English 102: College Writing and Research

Required Materials

• *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* [Paperback] by Raymond Williams (available for purchase at People’s Books Coop, 2122 East Locust Street, a few blocks south of campus on Locust and Maryland)

• *A Student’s Guide to the English Department’s First-Year Writing Program* (available at the Union bookstore)

• A college dictionary

• All other assigned course readings will be available on D2L. Printing them out and bringing them to class is part of your “class participation”

• Your final project must cite its sources “accurately and fairly,” styles and guidelines for which can be found in several writers’ handbooks as well as online, such as the Purdue Online Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>

These materials MUST be brought to each class meeting; failure to do so will negatively affect your class participation grade.

Course Purpose and Methodology

English 102 is a course designed to introduce you to the conventions and practices of academic research writing—yet it will be emphasized that academic research writing cannot itself be defined in any one specific way. Different disciplines and fields of study have different sets of conventions and practices, that is, different ways of conducting research. Additionally, research writing in any one discipline can be pursued in a variety ways, ways that can both conform to and challenge accepted conventions and traditions.

As a class, we will analyze several different kinds of researched texts from different academic disciplines as well as texts outside of academia. Through these texts, you will be formulating your own research questions and projects. Through class discussions, we will be exploring what it can mean to engage in academic research and how you, your colleagues, and I can work together collaboratively to foster a supportive research culture.
The course will begin with the assumption that at the heart of academic research is a strong commitment to “inquiry,” or in other words, to the process of “questioning.” Not only does research often begin with some kind of question (though questions often change, new questions emerge, and questions and assumptions are revised as the research process begins to unfold), but researchers must also be willing to question their own assumptions, question the sources being researched, and question their approaches and methods in order to develop new and important insights and openings for further questioning. Academic research is not necessarily final or definitively conclusive, but instead contributes to larger fields of inquiry and reaches out to other researchers with similar interests and concerns as well as those who might be affected by that work.

A final note: student writing—the writing produced by you and your colleagues—will be a central text of the course. Because academic writing is often in response to something one has read and is often intended to be responded to itself, we will be spending a great deal of time responding to each other’s writing. Expect that your essays may also be used as anonymous samples in class and plan to bring copies of essays on designated days to share with one another.

Course Framework

As a class, we will be investigating the ways in which some of the following strategies can be useful in sustaining academic inquiry. Please, feel comfortable asking me and your colleagues questions about any or all of these concepts. They are designed to be very open-ended:

- Developing theoretical frames, lenses, and approaches to working with different kinds of texts
- Using texts, artifacts, examples, experiences as both primary and secondary sources
- Reflecting on the role(s) of researchers in the texts they produce, as well as your own role(s) as a researcher, writer, and reader.
- Analyzing and “close-reading” texts and the language researchers use to construct their ideas, questions, and arguments

Attendance

The attendance policy of the First-Year Composition Program states that you will fail this course if you are absent more than 4 days (regardless of the cause of your absences). There are no “excused” absences, such as illness, funeral, etc. Ration your absences in the case of such emergencies.

Please be aware that being late to class is disruptive, as is leaving early. If you are more than 10 minutes late, or if you leave more than 10 minutes early, you will be marked for one half (1/2) of an absence. If you are more than 25 minutes late (or leave more than twenty-five minutes early) you will be marked absent.

Regular class participation, turning assignments in on time, and communicating with me regularly is crucial for success in English 102. Therefore, if you are not in class, you cannot
participate. As you will see below, your grades rely heavily upon being in class, participating regularly and meaningfully, and turning work in on time.

The Assignment Sequence
English 102 writing and reading assignments will be structured in a recursive sequence. Each assignment asks you to revisit, revise, rethink, and build from your previous assignments. This sequence is intended to reflect research writing as a process that deserves great attention, though it does not dictate a strict method for that process. Therefore, assignments are intended to open up discussion and ideas for you so that we may engage in the research process together as a class while each of you works on your own individual project.

Because of their sequenced nature, it is imperative that you turn in every assignment on the day that it is due—there will be an assignment due just about every class meeting. And, all assignments must be completed in order for you to be eligible to turn in a portfolio and subsequently, pass the course.

Grading
Final grades for the course will be determined using the following system:

Final Portfolio: 50%
Participation: 30%
Assignments: 15%
Presentation: 5%

Final Portfolio (50%)
Your final portfolio will be submitted on the last day of class and will include two essays (your revised research project and the reflective research analysis essay). Your portfolio will be read by a committee of other English 102 instructors; they will determine whether you pass or fail the course. If your portfolio is passed, then you will be assigned a final grade between an A and a C. If your portfolio fails, you will be assigned a final grade between a C- and an F, and you will be required to take English 102 again. I will then assign a letter grade to your portfolio, and then your final grade will be assessed according to your Participation and Assignment work.

The final portfolio is due in my office on Thursday December 9th before 12noon. Your portfolio may not be submitted late or electronically. You may also not turn in writing for your portfolio that I have not seen in some form already (this prevents plagiarism and also ensures that you’ve gotten feedback on your work from both me and your colleagues).

Participation (30%)
Coming to class prepared for discussion is crucial to our success as readers, writers, and researchers. Much of our class time will be spent discussing essays from the course as well as discussing samples of writing from you and your classmates. Respect for others’ ideas and writing will be upheld at all times.
**Required Conferences**

You will be required to meet with me on occasion throughout the semester. The more prepared you are for these conferences (we will discuss what “prepared” means in class), the more productive they will be. Missing a conference will count as one absence.

**Assignments (15%)**

This percentage will reflect your timeliness and effort in completing all of the assignments, which includes readings, notes, shorter writing assignments, drafts of essays, and in-class writing. Merely completing all assignments does not merit an “A.” Effort and a willingness to revise will be the main factors in determining your overall assignment grade. Late assignments will negatively affect your final grade. Also, I will not write comments or give feedback on late assignments.

**Presentations (5%)**

Toward the end of the semester, you will be required to give a brief presentation of your project to your colleagues in class. This will be informal, but you will need to prepare a short “handout” or “poster” of some sort. I will give you an assignment that outlines in detail my expectations for this work at a later date. These are intended to be fun and collegial.

**Academic Honesty**

We will spend time in class discussing plagiarism, but see the Student Guide for information on plagiarism. Plagiarism has serious consequences for writers in the university and those who write for publication. UWM and the Composition Program do not hesitate to take disciplinary action if a student has plagiarized.

**Writing Center (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/English/wcenter)**

The writing center is beneficial to all students at any stage of the writing process. It’s advised that you meet with someone there early and often. They offer free, one-on-one conferences. The writing center is located in 382 Curtain Hall. Call 229-4339, or stop in to set up an appointment.

**Student Accessibility Center (SAC)**

If you work with an advisor at the SAC, please bring your VISA statement to me within the first week of class. If you are concerned that you might have a learning disability, visit the SAC office in 112 Mitchell Hall.

**Administrative Drop**

Any student who does not attend the first full week of classes will be dropped from the course.