

Eng 105: I Guess this is Growing Up: Transitioning to College Life
Fall Quarter 2023
Professor Fritz

Individual Learning Plan Prompt and Template

Fall-Quarter Weinberg College Seminars are designed to help incoming students transition to college life and academics, particularly in the areas of critical reading, writing, thinking, and research. Building off of Weinberg's learning objectives for College Seminars as well as my own expertise in the teaching of college writing, I have created the following learning goals for Eng 105:

This quarter, students will:

1. Cultivate the speaking and listening skills necessary for college-level seminars.
2. Develop personal study habits and routines that will help you excel across the curriculum at Northwestern.
3. Practice methods of learning and self-care grounded in writing and personal reflection.
4. Recalibrate critical reading, writing, thinking, and research skills for college-level study.
5. Investigate a novel that invites you to make personal and academic connections to not only to literature but to disciplines across Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences

This course seeks to honor your individuality and your personal transition to NU. I fully understand that achieving these goals will look very different for every student, and that some of my goals might not line up with what you feel you need to transition to college life at all. That's completely ok! All of you are starting your college career at different places. In celebration of these differences, Eng 105 wants to make sure that everyone, regardless of personal and educational background, learning abilities, or English language proficiency, can succeed.

For your first college assignment, I invite you to adapt the learning goals listed above to create your own goals for the quarter in the form of an Individual Learning Plan. An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is a document that will help you:

- reflect on your current academic skills,
- set goals for how to develop those skills throughout the quarter,
- establish how you will determine if you are reaching your goals, and
- ultimately assess your academic growth throughout the quarter.

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By identifying the areas where you want to learn this quarter, and by defining what that learning looks like for you, this course gives you the opportunity to critically reflect on who you are as a college learner in real-time, as it is happening. By paying close attention to the effort you put into your work this quarter and what that effort achieves, you will learn how to assess and better understand your own learning so that you can better succeed in each of your courses going forward.

This is a revisable, working document that will likely change and develop as your learning progresses throughout the quarter. You should feel free to be as open as possible in your answers. This is a fluid, nonjudgmental document!

Important Dates and Deadlines:

This is a big document! I expect at least one-paragraph responses (4-6 sentences, or the verbal equivalent) for most of the questions. But don't stress. We're going to handle it in bits in pieces, both in and outside of class, and you'll discuss your goals regularly with Prof. Fritz and your peers throughout the quarter. We will also revisit and revise your ILP in Week 6 of the quarter.

Here's the timeline for how we are going to complete the ILP over the first few weeks of the quarter:

Course Learning Goal #1 (Cultivate the speaking and listening skills necessary for college-level seminars)

- Write outside of class; finish and be prepared to share with peers in class on Th, 9/21.

Course Learning Goal #2 (Develop personal study habits and routines that will help you excel across the curriculum at Northwestern)

- Write DURING class on Th, 9/21

Course Learning Goal #3 (Practice Methods of Self-Care grounded in writing and personal reflection)

- Write outside of class; finish and be prepared to share with peers in class on T, 9/26

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Course Learning Goal #4 (Recalibrate critical reading, writing, thinking, and research skills for college-level study)

- Write the critical writing section ONLY outside of class; finish and be prepared to share with peers in class on Th, 9/28

Course Learning Goal #4 (reading)

- Write the critical reading section ONLY, DURING class on Th, 9/28

Completed ILP (including the remaining critical thinking and research sections of Course Learning Goal #4, Course Learning Goal #5, and your personal grading scale) **due to Canvas on Sun, 10/1.**

Individual Learning Plan

Course Learning Goal #1. *Cultivate the speaking and listening skills necessary for college-level seminars.*

Attendance and participation tend to be a big part of how students are evaluated at Northwestern, particularly in smaller seminar-style classes in the Humanities. Unlike larger lecture-style classes (and unlike learning that you may be more familiar with from high school) professors expect students to do some heavy-lifting in the classroom, particularly as active discussants.

How do you prefer to participate in the classroom?

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What are your strengths and weaknesses in terms of contributing verbally in the classroom? For example: Do you feel comfortable speaking in front of the whole class? Do you prefer speaking in small groups? Do you hate working in small groups?, etc.

How specifically would you like to grow your discussion skills in this course and during your time at Northwestern more broadly?

What do you think will be some markers of your success in growing your discussion skills this quarter? How will you know you are improving/growing/developing?

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What do you imagine constitutes strong listening skills in college? What are some of the characteristics that you would like to acquire this quarter as an engaged academic listener?

How will you define growth in listening skills for you this quarter? What do you think you need to accomplish in order to grow?

Active speaking and listening in class not only improves your individual learning, but it also impacts the learning and engagement of your classmates. How would you like to participate in class in a way that helps engage your peers and creates a in a meaningful classroom environment?

Course Learning Goal #2: *Develop personal study habits and routines that will help you excel across the curriculum at Northwestern.*

How would you describe your study habits and routines in high school? What worked for you? What didn't work for you?

