English 1A: Assignments

A note on turning in final drafts of major papers: All final drafts of papers must be turned in through the Turn It In feature on the course website no later than 5pm on the day the assignment is due. All files must be .doc or .docx to receive credit. You will give me your peer and instructor-reviewed drafts in class together with your Instructor Confirmation sheet.

Homework Homework for English 1A will consist of discussion questions associated with readings and films throughout the semester, preliminary work on major assignments, research, peer reviewing, and vocabulary assignments, among other assignments.

Peer Reviewing One of the best ways to learn how to write is to be able to give helpful and constructive criticism to fellow writers and to receive the same criticism back in return. Being able to take criticism is a valuable life lesson, and provides one of the best ways to improve and hone your skills. In this class, we will form reading groups of 3 students each. These groups will meet with each other frequently to discuss their writing before composing final drafts of papers. Your partners will see your work before I do, so be sure to be thorough in your reviews and in your reception of criticism. These meetings and the work that you do in them is integral to developing your abilities as a writer and should be taken seriously. The Peer Reviews you complete will count as a homework score.

Quizzes You will have 3 vocabulary quizzes throughout the semester and a quiz on MLA citations, quotations and Works Cited lists. In addition to these scheduled quizzes, I may also give unannounced quizzes or in-class writing assignments periodically throughout the semester. Regular attendance will help ensure that you do not miss out on valuable points and keeping up on reading will ensure that you are ready for any unannounced assignments I might give.

WRC Please see the WRC Syllabus for further information about WRC assignments and requirements.

PAPERS

E1 For Essay #1 you will follow the guidelines we discussed in class for Justifying an Evaluation. We express opinions to our friends, peers and families everyday, but often rely on the audience knowing us personally as the only justification for our opinions. Your best friend might completely understand you when you say, “I hate my math class.” In writing, however, the audience is generally unfamiliar with the author personally, so statements of opinion need justification in order to be viewed as valid. Learning to justify your claims is key to developing into a persuasive, informative and successful writer. For this assignment you will write a 3-4 page review of an element of entertainment (an eating establishment, place of entertainment, a specific movie or television series, etc.) OR a written work (such as a novel or play). All drafts of this paper must adhere to MLA citation and formatting guidelines, be typewritten in standard font and double spaced with 1.25” margins. A successful essay will contain:
- A clearly identified and vividly described subject
- A clear and balanced evaluation of the subject
Specific and well-conceived evidence supporting the author’s judgment of the topic, based on clear standards of evaluation

The author’s anticipation of counterarguments against his/her evaluation of the subject

While you are not required to consult outside sources for this assignment, you may wish to do so in order to justify your evaluation. If you decide to use outside sources, please follow the guide to using sources found in Chapters 5 and 6 of the *MLA Handbook*. **NOTE:** Failure to complete a first draft and have it peer reviewed will result in a significant lowering of your final grade on this assignment.

**E2 Essay #2** will also form the basis of your group assignment, so your topic and angle of approach must be chosen in conjunction with a partner. For E2 you will write a position paper in which you argue for one side of a controversial issue. Your partner, then, will write a position paper arguing for the opposite side. Your topic must be current, relevant and clearly arguable (i.e., not based on belief, faith or personal taste). We will come up with a list of potentially debatable topics together as a class. If you wish to write on a topic that we do not come up with together, be sure to get it approved by me before you begin working on your project. This paper must be 4-5 pages in length, adhere to MLA citation guidelines, be typewritten in standard font and double spaced with 1.25” margins. Follow the guidelines for arguing a position that we discussed in class. This paper must also make use of at least 3 outside sources and contain a proper Works Cited list (see *MLA* Chapter 5). You must also include 3 vocabulary words from the class vocabulary list. Please indicate these words in your paper in **bold** text. Be sure to anticipate and address counterarguments to your position. **NOTE:** Failure to complete a first draft and have it peer reviewed will result in a significant lowering of your final grade on this assignment.

