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Canvas

# College Composition

Spring 2019—EngWr 300 (19739) & EngWr 94 (19781)

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**Introduction** Writing is thinking made visible for others, a conscious attempt on our part to anticipate and accommodate the reader. Writing is a dialogue with yourself and with others—but then so is reading. In fact, these processes have much in common; the process of making meaning as we read is very similar to the process we use to make meaning when we write, and writing is an attempt on our part to make meaning of the worlds—internal and external—within which we find ourselves.

Good writing creates order out of chaos, transforms the relationship between a reader and a text. The problem, however, is that our reader never knows what we know, or doesn't know it in precisely the same way we do; examples, images and ideas don't mean quite the same thing to another as they do to us. Explaining what we understand to another **IS** the problem, especially when we write. To a great extent, learning to write well involves learning to think like someone else: someone who reads critically, questioning both what the author of the assigned text writes as well as what we, as the reader and writer, might have to say in response.

Good writing, in or out of college, is much more than having enough paragraphs or getting the commas in the right places. Too often, academic writing has become, as David Bartholomae describes it, "more a matter of imitation or parody than a matter of invention and discovery." A college education **should** be a chance to explore the worlds in which we live and **should** be an opportunity to reinvent ourselves within those newly discovered worlds, trying the various languages of the academy on for size and learning to read, think, and write in new and different ways.

**Expectations** I expect a willingness on your part to participate in this exploration and hope you will experiment with your reading and writing. But your willingness to question the *familiar* as well as the unfamiliar will be the key to your success in this course.

**Course Texts** ***There are two required texts you must buy for this course:***

Baldwin, James. *The Fire Next Time*. Vintage International, 1993.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. Spiegel & Grau, 2015.

## Here's how the course is organized—

**Grades** This is a **portfolio course**, so individual essays will **not** receive grades; I'm much more interested in the development of your writing, reading, and thinking skills than how you perform on any given assignment. However, this does not mean that the papers are not important.

The portfolio accounts for 65 percent of your course grade; the other 35 percent of your course grade comes from points accumulated through daily assignments, short in-class writing exercises, quizzes and the effort expended on peer critiques. The course has a mandatory 6500 minimum word requirement; you will exceed that minimum.

The course is designed to encourage a writing process—keep up with class assignments, follow the prescribed process and you will accumulate points and develop an understanding of a writing process that works for you and will prepare you to compose your portfolio. **If you do not participate in the process, you will probably not pass the course.** So discipline yourself to do the work, turn assignments in on time, and stay focused.

**Canvas and Online Discussions** This is **web-enhanced class**, utilizing the Los Rios Canvas website; it incorporates a webbed discussion group, a content area for texts and handouts I assign, and an area where you may check the points you have earned. You will post responses to each reading assignment after an initial class discussion; in addition, I encourage you to revise, reply, or repost as you gain more understanding of the text. The discussion web is an excellent way to extend the spatial and temporal boundaries of our classroom, AND an excellent way to practice those analytical writing skills. A link to the Canvas website can be found on the class website, but the login address for the Canvas server is:

<https://sites.google.com/a/apps.losrios.edu/start/>

The bulk of your course assignment points will come from participation in the online group discussion and from drafts. I consider discussion group work just as important as our f2f classroom discussions. **Preparation** is necessary in both situations if you are to participate effectively. In addition, you will find that the discussions and postings prepare you for the essay assignments. PLEASE do not neglect these postings; points accumulate very quickly, and I do NOT give extra-credit assignments—I expect you to keep up with the course.

**Email** You **must** have an active email address to participate in this class. Even if you already have a personal email address, please activate your Los Rios gmail account. The link is the same as the Canvas login.

Your first assignment is to activate your gmail email account, log in to Canvas, and begin to familiarize yourself with the site.

**Drafts** Your **formal writing will begin with drafts**, which will be critiqued by other students; using the critiques, you will revise the drafts and turn in the revision for my *comments and feedback* (not a grade).

**You MUST submit ALL assigned drafts AND revisions to pass the course. Please understand that if you fail to submit any draft or revision, you will fail the class.**

Much of your work in this class will be done in informal groups, including the work of critiquing drafts. Members in your group will be expected to critique each other's drafts—and we will explore appropriate ways of doing this in class. Although ***you will upload a copy of your draft to the Canvas prior to the workshop***, I also require you to bring copies of your drafts with you to class for workshop. You are expected to arrive WITH two copies of the draft, printed and ready to workshop. If you do not have copies of your draft, you will not be allowed to stay for the workshop, and you will not receive points. I assign critiques because learning to respond to others' papers is the best way to learn to objectively read our own drafts.

### **Writing Assignments**

There are three essay assignments for the course, and most include a research component. Each of your writing assignments will require you to react to and incorporate ideas from the texts I assign you to read. You are expected to become increasingly familiar with MLA format, demonstrating that familiarity in your papers. Although you are required to include the third writing assignment in your portfolio, you are free to choose from the first two assignments in constructing your portfolio. Portfolio information is available online.

