

ENGL 1120: OBJECTIVES, REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Objectives for ENGL 1120

- To develop the student's ability to construct and critique arguments, with particular attention to writing extended essays that articulate a clear, argumentative thesis statement and that fully and effectively develop and support that thesis in a manner appropriate for the student's rhetorical objectives and intended audience. This will also include developing the student's ability to identify and employ counterarguments that could be raised against the essay's thesis and to respond to those counterarguments effectively.
- To build on prior knowledge to develop the student's ability to understand and use writing to support inquiry, learning, and critical reading and thinking, with more attention to integrating ideas from other writers. It will also further develop the student's ability to employ a voice, tone, and level of formality appropriate to the reader's expectations and understanding and demonstrate the level of competency in grammar and usage necessary to engage with an academic audience.
- To develop the student's ability to locate appropriate scholarly sources of information, engage meaningfully and critically with those sources, use them to develop and support an extended argument, and document them correctly according to the documentation style appropriate to the field or task.
- To build upon prior knowledge to develop the student's ability to use technology reflectively for a variety of writing tasks, including word processing, online and visual communication, virtual and physical research methods, and document design.

Course Requirements for ENGL 1120

Textbooks

The instructor's supplemental syllabus will list the textbooks students are required to buy. Instructors with one or more years of experience teaching composition at Auburn may select their own texts, provided that these include a handbook, an anthology of nonfiction readings (commonly called a reader), and a text that provides instruction in the writing process (a rhetoric). A single text that combines two or more of these functions can also be used.

Instructors teaching composition for the first time at Auburn are required to select their textbooks from the following list:

Handbook:

Lunsford, Andrea. *Easy Writer: A Pocket Reference*. 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006.

Reader and/or Rhetoric:

NOTE: Some of the texts below include rhetorical and handbook parts. Instructors may want to review these books, since some of them could be used in place of *Easy Writer: A Pocket Reference* or other texts listed below.

Axelrod, Rise B. and Charles R. Cooper. *Reading Critically, Writing Well*. 8th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008.

Mauk, John and John Metz. *The Composition of Everyday Life: A Guide to Writing*. Boston: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2004.

Ramage, Bean, & Johnson. *Writing Arguments: A Rhetoric with Readings*, 7th Ed. Pearson, 2006.

Rottenberg, Annette T. *Elements of Argument*. 7th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008.

Course Themes for ENGL 1120

Each section of ENGL 1120 will be assigned a theme. Instructors are expected to tailor course content to the theme of the course. The themes are not intended to imply disciplinary knowledge of a given field; rather they denote the subject matter that will be used to focus students' discussion and writing. The themes were devised as a way to reflect students' academic interests, but they were also intended to allow for discussions of the major social, ethical, legal, and economic implications of these fields. Although many of the themes refer to academic disciplines, the revised curriculum primarily concentrates on argumentative writing, so students and instructors do not need a strong background in any of the themes in order to take those courses, nor do must they intend to major in those disciplines.

During 2008-09, students will have a choice of six themes from which they can choose (see listing below and descriptions at the end of this handbook). These themes broadly cover major subject areas represented by Auburn University's twelve colleges as well as reflecting two of Auburn's interdisciplinary initiatives (cultural diversity and sustainability):

Themes for 2008-09

Business

Cultural Diversity

Health & Medicine

Liberal Arts

Science & Technology

Sustainability

Writing Requirements for ENGL 1120

Students will write between 5700-7700 words (23-31 pages) for graded work. This will be divided among the following writing assignments:

- Four essays to be written out of class. These essays will count for 80% of the course grade. Instructors should require students to practice drafting and revision for all essays.
- Writing that supports the four essays. This may include short papers, journals, and responses to reading assignments. Instructors will generally score or grade this work, and the details for doing so will be explained in their syllabus. This writing counts for 10% of the course grade.
- A final paper, to be written or presented during the university-mandated exam time, and counting for 10% of the course grade.

The four essays for this course are described below in order of their instruction:

Essay #1: Analysis and evaluation of an argument (3-4 pages)

This assignment asks students to systematically break an argument into its constituent elements and then create an essay that discusses how the argument works. In addition, assignment #1 asks students to evaluate the argument based on some set of criteria acceptable to the academic community. This assignment will teach keyword searching in general databases, and the argument should come from popular media sources.

