

**English 101.96929**  
**Reading and Composition**  
Mesa College Fall 2009

Mr. Dill  
Tues/Thurs 5-6:25 pm  
Room H204

<http://homework.sdmesa.edu/bdill>

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**Required Texts and Materials:**

Raimes Keys for Writers, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.

Jacobus, A World of Ideas: Essential Readings for College Writers, 7<sup>th</sup> edition.

In addition you will need

- A standard, college level dictionary (not a pocket edition)—a good bargain is the *American Heritage College Dictionary*, 3rd ed.
- Access to a computer with word processing capability and Internet access (available in this classroom K302 and in the library).
- An e-mail account (available for free for those who do not already have one at such sites as yahoo, hotmail, Gmail, etc.—I recommend Gmail) (note: hotmail users have experienced difficulty receiving some of my emails and in sending and receiving attachments).

**Nature of the course:**

English 101 is a course intended for transfer students or for those who want competence in college-level composition. The course emphasizes reading and writing principles and practice of effective, logical, and precise expression of ideas. Students will be required to write a variety of papers applying a variety of rhetorical patterns. A research paper will be required.

Basically, then, this is a course which integrates **reading**, **rhetoric**, and **research**. It involves the ability to read standard, college level material on literal, inferential, and critical levels, the ability to summarize, paraphrase, and outline what is read; the ability to develop clear written responses using standard rhetorical modes and strategies while avoiding distracting grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors; and the ability to find, evaluate, and use information from library sources while employing standard documentation techniques (current MLA standards). Since these aspects (reading, rhetoric, and research) cannot be integrated without a good measure of **critical thinking**, the course will also involve introduction to such areas as syllogistic logic, the Toulmin method, examination of assumptions, etc.

**Grading Policies:**

65% of the final grade will be based on essays (including an in-class final exam). Essays will be evaluated for content of ideas and rhetorical effectiveness. Since errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, idiom, etc., detract from overall effectiveness, they will have a large effect on the grade.

10% of the final grade will be based on the RESEARCH PAPER

10% of the final grade will be based on class work and homework such as summaries, outlines, and all parts of the research process other than the final paper (preliminary topic, thesis, bibliography, outline)

5% of the final grade will be based on the NOTEBOOK

10% of the final grade will be based on your class participation and the instructor's evaluation of your effort and progress. Please note that in accordance with college policy attendance may also be used in determining this portion of your grade.

**A=100-90%; B=89-80%; C=79-70%; D=69-60%; F=below 60%**

In order to receive a passing grade for the course, you must have completed work in all five of these areas. Specifically, this means that you *must* write a research paper even if you believe that your average grade without it would be passing. Please **NOTE**: late assignments may not be accepted or may not be given full credit, depending on the circumstances. **Missing work will be given a zero.** *Please consider the effects of averaging a zero into your grade.*

### **Class policies:**

We live in an age in which terms such as *commitment* and *responsibility* seem to have very little meaning. Please note that your instructor, being about half the age of water, was raised in a different era and clings to outmoded concepts and values. I support the policies set forth by the college regarding attendance. Excessive absences may result in your being dropped from the course. The college sets this level at 6% of the total hours that a class meets during a term. A little simple math will show that as few as **two** unexcused absences can get you into difficulty quickly. At **three** unexcused absences you have passed the 12% level which the college sets as the “inactive” level, meaning if you miss this much before the withdrawal deadline, you are supposed to be dropped from the roster. If your absences total that much after the deadline, you will receive a failing grade. *Please note, however, that your official enrollment status is your own responsibility. If you decide, for whatever reason, that you no longer wish to attend this class, you are responsible for officially withdrawing. Your failure to drop the class officially may well result in your receiving an **F** for the course.*

**Turn off all cell phones, pagers, etc.**

**Although this is a computer-assisted class, you are still expected to follow class discussions and activities. Internet chats, web surfing, etc., are not permitted. The Instructor reserves the right to disable your computer during class activities.**

