

English 110C Fall 2010

Academic Writing

Instructor: Joseph Conlin

Class Time: Monday 9:30-10:45 and Wednesday 8-9:15

Classroom: HC 202

Office Hours: Monday 8:00-9:15; Wednesday 9:30-10:45 in Mahogany Room
Afternoons on Saturday and Sunday by appointment in the Mahogany Room.

E-Mail: ConlinJ@sacredheart.edu

Web Site for English 110 Classes: <http://faculty.sacredheart.edu/conlinj/English110.html>

Syllabus for English 110C: <http://faculty.sacredheart.edu/conlinj/SyllabusEnglish110C.pdf>

28 Aug. 2010

Course Description

This course will introduce students to the rhetorical strategies and techniques for clear and effective college-level writing. Students will study and practice academic discourse, including research techniques. The course emphasizes essay organization and development, analysis, argument, documentation, and critical evaluation of academic writing and reading.

As you begin your college writing career, you are entering a conversation with other scholars that will continue even after you graduate. In this class, we will think about what it means to take part in academic discourse and consider ways to strengthen our own scholarly voice. Academic writing strives to move beyond the simplistically binary pro/con position and instead seeks to understand the complicated nuances of the various academic discourses.

Since engagement with academic discourse presupposes that the conversation is a continuing process and not something that begins and ends in the classroom, we will learn ways to evaluate and understand what has already been said.

Course Objectives

By the end of English 110, students should have the following skills and know-how to write an essay in standard English. Students should be able to do the following:

1. Know how to identify and create a thesis appropriate for college-level writing.
2. Know how to support an argument with logic, evidence and examples.
3. Be able to synthesize and critique evidence from a variety of sources, and use that evidence to construct a new argument.
4. Show how to compile and document a wide variety of sources.
5. Demonstrate an ability to think critically.
6. Be able to differentiate between fact and interpretation when using and evaluating sources and providing citations.
7. Recognize effective, eloquent, and stylistically appropriate writing.

Those of the school's objectives. Mine are similar. By the end of the semester you will understand the following:

1. The need of critical thinking when communicating with others.

	<p>2. The needs and expectations of the people to whom a student writes.</p> <p>3. The importance of grammar, vocabulary, rhetoric, and semantics to communicating ideas.</p> <p>4. The influence of graphics on communication.</p>
Course Notes	<p>Prerequisites: English Placement/Proficiency Exam.</p> <p>Passing Grade for English 110: Students must pass this course with a C or above.</p> <p>Last Day to Withdraw: The last day to withdraw without penalty is October 5.</p>
Course Materials	<p>1. Class Web Site at <http://faculty.sacredheart.edu/conlinj/English110.html>, which contains links to the syllabus and supplemental material for the course.</p> <p>2. <i>Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers</i>. 8th Edition. Edited by David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky. P-312-25897-6</p> <p>3. <i>A Writer's Resource: A Handbook for Writing and Research</i>. Third Edition, McGraw-Hill.</p> <p>4. A good dictionary. Should you not have a good dictionary or other reference material, here's a link to an excellent site: www.bartleby.com. You can also use www.askoxford.com, www.dictionary.com, or www.freeditonary.com, the final one being the best. More free reference material and software, which I have used without incident for more than five years, is available at English 110's Web site opening page: http://faculty.sacredheart.edu/conlinj/English110.html.</p> <p>5. Access to a computer and e-mail, such as in the school's computer labs.</p> <p>6. You should have access to "Office" software. Students can purchase MSOffice (the software used on the University's computers), Corel's Word Perfect Office Productivity Suite at a student discount. You can also use Open Office (www.openoffice.org), which you can obtain for free. It's a open-source software supported by such companies as Sun Microsystems and IBM. For students using Office 2007, please send your file as a .doc file. Office 2007 creates by default a .docx file.</p>
Course Workload	<p>Students will be writing. It's the only way to learn to write. There will be in-class assignments. There will be at least one writing assignment a week. There will be one eight-page report with documentation from <i>at least</i> seven sources. Students will be expected to e-mail writing assignments.</p>
Course Grading	<p>Course Grading and Requirements: I grade using a letter grade system. Grades will always be given based on the letter system. An 'A' is roughly 4, A minus 3.67, B plus 3.33, B 3, B minus 2.67, C plus 2.33, C 2, C minus 1.67, D plus 1.33, D 1, and F 0.</p> <p>Assignments: Your first drafts will not count toward your final grade. However for each entry you do not submit, you will lose half a letter grade on your midterm and final grade.</p> <p>Your four research essays—including the first submissions, which you will included in your mid-semester and final portfolios—will account for 100 percent of your grade. Your essays will grow progressively longer as the semester progresses. For example, your first essay will run 1000 words, the second and third 1500 words each, and your final essay will be 1800 words. The total number of words for the semester 5800 words. Each essay will require different number and types of citation. For example, the first requires only citations from within the text. The final will require citations from within the text (the four authors that you have read) as well as four-peer reviewed sources, bringing the total number of sources to eight. Failure to submit an essay will result in the loss of a letter grade on your midterm or final essay.</p> <p>Portfolios: You will also be responsible for developing a writing portfolio—a collection of your revised essays. At the mid-term, your will submit a portfolio in class that contains your first two essays and a cover letter via email. At the end of term, you will submit another portfolio in class that contains your last two essays as well as a cover letter via email.</p> <p>The portfolio will demonstrate the revision process at work. In both your mid- and end-term portfolios, you will include your draft and your subsequent revisions. It is the student's responsibility to revise the essay in preparation for the portfolio.</p> <p>With each portfolio you will write a cover letter that explores what has changed in your writing, how has your attitude toward writing changed, and what have you discovered about how you and others write. You will submit your portfolios on virus-scanned CDs, which I will supply.</p>

For your midterm and final portfolios, you will bring your laptops to class. You will write your cover letter for the portfolio in class. You will email your material for the portfolios and the cover letter.

