Syllabus

Classroom: 4725 Sangren
Schedule: W 1:20-3:50
Instructor: Kailyn Dekker
e-mail: Kailyn.j.dekker@wmich.edu
Phone: (269) 779-1045

Course Description
The purpose of this course is to prepare you for college writing and to think analytically, creatively, and independently. This class fosters a workshop atmosphere with feedback from your peers that makes our class special in that your writing will be a major portion of the text. Class activities will focus not only upon reading but also on the process of writing: planning, drafting, and editing. Your papers will see several stages: initial discovery draft, rough draft critiqued by peers, and a polished (publishable) draft. Each polished draft will be graded and then revised to go into your portfolio. (This is not a class where you write a piece at the computer and turn that version in with no review.) The portfolios will showcase the best of your work. The only way to become a better writer is to write and to develop critical reading skills. As I become familiar with your writing, we will also focus upon individual goals for you.

During the first half of the year, students will work on several formal essays: narration, description, process analysis, exemplification, cause and effect, comparison/contrast, definition, argumentation, and researched argumentation. Students will study and respond to several literary essays from various authors, among them, E. B. White and Virginia Woolf. Students will also read short stories such as Vonnegut’s “Harrison Bergeron.” We will discuss and analyze Orwell’s Animal Farm. Public speaking components will reflect our reading. Special attention will be paid to the study and understanding of logical fallacies. Students will keep a journal in which they write directed entries. We will write about and discuss aesthetics and philosophy—specifically applicable to art/artist/process. We will use ELearning in which discussion over homework and other topics related to our class may be explored outside the classroom. Critical thinking skills, time-management, interpersonal, and metacognitive skills will be stressed throughout the course.

And for the last half of the year, students will write two short literary essays for Golding’s The Lord of the Flies and Orwell’s Animal Farm. After reading Orwell’s Animal Farm and The Lord of the Flies, students will develop ideas into a working thesis for their individual research paper topics. We will learn library research and Internet skills, proper MLA documentation, and how to balance in-text citation. We will continue to pay special attention to the study and understanding of logical fallacies. Our class will read Shakespeare’s Much
Ado About Nothing while keeping character diaries. We will discuss and explicate the text and students may also do individually researched presentations related to our reading. The final project will be a combination of fiction and poetry for a creative writing component. Please understand that our schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Required Texts and Materials

- *Patterns for College Writing, 12th ed.* Laurie G. Kirszner and Stephen R. Mandell (provided)
- *Grammar Girl Presents the Ultimate Writing Guide for Students* by Mignon Fogerty (provided)
- *The Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
- *Animal Farm* by George Orwell
- *Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare
- The detailed fallacies of logic found at the following website: [www.entish.org/nizkor/](http://www.entish.org/nizkor/).
- The MLA formatting and style guide found at the following website: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/).
- An in-class spiral writing notebook for daily in-class writing and notes
- A 3” 3-ring binder to keep as your portfolio (A collection of all drafts, outlines, submitted/returned papers, vocab, etc.) Note: Trapper keeper type binders do not work for this
- A folder to keep homework

Policies and Requirements

I refer you to the standard Rules and Responsibilities memo that was mailed to you - especially “Avoiding Digital Distractions” and “Organizing for ATYP.”

**Papers and homework:** Hard copies (except for logical fallacies and vocabulary) are due at the beginning of class. USE PROPER HEADING (NOT HEADER): Name, week number it is due, assignment in the upper right corner. Interesting titles, centered one space below the heading are required. You also have digital deadlines. Early submissions are welcome and encouraged.

**Late work policy:** Homework turned in late more than three times in a semester means that you may not earn an “A” in the class. For compositions scored on a check minus, check, check plus, plus scale, late work will receive no higher than a check. Late major essays will be penalized one full letter grade. If you have a late assignment, you will complete a “Sorry It’s Late” form which I will sign and send home with you. It must be signed by a parent and returned with the late work attached the following week. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis for illness, family emergencies, etc. So, if life happens, it is your responsibility to communicate with me what is going on. Family vacations are not an excused reason for turning in assignments late. While we strongly discourage scheduling activities that keep you from class, if you must be gone, please discuss with your instructor well in advance how you will turn in your assignments on time.

