Welcome to English 101!

- **Course Title:** ENGLISH COMPOSITION I  
  **Course Number:** ENG 101  
- **Credit Hours:** 5.0 Quarter credit hours  
  **Course Length:** 11 weeks  
- **Term:** Winter 2018  
  **Day/Time:** Tues. @ 7:50PM  
  **Course Number:** 1117AB  
  **Thurs. @ 7:50PM**

**Faculty Information:**

- **Instructor:** J.R. Hudspeth  
- **Classroom:** R-201  
- **Background on the Instructor:** Hello! Welcome to our Composition course! I am excited to work with you on developing your academic essay format and mechanical skills while also helping you to improve your critical thinking and research abilities. I have been involved in teaching or tutoring English for over ten years, and I have a B.A. in Literature from Arizona State as well as a M.A. in Rhetoric and Composition from the University of Alaska Anchorage, so I have spent my life preparing to help students develop these skills.

On a more personal and less stuffy level, here’s a short biography of random stuff that I like so that you can have an idea of what I do when I’m not grading, giving feedback, or teaching:

**Favorite hobby:** I can’t pick just one favorite, but I like to read, cook, play basketball, and play video games.

**Favorite food:** Ramen, especially Tonkotsu style. I could eat it every day, no kidding. If I could only eat one thing for the rest of my life, it would be ramen. You can put whatever vegetables that you want in it and vary it up in many different ways between changing the broth, meat, veggies, and noodles that you add to it. **Runner up: Avocados.** They taste good in everything. I almost put pork skins/chicharrones with hot sauce here, but that seemed like cheating after I answered “bacon” for my favorite food.

**Favorite book:** *American Psycho* by Bret Easton Ellis. Not for the faint of heart, people who dislike violence, or people who are turned off by extremely dark comedy.

**Favorite video game:** Right now, I’m playing *Pro Evolution Soccer 2018, Mafia III, Injustice 2, and Everybody’s Golf*. All-time faves? Hard to say, though *Sonic the Hedgehog 2, Street Fighter 3, Alpha Protocol, Red Dead Redemption, Super Mario Odyssey, and Fallout: New Vegas* are up there.

**Favorite basketball team:** I don’t have one. The Sonics are dead, long live the Sonics.

**Favorite soccer clubs:** Seattle Sounders FC, Newcastle United FC

**Favorite TV show:** Ever? Hard to say. Probably *Seinfeld, The Larry Sanders Show* or *Chappelle’s Show*. Right now? *Cutthroat Kitchen, The Great British Baking Show, Curb Your Enthusiasm,* and *It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia*.

**Pet peeves:** Improperly used apostrophes, people who throw their cigarette butts out of their car as if the world is their ashtray, strawman fallacies being used and accepted as legitimate arguments, people who blast music in their car really early in the morning or
late at night, when people put melted cheese in your omelet without asking you if you wanted any. I could go on, but we'll keep the negativity to a minimum.

**Why I like teaching English so much:** Students often ask me this because they are confused by my enthusiasm over things that they would never get excited about. I *like this subject because I enjoy reading and writing, but I also enjoy thinking about things and I'm always up for a good debate.* Sadly, these are skills that many people lose after years away from school or never acquire in their K-12 experiences, but the good news is that I'm happy to take on the role of helping students get better at these things.

**Course Description/Pre-Requisites**

- **Course Description:** This is a college level writing course in which students learn to write essays that explain ideas, argue for a position, and evaluate information. Students draft essays based on personal experience and information gathered from a variety of resources. Students revise and edit their draft essays based on constructive comments offered by their peers and by their instructor. Upon successful completion of the course, students are able to write essays (of at least 1,000 words) demonstrating the conventions of standard written English.

- **Prerequisites:** COMPASS score of 75 or higher or completion of ENGL 100 with a 2.0 or higher. Basic computer and keyboarding skills strongly recommended.

_Note:_ We will have typed assignments in the class, so please be comfortable with your typing skills and with using Word. Bellevue College does offer classes that will improve your keyboarding and your understanding of key programs for writing and completing other such projects, so please review your Course Schedule if you think you may need to take one.

