English 101: Writing Seminar

T 8:00AM-12:30PM 3 Credits

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Martin Luther shook apart the Christian world.

Nietzsche proclaimed the death of God.

Steinbeck told us the story of "the Okies."

And Salinger gave us The Catcher in the Rye.

How did they do it?

You got it—writing.

Do you want to be a better writer? Is keeping a journal your ultimate goal or do you want to be a Revolutionary? Whether your goal is big or small, English 101 can help you reach your writing goals.
Course Description: English 101 is an introduction to writing course. It is designed to help you succeed in college and in life. The course will deepen your knowledge of punctuation, grammar, the elements of style, and various types of essays. It will also develop your critical reading and thinking skills so that you can express your ideas clearly in verbal communication and in writing.

Course Goals:

- to improve your grammar and punctuation
- to improve your vocabulary
- to write well-crafted personal and persuasive essays
- to discover your talents as a writer and to nurture those talents over a lifetime

Required Texts:


Course Requirements: There are four requirements in this class. They are 1) attendance, participation and attentiveness (APA) 2) short writing exercise 3) a personal essay and 4) a persuasive essay.
Attendance, Participation & Attentiveness (APA):
Attendance is mandatory. The material we’ll cover in class may not be found in the readings. Participation is expected. Learning to express your ideas orally is a huge part of a college education; it also makes discussion more interesting. Attentiveness is also expected. Students may use laptop computers for class notes only. Those who use a laptop for the Internet, email or video games will lose the privilege of using a laptop for the rest of the semester. Finally, students who are disruptive in class (talking while the instructor is talking, texting, sleeping, flirting, etc.) will be asked to leave for the remainder of the class.

Note: If you’ll miss more than two classes, do NOT enroll in this class. If you leave class early, you’ll be counted as absent for the entire class. More than two absences will result in the grade of “F.”

Writing Exercises: Each week students will submit writing exercises based on The Pen Commandments. The purpose of these exercises will be to construct a wide variety of sentences and also to master the art of punctuation.

Personal Essay: Here you’ll write a 2-3 page personal essay about an insightful or transformative experience. Our models for the essay will be the essays in A Summer Life and Official Truth, 101 Proof: The Inside Story of Pantera

Persuasive Essay: The paper will be 5-7 pages and will involve two parts. First, you’ll choose a religious, political or ethical issue on which to write. The issue you choose must have a “pro” side and a “con” side. Second, you’ll argue for or against one of those sides (e.g., abortion is wrong) and then offer reasons for your position.
Other topics may include, but are not limited to, the following: human cloning, gay marriage, capital punishment, genetic engineering, suicide and physician-assisted suicide, legalization of drugs, civil disobedience, and gun control. The final paper will be graded on the student’s handling of the readings, clarity of thought, organization of ideas, and creative thinking.

Method of Evaluation:

1) attendance, participation & attentiveness (APA) (40%)
2) writing exercises (10%)
3) personal essay (2-3 pages) (20%)
4) persuasive paper (6-8 pages) (20%)

What to Expect:

Expect to be challenged. This class will challenge your most deeply held convictions. Get used to it. You won’t grow as a human being unless you wrestle with points of view—religious, political, and ethical—in opposition to your own.

Expect to read and write. This isn’t a “coasting” course. You must do the readings and come to class ready to discuss them. This will be a boring class if I’m the only one up here talking.

Expect to pay attention in class. Don’t talk while the instructor is talking. Don’t talk while a colleague is talking. Raise your hand if you have a question and wait until you’re called on to speak.
Expect to stay for the entire class and to be in class until at least 10:00AM.

Expect to be on time for class. If you arrive to class late, don’t ask the person next to you what you’ve missed. Wait until the break or after class to ask this and related questions.

Expect the instructor to teach the class. Don’t think you can teach the class by dominating the class discussions. Many students enroll in the courses offered at Doane College. Expect to hear from all of those students.

Expect to keep all books, notebooks and pencils on your desk until class is over. Don’t put them away early. Don’t do anything that suggests class is over when it isn’t; doing so will trigger the “off” switch and students will stop paying attention.

Expect to turn your cell phone off at the beginning of class—and keep it off.

**Grading Scale:**

A+ = 97–100
A = 93–96
A- = 90–92
B+ = 87–89
B = 83–86
B- = 80–82
C+ = 77–79
C = 73–76
C- = 70–72
D+ = 67–69
D = 63–66
D- = 60–62
F = 59 and below
Academic Integrity Policy

All written work must be in your own words. Borrowing an author’s words, sentences or thoughts without a citation is a crime. If I find you guilty of plagiarism, not only will you earn a free trip to the Dean’s Office, you’ll also fail the course. Play it safe—don’t steal.

A Note on Courtesy

This is the twenty-first century, not the Stone Age. Everybody should act civilized. When the instructor is talking, you don’t talk. When you’re talking, your colleagues don’t talk. Also, if you disagree with somebody, do it gracefully. And remember: always attack a person’s argument, not the person.
Session I  English 101: A Short Introduction

Session II  The Pen Commandments (1-3)
            Soto (1-47)
            Writing Exercises Due

Session III The Pen Commandments (4)
             Soto (51-104)
             Writing Exercises Due

Session IV  The Pen Commandments (6)
            Brown: (Prologue–158)
            Writing Exercises Due

Session V   The Pen Commandments (5)
            Brown: (159–246)
            Writing Exercises Due

Session VI  The Pen Commandments (9)
            Soto: (105–150)
            Persuasive Paper Outline Due

Session VII The Pen Commandments (10)
             Persuasive Paper Draft Due

Session VIII Writer’s Workshop
             Personal Essay + Persuasive Paper Due