

## Spring Semester 2016 Course Syllabus for English 131: Writing Experience I



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### Important Notes:

- ✓ **Please use your JC email account when you email me, or I may not receive your message.** I am very conscientious about returning emails. However, I am not on-call 24 hours. I only check my email once a day. If you email me after 8:00 p.m., I will not see it until the next afternoon.
- ✓ **I accept NO assignments via email attachments. You must submit a hard copy of assignments to me in person.**
- ✓ **Any discussion of grades or essays must be handled in person at the end of class or during office hours.**
- ✓ **In the case of instructor illness and unforeseen circumstances, such as weather emergencies, I reserve the right to make adjustments to any and all course sessions and scheduled assignments in order to accomplish the objectives and outcomes of this course.**

### JC Course Catalog Description

ENG 131 is “an intensive writing course designed to help students improve, strengthen and refine writing skills. Research methods are introduced. An end of the semester portfolio of narrative and informative writing is required.” (Prerequisites: Eng 085 and Eng 090)

**You must be prepared to write, share, and revise your writing, both in and out of class.** Improving writing skills requires continual re-visioning and developing ideas. Sometimes, we will do this during class. As a result, you must be able to access your Word documents in the classroom. You should save all work to both a flash drive and the JC G-Drive. Everything you write outside of class and turn in must be word-processed. Please have your documents saved as Word docs or as RTF files.

Writing to learn and writing as a process (which means revising) will be the underlying themes of this course. Although writing is sometimes considered a task, writing is also a powerful tool that requires constant practice both inside and outside the classroom. I hope that this course can build your confidence in using writing as a tool for learning and exploring your ideas in a reflective and innovative way.

**Important Notice: This is a 12-week course, not a 15-week course. This does not mean it's easier because it's shorter. This means it's harder. You will be doing 1.5 times the work of a 15-week class in 2/3 of the time.**

### Required Materials

- **Required Textbook:** *Writing Today* (w/ REVEL Access Card and loose pages) by Richard Johnson-Sheehan and Charles Paine. Third edition. 2016. ISBN: 9780134217307
- **3-ring binder** (for course handouts, packets, and downloaded materials from *JetNet*)
- **Flash Drive** (You need to save all of your typed work on this and bring it to class.)
- **5 two-pocket folders** (one folder for course materials; one for each of 4 essays)
- **Black or dark blue pens** (for in-class and homework assignments)
- **Access to a printer** (for homework assignments and essays)

**Associate Degree Outcomes** The Board of Trustees has determined that all JC graduates should develop or enhance certain essential skills while enrolled in the college. Several of these Associate Degree Outcomes are addressed in this class, including writing clearly, concisely, and intelligibly and working productively with others, recognizing individual contributions to group success.

**ADO #1: Writing Clearly, Concisely, and Intelligibly (Developing)**

**Writing Skills** that we will work on together include:

- Process—using pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing
- Purpose and Audience—understanding how purpose and audience influence style and tone
- Organization and Development—using effective organizational structure, examples and details to support ideas and content
- Meaning/Understanding—researching and writing for further understanding and knowledge
- Use of Sources & Documentation—demonstrating appropriate documentation
- Language—attempts and practices correct grammar and mechanics

**ADO #9: Working in Small Groups (Developing)**

**Team Work Skills** that we will work on together include:

- Participating—contributing fully to group work
- Making Collective Decisions—establishing procedures for consensus
- Supporting Team Members—respecting individual contributions
- Evaluating—reflecting on group processes and outcomes

**Performance Objectives:** In conjunction with ADOs 1 & 9, the following outcomes refer to the specific skills that learners are expected to develop as a result of the instructional process in English 131:

<b>Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing Processes</b>	<b>Rhetorical Knowledge and Conventions</b>	<b>Electronic Environment</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice active reading strategies</li> <li>• Identify and contextually evaluate assumptions, points of view, stylistic choices, and implications born of reasoning</li> <li>• Offer formative feedback on others writing in peer review sessions</li> <li>• Use genres to navigate complex rhetorical challenges</li> <li>• Distinguish one’s own ideas from those of others</li> <li>• Practice metacognitive reflection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use genre specific strategies, voice, tone, and perspective to achieve rhetorical goals</li> <li>• Recognize conventions of writing distinctive to specific disciplines</li> <li>• Employ Modern Language Association (MLA) style in academic writing</li> <li>• Writing in Plain Style—simple and direct language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Microsoft Word to compose, revise, and save documents</li> <li>• Locate research material collected from electronic sources, including library databases and other electronic networks and internet sources</li> <li>• Use college learning management system</li> </ul>

