



**WR121
The College Essay
Fall 2016**

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Credit Hours: 3
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Course Description

This course emphasizes clear, detailed writing that employs critical reading and thinking and basic research skills. The prerequisites include placement into WR 121 or WR115 with a grade of C or better.

The purpose of WR 121 is to help you *grow* and stretch yourself as a college writer—for academic assignments and *also* for the writing demands in your personal, professional, and civic lives. In this course, you'll examine how writing is a process, as well as a communicative act that always occurs within a particular context, and you'll gain practice writing for different purposes in multiple contexts.

Course objectives

By writing, reading, and engaging in discussion in this course, you'll improve your ability to:

1. *Analyze the rhetorical needs* (the interaction of audiences, purpose/outcome, and subject) of a variety of academic and practical writing assignments.
2. *Apply appropriate levels of critical thinking strategies* (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation) in response to the rhetorical needs of an assignment.
3. *Implement appropriate rhetorical elements and organization* (introduction, thesis, development and support, rebuttal, visuals, narration, conclusion, etc.) in response to the rhetorical needs of an assignment.
4. *Locate, evaluate, and integrate high-quality information and opinion* in response to the rhetorical needs of an assignment.
5. *Craft sentences and paragraphs* that communicate their ideas clearly and effectively using words, sentence patterns, and writing conventions to make their writing clear, credible, and persuasive.

Required Texts

X.J. Kennedy, *The Bedford Reader*, 12th Ed.

Bullock and Weinberg, *The Little Seagull Handbook*, 2nd ed.

Please also bring a folder (standard two-pocket) to class for generative writing and other in-class and at-home exercises. This will act as your Unit Portfolio.

Required Resources

- Internet access and eLearn access to complete homework assignments
- Pen/pencil and paper for all class meetings
- Access to a copier for required copies of your work for peer review

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The Basics: To do well in this class, you must:

- Attend all class sessions, arrive on time, and stay for the entire class.
- Complete homework, assigned readings and quizzes, and all major writing assignments.
- Submit work that is entirely your own and that you have written specifically for this class that demonstrates college-level writing and fulfills the requirements of the assignment.
- Engage respectfully with fellow students, in-class activities, and discussions.
- Seek to improve through incorporation of instructor feedback, revision, and use of writing resources (course textbooks and Writing Center).
- Ask for help and clarification if you need it.

Major Assignments: This course is designed as a series of four units, each with its own major writing assignment—an essay 1,000-1,250 words in length. Each essay will go through an extensive writing process, and each will introduce new challenges.

- **Unit 1: Inquiring into Self** asks you to draw upon personal experience, analyze an aspect of your personal context, and write about this to a familiar audience.
- **Unit 2: Interacting with Texts** asks you to develop and write a critical response to one or more published texts and tailor the response to an academic audience.
- **UNIT 3: Identifying the Issues & Adding to a Conversation** asks you to interpret and analyze a given primary “text”—film, in our case—in which the key issues are less overtly stated, and produce a review essay that also serves as a platform for discussion of a major issue in society/culture.
- **Unit 4: Final Exam Essay:** Asks you to analyze and respond to an assigned reading in essay form. More details will be given at in the later weeks of the course. Further information can also be found on the Linn-Benton website.

Unit 1-3 Portfolios: Each of the first three unit assignments requires that you engage in a rigorous writing process. For each unit, you’ll develop and submit a portfolio that includes the following:

- a. generative writing to explore ideas and writing options;
- b. an initial draft;
- c. a **substantially** revised draft, based on feedback from self, peers, instructor, and others;
- d. a further revised and copy-edited final draft;
- e. reflections on your own writing to help you identify effective processes and writing choices.

Each activity, including peer review, is meant to help you focus on specific aspects of your writing. With certain assignments, we may devote more time to certain stages of the process, and at other times, we may move more quickly. To grow as writers, we need to write, reflect, and write some more—thus, *each part of the process is required*, and **grades for units 1 - 3 will be based on the entire portfolio, not only the final version of essays**. Be sure to save every piece of writing! For each unit, you’ll be given instructions on what to submit, how, and when.

NOTE: YOU MUST VISIT THE WRITING CENTER AT LEAST ONCE DURING THE TERM (UNITS 1 – 3). THE CHOICE IS YOURS AS TO WHEN IN THE WRITING PROCESS OF WHICH UNIT YOU VISIT. BE SURE TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINT BEFOREHAND.

