

## English 121 Sample Syllabus

*While every course offered by UTC's Composition Program shares common goals and grading criteria, each class will differ slightly to allow the instructor to put his or her personal stamp on the course. Below is a sample syllabus from English 121 that will help you see how a typical course in our Composition Program operates.*

## ***ENGLISH: Rhetoric and Composition I – 121, Syllabus***

**University of Tennessee at Chattanooga**

**Prerequisites:** Grade of C or better in English 106 or placement.

**Description:** English 121, Rhetoric and Composition I (3 hours)

An intensive writing course designed to develop skills essential for effective communication. Students will be sensitized to the structure, beauty, and complexities of Standard American English as they refine their abilities to write logically and clearly. This course must be completed with a grade of C or above.

**General Education:** This Course fulfills a general education requirement in Rhetoric and Composition.

### **Objectives:**

- To practice and develop writing processes pertaining to invention, revision, organization, drafting through multiple drafts, editing, and adjusting for rhetorical context (purpose, audience, persona).
- To discuss and share writing and reading with one another and develop a vocabulary for talking about writing.
- To practice critical thinking processes such as abstracting, representing, incorporating, and synthesizing the ideas of others through writing.
- To produce readable and interesting finished products that reflects appropriate academic textual conventions of presentation.

### **Outcomes:**

By the end of English 121, each student who earns a C or better will have ...

1. Demonstrated and used invention strategies that help writers develop ideas, formulate a thesis, and adjust organization and details for the audience's needs.
2. Used revision to clarify and/or improve a writing project's purpose, thesis, organization, use of supporting details, use of source material, and audience awareness.
3. Worked effectively in peer groups to give and receive substantive feedback on emerging drafts.
4. Composed at least two formal writing projects that effectively synthesize and incorporate texts produced by others.
5. Cited all outside sources correctly and consistently using an accepted form of documentation such as MLA or APA style.

6. Used Edited American English in all formal projects. On rare occasions, features of other dialects may be used to serve particular rhetorical purposes.
7. Completed an acceptable draft of all formal writing projects. An “acceptable draft” is one that meets minimum assignment criteria to earn a grade of C or better.
8. Revised and edited at least three formal projects for a total of 3750-5000 words.

**Required materials:** (You must bring the assigned textbook to class daily).

- Wysocki, Ann Frances and Dennis A. Lynch. The DK Handbook. New York: Pearson Longman, 2009. (ISBN:
- Notebook paper and 8 x 11 white printing paper (at least a ream—you will need to print several articles)
- A folder with pockets for your portfolio
- Highlighters
- You will need loose change or money on your Mocs card to photocopy/print.
- Recommended: a good college dictionary (for example, The American Heritage Dictionary.)

### **Work Required:**

#### **Participation: informed class participation 10%**

I expect thorough completion of all reading assignments and constructive, thoughtful participation in class discussions concerning readings or lectures. All assigned reading and homework should be done before class, and you must bring the textbook(s) in which the work is assigned for that class. Please **do not** e-mail me your homework or papers. Outside class work associated with your papers will include research and observations of people, things, books, or possibly free films in the library or other classrooms. You must attend class to participate.

#### **Attendance:**

Attendance is mandatory. There will be no excused absences. Students are expected to arrive on time and remain for the whole class period. Anyone not on time or who leaves early will be marked tardy--2 “tardies” equals one absence. Throughout my 18 years of university-level teaching, I have never had a student be successful after missing 25% of the class meetings. Because of missed assignments and lack of understanding caused by excessive absenteeism, students who miss more than one-quarter of class meetings (MW or T/Th 6 classes) will receive a final grade of F. If you are absent, or if classes are cancelled for some unforeseen reason, you are responsible for keeping up with the syllabus. I will be glad to help a student if they have missed multiple classes but have done so because of a traumatic experience or hospitalization. If this happens, however, I will need documentation for your hospitalization/family emergency. The documentation needs to be official—not a note from a parent-- and must have your name on it with all dates you are absent. The documentation does not an excused

absence make; it will help me make an informed decision and provide an explanation for any exemption I may make. The only university exception is for athletes or other students representing the university—see me for policies if you are a UTC athlete.

