion to letter grade will be used:

90 – 100% = A+ Grade Point Equivalent: 9

85–89% = A 8

80–84% = A– 7

77–79% = B+ 6

73–76% = B 5

70–72% = B– 4

65–69% = C+ 3

60–64% = C 2

50–59% = D 1

0–49% = F 0

7. Learning Support and Services for Students

There are a variety of services available for students to assist them at the college.

Information on these services is available in the College Calendar, the Registrar's

Office and on the College website at www.camosun.bc.ca

8. Academic Conduct Policy

There is an Academic Conduct Policy. It is the student's responsibility to become

familiar with the content of this policy. The policy is available in each School

Administration Office, the Registration Office and on the College website in the Policy Section.

HOW TO USE STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL WRITING IN THE ENGLISH 151
COMPOSITION COURSE

1. Chapters One through Six on Rhetoric **HAVE** to be read closely because they explain in detail how to write an essay and how to do active reading. You will note that the title for these first six chapters is “Writing Strategies: A Writing Process” and I want to stress that writing is indeed a *process* which goes through various stages that can include brainstorming--see pages 40 to 41--gathering information--even if it is just re-searching your memory--and developing a thesis statement--see pages 46 to 49. There is also a detailed explanation of peer-reviwing from page 69 to page 75 and collaborative writing from page 76 to 77. We will practice these techniques during the semester but it is important to familiarise yourself with them as soon as possible.

2. Chapter Five deals with the crucial stages of revising and editing your essay and **MUST** be closely read. You should closely follow the advice in this chapter while revising the rough drafts of your essays--and before printing and submitting them in class.

3. The first essay you are going to write is a narrative essay so it is **CRUCIAL** that you read Chapter Six on narration. Examples of student essays are given and should be studied closely for what is required: the essay employs the first person point of view and is around 500-750 words in length. The narrative essay will be on an intense experience that has transformed your life.

4. Your second essay will be what is loosely termed an expository essay on a hobby or recreational activity you enjoy. For this assignment you can use any one of the essay strategies described in Chapters Seven through Twelve so you **NEED** to read these Chapters carefully. I would recommend Process Analysis--in Chapter 8--as the most straight forward strategy to use for creating a how-to essay but other approaches are fine as well.

5. As there is no final exam, the semester finishes with an in-class debate and then an in-class argument essay on the topic you have just debated. Chapter 13 is of **VITAL** importance when preparing for these two assignments. The Chapter includes examples of fallacies that you can ferret out in your opponents' arguments--from pages 273 to 277. There are examples of a student argument essays on page 285 to page 294 and a Suggestion for Oral Argumentation from page 296 to page 299..

6. The Research Guide section of our text is an **ESSENTIAL** resource in preparing for your research essay which is the most important assignment of the semester and which has to deal with a subject related to our community here in Victoria or Vancouver Island or the Lower Mainland or the Province of British Columbia; we are in a Community College and I want you to explore some subject that concerns all of us as members of the same urban, island or provincial community. Chapter Fifteen gives a detailed example of a sentence outline on pages 362 to page 463; you will have to submit a sentence outline as one of the steps in the research process. There is also an example of a student research essay from pages 364 to 375. You must study this essay closely as your own research essay will be presented just like this with the addition of a title page. You **have** to use a **Works Cited** list and we use the MLA method of documentation as detailed in Chapter Seventeen.

7. Another assignment will be the in-class oral report on progress in the research essay project. Chapter Sixteen is a **MANDATORY** read because it gives examples of student reports on research activities. You learn how to organise an interview on pages 384 to 386: some of you may need to interview people depending on your research topic. Also from page 388 to 392 you learn all about questionnaires which some of you might want to use as part of your research process. **On pages 427 to 430 at the end of Chapter 16 please note the key advice on how to avoid plagiarism.**

8. The Course Outline details the various essays to be read during the semester and some of these essays are drawn from Strategies for Successful Writing. You can find the essays by looking for the author's last name in the index at the very back of the book. There will be in-class multiple-choice tests on these essays, so, in order to prepare for these tests, you **HAVE** to use the active reading strategy as explained in Chapter 2. you **HAVE** to use the active reading strategy as explained in Chapter 2. From time to time I may require you to read additional essays that are not listed on the Course Outline but that I hand out in class.

