

Peru State College

English 201-49X– Advanced English Composition

Syllabus – Spring – 2012

Instructor: Andy Benscoter

Office Hours: Online Course

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Course Meets: Online

Required Textbook:

*Sf Compact, Ruszkiewicz Binding Spir, ISBN 0-205-75119-9

*Writing & Reading Across Curriculum, Behrens Longman Binding Pape, ISBN 0-205-72765-4

Course Description & Objectives

Prerequisites: English 101

Upon completion of this course you should be able to:

- 1) This course is a study of the principles of clear and effective writing and includes practice in writing sentences, paragraphs, and whole composition.
- 2) You will also review grammar, mechanics, and correct usage.
- 3) This course supports the college's mission of providing opportunities for student learning in the liberal arts and of ensuring that its graduates can write effectively.
- 4) It also supports the English Department's goals of fostering critical thinking, reading skills, and clear expression of ideas.
- 5) At the beginning of the course, we will discuss how these objectives fit into the College's and School's mission and goals.

Expectations & Instructional Approach

Reading: You will be expected to have read the assigned material for each week and to have thought about these selections carefully and thoroughly

"Speaking": Each week we will discuss the reading assigned. This is a time when I expect everyone to participate. This will be done by mandatory Discussion Board questions. You must

post one original answer by 11:55 p.m. Friday of the week assigned and reply to two other students by 11:55 p.m. Sunday of the week of the assigned. Note: You cannot pass this course if you do not participate in a majority of the weekly discussions. Since there are seven discussions, that means you must participate in at least five of them. Missing any discussion will likely hurt your grade, so it's to your advantage to participate in all of them.

Writing: You will write weekly assignments of one page each, unless otherwise specified (one page = 250-350 words). An annotated bibliography will be due in conjunction with your final project. The final project will be a 3.5 to 5 page research essay.

Peer Discussion Board
Weekly Writing Assignments
Research project

Assessment and Grading

To receive at least a "C" in this course, you must be able to do the following: Address an assigned topic in a meaningful way; support a central idea (thesis) with facts and examples; write unified, coherent, and effectively developed paragraphs; demonstrate understanding of transitions; formulate correctly constructed sentences using a variety of patterns; and create essay free of usage and punctuation errors. All the above is covered in more detail in the The "Six-Trait Writing Assessment" a formal standard for evaluating writing at the college level. Copy/paste the following into your browser's address bar to read more: <http://www.nwrel.org/assessment/toolkit98/traits/index.html>

Following is my personal rubric for grading your writing:

A=Excellent writing. In any piece of writing, student exhibits strong ability to write a thought-provoking, original thesis. Thesis is stated clearly early in an essay and student develops thesis with depth, sophistication, and originality. Additionally, in writing about essays, student displays strong ability to interpret/analyze, and express that interpretation clearly. In general, ideas are well-developed, organized, and show a superior grasp of and facility with the English language, including strong sentence structure, use of transitions, and effectively developed paragraphs. Writing displays excellent grammar skills, and is carefully proofread. Put another way, "A" work is that which surpasses the expectations of the instructor.

B=Good writing. Student displays strong ability to write a thought-provoking thesis. Ideas are well-developed, organized, and clearly stated, showing strong grasp of and facility with the English language, including strong sentence structure, use of transitions, and effectively developed paragraphs. Displays strong grammar skills and is carefully proofread. Thesis is stated clearly and essay backs up thesis well. Work may be lacking somewhat in depth, sophistication, or originality.

C=Average writing. Student displays ability to write a thesis, although it will not be as strong or original as thesis found in "A" or "B" work. Ideas are stated well enough to be understood, but writing can be faulted for some weaknesses in any one of the following: development (depth of thought), organization, paragraphs, sentence structure/grammar and/or proofreading. Any one of these flaws can result in a "C"; two of these flaws will guarantee it. Grammar/proofreading errors often result in an average or below-average grade. However, a "C" does mean you are achieving a competent level of writing in the course.

D=Below average writing. Analysis and/or grammar skills are substandard, resulting in writing that is not strong enough to be understood clearly. A "D" is not a passing grade. If student receives a "D" on an early assignment in this class it signals that student will need to seek outside tutoring in order to improve basic writing skills.