### **Participation Grading:**

After each class meeting, I take a few minutes to record for each of you a check, a plus, a minus, or a zero in my grade book.

**Check (Average)** means that you seemed to come to class prepared. You seemed to follow the discussion, and your body language seemed to encourage others in the class to share their insights. You probably made a comment or two—or you may have remained silent. But you were prepared and engaged. Your presence was productive.

**Plus (Above Average)** means that you satisfied all of the criteria for a check. However, you also contributed in explicit and effective ways to the class discussion or work. Perhaps you made several appropriate comments (and you were also attentive to the needs of others to participate). Perhaps you made only a few comments but these were of such quality that they moved the class in good and productive directions.

**Minus (Below Average)** means that you came to class, but you either didn't seem prepared or your presence detracted, in however small a fashion, from the quality of class experience for others. Perhaps you read the paper or slept or browsed email or your textbook. Perhaps you muttered or talked or had some behaviors that discouraged others from talking. A minus, obviously, is a cause for concern, so I'll talk to you if I see this happening more than a couple of times.

**Zero** means, alas, that you didn't show up at all. Six means you fail.

### **Homework/Quizzes/In-class: informal and reflective writing 10%**

The Homework is assigned on the syllabus calendar and is due the day it is listed. The actual Homework Sheets will be posted on UTC Online under documents for you to retrieve. Pop quizzes/in class writings may be a possibility on selected readings. There will be no make-up pop quizzes and/or homework, but I will drop some depending on the number given. In other words, **I accept no late homework**, and we do not make-up quizzes or in-class writings. Homework, like a paper, is due at the beginning of class.

### **Extra Credit**

Extra credit involves UTC's cultural activities. By attending four and writing a two-page review of your experience, you can earn four points on your participation/informal writing grade. The assignment is posted on UTC Online.

### **Group work, conferences and in-class writing: preliminary drafts of formal assignments 15%**

You will be expected to do one partnered oral presentation, pre-writing, drafts, and revisions as assigned by your instructor. This preliminary work will be shared with your fellow classmates during Group work or with me at conferences. Group work, on each essay, is part of the writing process. Be prepared to give thoughtful, constructive help to your fellow students, and they will do the same for you. (Full explanation posted on UTC Online).

You will have one mandatory one-on-one conference with me as well this semester, which will take place outside our regular class hours. You will sign-up for a time that is convenient for you to meet with me as we draw closer to the conference dates.

- On days of group work/conferences, you must bring two typed copies of your complete draft to be reviewed.
- If you are absent and/or do not bring your drafts, you will receive a zero for a quiz grade, and your paper's final grade will be lowered one letter grade each day of group work/conference you miss.
- However, if you are absent but can get your drafts to class, you will only lose the participation quiz grade. (This does not apply to the conferences because you must be present).
- Only having one copy, a handwritten draft, and/or you are late for group work is the loss of a quiz grade.
- The penalties remain even if you revise.

**The following are guidelines for grading preliminary drafts and informal writing:**

- A = Exceptional, thorough, imaginative, and thoughtful work. All assignments complete.
- B = Good work that goes beyond the basic requirements. All assignments complete.
- C = Basic requirements met. Acceptable work. All assignments complete.
- D = Only some assignments complete or work fails to meet many of the assigned requirements.
- F = Few or no assignments complete or work fails to meet many of the assigned requirements.

**Formal Assignments: 65%**

You will be assigned five typed out-of-class assignments (Computer Lab U.C. first floor) and one written final exam. You must turn in your papers at the beginning (by 15 minutes after the hour) of class on the date they are due. After this time, the papers are considered late and will be docked **one** letter grade each day they are late. I will not accept late papers after four days, and your grade will stand as zero. If you do not turn in all the Formal Assignments at the posted due date, you will automatically fail this course because, per English Department policy, you must complete 15-20 typed pages of final, polished drafts to pass this course. Please make copies of all papers. You will be able to **revise** three essays after the initial grade is given. This revised grade, if better than the original, will replace the original grade. You cannot revise a paper that was turned in late. You may only revise the four papers twice.