9. There will be a **VITAL** review of grammar errors--drawn anonymously from your own essays--early in the semester and we will be putting together a grammar check list that explains how you can avoid the commonest grammatical errors by referring to the advice given in the Handbook section starting on page 500.

10. Points one through nine above illustrate the multiple ways in which *Strategies for Successful Writing* is **CENTRAL** to English 150 so you **must** read carefully through the entire textbook. If you organize your time effectively, all the required reading and writing can be accomplished in the fourteen weeks available and this will be the chief way in which you can guarantee success for yourself in the course. **Time management is the key to doing well in English 150.**

REQUIREMENTS FOR ESSAYS WRITTEN IN ENGLISH 151

1. All essays **must** be completed and submitted on the specified due dates in order to complete the course. Late submissions, without prior negotiated extensions, will be penalized 10% per day up to a maximum of five week days.

2. All essays **must** be word processed and double-spaced.

3. All out-of-class essays **must** have a separate title page. The title page should include: your name, the due date of the assignment, your course title and section number and the instructor's name.

4. The pages of your essay **must** be numbered in the top right hand corner and you should print on one side of the page only.
5. Your essays **have** to be clearly organised with an introductory paragraph/section, that includes a thesis statement, a series of body paragraphs/sections, that develop logically out of the thesis statement, and a concluding paragraph/section.
6. You **have** to give yourself time to proof read your essays--even if they are in-class essays--so that they are free of grammatical errors. Out-of-class essays should have a clean printed text that is not marred with last minute corrections and erasures. **Give yourself ample time to solve any technical problems that may occur in formatting and printing off a hard copy of your essay.**
7. Staple together the pages of the essay in the left-hand top corner. **Do not use plastic binders or covers or folders.**
8. Leave reasonable margins on all edges: about one and a half inches on the left hand side and the top of each page and an inch on the right hand side and bottom of each page.
9. The final research essay **must** adhere to the **MLA** conventions and include a separate title page and a separate Works Cited page at the end. **Not only just direct quotations but all specific information must be followed by parenthetical citations within the text of the research essay.**
10. **Be sure to read the section on plagiarism in Strategies for Successful Writing and be aware that: “the consequences of plagiarism are often severe.” (Reinking et al 428)**

THE MAJOR CAUSES OF SPIRITUAL BANKRUPTCY IN CANADA

Thesis Statement:

Although Canada is one of the most affluent countries in the world, its very affluence, as well as its youth, its lack of culture, and its proximity to the United States, make it a potential victim of spiritual bankruptcy.

I. Introduction: Relative to the pain and suffering in the world, Canadians have it easy.

II. Canada's affluence threatens its spiritual development.

A. Accumulation of money and material benefits has traditionally been at odds with the development of a country's inner life.

B. Canadians intent upon increasing their standard of living seem to have little time for their inner selves.

III. Canada's youth as a country threatens its spiritual development.

A. Like children themselves, young countries seem not to worry about the past or the future, but live only for today.

B. A young country like Canada, with little sense of its own identity, seems not to have to worry about its past and its spiritual welfare.

IV. Canada's lack of culture threatens its spiritual development.

A. If culture is, in some sense, the repository of spiritual values, Canada's apparent unconcern with culture suggests spiritual impoverishment.

B. Those forces within our country with a cultural heritage--Indians and Inuit--are largely ignored by the rest of us.

V. Canada's proximity to the United States threatens its spiritual
Development.

A. The U.S. exerts a depressingly anti-spiritual parental influence over Canada.

B. In looking for role models, Canada, by virtue of its closeness to the U.S., has turned towards it and sees its material success.

VI. Conclusion: Of what real worth is a wealthy but soulless nation?

RULES FOR WRITTEN ENGLISH

The following sentences contain examples of the grammatical errors to avoid. **PLEASE KEEP THIS HAND-OUT WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES FOR EASY REFERENCE**

1. Don't use no double negatives.
2. Each pronoun agrees with their antecedent.
3. When dangling, watch your participles.
4. Don't use commas, which aren't necessary.
5. Verbs has to agree with their subject.

