

College Composition

Jake Westrum

westrumcollegecomp.blogspot.com/

Email: jacob_westrum@isd31.net

(218) 585-9707

Room: 2204

Hours: 7:50 am – 3:40 pm

Course Description

College Composition is designed to be an introduction to rhetoric and best practices of research, geared towards writing as a process; Students will be introduced to college-level research writing using primary and secondary sources. Students will write with a variety of aims in multiple media, with an emphasis on logic in argumentative writing. In completing the course, students should be able to read critically and document correctly as well as write essays that are unified, deep in support, have smooth transitions, and are expressed in a variety of sentence patterns. Students will receive a grade of A, B, C, D, or F, with a C being considered average work.

While Bemidji High School requires at least a D to satisfy the senior English requirement, Bemidji State University requires students to earn at least a C in order to receive college credit.

Objectives:

Students taking this course will do the following:

1. Learn effective strategies for critical reading.
2. Create a focused thesis which reflects a topic's complexity, and support this purpose with acceptable, relevant, and sufficient evidence.
3. Expand upon this thesis with well-organized and cohesive prose which blends written styles towards a unique voice.
4. Learn to use a variety of sources including databases, internet, textual, and primary research.
5. Search and select evidence appropriate to the text's purpose and audience.
6. Understand the purpose and use of various documentation styles
7. Develop fluency in standard written English.
8. Use drafts with specific goals for each draft which incorporate peer feedback, as well as learn the appropriate technology for commentary, revision, and collaboration

Course Texts

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. 1959. Evanston: McDougal Littell Inc, 1997.

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness: And, The Secret Sharer*. 1950. New York: Signet Classics, 1997.

Hassib, Rajia. *In the Language of Miracles*. Penguin Books, 2015.

Kirszner, Laurie G., and Stephen R Mandell, eds. *Patterns for College Writing*. 14th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2018.

Requirements

1. **Essays:** The final draft of the three major papers (persuasive essay, literary analysis, and large research essay) must be shared with me on google classroom by 11.59pm the assigned due date. Any documents edited after this 11.59 checkpoint will lose 10% of the points on the paper for every day. All documents must be shared with me, and I must be set as an editor. **All papers have a printed, as well as digital, turnin requirement. You cannot receive a grade on a required essay without both submitted.**
 - a. Checkpoints - Each essay has three major checkpoints. Failure to have material ready for any of the checkpoints will result in a 5% deduction of the grade for the final essay for each checkpoint missed.
 - b. Each essay has multiple points for peer review, and all must be followed: these are often checkpoints. In addition to allotted class time to peer review essays, online peer review must be followed during writing. It is your responsibility to seek out students to read and respond to your work.
 - c. Error policy: Papers may have a maximum of one technical error (including punctuation, spelling, grammar usage, typographical or format errors) per page in order to be eligible for an A grade. If there are two errors on any page, 10% is deducted, with a maximum eligibility of 90%; 4 errors will deduct 20%, 6 errors will deduct 30%. I will stop reading should any paper have more than seven errors per page, and it is the student's responsibility to revise for re-grading. My late policy will deduct 10% per day after the due date until re-submission.
2. **Readings:** All reading assignments are required, not suggestions. In this class I always assume participation in the ideas at hand, and how they relate to practical matters in the course. This means the student must come to class having read, responded via note-taking skills, and thought through the issues in all reading assignments. Quizzes may be given.
3. **Blogs:** All students are required to activate and maintain a blog. There is a weekly requirement of approximately 300 words, and each post must follow a general Toulmin model of a claim, grounds, and a warrant. Early posts will be generalized, assigned topics. Students are expected to generate their own content on a weekly basis. In addition, some assignments in class may be turned in through blogs.
4. **Research presentation:** The research done for the large research essay will be presented in a 8-10 minute visual presentation.
5. **Exercises, and Participation:** Participation in the course is achieved through class

discussions, and the completion of in-class exercises. The nature of the course itself is a discussion forum and workshop environment, so attendance and participation is mandatory. **Exercises and discussions missed can not be made up.**

6. **Communication:** I am available via e-mail outside of class or office hours. However, I will not generally respond to e-mails after 6pm or on weekends unless the e-mail involves a very small subset of topics (illness, death, accident, other major crisis) or, for weekends, specific, focused questions about the assignment that I have not already addressed in class. I will not respond to messages asking about what was already answered in class.

