

Supplemental Materials for Designing a Corequisite First Year Writing Course with Student Retention in Mind

Course Syllabus

College Writing Workshop Course Description

This course offers students additional practice in and strategies for developing writing skills in post-secondary academic contexts. Students will be reading, writing, and engaging in a variety of activities that will provide them with opportunities to practice effective writing processes, to develop flexible habits of mind, and to engage in information literacy practices. Prerequisite: concurrent enrollment in ENG 110 with English Placement Test (EPT) score of 325 or below. Concurrent enrollment in ENG 110 with an EPT score between 330-350 and the Multiple Measures Placement (MMP) may be required as determined by the English department. Consent of department. Offered Fall.

College Writing Workshop Student Learning Outcomes

Students successfully completing ENG 100 will be able to do the following:

- * Describe, discuss, and reflect on their reading, writing, and research habits and practices.
- * Identify specific skills and techniques for developing recursive and flexible writing processes.
- * Evaluate and incorporate feedback from peers and instructors.
- * Practice writing as a collaborative activity.
- * Develop strategies for the various stages of the writing process including invention, drafting, and revision.
- * Develop proficiency in using information literacy resources

Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing

As we will discover, writing is a social and personal act rooted in context. The Writing Program Administrators has identified these habits of mind that are essential for first-year writing students. **Habits of mind** refers to ways of approaching learning that are both intellectual and practical and that will support students' success in a variety of fields and disciplines.

- Curiosity – the desire to know more about the world.
- Openness – the willingness to consider new ways of being and thinking in the world.
- Engagement – a sense of investment and involvement in learning.
- Creativity – the ability to use novel approaches for generating, investigating, and representing ideas.
- Persistence – the ability to sustain interest in and attention to short- and long-term projects.
- Responsibility – the ability to take ownership of one's actions and understand the consequences of those actions for oneself and others.
- Flexibility – the ability to adapt to situations, expectations, or demands.
- Metacognition – the ability to reflect on one's own thinking as well as on the individual and cultural processes used to structure knowledge.

Course Grading and Policies

Grading in this class will be done by contract, with the **default grade being a C**. There are a number of reasons why I've opted to grade by contract, including the following:

- The focus shifts from grades to **feedback, emphasizing process** over product;
- Feedback encourages **reflection and revision**, which are essential to learning and writing;
- Reflection and revision are part of a **recursive writing process** that highlights writing as something to be **practiced rather than mastered** once and for all;
- De-emphasizing grades also **promotes risk-taking and the ability to make mistakes** and learn from them without those risks and mistakes resulting in a lower GPA;
- Risk-taking and mistake-making can be tools for **ongoing and connected learning**, so assignments are more likely to be viewed as deliberate and integrated aspects of the course rather than being disconnected end goals in themselves;

- **The grade you earn in the class is more firmly in your own hands**; if you complete the required work for the grade you want, you earn that grade;
- Having more control over your grade should also increase your **investment in and responsibility for completing the required work** to earn that grade;
- Having more options for earning a grade **accommodates different ways of learning**, personalities, and a wider variety of individual strengths;
- There is less ambiguity or question about expectations from the professor, which should lead to a more **collaborative classroom** and **collaborative relationship between professor and student**.

Learning to write requires patience and consistency, so this course is designed to emphasize process. Thus, the criteria below are primarily based on *behaviors*: Have you shown responsible, persistent effort in our class? Have you done what was asked of you in the spirit it was asked—with sincere effort? **To earn a C** in this class, students must fulfill the below requirements. For any writing assignment to be considered complete, it needs to earn a “P” grade.

To earn a C in this course, you agree to complete the below thoroughly and on time:

- Complete the portfolios and reflective essay on time
- Be a Featured Writer at least twice
- Attend at least 3 conferences with the Writing Mentors
- Attend at least 2 conferences with the Professor
- Miss no more than 2 classes
- Complete most (75%) of the day-to-day homework
- Participate most (75%) of the time in class

To earn a B in this course, you agree to complete 2 of the “extras” below. To earn an A in this course, you agree to complete 4 of the “extras” below.

- Be a Featured Writer three times
- Attend 4 conferences with the Writing Mentors
- Miss no more than 1 class
- Complete nearly all (90%) of the day-to-day homework
- Participate nearly all (90%) of the time in class
- Provide substantial, written feedback for a Featured Writer
- Collaborate with a Mentor to lead the class in discussion or an activity

Students who **submit, but do not completely fulfill** all of the requirements for a C, including **revisions and resubmissions** for a score of P on written work, **timely submission**, and class **participation**, will **earn a D**.

