

Fall 2019

# HUM 101-047: Writing, Speaking, Thinking I

William O'Sullivan

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**HUM 101 - English Composition: Writing, Speaking, Thinking I (3-0-3)****Course Information**

Course: HUM 101 - English Composition: Writing, Speaking, & Thinking I

Course Dates: September 3 to December 10, 2019

Prerequisite: Permission of the Humanities Department required. Entrance is determined by placement score or completion of Hum 099 with a grade of C or better.

Required Follow-up Course: HUM102

**Instructor Information**

William O'Sullivan

Office: Cullimore 115

Office Hours: Thursday 2:00--4:00 P.M.; Friday 4:00--6:00 P.M.

Friday: 4:00 P.M -6:00 P.M.

Please email or call to confirm appointment.

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Email: [osulliva@njit.edu](mailto:osulliva@njit.edu)

Humanities Office : 431 Cullimore (drop off late papers with secretary)

**Assigned Course Texts (Print Editions Required)**

Cohen, *50 Essays, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.*, Bedford/St. Martins.

Hacker, *Pocket Style Manual, 8th Ed.* Bedford/St. Martin's,

NJIT, *Introduction to Academic Writing (Custom)*. Fountainhead.

St. Exupéry, Antoine de , *Wind Sand and Stars*. Harcourt.

**A- Course Learning Objectives**

## **I- Knowledge & Comprehension**

Most of us like to read. What we don't like is being told what to read and then having to answer questions about what we've read especially when the text didn't particularly interest us. Why then did English teachers inflict this unpleasantness upon us in high school? Why will they continue to torture us in NJIT? Are they sadists?

## **II- Analysis**

"I don't know nothin' about art," says the tycoon. "But I know what I like." We all know a "good" movie when we see one, but few of us examine the reasons we think it's "good"; in fact, we're more likely to do this with a movie we don't like. "If it works, don't ask why" seems to be our approach, so why do Humanities teachers bedevil us with questions about "why" an essay or a short story or a poem "works"?

## **III- Application**

Several weeks into the course, the instructor begins to ask even more onerous questions which require that we apply to new texts what we have already learned about how texts operate. We find that this approach is very effective in some cases and makes us better readers; in other cases, however, it goes nowhere and seems like a dead end.

## **IV- Synthesis**

Horror of horrors! The teacher now demands that we take what we've learned and produce a text of our own.

## **V- Evaluation**

a- Peer review: before we submit our text for the instructor's judgment, we'll exchange essays with our neighbors and comment on the strengths and weaknesses of their efforts. UGH! Students often have difficulty separating the essay from the person who wrote it. Not wishing to offend, they append comments such as "Very good" and "I liked it" without pointing out the reasons why it was so good or why they found it entertaining or informative. What does the statement, "I liked it" truly mean when applied to any essay? While well-intentioned, such comments are not really helpful to the student writer. Try to remember that essay we read is not the person. When we judge an essay, we are not judging the person. If an essay lacks a thesis, is poorly organized, ends abruptly without any conclusion, we might be justified in saying, "this essay leaves a lot to be desired" or less politely "this essay stinks!" Remember, this does not mean the student "stinks." That's another topic altogether! When commenting on an essay, try to think in larger terms such as "organization," "thesis," "support," and "logical development." If the essay lacks paragraphs, you might want to mention that under "organization" and if there are unclear sections or *non-sequiturs* relate this to "logical development." Avoid correcting particular instances of grammar and punctuation although you might mention that there are problems in those areas.

(1) *Positive criticism* is essentially analysis that helps the student writer improve a particular text and maybe his or her overall approach to writing; remember it has nothing to do with morality or personality or whether you like the writer. Perhaps, the reason students (and the rest of us) often have problems engaging in *positive criticism* is based on family experience.

Let's face it: in the typical family, almost everything becomes "personal" and it frequently seems impossible to make a negative judgment about some act of a family member without it being misconstrued as an attack on the person; sometimes it may seem that family members are just looking for excuses to criticize each other, which, unfortunately, they very well may be!

b- the instructor's role: handing in our papers, we can imagine the teacher sharpening up that nasty old red pencil. Some days later, we get our paper back and are disappointed that there's no grade on the top of the first page. In place of a mark, we find the word REVISE in capitals. We're told we have to rewrite the paper taking the instructor's comments and corrections into account. We're either happy because we did a rush job in the first place or we're a bit upset or even angry because we thought we did a really good job. Now, we have to judge our first effort objectively and undertake whatever re-organization, re-writing, and revision necessary to improve it.

