

ENG 111: Principles of Effective Writing I | Lehman College, CUNY, Fall 2021

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Class #57962 (3 credits), Online | “Live” Hours: M/W 9:00a-10:40a (class)

Student Hours: M/W 10:45a-11:30 and by app’t on Zoom.

Key Links

- Zoom: <https://ccny.zoom.us/j/4537798403> (Yes, that's a City College link. Long story.)
- CUNY Academic Commons site: <https://litcircles.commons.gc.cuny.edu/>
- CUNY Academic Commons group:
<https://commons.gc.cuny.edu/groups/eng-111-with-prof-dalton-fall-2021/>
- “Goals and Plans” Doc (for daily classwork):
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1C8OR7g8V9WNiAgE7k8aj5drQ0ufpijsta_MKlNWkJ8w/edit?usp=sharing

Course Description

From the college catalog: *ENG 111: Principles of Effective Writing I. 3 hours, 3 credits.*

Focus on all aspects of reading and writing, with particular attention to summary, critical responses to short texts, argumentative development in paragraphs and essays, and the rewriting process. Emphasis on organization, language, accuracy, grammar, and mechanics. Classroom instruction supplemented by individual conferences on drafts with instructor, library resources sessions, and appropriate use of available technology. Note: All students, unless exempted, must pass this course in fulfillment of the Common Core Requirement in English Composition. Students who take but do not pass this course should repeat it the following semester. Students who pass ENG 111 proceed to ENG 121 the following semester.

Section Description

In this section of ENG 111, we turn our reading, writing, and thinking skills on the book group. We’ll examine this cultural phenomenon using a range of academic tools, including research, observation, and interviews. We’ll be writing, editing, and discussing topics related to identity. The memoirs you’ll choose from this semester explore various aspects of identity: race, gender, sexuality, and place. In “book clubs” you’ll read either *Heavy* by Kiese Laymon (2018), *Ordinary Girls* by Jaquira Diaz (2019), or *Fairest* by Meredith Talusan (2020). At the end of the semester, you’ll draw on reflections conducted throughout to advise a future group of ENG 111 students about this very process.

Course Learning Objectives

Goals

- Write analytically and creatively—express ideas clearly and incisively in writing in ways required both inside and outside of the academy.
- Effectively use a range of writing, reading, and research strategies applicable to multiple disciplines.

Objectives

- Students will be Introduced to the skills of the discipline and be able to:
 - Compose a well-constructed essay that develops a clearly defined claim of interpretation which is supported by close textual reading.
 - Employ effective rhetorical strategies in order to persuasively present ideas and perspectives.
 - Utilize literary terminology, critical methods, and various lenses of interpretation in their writing.
 - Adhere to the formatting and documenting conventions of our discipline.
 - Locate and critically evaluate print and electronic sources.
- Students will have the following skills Introduced and/or Reinforced in the coursework and they will be able to:
 - Integrate primary and secondary sources into their writing.
 - Employ methods of active reading, including annotating, summarizing, questioning and synthesizing.
 - Utilize current technologies to assist in the research and presentation of critical and creative writing.
- Students are Expected to have knowledge of the following skills which will be Reinforced in the coursework and they will be able to:
 - Apply the rules of English grammar.

Required Texts (Pick ONE)

- *Heavy* by Kiese Laymon [[Powell's](#) | [Bookshop.Org](#)] OR
- *Ordinary Girls* by Jaquira Diaz (in English) [[Powell's](#) | [Bookshop.Org](#)] OR
- *Muchachas Ordinarias* by Jaquira Diaz (in Spanish) [[Powell's](#) | [Bookshop.Org](#)] OR
- *Fairest* by Meredith Talusan [[Powell's](#) | [Bookshop.Org](#)]

Logistics have been challenging during the pandemic. These books were ordered to the Lehman bookstore earlier this summer. Because they were listed on the bookstore's website in late August as "Out of Stock," I have provided links to Powell's City of Books and Bookshop.Org. Any means of acquiring your chosen text in any format is basically OK with me. The page numbers refer to the paperback editions.

Content Note: These books at times describe lived experiences sometimes directly shaped by racism, sexism, violence, poverty, mental illness, and addiction. Each book is a beautifully written, important work by an exciting, living American writer. That said, I recognize that some passages may be hard for some readers. We can adjust as needed.