Essay #2: Comparison/contrast of two sources (4-5 pages):

This assignment invites students to explore key similarities and differences between two sources, one that the class has covered and a second that the students found on their own, in order to make a point about the two sources. Essay #2 asks students to move beyond merely reporting the similarities and differences between the sources and to work toward fleshing out what those similarities and differences represent, reveal, or demonstrate. This assignment also introduces students to using scholarly sources as well as popular ones, so the students' source can come from scholarly sources.

Essay #3: Construct an argument by synthesizing three (or more) sources (5-6 pages)

This assignment asks students to engage with two related sources, one that the class has discussed as a whole and others that they've found on their own, and then combine information from those sources with their own ideas to coherently and logically develop a thesis. This assignment also introduces students to discipline-specific databases for scholarly sources and locating print sources in the library.

Essay #4: Construct an extended argument based on multiple sources (8-12 pages)

Essay # 4 requires students to engage meaningfully with multiple sources (at least 6-8 sources) and then organize, analyze, and synthesize information from those sources to develop an original argument. This assignment will require that students utilize all the information literacy skills they have acquired throughout the semester.

*Essay #5: Reflective Essay (based on students' portfolio, 3-4 pages)****

Essay #5 might ask students to put together an essay in which they reflect on the writing and learning they've done throughout the semester. At the end of the semester, students will use key points from this reflective essay to put together an oral presentation of their growth as writers in ENGL 1120.

*** This assignment counts as the University-mandated "Final Exam."

Grades in ENGL 1120

General Grading Policy

Instructors of ENGL 1120 use their experience and professional judgment to evaluate a student's writing. The criteria for separate grades given below help guide them in their evaluation and can help students understand what will be expected of them in the course. As the criteria show, instructors evaluate more than grammar and the formal correctness of the essay. They'll take into account support and evidence for claims, the quality of the prose, and other rhetorical features that aid the reader in understanding the essay.

Students are encouraged to read these criteria carefully and to ask their instructors to explain anything they don't understand. As students will find, these criteria differ in many ways from those they might have become familiar with in high school. Just as importantly, students should not use their grades in high school English as a predictor or indicator of their performance in college composition. Nor should they count on the opinions of former teachers or parents to overrule the evaluations of their ENGL 1120 instructor.

Instructors may build additional requirements into their assignments that will factor in to the grade a student gets. These factors should be consistent with the philosophy and objectives of the course.

Challenging a Grade on a Paper or for the Course

Students who wish to challenge the grade on a paper or for the course must follow the procedures for filing an academic grievance, as spelled out in *The Tiger Cub*. Before doing so, students should know specifically what kinds of grievances are possible. Merely believing that one should have gotten a higher grade does not usually qualify as a legitimate grievance. Students who believe they do have a legitimate grievance should first contact their instructor. If this isn't possible, they should come to the English Department and ask to speak with the Department Head or the Coordinator of Composition.

Grading Criteria for Essays in ENGL 1120

Many of the same factors which go into evaluating and grading essays in ENGL 1100 are applicable to essays written in ENGL 1120. The difference is that expectations are higher, and papers will be evaluated on their research, the quality of argument, and documentation mechanics. These are covered below.

The “A” Essay

The superior “A” paper demonstrates the writer’s ability to address the rhetorical situation (the assignment) in innovative, creative, and perceptive ways. The thesis is argumentative, insightful, and crystal clear. All ideas in the paper flow logically; the argument is extensive, identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Essay demonstrates mastery of rhetorical appeals and ample consideration of counterargument(s) that could be raised against thesis. Content and overall writing style are striking and the purpose is distinguished by extraordinary depth and breadth of insight; effective use of a variety of appropriate support/sources. The essay includes excellent integration and effective use of direct quotes, paraphrases, summaries, and citations of outside material according to assignment parameters. Overall structure, organization, and paragraph construction are appropriate to the assignment and an academic audience. The writer shows consistent awareness of audience/reader expectations as evidenced by voice, tone, and level of formality appropriate to assignment. Transitions show originality and sophistication. Sentence structure, grammar, and diction are excellent; correct use of punctuation and citation style; minimal to no spelling errors. . Indication of strong proficiency with technology element as defined by assignment (ie. effective incorporation of commonly used research databases and web sources or masterful incorporation of technological creativity according to assignment).