**Group Paper** The group assignment will relate to your second essay assignment (E2). Together with a partner, you will investigate opposing views on a controversial issue. For E2, each of you will write an argumentative (position) paper favoring one side of the argument. For example, if you choose to explore same-sex marriage, one student will write a paper that argues for the legalization of same-sex marriage, while his/her partner will write a paper arguing against its legalization. For your group assignment, you will then co-write a 4-5 page paper finding common ground between the two opposing arguments, using your argument essays (E2) as the main sources. You will follow the guidelines for finding common ground that we discussed in class. You must also include 3 vocabulary words from the class vocabulary list. Please indicate these words in your paper in **bold** text. In addition to the co-written paper, each individual must write a 1 page maximum self-reflection about how you worked as a team and what you each contributed to the project. The Group Paper must make use of outside sources.

**Group Presentation** As a group, you will present to the class your arguments on each side of the debate presented in the Group Paper and the ways in which you were able to find common ground in the debate. The presentation should be about 12-15 minutes in length. Your presentation must contain facts and evidence learned in your research. Each group member must participate equally in the oral presentation. You must also include a visual aid with your presentation. You may use whatever technology or visual aids that you wish.

**Research Paper** The research paper is the single largest assignment of the semester, and it is what all of the skills you have gained throughout the semester have been preparing you for.
such, you will utilize nearly all of the writing strategies that we studied this semester. For the research paper, you will identify a major socioeconomic or environmental problem effecting the United States or world at large, specify its most important causes, and finally propose a solution to it. This problem must be current, of interest to you and must be clearly defined by you as a serious problem. (If you would like to write on a different topic, be sure to have it approved by me before you proceed in writing.) It should also be a problem that has no clear singular cause. You will need to argue that the cause(s) you suggest are plausible and back them up with research.

Finally, you will need to propose a solution or set of solutions to the problem. When proposing a solution or set of solutions, you must convince your readers that the solution will indeed solve the problem and can be implemented. You must take into consideration the costs, time and feasibility of the solution, as well as psychological, sociological and/or environmental impacts of the solution. The solution should clearly link back to the causes of the problem you originally outlined.

Furthermore, like any good argument or position paper, you must take into consideration any counterarguments that you may come across or anticipate. These could be counterarguments against the causes that you originally outlined of the problem or against the significance of the problem. They could also be counterarguments against your proposed solution or represent previous solutions that did not work. Remember, the purpose of including counterarguments is to show your awareness of both sides of an argument and, especially, to strengthen your own argument by proving its worth over the counterarguments.

NOTE: This work may be a continuation of the work that you did on E2 and the group project if that problem is one that can have a solution and is not just a simple debate of opinion. If you choose to continue your work on E2, please note that you may not use any of the group project paper in your research essay verbatim. Any ideas you wish to use from that paper must be significantly revised to be solely your own work.

Requirements: The paper must be 6-7 pages in length, utilize at least 6 outside sources, adhere to MLA citation guidelines, and contain a proper Works Cited list. You must also include 3 vocabulary words from the class vocabulary list. Please indicate these words in your paper in bold text.

This, like your other major writing assignments, will be completed in stages with portions of the final project being worked on (and turned in) in stages. The first stage of the Research Paper is the Proposal.

Proposal: For the proposal (due 5/9), you will need to:
- Write a paragraph briefly defining the problem you have chosen and explicating its seriousness. You should also briefly list what you perceive to be the main causes of the problem and speculate about what you might suggest as solutions. The goal for your proposal is to demonstrate to me your understanding of the problem and show that you will be able to carry out the goal of determining its causes and proposing solutions. This does not need to be exhaustive, nor do the causes and solutions you suggest need to be fully fleshed out, nor do these need to ultimately be the causes and solutions you focus on in your paper.
- Provide an annotated bibliography of 8 sources that you have consulted in researching your paper. You ultimately only need to use 6 sources in your paper (though you may use more if you wish), but you should consult more than are required to be sure that you have discover all of the best sources for making your argument. Proper sources include:
- Articles from scholarly journals
- Books or book chapters
- Newspaper or other professional reporting on the subject
- Websites that scholars and academics would consider credible

EXTRA CREDIT OPTIONS
There will be a few extra credit options that you may take advantage of this semester. Please hold all extra credit assignments until the last week of class! You may do a maximum of 5 extra credit assignments.
1. You may attend up to 3 additional workshops for extra credit. Click here to download additional Workshop Worksheets.
2. Write a 2-3 page movie review using the evaluative techniques you learned during E1.
3. Write a letter to the appropriate government official about an issue that you came to care about after we discussed or you researched it during this class.