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This course will provide you with many tactics and resources for studying and managing your time more effectively. What are some specific goals you would like to set regarding cultivating college time management skills?

How would you like to (compassionately!) assess your progress throughout the quarter in terms of developing a new routine and updated study habits for college-level learning?

Course Learning Goal #3: *Practice methods of learning and self-care grounded in writing and personal reflection.*

It's really stressful to be a human in the year 2023. How have you been managing the stress of finishing high school during this weird, post-pandemic (kind of?) moment?

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How do you typically manage academic stress and other anxieties related to school? Is this something that you are relatively good at, or something that you could practice better?

What are some goals that you have for making sure that you are taking care of yourself mentally, physically, and emotionally during your first quarter at Northwestern?

This class will ask you to reflect on your learning weekly in our Sunday Summary assignments. I believe that students benefit academically and emotionally from slowing down at the end of the week and actively processing what they have learned and accomplished, however small. I also believe that meaningful self-reflection is a skill that can be cultivated and practiced. What makes self-reflection meaningful for you? What do you hope to learn from your weekly reflections in Eng 105?

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Self-care is tricky to assess because it's a constant work in progress. I'm still learning new ways to manage my work/life balance and I've been at Northwestern for 11 years! How would you like to assess your work towards self-care this quarter (with kindness and grace to yourself, of course)?

Course Learning Goal #4: *Students will recalibrate critical reading, writing, thinking, and research skills for college-level study.*

Oh, dear. This is a big one. Let's break it down by topic:

Critical Reading

As a high school graduate, what experience do you have with critical reading? What do you consider your strengths and weaknesses as a reader?

I have suggested that I would like for this course to help you recalibrate your high school reading skills for college level study. What does that mean for you? What do you imagine you would you like to learn to improve/expand/refine/develop your reading skills for this course, for college, and for life in general? What are some specific critical reading goals you hope to accomplish this quarter?

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As you know, I will not be using grades in this course to evaluate your learning. You will ultimately assess your progress in critical reading based on the effort that you put into completing your assignments and on your perceived academic and intellectual growth as a reader throughout the quarter. At this early stage in the quarter, how do you think you will know when you are achieving growth in your capacities as a critical reader?

Critical Writing:

What was your relationship to writing as a high school student? Do you enjoy writing? Does it make you anxious? Do you consider yourself a “good” writer, a “bad” writer, or somewhere in between?

What do you consider your current strengths and weaknesses as a writer?

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I have suggested that I would like for this course to help you recalibrate high school writing skills for college-level writing. What does that mean for you? What do you imagine you would like to learn to improve/expand/refine/develop your writing skills this quarter and for college in general? What are some specific goals you hope to accomplish this quarter as a writer?

As you work to assess growth in your writing skills throughout the quarter, how do you think you will know when you are making progress?

Critical Thinking

As a high school graduate, what does the term “critical thinking” mean to you, and why is it important to both your college education and your life and career beyond Northwestern?

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What do you consider your strengths and weaknesses in terms of critical thinking?

I have suggested that I would like for this course to help you recalibrate your high school critical thinking skills for college level study. What does that mean for you? What are some of the ways that you would like to improve/expand/refine/develop your critical thinking skills this quarter? What are some specific goals you hope to accomplish this quarter as a thinker?

How do you think you will know when you are making progress in your critical thinking skills?

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Research Skills

As a high school graduate, what experiences with academic research have you had? What do you consider your strengths and weaknesses of your research skills?

What do you think will be different about conducting research at college? What do you want to learn this quarter about doing research for assignments at NU?

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What are some of the ways that you would like to improve/expand/refine/develop your research skills this quarter?

Course Learning Goal #5: *Investigate a novel that invites you to make personal and academic connections to not only to literature but to disciplines across Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences.*

Do you consider yourself to be more of an “Arts” person, a “Sciences” person, or a bit of both? Why?

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I am hoping that Demon Copperhead will be a story through which you can examine and process your own coming-of-age moment as a first-year student at Northwestern as well as a vehicle through which you can explore the way that literature intersects with many “Arts” and “Sciences” disciplines throughout WCAS. What do you hope to learn from our quarter-length exploration of Demon Copperhead?

Part III. Assessment

Although we have spent the first week of the quarter discussing how grades can be detrimental to student learning, the university nonetheless requires that I enter a letter grade for you at the end of the quarter. As the syllabus states, you will use your ILP to articulate how your learning translates into an A, B, C, D, or F for you.