### **Other Concerns:**

1. Academic Accommodation—"Students with disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss options with their professors during the first two weeks of class."
2. Behavioral/discipline—While the majority of students are serious and polite, occasionally problems occur. The basic standards for student rights and responsibilities are writing out in District Policy 3100. Misconduct includes, among other things, **plagiarism and other forms of cheating**, disruption of classes, and physical or verbal intimidation. Please refer to your current college catalog for details. In addition, please turn off your papers and wireless phones. If you must answer an emergency call, please leave the room, take care of your emergency, and return for the **next** class session.
3. Incompletes—incompletes will be given only in special cases involving students who for certain understandable reasons are unable to complete a specific assignment. For example, one student recently missed my final examination because she was in the hospital, busy delivering her new daughter during the test. Another student was arrested and missed the last two days of class. In such cases, I *might* be persuaded to grant you an incomplete. I have little compassion for students who have missed work throughout the semester and suddenly realize that they cannot pass.

### **Essay grades:**

The grades assigned for your essays will be based on a variety of factors that will probably seem somewhat subjective to you at first. An essay is not like a multiple-choice test in which the grade is determined by subtracting the numbers of "errors" from 100%. This image has become a metaphor that greatly influences our whole society; it is assumed that everybody starts at perfection and goes downhill from there. Excellence is seen largely as a matter of minimally following rules (or not getting caught). This idea is a rotten way to run a school, a government, a business, or anything else for that matter. True excellence in writing (or in anything else) is *not* just a matter of avoiding obvious error. I would like to suggest a different analogy: building a house. In order to build a good house, you must select an appropriate location on which to build (subject); lay a firm foundation (thesis); divide the whole into rooms that serve specific functions such as kitchen, bedroom, living room (outline); provide adequate doorways (transitions); paint and decorate (style and word choice)—I think you can see the point. A builder could follow all the building codes without "error" and still wind up with an ugly, uncomfortable house. Thus an essay that has very few "errors" in spelling, punctuation, and grammar can still be a poor essay. Also, just as much of what goes on in building a house is not visible to the ordinary person, much of what goes on in "building" an essay is not visible to the ordinary reader. Another "contractor," however, will see the underlying form and will appreciate the handling of hidden features such as plumbing, wiring, ventilation and lighting. In a sense, I am that contractor; a kind of building inspector who not only checks to see if you have met the codes, but also appraises the market value of what you've built at the same time. So that you may better understand how your work is evaluated, please study the following guidelines.

- A Essay shows unity, specificity, and coherence. It is virtually free of mechanical error. It shows consistently clear critical thinking skills and sound logic. It shows sophisticated sentence style and word choice appropriate to the subject.
- B Essay shows unity, specificity and coherence. It has few, if any, mechanical errors. It generally exhibits sound critical thinking and logic and is written in easy-to-read prose.
- C Essay is adequate. Its ideas come across fairly well in spite of a few mechanical problems. It may have some flaws in critical thinking and logic. The sentences show some variety and the word choice is adequate.
- D Essay is shallow and undeveloped, or it contains seriously distracting mechanical errors. It may show little, if any, critical thinking and may be logically flawed. The sentences may show little sophistication, and the word choice may be weak. Overall, the essay may show little pre-writing effort or attempt at revision.
- F Essay shows little effort to meet the assignment. It may be riddled with mechanical errors. It may be logically inconsistent or show almost no critical thinking.