### **B- Core Competencies/ Required Skills**

This course focuses on developing written and oral communication skills that students will use within and beyond NJIT. It emphasizes acquiring the tools necessary for writing expository and research essays; preparing oral reports; drafting, revising, editing; evaluation and proper documentation of source material; and using rhetorical strategies such as narration and argument. Students will learn to communicate with a variety of audiences in personal, academic, and professional settings. Teamwork and collaboration will be cultivated.

### **C- The Vital Importance of the Reader**

This course approaches the art or craft of writing through reading. The operative theory here, substantiated by experience, is that the more college-level material a student reads the better s/he is able to write, again at the college level. Most of the reading and writing demanded in this course falls under the heading of "expository prose," i.e., prose which attempts to explain, analyze and, sometimes, persuade. Good expository writing requires time, concentration, patience and practice. The same is true of reading expository texts. Thus, the course readings demand *active* engagement on the student's part. It is hoped that they will stimulate the intellect and pique student interest. Jean Paul Sartre, the French philosopher, novelist and playwright, remarked that the writing process is not complete until the text is read and understood by the reader. Indeed, he maintained that *a text has only a potential existence and depends on the reader to truly come to life*. Consequently, it is incumbent upon the student not to short circuit, undercut, or sabotage the reading process in any fashion. The best time for a student to read is when s/he is rested, alert, and in suitably quiet surroundings. Simultaneous aural or visual stimulation works against thorough comprehension. A college level, hard cover dictionary is a helpful companion in the process. It should be consulted as needed. Remember. An excellent and expanding vocabulary is the toolbox of analysis, conceptualization, informed speculation, and all forms of advanced thinking.

In addition to the standard readings, this course will incorporate additional essays of literary/historical, scientific, political and intellectual interest

Along with reading actively, our goals are to learn how to think critically and write clearly and proficiently for a variety of potential audiences. The course will focus on three types of exposition: writing to share experience; writing to analyze; and writing to persuade. The first type of writing forces students to examine an experience and then to develop a strategy to best express and articulate it; the second requires that they provide a logically structured examination and interpretation of a text or an experiment or a survey; and the third requires that they convince an audience of the validity of an argument and perhaps to pursue a certain course of action. Some assignments, including a group report and presentation and a course portfolio, offer the students the opportunity to learn how to present their work to the public.

## **D- Course Features:**

### **I- Moodle**

The online course management system, including sample assignments and links to other on-line course components, is Moodle. Consistent with the course's primary aim to introduce students to professional writing for electronic as well as print-based environments, this class features readings and assignments organized for both screen and page. Class sessions will meet each week for a combination of lecture, seminar and workshop activities. All out-of-class work will be distributed via Moodle. See <http://moodle.njit.edu/> to access the Moodle course page and to learn more.

### **II- Writing Diagnostics**

At the start of the semester students will be required to write a short in-class essay that will be used to determine their writing level. The results will be classified into two general categories: upper level and lower level. Students scoring in the lower level are *required* to visit the Communication Studio for ongoing tutoring sessions. A diagnostic essay will be repeated at the end of the semester to determine each student's improvement.

### **III- The Writing Center**

The NJIT Writing Center is available for one-hour, individual appointments with professional writing instructors. This resource is intended to help you to improve your communication and writing skills. Tutor/Advisors can help you plan assignments, improve your writing, refine an essay or multimedia project, and with other communication-based needs. Sign up online at <http://humanities.njit.edu/commstudio/index.php> or drop by the Studio, located in the Basement of the Central/King Building to sign up for an appointment and learn more about how we can help you.

## **E- Course Requirements & Grades\***

Attendance/Participation

10

Written Homework Assignments/Quizzes	20
Writing as Experience Essay (all stages)	15
Writing to Analyze Essay (all stages)	25
Persuasive Essay (all stages)	30
Total	100*

\*90-100 will equal an "A"; 85-89 = "B+"; 80-84 = "B"; 75-79 = "C+"; 70-74 = "C"; 60-69 = "D"; 59 and below will constitute an "F".

