

# Course Syllabus

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## Course Information

### Course Description

In this course, students develop and practice college level writing skills associated with effective performance in SNL courses and SNL assignments. SNL students focus on writing to achieve competence. Students review and apply the essentials of good writing by identifying and building on their particular strengths and improving their work in problem areas. In addition to receiving individual feedback and guidance from the instructor on grammar, development and use of outlines, and using the ideas of sources to formulate arguments, students learn to give feedback on writing to one another.

To get started, students will write a few paragraphs of introduction. As course assignments, learners will produce two written projects: a 3-page essay, and a 5-page research paper. Students in *College Writing* will also do extensive work in editing and rewriting to meet course goals.

Unlike other college courses, however, there are no in class gatherings. During this course, students and the instructor will exchange all papers, assignments and other correspondence via the course website and the World Wide Web.

### Course Learning Goals

To successfully complete this course, you will need to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of college level writing skill. To achieve college level writing skill you will be able to do the following:

#### **Analyze the audience and purpose of written communication.**

- Identify the essential components of a college research paper.
- Employ techniques to plan for writing a college research paper.

#### **Write to explain, describe, and persuade.**

- Make progress in writing skill.
- Develop a strong and appropriate thesis statement.
- Develop a coherent and complete essay.

#### **Generate appropriate ideas and details in well-developed and well-supported paragraphs.**

- Identify appropriate source materials.

- Incorporate relevant evidence to support writing.
- Use proper documentation style to support written work.

### **Employ tools of Standard English usage and mechanics.**

- Identify proper sentence structure, paragraph development, topic sentences, introductory, and concluding paragraphs.
- Effectively revise and edit written work.

## **Course Resources**

### **Required Texts**

Hacker, Diane. A Writer's Reference, 5th edition, Bedford/St. Martin's, Boston, 2003.

Peterson, Linda H and John C. Brereton. The Norton Reader: An Anthology of Nonfiction, Shorter 11th Eleventh W.W. Norton & Co. Edition, 2003. ISBN: 0393978079

It is also recommended that students acquire a college level dictionary and a thesaurus.

### **Web Resources**

DePaul University Writing Center  
[www.depaul.edu/~writing](http://www.depaul.edu/~writing)

Modern Language Association website:  
[www.mla.org/style\\_faq](http://www.mla.org/style_faq)

APA website—  
[www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org)

DePaul Library Citation Guides  
[http://www.lib.depaul.edu/eresource/infotype\\_subject\\_search.asp?MaterialID=8](http://www.lib.depaul.edu/eresource/infotype_subject_search.asp?MaterialID=8)

## **Course Competence**

College Writing addresses the following competence:

**L-4:** Can write clearly and fluently.

1. the audience and purpose of written communication.
2. Writes to explain, describe, and persuade.
3. appropriate ideas and details in well-developed and well-supported paragraphs.
4. Employs tools of Standard English usage and mechanics.

## **Course Structure**

This course consists of nine modules. Each module is designed to provide specific information about college writing techniques. You will use this study guide, the required textbooks, handouts and weekly discussions to guide your

progress throughout the quarter. Each week, you will receive at least one email from your instructor with more detailed information about the week's assignments. This email will also announce the module's discussion board(s) and *required* participation in the forum(s).

In this course, in addition to participation in web forums, you will produce a short personal introduction, a persuasive essay, and a research paper over the ten-week quarter. You will introduce yourself to the class in your first assignment. Your teacher will provide you with a topic. In the persuasive essay, you will seek to convince an audience about your opinion on a given subject. In the research paper, you will call upon the ideas of experts to support a given idea. Topics for these two assignments will be taken from the course text, the *Norton Reader*. These types of writing will help you prepare for the academic writing that will be expected of you during your undergraduate degree program. Additionally, you are expected to participate on a weekly basis in the online discussion forums.

Your instructor will provide weekly feedback by email on your writing assignments. Additionally, your instructor will post discussion items to the online forums for your review and comment. It is important that you actively participate in these online discussions.

There is a forum set up to allow you to ask questions at any time about writing; it is appropriately entitled *General Writing Questions*. You are welcome to contact your instructor by email or phone to ask questions; however, by posting questions, you may assist your classmates who have similar questions. You are encouraged to post to this forum.

The criteria used to grade each assignment are described in the Course Grading Criteria section.

**To view the course schedule, click on the Schedule link on the left-hand navigation bar. This page contains the most recently updated listing of the topics and assignments due for each week of the course.**

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## Assessment

### Course Grading Criteria

College Writing is a Pass/Fail class. However, you have the option of taking the course for a letter grade. If you wish to take the course for a letter grade, you must inform your instructor in writing by the end of the second week of class. Once you commit to taking the course for a letter grade, you cannot switch back to Pass/Fail.