College Resources

COVID-19 has made college a different place. Below are a few college resources with remote services available. I'm hopeful this information helps you navigate this semester more smoothly. For many of

these transactions, you'll need to know your EMPL / CUNY ID. You might also need to use your Lehman email address.

- For online tutoring, [fill out this form](#)
- For virtual counseling services, email the Counseling Center or call them at 718-960-8761.
- For a list of the advising and student support resources available to first-year Lehman students, [go here](#).
- For general information on COVID-related resources and information at Lehman, [go here](#).
- For ways to use the Lehman library services remotely, [go here](#). Check your Lehman email for updates on the library's reopening plan.
- For tech support, [contact IT](#). There's a Lehman app for [Apple](#) and [Android](#) devices.

Grading Contracts

For this course, we will use a grading contract, which my colleague Melissa Watson has defined as “a system of grades that are based primarily on your labors and efforts.” That means that your final course letter grade will be based on your participation, attendance, and successful completion of assignments and revisions. Like Prof. Watson, whose model of grading contracts I borrow from here, I will “continue to hold high standards for completing assignments fully and effectively,” but hope that contract grading will “invite you to feel more comfortable taking risks, making mistakes, and being transparent about your questions and stances.” It's my preference to put my energy into supporting your growth, rather than assigning you a number.

Generally, as should be clear from the expectations above you'll need to attend most classes, for close to their full duration, and be prepared and present for the entire time you are here. Being a few minutes late a few times in a semester is understandable, but we may need to talk if lateness becomes a problem. If things come up, let me know. You might also get the contact information for people in class who seem friendly. They can help fill you in about what you might miss (and you can return the favor). As part of this grading contract, you agree to participate in ways that best fit you and that are most appropriate for each day's goal (by actively listening, taking notes, asking questions, offering comments, etc.). You agree to work cooperatively and collegially in groups, to share your work, to listen supportively to the work of others, and, when called for, give full and thoughtful assessments that help your colleagues consider ways to rethink and revise.

The grading contract includes some consideration of the assignments, low stakes and high, that make up your grade for the term. You agree to strive to complete all readings and to turn in on time all assignments. All assignments should be completed fully and meet all assignment requirements. Even if you are absent, you are still responsible for submitting work that's due on time. The only letter or number grade you will receive in this course will be your final course grade. Pluses and minuses are at the instructor's discretion.

All formal and informal writing assignments will instead be marked in the grade book according to the following guidelines:

- Complete Assignments (marked as “0” in the grade book): An assignment is considered “complete” if it is turned in on time and if it effectively meets the assignment goals. This means

that projects are not just done but done in the manner discussed. If I find that a given assignment is not “complete,” we will discuss how this will affect your final grade.

- Late Assignments (marked as “1” in the grade book): An assignment is considered “late” if turned in after its initial due date and time, but submitted within two days (48 hours).
- Make-up Assignments (marked as “2” in the grade book): An assignment is considered a “make-up” if it is turned in at some point in the semester but after the 48-hour window.
- Ignored Assignments (marked as “3” in the grade book): Any assignments not done at all, for whatever reason, are considered “Ignored.” Even one ignored assignment will prevent you from earning a higher than a B (see chart below).

The Grade You Want	# of Absences	# of Late Assignments	# of Make-up Assignments	# of Ignored Assignments	# of Informal Writing Artifacts Reflectively Discussed in Essay 4
A	3 or fewer	2	1	0	10
B	4	3	2	1	9
C	5	4	3	2	8
NC	7 or more	6 or more	5 or more	4 or more	3 or fewer

A more visual breakdown of our grading contract and its requirements.

Note: “Assignments” include writing prompts, peer editing evaluations, book group participation, class-wide research, and other acts of care/service to the group. These tasks can all be completed asynchronously. A very few tasks (in-class polls, check-ins, freewrites, reading quizzes) will not count as full assignments because they cannot be completed asynchronously. With this work, I see the penalty related to the absence of class and the consequent loss of the learning opportunity as sufficient.