\*\*N.B. ALL written work including various drafts of essays, homework, debate notes etc. should also be kept in a hard copy portfolio; this hard copy version will be inspected at the end of the semester. NJIT folders are available in the campus bookstore and should be used to hold the portfolio material .

### **F- Writing as a Process**

Each assignment will be drafted and revised in detail before it is presented either in written or oral form. The draft serves as a prerequisite to the final submitted copy; therefore, if drafts are not submitted, then the final assignment will not be accepted. This course relies on the process of reviewing drafts via peer review (in class and on-line) and, as such, students should expect to share their work, and to provide constructive feedback to fellow students for the duration of the course. We'll try to start the writing process in class as much as possible.

N.B. All essays must be typed (Times New Roman 12) with the student's name, section, the instructor's name, and the number and draft number of the paper in the upper left corner of the first page. As an aid to reader comprehension, each essay should be given a title. An example of the proper format is as follows:

*Jane Schiff*  
*HUM 101 019\_*  
*Prof. O'Sullivan*  
*Essay III*  
*Draft #2*

*Tattoos and Social Class in Mahwah, New Jersey*

### **G- Academic Integrity**

Each student in HUM 101 is required to sign the Honor Code Agreement. The URL for

University Code on Academic Integrity: <http://integrity.njit.edu>.

## **H- Attendance and Participation**

All students are expected to attend all regularly scheduled classes. See the NJIT attendance policy: <http://www.njit.edu/registrar/policies/attendancepolicy.php>

Since HUM 101 is a required course, a maximum of four absences for illness is permitted. This equals two weeks of class time and is quite generous. Students who are hospitalized or ill for an extended period should make sure that the instructor as well as the Dean of Students is apprised of the situation. Excessive absences will result in a failing grade. Students who expect to miss classes or exams because of religious observances must submit to their instructors, by the end of the second week of classes, a written list of dates that will be missed. Students are expected to make up missed work. Lateness is also to be avoided. Since late entry disturbs the class, chronic lateness will result in a lowered grade.

Each class will offer students the opportunity to discuss reading assignments, homework and essay topics. Following this format, 10 percent of the final grade will be based on both the frequency and quality of the student's comments, questions and observations. The quality will be determined by, among other factors, the relevance, insight and clarity of remarks..

## **I- Late Penalty**

All assignments are to be submitted on or before the specified deadline. The standard late policy is 5% per day. The instructor reserves the right to refuse any assignment submitted more than one week late.

**J- Weekly Course Schedule: All selections below are from *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology* except those marked (H) which are "handouts" and those from *Wind, Sand & Stars***

### **Audience (Weeks 1 – 5) (9/3 -10/4)**

Goals: sharing experience; understanding of voice and audience

Diagnostic Essay (in class)

Essay Assignment: Writing as Experience Essay

Readings:

Baldwin, "Notes of a Native Son"

Cofer, "The Myth of the Latin Woman"

Mairs, "On Being a Cripple"

Rose, "I Wanna Be Average"

Tan, "Mother Tongue"

White, "Once More to the Lake."

### **Analysis (Weeks 6 –8) (10/7-10/25)**

Goals: understanding through inquiry and analysis; writing process including brainstorming, outlines, organizing ideas

Essay Assignment: Writing to Analyze Essay

Readings:

Angier, "Unscrambling the Egg" (H)

\_\_\_\_\_, "The Mosaic Imagination" (H)

Mukherjee, "Two Ways to Belong in America"

Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant"

Staples, "Just Walk on by: Black Men and Public Space"

### **Persuasion and Reporting (Weeks 8 – 11) (10/29-11/22)**

Goals: supporting your opinion, knowing your audience, understanding points of view

Writing Assignment: Persuasive Essay

Readings:

Carson, "The Obligation to Endure"

Ehrenreich, "Serving in Florida"

Gould, "Sex, Drugs, Disasters, and the Extinction of Dinosaurs"

St. Exupéry, *Wind, Sand & Stars*

### **(Weeks 12 –15) (11/26- 12/10)**

**[N.B. Wednesday 11/27 follows a Friday schedule!**

**Thanksgiving Holiday: Thursday/Friday 11/28 & 29]**

Last Day of NJIT Classes: 12/12

Reading Day: Friday 12/13 *Anmat!* (Coligny Calendar)

No final exam! Sorry!

INCIPIANT SATURNALIA!