

**Instructor's Supplement
for
ENGL 1100: English Composition I
and
ENGL 1120: English Composition II
2006-2007**

Introduction

The English Department at Auburn is fortunate to have so many experienced and talented people teaching in the Composition Program, but our good fortune does present one challenge: finding the balance between a prescriptiveness too distasteful for most professionals in higher education and an anything-goes approach that could end up being counterproductive to the mission of the English Department. The challenge is heightened by some other factors: more than 4000 students will register for over 250 sections of ENGL 1100 and 1120 in the coming year, and responsible pedagogical practice requires a minimal degree of commonality among all sections of a course to insure as much equity for our students as possible.

The *Instructor's Supplement* you have here attempts to locate that balance. It describes the university and department policies that govern the Composition Program as well as other policies where teachers have more flexibility, it provides an overview of the process pedagogy used in the classroom, and it sets down the philosophy, objectives, and requirements of the two composition courses. Though some policies are, by necessity, prescriptive--the language of the text will indicate these--most of what this document contains are descriptions of common practices in the teaching of composition and recommendations for the most effective teaching methods. In writing the *Instructor's Supplement*, then, we have been guided by the following statement as drafted by the Composition Committee:

Each section of English Composition is a single course of instruction, and teachers, depending on their experience, are given considerable autonomy in determining how to teach their sections. But ENGL 1100 and 1120 are multi-section courses, which means that there should be commonality in requirements, workload, general policies, and objectives. This is necessary as a matter of professional ethics and fairness to our students and, where unavoidable, university policy.

These conflicting features of multi-section courses have some important implications:

Complaints arise if students perceive that the workload, the nature of the assignments, attendance policies, and so on in sections other than their own are significantly different, which to some students may also mean easier. Such complaints are difficult to resolve because the burden falls on the English Department to demonstrate that the student's

claims are unfounded, and it is not always the case that they are. When it turns out that the student is right--as happens when there are fewer required essays in some sections than in others or when some instructors require final exams but others do not--it is nearly impossible to negotiate a just solution when so many are affected. Typically, grievances follow.

We must operate as well within the constraints of the university. For example, a final exam in English Composition is a university requirement. In addition, English Department policy states that the exam be held at the designated time and that it be proctored by the teacher of record. Neither the Composition Committee nor individual teachers can afford to be unaware of these and other policies, for if the policies are not met inequities are instantly created, making teachers and the English Department vulnerable to embarrassment or administrative action.

At the same time, we are sensitive to the wide range of experience in the people who teach in the Composition Program. Beginning teachers typically need more guidance in their first year of teaching, as well as systematic instruction into the professional and pedagogical aspects of teaching composition. For first-year GTAs in the MA and MTPC programs, this is accomplished through the practicum and co-teaching program. (GTAs with fewer than 18 semester hours of graduate course work do not teach their own classes.) For advanced GTAs, it is accomplished through additional professional development provided by the Composition Program and the English Department. Experienced teachers are welcome to craft their own teaching methods or to adopt those they have successfully used in the past, so long as these do not violate the requirement for commonality to such an extent that inequities across sections result.

The *Student Guidelines*, which is available on the web via the English Department web site, and supporting materials such as this document reflect all of these realities. Course objectives and writing assignments adhere to the constraints of a multi-section course and are accordingly presented as requirements in the Composition Program; we ask all teachers to observe them. In other aspects, however, latitude exists so that experienced teachers may use the teaching methods they believe will best achieve the course objectives.

What you will find in the *Instructor's Supplement* are the following:

Part 1: General Policies describes those policies that are administrative in nature. The first four (registration and enrollment, dropping a class, plagiarism, and accommodations for students with disabilities) are mandated by the university. The remaining policies are less prescriptive, in part because the university leaves their definition and implementation up to the department or teacher; nevertheless, we recommend specific policies in light of the equity concerns expressed above.

Part 2 (beginning on page 10): Composition At Auburn University: Philosophy, Objectives, and Pedagogy focuses on the courses. Besides a general statement of philosophy and course objectives, in this part we review the course requirements for your students and describe the general features of the process pedagogy.

On behalf of the English Department and the Composition Program, I want to extend my thanks for your willingness to take on an important part of the English Department's teaching mission. If there is anything I can do to help you in your teaching, please don't hesitate to talk with me.