_Note #2:_ It's very important that you feel comfortable with sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and basic academic essay structure. While we will certainly spend more time with the latter, we do not spend as much time on the first three things. It is assumed that you have a good handle on these things by the time you reach the 101 level, and you will be graded on them. It may help you to brush up on sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation before and during the course. If you have questions about other materials you can use to keep those skills strong, please ask me!

**Materials / Texts**

- **REQUIRED:**
  - N/A

- **SUGGESTED:**
  - A print dictionary and a print thesaurus
  - (For second-language speakers) An electronic translator (no ability to connect to the internet needed)
  - A flash drive/USB (please bring to class each day)

**Extra Reading / Resources List:**

- **Purdue OWL:** [http://owl.english.purdue.edu](http://owl.english.purdue.edu)
Please refer to this site as a guide/glossary for supplementary writing information, such as APA Style; grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure; and resume or business letter building, among other things.

- **Your Logical Fallacy Is**: https://yourlogicalfallacyis.com/
  We will talk at length about some, but not all, of the bad arguments that people sometimes make when trying to support their position on a topic. This site covers many of the bad arguments that we will talk about and even some that we will not.

**College Services:**

These are not the only services available at RTC – there are numerous services here to help you achieve your goals as a student – but these services may be the most helpful to you in terms of our course.

- **Library Media Center**: https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/
  We will be using the library regularly for finding sources for our research and for developing properly-styled APA references. The physical library is located in Building D, Room 126 and houses numerous books and other materials that can also help you research our topics. Please bookmark the above site AND go to the library and get a library card when it is open!

- **Academic Success Center**: https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/asc/
  TRiO offers a reading and a writing lab, both of which can be helpful for you if you would like tutoring that helps you with our work.

  The hours of operation and further information about TRiO services is at the link above!

- **Disability Resource Center**: https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc/
  This office is here to help students with disabilities of all types. If you are diagnosed with a disability of any type, please contact this office. You may be eligible to receive support as a disabled student. If you are struggling with anything like a physical injury, learning disability, or mental illness, **PLEASE** talk to them. Often, students will confide in me the problems that they are having, but the DRC can do much more for you than I can in the long run because they are trained to know how to help you the best with your particular illness or injury. More information about this is listed in the next section of this syllabus.
Student Learning Outcomes:

Q: So, what am I supposed to learn, and how will it help me later on?

A: Great question! The 100-level English course is loaded with skills that you need to be able to improve upon in order to move on. It's a surprisingly multi-faceted course for many students, and some are surprised in particular by how much English 101 asks you to do (and to do well).

Let's talk about the five BIG things that you have to be able to do reasonably well in order to be successful in the course first.

1. **Critical thinking**: This is the big one. If you think about every opinion that you have ever held in your life, can you honestly say that you have searched out all the possible evidence for all the possible sides that people have taken on the issue? Then, can you honestly say that you understood all the evidence and still came to a clear and logical conclusion?

   If so, you might be above the English 101 level!

   Most students—no, most people in life—are always sharpening their critical thinking skills. It is easy to slip and resort to bad arguments, or fallacies, in order to support one's ideas about what is right or correct.

   There are cases where you don't have to make up a logical argument full of facts. Spirituality and faith, for example, are based on a personal experience beyond the concrete or factual—and that is perfectly okay.

   However, in the realm of academics (and in most realms of employment), we try to focus on facts and logical understanding of the facts and what they mean rather than faith. That doesn't mean that faith is a bad thing; it just makes it a different tool that is more useful for church, your bible study group, or your personal life than for school and work in most cases. For example, if your biology teacher asked you how your blood cells worked, and you said that you didn't know, but that you had faith that they work properly because you are still alive, you probably wouldn't pass that course!