1. L4 competence: Can write clearly and fluently.
  1. Analyzes the audience and purpose of written communication.
  2. Writes to explain, describe, and persuade.
  3. Generates appropriate ideas and details in well-developed, well-supported paragraphs.
  4. Employs tools of Standard English usage and mechanics.

#### **Core Competence: *LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE***

Can assess and revise one's own writing

Can elicit and use feedback from others to improve one's writing

#### **Core Competence: *COMMUNICATION***

Can apply a process model of expository writing at college level

Can demonstrate college level competence in narrative and expository writing

Can incorporate and cite ideas using appropriate sources

#### **Core Competence: *DECISION MAKING***

Can select appropriate themes and expressions that demonstrate concepts and ideas to others.

2. Participate regularly in online course discussions: Please also note that the above list will also be assessed via online course discussions. In order to pass the course, you must post responses to the Discussion Board.
3. Submit work according to scheduled due dates : Acceptance of late work is up to the discretion of the instructor. That is, if your work is not submitted on time, the instructor is under no obligation to accept it.

Although you will be grading on the above criteria, your instructor will also be looking for progress in your writing over the course of the quarter. As mentioned in the beginning of the book, writing is process. Throughout the process, you should progress in your writing and your ability to identify college level writing skill.

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## Policies

### Academic Integrity

DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu/homehandbook.html> for further details.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
- Copying of any source in whole or part with only minor changes in wording or syntax, even with acknowledgement.
- Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
- The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

Plagiarism, like other forms of academic dishonesty, is always a serious matter. If a instructor finds that a student has plagiarized, the appropriate penalty is at the instructor's discretion.

### Disability Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis. The Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) determines appropriate accommodations through consultation with the student. For certain learning disabilities and/or attention deficit disorders, the Productive Learning Strategies Program (PLuS) determines the appropriate accommodations. See the instructor for more information or call OSD at 773-325-7290 (phone) or 773-325-7296 (TTY); or call PLuS at 773-325-1677.

### Incomplete Grades

The intent of the Incomplete grade is to allow students extra time to complete their final assignments. This need arises because, in the closing weeks of the course, they have an event of significant magnitude that adversely affects their ability to complete the course, e.g. serious illness, death in the family, overseas deployment, or natural disaster.

You must request an incomplete grade in writing two weeks before the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades will be considered only after you have satisfactorily completed at least 75 percent of the coursework, and you have such an unexpected, uncontrollable event that prevents you from completing your course. Do not assume that you will qualify for an incomplete. Students who are failing the course at the point where they request an incomplete will not receive one, nor will they be granted after the end of the quarter. Incomplete grades are given at the discretion of the instructor.

you do receive permission from the instructor to take an incomplete in the course, you will be required to complete a contract with the instructor, specifying how you will finish the missing work within the next two quarters (excluding summer). Incompletes not finished by the end of the second quarter (excluding summer) will automatically become an F grade on your transcript.

Instructors may not change incomplete grades after the end of the grace period without the permission of a college-based Exceptions Committee.

NOTE: In the case of a student who has applied for graduation and who has been approved for an Incomplete in his or her final term, the incomplete must be resolved within the four week grace period before final degree certification.

## Protection of Human Subjects

For more information see: <http://research.depaul.edu/>

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Demonstrating the acquisition of competences in this course can involve “interactions”—interviewing and or observing other people—discussing those interviews or observations with other class members and writing them up in one or more final report(s). As such, these activities qualify as “research” with “human subjects” and are subject to University and Federal guidelines. Because it takes place in the context of this course, your research is exempt from approval by the School for New Learning’s Local Review Board only under the following conditions:

1. The information you collect is EXCLUSIVELY for the purpose of classroom discussion and will NOT be used after the term is over. If there is any possibility that you will EVER use it in further research or for publication, you must obtain approval from the Local Review Board before you begin.
2. You assess and ensure that no “harm”—physical, mental, or social—does or could result from either your interviews and/or observations or your discussion and/or reports.
3. The privacy and confidentiality of those that you interview or observe must be protected. Unless you receive specific permission, in writing, from the person(s) you interview or observe, please change their names, and make sure that their identity cannot be readily ascertained from the information you provide.
  - a. If you want to use real names and relationships, they must sign an “informed consent” document. For information on creating an “informed consent document” see, for example, <http://www.research.umn.edu/consent>.