Michelle Sidler
Coordinator of Composition

Part 1: General Policies

Registration and Enrollment

Admitting a Student to Class

Students must be properly enrolled in your class to receive credit for the course. In most cases, students who attend your first class meeting will be enrolled and will thus have their names on your roster. However, some students may have added the class after you obtained your roster; please ask these students to show proof (a schedule will do) that they have enrolled in your class. In a few instances, the Coordinator of Composition will have added a student; this student should present you with a schedule with the Coordinator of Composition's signature and a note saying, "OK to admit." If a student is not enrolled in your class, don't allow that student to remain in the expectation that he/she might be added later. In short, all students not officially enrolled should be referred to the Coordinator of Composition, who alone has the authority to add students to classes.

In general, no students will be added to a section of English Composition after the second class meeting. On those occasions when a student is added, it is usually for one of two reasons: a) the student's schedule was canceled due to an administrative error; or, b) the student is a sophomore or above and has been unable to get into a class, despite efforts to do so. Whenever possible, a student will be added to a section with fewer than 25 students in it.

Prerequisites for English Composition

Students enrolled in ENGL 1120, English Composition II, must have completed Composition I (at Auburn or elsewhere) with a grade of C or higher, or must have tested out of Composition I with a qualifying score on an entrance exam. (The tests and scores that are accepted are given in the *Student Guidelines*.) If you are teaching ENGL 1120, inform your students on the first day of class of these prerequisites. Remind them specifically that they must have earned a grade of C or higher if they took Composition I.

Dropping ENGL 1100 or ENGL 1120

Students may drop a class at any time up to mid-semester without penalty and without approval from the University or Department. Students may not drop a class after mid-semester unless they petition the Dean of their school. Advise students to consult the *Auburn University 2004-2005 Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin* for an explanation of the policy governing withdrawal from a class after mid-semester. If a student presents you with a drop or resignation form at any time during the semester, complete the parts you're required to and return the form to the student.

By mid-semester students should have received enough graded work back from you to determine for themselves whether to stay in the class. If the student asks for your recommendation about staying in the class, we suggest that you refrain from telling the student yes or no: the student may interpret a “yes” as an indication that they’re guaranteed a C and a “no” as an indication that you’ve already decided to fail them. You can, however, give your assessment of the student’s standing in the class at that moment, and you should advise the student on what he or she must do to improve the grade, but the decision to drop the class must be made by the student. If the student requests such advice from you after mid-semester, recommend that he or she consult with an advisor or the Dean’s office.

Plagiarism

The Tiger Cub, under its “Academic Honesty Policy,” describes the procedures by which cases of suspected academic dishonesty are to be handled, and you should initiate the procedure as soon as you read a paper or other student work that you think might be the product of dishonesty. Do not impose sanctions of your own, even if you’re convinced that an assignment was plagiarized. If you’re unsure about a student’s work, please see the Coordinator of Composition.

Please keep in mind that students sometimes plagiarize without knowing it, and often this is because they do not understand how to incorporate research material into their work or how to cite and document it correctly. Although these matters are covered in class, especially ENGL 1120, errors in research and documentation do occur. If a student appears to be having trouble understanding the concepts, confer with this student while the paper is in progress to explain the nature and seriousness of the problem and to encourage revision. The grade on the paper may be lowered if, in your estimation, the student has failed to apply appropriately and correctly the required format but has not deliberately attempted to commit academic dishonesty or plagiarism.

Accommodations for Students with Special Needs

A student who has registered with the Auburn University Program for Students with Disabilities will present you with a confidential memo from that office outlining the special accommodations the student needs for your class. Regardless of when the student presents the memo, you are required by law to meet these needs from that time until the end of the semester.

The following statement, or one similar to it, must appear in your supplemental syllabus:

“Students with documentation of special needs should arrange to see me as soon as possible.”

You are not required to extend accommodations to any student who does not present a memo from the Program for Students with Disabilities. Should you have questions about the appropriateness of accommodations, see the Coordinator of Composition or call the

Program at 334-844-2096.

Class Attendance

The *Tiger Cub* states that “Specific policies regarding class attendance are the prerogative of individual faculty [and should be stated] in writing at the beginning of the course.”