   **In order to think logically via the use of factual evidence, you have to know how to understand the facts, piece them together like a puzzle, and think about what they might tell us about the world at large.**

*Follow-up Q: When will I use critical thinking outside of this class?*

A: Every day of your life. When you go to vote for a public official or for a plan or idea (like legalizing marijuana, for example), you need to know the facts and to use them to come to a reasonable conclusion. Less seriously, maybe you want to argue with your friends about the best quarterback in the NFL. Being able to read, understand, and explain why the statistics support your position will help you to win that argument. For important and not-so-important stuff, critical thinking is a must-have skill.

Beyond that, in school, every instructor that ever tests you to see if you understand the material is testing your critical thinking ability. They want to know if you understand the information that they have given you; they also want to know if you know how to use that information in the right way.
Likewise, when you get hired at whatever job you get out of school, your supervisors will expect that you can use the information that you gathered in school to do your job in the correct way. Critical thinking skills are often the difference between employment and unemployment.

2. **Critical reading:** This goes hand-in-hand with critical thinking. If you are going to understand the facts clearly, obviously, you'll need to be able to read the facts effectively! Reading can be a challenge because as students, you are often bombarded with new ideas and vocabulary that you are trying to take in all at once. We'll talk about ways to manage this and practice critical reading ourselves. It's important to note that reading should always be followed by thinking about what you read, what it tells you, and how it applies.

*Follow-up Q: When will I use critical reading outside of this class?*

*A:* Again, all the time. Whether at work or school, you will be asked to read chapters, documents, letters, etc., and then understand the information enough to apply it to whatever you are learning or doing. Plus, being a stronger reader helps you in your personal life when you are interested in a topic and want to learn more about it.

3. **Academic essay writing:** Because you are in school, you want to learn to write in the way that is expected of you by your instructors. Though there are many different tweaks to the formula, there is generally a basic formula for writing academically that you can learn. Likely, you have encountered this formula at some point, but you'll want to be able to get it down as best you can because it will form the basis for most of the academic writing that you do. We will talk about some of the different elements and strategies that go into writing an academic essay during this course.

*Follow-up Q: When will I use academic essay writing outside of this class?*

*A:* This is specifically a school thing; every time an instructor asks you to write a paper as a way to demonstrate your knowledge, you can do so by using this formula that we'll talk about. It gives you a concrete way to organize your ideas clearly so that your instructor will more easily follow what you are saying and thus be able to see that you understand the ideas that s/he has tried to teach you.

4. **Research skills:** What do most people do when they need to find out some information? They head straight to Wikipedia or Google to look at the first page that pops up. This is convenient, but it isn't necessarily accurate. How do you know that the research you have is complete and that the person who has shared the information isn't hiding anything from you? How do you know that the person who has shared the information knows what s/he's talking about?

In this class, we will talk about how to evaluate information to know that it is reliable and where to go in order to find solid information.

*Follow-up Q: When will I use research skills outside of this class?*

*A:* You will likely be asked to do quite a bit of research in your school careers as your instructors test you on if you can find, understand, and relate information that is important to the subject that you are learning.

Beyond that, you may be asked to research things at work, and of course, knowing where to go in order to find reliable information helps massively in your personal life. How do you know which news sources to trust? How can you be sure to find out about an important initiative that you are voting on? If you have an opinion on a controversial issue, how can you be sure that you have the information needed to show that your opinion is logical, makes sense, and should be considered? Research, research, research.
5. **Making strong arguments:** This was covered to some degree in the critical thinking area, but it deserves to be mentioned here as well. People are often TERRIBLE at making arguments. If you want proof, here's what I want you to do: Go online to Yahoo or CNN or Politico. Read an article about some newsworthy, important, or complex idea or event. Then, look at the reader comments left behind.

What you'll see is name-calling, distorted arguments based on made-up stuff that people never said, and many other arguments that are illogical and irrational. People have a hard time sticking to the facts and making a clear, evidence-based argument; instead, they often toss out insults like bombs and fail to even understand what the argument is about in the first place.