How will I grade your work?

An 'A' Portfolio—Excellent Work: It will contain all required work. The essays will logically express a “new” idea or a new approach to old ideas with clearly defined theses. The essays will show paragraph coherence, unity, and completeness. The essay will also demonstrate significant revision. The writer will use “to be” verbs sparingly and will not use unnecessary passive voice. The student will have submitted his/her draft essay during the semester.

A 'B' Portfolio—Good Work: It will contain all required work. The essays have clear theses and well-developed, coherently organized support, and effective language, but does not distinguish itself as fresh or original with few or no grammatical errors. They have a tone consistent with the audience. The writer will use “to be” verbs sparingly and will not use unnecessary passive voice. The student will have submitted his/her draft essay during the semester.

A 'C' Portfolio—Satisfactory Work: It will contain all required work. The essay revisions will be minor, and even though they have a theses, the essays will be trivial or too general, meaning the argument is only but adequate and possibly cliched. The essay's organization will be mediocre. The paragraphs will be inconsistent or monotonous in coherence, unity, or completeness. The essay struggles for appropriate tone. The essays have a few grammar errors. The writer uses “to be” verbs and passive voice too frequently. The student will have submitted his/her draft essay during the semester.

A 'D' Portfolio—Poor Work: It will not contain all work. The revisions of the essays will be inadequate or done poorly. The essays will lack a clear theses, will lack appropriate support, will have gaps in organization, and will have a number of grammar errors. The writers uses “to be” verbs and passive voice excessively.

An 'F' Portfolio—Failing Work: It will not contain all work. The essays are not revised, lack theses statements, or have severe organizational problems. The number of grammar errors will interfere with the essays clarity.

Failure to submit a draft essay during the semester will result in the loss of a letter grade of the essay submitted to a portfolio.

Back Up Your Work: *Save all of your writing—backup any material on your computer to an FTP site, floppy, thumb drive, CD, or whatever your preferred medium. Computers crash—usually just when you need them most.*

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the theft of someone else's words *or* ideas without giving the author due credit. In research papers, that means citing the quotation or the idea in MLA style that references the author's work in a Works Cited (Bibliography) page, also formatted in MLA style. (For a thorough analysis of plagiarism, you can refer to a [Wikipedia](#) page on the subject.) During class, I will explain how citing authors' works forms the foundation of all intellectual endeavors in a free society—whether the subject is in the Humanities or the Sciences. In other words, without this simple technique, you would lose access to millions of words of learning, making your college degrees worthless.

You don't have to cite an author's idea if it is common knowledge—either to all humankind or within a specific group. How do you know if it is common knowledge: simple. If you knew about the idea before reading the author, then it is common knowledge. If you did not, assume that it is not common knowledge. Rarely, if ever, has an undergraduate student been penalized for citing what's common knowledge. Let's put it another way: If you never knew the idea before reading the material, CITE it.

Here's a tricky point: What if it is not common knowledge but you thought of it prior to reading the author? Again simple: Write the statement in your words. To avoid being accused of plagiarism, you then add something of this ilk: “Dr. Jonah Halibut wrote similarly in his analysis of fish metaphors in the Old Testament ('Fishy Business' 27).” That way you establish that the idea is yours and that it is supported by someone who has also done research on the subject.

A student caught plagiarizing the first time—even if by accident—will receive an F for the assignment. A

	<p>student caught a second time will receive an F for the course.</p> <p>For more assistance about plagiarism, go to the following site: http://college.hmco.com/english/plagiarism_prevention.html.</p>
<p>Course Policies</p>	<p>Attendance: You are allowed four non-excused absences. Three points could be deducted from your final grade for each absence beyond the two. If you wish an exception, e-mail me. Sending an e-mail does not guarantee an excused absence. More than six non-excused absences could result in an F. Should you arrive more than 10 minutes late, you may be considered absent. Any in-class work missed cannot be made up.</p> <p>Assignments: Turn your work in on time. Late work will be accepted, but a letter grade will be deducted for each day missed. Extensions are possible, but not probable. You must submit a written request more than 24 hours before the due date. Send the request by e-mail to ConlinJ@sacredheart.edu. Your request should explain why you need the extension and the date you will turn in the assignment. Computer crashes or other computer problems are not valid excuses. Assignments include all the material requested. Such items may include research material, an outline, a first draft, and final assignment.</p> <p>Submitting and Reviewing Assignments: Unless otherwise stated, you will send your writing assignments as email attachments to conlinj@sacredheart.edu. I will return your assignments via email—usually from the following account: conlinjoseph@gmail.com. You will see my comments in the reviewing panes (or bubbles) of your Word documents. Therefore you must ensure that your Word is set appropriately. Click View, click Toolbars, and make sure a check appears next to Reviewing. Close the drop-down menu. On the top of the page, the lower toolbar on the left is the Reviewing toolbar. You will see a window. Make sure it says: Original Showing Comments or Final Showing Comments. You will find it easier reading these comments than writing my handwriting.</p> <p>Revisions of assignments are not just possible; they are expected. DO NOT revise based merely on the comments made by the teacher. That will earn you nothing. You must rethink your approach to the assignment. Should you have any questions, please ask.</p>