

# Course Syllabus

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NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change during the semester . Please check the online version of this syllabus on a regular basis for any updates.

**Department** : English & Foreign Languages  
**Course Title** : Composition and Rhetoric  
**Section Name** : ENGL 1301.WB7  
**Start Date** : 01/18/2011  
**End Date** : 05/13/2011  
**Modality** : ONLINE  
**Credits** : Three credit hours

## Instructor Information:

**Name** : Dr. Mark W. Jordan  
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**OC Phone #** : 432-335-6549

## Course Description:

**Catalog description:** "Consists of essentials of correctness and effectiveness in writing skills. Emphasizes reading and writing expository prose. Requires expository essays and collateral readings."

**Professor's supplementary description:** As with my traditional sections of 1301, the specific goal is to teach *effective writing skills*, but on a broader level, its goal is to teach *critical thinking*, crucial to problem-solving in every field. Both skills are increasingly important in today's rapidly changing world. You will also get valuable experience in networked computer discourse and other skills essential to use of the Internet. The major part of your grade, however, will be taken from formal pieces of writing. You will do from four to six of these, most of which will follow the traditional essay format, while some may not. They will all teach elements of classical rhetoric.

**Prerequisites/Corequisites:** ENGL 0370 or counsellor approval

**Scans:** SCANS 1, 2, 9

## Course Objectives (Learning Outcomes):

- 1.0 Learn to write thesis driven essays, with clear internal organization governed by a series of controlled paragraph topic sentences;
- 2.0 Learn to move logically in a body paragraph from the generalization of the topic sentence to more specific clarifications;
- 3.0 Learn to understand and appropriately apply modes of expression in written communication;
- 4.0 Learn to maintain a logical movement through an essay with control of transitions, clarifications, and reasonable conclusions to ideas;
- 5.0 Learn to analyze an audience to determine the best strategies for effectively communicating with that audience;
- 6.0 Demonstrate an understanding of some basic research techniques and how to use library resources;

- 7.0 Demonstrate a knowledge of research documentation including quotation integration, proper citation, and some knowledge of bibliographic form;
- 8.0 Demonstrate competence in using conventional English; and
- 9.0 Articulate ideas in well-organized, lucid prose that exhibits the application of the aforementioned skills.

### Course Policies:

- 1.0 This course is not self-paced. Although as with any web course, students have the freedom to work the course when their own schedule best allows, the boundaries to this freedom are the due dates for various minor assignments, tests, and essays.
- 2.0 Work submitted late for any reason may be penalized five points per weekday (or in shorter terms, ten points per weekday). Any exceptions are entirely at my discretion.
- 3.0 Normally, no extension will be granted if the request is made after the assignment deadline has already passed, but must be requested no later than the day the assignment is due.
- 4.0 This policy applies to major essays as well as daily assignments. All assignments must be submitted in the required file format via Blackboard.
- 5.0 No student can pass this course without completing the final exam, which will be taken via Blackboard also. An Incomplete will not automatically be granted if a student misses the final exam.
- 6.0 Plagiarism in any form is not allowed. Please see the [Plagiarism](#) link. The penalty for intentional plagiarism is an F for the course. *If I suspect a student of plagiarizing, if necessary I will insist that the student meet with me personally and defend his or her claim of authorship of the paper in question. In the case of a student taking the course at a significant distance from Odessa College, I will require that student to arrange a telephone meeting, proctored by some authority who can ensure the student is actually the individual enrolled in the course.*

### Required Readings/Materials :

- 1.0 No textbook need be purchased for this course. My website is the textbook:  
<<http://www.odessa.edu/dept/english/mjordan/>>
- 2.0 Some students may wish to buy a grammar handbook (optional; sold in bookstore)
- 3.0 Equipment and Supplies: Every student must have daily extended access to a computer with Internet connection, web browser, email capability, file attaching capability, and word processing capability.

### Course Requirements (Lectures, Assignments and Assessments):

- 1.0 **Several major, multi-paragraph pieces of writing (60% of course grade; exact percentages depend on number of essays written).** Students will usually write five major essays prior to the final exam. All are to be written using the Three-Part Writing Format as taught in class. Essays run in length from a minimum of 1000 words (about three pages, double-spaced) to a minimum of 1250 words, with greater development (detailed examples, etc.) resulting in higher grades, all else being equal. Essays also focus on various different writing modes and/or writing purposes; additionally, at least one essay asks the student to learn and demonstrate basic research and documentation techniques.
- 2.0 **Error logs** consist of sentence-by-sentence correction of grammatical errors I mark in your formal essays. Specific instructions on how to do these error logs can be found in the [Errorlogs](#) web link. **These error logs, when combined with other minor assignments** (e.g., peer critiques, partial drafts, etc.), will count **10% of your course grade.**
- 3.0 **Various minor reading and/or writing assignments (10% of course grade when combined with item 2.0).** Typical such assignments are quizzes, partial essay drafts, peer critiques, etc.