**Portfolio: represents the work for your grade.**

All of the work that you do for this class will be kept in a folder--save **everything** in hard copy. Clearly date and title each assignment; for example, indicate whether an assignment is a first draft, a second draft, or an in-class writing. Besides being a folder in which work is accumulated, the portfolio will be a reference source for you and me to evaluate your progress. You cannot pass this course without completing all the Formal

Assignments. All drafts and graded versions need to be in the portfolio. I keep your portfolio for one semester after your grade is posted. At the end of the next semester, you may pick up your portfolio.

### **Required Electronic Submissions**

All students are required to submit formal assignments via MyCompLab, an online writing environment that is complementary with your purchase of The DK Handbook through the UTC bookstore. Students who do not complete the electronic submission requirement will not receive a grade in the course.

### **Formal Assignments Grading:**

- A = Texts fully meet assignment objectives and offer appropriate responses to the original assignment. Writing is clear, engaging, grammatically correct, and easy to read. Texts show originality in details, word choice, and approach to the assignment. An “A” from me on a paper means that I couldn’t ask for better work.
- B = Texts fully meet assignment objectives and offer appropriate responses to the original assignment. Writing is clear, engaging, grammatically correct, and easy to read. There may be a few awkward spots or minor grammatical problems, but texts are basically well-written and well-developed.
- C = Texts adequately meet assignment objectives and respond adequately to the original assignment, although there may be several minor problems with style, tone, thesis support, organization, or mechanics.
- D = Texts show some evidence of attempting to meet assignment objectives but have many problems with organization, thesis support, word choice, style, or mechanics.
- F = Texts fail to meet assignment objectives or have several major problems with tone, writing style, thesis support, organization, and mechanics.

### **Paper format:**

Format directions are on 406 in (DK), and there is sample essay on (DK) p.407-418.

### **UTC Communication and Blackboard:**

All university communication is conducted through UTC e-mail accounts. If I need to contact you, I will e-mail you at your UTC address. Please check your UTC e-mail and UTC Online on a regular basis. If you have problems accessing your e-mail account, contact the Help Desk at 423/425-4000.

### **Honor Code and Plagiarism: The UTC Composition Program’s Statement on Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism occurs when you use the words, phrases, sentence arrangement, or main ideas of someone else in your writing without giving credit to the source. In the most blatant cases, a student will turn in a paper that was written by another

person, downloaded from an Internet site, or ordered from an “essay factory” or “term paper mill.” In other cases, students commit plagiarism because they do not fully understand the proper way to document outside source material. In either case, plagiarism is wrong. . . .

Documentation is required when you quote, paraphrase, or summarize the words or ideas of other writers in your own writing. Your composition handbook and textbook clearly explain how to give credit to outside material that you use in your work. If you are ever uncertain about how or whether to document material, consult your teacher before turning in the written work.

Please do not jeopardize your grade or your future by lying, cheating, or stealing. All of us at the university want you to be successful, and we are here to help. If you are having problems with an assignment, and you feel like you cannot do the work without committing an Honor Code violation, talk to your professor or any of the support staff on campus. Let us help you. It is much better to come to us for assistance than to fail a class or be expelled because you did not want to bother us. **Penalties:** If I find areas of plagiarism in a paper and I believe they are not due to misunderstanding of the proper M.L.A. procedures, you will fail the assignment. If I find flagrant cheating and or plagiarism, you will fail the course, and I will have no alternative but to take you before the Honor Court. (For further help, we will read DK 308-325)

**Honor Code:** I pledge that I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid on any test or assignment. I understand that plagiarism constitutes a serious instance of unauthorized aid. I further pledge that I will exert every effort to insure that others uphold the Honor Code and that I will actively support the establishment and continuance of a campus-wide climate of honor and integrity. (UTC Handbook)

### **Outside Assistance:**

#### **Me:**

Office hours are for students to talk to the instructor one-on-one. Please come talk to me if you are confused or need extra help. I will read your drafts, help with reading, and offer explanations.