The English Department strongly recommends that you adopt its policy regarding unexcused absences, which is as follows: In Tuesday-Thursday sections, students will receive a grade of FA (failure due to absences) upon their third unexcused absence. In Monday-Wednesday-Friday sections, the FA is given upon the fourth unexcused absence. Whatever policy you adopt, be sure your students know what it is and understand how it works.

It is also University and Department policy that students not be penalized for excused absences, regardless of the number. However, if the student has made arrangements with you to make up missed work but has failed to fulfill the terms of these arrangements, you can refuse to accept the late work or impose other appropriate sanctions. You should state these terms in your supplemental syllabus and apply them uniformly for all of your students.

You have the authority to verify that an absence was legitimate. Ask the student to provide some form of official, and verifiable, documentation, if you think you need this to confirm the status of the absence. (We recommend that you do this as a matter of course for all legitimate absences.) Students who have been ill should provide a note from their health-care provider on their first day back in class. It may be difficult to get documentation for a family emergency, and you may feel awkward about asking a student for a note after attending the funeral of a close relative. Use your judgment; perhaps your best approach is to make it clear to students from the start that all legitimate absences must be documented.

In the case of a student who anticipates missing class for an extended period of time (three or more consecutive class meetings) for a legitimate reason, work out a schedule with the student ahead of time for completing missed work after he or she returns. Obviously, there are some caveats. Students who miss a great many classes, several weeks, say, may need to be considered for an Incomplete (especially if the absences come near the end of the semester), or may need to consult with their advisor or Dean about withdrawing from the class. Explain in your supplemental syllabus how you’ll handle cases of extended but legitimate absences. Also remind students to see you before the beginning of an extended absence known about in advance.

Students are expected to arrive in the classroom on time, preferably a few minutes before class is scheduled to begin. You may impose sanctions for tardiness; most teachers, in fact, will count two or three tardies as equivalent to one absence. Be sure your students know your policy on tardiness. If a student tells you that he or she might be late because the instructor in a class before yours keeps students late, contact the Coordinator of Composition. Sometimes a simple phone call can resolve the issue. We also encourage

you to be in the classroom at least five minutes before class is scheduled to begin.

Keep accurate records of your students' attendance. This may seem like obvious advice, but occasionally students will bring grade appeals on the basis of what they believed to be the instructor's inaccurate or erroneous absence records. In cases where the records were incomplete or unclear, the student and instructor often wound up in a memory tug-of-war, and whatever the eventual outcome, the process was messy and uncomfortable. And sometimes a student will present documentation months after the fact, which means you have to factor in the memory—or inventiveness—of a third party you don't even know.

Assigned Work

From the *Tiger Cub*: "The student shall be expected to carry out all assigned work and to take examinations at the class period designated by the instructor. Failure to carry out these assignments or to take examinations at the designated times may result in an appropriate reduction in grade."

Your students will write more than the assigned out-of-class essays. If they are to do well in the course, you'll assign them other kinds of writing designed to introduce them to the rhetorical issues crucial to the successful completion of the essays. Such writing might include journal entries, drafts, responses to readings, and so on. Be sure to inform your students of the standards you expect them to meet in these assignments and of the consequences if they do not. Most teachers will lower the grade of a formal essay if the student has not completed most or all of the other writing associated with it. However, it is generally not a good idea to fail a student on an essay if he or she failed to complete just one or two pre-writing assignments.

Regarding late work: Most teachers reduce the grade of an essay by one letter for each class day it is late. They will also deduct points or impose some other sanction for other work, including informal writing assignments and readings, not completed on time. Some teachers will not accept an assignment at all if it is late. Just be aware that a student who misses a due date because of an excused absence must be given time to finish the assignment without penalty, which means that you should grant an extension of the due date. However, your students should be aware that even in the case of excused absences they have the responsibility of keeping you informed of their status and making a good faith effort to make up missed or late work. You should therefore grant extensions only under the condition that the student inform you, in a timely manner and in an appropriate fashion (such as a doctor's note), that he or she will be or has been legitimately absent.

Most teachers will not allow students to make up work missed due to unexcused tardiness or absence.

You may penalize a student who fails to submit work of acceptable quality or fails to submit such work on time. (Acceptable quality can include format requirements, such as those listed in the *Student Guidelines*.) Penalties can take the form of a reduction in

grade, or a refusal to grade the paper at all. However, you are required to explain in writing at the beginning of the semester how a student's performance in these matters will affect his or her grade on an assignment or his or her final grade.