An F will be earned if any one of the below qualifies:

- 4 or more face-to-face absences
- Any category of work is completely unfulfilled
- Failure to submit portfolios and essay
- Complete lack of participation in the class.

Featured Writer Workshops

As mentioned above, the goal of English 100 is to support you as you take Eng 110. Workshops are designed to support you with extra feedback on and conversations about your writing. During each class meeting, two members of the class will present works in progress to get feedback and ideas for continuing to draft and revise that work. While it seems most logical that these works in progress come from your Eng 110 class, that isn’t a requirement. You’ll sign up in advance for the weeks you want to be the person presenting work in progress, so I hope you’ll plan to use that time when you’re in the midst of working on a paper. It’s okay if you don’t have a draft of a paper to share, because we (the class) can also help you understand and plan for an assignment you are just getting started on, look over notes and prewriting in order to make decisions, create outlines and plans, etc.

Featured writers each week will have responsibilities before, during, and after the Workshop. **Before**, you will need to provide a copy of the work you're sharing with all members of the class. Offer a very brief summary of what you're working on and list 2-3 concerns that you have on which you'd like feedback. **During** the class, you'll be expected to use your 15 minutes to present portions of your work or assignment, ask questions about it, and engage in conversations with your classmates about strengths, weaknesses, and next steps. **After** your workshop day, you are expected to submit a one-page, double-spaced reflection about your reactions to and plans for integrating the feedback.

As a class member, you will also have responsibilities before and during the Workshop. **Before**, you will need to read the work to be shared from each of your classmates who will be featured and take notes in response to their questions/concerns. **During** the workshop, you'll be expected to ask thoughtful questions of the writer and offer your feedback on strengths, weaknesses, and possibilities for drafting/revising. **After** the workshop, you will fill out a brief exit ticket that will help you reflect on what you learned.

Conferences

Another way you're going to receive additional support for your writing is through individual conferences with the professor and the writing mentors. One-on-one time can help you work on challenges in your writing and get immediate feedback, and learning to talk about your writing helps you become more aware of your processes and habits as a writer. Developing that ability to critique and analyze your own work is crucial to continuing to develop as a writer.

Writing Mentors

Our class has three writing mentors. These mentors are upper class students majoring in English and are earning internship credit for their work in our class. They will attend class every day, keep up on our coursework with us, hold two office hours a week in the Writing Center, and will be ready to help you navigate writing in a college setting. These mentors are trained in providing feedback to writers and of course, have lots of experience writing in various classes here at UWL. I hope that these mentors can assist you in the following ways:

- Clarify ideas, activities, or homework assigned for our class;
- Provide feedback on all stages of your writing process, from brainstorming to drafting, in class and during conferences or office hours;
- Answer questions or provide recommendations about university life.

Writing Projects in ENG 100

Project #1: Reading Portfolio

At this point in your life, reading is second nature. We've read plenty of books and we read all sorts of things—text messages, magazines, newspaper articles, textbook chapters, restaurant menus, and more—all day long. But not surprisingly, the kinds of reading and purposes for reading in college can be unfamiliar or even challenging. Your academic success in college, and your success as a writer, rests on your ability to adapt to this new reading environment. So, in Eng 100, we will learn and practice reading strategies to help you be better prepared to face the complex, unfamiliar, and downright *BoRinG* reading you'll be doing in college.

You will create a reading portfolio that showcases your close, intense interaction with one or two texts of your choice from your Eng 110 course. The exercises and prompts for this portfolio are designed to encourage you to read purposefully and actively and with contextual awareness in mind. As *A Writer's Guide to Mindful Reading* suggests, reading for full comprehension involves four key stages: understanding, reacting, evaluating, and synthesizing.

Understanding a text suggests not only an understanding of what the text is saying, but also of what the text is trying to achieve. **Reacting** to a text suggests that you, the reader, should reconcile your own established knowledge with the text's key points. **Evaluating** a text suggests that you, the reader, should create agency over the text by accurately assessing the content of a text. Lastly, **synthesizing** a text suggests that you, the reader, are able to position texts alongside one another to create a contextually-sound, complex understanding of the key topic the texts discuss.

To receive a P, you will need to include ALL of the components below in your portfolio:

Understanding

- A two-to-three paragraph introduction to the text that examines the purpose of both the text itself and of how the text is being utilized in your Eng 110 course.
- A two-to-three paragraph summary of the text's content.