Grading Breakdown

Formal Writing (60%)

One aspect of the workshop aspect of our course is its formal writing assignments. Worth half your total semester grade, formal writing consists of four essays, composed in stages, workshopped with peers, and revised at least once (10% each). In addition, you’ll read and respond to a complete book for your final project, a contribution of writing or meaningful editorial work to our class’ “Reading Guide” to *Heavy* or *Ordinary Girls* (10%). To sum up:

- Essay 1, "Pick a Book!", due September 29
- Essay 2, "How to 'Book Group'", due October 20
- Essay 3, "Autoethnography of a Book Club," due November 29
- Essay 4, "Letter to a Future ENG 111 Student," due December 13

Informal Writing (30%)

This includes everything else you individually or collaboratively author: blog posts, replies, freewrites, comments in the class chat, in-class exercises, annotations, etc. These count as assignments under the contract grading system.

Generally speaking, this writing is done in preparation for a class learning activity, or as scaffolding for your larger project. For these reasons, it needs to be done on time. It is also OK to miss lower-stakes tasks (for example, a freewrite) occasionally. The most important thing you'll use them for is as evidence for your final essay, which reflects on your learning this semester to an audience of a future student.

Participation/Effort (10%)

This includes regular, active attendance in our synchronous sessions, effective collaboration with others, demonstrations of resilience, a sense of humor when things get tough, engagement with feedback from your readers, and a genuine curiosity about the work we have in front of us. Places I look for this include but aren't limited to: helpful peer editing, generous blog replies, prepared conference attendance, invigorated book club involvement, and otherwise unbridled curiosity and enthusiasm for the work we're so lucky to be doing in this class. It's hard for me to say that this directly affects your grade; I look for it informally until the fourth essay, when we start collecting "artifacts" of your learning from the semester. Certainly, though, I notice who is and is not participating. Generally speaking, putting in effort and participating in whatever ways feel accessible to you help writers do their best work.

Academic Integrity

Sometimes "academic integrity" is used as a synonym for "plagiarism." I think of "integrity" differently. To me, academic integrity is the sum total of behaviors, language, and rituals that allow us to show respect to our peers and our predecessors in this academic subculture. The policies below aim to reflect that. Please think of each as a potential way to express your integrity.

Deadlines

I strongly encourage you to meet deadlines. I set them so that we can engage with each other's work. Deadlines also help keep writing from being an overwhelming task. Deadlines are at 9am (the start of class) unless noted. If you need more time with a formal assignment, let me know before the deadline arrives. I almost always grant brief extensions. You can miss an informal assignment or two with no impact on your grade. With these, just do your best.

Accessibility

I operate under the assumption that all of us learn in various ways. Together, we will all examine ways of measuring and describing the ways we learn. Even if you do not have a formally diagnosed disability, I welcome dialogue in class and outside of it about what makes you most engaged as a learner. Partly because I myself have a disability (a brain injury), but mostly because it is a way of showing integrity, this class is designed with the intent of being "already accessible" to students with disabilities. If additional adjustments are needed, please let me know as soon as possible.

The college accommodations statement indicates that in any class, students with disabilities have rights: “Lehman College is committed to providing access to all programs and curricula to all students. Students with disabilities who may require any special considerations should register with the Office of Student Disability Services in order to submit official paperwork to instructor. For more information, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services. Prior to COVID, they were located in Shuster Hall, Room 238, 718-960-8441. They're available on email disability.services@lehman.cuny.edu.

Conventions of Academic Work

All formal writing assignments will have formatting requirements in their instructions. Those instructions can be found in this document, following the schedule for each module. You can also search in this document for its “Assignment Sheet.” These instructions include options for completing the work in multi-modal ways or with translingual elements. If any formatting issues need to be addressed when you turn in the work, I will contact you at your Lehman College email. Resubmit the work within 24 hours so that, for the sake of fairness, I can assess it alongside your peers’ work. We use MLA format.

Daily Schedule

Module 1: Pick a Book!

W, Aug 25: Course introduction, community building, expectations letters

M, Aug 30: Contracts; publishing and replying to our expectations letters; previewing activities for the books; starting in on group reads

W, Sept 1: discuss group reads; replies to expectations letters due; library assignment

M, Sept 6: No Class

W, Sept 8: No Class

M, Sept 13: Library assignment due to course blog; discuss writers; open internet assignment

W, Sept 15: No class

M, Sept 20; internet assignment due; Pick a book!; lesson on outlining

W, Sept 22: Draft of “Pick a Book” essay due to Google Docs

M, Sept 27: lesson on sentences; work day; tech set up (your site due)

W, Sept 29: Published version of your “Pick a Book” essay due to your Commons site