Textbooks

Your supplemental syllabus will list the textbooks students are required to buy. Instructors with one or more year of experience teaching composition at Auburn may select their own texts, provided that these include a handbook, an anthology of non-fiction 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:

ENGL 1100

Handbook:

Hult, Christine A. and Thomas N. Huckin. *The New Century Handbook*. Custom ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2005. (Includes some rhetoric.)

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 *The New Century Handbook* or other texts listed below.

Axelrod, Rise B. and Charles R. Cooper. *Reading Critically, Writing Well*. 7th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.

Cooley, Thomas. *The Norton Sampler: Short Essays for Composition*. 6th ed. New York: Norton, 1997.

Mauk, John and John Metz. *The Composition of Everyday Life: A Guide to Writing*. 2nd ed. Boston: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2007.

Silverman, Jonathan and Dean Rader. *The World is a Text*. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2006.

ENGL 1120

Handbook:

Hult, Christine A. and Thomas N. Huckin. *The New Century Handbook*. Custom ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2005. (Includes some rhetoric.)

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 *The New Century Handbook* or other texts listed below.

Axelrod, Rise B. and Charles R. Cooper. *Reading Critically, Writing Well.* 7th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.

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

Rottenberg, Annette T. *Elements of Argument.* 8th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.

We ask you to use the required texts, for the sake of program integrity and consistency, and in fairness to all students taking our courses. The required texts fit the goals and objectives of our courses, the process pedagogy we use, and the kinds of writing we ask our students to do.

We do invite all teachers of composition to recommend textbooks to the Composition Committee for possible adoption in the future. Over the course of a year, members of the Committee will receive examination copies of new textbooks from the publishers, and you are welcome to look through the copies at your leisure. In the spring semester the Committee will review the textbooks currently in use and as many of the new textbooks as possible, and the Committee relies heavily on the opinions and recommendations of teachers in making its decision.

Only on rare occasions will the Coordinator of Composition approve an alternate textbook as a replacement for a text in the syllabus, and usually only for teachers in their second or subsequent year of teaching composition at Auburn. If you would like to use an alternate text, please follow this procedure:

Choose a textbook that substantially matches the content and organization of the text being replaced and that is compatible with the pedagogy and objectives of the course.

Fill out the Textbook Request Form (available from Jean Joiner, the departmental staff person who handles textbooks, or Michelle Sidler, Coordinator of Composition) and submit it to the Coordinator of Composition before the middle of the semester *preceding* the semester when you plan to use the text.

The request form is important. Jean Joiner will not send your book order to the bookstore if it does not have the signature of the Coordinator of Composition.

Supplemental Syllabus

Provide your students with a supplemental syllabus that outlines policies specific to your class (although these should not contradict stated policies of the University or English Department). At a minimum it should provide essential information about yourself (name, office number and hours, etc.) and the course and explain such matters as your attendance policies, requirements for assigned work, how you will determine the final grade, and so on. Some teachers will give their students a schedule of class activities for the semester. Please give a copy of your supplemental syllabus to the Coordinator of Composition by the end of the first week of classes.

Office Hours

Please schedule and keep at least five office hours a week.

Part 2: Composition At Auburn University: Philosophy, Objectives, and Pedagogy

Composition Philosophy

Learning to write and read well are complementary activities and thus parallel learning objectives. The governing assumption of a writing course is that improvement in both is possible. Thus, exposure to the rhetorical nature of writing and reading plays a significant part in a student's development as a writer. Successful learning therefore requires that students be given ample opportunities to write in an environment that is challenging but also supportive.

Writing and reading are kinds of thinking: improvement in one is connected with improvement in the other. Students therefore need to develop strong writing and reading skills, including exposure to writing and reading processes, if they are to become thoughtful writers and perceptive readers. Responsible composition pedagogy should help students learn these processes.

In a freshman writing course, the reading and writing processes students learn should prepare them for the reading and writing they can expect in other college courses. Instruction should be tailored accordingly: specifically, reading non-fiction prose and writing non-fiction essays.