F=Fail. As a grade on a paper, an "F" signals the paper is unacceptable in several areas. I generally ask a student to revise a completely unacceptable paper rather than record an "F". As a final grade in this course, an "F" usually signals habitual disregard for following assignment instructions, failure to complete class work in a timely fashion, failure to revise assignments successfully, failure to participate in all required sections of the course. Note: Discussion participation is required. You cannot ignore the discussion board and pass the course!

Discussion Board Responses--Guidelines:

Because your discussion participation constitutes a significant part of your final grade, I'm adding a few notes here to better show you what I look for in the Discussion Board.

1) Develop your response to the full word count. I will take off 1 point for each 15 word increment you're short of the 250 minimum for each initial response in the DB. (This means if you write 245 words, you still get docked a point.) Note that you can always write more than 250 words, and developing a response beyond expectations may help your discussion board grade.

2) Organize your response(s). Rambling or quickly dashed off paragraphs (or no paragraphing at all!) reduces readability. (The common way to "paragraph" in the discussion board is to use a double return between paragraphs.) Think carefully about the question, and plan your response so it sounds like a college student writing. Including a thesis statement, or a one-sentence assertion that states your main idea, then supporting that thesis throughout your response is the best way to achieve a sense of organization.

3) Show depth of thought in your response. THINK, ASSIMILATE, and make CONNECTIONS about what you've read in the text for the week. Relate the text info to the question you're answering in the discussion board. Use personal experience as well to make your responses more readable. Originality/creativity counts, and giving us your own experience is one of the best ways to achieve originality--you're the only person who has lived your life! Finally, for each week's response, strive to write something you haven't already read at the DB.

4) Proofread for grammar errors/typos carefully. Strive for strongly constructed sentences and paragraphs. Avoid sentence fragments, run-ons, and comma splices--if you don't know what these are, ask me or look them up in your course grammar guide. Avoid careless/sloppy errors such as lack of capitalization ("i liked this essay") or, just as bad, capitalizing words that shouldn't be capitalized ("I liked this Essay"), misplaced punctuation, et al, that display inattention to detail. Proofreading carefully shows me you care about the words you're putting out there for others to read. Note that for your DB responses and all other writing for the course, I'll generally deduct .50 to one full point for each serious error such as sentence fragments, run-ons, comma splices, serious sentence construction errors (i.e., unclear meaning because of garbled wording) and .25 to .50 of a point for each minor grammar/proofreading error (everything besides the above-named errors). In some severe cases of unclear wording, I may take off more than one point.

Course Work Grade Weight:

Discussions: 12@20 pts each = 240 pts.
worth 35% of your final grade

Weekly Assignment writing: 6 @ 25 pts. each, 2 @ 50 pts. each, 1 @ 35 pts., 1 @ 30 pts. = 310 pts.
worth 45% of your final grade

Final paper: 1 @ 150 pts. = 150 pts.
worth 20% of your final grade

Total course points: 700

Late Assignment Policy:

This course, which essentially covers a semester's worth of knowledge in sixteen weeks, its going to move quickly; it is imperative you make the commitment to stay on schedule and complete each week's work on time. As you are given ample time to complete each week's discussion board assignments, I will not accept late work at the discussion board. The discussion board is designed for interactive discussion for students. You are unable to experience this part of the course when participating within the discussion board through late posts.

Regarding essays: I will accept late essays ONLY WITH PRIOR PERMISSION FROM ME. You must contact me by e-mail or telephone to let me know your situation, and that communication must be made at least 12 hours prior to the due date/time of the essay due. I can accept late work up to 48 hours after the posted due date/time. Note, though, that you will receive one letter grade deduction for each 24-hour period you are late, and a half-grade deduction for each 12-hour period you are late. Submit late work to my Oakmail inbox (abenscoter@oakmail.peru.edu), as the assignment links will be closed after the due date has passed.

No late submissions of the final essay will be accepted--NO EXCEPTIONS! Complete the final up to one week ahead of time (during week seven) if you foresee any conflicts in getting it submitted during the final week of the course.

Turn in Final Exam no later than 5 p.m Central Standard Time on the assigned day via the assignment Link. I would recommend that you also submit a backup copy of your essay file to my Oakmail address by 5 p.m. as well, to make doubly sure your essay reaches me on time.