**Handing in work via eLearning:** In order to provide you with another place to archive your work, I want you to upload your papers to the proper Dropbox folder in eLearning each week.

**Attendance and Professionalism:** This is your willingness to take part in class activities, keep notes during class, help others, arrive to class on time, have solid drafts ready for peer editing, contribute to class discussion boards by both reading and responding to topics, work with classmates outside of class (virtually or in person) for group projects, meet schedules for assignments, stow electronics,
seek help from either me or Jessie, our fabulous tutor, and basically contribute to the community of the class.

**Students with Disabilities and Special Needs:** WMU provides academic assistance for students with disabilities, including the emotional, technical and academic support necessary to achieve academic and personal success. Students are encouraged to tell the instructor if they need disability services.

- Please let me know whenever you feel overwhelmed. This class is meant to be challenging, but not crushing! Along with your parents, you have a support system in the tutors, the ATYP staff, and me.

**Electronics Policy:** We live in the age of technology. Digital communication is expected throughout the week. (A week is a long time to go without talking with your teacher.) However, digital communication can also be a hindrance to community building. During our class time together, I ask that you only use electronic devices when absolutely necessary. We need to be physically present for one another. Electronic versions of texts are tolerated, but print copies which one can annotate are preferred. Please ask before using any devices in class. Please also ask before taking a photo or recording a video, as people value their ever-diminishing privacy.

**On the Event of a “Snow Day”:** During the regular class time, we will use the discussion space in eLearning (unless otherwise instructed) to create a dialogue about the material we had intended to cover. I will set things up under that week’s “Content” section. Just log in and start commenting on threads and even start some of your own based on your questions and observations. This worked really well in other classes (And hey, it’s nicer than adding days in the spring!) Deadlines will still apply to homework and be sure to look for the new homework handout, as well.

**Student Expectations:**

*Thoughtful, thorough, and timely completion of all assignments
*Close, careful reading of all the material
*Energetic participation and respectful attentiveness during class
*Conduct in keeping with university surroundings
*Articulation of ideas, beliefs, and opinions
*Respect for the ideas, beliefs, and opinions of others
*Communication. If something is affecting your class performance, please let me know and we can work on it together. Remember that I’m here to help you—keep in touch with me about your concerns, frustrations, suggestions, struggles, ideas, and triumphs. Never hesitate to ask for help.

**Assignments**

**Weekly Writing Homework:** Short 2-4 page papers and/or creative exercises will be assigned each week. Please use **1.5 spacing and 12 point** Times Roman (or similar) font. Use proper heading (Name, week number it is due, assignment in the upper right corner). These will receive the following marks: + (excellent); √+ (Strong); √ (Fair); √- (Weak).

**Journals:** Do not confuse this work with your in-class writings and notes. Each week you will receive directed journal entries that should reflect **about 30 minutes** of work. **Single-spaced, 12 point** Times Roman (or similar) font. Use proper heading (Name, week number it is due, assignment in the upper right corner).
Notes: These will count toward your participation grade. You are required to keep a dedicated notebook for our class. Keep notes during class time—you will find it helps you retain important information and make greater connections that will come in handy when you compose your essays later. Listen to your classmates. They will have worthy insights. After each reading assignment, you will write down three questions you have about the readings or three points of interest/insight. You can draw from a combination of your questions and insights to help you prepare for class participation. I will ask to see your notes. (Don’t worry if you doodle in the margins, ha ha.)

Vocabulary: As you read (both for class and not), you will complete a selection of literary terms and devices assignment. You will have 2-3 terms each week which you will define and for which you will find examples from your readings. Upload vocabulary assignments to eLearning by Sunday night.

Logical Fallacies: You will be assigned fallacies in sets of three. You will read over an explanation and example for each one and then create 3 original examples of your own for each that will demonstrate your understanding of how the fallacy works. Note: logical fallacy homework will only receive a √ (complete) or a √- (incomplete). Upload logical fallacy assignments to eLearning by Sunday night.

