

The Power of the Past

Syllabus and Course Outline for English Composition 112 and 112H

Instructor: Drew Colenbrander

Please don't ever hesitate to contact me with questions, concerns, or if you just want to talk. Here are ways to reach me:

Office: My office at Delta is S-28, in the lower level of the Fine Arts Building. My office hours this semester are:

M 9:30-10:45
T 10:30-11:45
W 9:30-10:45
R 10:30-11:45

I will also be available most days before and after our learning community meets and most of the time during our mid class break.

If you cannot see me during my scheduled office hours or on class day, please contact me to set up an appointment. You are always free to stop by my office to see if I am available.

E-Mail: ajcolenb@delta.edu This is a good way to reach me outside of regular school hours, especially on the weekends. I cannot guarantee that I will check my e-mail every day or in the evenings, but I will respond to you as quickly as I can.

E-Mail Etiquette: By nature, e-mail is an informal method of communication, but that doesn't mean that there aren't some expectations for using e-mail in college. First, make sure your messages follow standards of college level writing. Use standard capitalization and punctuation and be sure to spellcheck before you send message. Also, when you receive a response to one of your messages, be sure to reply. At the very least, acknowledge that you have received the response.

Office Phone: (989) 686-9165. You can call me any time, but this is a particularly good way to reach me Monday through Thursday. If I'm not in, leave a message, with a phone number and a time I should call you back at that number. I am usually not at my office on weekends, so if you leave a message then I probably won't be able to return your call until Monday.

Required Books:

Coursepack for this learning community: Bring to class every day.

Handbook: You must have a college level handbook with

instructions on MLA documentation of sources. I have ordered the *Little, Brown Handbook* for our class, which you need to purchase if you do not already have another handbook. If you have another handbook, please show it to me and I will let you know if it works for our purposes.

You will also need to purchase the following two books:

Saylor, Steven. *Arms of Nemesis*

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*

Required Materials:

Access to a reliable computer with Internet access and a printer

Backup and storage system for work done on computer

One loose leaf folder, with pockets, for journal (not for Honors)

Packet of 4" x 6" notecards

Course Goals:

One purpose of this course is to develop advanced skills in non-fiction composition. We will gain experience in rhetorical techniques in descriptive, analytical, and expository writing and in the methodology of research and source use and documentation. Using a workshop approach, we will seek to develop editing skills. Finally, we will be reading extensively to develop critical reading skills and a deeper understanding of the techniques of fiction and prose style.

Another goal of this course, as part of a learning community, is to use writing and reading to explore topics and themes in the history of Early Western Civilization.

Course Title and Theme: The Power of the Past

As the learning community title suggests, we will be exploring an idea throughout the semester. We will be thinking about and writing about how the past informs the present. In particular, we will explore the role of humanism in Western Civilization and its influence on our society.

The American novelist William Faulkner once wrote that "the past is never dead. It's not even past." Faulkner was telling us that we cannot separate ourselves from the past, that the present—and all it encompasses—is merely an extension of the past. That idea will provide our reading, research, writing, and conversations with a common thread, and it should help give us a better understanding of who we are. In short, we will be writing about history not only to learn about the past, but to better understand the present.

Course Requirements

Class Participation: Regular attendance, punctuality, and active participation are absolutely essential to successfully complete this learning community. Because this is a lecture and workshop course, much of the course content is experienced in class. All students are required to come to class with assignments completed and to be actively engaged in all class activities. If you do miss class, you are responsible for any missed work and assignments that are due. It is your responsibility to learn what you missed and to pick up or drop off any assignments.

As explained below and under “Grading Information” later in this course description, final grades will reflect class preparation and participation.

Class Preparation Grade: You will receive 2 points for each day that you come to class fully prepared and engaged throughout the class period, with your coursepack and with assignments for that day completed. If you are late, leave early, or come to class without your coursepack or assigned work completed, you will receive reduced or no points for that day.

Attendance and Late Policy: Please note that arriving late or leaving class early will be counted as an absence, unless you have a legitimate reason that you communicate to the instructors.

Excessive Absence and Drop Policy: At the third absence, your Class Preparation grade will drop 50%. At the fourth absence, you would receive a zero for that grade. Students missing 3 consecutive class meetings or 6 class meetings total will be unable to continue in the class. You are responsible for completing a drop slip from Registration.

Group Participation Grade:

You will often be working collaboratively with fellow students during the semester. Group assignments will be turned in for assigned points. Everyone who participates fully in the group work will receive credit for that assignment. Absence or lack of participation will result in no credit for an assignment.