Instruction in writing is also an important part of students' intellectual development and helps prepare them for participation in society beyond college. It is an essential part of students' introduction to the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy. As such, writing can be construed as a private and social act. As a private act, it helps students know themselves better as writers and thinkers and become more confident in expressing themselves. As a social act, it helps students establish their presence in the world, acknowledge the presence of others, and make their thoughts known in responsible and ethical ways.

Course Objectives

ENGL 1100

- To become adept at using writing processes that will help students achieve the general objectives of English Composition. Processes include various kinds of prewriting and discovery, drafting and reviewing drafts, editing and revising, and submitting polished essays on time and in the appropriate format.
- To develop and articulate a claim that answers to the requirements of the assignment and that represents a thoughtful understanding of the issues the student is writing about.
- To support the claim with evidence that answers to the requirements of the assignment and that demonstrates the student's ability to make appropriate rhetorical and logical choices.
- To become proficient in the conventions of standard written English appropriate for an academic audience or educated readers and to apply these conventions to meet the requirements of the assignment.
- To become proficient in writing with some stylistic fluency and to begin to attain a mature understanding of prose style.
- To identify and assess the rhetorical effectiveness and appropriateness of various kinds of texts and to make critical judgments about these texts.

ENGL 1120

- To continue to develop the student's proficiency at using writing processes, with more attention on the research process. This would include locating sources in a variety of media; evaluating sources for validity, reliability, and applicability; and making intelligent choices of sources that are appropriate for the requirements of the assignment and the rhetorical objectives of the essay.
- To use the research process to develop and support claims. In particular, to quote, paraphrase, and summarize sources accurately, to incorporate sources smoothly into the essay, and to use sources to support an argument of the student's own making.
- To learn to apply correctly the mechanics of documentation and citation according to the Modern Language Association (preferred) or some other established organization.
- To further develop the student's critical reading skills, as evidenced in various written exercises, with attention given to the text's argumentative validity and its appropriate use of rhetoric and logic to advance its case.

Instruction in Writing

Students should receive instruction in how to write each assigned essay, and instruction should cover the whole writing process, including invention and prewriting; drafting, developing, and supporting arguments; review and response; editing; and revision and presentation to the teacher. The emphasis in ENGL 1100 is on writing expository essays that do not require research. In ENGL 1120, students will write argumentative essays that do require library research. The amount of graded writing in each course should come to approximately 3500-4500 words.

Writing Assignments in ENGL 1100

Students will write four essays:

- An essay that explores the significance of an experience in the student's life. The student should strive to make a claim or reach a conclusion about the meaning of the experience and that goes beyond the statement of a simple moral or lesson learned. The essay can be exploratory, in that the student confronts a question or problem he or she has been unable to resolve. Instructors should set boundaries as to how personal or confessional the essay can be.
- An essay that describes, in some detail, what the student has observed and that attempts to make some sense of the meaning of these observations. The assignment may ask the student to argue for an interpretation, though an argumentative thesis is not required. The essay should, however, present an organized response to the student's observations and, like the personal experience essay, be more than an itemized description followed by a moral or lesson.
- A critical reading of a non-fiction text, chosen by the instructor or by the student in consultation with the instructor. Critical reading should include an assessment of the rhetorical features of the text. The requirement that this essay be confined to a non-fiction text is based on two considerations: program objectives, which emphasize improving students' proficiency in reading non-fiction, and university assessments, which have indicated weaknesses in Auburn University students' reading skills.
- An expository essay of a type and on a topic chosen by the instructor or by the instructor and students. The genre, topic, and subject matter are at the instructor's discretion, but the assignment should address the objectives of ENGL 1100 and help students improve their ability to meet these objectives.

Writing Assignments in ENGL 1120

Students will write three essays:

- An essay that evaluates sources according to criteria developed by the instructor and that build on the critical reading skills developed in ENGL 1100. The assignment may begin by asking students to write an annotation or précis of each source, but the final document should be an essay that evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the sources and assesses their value in the student's research for the course. Instructors should be clear on the number of sources required for this assignment and should also use this assignment to teach their students proper documentation format.

At least one of these next two essays requires the use of sources and their proper citation and documentation.