Up above, I talked about why I like teaching English 101. I can say that I also feel, as many instructors do, that I have a duty to society. One of the most important duties that I believe to have is the duty of making sure that when you get in an argument and you want to support your position, you do so like an intelligent, logical, thoughtful person and not like a slobbering moron who couldn't win an argument over whether Pinkie Pie is superior to Twilight Sparkle with a first-grader. You will vote on things that affect me and the people that I love; you will decide to support ideas or do things that change the world for all of us. I need to die knowing that I helped you and other students to do so in a thoughtful, logical, and informed manner.

In this class, we will talk about how to evaluate information to know that it is reliable and where to go in order to find solid information.

**Follow-up Q:** When will I ever need to make strong arguments outside of this class?

**A:** All the time, from making arguments in essays for school to discussing with your spouse how to address the behavior of your kids to trying to convince someone of the right way to vote on an issue. This is a skill that, if you possess it, inevitably makes the world a better place because even if you come to a different conclusion from other people, you can defend it clearly, logically, and factually, contributing something thoughtful and useful to our national discourse. No pressure. :)

There are other skills that you will need to polish up on as well! These include:

- Grammar
- Sentence Structure
- Punctuation
- APA formatting

The stated outcomes decided upon for this class as determined by RTC are as follows:

- Identify common sentence errors and apply appropriate punctuation.
- Demonstrate audience awareness in developing and delivering expository prose in academically-accepted formats.
- Demonstrate proper conventions, organizations, and formats of paragraph and essay structure, including unity, development, and coherence.
- Identify and adopt best methods of enhancing exposition to make it precise, literal, and relevant.
• Identify and apply appropriate and standard diction that accommodates diverse audience members.

• Identify and adopt a variety of rhetorical modes and strategies to present cogent and convincing arguments.

• Demonstrate critical reading strategies by identifying common literary devices and articulating literary themes.

• Identify, retrieve, and evaluate secondary sources for authority, relevance, and credibility for use in research.

• Document research sources according to an academically-recognized style: APA or MLA.

• Revise at every level of composition: assignment compliance, diction, sentence, paragraph, essay, and documentation.

Course Content/Course Format:
Our full calendar will be viewable on the front page of Canvas. Please also choose “Modules” in Canvas to see key documents related to each topic.

College Closures:
Where to find info on college closures:
You can find information on class closures on this page:
http://www.rtc.edu/communityresources/security/Weather.aspx

You may also sign up for RAVE, which sends text messages to your phone updating you on school closures, through this link.

Working on college closure days:
If we have a day in which our school is closed – for instance, a snow day, an earthquake day, or a day when campus is locked down – I will post a make-up assignment on Canvas that will be due through Canvas at a later date that will be specified within the assignment itself and in an announcement about the closure and the assignment. Please be sure to check Canvas on any days for which the school is closed.

Days off in the Winter Quarter, 2018:
The following days are days on which class is officially canceled by the school and/or campus is closed.

• Monday, January 15th – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
• Thursday, February 8th – College Issues Day
• Monday, February 19th – Presidents’ Day
• Tuesday, March 6th – Faculty Professional Development Day
Conduct in our Course/Course Rules

On late work:

1. Work must be in by the due dates and times listed on Canvas. If work is turned in between one minute to eight hours past the due date and time, it will be graded, but it will receive a 50% penalty. If work is turned in more than eight hours past the due date and time, it will receive a zero. **NOTE: This does NOT apply to discussion posts, reading quizzes, midterms, or final exams on Canvas! Discussion posts will earn zero points if they are even one minute past the due date!**

2. Late work will only receive a score as feedback.

3. Students must be present to give presentations by thirty minutes after the class starts. Individual students who do not join their group during their presentation time will not be given a chance to make up their part in the presentation, again with one legal exception.

4. Students who will not be in class on the day of the due date are still responsible for turning in their work on that day and will not be given a pass. Please email your work to me as an attachment by the beginning of the class. Papers sent after the due date/grace period will not be accepted under any circumstances.

5. Per the law, which protects students in the event that they are physically not able or allowed to attend class for medical reasons, students who must miss class for medical reasons that a) require hospitalization or bed rest as prescribed by a doctor, and b) that are verified via doctor’s note to the student will be given the chance to make up any assignments that they have missed.

6. In order to make up work in such an instance, the student MUST present a doctor’s note in print as soon as s/he returns to class, and the note must include the doctor’s recommendation, the doctor’s signature, and a contact number and/or email for the doctor’s office so that the instructor can follow up if necessary.

7. Any missing assignments will be graded with a zero until and unless made up in the instance that the student misses classes due to prescribed hospitalization or bed rest.

8. I reserve the right to allow late work (past the due date) for individual students who experience catastrophic life events (for example, but not limited to, loss of transportation or childcare, death in the family, or loss of housing). Each determination of late work allowance will be made on a case-by-case basis. Previous course attendance, previous work completion rate, and previous communication with the instructor on the issue will be factors in my decision to allow late work for a catastrophic life event.

On attendance:

1. Attendance is graded for a total of up to one hundred points.

2. Absences, tardy attendance, and early departure attendance are all penalized.

3. In order to earn a full attendance grade for a single course meeting, a student must be in class for at least 60% of the course. If the student is not in the course for that long, s/he will be considered absent.
4. A student is tardy if s/he comes to class after the listed start time. I begin class at the start time, and if a student comes in after I start talking, that will count as a tardy.

5. A student is an early departure if s/he leaves class before the listed end time unless explicitly released by the instructor.

6. If a student earns a score of at least 80% within the Roll Call Attendance assignment through the day of the final, s/he will have his or her grade maintained at or raised to full attendance points (100%) for the quarter.

7. In the case that a student is prescribed with hospitalization or bed rest by a doctor, upon reception of a proper doctor’s note (see “On late work” section), the student will receive excused absences (these absences neither add nor take away points from the overall attendance score).

8. Canvas keeps track of all attendance and attendance scoring.

**On class conduct:**

1. Students are not allowed to have phones out in class. Phones must be in pockets or bags. I reserve the right to ask you all to place your phones at the front of the class if even one student is distracted by his or her phone.

2. Students should be polite in class and respect their fellow students as well as their instructor. No crass language or improper outbursts are allowed.

3. I will not answer questions that are already answered in the syllabus. I will simply direct you to the syllabus itself to find the answer. If you still have a question about what you specifically read in the syllabus and need clarification, I will gladly answer you.

4. Students should not engage in point-begging or extra credit begging in the class.

**On Exams:**

1. Students may not make up reading quizzes for any reason. If students come to class after the reading quiz has been administered, students will not be able to make up the quiz later in the course.

2. Students may make up the midterm, but must do so within a week of the midterm date. There will be a 10% penalty for any student who makes up the exam late. After a week, the midterm cannot be made up.

3. If the student is going to miss the final exam, the student must complete an incomplete grade form and agree on a future final date. The student will receive an “I” for incomplete until the exam is taken. If the exam is not taken by the end of the next quarter, the student will receive a zero for the exam.

4. All quizzes and exams are open note. Students may use any course or reading notes that they have taken in order to complete the quiz or exam.

5. Students are not allowed to use books or any other documents, whether made by me or another person, on the quizzes or exams.

6. Students can only have the quiz or exam up in their browsers. No other windows or tabs are allowed for use.

7. Students may not have a phone on their person or their bags during a quiz or exam. All phones must be placed at the front of the room, away from the student's station.
8. Students may not talk or look at another computer beyond their own during the quiz or exam.
9. Students may not leave the room until they have completed the quiz or exam that they are working on. There are no breaks during our exams.
10. If a student breaks an exam rule, s/he may be warned. In cases where the rule has been broken and an attempt at cheating has clearly been spotted, the student will receive a zero for the exam. The instructor may use his discretion as to whether the rule breaking warrants a warning or a zero.
11. This list is not comprehensive; any further written instructions given to the student during the quiz or exam also apply and are subject to a warning or a zero.