Course Assignments

Reading Assignments: Specific reading assignments from the required books and outside sources will be given throughout the semester. In addition to assigned reading, you will be doing supplemental reading and research for course writing projects.

Written Assignments: Much of the work involved in this course will be in writing, revising, and editing prose. Written work will involve a

variety of formal and informal writing, including formal essays, a journal, and writing logs.

Specific guidelines for this written work are as follows:

Formal Essays: These essays comprise the main writing of the course. Formal essays will be graded on content, structure, style, and text preparation. The specific requirements for each essay will be given in class, but all essays must conform to the following format:

- 1) All essays must be typed, double-spaced, stapled, and printed in dark ink.
- 2) Type your name, the date, and the status of the paper (first draft, second draft, final draft, final draft rewrite) in the upper left or right hand corner of the first page, above the title, one line to an item, single-spaced.
- 3) All drafts should have a title. Center the title two lines (double-spaced) below the above information and begin the text two lines below the title. Do not use a separate title page.
- 4) Margins should be one inch all the way around the text.
- 5) Make the appropriate number of photocopies for class.

Formal Essay Draft Policies

Late Final Drafts: The grade of late Final Drafts be reduced 10% for each 24 hour period after the start of class on the due date.

Draft Stages: You must complete and turn in every assigned stage of the formal essay drafts the week it is due or the Final Draft will not be accepted. Please note that every draft must meet the format guidelines for formal essays. This policy may be waived for a documentable emergency for which the instructor was notified in advance.

Journal and Symposium Assignments

Journals for Non-Honors: We will use journal writing as part of the development of formal essays, to reflect on reading, to keep a personal, informal record of writing principles and practices, and to explore course topics and themes. You will be given assigned journal entries throughout the semester. Be sure to stay caught up on your journal. While entries may vary in length, each should thoughtfully and thoroughly developed. Grades will reflect the effort that you put into the entries.

Journal Guidelines:

- 1) Be sure to complete assignments on time. Late work will be reduced by 10% for each class period turned in late.
- 2) Make sure that you completely address the issues raised in

the journal assignment.

3) Use standard size notebook paper, and keep your journal entries neatly in sequence with the journal number noted at the top under your name.

Symposium for Honors: Students who enrolled for Honors credit will participate in an Internet symposium instead of doing the journal above. We will use an online discussion group to discuss class topics and ideas and to explore the Internet to enhance the course experience. If you did not sign up for the Honors sections, but would like to, please contact us no later than the third meeting of the semester.

Symposium Guidelines:

- 1) Be sure to complete assignments on time. Late work will be reduced by 10% for each 24 hours period posted late.
- 2) Address the assignments directly and write thorough responses. Your responses are graded primarily on care, thought, and effort.

Writing Logs: At the end of some class sessions you will be asked to complete a brief description of work-in-progress or workshop or other activities. Your log entry should be written legibly on a 4 x 6" index card. Be sure to turn in your logs, because they are used to take attendance.

Grading Information: I will use the following formula to calculate your course grade:

Essay One:	25%
Essay Two:	25%
Essay Three:	25%
Symposium or Journal:	10%
Class Preparation:	10%
Group Participation:	5%

I encourage you to see me at any point during the semester if you have any questions about your grades.

Plagiarism: Please note that plagiarism or any kind of academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure of the course. We will be discussing how to avoid plagiarism and your handbook includes information on using and documenting sources correctly, but always feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about this issue.

Personal Profile

Due:

An important goal that we have for this course is to develop a positive, enjoyable, and productive community. As in any community, everyone has different skills and backgrounds. We would like to start getting to know you and to start learning about your background as students. Please write or type this on a separate sheet of paper.

Please start by introducing yourself. Share with us what you would like us to know about you as a person. Next tell us why you signed up for our learning community.

Include any interest or experience you have in studying history, whether in other classes or on your own.

Finally, we would like you to describe your writing experience in some depth,. Take your time with this; be as thorough and specific as you can. Please respond to the following questions and add whatever you would like.

- What has your writing experience been as a student and outside of school?
- What writing have you found writing enjoyable or rewarding?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses as a writer and how do you account for them?
- Next talk about your experience in doing research and writing research-based papers. Start by discussing the kinds of research you've done outside of class, such as learning about a vehicle you might buy or a vacation that you've planned. How did you do that research?
- Then discuss research projects you've done for school, whether for English or any classes. What was your experience doing those like?
- Finally, tell us any special concerns you might have about any aspect of the learning community.