Writing Community Membership: One of the best ways to learn to write is to share ideas about writing with others. Creating a community that enables us to grow and develop as writers depends on each person fulfilling our responsibilities, offering mutual respect to one another, and being receptive readers of one another's writing.

As a result, essential learning in this course will happen as you engage in writing-related activities with peers. Performing well in writing community membership means actively and respectfully contributing to *and* seeking to learn from our class community. Note that participation can take a variety of forms: e.g., asking questions and giving comments during class discussion, taking notes on behalf of a small group, sharing perspectives in writing with peers.

Writing community responsibilities include the following:

- a. being prepared to participate. Being prepared includes, but is not limited to, bringing required materials to class and actively reading the required texts. Reading texts by other writers, including classmates, will help you generate ideas, dialogue with others, and become aware of your writing choices. You should also be prepared to reflect on your writing. In addition to class meetings, you'll meet individually with me for at least one required student-teacher conference where we'll discuss more fully your writing and your progress in the course.
- b. giving constructive Peer Response. Learning to write means learning to be read by many others. In our class, you'll regularly give and get critical peer response. By giving *constructive* feedback and by listening carefully to others, you'll learn to make effective revisions—e.g., to further develop ideas and to move readers in intended ways.
- c. Participating in peer activities, incl. Class Discussion & small Group exercises. Our writing community activities will include discussion among the entire class as well as small group exercises—during class time, possibly on Blackboard forums, too. These activities are designed to help you write and reflect on your essay assignments.

CLASS POLICIES AND GRADES

The Things You Carry (Always Have This Stuff with You When You Come to Class):

- **A hard-copy of your most recent draft.**
- **Course Text Books — *The Bedford Reader, Little Seagull.***
- **Any materials previously assigned as homework. Be sure to check Moodle frequently and keep abreast of all assignments and announcements.**

COURSE GRADE: Your final grade for the semester will be based on the following breakdown:

Writing Assignments	Percentage	Due Date(s)
Unit 1 Portfolio	20% of total grade	11 October
Unit 2 Portfolio	20% of total grade	25 October
Unit 3 Portfolio	20% of total grade	29 November
Unit 4 Final Exam	30% of total grade	5 Dec & 6 Dec
Writing Community Membership (Class Participation & Writing Center Visit)	10% of total grade	

***NOTE: Each unit grade is based on the average of two grades: final essay and portfolio. Final essay and portfolio grades are weighted equally (50/50) for Unit 1 with essay grades becoming heavier through the term—so essay and portfolio grades become weighted respectively 60/40 for Unit 2, and 80/20 for Unit 3.**

Grade	Percentage	Description
A	90–100%	Excellent
B	80–89%	Very Capable
C	70–79%	Competent
D	60–69%	Limited Success
F	0–60%	Failure

Grading: Assignments in this course will be graded on an A-F scale. For more information about the grading scale, please see p. 17 of this year’s catalog.

YOU CANNOT PASS IF YOU DO NOT COMPLETE ALL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS AND RECEIVE AT LEAST A “C/70” ON THE PORTFOLIO, REGARDLESS OF THE GRADES YOU RECEIVED IN OTHER AREAS OF THIS COURSE.

Final papers are scored with minimal comments because of very tight grade deadlines. They will be available for pick up from the faculty secretary in bldg. 1, room 200. Please make an appointment with me during the following term if you would like to discuss your paper.

The assignment of **INCOMPLETE OR “I”** grades will be used only in cases of extreme emergencies where satisfactory progress has been demonstrated and a passing grade may be earned.

Assessment of Writing – Minimum Passing Requirements for WR 121				
Academic Discourse and Conventions	Organization, Thesis, and Development	Audience, Purpose, and Voice	Writing Process	Research and Documentation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edit final drafts to eliminate sentence boundary issues, errors in spelling, word choice, and grammar • Use punctuation correctly in both formal and informal writing • Format essays following MLA formatting guidelines • Give constructive feedback to peers • Assess the logic of one’s own and others’ reasoning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use thesis statement to control essay • Clarify relationship of evidence to the thesis statement through use of transitions and key words in topic sentences • Present adequate evidence and reasoning for thesis, including paraphrases, summaries, and directly quoted evidence • Organize an essay to meet the needs of readers and the intended purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate questions from audience and supply information accordingly • Assess knowledge and biases of audience • Refrain from informal writing style within academic papers, including unnecessary self-reference, verbal habits (“Well,”), and informal vocabulary • Develop authorial credibility with careful and honest use of evidence and respect for others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify credible general information and primary texts to develop a legitimate question • Develop question to search for appropriate and credible evidence • Provide evidence to develop a reasonable answer to the question (thesis) • Use thesis to develop an effective presentation of the thesis and supporting evidence. • Revise, edit, and proofread essays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use MLA style documentation and attribution (signal) phrases to integrate resource material into writing, including in-text citations and bibliography • Recognize APA style and be able to produce in-text citations and/or bibliographic entries using a writer’s handbook. • Use library, databases and the Internet to obtain information and evidence, including the effective use of key word searches. • Evaluate source materials for authority, currency, reliability and bias.

INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES & RESOURCES

Attendance and Participation: You are responsible for all content covered in class, whether you are there or not. Many in-class assignments, because they are based on class discussion, cannot be made up. Please remember that if you miss class for any reason **it is your responsibility to obtain notes and assignments from eLearn and your classmates.** Excessive absences (4 or more) will impact your grade and may affect your ability to pass the course. Though I appreciate an email alerting me to your absence, emailing me to let me know you will not be in class does not excuse your absence. Make-up work is allowed at my discretion.

Tardiness: It is important that you arrive on time since I use the first minutes of class to review homework and make announcements about assignments and adjustments to the syllabus. If you happen to be late, please make sure to check eLearn and ask your classmates about any essential updates you missed. Chronic lateness will impact your ability to do well in this course and may affect your grade.

Late Work: Assignments are due at the beginning of class, otherwise they are considered late. If you are absent or do not have the assignment completed by the due date, you can turn in the assignment at the beginning of the next class for a late penalty of 10% off the total grade. I will not accept late work beyond that unless you have requested an emergency extension. Extensions will be granted at my discretion and no more than one per student per term. The key to any extension depends on the courtesy of early communication. To receive an extension and credit for late work, it must be requested by course message on or before the assignment due date. Work that is consistently late will affect your grade and may impact your ability to pass the course. The final exam essay cannot be submitted late.

Classroom Courtesy Statement: Linn-Benton is committed to providing a quality learning environment. Please come to class ready to engage in thoughtful and respectful discussion and to participate in classroom activities that will enhance your learning experience. It is important to me that each student feels welcome to contribute to our classroom conversations. I ask that you contribute to a welcoming environment by coming to class on time and prepared to make the most out of our time together. **SILENCE PHONES AND OTHER DEVICES AND REFRAIN FROM TEXTING DURING CLASS.** Most in-class writing will be done longhand in order to help you manage and slow down your thought process, so laptops will not be necessary. Please bring your laptop only if we are conducting in-class research or if you cannot learn effectively without it. If you need to leave the room for any reason, please do so discretely or otherwise use the break provided during the middle of our class meeting.

Academic Honesty Policy: When using ideas, words, and short passages from other people's writing in your own writing, you are *required to acknowledge the source*. Failure to acknowledge the contribution of others is considered plagiarism, a serious academic offense; fabrication of sources is another form of academic dishonesty. We'll discuss academic honesty more in class, but note that suspect papers (e.g., those without drafts or works cited pages, papers which make large departures in style from your other work) may be submitted to Turnitin.com as part of the grading process.

WRITING RESOURCES

Office Hours You're welcome to come to office hours any time you'd like to discuss questions or concerns related to this course. If you have a time conflict with my office hours, please schedule an appointment.

LBCC Writing Center

From initial ideas to final drafts, the LBCC Writing Center can help you take your writing to the next level. Please feel free to drop in during regular hours to work one-on-one with one of the supportive Writing Assistants. In addition to your draft, please bring your assignment and any questions you have. You may also submit your writing online at lbcc.writingcenteronline.net

where you will receive a personalized response within 1-2 business days. For more information, visit the Writing Center online at <http://www.linnbenton.edu/go/learning-center/writing-help>

SCHOOL POLICIES

Disability Services

If you have a documented disability, I will help you in any way I can. Talk to me during the first week of class. If you think you might have a disability, but you are not sure, contact Disability Services, 917-4789. [Here is a lot more useful information about Disability Services and LBCC's disability policies.](#)