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## Course Expectations

## Time Management and Attendance

SNL's online courses are not self-paced and require a regular time commitment EACH week throughout the quarter.

You are required to log in to your course at least four times a week so that you can participate in the ongoing course discussions.

Online courses are no less time consuming than "face to face" courses. You will have to dedicate some time every day or at least every second day to your studies. A typical four credit hour "face to face" course at SNL involves three hours of classroom meeting per week, plus at least three to six hours of study and homework per week.

course will require at least the same time commitment, but your learning activities will be spread out through the week. If you have any problems with your technology, or if you need to improve your reading or writing skills, it may take even longer.

The instructor should be notified if your life events do not allow you to participate in the course and the online discussions for more than one week. This is particularly important when there are group discussions or you are working as part of a team.

If you find yourself getting behind, please contact the instructor immediately.

## Your Instructor's Role

instructor's role in this course is that of a discussion facilitator and learning advisor. It is not their responsibility to make sure you log in regularly and submit your assignments. As instructor, s/he will read all postings to the general discussion forums on a daily basis but may not choose to respond to each posting. You will receive feedback to assignments.

The instructor may choose to designate "office hours" when s/he will be online and available and will immediately respond to questions. Depending on the instructor, this response may be by e-mail, instant messenger or telephone. Otherwise, you will generally receive a response to emailed or posted queries within 48 hours.

## Your Role as a Student

As an online student, you will be taking a proactive approach to your learning. As the course instructor's role is that of a learning guide, your role is that of the leader in your own learning.

You will be managing your own time so that you can complete the readings, activities and assignments for the course, and you will also be expected to take a more active role in peer learning.

## Helpful Hints

- learning affords students great flexibility. However, many distance students find it helpful to schedule concrete times each week to focus on coursework. We suggest you mark time for College Writing on your calendar.
- For security reasons, the discussion board software may time out after 20 minutes if there has been no activity. It is best for you to draft and save your responses and contributions elsewhere and then post them into the discussion board after you have completed and reviewed them.
- should feel free to contact your instructor by email or phone to ask specific questions about the course, your assignments and so on.
- If you would like to know a little bit more about your instructor's background and experience, you can visit the Course Instructor link when you log into this website.
- Given today's technology and the use of technology in distance education, it is expected that you submit work that

has been reviewed for misspellings. Please remember to do this before submitting any work to the discussion board or to your instructor.

- Get to know any special tools available on your computer processing software that will enhance your ability to recognize misspellings, mistakes with grammar and style.
- As you continue to write throughout this quarter, you may find that you write best in certain situations. Keeping in mind when you write most clearly could prove to be a helpful technique as you move forward in your academic program.
- Although this is not a research class, you will be required to demonstrate a basic knowledge of use of source materials in your writing. As a result, you must avoid plagiarism and give credit to others' thoughts, ideas, and research. You will study more thorough research practices in SNL's required course Research Seminar.
- the purposes of this class, your teacher and your classmates will be your audience. This does not necessarily mean that they will review all of your work, however, they will review some of your writing. For this reason, you should consider the level of knowledge your readers will have about your subject matter. For example, you can assume that everyone in your audience is 24 years of age or older, is an adult, has had significant life experience and is engaged in the process of developing college level writing skill.
- In addition to the material you find in this book, your instructor will not only provide detailed edits on each of your submissions but will also provide additional examples of module exercises when needed. You should ensure that you review the edits and comments provided by your instructor and incorporate them into any subsequent assignment.

## How To Do Well In This Class

This section provides a few hints on how to do well in this class:

1. Participate in class discussions. The class discussions and homework exercises are worth a large percentage of your grade. Most modules ask you to post an opinion and include a follow-up. Don't miss the follow-up posting.
2. Don't fall behind – In general once a discussion is graded its over. Don't think you can post discussion items several weeks after they are graded and expect credit. The class has moved on and it is difficult for course administrators to find your postings after it has been graded.
3. Read the assignments carefully. If the assignment says answer three questions, then answer three. If it says use APA research paper style then find out what that style is and use it.
4. Email questions. When you have any questions, email your instructor. If your instructor posts a question to you then answer it (it often means your instructor cannot find an assignment of yours).
5. Submit all assignments by the specified Due Date.

## Final Note

Participating in SNL courses can be an enriching, rewarding experience, and a chance to share ideas in a safe environment.

Some difficulties at the beginning of an online course are quite normal; solving them is part of every distance learning experience.

Enjoy your journey into lifelong learning!

## Credits

This course was designed and produced by Andrea Spreter and staff at the Center for Distance Education of the School for New Learning of DePaul University. Revision, Fall 2005 by Betta LaSordo.

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