Policies and Procedures:

1. **Attendance:** I am required to take attendance by Bemidji High School, and your presence in the classroom is vital to success in the coursework. Students more than 15 minutes late to class will require an admit, and this will be marked in their attendance as an absence. Three tardies are also considered one unexcused absence. The student risks loss of credit when 15 absences are accrued.
2. **Absences:** I do not accept any excuses for absences or missing work. You are responsible to set an alarm and be in class on time. Other than a documented emergency (hospitalization, death), no assignment, paper, or exam can be made up. Most assignments are digital submissions. Any students missing for extra-curricular activities are responsible for any work assigned, and it is due at the same time as everyone else. When a student is absent, the student has the responsibility to check the blog and schedule to make sure they stay up to date. Participatory points are lost whether an absence is excused or unexcused.
3. **Plagiarism:** The English Department defines plagiarism as:
 - a. Not properly attributing words or ideas to a source
 - b. Using quotes from another author's writing without citing that author's work
 - c. Citing portions of another author's work, but using more of the work without attribution
 - d. Taking a paper, in whole or part, from a site of already-written papers
 - e. Using a paper from another student, submitting it as original coursework
 - f. Submitting the same paper multiple times for different assignments
 - g. Taking the results of another's research and attempting to pass the results as his/her own work

Plagiarism constitutes theft and fraud of intellectual material.
Plagiarism on any component of an assignment will result in an F for the course.
4. **Participation:** The following behaviors are considered rude in a classroom: talking out of turn or while another student is speaking, sleeping, doing homework for other classes, texting or playing on the phone during class time. I reserve the right to remove you from class for disruptions of any kind. If you are asked to leave, you are responsible for all class work you missed. Excessive disruptions will result in removal from the course.
5. **Accessibility Services:** BSU provides services for College in the High School students with disabilities and IEP's at the high school. However, accommodations may vary from

what is available at the high school. If you have a 504 plan or IEP in place at BHS, these may be used to assist the Accessibility Services Office at BSU in determining reasonable and appropriate accommodations. If you would like consideration of accommodations at BSU, you must contact the Accessibility Services Office at the university to provide documentation of your disability and start a file. Documentation is required to start a file.

Grading Process:

I will be grading based on organization, voice, purpose, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions. Depending on the assignment, I may also grade specific research parameters. Specific rubrics are attached to each assignment sheet, available on my blog.

***Note: the starred assignments are considered vital to the class: you cannot pass the class without having turned in all of these assignments.

Grading:

Grade Scale:

Assignment	Values		
Research Essay*	25%		
Literary Analysis*	10%	90-100%	A
Persuasive Essay*	25%	80-90%	B
Research Presentation*	10%	70-80%	C
Short Compositions	10%	60-70%	D
Weekly Blogs	10%	Below 60%	F
Exercises and Participation	10%		

Good writing means making (and learning from) mistakes. As such, I expect you to take *appropriate, acceptable* risks with the thinking and work done in class, and really push yourself to become part of the discussion; I will do my best to engage you as a learner, provided you *make the choice to engage yourself* with the class.

College Writing 1

My signature hereby confirms that I have carefully read and understand this syllabus and all of the information contained therein.

Student

Name (signature): _____

Date: _____

Name (print): _____

Parent / Legal Guardian

Name (signature): _____

Date: _____

Name (print): _____

Additionally, we will be reading adult texts. As a best practice for deeper understanding, we will be discussing these adult texts as well as viewing supplementary materials which are occasionally at an R rating. As a result, I'm asking your permission to allow your son/daughter to watch in class.

----- Yes, I give permission for my son/daughter to watch R rated films in College Writing class.

----- No, I do not give permission for my son/daughter to watch R rated films. Please remove them from class during viewing.

Student's Name:

Date:

Parent's Signature: