ENGL 118: COLLEGE WRITING DEVELOPMENT
SYLLABUS

Almost all good writing begins with terrible first efforts. You need to start somewhere. Start by getting something—anything—down on paper. A friend of mine says that the first draft is the down draft—you just get it down. The second draft is the up draft—you fix it up. You try to say what you have to say more accurately. And the third draft is the dental draft, where you check every tooth, to see if it’s lose or cramped or decayed, or even, God help us, healthy.

-- Anne Lamont, Bird by Bird


Dictionary (paperback).

MATERIALS: Always come to class prepared with paper, pens, pencils, and texts.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: ENGL 118, College Writing Development, is a course for improving the student’s ability to express ideas and feelings effectively in college-level, expository essays. Through continual writing practice, students will improve their skills in observation, fluency, organization, and revision, as well as other parts of the writing process. Students will learn to analyze a variety of texts with an emphasis on non-fiction.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Welcome to English 118! To improve your ability to effectively express and generate ideas for college level writing assignments; write paragraphs with unity, substance, and clarity; develop a polished thesis statement clearly postulating the central idea of an essay; develop an essay with paragraphs in logical sequence culminating in a logical conclusion; develop paragraphs and essays with sufficient detail; understand and participate in the writing process; use effective and correctly structured sentences and varied patterns; identify and correct common grammatical errors; implement and identify common rhetorical modes; develop critical thinking skills.

ASSIGNMENTS and REVISIONS: There are eight (8) graded assignments, including the final exam. You are also graded on peer editing; it is part of the grade of each paper. Overall participation and attendance is graded. Excellent attendance and class participation may be beneficial in determining borderline grade cases. There is no extra credit. You will receive clear guidelines, objectives, expectations, and grading criteria and a grading rubric prior to starting each writing assignment. Revisions are always due one week from the date I return the original paper to you. In the event you must revise a paper a second time after submitting a final draft, you will need to conference with me.
GRADES: ENGL 118 may be taken for letter grade or credit/no credit. If you take the course credit/no credit, you must receive a “C” or better to receive credit. It is assumed that upon receiving a “C” or better in ENGL 118, you are ready to proceed to ENGL 122, Freshman Composition, or college-level composition. It is your responsibility to keep track of your grade.

Five (5) formal essays 100 points each
Midterms: Two (2) timed in-class essays 50 points each
Final exam: in-class essay 100 points
Participation 100 points
Pop reading quizzes dependent upon course section/class

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS: 800 points (does not include pop reading quizzes)

Grade Scale for this course:

A = 90% - 100%
B = 89% - 80%
C = 79% - 70% (of the total possible points)
D = 69% - 60%
F = 59% - 0

HOW DO I CALCULATE MY GRADE?: Calculating your grade—take the number of points you earned for each assignment and then divide it by the possible number of points. Example: you scored 33 out of 40 on an assignment. You would do the following 33 / 40 = 82.5% (B-). By saving all work completed throughout the course of the semester, you can keep track of your own grade. Do not keep asking me to remind you what your grade is. You are responsible for keeping track of your own grade and saving all course work.

ATTENDANCE: I take your attendance very seriously! According to DVC policy, you are allowed to miss a maximum of six (6) hours of class, excused or unexcused. Since this section of ENGL 118 meets two times a week for seventy-five minutes, you are allowed no more than six (6) absences. If you accrue more than six (6) absences, or six (6) hours of absences in this class, you will be dropped. Absences occurring after the final drop date and failure to show for the final examination will adversely affect your grade. Indeed, should you disappear from the course and neglect to drop you could receive an “F” for your final grade. Absence from class is not an excuse for late work! It is your responsibility to properly drop or add this course. If you miss the first day of class you will be automatically dropped in favor of those wishing to add. Tardiness: Do not be tardy as class begins promptly at 2:00 and ends at 3:15. Two tardies equals one absence. Please do not be tardy!

STUDENT CONDUCT and BEHAVIOR: Your conduct, behavior, and general classroom comportment are essential. I will not tolerate rudeness or conduct not acceptable in a college classroom. This is not high school, and if your behavior towards me and/or your classmates is like that of high school I will ask you to leave. I routinely ask students to leave class if they are excessively or consistently tardy or do not have work completed and being non-productive and only sitting during class. If you are rude and use inappropriate language
(vulgarity), excessively tardy, text messaging, using a cell phone, are rude towards another student or a group, I will ask you to leave. If after a discussion and day’s suspension from class the behavior persists I will refer you to Bill Oye, Dean of Student Life.

**BEEPERS and CELL PHONES:** *Turn them off before coming to class.* It is rude and disruptive not only to me, but to your classmates if you are answering your cell phone during class and chatting with a friend. If you must have your cell phone or pager, keep it on pulse or vibrate. **Text messaging is not allowed.** If you persist in using a cell phone or text messaging, I will ask you to leave class.

**DEADLINES:** Generally, I do not accept late papers. Unless you have an unusual and valid reason I do not accept late work. Deadlines are a fact of life at home, the workplace, and school is no exception. Work is due on the days given in the course schedule at the beginning of the class period. If you are absent the day an in-class essay is given, you will need to make arrangements to take it the following week. Be forewarned: not turning in an assignment is an automatic zero. If you miss class, the assignment may be turned in early or sent with a classmate. **In the event I should decide to accept a late paper (without doctor and school excuse) you will be docked ten (10) points.**

**E-mail:** If you must miss class, you may submit your assignment to me via e-mail, but only with my prior approval **on or before the final due date.** In the event that you email me an assignment, you must email it as a Word attachment—I cannot accept anything via e-mail that is not done on Microsoft Word. Send papers to: jthomas@dvc.edu. Also, if you must miss class leave me voice mail at DVC, x2140. I check mail voice mail at least once a day.

**PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarism is the illegal use of somebody else’s words or ideas without authorization or accurate citation credit. Having another individual excessively edit, proofread, or re-write your paper is also a form of academic dishonesty. If you are caught copying or plagiarizing a paper, your grade for the paper will be an automatic zero, or “F.” Reusing or recycling a paper from high school is also unacceptable. If you are caught plagiarizing a paper it could be an “F” or a “W” in the course. For further information on this topic check the DVC handbook or consult with me. **My policy:** If you are caught plagiarizing an assignment, it is a zero for the first offense. The second offense is an “F” in the course and I will report you to Bill, Oye, Dean of Student Life.

**STANDARDS:** All essays, including rough drafts, must be typed or word-processed, double spaced, on white 8” x 11” paper with 1” margins, following MLA guidelines, no exceptions. All papers must conform to the format in model papers distributed in class. **If your final paper is not word processed and double spaced, I will not accept it.** All final copies must be submitted with the following: final copy, stamped drafts, peer editing sheets, self evaluation sheet, and any other specified materials. All must be stapled in the upper left corner, not turned in loose-leaf, paper clipped, folded or with brads. Make certain to keep all your written work, papers, and evaluations in a folder.

**DISCLAIMER:** *This is a college course.* As a result, readings and discussions on topics of a potentially controversial nature including, but not limited to, politics, sex, and religion will arise.
Such open, in-depth inquiry is essential to maintaining our democratic and pluralistic society. If you have difficulty or are uncomfortable about this, you should preview course content and consult with me before continuing with this course. As things sometimes change, I reserve the right to amend the course syllabus and schedule of assignments if needed. Rest assured this almost never happens.

**STUDENT RESOURCES:** **Computer assisted instruction:** While all final copies of your formal essays must be word processed, *there probably will not be computer time during class meetings.* If you do not have access to a computer, you are encouraged to work in the Computer Center (L). **Individual tutoring:** If you need additional assistance you are strongly encouraged to seek tutoring at the Learning Center (LC 105). Tutors are trained to assist you in brainstorming, focusing topics, organizing drafts, and self-editing techniques. Tutors will not write papers for you. The Learning Center English Program also offers free workshops on specific topics in English. It is a good idea to visit the Learning Center early before you feel overwhelmed, fragmented, and discouraged. **Audio Visual:** We will see one film in class this semester. A copy of it will be placed on reserve in Audio Visual for those who are absent or those who wish to view it again. The film is also available at video stores; it is not obscure. **Library:** We will utilize the library as a class for one writing assignment this semester. More information about this will be provided at the appropriate time.

**LEARNING DIFFERENCES:** If you are a student who has recognized learning differences and utilizes DSS (Disabled Student Services) please feel free to come up to me after class or during one of my office hours to speak to me. Let me know and I am more than happy to accommodate you in any way!