

Fall 2013 Syllabus—English 131: Writing Experience I

Instructor: Clarinda Flannery
Office: BW 223B
Office phone: 796-8537 (however, email is by far the best way to reach me)
Office Hours: M-TH 3:00 – 6:00; and by appt.
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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. Also, I accept no assignments via email attachments. You must submit a hard copy of assignments. Finally, any discussion of grades and how to write essays must be handled in person during office hours.

Important Note: 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)

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. Writing can also be a frustrating experience, especially when you are introduced to new ideas and concepts and then expected to explore those concepts on paper. 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.

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.

Required Materials

- **Required Textbook:** *Writing Today* by Richard Johnson-Sheehan and Charles Paine. Second edition. ISBN-13: 978-0-205-21008-4
- **3-ring binder** (for course handouts 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 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 **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

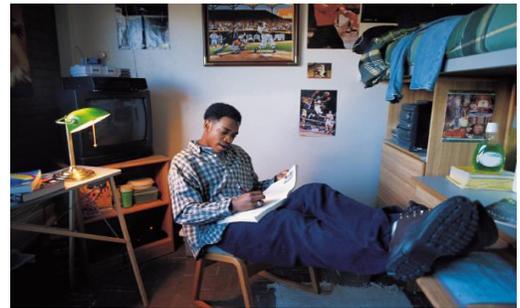
Course Design The primary business of this class is to improve your writing skills. We write, rewrite, think about writing, read about writing, and find various uses for writing. This means we will think critically, examine words, language, communication, and meaning.

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, 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 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.

Grading Scale:

Grades are based on a 4.0 scale, with 4.0 being *Excellent*. You must earn a 2.0 in this class to pass. Less than a 2.0 will not transfer for credit or serve as a prerequisite for another course. Grading scale:

95-100	4.0 (A) =	<i>superior</i> work (above and beyond what was expected)	
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 will not earn 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. If you receive this grade, you will be automatically withdrawn from the course. I assign it if I have not received work from you for four classes in a row (classwork or exams, as appropriate to the days), and/or you have been absent for four classes and have not contacted me regarding your absences.

Special Grading Situations:

- Although I am can withdraw you for non-participation before midterm, only you can initiate a withdrawal after midterm. There is a deadline for this, and Student Services can provide you with this information.

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

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.

Completion of Essays, Daily Writing and Class Assignments, and Homework (40% of Final Grade)

Each daily writing and class activity is due the day it is assigned unless I extend the time and assign it as homework. 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. These may help define your thoughts, insights, and responses to readings from the text. They will give you a chance to analyze other writers’ work. Occasionally, you will be asked to reflect on the class and on your experiences in your small groups. Some assignments offer an opportunity to think in writing, to experiment, and to record your observations. This work helps me better understand your writing process and your thoughts and reactions to the text, the class, and your peer writers.

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.

Revision is a constant, often frustrating process. Keep in mind that revision is not the same as drafting. Drafting takes place in the initial states of a writing project, when you are capturing your initial ideas in writing. Revision takes place after your initial drafts are complete. You will begin to make changes, and you’ll get feedback from your classmates and from me. Revision literally means to re-vision, to re-see your work in order to develop your ideas for readers. That is why this course is based on **revision**: every essay has the opportunity to improve every time you revise it. Evidence of revision is expected for the essays in the Portfolio.



Participation (20% of Final Grade) does not mean merely showing up and sitting in class as a passive observer. It’s much more than simply attending class. Participation means active engagement with whatever is happening in class. It means actively responding to the issues and activities of this course. Participation demands that you are willing to respond honestly and with a sense of integrity to others’ work and that you listen to the comments offered about your own work.

We will also learn a variety of ways to respond to each other's writings. Working with your classmates and provide feedback to them about their ideas and their writing are part of your participation grade. 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 your schedule when there are conflicts between work and school, family and school, this class and others you are taking. In return, I expect you to make every effort to submit your work on time.

Writing Portfolio Requirements (40% of Final Grade):

This semester, you will be assigned 4 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.

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. I will be talking with you daily about your work, and I will expect to see regular progress on your essays. Before you submit your essay to me, you must “earn the right” for me to read it. The following three conditions must be met in order to include an essay in the Final Portfolio:

1. Essays are not complete unless they are at least 2 full pages long. Having at least 2 pages means 2 FULL pages, NOT one page plus a paragraph.
2. Once you have made your essay the best that you can at this stage, you must have two of your classmates read and respond to your working draft. I will provide guidelines for this, so that it's a meaningful process. You will have deadlines for having your essay ready for peer review. These sessions are worth 10 points, and they cannot be made-up. Once two of your classmates have reviewed your essay, you will then revise it, based on their advice. When the new, revised draft is finished, you will consult with me about the revised draft. Then, you will create a third, polished draft and submit it to me, with all pre-writing and peer review sheets for my comments. NOTE: Only one essay at a time can be submitted.
3. I will not accept rough drafts. Your submitted essays should show that you have spent significant time working on them, considering your classmates' and my comments, clearly expressing your ideas, and then carefully organizing them for readers. If you try to submit a rough draft, it will be returned to you, unread. A word of caution: Essays I have not read cannot be included in the Portfolio—no exceptions.

Center for Student Success

Located in BW 125, 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.

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, leave early and miss an in-class activity, you will not be able to make-up the work. Additionally, if we have a quiz and you leave early, you get no credit for it. 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. *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 WA 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.

Electronic Gadget Policy—All techno-devices need to be turned off and put away. When class begins, I expect you to take out earpieces, close laptops, and put hand-held devices away. The only exception to this is in the event of a family emergency, such as a scheduled surgery, where you need your cell phone on. However, this must be discussed with me before class. Other than for this situation, electronic devices are not allowed—period. If I see them being used during class, I reserve the right to publicly ask you to put them away. The only exception to this policy is when the class uses the classroom computers (if available). Other than that, everything else is taboo.

Academic Honesty—JC has an academic policy that is stated in your student handbook, as well as being posted online at the JC homepage. 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 aid in anyone 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 in this area.

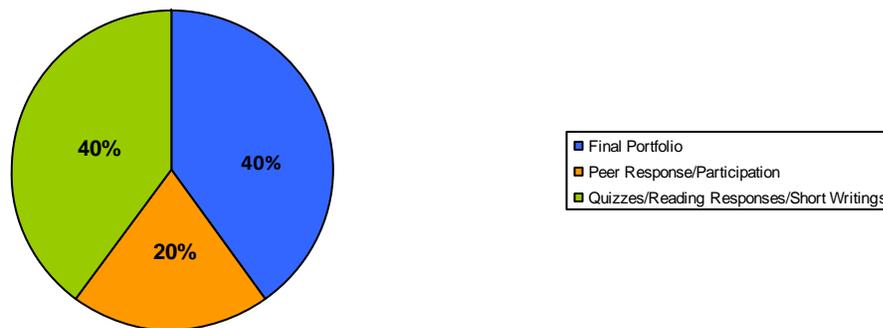
Important Note—Save all hard copies (paper), both handwritten and typed, of *all* assignments, in one of your pocket folders. For all typed work, if you have your own computer, save your work to the Desktop. In addition, "back-up" your work by saving it to your flash drive. I will also show you how to 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 drafts, peer review work, process writing prompts, reading responses, 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 Criteria

Your final grade is based on the criteria below. Your homework assignments and in-class work are equally as important as the essays you include in your Final Portfolio. You must attend regularly and complete all assignments to be successful in this course.



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

I love teaching and working with students. Please let me know what I can do to help you in your learning. I am glad you are here! Welcome!!

Clarinda

"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).