The “B” Essay

The good “B” paper demonstrates the writer’s ability to address the rhetorical situation (the assignment) beyond mere competency. The thesis is promising but may be slightly unclear, or somewhat lacking in insight or originality. Most ideas in the paper flow logically; the argument of the paper is clear, adequately developed, and usually makes sense. Essay demonstrates respectable attention to and understanding of appeals, and evidences sufficient consideration of counterargument(s) that could be raised against thesis. Content and overall writing style reflects adequate concern for the reader and the purpose. Some evidence does not support main point, or may appear where inappropriate. Good integration and reasonable use of direct quotes, paraphrases, summaries, and/or citations of outside material into sentences according to assignment parameters. Writer’s credibility is strong. Overall structure, organization, and paragraph construction are appropriate to the assignment and an academic audience, though may be less evident and understandable in some places. Moderate awareness of audience/reader expectations as evidenced by voice, tone, and level of formality appropriate to assignment.

Transitions are adequate but may be unclear or missing at times. Sentence structure, grammar, and diction are strong despite occasional lapses; punctuation and citation style often used correctly; some minor spelling errors. . Indication of respectable proficiency with technology element as defined by assignment (ie. effective incorporation of commonly used research databases and web sources or masterful incorporation of technological creativity according to assignment).

The “C” Essay

The competent “C” paper demonstrates the writer’s ability to address the rhetorical situation (the assignment) adequately. The thesis may be unclear and contain many vague terms, appear unoriginal, or offer relatively little that is new; provides little around which to structure the paper. The main idea is recognizable but is somewhat ineffective and lacks depth and development. The argument of the paper is often unclear, inadequately developed, and does not always flow logically and make sense. Essay demonstrates unpredictable attention to and slim understanding of rhetorical appeals, and evidences insufficient consideration of counterargument(s) that could be raised against thesis. Content and overall writing style are somewhat appropriate for the audience but are not exceptionally engaging; thesis/main points often lack supporting evidence, or evidence used where inappropriate (often because there may be no clear point). The essay demonstrates inconsistent integration and use of direct quotes, paraphrases, summaries, and/or citations of outside material into sentences according to assignment parameters. Writer’s credibility is compromised. Overall structure, organization, and paragraph construction are readable, somewhat appropriate to the assignment and an academic audience, though may be a bit awkward in some places. The essay demonstrates meager awareness of audience/reader expectations as evidenced by voice, tone, and level of formality somewhat inappropriate to assignment. Transitions are formulaic and may be few or weak. Sentence structure, grammar, and diction have problems (usually not major); errors in punctuation and citation style; some major spelling errors indicative of careless proofreading. Some attempt made at using the technology element as defined by assignment (ie. incorporation of commonly used research databases and web sources or incorporation of technological creativity according to assignment).

The “D” Essay

The “D” paper only begins to meet the assignment requirements, indicating the writer’s ability to address the rhetorical situation (the assignment) somewhat competently, but the writing contains major weaknesses and/or flaws that mark it as less than what is expected in one or more of the following ways: The thesis is difficult to identify; may be a bland restatement of an obvious (non-debatable) point. The main idea is barely recognizable and is wholly ineffective, confused or too general. The paper lacks coherence, providing no discernible argument; ideas do not flow logically and do not make sense. Scant or no attention to rhetorical appeals; little to no

addressing of counterargument(s). Content and overall writing style is inconsistent, simplistic, and inappropriate for the audience. The support offered is weak, vague, unconvincing, inaccurate, irrelevant or too narrow in focus; there is a general failure to support statements or evidence seems to support no statement. Scant or no insightful connections to outside material made. Quotes, paraphrases, summaries, and reference are not integrated appropriately. Analysis is scant or very weak in attempt to relate evidence to argument; may be no identifiable argument, or no evidence to relate argument to. Writer's credibility is suspect. Overall structure, organization, and paragraph construction are difficult to read, or inappropriate for audience. Little to no awareness of audience/reader expectations. Transitions are confusing or nonexistent. Sentence structure, grammar, and diction have major problems (so many that the text is difficult to read – ie. awkward, vague); frequent major errors in punctuation and citation style; frequent and repeated major spelling errors indicative of careless proofreading. Inadequate attempt made at using the technology element as defined by assignment (ie. incorporation of commonly used research databases and web sources or incorporation of technological creativity according to assignment).

The “F” Essay

The “F” paper fails to address the assignment and shows an obvious minimal lack of effort or comprehension of assignment purpose. The writing is very difficult to understand owing to major problems with organization, clarity, structure, analysis, and mechanics. There is no thesis (or thesis is unclear, unsuitable to assignment, and does not adequately address assignment topic and rhetorical situation); no central main idea, no support or evidence, unreadable style and voice or tone alienates audience). Substantial errors in grammar and mechanics that deviates significantly from conventions of standard written English. Research and technology inappropriately incorporated (if at all) and is incorrectly documented.