There will be no extension on this assignment. I will need to have all assignments graded and submitted to the College by early May.

College's Incomplete Coursework Policy

To designate a student's work in a course as incomplete at the end of a term, the instructor records the incomplete grade (I). Students may receive this grade only when serious illness, hardship, death in the immediate family, or military service during the semester in which they are registered prevents them from completing course requirements. In addition, to receive an incomplete, a student must have completed substantially all of the course's major requirements.

Unless extenuating circumstances dictate otherwise, students must initiate requests for an incomplete by filling out an Incomplete Grade Completion Contract, which requires the signature of the student, instructor, and Dean. The Incomplete Grade Completion contract cites the reason(s) for the incomplete and details the specific obligations the student must meet to change the incomplete to a letter grade. The date by which the student agrees to complete required work must appear in the contract. The Dean, the instructor, and the student receive signed copies of the Incomplete Grade Completion Contract.

Even if the student does not attend Peru State College, all incomplete course work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester. Unless the appropriate Dean approves an extension and if the student does not fulfill contract obligations in the allotted time, the incomplete grade automatically becomes an F.

College's Academic Integrity Policy

The College expects all students to conduct themselves in a manner that supports an honest assessment of student learning outcomes and the assignment of grades that appropriately reflect student performance. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to understand and comply with instructions regarding the completion of assignments, exams, and other academic activities. At a minimum, students should assume that at each assessment opportunity they are expected to do their own original academic work and/or clearly acknowledge in an appropriate fashion the intellectual work of others, when such contributions are allowed. Students helping others to circumvent honest assessments of learning outcomes, or who fail to report instances of academic dishonesty, are also subject to the sanctions defined in this policy.

Instances of academic dishonesty may be discovered in a variety of ways. Faculty members who assign written work ordinarily check citations for accuracy, run data base and online checks, and/or may simply recognize familiar passages that are not cited. They may observe students in the act of cheating or may become aware of instances of cheating from the statements of others. All persons who observe or otherwise know about instances of cheating are expected to report such instances to the proper instructor or Dean.

In order to promote academic integrity, the College subscribes to an electronic service to review papers for the appropriate citations and originality. Key elements of submitted papers are stored electronically in a limited access database and thus become a permanent part of the material to which future submissions are compared. Submission of an application and continued enrollment signifies your permission for this use of your written work.

NSCS Board of Trustees Policy 4220 states that each College “. . . will establish a distance learning assessment policy that will include, at a minimum, a substantial culminating experience that is proctored.” Peru State College's policy is that each course that is offered entirely online will feature a proctored final exam that substantially measures the extent the course's stated learning objectives are achieved. Online course syllabi will clearly state that, regardless of grades earned previously, the proctored final exam must be passed in order to receive credit for the course. Courses which feature graded site-based activities (e.g., teaching demonstrations) and/or video-taped presentations that occur near the end of the term, and that are designed to substantially assess the achievement of learning objectives, can be considered in compliance with this policy. Project-based capstone and graduate courses utilizing real-time discussions held by web-cam, phone or in person with the faculty member as part of the assessment process can also be considered in compliance with this policy.

Should an occurrence of academic misconduct occur, the faculty member may assign a failing grade for the assignment or a failing grade for the course. Each incident of academic misconduct should be reported to the Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). The VPAA may suspend students for two semesters found to be responsible for multiple instances of academic dishonesty. The reason for the suspension will be noted on the student's transcript.

A faculty member need present only basic evidence of academic dishonesty. There is no requirement for proof of intent. Students are responsible for understanding these tenets of academic honesty and integrity. Students may appeal penalties for academic dishonesty using the process established for grades appeals.

Title IX Compliance Notice

Peru State College is an equal opportunity institution. PSC does not discriminate against any student, employee or applicant on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or age in employment and education opportunities, including but not limited to admission decisions. The College has designated an individual to coordinate the College's nondiscrimination efforts to comply with regulations implementing Title VI, VII, IX, and Section 504. Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies and practices may be directed to Eulanda Cade, Director of Human Resources, Title VI, VII, IX Compliance Coordinator, Peru State College, PO Box 10, Peru, NE 68421-0010, (402) 872-2230.

Students requesting reasonable accommodation and tutoring services should contact the Center for Achievement and Transition Services (CATS).