

Welcome!

Welcome to English Composition (ENGL 0930). This course is designed to foster the development of the reading and writing skills that provide the necessary foundation for further study in many subjects. Depending on your background and ability, you should expect to spend 9 to 10 hours per week in this course.

Throughout this course we will read a wide variety of English essays in order to learn to recognize differences in style and purpose, and to understand the reasons for these differences. You will learn how to analyze, in writing, different essay styles (or rhetorical modes) and to write effectively using these different styles. As an added bonus, you will reap much pleasure from the readings. The essayists we will study engage their worlds with intelligence, insight, passion, and, often, humour.

In the following pages, you will learn (or refresh your memory of) sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation. Beyond learning how to write correct sentences, you will also learn to write clear, concise, and elegant sentences. You will also learn how to craft effective essays, how to structure paragraphs, establish and maintain coherence, develop a point or analysis, create the appropriate tone, and fashion just the right style.



It has been said that writing is 1% inspiration, 99% perspiration. You can expect to work hard in this course but you can also expect to be rewarded for your effort with the satisfaction that comes from learning something new and difficult, and with the confidence to pursue further studies or endeavours. Finally, you can also expect enjoyment.

Acknowledgments

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| Content specialists: | Willow Rector, M.A. Judith Owens, Ph.D. English Department Faculty of Arts University of Manitoba |
| Instructional Designer: | Jill Campbell, M.D.E. Bonnie Luterbach, M.Ed. Distance and Online Education Extended Education University of Manitoba |
| Editor: | Jim Hartman, Ph.D. Distance and Online Education Extended Education University of Manitoba |
| Desktop Publisher: | Lorna Allard Distance and Online Education Extended Education University of Manitoba |
| Web Developer: | Jan Miller M.Sc. Distance and Online Education Extended Education University of Manitoba |

Course description

English Composition is designed to help students write better essays. This course focuses on effective expression; sentence, paragraph, and essay construction; and the writing process. A great deal of writing is required; instructors address the particular needs of individual students. Students may not enter English courses numbered above the 1000 level directly from this course. This course is not designed to teach English as a second language.

Course goals

As a student in ENGL 0930 English Composition, you will learn how to:

- identify a variety of English essay styles;
- describe the effects of the different styles of essay;

- analyze the purposes of the different styles;
- understand how those effects and purposes are achieved;
- compose essays in each of the styles of essay;
- master the fundamentals of sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation;
- write effective, as well as correct, sentences;
- construct unified, coherent, well-developed paragraphs;
- organize essays coherently and effectively;
- establish the appropriate tone and style in essays.

Course materials

The following required materials are packaged together and available for purchase from the [University of Manitoba Bookstore](#). Please order your materials immediately, if you have not already done so. See your [Distance and Online Education Student Handbook](#) for instructions on how to order your materials.

Required

Connelly, Mark. *The Sundance Reader*. Sixth Edition. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2012.

Messenger, William E., Jan de Bruyn, Judy Brown, and Romona Montagnes. *The Concise Canadian Writer's Handbook*, 2nd edition. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford UP, 2013.

Messenger, William E., Jan de Bruyn, Judy Brown, and Romona Montagnes. *The Concise Canadian Writer's Handbook: Student Workbook*, 2nd edition. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford UP, 2013.

Time management

For every university course you take you should schedule 9 to 10 hours study time per week. You may need more or less time, depending on how easy or difficult you find the particular course. Generally you would have 3 hours of in-class time and the remainder would be working on your own to complete the readings, library work, research, learning activities, and studying.

In this course, the usual 9 to 10 hours will be spent as follows:

- **Online course site.** You need to have regular access to a computer and to the web. Each week you will be required to write a brief essay or interact in the online discussions with the instructor and other students. Although you can do this whenever you want during the day or night, there will be some deadlines during the week by which you need to have participated in online discussions or made online submissions of assignments. All course discussions are asynchronous discussions, but you can use the online chat tool to arrange some synchronous online chats yourself.
- **Independently.** Work on your own, wherever you choose, to complete the required readings, writing activities, and studying. You will need to use a computer to complete the writing activities and submit them to your instructor through your course site.

Guidelines for assignments

To meet the course requirements you must complete the following:

- The plagiarism assignment;
- **Actively** participate in discussion assignments; make one original post (required), and respond to at least two of your peers;
- Complete and submit the weekly essay **and/or** discussion assignment within the time lines and at an acceptable level according to the grading criteria provided;
- Successfully pass the final exam that will be written under supervision.

IMPORTANT. You MUST submit assignments during the week that they are due.

Grading criteria

Online discussions

The online discussions are graded for:

- Level of participation and engagement, grammar, sentence structure, and punctuation, unless otherwise specified.

Essays

The essays are graded as follows:

- Weighting of the various components will vary according to how they work in any given piece of writing. The Grading chart below divides the components of grading, presenting them in the form of a chart. Of course, most of these are not discrete elements—for example, faulty pronoun reference may entail faulty logic or vagueness or ambiguity—but if you can identify the specific problem or mistake, you can correct it.