**On Plagiarism:**

1. Students that plagiarize will be contacted via email with a clear message about what was plagiarized, including links to the plagiarized material. Students will receive a zero for any plagiarized essays with no opportunity to make up their work.
2. Students should cite ALL words and ideas that they take from another source to avoid plagiarism. If you only added it to your work because you saw it elsewhere, CITE IT.
3. Students who plagiarize or cheat on an exam twice will be failed in the course immediately.

**On Incompletes:**

1. Students may receive an incomplete if a) they have completed all work except for the final exam and final draft, and b) they have two forms of proof of illness [hospital bill, doctor’s note, etc.] or sudden financial burden [eviction note, notice of job loss, etc.] that they can show to illustrate a sudden burden that does not allow them to complete the work in a timely manner.
2. Students will be responsible for getting the incomplete form signed within two weeks of their declaration for an incomplete grade.
3. The instructor and student must come to an agreement on the specific schedule by which the student will complete the remaining work within two weeks of the assignment – this agreement must be agreed to in writing via email.
4. Students must then stay in contact with the instructor over the following quarter to complete the class. Students who do not complete the class according to the agreed-upon schedule will revert to the GPA that they had achieved prior to the incomplete.

**On the Student/Instructor Relationship:**

1. Please remember that, while I am excited to know and work with you, my role is as your instructor and not your friends or family. This means that, while I totally understand your need to vent, complain, or even to whine at times about your classes in general or this class in particular, you should do so with the proper people such as friends and family.
2. I do not re-grade material in regards to the grading of content. If I made a mathematical mistake, on the other hand, please point it out immediately.
3. Please note that I can only grade your work as you present it. While I understand and empathize that you may need this course to move on in your classes, I cannot grade you based on your needs (or on how much I like you personally).
4. Please ask me questions. If your question is answered by the syllabus, I will direct you here. If not, I will be glad to answer. Please send emails via Canvas using the Inbox link to the left of
the classroom.

5. When you do email me, please use full sentences and proper spelling and punctuation. Remember that you are writing emails in an academic setting rather than text messages to a friend. I may ask you to re-write your email if it uses text-speak or other shorthand.

6. Please know that I will work hard for you because I understand how much work most students put into the course. I will try to respond to emails within 24 hours M-TH. F-SU, however, I will be checking email less regularly and I do not answer emails on Saturday at all. Keep this in mind when sending questions over.

7. I reserve the right not to answer emails that are inflammatory or otherwise inappropriate.

8. If you have concerns, please email me with them. Having documentation is helpful.

9. I reserve the right to record any of our group/class interactions as well as any of our one-on-one interactions. Recordings will never be shared with other students without your permission, but they may be shared with administration in the remote chance of a dispute.

FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions

Students often have recurring questions for me. I would like to try and anticipate some of the questions that you likewise might have after reading this syllabus. The common questions that students ask me are written below in italics; my response is written in bold.

Q. All those reading quizzes and discussions take time, not to mention the essay writing! Why is this class so packed?

A. One of my past students was struggling with the pacing of the course. He let me know this and then stated that he understood that my schedule was meant to punish the weak and inefficient (or words to that effect).

He had a fundamental misunderstanding of why the schedule is what it is.

I have no interest in punishing you. I probably like you quite a lot, actually. I definitely want you to enjoy the wonder of thinking, arguing, researching, and crafting well-developed thoughts and positions. Even if you don't like English (and I can't convert ALL of you, no matter how hard I try), I do want you to develop these important skills that will make your life easier as you move on in your college career. Purposely punishing you doesn't achieve ANY of these goals in an effective manner.

The schedule is packed because you have to be comfortable with these different skills that I listed above. To write effectively, you must read effectively. To read effectively, you must know how to find the most reliable information to read. To write and read effectively in conjunction together, you have to get practice in developing clear and sometimes complex thoughts about what you have read.

Some of you may be strong in these areas, but I find that increasingly, students didn't get these skills from K-12 learning. Others had these skills, but left them to rust for too long and need to re-polish them. They are vital skills, and it falls upon me to help you develop them.