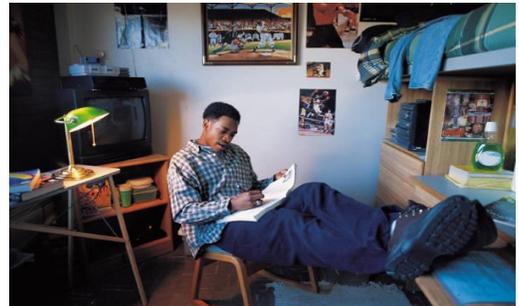
## Course Design

The primary business of this class is to improve your writing skills. We write, rewrite, think about writing, read about writing, and find various uses for writing. This means we will think critically as we examine words, language, communication, and meaning.

Language forms who you are, how you function, and how you view the world. By writing and sharing your writing, you may discover and/or reveal things about yourself to others. This process can be intimidating and sometimes frightening. It can also be rewarding and sometimes exciting. Risk-taking is part of the process of improving your writing and of learning.

The classroom environment, the small community of writers that we (as a class) create, will help support you in your efforts to become a better writer. You must willingly help and support others in return.

Each class period we will discuss writing and reading, analyze assignments, or talk about strategies and methods used in written communication. We also will explore ways to stimulate ideas; develop and organize ideas; edit; respond to classmates' writing; and eliminate common grammatical errors. We will practice various kinds of writing in class, and you will have time for your own writing during most classes. The atmosphere is loosely structured and informal, allowing you to progress at your own individual pace. This allows me to observe you in the writing process and offer suggestions or help you with specific problems.



## Your Responsibilities

Your primary task is to improve your own writing skills. This means that you must practice, experiment, discover, and create as you learn about how you write in order to determine your strengths and weaknesses and learn how to overcome problem areas.



I expect you to prepare for the class by doing the following: read the text and other assigned readings, hand in daily work and drafts on time, share your writing with others, respond to your classmates' writing, actively participate in class, work with me individually, and most importantly, write and revise your essays, both in and out of class.

## My Responsibilities

I will do everything I can to assist you. I'll read your writing and respond to as much of your writing and your revisions as I possibly can. I will introduce concepts that may help you become a better writer, lead class discussions, form small groups, share readings and writings, help you individually, and encourage you.

I'll provide class time for you to discuss and explore strategies for successful writing. I'll class time for drafting and revising. Sometimes you'll break into pairs or small groups for sharing and responding to each other's writing. Sometimes I'll informally lecture—a way to see where you're going as a group and what you need next. I'll use course materials to spark writing ideas and topics. Most of all, I'll provide opportunities for you to share ideas.

## To Be Successful in This Class, You Must Accept and Live by the Following “House Rules”:

- Come to class regularly and expect to work in small groups on a regular basis
- Put thought and energy into your assignments and turn them in on time
- High grades are given for quality work, not simply turning thing in; grades are based on quality
- There’s no credit for showing up; you’re *supposed* to be here and get your work done
- Be respectful of people, including me; if you’re not, you will be asked to leave
- For physically threatening and/or verbally abusive behavior, security will be called—zero tolerance
- If you know you won’t be in class regularly, or you’re planning a vacation in the middle of the semester, this is not the class for you; you might consider a hybrid or online course
- There aren’t excused absences in college; since you signed up for the class, you’re expected to be here; if you make appointments during class time, what can and can’t be made-up is dictated by these syllabus policies, not whether or not you have a good excuse—plan accordingly
- **All techno-devices need to be turned off and put away when class starts. This means OUT OF YOUR SIGHT, NOT ON YOUR LAP, AND NOT ON THE TABLE.** When class begins, I expect you to take out ear buds, close laptops or notebooks, and put phones and hand-held devices away. **If you need to be on your device, leave the classroom and then return when you’re finished.** If I see you texting or looking at your phone in class, you will receive a written penalty. There will be no discussion or negotiation about it. It’s my call, so as long as your devices are put away, no worries. These penalties affect your grade: **Every written penalty you receive results in a deduction of 1% of your Final Grade.** This means if you receive ten penalties, your final grade will be lowered by 10%; twenty penalties, 20%. This adds up fast because you can receive more than one penalty on any given day. When I see you touching or even looking at your phone, it’s a penalty. NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS.