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| A (Excellent) | Detailed understanding of the text; sound organization; few or no mechanical mistakes; clear, unambiguous sentences, perhaps with a touch of elegance; in the best A papers, a lively and intelligent voice seems to speak; it has something interesting and original to say, says it clearly and gracefully to an appropriate audience, and supports it fully. |
| B (Good) | Clear thesis, organization, and continuity; probably some minor mechanical errors but not major ones; slightly awkward style at times; ideas that are reasonable and are anchored in the text; thought has obviously gone into the paper; it is solid but not striking; the writer has a definite point to make and makes it in an organized and competent way, and to a definite audience. |
| C (Satisfactory) | A weak, fuzzy thesis and perhaps illogical arguments to support it; a certain amount of confusion about what the text at hand actually says; many minor mechanical errors and perhaps some major ones (such as incomplete sentences or faulty verbs); examples given for their own sake or to demonstrate that the writer has read the text, not to prove a point; organization rambles or disappears; words are misused; diction is inconsistent; proofreading is weak; the intended audience is unclear; there are some ideas here, but the writer needs help and work to make them clear to another reader. |
| D (Poor) | Thesis garbled, misguided, or missing; major mechanical problems; poor organization; serious misreadings of the text; stretches in which the writer simply gives a narrative account of the text for no apparent purpose; the paper may be much shorter than the assigned length; the writer shows some understanding of the text but has no real point to make and has serious problems in writing and reading at an appropriate level. |
| F (Failure) | The paper lacks a thesis and shows weaknesses even graver than those of a D paper, or it is plagiarized in part or as a whole. |

(Adapted from Harry Shaw, "Responding to Student Essays," in *Teaching Prose*, ed. Frederic Bogel and Katherine Gottschalk [Norton, 1988])

Please note: All final grades are subject to departmental review.

Detailed grading chart

Print this chart and keep it handy as you prepare your essay assignments.

| Grade | A | B | C | D | F |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|--|--|
| Thesis | substantial, significant; well support, well developed | sound; supported, adequately developed | may be too general, broad, or obvious; some support and development | weak or misdirected or partly mistaken; inadequate support and development | missing or mistaken; lack of support and development |
| Organization Overall | clear and effective beginning, middle, and end, with smooth | well-ordered | some awkward connections; conclusion only repeats the introduction | disjointed in places | organization not evident or not logical |

| Grade | A | B | C | D | F |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| | transitions | | | | |
| Paragraphs | topic sentences that the whole paragraph develops coherently | unified and coherent | some problems with unity, coherence, development | such problems more serious | lack of unity and coherence |
| Sentences | varied in structure and length to suit the purpose; effective parallelism and subordination; appropriate emphasis | complex structures may have some errors -//, dm, mm, sub, co* | more such errors, or overly simple structures; problems with repetition, wordiness, passive verbs | more serious errors and weaknesses | inadequate control of sentence structure |
| Logic | sound and clear | evident | weak; perhaps some mistakes in comparison | mistaken or missing in part | mistaken or missing |
| Diction | precise, effective, without any wasted words—every word counts | correct, appropriate | some weaknesses in level of diction (jargon, colloquialism), idiom, standard usage, or word choice; overly general; wordy | such weaknesses or errors that interfere more seriously with clarity | an excessive number of errors |
| Basic writing grammar spelling punctuation | free of punctuation used to good effect | possible minor errors such matters as ref, agr, verb, vt, sp, p* | minor errors and possibly some major errors, such as frag, cs, fs, agr, vt, verb, ref, case, cap, sp, p* | errors that interfere with clarity | errors serious and excessive |
| Use of sources (primary, and, if assigned, secondary) | well-chosen, accurately quoted, and clearly acknowledged; reliable and representative | adequate use of quotation and reference | may need to quote more fully and more carefully, or quotations may be excessive in number and length | quotations are ungrammatical or do not fit into content; no quotation or reference when called for | misused or plagiarized |

*COMMON ABBREVIATIONS FOR GRAMMATICAL ERRORS: agr - agreement of subject and verb (or of pronoun and antecedent); cap - capitalization; case- case of pronouns; co-coordination; cs - comma splice; dm - dangling modifier; frag - sentence fragment; fs - fused sentence; mm - misplaced modifier; p - punctuation; ref - reference of pronoun to its antecedent; sp - spelling; sub- subordination; verb - grammatical form of the verb; vt - tense of the verb; // - parallel construction

About discussions

The course discussion forum will be used for some assignments. From the introduction to Unit 5 you are **required** to respond to the discussion question(s). You are also expected to **respond** to at least two of your peers. After posting a question or answer be sure to revisit the discussion forum in case your peers require additional clarification.

In Units 6, 7, and 8 discussion postings are **optional**. In those units you can use the unit discussion forums to communicate with your instructor and peers. Ask questions, share tips, and make friends!

Coffee shop discussion

Of course there will be times you may want to discuss topics other than this course with your peers. Meet your peers and instructor, seek advice, share resources, get to know each other, and enjoy the intellectual and social life of a university course!

Getting started...

You should become comfortable with the Learning Management System (LMS). Review the course site, play with the online communication tools, familiarize yourself with the course content and planned learning activities and assignments. You are **required** to participate in an introductory discussion activity and a practice assignment online during the first week of class.

Assigned readings

Please read the following chapters.

Sundance, Chapter 1: The Writing Context

- How We Write
- The Writer
- The Reader
- The Discipline

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