Assignments will always be due on the time and day specified. Readings will be discussed in class on the day they are listed (see the assignment schedule), and postings are always due as scheduled.

**I do not accept any late assignments**, nor will I reward late postings: if you fail to post by the specified time, you will not receive credit for the assignment. This is your responsibility, so do not ask; I will **not** negotiate points.

I expect students to behave appropriately in a college classroom. This means that we must **at all** times show respect for **everyone** in the class, and at all times remember that we must earn that respect. Any disruptive behavior in the classroom may result in suspension and the possibility of being dropped from the course. For specific information refer to the official "Student Rights and Responsibilities" as established by the college.

A word **about attendance: Don't miss scheduled class meetings**. Attendance is mandatory. Missing more than **three** classes will result in your being dropped from the class. Absences may only be excused according to school policy; if you anticipate missing class, please speak to me in advance to make arrangements for any assignments due that day.

I expect you to show up on time for class; coming to class late is both rude and disruptive. I check attendance at the beginning of each class; if you are not present in the classroom when attendance is taken, you will be marked absent. If you miss a class, **you**—not I—are

responsible for homework due on that day and for material covered in class.

Finally, you must register for the **Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)** program located in the Learning Resource Center. The half-unit WAC class gives you one-on-one or small group time with English instructors who will help you keep up with the demands of your college writing assignments. WAC has a proven track record of helping students be more successful in all their classes. Students can register for WAC by visiting the program desk in the LRC.

Quantity	Assignment	Points	Total
10	Reading responses (Post to Canvas)	50	500
3	Drafts	150	450
3	Draft workshops	100	300
Subtotal →			1250

1	Sentence Pattern website	100	100
1	Final: Sentence pattern test	200	200
Subtotal →			300

Assignments and sentence quizzes	35%	1550
Portfolio	65%	2880
Total →		4430

### Assignment Schedule:

Week	Monday	Wednesday
<b>1</b>	1-21 <b>Holiday—No Classes</b>	1-23 Class Intro—summary Canvas and reading responses Sentence Pattern website
<b>2</b>	1-28 Read Said Summary and response—in-class writing Post to Canvas by 1-29	1-30 Read De Verteuil Summary and response—in-class writing Post to Canvas by 1-31
<b>3</b>	2-4 Read Morrison Summary and response—in-class writing Post to Canvas by 2-5	2-6 Read Baldwin's "Notes of a Native Son" Summary and response—in-class writing Post to Canvas by 2-7
<b>4</b>	2-11 Read Anderson and "My Dungeon Shook" Discuss Essay #1	2-13 Finish reading Baldwin's <i>Fire Next Time</i> Summary and response—in-class writing Post to Canvas by 2-14
<b>5</b>	2-18 <b>Holiday—No Classes</b>	2-20 Discuss Essay #1 Thesis and map
<b>6</b>	2-25 Making connections with Baldwin Discuss focus	2-27 Draft Workshop #1 Bring 2 clean copies of your draft to class
<b>7</b>	3-4 MLA—page format & parenthetical references Rubric	3-6 Essay #1 due today at beginning of class

Week	Monday	Wednesday
8	3-11 Read Caldwell and Wright Summary and response—in-class writing Post to Canvas by 3-12	3-13 Read Baldwin's "On Being White" Summary and response—in-class writing Post to Canvas by 3-14
9	3-18 Read Coates through p 71 Response—in-class writing Post to Canvas by 3-19	3-20 Finish reading Coates' <i>Between the World</i> Response—in-class writing Post to Canvas by 3-21
10	3-25 Discuss Essay #2 Context and focus	3-27 Discuss Essay #2 Thesis and map
11	4-1 Making connections, transitioning, paraphrasing, and <i>selectively</i> quoting	4-3 Draft Workshop #2 Bring 2 clean copies of your draft to class
12	4-8 Essay #2 due today at beginning of class Complex sentence quiz	4-10 Read Kivel and Hunigan Response—in-class writing Post to Canvas by 4-11
13	4-15 <b>Spring Break—No Classes</b>	4-17 <b>Spring Break—No Classes</b>
14	4-22 Discuss Essay #3 Annotated Bibliographies	4-24 Discuss Essay #3 <b>Sentence Issues deadline for points</b>
15	4-29 Discuss Essay #3 Group discussions of research	5-1 Discuss Essay #3 Finding a focus
16	5-6 Thesis & Map Sentence pattern review	5-8 Draft Workshop #3 Bring 2 clean copies of your draft to class
17	5-13 Portfolio Workshop—bring copies of files to class Chance to workshop Letter of Introduction	5-15 <b>Course Portfolio due</b> Sentence pattern test
18	5-20 Finals—No Classes	5-22 Finals—No Classes

Please check the online assignment schedule for any updates (the URL for the online schedule is: <http://www.boblyman.net/engwr300/assign.htm>). You will find all the essay assignments and portfolio requirements online at the boblyman.net site as well.