**Important note:** There is a tendency for people to say something is “not fair” when they don’t like it. However, the principle of fairness is not based on whether or not we like something. The principle of fairness is based on whether or not rules are applied equally to all. My policies are fair because there are no exceptions to them. “House Rules” apply to everyone. Be sure you understand this.

### Grading Scale:

We don’t use letter grades at JC. Grades are based on a 4.0 scale, with 4.0 being *Masterful*. You must earn a 2.0 in this class to earn credit for the class. Less than a 2.0 is considered failing. This means you will need to re-take the class and pass it before it meets pre-requisite requirements for other courses or for transfer to other colleges and universities. I have provided how the numeric grade equates to a letter grade, but you will see a numeric grade on your student record. Grading scale:

<u>% earned</u>	<u>Grade received</u>		
95-100	4.0 (A) =	<i>masterful work (superior; above and beyond what was expected)</i>	
89-94	3.5 (B+)		
84-88	3.0 (B) =	work completed correctly and well	
78-83	2.5 (C+)		
72-77	2.0 (C) =	mediocre work	
66-71	1.5 (D+)		
60-65	1.0 (D) =	unsatisfactory work	<i>If your final grade falls below 2.0, you earn no credit for the course</i>
55-59	0.5 (D-)		
54 and below	0.0 (E)		

### Intermediate Grading:

To comply with college policy and federal regulations, we will assign a grade to you after approximately two weeks, five weeks, and eight weeks. The grades assigned are letters with the following meanings:

- **V:** Verifies that you are participating and your work so far has been acceptable.
- **H:** Means that you are participating, but your work shows that you may require help in order to complete the class successfully. If you receive an H grade, you will be contacted by the Center for Student Success and offered tutoring services.
- **Q:** means that you have effectively quit participating in the course. Jackson College is required to drop students who are not producing work or attending class. Just showing up doesn't count. You will automatically be dropped from the class if the following occurs. **If I have not received assigned work from you for four classes in a row (in-class activities or homework, as appropriate to the days—quizzes do not count here), and/or you have been absent for four classes without medical documentation stating you needed to be.**

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Students own the responsibility of the effect of being dropped. Being dropped from the class may affect financial aid or housing status. If you are dropped, the drop status will NOT be changed because of its impact on a student's financial aid, housing status, etc. Once Q'd, a student will not be re-added to the class.

### Final Grade Criteria

- **Class Assignments and Homework**      **40%**
- **Final Writing Portfolio**                      **40%**
- **Participation**                                      **20%**

#### Class Assignments and Homework (40% of Final Grade)

Each daily writing and class activity is due the day it is assigned. The daily assignments and activities are practice pieces and ways of generating ideas. In these assignments you will plan, draft, and explore ideas that you may want to write about. All essays assigned must be attended to in both draft and revision stages. They must be completed on time in order to ensure classmate and teacher feedback and to help you stay on track.

#### Final Writing Portfolio (40% of Final Grade):

This semester, you will be assigned 3 writing projects, called Long Essays. The revised, polished, final versions of these essays are included in your Portfolio, and the grade you receive for them is 40% of your final grade. Before you submit them in your Portfolio, you will get feedback from both your classmates and me throughout the semester. **All essays must be submitted to me for comments before they can be included in your Final Portfolio, and only one essay at a time can be submitted.** I will work with you as you develop your essays. I will discuss your work and give you suggestions. However, I do not make written comments on essays until they are polished. Polished means the essay is complete and has met all assignment criteria. In other words, you have to earn my written feedback.

## Participation (20% of Final Grade)

This is not for simply attending class. It does not mean merely showing up and sitting as a passive observer. It's much more than attending class. Participation means active engagement with whatever is happening in class. It means actively responding to the issues and activities of this course. This includes having your homework done, so you have something to contribute each day.