6. About those sentence fragments.
7. Try to not ever split infinitives.
8. Its important to use apostrophe's right.
9. Always read what you have written to see if you any words out.
10. Corect speling is impordant.
11. Prepositions are not suitable words to end sentences with.
12. In my opinion I think that an author when they are writing shouldn't get into the habit of making use of too many unnecessary words that are not really needed.
13. Avoid use of ampersands & other symbolic marks in formal writing, like research essays, for example.
14. Don't use contractions in formal writing.
15. When writing a sentence that has a sub-part or two don't forget to put in commas sometime or other so the reader will not go mad from confusion or die from lack of breath.
16. Profanity sucks
17. Don't abbrev.
18. Just between you and I, case is important.
20. Use slang! NOT! and also prufreed to avoid erors....
21. One must not shift your point of view.
22. When a writer changes his tense there was a real grammar problem.
23. Do not use a run-on sentence, you have to punctuate properly.

Criteria For Marking Essays

1. Content, Development and Organisation

High (Ranked A+, A or A-). The paper has an overall plan, point of view and sense of direction. The thesis and the main supporting points are original and interesting and are developed fully in a logical, persuasive, thought-provoking manner. Each paragraph is unified around a clear focus. The transition within and between the paragraphs is clear and smooth, without being mechanical, allowing the reader to move from point to point with a sense of coherence and momentum.

Middle (Ranked B+, B, B- or C+). Content and organisation are adequate but pedestrian. The essay has a main idea, although it is not clearly stated or kept in focus throughout. The content is skimpy--often short, one and two-sentence paragraphs restricted to generalisations and commonplaces. The arguments are too one-sided. There is no clear organisation or it is too mechanical. Transition is lacking or is restricted to the simplest devices. The order of points is adequate but nothing more.

Lower (Ranked C, D or F). No central idea governs. Obvious points are repeated in slightly different words. The essay pays lip service to the topic, but actually avoids it. (Essays that offer unreasonably one-sided arguments should also be placed in this category.) Points come in haphazard order, without coherence or a sense of direction. The paragraphing contributes little or nothing to the flow of ideas. Transition devices are lacking or extremely mechanical.

2. Sentences (Structure, Grammar, Punctuation)

High (Ranked A+, A or A-). The sentences are clear and demonstrate a variety of length and structure. There is clear evidence that the writer is able to use subordinate structures and is not limited to simple and compound sentences. Errors, if any, are isolated and relatively minor.

Middle (Ranked B+, B, B- or C+). The sentences lack variety in length and structure. The writer is able to construct familiar sentence patterns, but is prone to error and avoids sophisticated structures, such as parallelism, subordination etc. There is reasonable control of the comma, but semi-colons and other marks of internal punctuation are absent or used incorrectly or indiscriminately.

Lower (Ranked C, D or F). There are errors in sentence structure, grammar or punctuation such as to obscure the meaning or seriously impair the flow of ideas.

3. Words (Precision, Vocabulary. Level of Usage, Spelling)

High (Ranked A+, A or A-). Words are used precisely and imaginatively. The vocabulary appears to be wide-ranging. Wordiness and pretentious diction are absent. The diction is specific and concrete where appropriate--not restricted to the abstract and general. The level of usage is consistent, neither too formal nor too informal (except for deliberate effect). Misspellings, if any, are few and not "glaring".

Middle (Ranked B+, B, B- or C+). The phrasing is standardised, ordinary--sometimes hackneyed, never fresh. There is evidence of imprecision and wordiness. There are inconsistencies in the level of usage, especially in the direction of overly informal

expressions. Some jargon or pretentious diction is evident. Spelling is perhaps a noticeable problem with some errors in regular words as well as in more difficult words.

Lower (Ranked C, D or F). Imprecise and wrong words abound. The phrasing is vague, general and wordy. The level of usage is frequently too informal. Spelling is a definite problem. (An essay written in an overly-simplistic vocabulary may also get a "Low" rating , even if no word is clearly wrong. Similarly, excessive wordiness or gobbledygook deserves a "Low" rating.)