Students in this class *must* enroll in either ENGWR 95 or 96: Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC). The WAC program is located in the Learning Resource Centers (LRC) on both the main campus and at Natomas. The half-unit WAC class gives you one-on-one or small group time with English instructors who will help you keep up with the demands of college writing assignments.

Please sign up for any ENGWR 95 or 96 that fits your schedule and does not conflict with any other classes. If you have any questions about signing up, please visit WAC in the LRC. You can also contact WAC at 916-484-8802 ([wac@arc.losrios.edu](mailto:wac@arc.losrios.edu)).

# EngWr 300 Grading Rubric

## An **A-level** paper:

- Formulates a strong sense of purpose and audience awareness; exhibits a consistent and appropriate persona; addresses the assignment with a challenging approach
- Formulates a thoughtful and analytical thesis; demonstrates a strong understanding of issues and ideas raised in the text
- Skillfully and logically organizes ideas using effective transitions to connect and develop ideas
- Employs a variety of support details and evaluates them through relevant analysis and careful reasoning
- Demonstrates excellent control of MLA formatting—page set up, referencing of sources, works cited
- Employs superior control of grammar, sentence variety, word choice, and conventions of standard written English

## A **B-level** paper:

- Demonstrates a clear sense of purpose and audience awareness; exhibits an appropriate persona; addresses the assignment with a meaningful approach
- Formulates a clear and logical thesis; demonstrates a clear understanding of issues and ideas raised in the text
- Clearly organizes ideas using appropriate transitions to connect ideas
- Demonstrates a variety of support details and evaluates them with analysis and reasoning
- Demonstrates good control of MLA formatting—page set up, referencing of sources, works cited
- Demonstrates consistent control of grammar, sentence variety, word choice, and conventions of standard written English

## A **C-level** paper:

- Demonstrates some awareness of purpose and audience though persona may be inconsistent; addresses the assignment
- Formulates a controlling idea though it may be too broad or too narrow; demonstrates a basic understanding of issues and ideas raised in the text
- Organizes ideas using transitions adequately to connect ideas though some connections may be unclear
- Demonstrates support and some analysis, but examples, details, and evidence may be irrelevant, obvious, or unexplained
- Demonstrates adequate control of MLA formatting—page set up, referencing of sources, works cited
- Demonstrates adequate control of grammar, sentence variety, word choice, and conventions of standard written English, though it may be inconsistent

## A **D-level** paper may:

- Show insufficient awareness of purpose, audience or persona; fail to address the assignment directly or clearly
- Set up a vague controlling idea; demonstrate minimal understanding of issues and ideas raised in the text
- Demonstrate formulaic or illogical organization of ideas and may not use, or use inappropriately, transitions to connect ideas
- Lack specific details, examples, and analysis to support general claims; misuses sources
- Demonstrates inadequate control of MLA formatting—page set up, referencing of sources, works cited
- Demonstrate inadequate control of standard written English; errors may distract or impede understanding

## An **F-level** paper may:

- Lack purpose or audience awareness or both; fail to address assignment in any meaningful way
- Lack a thesis or controlling idea; fail to demonstrate understanding of issues and ideas raised in the text
- Display random or confusing organization of ideas; fail to connect ideas
- Lack relevant details, examples, and analysis to support general claims; neglect to use or misuses sources
- Demonstrates little or no control of MLA formatting; may not use MLA formatting at all
- Lack control of sentence focus or boundaries; serious and frequent errors impede understanding

*The question in my title was posed by one of my students after we had spent a class period closely reading and discussing one of the writing assignments in Ways of Reading. Although this student had been quite attentive and had dutifully taken notes during class, her frustration and exasperation at not having been told precisely what or how to write was reflected in her face and in the way she slammed her notebook closed at the end of class. She had come to class looking for answers and what she got instead was a discussion about rereading and working with the text in preparation for writing. This didn't correspond to her previous writing experiences. For her, reading and writing were two distinctly separate activities. She'd read the text already; she knew the story; the reading was done. What she wanted now was a precise definition of what she should write about: What were the important points in the text? What did I (the teacher) see as its value for students? What kind of essay did I expect her to produce? As students filed out of the classroom, she approached me in a final effort to ask, "What part of the assignment should I write about?" Because she had come to class expecting to hear an answer, she had neither seen how class work related to what she might do on her own nor heard that what she might write depended on how **she** read, what **she** noticed, why **she** was interested in this passage or image and not that one. Her final question asked for a connection to the ways of knowing and doing papers that she had come to rely on and that had worked for her in the past. In this case, however, these old ways blocked her from understanding class work and discussions, making use of the information she'd taken down in her notebook, and, ultimately, from engaging in the challenge of the assignment at hand.*

This is the opening paragraph of the essay—"Opening a Conversation with the Text, or 'What Part of the Assignment Should I Write About?'"—written by Kathleen A. Welsch.

—As this author indicates: reading, understanding, writing, and finding meaning are *your* challenges in this course. College writing is *your* opportunity to demonstrate to your teacher the significance of the ideas discussed in assigned readings and class discussions.