The success and liveliness of this class depends on your willingness to speak up, to ask questions, to share your thoughts, ideas and stories, and to help others. I will make every effort to accommodate you. In return, I expect you to make every effort to be prepared for class and ready to participate.

## *FOR YOUR INFORMATION*

### Center for Student Success

Located in the Potter Center, the center provides tutoring and other services. Please call (796-8415) or visit for more information. The staff are there to help you succeed in your studies, so please do not hesitate to make use of this free resource for any of your classes.

### Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the office of Learning Support Services at 787-0800, extension 8270/8553 as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

### Checking Your Progress

You can always check your progress by accessing *JetNet*. You can access this from the JC Website. It will show what percentage of credit you have earned. Midterm and final grades (0.0 - 4.0) are posted to your student account on *e-services*, accessible from the JC Website. Any discussion of grades must be done in my office. Because of FERPA, I don't discuss grades during class or via email.

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## **COURSE POLICIES—No Exceptions to These—Read Carefully**

**Drop-In Office Hours**—Research studies show that students who visit their professors during office hours generally perform better and receive higher grades. However, students have busy schedules (and lives) and often don't take advantage of office hours. In addition, some students are shy or intimidated at the idea of meeting one-on-one with their teachers. I understand this. However, I know that individual conferences are extremely beneficial. We can get a lot done if we meet and talk about your writing and/or writing assignments. Many students are surprised (and relieved) at how useful these conferences can be. I hope you will take advantage of this service. My office hours are listed at the top of the first page of this syllabus. You simply need to let me know when you would like to see me during those times. If my office hours aren't convenient for you, I'm happy to arrange a time to meet with you.

**Missing In-class Work (coming in late and leaving early)**—If you are absent, come in late, or leave early and miss an in-class activity, you will not be able to make-up the work. Quizzes are given in the first 10 minutes of class. However, once everyone has turned in their quiz, even if it's only been 5 minutes, the window to take it is closed and cannot be made-up. If you're on time, this won't be an issue for you. Also, if take the quiz and leave early, you lose all credit for the quiz. The point of quizzes is be prepared for class activities, not to take the quiz and leave. Also, one of the ADOs for this course is working collaboratively, which means interacting with classmates. You can't meet this requirement if you're not here. Remember, too, that missed points add up fast. Finally, if you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you've missed from a classmate. You also need to check *JetNet* for any handouts or assignments I handed out in class. *I suggest that if you know you will have trouble getting to class on time and/or will be leaving class early on regular basis, for whatever reason—job(s), daycare, commuting problems, or other scheduling conflicts—you will want to drop this class and register for one that will accommodate your schedule.*

**Late Homework**—Homework is due at the beginning of class on specified dates. However, I realize that once in a while things happen beyond our control, so you can turn in any homework assignment up to one class day late, but you will receive only half credit of what you earned on those assignments. If you put a homework assignment in my mailbox and don't attend class, you will receive half-credit for that assignment. If I have collected homework, and you come in late and turn-in homework, you will receive half-credit. Homework can never be turned in more than one class day late unless there is a documented emergency. Additionally, you can't make-up in-class work for any reason—including illness. It's logically impossible to "make-up" in-class work or activities. *Important note: Habitually turning in homework late will lower your final grade; after all, half credit means 50%. 50% = failing. This Late Homework policy is intended to give you a break for unexpected emergencies, but to do well, you must meet regular deadlines.*

**Extra Credit**—I will provide just a couple of extra credit assignments over the course of the semester, to make up some credit for missed homework assignments. What this means is if you miss an assignment or two, it can help with that. What it won't do is save your grade for a lot of missed work, nor should it. Additionally, extra credit cannot be turned in late or early; you must be in class on the day it is due to receive extra credit.

**Printer Problems**—In order to do well in this class, having access to a reliable printer is important since most of your assignments must be typed. Printer problems, whether it's accessibility or faulty mechanics, are never an acceptable excuse for not having work done. I don't accept work via email attachments or on flash drives. You must have copies "in hand" when assignments are due. Plan ahead and plan accordingly. Also, if you're having any problems, including formatting documents, you'll need to get help from the JC Solutions Center, located on the second floor of William Atkinson Hall, or The Center for Student Success, BW 125. Since your work is your responsibility, you will need to be proactive about it. See me if have any questions about this.