Furthermore, as I said above, we have precious few weeks (and even fewer in the summer). This creates space in the schedule where you will have quite a bit to do.
I am not insensitive to this; I tried where I could to lessen the load a bit. However, when you feel tempted to complain (and believe me that I do understand and empathize with your stress levels), do remember that you are a college student. This means something; you are at a point in your life where you want to expand your mind and your skills. That takes study, and sometimes intense study. You have chosen to improve yourself in numerous ways; don't be scared of the hard work that it takes in order to do this!

Q. How do you grade? Are you a hard grader or an easy one?

A. I grade based on rubrics. I want to standardize the grading so that you know why you have earned the score that you have earned. This way, you know that you got a fair shake. If you do what is asked of you on the rubrics, you score highly. If not, you might score lower than you hoped. The rubrics will be available to you on Canvas in numerous places including the Files section of the class so that you can examine them before you write an essay or do a presentation. In terms of your exams, I offer a points breakdown within the exam questions themselves unless the questions are multiple choice or matching, in which case there is a single answer and thus no need for a rubric.

Q. So if I get a 72.9%, I don't pass the class, but if I get a 73%, I do? One measly tenth of a percent is the difference between passing and failing?

A. The grade scale (which is the very last thing in this syllabus) is based off of Washington's grade scale. Because of the whole 4.0 scale, I had to figure out how to make it work mathematically. I asked other instructors and used their scales as a basis for my scale. This means that, as you go down each rung on the grade scale, from 4.0 to 3.9 to 3.8 and so on, the way that it corresponds most sensibly is by single percentage points.

Unfortunately, there needs to be a cut-off point between passing and failing, and the above listed score is the cut-off point. In order to be fair, your percentage at the end of the course is your percentage. I do not raise any grades; again, this is to be fair and to avoid being accused of unfairness because I raised some grades but not others.

Q. So will I REALLY need to know most of this stuff for future classes?

A. Yes. I promise. Some students are suspicious of what they learn; this is because instructors also have different things that they care about. For example, I'll teach you how to write an abstract for an APA paper. However, you'll find that some instructors might not care about whether or not you write an abstract for the APA-styled papers that you write in THEIR class. In this class, I'll try my best to teach you the standards and then let you know where teachers might deviate a bit and look for something alternative to what I'm teaching you. Rest assured, however, that I am giving you the real, true basics that you will need to know to write strong academic papers.

Q. Can you help me with my paper that I'm writing for my psychology class?
A. No matter what other class you are writing this for, my answer is no. This isn't because I secretly don’t care about you and want you to fail, but because I am working multiple jobs and generally have precious little time to give feedback on the work that I assign, much less the work of another instructor. I encourage you to go to the Student Learning Center (location and hours in the College Services section) if you would like to get a little bit of outside help.

Q. Well, what about the paper that I'm writing for your class?

A. Absolutely! Oh, with one catch; students often just toss their paper at me and ask me to check it. I think that this doesn't encourage you to think enough about your writing, your strategies, and what you are trying to achieve. I only ask students to share what specifically they are working on, what they perceive to be a potential issue with it, and what they are trying to achieve. While working on big chunks of your writing is not necessarily possible via email, we will have time in class to work on our writing, and I am always free to come sit down with you and give you advice!

Q. If we’re such responsible and adult college students, why do you still take attendance?

A. Good question. Actually, I’ve tested with not taking attendance, but each time I’ve done it, a sizeable number of students have missed classes or left early so often that they ended up torching their own grades. I think that it's best to leave the structure of being incentivized for attending via points in place for now.

Q. What's up with the recordings of classes and conversations?

A. This is simply to keep a record of conversations. Sometimes, students come up to me and say, “Remember when you said I/we/the class could...” and I really honestly do not. I have quite a lot going on. Sometimes, it's nice to be able to check the record. I emphasize that unless in the unlikely chance of a dispute, I will never play, share, or send any recordings that you are a part of without your permission.