**NOTE--English 101 is intended to be primarily a class in composition, not in grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. Following the college course descriptions and policies, I must assume that you have already mastered most of these problems. I will mark such errors on you essays for your correction, and will refer you to the appropriate sections of the textbook. If your essay shows a major problem (for example, four or five major errors), I will mark the first few errors, refer you to the text, and return the essay either with an F grade or without a grade (that is, I'll give it a ZERO) and tell you to try again. Of course, as with all essays, you may correct it and resubmit (one time only) for an improved grade. I TAKE GRAMMAR VERY SERIOUSLY; I'm tired of inarticulate college graduates.**

## **Essay Format and Policies:**

1. Please type the final drafts of all out-of-class essays. If you don't know how to type or use a word processor, now is a great time to learn this valuable skill. Both typed and hand written work must be double spaced (that means to skip lines), on one side of the page only. Hand written work must be in ink.
2. Use standard 8 1/2 inch by 11-inch paper for all essays, written or typed. Use regular ruled notebook paper for handwritten work. Do NOT use paper torn from a spiral notebook.
3. Put your name, the date of submission, and the name of the specific assignment (such as "description essay" or "reading response #2") in the upper right corner. Give your essay an appropriate title that reflects your subject and thesis. Use one-inch margins all the way around your writing. Generally follow MLA standards for layout. Check handbook for details.
4. Be prepared to turn in assignments when you arrive. I tend to get upset when I see students trying to write their essays in class while the rest of the class is discussing something else. In trying to do two things at once (write an essay and follow the class), they wind up doing neither.
5. Put the final draft on top and any preliminary drafts beneath. You may include any brainstorming notes or free writing also. Staple all together.
6. Keep all the essays in an essay portfolio or notebook with the oldest on bottom and the newest on top. It is always wise to keep all your work throughout the semester.
7. Out-of-class essays (not summaries or outlines that are part of your class work/homework grades) may be rewritten for an improved grade. Staple or clip the revision on top of the original graded essay, labeled clearly as a revision. The revised essay will not be evaluated without the first version attached. The amount of grade increase, if any, will be entirely up to my judgment. Naturally, essays that come at the end of the semester cannot be revised, including the final exam, the last reading response essay, and the Research Paper).

## **Essay Projects/assignments.**

### **Essay #1 Assignment: Analyze, explain, and evaluate the effectiveness of Darwin's Rhetoric in the essay "Natural Selection."**

Steps:

1. Read and annotate the text, marking vocabulary terms that may be difficult. (You will be showing the instructor your annotated text.)
2. Study the text carefully with the goal of understanding all points.
3. Write a summary/paraphrase of the essay, covering all of the main points.
4. Identify and explain the various "Means of Persuasion" Darwin uses (referring to the "Classical Rhetoric" outline).
5. Evaluate the argument in terms of the effectiveness of the types of appeals and the effectiveness of the evidence presented.
6. Construct an argument that Darwin's rhetoric either is or is not generally effective in persuading the reader to accept his claim.
7. Submit the following:
  - your annotated copy of the essay
  - the summary.
  - your original essay..
  - your final draft.

## Essay #2: Managing Sources

Using any or all of the essays listed below, evaluate Aristotle's famous definition, "Man is a rational animal." To what extent do you agree or disagree (and why)?

- Plato. "Allegory of the Cave."
- Gardener, Howard. "A Rounded Version: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences."
- Bacon, Francis. "The Four Idols."
- Aristotle. "The Aim of Man."

In your essay, you must properly document everything you use from these essays in correct MLA format, using both parenthetical citations and a "Works Cited" page (see the appropriate sections in Keys for Writers). You may use other sources as well, with prior approval of the instructor.

## Essay Assignment #3: Proposing Explanation

It is common in writing classes to compare King's "Letter from the Birmingham Jail" with Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience," pointing out the obvious similarities. Although King does not make a direct connection, many people have proposed links through the writings of Gandhi, and it seems difficult to believe that someone as well read as King would not be very familiar with Thoreau's famous essay.

However, we also see some rather interesting differences between the two regarding such things as recognition of unjust laws, respect for law and government as institutions, attitudes toward voting, cooperation and use of existing social/political structures when attempting change, the degree of personal responsibility one has when faced with injustice involving others, the nature and role of government, and the specific nature of the actions one should take.