Grammar Lessons: You will have a grammar pre-test or a grammar quiz to take on assigned weeks. Grammar quizzes must be taken by Sunday night. If you achieve 85% or higher on the pre-test, you will be exempt from the reading and post-test for the next week. If you achieve less than 85%, clearly you need work in this area of grammar - a subject for which most of you have had little direct instruction. You will be assigned related reading in the Grammar Girl Presents the Ultimate Writing Guide for Students. Once you have completed the reading, you may take the grammar quiz. All quizzes must be completed by Friday of the week they are assigned by 10 pm.

Weekly Reading Quizzes: Each week, you will take a short reading quiz over the assigned readings for the week. These quizzes will be taken on eLearning. You may use any notes or even your text for these quizzes, but they are timed. So, you will need to read ahead of time. All quizzes must be completed by Friday of the week they are assigned by 10 pm.

Unit Essays: At the conclusion of each unit, students will hand in a formal essay related to the technique or topic studied in that unit. These essays will be longer and more polished than the weekly writings and journals. You will first receive an evaluation from among the following: weak, fair, strong, or excellent. All essays will be revised. Depending on the nature of the essay, plan on 4-7 hours of work.

Essay Formatting:
* It must have proper header format and an interesting title
* It must be typed with Times Roman 12 point font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides, using left-justification only
* The essay must have a clear thesis
* The essay must meet the minimum page length
* The final polished essay must be accompanied by graded drafts in the portfolio

A warning for Google Docs users: the defaults for formatting for Google docs MUST be changed. Margins need to be 1” and the line spacing must be single or 1. (The defaults for Docs and MS Word are 1.25” margins and 1.15 spacing.) This picky change saves trees! If you don’t know how to change defaults, ASK!
Procrastination tends to create anxiety. To be clear, except for quizzes, vocab and fallacies, you still need to bring physical copies to hand in to class each week for your instructor to evaluate.

**Tentative Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Approximate Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>Summer Reading</td>
<td>~3 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>Narration</td>
<td>~3 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>~2 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>Exemplification</td>
<td>~3 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 5</td>
<td>Process Analysis</td>
<td>~3 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 6</td>
<td>Cause &amp; Effect/Compare &amp; Contrast</td>
<td>~5 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 7</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>~2 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 8</td>
<td>Animal Farm</td>
<td>~3 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 9</td>
<td>Lord of the Flies</td>
<td>~4 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 10</td>
<td>Research Essay</td>
<td>~4 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 11</td>
<td>Shakespeare</td>
<td>~4 weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unit 12</td>
<td>Creative Writing</td>
<td>~3 weeks</td>
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**Grades**

Grades are viewed by the instructor as a means of **motivating** and **challenging** students as well as an indication of mastery. At any given time, your grade is a snapshot of where you are at that moment. However, our class is graded based on your progress from the first draft to the final draft. You almost always have the chance to revise, often multiple times, to improve. To be clear: your grade is in flux until the final portfolio evaluation. As noted above, each essay will be given a minimal grade (Excellent, Strong, Fair, Weak) based upon the particular areas of content, style, mechanics, and organization when you turn it in for its first evaluation, after which, it will be reconsidered as part of a holistic letter grade for the entire portfolio. These minimal grades will give you an idea of where each essay stands on its own. I understand that most of you will not be used to having words as grades and may feel a bit anxious about where you stand grade-wise at the beginning of the course. Fear not! I will contact you if your overall course grade approaches B- level.

Our University grading system does not allow plus and minus grades. Letter grades are: A, BA, B, CB, C, DC, D, F. We request that home schools “err on the side of generosity” when calculating grade point averages. So, a “BA” should translate to your report card as a “A-“

**The requirements for the Portfolio:** All assignments, revisions, previously graded papers with my comments, and other class materials should be kept in your portfolio, unless otherwise noted. It is a good idea to put your work as it is handed back to you directly into its proper section in your portfolio. *Trying to organize this at the last minute will be quite a trial.* I will collect portfolios at the end of each semester so I can look at all of your work as a whole before assigning a course grade. There may be spot checks during the semester, as well.