Q. Are all the quizzes and exams really open note?

A. Yes. This is a decision that I made after thinking long and hard about HOW I wanted you to learn in this class. The notes that you take will almost never outright give you the answer to our exam questions; however, they will help you to figure out what the best answer might be. I don't just want you to memorize a bunch of terms that you can spit back at me on an exam and then forget as soon as you leave class; I want you to understand those terms and how they connect together. Most of all, I want you to be able to apply your knowledge so that you can solve problems, make your writing stronger, and figure out what people mean in their writing. The truth is (at least in my experience), “real world jobs” are fine with you taking and using notes as long as you use those notes to come to the right answer and get the job done. I want to mirror this and get you used to taking notes and then being able to read and apply the information that you wrote down in an effective manner.
Q. What do I need to do in order to pass this class?

A. Of course, you need to show an understanding of the skills that we work on developing in class. Beyond that, I do think that you need three things which I notice are characteristics that successful students in my courses tend to have:

1. Good time management and scheduling skills: Trying to write a three-page paper in one day while also completing reading so that you can take a quiz and also squeeze the discussion post in by the end of the day is not a good idea. It makes students overwhelmed and sometimes starts them on a path upon which they run perpetually behind, never really catch up, and become discouraged.

   Students that break apart their work and schedule it so that they do a little each day tend to do much better in my courses. Those students also do not leave everything for the deadline day; they'll get some things (discussion posts most specifically) completed days before the drop-dead date. Really, staying on top of discussions and the essays themselves tend to be the difference between an A and a C (and a C and an F) in my classes, I've noticed.

   Missing class regularly is also a key indicator of someone who might struggle. My strongest students are usually on time most of the time and in class pretty much each day.

2. Comfort with essay writing in general and sentence structure, punctuation, and grammar on Day One are crucial. Sometimes, I get students that probably would be more comfortable in English 100. They have very few skills of sentence structure, let alone essay development. You shouldn't necessarily be a master of the academic essay or researching or arguing yet – that's what this class is for – but you should have a sense of a few of the basics.

3. Finally, your attitude. BE POSITIVE. That's a big, big thing, and it seems so trite or corny to students, but it's true. Students come in and get down on themselves easily. Look, this class SHOULD be at least a little challenging to you because you are learning something that you don't have a strong grasp on yet. If you did, you'd be bored here and overqualified for this course.

   Students will sometimes say, “This course is hard.” Well, I don't like that word as a descriptor of the course. The same goes for the word “difficult.” What advantage is it to me to make a course intentionally difficult for you? There is no sense in that. On the other hand, this course WILL challenge you to think, read, write, and explore ideas in ways that maybe you haven't done very much in the past, and it should.

   Coming in to class with a negative demeanor does nothing for you. It doesn't put you in the mindset to learn. Students who get down on themselves almost seem to self-fulfill their own struggles.

   It's also important that you come here ready to learn. I hope that you come here WANTING to learn. Students that are naturally curious tend to do the best of all in my courses. However, at least come to class with the mindset that you are here to get a job done (that job being the development of the skills that you need to write, read, and think at a college level). Sometimes, students come in to class thinking that they can go half-speed. This can get you into trouble.

   If you're here to be positive and to learn, it doesn't guarantee that you'll get the grade that you want, but it goes a long, long way.
Q. So, can I use my ability to point out these fallacies you showed us to win all my arguments at home?

A. That's like half the point of me teaching them to you!

If there are any questions that you have, but didn't see answered here, please ask me in person or via email!

Grade scale:

The grade scale is as follows. Note that you must earn a full tenth of a point to move your grade level up. For example, a 93.7% would be a 4.0 for the class. A 73.5% would be a 2.0. I do not round up.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.0 – 93% or higher</td>
<td>2.9 – 82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.9 – 92%</td>
<td>2.8 - 81%</td>
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<td>3.8 – 91%</td>
<td>2.7 – 80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 – 84%</td>
<td>2.0 – 73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 – 83%</td>
<td>1.9 - 72%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That's (finally) all! Let's have a great class together! If you have any further questions about the information in the syllabus, please email me via Canvas!