Reacting

- A two-page, double-spaced, informal response essay that captures your key thoughts and reactions to the text.

Evaluating

- A two-page, double-spaced essay that discusses a critical evaluation of the piece's content and rhetorical strategies.

Synthesizing

- A two-page, double-spaced literature review that aligns your text's key ideas with another's.

Other Stuff

- A copy of your original text(s) and at least one additional text you utilize for the synthesis entry
- Additional materials you created as you worked on this portfolio, from either Eng 100 or Eng 110 homework assignments, essays, etc. (ie., reading notes, annotations/highlights, bibliography entries, exercises from *Writer's Guide*, etc).

Project #2: Reflection Essay

“Well, it depends.” ㄹ(ツ)ㄹ

I say “Well, it depends” to students *a lot* when I teach English 110—it is one of my most common, and frustrating, responses when they ask me about their writing. Writing is rather ambiguous. It is not straightforward in its approach. There are no clear answers on how to do it well. To write well, and at a level that college requires, is messy: there are so many aspects to consider at once. But at the same time, the words themselves must be crystal clear to your readers. It's no wonder writing is hard.

English 110 has likely introduced you to new ways of thinking about writing—ways that may challenge or even directly contradict your past writing experiences. Overall, you're learning about how rhetorically-situated strong writing (and writers!) is/are: we must always consider **what** we are writing, **who** we are writing for, **why** we are writing, and **how** we're going about doing it. The choices we make as writers (Should I use “I”? Should I include hyperlinks?) start with “Well, it depends!”

A text that explores this difficult nature of writing is *Bad Ideas about Writing (BIAW)*. Each chapter in this book highlights a commonly-accepted myth or “rule” about writing and discusses exactly why that myth is troublesome for learning writers. In a roughly four page exploratory essay, choose one myth from *BIAW* and examine how your perception of this myth has changed because of your work in English 110. Why has it changed in this way? How has this perception changed? And, what prompted the change?

Your audience is a future or current UWL student who has not yet enrolled in English 110. They may be aware of writing in college and what it entails, but not at the level and skill that you now possess. They also may be familiar with college-level work, but be unaware of your specific experiences in English 110.

As you draft your essay, consider your English 110 coursework and *BIAW* as your sources; you should explicitly and specifically refer to both to help show and explain your ideas to your readers. The myths below from *BIAW* cover a wide variety of topics related to writing. You could focus on something as ambiguous and fluid as your identity as a writer or on something as concrete and visible as paragraphing. It is up to you; writing functions in all sorts of ways. You may choose to focus on any of the following *BIAW* chapters, which are available on our Canvas site:

“You Can Learn to Write in General”

“Strong Writing and Writers Don't Need Revision”

“You Need My Credentials to be a Writer” “Good Writers Always Follow My Rules”
 “Only Geniuses can be Writers” “The Five-Paragraph Essay Transmits Knowledge”
 “Some People are Just Born Good Writers” “Research Starts with Answers”

Project #3: Final Revision & Reflection Portfolio

A major goal of this course is to develop practice in revising and re-seeing your own work as a writer. As you remember from our class discussions, the ability to reflect on your own choices as a writer (metacognition) is a key habit of mind for academic success. We’ve also focused heavily on writing strategies and processes this semester; this final project brings all of these components together.

The final project for this course is a Revision & Reflection Portfolio. Choose one piece you’ve written for English 110 as the focus of this portfolio. You’ll revise and reflect on the process of revision based on this chosen piece. In order to earn a P, this portfolio should be submitted on time and include the following:

- At least one rough draft of the piece
- The final, polished draft of the piece. (You may have revised and resubmitted this for Eng 110; if you have not, I expect you to revise this piece for the purposes of this project.)
- At least three artifacts you created while drafting the piece. These could be: prewriting, freewriting, mapping/clustering, journaling, annotating, outlining, proposals, bibliographies, peer review notes, etc.
- A three to four page, double-spaced revision memo that answers the following questions. Each of these answers should be supported by specific examples from your revised piece:
 - What revisions did you make? Why?
 - How do these revisions strengthen the piece?
 - How did you incorporate feedback from instructors, peers, and mentors as you revised?
 - How did the artifacts you included help you revise the piece? Or, what sorts of strategies worked for you as you revised?
 - What Eng 100 course concepts (readings, class discussions, and activities) did you apply as you were revising this piece?