

Professor Rob Whyte
English 204 Composition

Overview

Writing is a challenge because it requires multiple language skills and the ability to think. Students will practice both in this course. The focus will be writing well-structured paragraphs on a wide range of topics. In the second half the semester, we will expand the scope of writing to one page compositions. Given the importance of electronic communication in the workplace, we will spend time learning how to compose effective business emails.

Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to write clear English language documents by:

1. improving critical thinking skills through a continuous process of exploring main ideas;
2. evaluating text through an understanding of 6 writing traits;
3. developing well-organized sentences and paragraphs through guided summary writing exercises;
4. improving accuracy through editing exercises;
5. improving vocabulary skills through paraphrasing exercises;
6. understanding the structure of effective business email.

Methodology

In order to improve writing skills, students need to write. That is why much class time will be devoted to independent writing. Typically, I will spend the early part of the class reviewing key learning points, reviewing examples and offering critiques of student work.

Assignments will be given along with reading material.

Textbook and Material

Ready to Write 2: Perfecting Paragraphs
4th edition
Karen Blanchard and Christine Root
Pearson Longman, 2010

Exams

The mid-term and final exams will be in-class written tests covering the class work. Questions may include: short comprehension questions, writing a paragraph, multi-paragraph compositions, paraphrasing, writing a business email and editing text.

A major part of the class work will be short in-class compositions. Ten compositions will be assigned and collected for grading. Most assignments will involve paragraph writing. Two short composition projects (maximum one page) will be assigned in the second half of the semester.

Reading and textbook work will be assigned throughout the semester.

Grading

Attendance: 10%

Participation: 10%

Mid-term exam: 30%

Final exam: 30%

10 in-class assignments: 10% (1% each)

2 homework compositions: 10% (2 x 5%)

Students with excused absences (e.g. official school activities, personal problems, job interviews) will be not be penalized for attendance. However, there will be a reduction in the participation score.

Deadlines for writing assignments are firm and cannot be extended. Sometimes I will post homework on my website. You will need to download and print this material. My website url is www.eslwriting.org.

Other Matters

Coming to class prepared to learn is critical to your success in this class. That means begin on time. Two lates will be marked as one absence.

Coming to class prepared also means you have five instruments of learning: 1) a writing tool (pen or pencil), 2) an A4 notebook with loose paper for handing in writing assignment, 3) a notebook for notes and vocabulary, 4) the textbook and 5) a dictionary (phone dictionaries are okay). Students who frequently forget to bring these vital tools will experience a reduction in their participation score.

There will be zero tolerance for plagiarism.

Many students want a high score. Maybe you need an A to get a job, to go to graduate school or get a scholarship. These are all important. At the end of the semester do ask me to change your final score. Unless I made an error in the calculation, I will not change any score. If you want a high grade, you must apply yourself and do the work.

Contact

If you have a question about the class work, contact me at robbusan@yahoo.com. My office is room 203 in the International Building. Office hours TBA.