LBCC Non-Discrimination Policy

Everyone is welcome at LBCC, regardless of whether they are black, white, Latino, native, gay, straight, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, atheist, male, female, transgendered, married, disabled, a veteran, a non-English speaker, an immigrant, or any number of other categories not listed here. [For the official nondiscrimination policy click here.](#) What is more, LBCC sees our differences as a source of strength and an important part of education. [Click here to see what the LBCC board has to say about diversity.](#)

PERFORMANCE-BASED LEARNER OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Academic Discourse and Conventions

- a. Engage in and value a respectful and free exchange of ideas.
- b. Practice active reading of college-level texts, including: annotation, cultivation/development of vocabulary, objective summary, identification, and analysis of the thesis and main ideas of source material, among others.
- c. Participate in class discussion and activities; speak, read, respond, and listen reflectively.
- d. Appreciate and reflect on challenging points of view through reading and writing; measure another writer's viewpoint against personal experience and assumptions and the experience of others.
- e. Understand self as a part of a larger community.
- f. Use appropriate technologies in the service of writing and learning. For example: use word processing tools to prepare and edit formal writing assignments (spell check/grammar check, find and replace); understand the limitations of such tools; locate course materials and resources online; and use online communication tools such as e-mail.
- g. Word process and format final drafts with appropriate headings, titles, spacing, margins, demonstrating an understanding of MLA citation style.
- h. Demonstrate the ability to use Edited Standard Written English to address an academic audience.
- i. Use a writer's handbook and/or other resource for style, grammar, and citations.
- j. Manage prerequisite skills such as grammar, sentence variety, and word choice.

2. Organization, Thesis, and Development

- a. Try more than one organizational strategy in essay drafts including reworking thesis statement Write well-focused, logically organized, and well-transitioned essays, using introductions, discussion, and conclusions in which the relationship of ideas to the thesis and to one another is clear.
- b. Develop and organize essays using evidence that may include examples, illustration, and research to support ideas.
- c. Evaluate and synthesize ideas from own writing and the writing of others.

- d. Write at least one argumentative essay that demonstrates an understanding of the basic elements of formal argumentation including claims, support, logic, and credibility.
- e. Write argumentative essays that integrate research.

3. Audience, Purpose, and Voice (Develop Rhetorical Competence)

- a. Identify the roles played by situation, purpose, and audience in directing a writer's choices, and make appropriate choices of tone, voice, and level of formality.
- b. Assess knowledge, expectations and biases of audiences.
- c. Anticipate questions an audience is likely to have and supply appropriate information.
- d. Identify the different levels of formality through vocabulary, syntax, and other conventions, and the situations in which they are appropriate.
- e. Employ strategies of development appropriate for the purpose and audience, recognizing that effective writing usually involves combinations of organizational strategies, including finding and integrating outside source material.

PERFORMANCE-BASED LEARNER OUTCOMES

4. Writing Process

- a. Explore the ideas of others in both informal and formal writing.
- b. Recognize that strong organization, thesis, and development result from a recursive writing process.
- c. Exercise original thought in selecting and narrowing writing topics
- d. Develop essays through a flexible writing process that proceeds from exploration and discovery, through drafting, peer review, revision, editing, and proofreading.
- e. Work effectively and collaboratively with other writers to evaluate and revise essays, sharing work in process and providing constructive feedback to others according to established guidelines, and revise according to peer and instructor feedback.
- f. Appraise own writing skills, abilities, and process and those of others, identifying strengths and addressing weaknesses.
- g. Use available writing assistance.

5. Research and Documentation

- a. Use the library, a database, and the Internet to locate information and evidence.
- b. Evaluate source materials for authority, currency, reliability, bias, sound reasoning and validity of evidence.
- c. Demonstrate an ability to summarize, paraphrase, and quote sources in a manner that distinguishes the writer's voice from that of his/her sources.
- d. Produce at least one paper that demonstrates an ability to synthesize sources to support an assertive or argumentative thesis through summary, paraphrase, and integrated quotation.
- e. Format citations and bibliographic information in more than one documentation style using the handbook.
- f. Integrate research as support for their own ideas with proper MLA or APA documentation.

STATEWIDE GENERAL EDUCATION (AAOT) OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the Writing course, students should be able to:

- 1. Read actively, think critically, and write purposefully and capably for academic and, in some cases, professional audiences.
- 2. Locate, evaluate, and ethically utilize information to communicate effectively.
- 3. Demonstrate appropriate reasoning in response to complex issues.