In your essay do the following:

1. examine the differences you see between the two positions and
2. attempt to explain why they exist.

Are these merely differences of rhetorical approach because of different audiences or historical contexts? Do they reflect underlying differences in concepts of Justice? Do they involve a difference in ethical values or value systems?

In preparing your essay, you will obviously make references to the two main essays (**using proper MLA documentation**). However, you may also find it useful to examine more fully the references and allusions made by the two writers (some of which are pointed out in our text's footnotes. Perhaps even more useful are the "Questions for Critical Thinking" and "Suggestions for Writing" that follow each essay.

Some other essays you may find relevant are those by Lao Tzu, Jefferson, Machiavelli, Aristotle, and Rawls.

## Essay #4: an In-class final exam on a topic to be discussed.

### A word of warning about plagiarism

#### Don't Do it!

"One of the unintended effects of new technology is to force new moral decisions upon us"

Lawrence Hinman, UCSD

Yes, the massive availability of information through the Internet has provided those who lack academic integrity a wealth of opportunity to cheat. Completely finished research papers may be

purchased and downloaded in a few minutes. Others are posted on personal web pages and may be copied for nothing. It is very easy to lift major sections from web sites and to incorporate them into your paper without giving credit to the author. (Study your handbook for legal ways of using such information.) It is also very difficult for your teacher (especially at a freshman composition level) to catch all the offenders. Studies also indicate that about 80% of today's students seem to believe there is no problem with cheating. For those of you who tend to sacrifice integrity for expediency, I have two points, one philosophical the other pragmatic: first, as both the ancient stoics and the modern existentialists have pointed out, we become what we have chosen to be--we *are* what we *do* (I laugh at those who try to tell me they are really honest people after they have cheated--get a clue!); second, if I catch you, you get a zero--not an F--and you can go take the course again with someone else.

**Don't Do it!**

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**Some final thoughts:**

“What is written without effort is,  
in general, read without pleasure.”

Samuel Johnson

Or, as the Romans said: **Labor omnia vincit** (work conquers all).

### Major Assignment Schedule

	Reading	What's Due
8/25 8/27	Course Introduction Read: Darwin	Course Introduction Read: Darwin
9/1 9/3	Read: Darwin Read: Keys, Chap. 6	<b>Due: Research Paper Topic</b>
9/8 9/10	Read: Darwin/ Gould Read: Keys Chap. 7	<b>Due: Research Preliminary Thesis</b>
9/15 9/17	Read: Keys Chap. 8	<b>Due: Essay 1 for review</b>
9/22 9/24	Read: Plato	<b>Due: Essay 1—final draft Due: Research Preliminary Bibliography</b>
9/29 10/1	Read: Gardner Read: Keys Chap. 9	
10/6 10/8	Read: Bacon Read: Keys Chaps. 29-31	
10/13 10/15	Read: Aristotle Read: Keys Chaps. 32-36	<b>Due: Research Preliminary Outline</b>
10/20 10/22	Read: Aristotle Read: Keys Chap. 10	<b>Due: essay 2 for review</b>
10/27 10/29	Read: Machiavelli Read: Keys Chap. 11	<b>Due: essay 2 final</b>
11/3 11/5	Read: Machiavelli Read: Keys Chap. 12	
11/10 11/12	Read: Thoreau Read: Keys Chap. 13	
11/17 11/19	Read: Thoreau	
11/24 11/26	Read: King	<b>Due: Essay 3 for review</b>
12/1 12/3	Read: King	<b>Due Essay 3 final</b>
12/8 12/10		<b>Due: Research Paper Due: Notebook</b>
12/15 12/17		<b>final exam</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading assignments must be done <b>BEFORE</b> coming to class.</li> <li>• Work is due at the <b>BEGINNING</b> of class</li> <li>• This schedule is subject to change. Please <b>bring it</b> to every class.</li> <li>• There will be <b>other</b> reading assignments (chiefly handouts) that may not listed here.</li> </ul>	