### **Counseling and Career Planning Center:**

If you find that personal problems, career indecision, study and time management difficulties, etc. are adversely affecting your successful progress at UTC, please contact us at 425-4438.

### **Writing Center:**

Because all writers can benefit from readers’ responses to their work, I strongly encourage you to visit the UTC Writing Center. Consultants there can help you at any stage of the writing process, from invention, to development of ideas, to polishing a final draft. The Center is not a proofreading service, but its consultants can help you to recognize and correct grammar and punctuation errors in your work. The Writing Center is in Holt 119; you can call (425-1774) for an appointment or just drop in.

**Disability and Accommodations:**

If you believe that you may have a disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.), you should make an appointment to see me to discuss your needs privately. In order to receive special assistance or a special accommodation in any class, your disability must be on record in the Office for Students with Disabilities/College Access Program at 110 Frist Hall, 425-4006.

## Course Schedule

This is a tentative schedule. It will inevitably shift and change. You are responsible for any changes, substitutions, or additions announced in class.

### Unit I: Weeks 1-4 Literacy Memoir

You will recall a literacy event from your past and write a memoir about its significance to your development as a writer. Although writing may (or may not) have been important to you for some time, you should choose just one event to focus your memoir. After your audience reads your memoir, they should have a clear understanding of the significance of this literacy event to you. Your audience will be your classmates and your instructor.

4-5 typed pages for the final draft

Week 1: 18-22 Aug.

M

W Where and how to access course materials Course introduction and policies, in-class writing: writing experience, college writing expectations

Week 2: 25 Aug.-29 Aug.

M Why write about ourselves? **RR 165-193**, in-class writing: choosing a topic

W **RR 204-215**, in-class writing: connecting an experience with a theme and drafting

Week 3: 1-5 Sept.

M

Holiday

W Sharing preliminary ideas, drafting

Week 4: 8-12 Sept.

M Typed draft due, responding to drafts

W **Bring responses**, implementing responses, editing and revision exercises, draft must be submitted by beginning of next class, along with unit folder and responses

### Unit II: Weeks 5-6 Summary Assignment

Assignment: Summarize one of the following essays: “Stop Cloning Around” by John Kilner (on Blackboard), “The Need for Environmental Ethics” by Anthony Weston (436), “The Singer Solution to World Poverty” by Peter Singer, or “When Ignorance is Bliss” by Eric Alterman (on Blackboard)

Week 5: 15-19 Sept.

M Assignment introduction, introducing “Argument”, John Kilner, Reading: a 12-Step Program

W 3-62, 436-446

Week 6: 22-26 Sept.

M Drafting

W Drafts due

### **Unit III: Weeks 7-9 Annotated Bibliography**

Week 7: 29 Sept.-3 Oct.

M Assignment introduction, readings TBA      **Introduction to Library Research**  
W Research

Midterm notification

Week 8: 6-10 Oct.

M Research/drafting

W Research/drafting

Week 9: 13-17 Oct.

M Drafts due

W Revising

F Last day to withdraw with a “W”

### **Unit 4: Analysis/Evaluation Assignment**

Week 10: 20-24 Oct.

M Holiday

W Assignment introduction, readings TBA

Week 11: 27-31 Oct.

M Readings TBA

W Drafting

Week 12: 3-7 Nov.

M Drafts due

W Revising

### **Unit V: Common Ground/Problem and Solution Essay**

Week 13: 10-14 Nov.

M Assignment introduction

W Drafting

Week 14: 17-21 Nov.

M Drafts due/Revising

W Revising

Week 15: 24-28

M Revising

W Holiday

Week 16: 1 Dec.

M Last day/Housekeeping

**Last day of classes**

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Composition Exams: Wednesday 3 Dec. 2-4 p.m.