Writing 121: English Composition

Welcome to WR121! How many times have you stared at a blank piece of paper or a blank computer screen and tried to find the words to express your thoughts? How many times have you wondered just how those writers write so well? And how many times have you been given a writing assignment and cringed? In this class, we are going to work through these concerns so you can write better and more efficiently.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is designed to help you communicate more effectively and understand what is required for college-level writing. In this course, you will be learning not only how to write different types of essays, but also how to not get overwhelmed with the task of writing. Furthermore, you will learn how to critically think about issues, critically read texts, and critically write about issues, texts, and everyday life. Our focus will, therefore, be the power of writing and how you can uniquely and effectively express yourself in writing. Overall, the course will cover essay structure, organization and development, audience awareness, diction and style, revision and editing, mechanics, and standard usage.

Prerequisite: Placement determined by placement test or passing WR 115.

COURSE OUTCOMES
By the end of this course, successful students will be able to:

• Understand several varieties of writing strategies and how to use them effectively.
• Adjust the writing process for various writing tasks.
• Write essays that are well-organized using focused and developed main ideas, specific details, focused paragraphs, and interesting and effective introductions and conclusions.
• Communicate to specific audiences and for specific purposes and situations.
• Express themselves in Standard Written English.
• Revise and edit materials to reflect college-level writing.
• Develop their voice and style both in their writing and in their learning process.
• Think critically about the world around them.
• Read, analyze, interpret, paraphrase, and summarize textbook and source material.
• Gather, read, and analyze source material, and incorporate it into their writing using appropriate citation and documentation.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

- 3 two-pocket FOLDERS for turning in projects
- 3 or more ways for storing your work: CD-ROMs, jump drives, e-mail... (Floppy disks are not recommended.)
  • Note: Computer problems are not a valid excuse for being late, being unprepared, or turning in late assignments.
**Student Services**
For a complete list of services and the days and times of the services, please consult the Linn-Benton Schedule of Classes and/or www.linnbenton.edu. For your convenience, I've listed a few here.

**Writing Center Hours**
Upper WH
Mon.-Fri. 10-3
You may also use the writing centers/desks on other LBCC campuses.

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**Computer Lab Hours**
*Learning Center*
Upper WH
Mon. & Wed. 7:30-7
Tues. & Thurs. 7:30-9
Fri. 7:30-4

*Forum 204*
Mon. – Thurs. 8-9
Fri. 8-5
Sat. & Sun. 12-5

**Library Hours**
Lower WH
Mon.-Thurs. 8-8
Fri. 8-4:30
www.linnbenton.edu/library

**Learning Center Hours**
cf.linnbenton.edu/depts/lrc

**Support Lab Hours**
*HO-114*
Mon. – Fri. 8:30-4

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**Important College Dates**
Consult the Linn-Benton Schedule of Classes

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**SUGGESTED TEXTS AND MATERIALS**
- Dictionary
- Thesaurus
- Spiral notebook or another folder for your journal

**RESOURCES TO HELP YOU SUCCEED**
- Please drop by my office or make an appointment with me if you would like my help with any assignment, including getting ideas, developing your paper, gathering information, and revising. I have office hours to serve you, so please use them.

  - The *Writing Center*, located on the second floor of Willamette Hall, provides help with writing. Please remember, however, the people are there not to proofread your papers, but to help you with your writing. See hours to the left. For more information, go to http://cf.linnbenton.edu/depts/lrc/web.cfm?pgID=95.

  - You can also use the Writing Center online through the [Online Writing Lab (OWL)](lbcc.writingcenteronline.net) by going to lbcc.writingcenteronline.net.

  - The library, located on the first floor of Willamette Hall, will be helpful when doing research.

  - [Counseling Services](madriac@linnbenton.edu) If you ever need to talk with someone about school or life situations, you can contact any of LBCC’s counselors, including Charles Madriaga who can be contacted at madriac@linnbenton.edu. Counseling services is located in Takena, room 101, and can be reached by phone at 917-4780.