- 4.0 **Class participation** will count **10% of your course grade**. This will be judged on several factors chosen to reflect not only quantity of participation but quality as well. Criteria may include such factors as number of days participating, number of messages sent, amount of pertinent questions asked, amount of topics or persuasive points introduced in discussion, and general imaginativeness and focus demonstrated. **Note: this element may not apply during summer term classes.**
- 5.0 The **final exam** will also be an essay similar to the previous ones, and counting **20% of your course grade**. At my discretion, I may choose to permit students to do final exam essays at home, like the other essays, or on the other hand students may be required to take an on-campus, timed final just as my traditional 1301 students do. For students living at a distance, this requirement, if necessary, can be handled by arrangement with the student's own college testing center or other similar secure testing environment.

## Summary of Assignments & Activities

**Note: Essay assignment topics may change! These topics are those used last semester.**

Item Name	Type	Description	Time Frame
Essay One	Social Issues	Persuasive purpose; argumentation mode. Choice between two topics. Worth 10%	Essay One usually takes approximately four weeks of the course. Basic rhetorical concepts and the required writing format must first be taught before work on the essay itself can be begun. Feedback is given on partial drafts before the final draft is begun. <i>The pace of all essay units depends in turn on the pace of student learning in the classroom, along with other variable factors. Specific due dates will be announced in class.</i>
Essay Two	Classification by Qualities	Informative purpose; classification mode. Broad topic choice. Students explain how someone is competent at a particular skill by describing the key qualities of that skill, with examples. Worth 10%	The normal time frame for Essay Two is between two and three weeks.
Essay Three	The Hero's Journey	Expressive purpose; process analysis mode. Using the stages of the Hero's Journey, a version of the concept written of by scholar Joseph Campbell, students describe how they themselves have successfully met some personal challenge. Worth 15%	Essay Three generally takes between three and four weeks of the semester.
Essay Four	Using Secondary Sources	Persuasive purpose; argumentation mode. Range of topic choice usually narrow; to be announced in class. Students research a particular topic of broad social relevance, and argue a position using research findings presented as direct quotes and cited using MLA format. Worth 15%	Essay Four generally takes between three and four weeks of the semester.
Essay Five	Problems of the Quick Fix	Persuasive purpose; cause/effect mode. Broad range of topic choices. Students describe either the causes or effects of some specific situation involving the use of some "quick fix" approach. Worth 10%	Essay Five generally takes between one to two weeks of the semester.
Final Exam Essay	Some Part of What Makes Us Human	Informative purpose; definition mode. Broad range of topic choices. Students define, using some mode of their own choosing, some particular part of what makes us human (an emotion, a belief, a behavior, etc.). Worth 20%	This Final Exam essay must be written in class during the assigned exam period of two and a half hours. Students choose topics beforehand and may bring outlines from which to work.

## Grading Policy:

In the Odessa College grading system pertaining to overall course grades for this and most courses, the standard range is A ~ B ~ C ~ D ~ F, as shown below.

**90-100 = A = 4.0 gradepoints**

**80- 89 = B = 3.0 gradepoints**

**70- 79 = C = 2.0 gradepoints** (the lowest transferable course grade)

**60- 69 = D = 1.0 gradepoints** (a passing course grade, but not accepted by most colleges and universities to which you might wish to transfer)

**Below 60 = F = zero gradepoints**

In my evaluation of individual assignments, I use a similar range as shown above from "A" to "F," where "A" = 95, "F" = 55, and so forth. Additionally, a grade of A, B, C, or D may be shown with a minus (-) or a plus (+) with the minus equaling a "2" and the plus an "8". For example, a "B+" on an assignment equals 88 points; a "B" equals 85 points; a "B-" equals 82 points. The A, C, and D ranges work the same way. I also on some occasions may give the following grades:

**Below 55 = F-** (may be given when an assignment is turned in but in such a condition that even the most generous evaluation cannot justify giving even 50 out of 100 possible points; used rarely. The actual point value may range anywhere from 10 to 50 points, at my discretion.)

**Zero = No points** (when an assignment is not turned in at all).

## Special Needs:

Odessa College complies with Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you have any special needs or issues pertaining to your access to and participation in this or any other class at Odessa College, please feel free to contact me to discuss your concerns. You may also call the Office of Disability services at 432-335-6861 to request assistance and accommodations.

## Learning Resource Center (Library):

The Library, known as the Learning Resources Center, provides research assistance via the LRC's catalog (print books, videos, e-books) and databases (journal and magazine articles). Research guides covering specific subject areas, tutorials, and the "Ask a Librarian " service provide additional help.

## Student E-mail:

Please access your Odessa College Student E-mail by following the link to either set up or update your account: <http://www.odessa.edu/gmail/>. All online assignments or correspondence will be submitted using your Odessa College email.

## Technical Support:

For Blackboard username and password help and for help accessing your online course availability and student email account contact the Student Success Center at 432-335-6878 or online at [https://www.odessa.edu/dept/ssc/helpdesk\\_form.htm](https://www.odessa.edu/dept/ssc/helpdesk_form.htm).

## Important School Policies:

Information regarding student support services, academic dishonesty, disciplinary actions, special accommodations, or students' and instructors' rights to academic freedom can be found in the Odessa College Student Handbook.