**Classroom etiquette**—I expect you to be on time every day and prepared for class. I expect you to act like adults and be respectful of everyone—including me. Inappropriate behavior is rudeness, whining, sleeping, swearing, acting out inappropriately, refusing to put electronic devices away, or doing work for other classes. If you are sleeping in class, I reserve the right to publicly wake you up. You are not mentally present if you are asleep, which means you can't contribute to the class. In instances of abusive and threatening behavior, you will be asked to leave, security will be called, and the incident will be reported to the Dean. Everyone has the right to feel safe, including me.

**Academic Honesty**—JC has an academic policy that is stated in your student handbook, as well as being posted on the JC Website. I adhere to the JC policy in this class. In essence, the policy requires that all work must be done by the student whose name it bears. It requires you not anyone in cheating, that you acknowledge all sources, that you not submit another’s work as your own (plagiarism), either directly copied or paraphrased from another source, published or unpublished. If you commit plagiarism, it will result in a failing grade for that assignment, and is grounds for removal from the class. It can result in dismissal from the college. A clear case of plagiarism will be reported to the academic dean. Dismissal for dishonesty will affect your credit rating and ability to receive financial aid.

**Incomplete grades**—In accordance with the JC policy for incomplete grades, incompletes are only granted to students who have demonstrated good standing in the class and who have a passing grade at the time of an extenuating circumstance that precludes completion of the course. Documentation validating the circumstance will be required. Incomplete grades are not intended as a free pass out of class.

**Bringing children and guests to class**—I realize that some of you may have children. There may be times when you need to be home with them on a class day. Unfortunately, children may not attend the class. Because they can be either adorable and/or unruly, they become a distraction. Additionally, friends and family may not join you in class. They will have to wait for you somewhere on campus. Only students who are registered for class may attend. Thanks for your cooperation.

### **Grade Insurance**

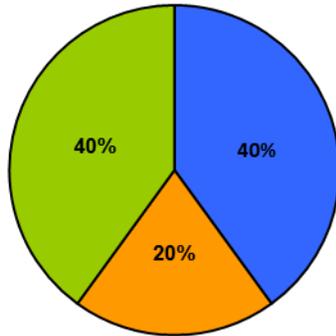
Save all hard copies (paper), both handwritten and typed, of *all* assignments, in one of your pocket folders. For all typed work, if you have your own computer, save your work to the Desktop. In addition, “back-up” your work by saving it to your flash drive. I will also show you how to save all work on JC’s G-drive, so you can always access your work on-campus.

Everything you write *must* be saved! Don’t throw any writing away, even small pieces of writing until you’re certain that the course is completed and you have received a final grade. You will need to save each essay draft separately. Do not save a revised draft over an old draft. For example, save as Essay 1 draft 1, Essay 2 draft 2, etc. You need every individual draft. You are responsible for all your writing and for all the work we do in and out of class including short writing activities, critical reading assignments, in-class essays, comments on your essays from peer review work, writing prompts, and research work.

**Reminder: A grade of 2.0 or better will be accepted as successful completion of the course. Since this course is a prerequisite to other academic courses, a 2.0 is the minimum grade to exit. For courses that will transfer, other colleges generally accept a grade of 2.0 or higher for transfer. Most financial aid, scholarships, and loans require a grade of 2.0 or better.**

## Final Grade “Pie Chart”

Your final grade is based on the criteria below:



- **Final Portfolio (40%)**
- **Homework, Quizzes, Peer Responses, In-class Activities (40%)**
- **Participation and Attendance (20%)**

**FAILURE TO SUBMIT YOUR FINAL PORTFOLIO WILL RESULT IN AUTOMATIC 0.0 FOR THE COURSE, REGARDLESS OF HOW MUCH CLASSWORK CREDIT YOU'VE EARNED—NO EXCEPTION TO THIS FOR ANY REASON.**

*“You can approach the act of writing with nervousness, excitement, hopefulness, or even despair- the sense that you can never completely put on the page what’s in your mind and heart. You can come to the act with your fists clenched and your eyes narrowed, ready to kick ass and take down names. You can come to it because you want a girl to marry you or because you want to change the world. Come to it any way but lightly. Let me say it again: you must not come lightly to the blank page.”*

*Stephen King, On Writing (106).*