Portfolios are to have these sections: hand outs, notes, journals, weekly writings, essays, and other. Sections must be clearly labeled with dividers. XX Items should be organized by week - DONOT group the journals
by letter; group by week. I don’t care if sections are organized chronologically or reverse chronologically. Just be consistent. The most recent copy goes on top for each assignment (i.e. If you have two revisions of week 1 journal A, I will see the second revision, then the first graded revision, then the original graded assignment).

**Notes about revisions for the Portfolio:** If your journal earns a $\sqrt{+}$ or higher, then you will not be required to revise it. If your weekly writing earns a $\sqrt{+}$ or higher, then you will not be required to revise it. **All essays must be revised,** even those with highest marks. If your vocabulary or logical fallacy assignments receive a mark lower than a $\sqrt{-}$, then they must be revised and re-uploaded to Elearning. All revisions must be accompanied by the original paper with your instructor's marks—otherwise, how can we tell any revision has been made? All revisions must be TRACKED or HIGHLIGHTED.

**Semester Grade Calculation after viewing the portfolio:** Unit Essays (40%), Weekly Writing (15%), Journals (15%), Grammar (10%), Reading Quizzes (10%) Vocabulary and Logical Fallacies (5%), and Participation and professionalism (5%) (Please consider this rough math!) The grading scale changes slightly second semester.

Keep in mind that the learning experience that you gain should always remain more important than any particular word or letter grade.

**Misc. details for class:**
- If you MUST be absent or leave early, please notify me via email or text as soon as you know. Missing a day of class is the equivalent to missing an entire week of class at your home school. (Just something to think about.)
- If you must leave early, the adult picking you up needs to come in the building to our classroom or text me to let me know they are downstairs and again once you have reached the car.
- Please arrange to be picked up immediately after class (3:50 pm). I will do my best to release you on time.
- Please arrive by 1:15 so we can begin *promptly* at 1:20. I will be in our classroom at 1pm to address any questions or concerns you may be having.
- As you discover cool things (i.e. helpful websites, quotes, etc.) please share them by emailing them to me. I'll share or ask you to share with your classmates after I preview.
- All class assignments can be found in Elearning.
- Feel free to bring snacks and drinks to class. Our class is long. You will have one break. You may have food and water in class AS LONG AS YOU CLEAN UP AFTER YOURSELVES. If I have to clean up, I will suspend eating and drinking in class. All beverages MUST have a sealed top.

Keep in mind, I can only help you if you let me know that you need help. SMART students will attend tutoring on Sundays with our tutors (who are amazing!), email when confused, ask questions, take risks, and stay on top of homework. SMART students also text or email when they need help. Seriously, it isn't a bother. If I didn't want you to contact me, you wouldn't have my cell phone number or email! I promise to respond within 24 hours.

**Pep Talk**

This class, I hope, will be like nothing you've experienced before. It will be tough, but manageable. The discussions we have will brighten your soul - seriously, we don’t deal with some of the shenanigans that you’ve experienced with classmates who just don’t “get it.” There will be times when you leave class invigorated, and there will be times when you just want to quit. Both are okay. (But, give it six weeks and TALK TO ME before you consider dropping.)
The best learning happens when you are in what educators refer to as a “moderate state of challenge.” My guess is that you’ve rarely experienced that in school. The tough part is that it doesn’t always feel comfortable when you are challenged. In fact, I’d argue that the best things I’ve learned have been when I’m fairly UNcomfortable. Think about this class like learning how to walk. You’re going to fall down. Occasionally you’re going to hurt yourself. But, I promise to be your biggest cheerleader when you succeed. And, though I won’t kiss your boo-boo’s, I will listen to you vent frustration and help scrape you back together.

I am looking forward to working with each of you. Your classmates and I want your input and insight. Be sure to ask questions and contribute to class discussions and listen to your classmates, your instructor, and yourself. Think about what others are saying when they review your work so that you can consider the counsel of others along with your own. And lastly, take some risks. Try new ways of approaching assignments. Explore. You will very likely surprise yourself. Good luck!