Module 2: “How to ‘Book Group’” (Sept 29-Oct 20)

M, Oct 4: Exploratory essay post due

W, Oct 6: Contribution to class annotated bibliography due; open internet assignment

M, Oct 11: No class

W, Oct 13: Draft of Essay 2 due for peer editing

M, Oct 18: lesson (TBD); work day (keywords); open internet assignment due

W, Oct 20: Published Revision of Essay 2

Module 3: Reading Alone and with Others (Oct 20-Nov 29)

M, Oct 25: Posts for Session 1 (Laymon p 1-62 / Diaz p. 1-62 / Talusan 1-82)

W, Oct 27: Replies

M, Nov 1: Posts for Session 2 (Laymon 63-116 / Diaz 63-142 / Talusan 83-149)

W, Nov 3: Replies

M, Nov 8: Posts for Session 3 (Laymon 117-162 / Diaz 142-247 / Talusan 150-229)

W, Nov 10: Replies

M, Nov 15: Posts for Session 4 (Laymon 142-end / Diaz 248-end / Talusan 230-end)

W, Nov 17: Replies (cross-post to your blog on your Commons site) due to our Course Blog

M, Nov 22: Peer Edit Draft of Essay 3 (“Reading Alone and with Others”)

W, Nov 24: Catchup day

M, Nov 29: Published Revision of “Reading Alone and with Others” due to your Commons page

Module 4: Letters to the Future (Nov 29-Dec 13)

M, Dec 6: Peer Edit Draft of “Letter to a Future ENG 111 Student” due to your Commons page.

M, Dec 13: Published Revision of “Letter to a Future ENG 111 due to your Commons page.

Major Deadlines

Module 1: “Pick-A-Book!” (Aug 25 to Sept 29)

Activity	Location	Deadline
Write ‘expectations’ post	Course Blog	rotating, finished by Sept 17
Reply to two other students’ expectations posts	Course Blog	rotating, finished by Sept 17
Group Reads (Talusán, Laymon, Díaz)	Groups Library (Module 1 folder)	Sept 1 (use Hypothes.is)
Fieldwork (Racial Justice Reads)	Groups Library (Module 1 folder)	Sept 13 (post to Course Blog w/ keyword b/t Sept 13-22)
Draft of “Pick a Book” essay	A blog post on your Commons site	Sept 22
Published Revision of “Pick A Book” essay	A new page on your Commons site	Sept 29

Module 2: “How to ‘Book Group’” (Sept 29-Oct 20)

Activity	Location	Deadline
Exploratory Essay (based on Sept 29 freewrite)	Blog post	Oct 4
Contributions to Annotated Bibliography	Course Website	Oct 6
Draft of Essay 2	A new page on your Commons site (with a password)	Oct 13
Published Revision of Essay 2	A new page on your Commons site (with no password)	Oct 20

Module 3: Reading Alone and with Others (Oct 20-Nov 29)

Activity	Location	Deadline
Posts for Session 1 (Laymon p 1-62 / Díaz p. 1-62 / Talusán 1-82)	Course Blog	Oct 25
Replies (cross-post to your blog on your Commons site)	Course Blog	Oct 27

Posts for Session 2 (Laymon 63-116 / Diaz 63-142 / Talusan 83-149)	Course Blog	Nov 1
Replies (cross-post to your blog on your Commons site)	Course Blog	Nov 3
Posts for Session 3 (Laymon 117-162 / Diaz 142-247 / Talusan 150-229)	Course Blog	Nov 8
Replies (cross-post to your blog on your Commons site)	Course Blog	Nov 10
Posts for Session 4 (Laymon 142-end / Diaz 248-end / Talusan 230-end)	Course Blog	Nov 15
Replies (cross-post to your blog on your Commons site)	Course Blog	Nov 17
Peer Edit Draft of Essay 3 (“Reading Alone and with Others”)	your Commons page (with a password)	Nov 22, by 9am
Published Revision of “Reading Alone and with Others”)	your Commons page	Nov 29, by 9am

Module 4: Letters to the Future (Nov 29-Dec 13)

Activity	Location	Deadline
Peer Edit Draft of “Letter to a Future ENG 111 Student”	your Commons page	Dec 6, by 9am
Published Revision of “Letter to a Future ENG 111	your Commons page	Dec 13, by 9am