Professor Fritz has very limited, baseline expectations for the varying letter grades that are as follows:

A:

- Complete the two major formal writing assignments by following a growth-based writing process which includes: a first draft, peer-reviewing, attending a one-on-one writing conference

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with Prof. Fritz, and meaningfully and substantially revising your first draft into a new and improved second version

- Complete all self-reflections (Sunday Summaries, midterm reflections, and final assessment reflection) authentically, sincerely, honestly, and comprehensively (however that looks for you)
- Attend all class sessions or make up any absences with one out-of-class activity for each class missed
- Engage in class and actively participate according to the criteria defined in your ILP
- Adhere to our Eng 105 Community Guidelines and make learning meaningful for your peers as your ILP delineates
- Show some level of growth (however you define it) across most sections of your ILP

A-:

- Complete the two major formal writing assignments following the growth-based process listed above
- Complete all self-reflections (Sunday Summaries, midterm reflections, and final assessment reflection) authentically, sincerely, honestly, and comprehensively (however that looks for you)
- *May miss a class or two* and not make up the absences with out-of-class activities
- Engage in class and actively participate according to the criteria defined in your ILP *most days*
- Adhere to our Eng 105 Community Guidelines and make learning meaningful for your peers as your ILP delineates
- Show some level of growth (however you define it) across most sections of your ILP

B+:

- Complete the two major formal writing assignments following the growth-based process listed above
- Complete *all but one or two* self-reflections (Sunday Summaries, midterm reflections, and final assessment reflection); authenticity, sincerity, honesty, and comprehensiveness (whatever that means for you) may be limited.
- *May miss two or three classes* and not make up the absences with out-of-class activities *or communicate with Prof. Fritz* about the reasons for the absences
- Engage in class and actively participate according to the criteria defined in your ILP *many days*
- Show some level of growth (however you define it) *across many sections* of your ILP

B:

- Complete the two major formal writing assignments following the growth-based process listed above, though maybe *missing a step or two*
- Complete *all but two* self-reflections (Sunday Summaries, midterm reflections, and final assessment reflection); authenticity, sincerity, honesty, and comprehensiveness (whatever that means for you) may be limited.

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- *May miss three or four classes* and not make up the absences with out-of-class activities or *communicate with Prof. Fritz* about the reasons for the absences
- Engage in class and actively participate according to the criteria defined in your ILP *often but not on many days*
- Show some level of growth across some sections of your ILP *but none in others*

B-:

- Complete the two major formal writing assignments following the growth-based process listed above, though misses steps in both assignments
- Complete *all but three* self-reflections (Sunday Summaries, midterm reflections, and final assessment reflection); authenticity, sincerity, honesty, and comprehensiveness (whatever that means for you) may be limited.
- May miss four or five classes and not make up the absences with out-of-class activities or *communicate with Prof. Fritz* about the reasons for the absences
- Engage in class moderately, participating rarely.
- Show some level of growth *across a few sections* of ILP *but none in others*

C:

- Complete the two major formal writing assignments following the growth-based process listed above, though *misses more than two steps in both assignments*
- Complete *all but four* self-reflections (Sunday Summaries, midterm reflections, and final assessment reflection); authenticity, sincerity, honesty, and comprehensiveness (whatever that means for you) may be limited.
- *May miss at least 5 classes* and does not make up the absences with out-of-class activities or *communicate with Prof. Fritz* about the reasons for the absences
- Engages rarely and rarely participates in class
- Shows some level of growth *across a section or two* of the ILP *but none in others*.

C-:

- Complete the two major formal writing assignments following the growth-based process listed above, *though misses more than three steps in both assignments*
- Complete *all but five* self-reflections (Sunday Summaries, midterm reflections, and final assessment reflection); authenticity, sincerity, honesty, and comprehensiveness (whatever that means for you) may be limited.
- *May miss at least 6 classes* and does not make up the absences with out-of-class activities or *communicate with Prof. Fritz* about the reasons for the absences
- Engages in class or participates rarely
- Shows some level of growth *across a section or two* of the ILP *but none in others*.

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D:

- *Complete only one or parts of both* of the two major formal writing assignments following the growth-based process listed above
- *Complete all but six* self-reflections (Sunday Summaries, midterm reflections, and final assessment reflection); authenticity, sincerity, honesty, and comprehensiveness (whatever that means for you) may be limited.
- *May miss at least 7 classes* and does not make up the absences with out-of-class activities *or communicate with Prof. Fritz* about the reasons for the absences
- Rarely, if ever, participates in class
- Shows very little growth across ILP

F:

- *Does not complete one or both* of the two major formal writing assignments following the growth-based process listed above
- *Does not complete seven or more* self-reflections (Sunday Summaries, midterm reflections, and final assessment reflection); authenticity, sincerity, honesty, and comprehensiveness (whatever that means for you) may be limited.
- *Misses more than 7 classes* and does not make up the absences with out-of-class activities *or communicate with Prof. Fritz* about the reasons for the absences
- Rarely, if ever, participates in class
- Shows very little growth across ILP

Building on my baseline requirements, what kind of personal effort and learning growth will you require for yourself to determine your grade at the end of the quarter? What are your personal “standards” for achieving the grades required by the university?

Please think creatively! This may be one of your only opportunities in your educational career to assess your hard work, engagement, and learning on your own terms. Think of your grading scale more in terms of your values around learning and what you hope to accomplish based on your individual goals this quarter!

Your Individual Grading Scale!**A:**

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B:

C:

D:

F:

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