  - [Students with Disabilities](madriac@linnbenton.edu) Students who have any emergency medical information the instructor should know of, who need special arrangements in the event of evacuation, or students with documented disabilities who may need accommodation should make an appointment with the instructor as early as possible, no later than the first week of the term. If additional assistance is required, the student should contact LBCC’s Office of Disability Services at 917-4789.

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**MISCELLANEOUS NOTES**
- **Permission to Use Student Work**
  I will be using examples from student papers, which will be anonymous. Please contact me within the first week of class if you do not want your work to be used.

  - **Note:** This syllabus may change at my discretion.

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**My Degrees**
I received my Bachelor of Arts degree in English with an emphasis in Writing from Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, and my Master of Arts degree in English with an emphasis in Rhetoric and Professional Communication from New Mexico State University.
**WHAT I EXPECT FROM YOU**
- Attend class, and be punctual.
- Be prepared for class (i.e., have the assignments completed and have your assignments, texts, and materials with you).
- Be considerate toward me and your peers.
- Care about the class and the work you turn in.
- Use the resources available to you.
- Ask questions.
- Be familiar with the syllabus. (Note: Please come see me as soon as possible if you have any problems or questions about anything in this syllabus.)

**WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME**
- Attend class, and be punctual.
- Be prepared for class.
- Be considerate to you and other students.
- Care about the class and the work you turn in.
- Be available to help you in any way I can.
- Ask questions.
- Give honest feedback.
- Listen to your concerns.
- Return assignments within a week, on average. (I may return them a little sooner or a little later, but I always try my best to get them back to you within a week.)
- Answer e-mails within two business days.
- Return voice messages within two business days.

**ATTENDANCE**
- **Attendance is a must!** Attendance at all classes is important not only for the valuable information you will receive in classes, but also because classes will involve in-class work, discussions, and group work that are part of your grade.

- **Missing any class negatively affects your grade** because of the information you miss. Missing more than two weeks of classes may result in failing the class because of the amount of information and class activities and quizzes missed. (Keep in mind we only have 10 weeks of classes.) Those who miss more than two weeks of classes may want to withdraw from the class to avoid a failing grade.

- In-class work, freewriting journal entries, quizzes, and any other participation cannot be made up; therefore, your participation grade will decrease. In the case of **peer reviews**, 10% of your grade for that paper is also subtracted from your major assignment grade, as you will be missing a major part of the writing process. This also applies to coming unprepared on a peer review day.

- Please keep in mind that not only are you missing valuable information, but also your ideas and input are very important to this class. Your groups and this class will be missing valuable input if you miss a class.

- If you are absent, please contact me. In addition, you are responsible for getting the information that you missed in class. **Please exchange information (e-mail, phone number, etc.) with others in the class, so you have people to contact.**

**PARTICIPATION**
- Participation will be averaged into the final grade. Participation is considered
  - Active involvement in group work
  - Readiness for class (Read the material and write assignments before class.)
  - Completion of your freewriting journal, peer reviews, and in-class work
  - Organization of your folder
  - Active discussion in class (Your ideas are important, so speak up. I should hear your voice at least a few times during the term.)
  - Alertness, i.e. being totally present: body, mind, and spirit

- Group work is vital to this class, and the only way the group is effective is if all members of the group participate. It is important that you be present on days of peer critiquing, not only for your benefit, but also because your group members are counting on your input. Each instance of being unprepared for group work will result in a deduction from your class participation and in-class work grade.
PARTICIPATION, continued

• Please be punctual and stay for the entire class period. Late arrivals and leaving early disrupt the class and are inconsiderate. Half the points from the participation grade for that day will be deducted.

• Those who arrive late and/or leave early frequently (four or more times) will be asked to not attend the class. They should withdraw from the class to avoid a failing grade.

• Cell phones, pagers, and other such devices are disruptive to the class. These gadgets, therefore, will be turned off and placed out of view before class.

• Since writing and reading go together, I expect critical discussion from you concerning the reading assignments.

• Announced and surprise quizzes will occur throughout the term.

• Expect to work around SIX hours per week outside of class.

• **Respect not only me as your instructor but also your peers as equals.** We are all unique individuals entitled to our own opinions and beliefs; however, any comments, jokes, or remarks that denigrate the worth of an individual’s physical/mental ability, body size, religion, race, creed, ethnic background, sexual preference, or gender are inappropriate and will not be tolerated. If you are disrespectful to your peers or me, you may be asked to leave the class for the remainder of that class period.

ASSIGNMENTS

• **Major assignments are due at the BEGINNING OF CLASS on the day they are due. Late assignments are an inconvenience to both you and me.** If there is something that is making it difficult to finish an assignment on time, please contact me in private.

• Turn in your essays along with your writing process work (see folder checklist) in a two-pocket folder. You will be graded on your final products along with your writing process.

• I will accept ONE late assignment. The late assignment will be given full credit and is due one week from the original due date (and is not eligible for revision, if revisions are accepted for that assignment). Any other late assignments will be accepted for 50 percent of the points earned on that assignment.

• Make sure you complete and print your assignments in enough advanced time to avoid computer, printer, internet, and e-mail problems. The best way to hand in an assignment and the only way to guarantee that I get it is to put it in my hands during class or my office hours.

• **I must have a hard copy of your assignments for them to be graded.** Major writing assignments will not be accepted by e-mail.

• Your hard work is a reflection of yourself. Using someone else’s work as your own or using information or ideas without proper citations is plagiarism. **Plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty can result in failing the assignment or the course.** (Please look in your book or ask me for help in understanding what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.) Please note that bibliographies (”Works Cited” in MLA and “References” in APA) AND in-text citations are required whenever you use outside sources, including internet sources.
ASSIGNMENT FORMAT AND DESIGN

- With the exception of freewriting, all work is to be typed, double-spaced, and composed in **12-point Times New Roman Font** and have 1-inch margins unless I otherwise indicate. Use spell check, your dictionary, and your handbook. Sloppy work, including excessive misspelling, will not be accepted.

- If submitting anything electronically, please attach the work in *Microsoft WORD*.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf).

- Unless otherwise specified, out-of-class assignments, including your essays, are to be word processed.

**How should my essays be formatted?**

Use the MLA format. *Read the example! You are held responsible for the content in this example.*

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Your Last Name 1

Your Name  
Assignment  
Instructor Joyce Bower  
WR 121, Class Day and Time  
Due Date

Title with Pizzazz

This is how the first page should appear. The header should include your last name and page number. You can access the header by clicking on View, then Header and Footer. Right justify, type your running head, and on the toolbar, click on the macro with the page with the pound sign (#). This automatically numbers the pages for you. The header will appear ½ inch from the top of the page. The other margins will be 1 inch.

An extra space between paragraphs is not necessary. Instead, indent (5 spaces) the first line of the next paragraph. The text should be double-spaced and use 12-point Times New Roman Font (this font). Continue your essay. Don’t forget to cite your sources when applicable and spell check and proofread always.
**What do I include in my assignment folders?**
For each essay, you will turn in a 2-pocket folder with the work that you have put into the essay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left Pocket</th>
<th>Right Pocket</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✧ Freewriting</td>
<td>✧ Peer Reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✧ Brainstorms</td>
<td>✧ Final Essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✧ Outlines/Idea Maps</td>
<td>✧ Self-Assessment (completed in class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✧ Drafts</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**Important Information about Writing Assignments**

**No Surprises!**
I firmly believe in the motto “No surprises!” For each assignment, you will be provided with the information about what I am looking for and plenty of opportunities to receive feedback throughout the writing process. Missing any classes and/or not turning in assignments may not only affect your grade, but also give both you and me an unpleasant surprise.

**Where do I start?**
One of the most difficult aspects about writing—no matter if one is a published writer or a writer who only writes for school—is making yourself sit down and get words on paper. If you find yourself staring at a blank sheet of paper or a blank computer screen, just start writing whatever comes to mind. Whatever you do, get something down on paper. It may seem like a waste of time at the moment; however, it is much more productive than sitting in front of a blank piece of paper thinking, What am I going to write? and only stressing yourself out over what you don’t write. Besides, you will probably surprise yourself with what you produce.

**What are peer reviews?**
On peer review days, you will bring two copies of your paper. These copies should be what you would consider a final draft, ready to turn in to me. You will exchange papers with each of the two other people in your group and provide feedback (both written and oral) to each of the two people in your group about their papers, and they each will provide you with feedback about your paper. Remember to point out what you like about each paper as well as what the author should consider changing.

**What do I write in my journal?**
For each day of class, you will write a one- to two-page journal entry.

- On days when we have a reading due, you will choose one sentence from the reading and explain why you chose it in three or more sentences. (Be prepared to share these in class on the day the reading is due.) If your response is short, you may write about whatever else you’d like.
- On days when we do not have a reading due, you may write about anything, from a prompt in the book to a quote you would like to explore to whatever is on your mind.

I will not be grading these on mechanics. This is your place to explore ideas. You may be random and/or go off on tangents if that is where your writing leads you. During the middle and end of the term, I will be collecting these journals.

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**EVALUATION**
The percentage breakdown of your final grade is:

- Essays and Practice Final = 50%
- Final = 30%
- Journal = 10%
- Participation (In-Class Work, Quizzes) = 10%
**GRADES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
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</tbody>
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Note for WR121: You must receive a “C” to pass.

**INCOMPLETE AND “Y” GRADES**

Incompletes will be given only in extreme circumstances. You must contact me before the end of the term if you need this option. If we decide on this grade, you must write me a memo or letter informing me of why and how you qualify for the grade. “Y” grades will not be given. If you do not show up for the class or need to withdraw from the class, you are responsible for doing so.

**GRADING POLICY**

**A Paper**
This paper is an excellent response to the assignment, fulfilling all major requirements and showing critical thinking. With an engaging voice appropriate for the audience, the writer guides the readers through organized and well-developed thoughts. Support and evidence is appropriate and given where needed, and sources are cited using MLA or APA style. In addition, the sentences and paragraphs transition well from one to the next. This paper contains few, if any, minor errors in mechanics and demonstrates the entire process of writing.

**B Paper**
This paper meets all major requirements of the assignment and goes beyond a routine response. Like the above explanation, this paper has an engaging voice appropriate for the audience and is well-developed, well-organized, well-supported, and well-documented. It contains no major distracting errors in usage or mechanics, and transitions guide the readers. Again, this paper demonstrates the entire process of writing.

**C Paper**
This paper is a routine response that makes a commitment to fulfill the requirements of the assignment but does so only at a minimum. Containing a few distracting errors and no glaring clichés or mistakes in diction or mechanics, the paper guides the readers who have little difficulty understanding the content. The writing in this paper is neither vigorous nor fresh and spontaneous. This paper also reflects missing stages of the writing process.

**D Paper**
This paper does not respond to the assignment’s requirements and contains distracting errors and glaring mistakes in diction or mechanics. Although it is difficult to read, some of the content is good, and with more work, could form well-developed ideas. Again, this paper reflects missing stages of the writing process.

**F Paper**
This paper does not accomplish the above criteria.

**Evaluation of Minor Assignments**
You will be completing several reading and writing exercises before, during, and after you write each paper. These materials will be turned in on their due dates, and you will receive a check (did the assignment well), check minus (did not do what was expected), or check plus (did better than what was expected). You will turn these materials into me with each final paper when the writing project is due.