- An essay that argues for a claim or thesis, or that develops and argues for the validity of an idea or for the student's understanding of an idea. Students should be reminded that this is not an opinion paper only. The essay is to be grounded in a sound knowledge of the subject matter and of the writings of others on the subject. The paper should go beyond persuasion and should be addressed to readers who are familiar enough with the subject to make an intelligent assessment of the essay's credibility.
- An essay that identifies and demonstrates the existence of a problem, evaluates proposed solutions, and argues on behalf of a solution or a combination of solutions.

Instruction in Grammar and Usage

University-level instruction in composition presumes that students possess a basic proficiency in the conventions of edited American English and that it is their responsibility to gain this proficiency if they do not already have it. Thus, we do not expect you to teach grammar and mechanics on a regular basis. However, on occasion it may be necessary that you address specific grammatical problems that seem to be common in your students' writing. If so, you can address these problems in mini-lessons that fit into the larger context of the day's work.

Individual students with particular problems in grammar and usage may be referred to the English Center for additional tutoring. This tutoring should, of course, supplement any instruction you give to the student.

Occasionally, you may get students, especially in ENGL 1100, who demonstrate such severe weakness in the conventions of written English as to make it very unlikely that they will pass the course. If you have such a student in your class, please see the Coordinator of Composition.

Instruction in Reading

You should assign your students enough reading to support the objectives of the course. In general, this means that your students should read all sections of *The New Century*

Handbook relevant to the writing they'll do. In ENGL 1100, encourage your students to read as much of the reader as they can, but schedule regular assignments and follow these up with discussions or other classroom activities that assist your students in the writing of their essays. In ENGL 1120, in addition to *The New Century Handbook*, you should also use a reader that provides examples of writing based on research as well as some topic ideas. Make frequent use of it.

Although you'll grade your students on how well they write, their reading will figure in to the successful completion of their writing assignments. Thus, both courses give considerable weight to reading strategies and the application of these strategies to the reading of assigned essays. You may choose not to discuss some assigned readings in class. However, discussion, when it does occur, should emphasize the relevance of assigned readings to the writing instruction of the assigned essays, though discussion of issues raised in the readings can be a part of this emphasis.

To encourage prompt and careful reading of assigned material, you might wish to assign frequent reading journal entries, quizzes, or both.

A recent survey of Composition teachers in the department indicated some interest in having students read, and write about, literary works in Composition. If you are interested in doing so, please do so sparingly. The emphasis in Composition is on the reading and understanding of non-fiction writing and on evaluating and using non-fiction for the research projects. Also, students will take two semesters of World Literature as part of the University Core.

Library Orientation

ENGL 1120 classes will each attend two library orientation sessions. Because the logistics of scheduling more than 100 sections is so complicated, planning is handled by the Assistant Coordinator of Composition, Kathy McClelland. She will get a memo with details to all teachers early in the semester. If you have any questions, feel free to stop by her office in Haley Center, 8080.

Conferences

We recommend that you meet regularly with your students and that you have a statement in your supplemental syllabus that explains your conference policy. You may cancel classes if you plan to set aside several days for conferences, but try not to cancel more than two (TH) or three (MWF) classes in a row. Some teachers will count a missed conference as an unexcused absence. Make sure you note this in your supplemental syllabus.

Final Examination

The final examination must be administered under your supervision at the time and day assigned by the University exam schedule. You cannot change the day or time. A

student may request to take the exam at a different time, but only for a legitimate reason (such as a schedule conflict with another exam) and only with the approval of his or her Dean.

The Composition Committee, after consultation with the Department Head and the composition faculty, has developed these general principles for the final exams in ENGL 1100 and 1120:

The exam should test your students' understanding and mastery of the objectives of the course. These will be tested in an essay of about 500-750 words (2-3 pages) to be written during the exam period. You may include other test formats (short answer, identification, etc.), but your students should spend a majority of the exam time writing an essay.

The exam should allow the student to demonstrate his or her ability in using the writing process to produce an original essay.

Preparation for the exam takes place during the last two or three class meetings of the semester. Two models of preparation are given in the Instructor's Teaching Aids.

Course Grade

80% of the student's course grade is based on the grades he or she receives on the major essays. The other 20% is divided as follows: 10% for the final exam, and 10% for other assigned writings, quizzes, class participation, and so on. Of this last group, students should successfully complete at least 60% of the work; you may deduct from the student's course grade if he or she does not meet this requirement.

Evaluation of Student Writing

Typically, the process for each of the major essays goes as follows. Students will write a full draft of the essay. This draft will then be reviewed, by you and/or by other students, and returned to the author with suggestions for revision and editing. Students will then revise and submit a final version for a grade.

You can handle the review and response in one of several ways: 1) collect the drafts, take them home, write response comments, and return them to your students; 2) conduct the reviews during a conference with the student; 3) conduct in-class peer reviews.

The first method described above gives you maximum involvement in (and control over) revision and rewriting, but it is also the most labor-intensive and the one least likely to promote the student's involvement in his or her writing process, since often the student will defer to your comments and seek to do exactly what you say, but no more.

The second method can be unwieldy, since you'll need to review the drafts before you confer with the student, and the method can become as time consuming as the first. One

way to make conferences more efficient, however, is to put more responsibility on the student to set the agenda and come to the conference prepared to explain and defend the revisions he or she plans. You'll still have to read the student's draft and be ready to discuss its strengths and weaknesses with the student, but you won't need to spend an inordinate amount of time writing comments and laying out the revision strategy yourself.

The third method subordinates teacher involvement and control to student empowerment and authority, though it still demands considerable management on your part to ensure that the reviews are pedagogically effective. As above, you'll need to know the status of your students' drafts, and you may need to intervene with individual students and in the peer review process itself.

In general, we recommend that you use all of the above methods, in various degrees and combinations, as the needs of individual students and the class as a whole dictate. You will probably find that, as the semester progresses, students should come to depend less on your direct involvement in the writing process and more on their own resources, both as authors of their own work and as readers of each other's work.

You should return rough drafts within one calendar week after you're collected them, and you should leave your students sufficient time to revise their drafts before turning them in for a grade. Likewise, final copies of the essay, with the grade, should be returned within one week after you've collected them. Be sure that you have graded and returned one major essay and several short assignments before mid semester. By all means, avoid stacking up assignments at the end of the semester.

Grade Distribution

It is important that we maintain fair and reasonable grading standards in ENGL 1100 and 1120; the long-term effectiveness of the Composition Program depends on this. Accordingly, we try to develop, as much as possible, a shared sense of what those grading standards are. We therefore include a statement on grading and Grading Criteria for both courses in the *Student Guidelines*. In addition, we schedule workshops on evaluating and grading during the pre-semester workshops for new GTAs, and we can schedule additional workshops as needed at other times during the year for all faculty. Please don't think that your grade distribution should match some theoretically "perfect" distribution. Our in-service workshops and grading criteria are not designed toward this end. However, as you probably know, grade inflation is a serious problem, and it is the kind of problem that can be addressed only through the conscientious efforts of all who teach composition to know and apply the standards developed by the Composition Committee. This will help insure that the grades are fair and that they are accurate reflections of your students' writing proficiency. Thus, as you grade individual essays and assign course grades for your students, we ask that you take into consideration the following:

The course grade should reflect the student's writing proficiency as maintained during a

substantial part of the semester. Thus, if a student has shown a general proficiency at the C level, but gets an A or B on the final essay, it is not automatically certain that the student has attained an A or B level writing proficiency. Moreover, while other factors, such as journal entries and quizzes, have a place in determining a student's final grade, we expect that this final grade will be based primarily on the student's out-of-class essays.

The Composition Program defines the grade of C as indicating that the paper has met the minimum standards for an essay written by a freshman in a university writing course. Auburn University students, of course, beg to differ: to most of them, the C is unacceptable, no better than a D or F. More than one student will tell you that he or she needs an A or B to gain entrance into an academic program or professional school or to maintain a high GPA. Just as we encourage you to make every effort to grade fairly, we also encourage you to give your students' observations a fair and serious hearing. But you do a student no favor if you give him or her a higher grade when you're quite certain that he or she has earned a lower grade. While we expect a small percentage of students to earn A's and a slightly larger percentage to earn B's, we also expect these percentages (particularly for the grade of A) to remain small because many students who can write at these levels enroll in the Honors Writing Seminar or are exempt from taking ENGL 1100 on the basis of entrance exam scores. As a result, we generally expect that a majority of students who complete ENGL 1100 and 1120 will perform at the C level. Since Auburn students have until mid-semester to drop a class without penalty, we also expect that the percentage of students earning D's or F's will be relatively small.