

Spectrum Program

Session 1

Course Title: Non-Fiction Writing Honors: The Art of the Essay

Course Description

“The role of a writer is not to say what we all can say, but what we are unable to say.” — Anaïs Nin

Essayists use texts to present a point a view, spur readers to action, or bring an issue to life. In this course, students wield the skills of essay writing, becoming better readers and thinkers in the process. Exploring a range of models, students discuss and practice essays, focusing on persuasion, criticism, narrative and the memoir. Students discover audience, purpose, point of view and more. This class prepares students for advanced writing in AP English courses.

Essential Questions

- How should prose sound?
- What techniques stretch across all types of essays and what techniques are specific to particular forms?
- How does aping professionals lead us to our own voices?
- How can writing glow with creativity and truth?
- How is reading essential to writing?
- How can writing glow with personality and authenticity?

Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Know how to grow ideas through reading, annotation, contemplation, and discussion.
- Know how to analyze and evaluate a variety of pieces of nonfiction
- Understand the link between reading and writing
- Understand the journey toward completing a piece of writing.
- Understand that revision *is* writing.
- Use proofreading skills, based on knowledge and intuition of grammar and usage, in revision.
- Create compositions that demonstrate their wrestling with the subject through research.
- Write with clarity, using all the senses, point of view, and other aspects of craft.
- Write lively, pulsing compositions that speak to who they are and what they know.
- Incorporate conventions while also innovating and finding their own voices.
- Design deliberate narrative, editorial, and expository writings.
- Refine their ability to workshop their own work and that of their peers.

Instructional Strategies

This course differentiates instruction through several strategies. We activate different learning styles by means of aural activities (reading aloud, music), visual (thought-mapping), and kinesthetic exercises (improv games). We will also take advantage of modes of content delivery and exploration: large group discussion, small group discussion, one-on-one tutorials, teacher lecture, student presentation, and workshopping. In-class writing and reading will provide opportunities for tiered instruction in that the demands of the assignment, its length, difficulty, degree of nuance, will vary from student to student.

Resources and Materials

• Books

- a. Ellsworth, Blanche and Higgins, John, *English Simplified*, 2009, 12th Edition, 0205633294
- b. Oates, Joyce Carol, ed., *The Best American Essays of the Century*, 2000, 0618155872
- c. Course Packet: supplied by the Instructor
- d. Dictionary: supplied by the student

• Web sites

- a. Poetry 180: www.loc.gov/poetry/180 This site features a collection of writings that provide the richness of language and ideas that comes from reading poets.
- b. 826 Chicago: A group of volunteers run a headquarters for young writers in the back of a spy shop. 826 publishes student work, offers workshops, and provides a community where children can thrive as artists.
- c. Grammar Book: www.grammarbook.com Besides a breakdown of basic grammar and punctuation rules, this site offers fun interactive quizzes with answer keys and explanations.
- d. Word Central: www.wordcentral.com This site celebrates English with games, daily buzzwords and trivia.

• Materials

- a. Pens, as many colors as you can tote.
- b. Bring a journal or a binder with at least 100 sheets of paper for writing and sketching.
- c. Index cards

Student Assessment

• Pre-Assessment

A writing prompt and a reading comprehension quiz will be used to determine where students are with regard to the sophistication of their thinking and prose, the originality of their voice, the coherence of their expression, and the richness of their literary interpretation.

• CTD Grading Scale

A+	100-97%	A	96-93%	A-	92-90%
B+	89-87%	B	86-83%	B-	82-80%
C+	79-77%	C	76-73%	C-	72-70%
D+	69-67%	D	66-63%	D-	62-60%
F	below 60%				

• Breakdown of Final Grade

Final grade: 10% Quizzes, 10% Test, 15% Discussion, 15% In-class exercises, 50% Essays

• Post-Assessment

A portfolio and a reprise of the pre-assessment from the first day will be used to reflect on how much progress students have made.

Schedule

Date	Topic(s)	In-class Activities	Assignments/Assessments	
Mon, June 27	Introductions; <u>The Art of the Personal Essay</u> ;	Freewriting prompt; Defining the Genre; Grammar/Usage Diagnostic; “How It Feels To Be Colored Me” (Zora Neale Hurston, 1928)	Writing and Reading Comprehension Diagnostic	Pre-Assessment to ascertain abilities, Icebreakers; Independent Writing and Reading
Tue, June 28	The Personal Essay	Freewriting prompt; “Once More To The Lake” (E.B. White, 1941) (BAE); Grammar/Usage; Vocab Games		Independent Writing; Individual conferences w/ instructor, Large/small group discussion, Independent reading (tiered)
Wed, June 29	The Personal Essay	Freewriting prompt; “Perfect Past” (Nabokov, 1966) (BAE)	Grammar/ Usage/ Vocab Quiz #1	Independent Writing; Large/small group discussion, Individual conferences w/ instructor
Thur, June 30	The Personal Essay	Freewriting prompt; “No Name Woman” (Maxine Hong Kingston, 1975) (BAE); Grammar/Usage; Vocab Games	In-class Essay #1	Independent Writing; Large/small group discussion, Peer review, Tiered in-class essay, Individual conferences w/ instructor
Fri, July 1	The Personal Essay	Freewriting prompt; “A Life: Notes” (Lorrie Moore, 1985)	Grammar/ Usage/ Vocab Quiz #2	Independent Writing; Large/ small group discussion, Individual conferences w/ instructor
Mon, July 4	The Personal Essay	Freewriting prompt; “The Things They Carried” & “On The Rainy River” (Tim O’Brien, 1990); Grammar/Usage	Lorrie Moore-style Personal Essay due	Large/small group discussion, Peer review (workshopping), Independent writing
Tue, July 5	<u>The Feature (Creative Nonfiction): The Profile</u>	Freewriting prompt; Defining the Genre; Grammar/Usage; “The King of the Ferret Leggers” (Donald Katz) & “Twirling At Ole Miss” (Terry Southern); Workshop Half of Class (Personal Essay); Vocab Games	In-class Essay #2	Independent Writing; Peer review (workshopping), tiered in-class essay, Large/small group discussion

Date	Topic(s)	In-class Activities	Assignments/Assessments	
Wed, July 6	The Feature (Creative Nonfiction): The Profile	Freewriting prompt; "Travels in Georgia" (John McPhee); Workshop Half of Class (Personal Essay)	Grammar/ Usage/ Vocab Quiz #3	Large/small group discussion, Independent writing, Modeling, Individual conference w/instructor; Peer review (workshopping)
Thur, July 7	The Feature (Creative Nonfiction): Places, Experiences	Freewriting prompt; Grammar/Usage; "Into Thin Air" (Jon Krakauer), "Today Many Problems" (Laurence Shames), "Death All Day" (Richard Rhodes); Vocab Games	Lorrie Moore-style Personal Essay REVISION due	Independent Writing; Large/small group discussion, Peer review (workshopping), Independent reading (Acceleration)
Fri, July 8	<u>The Persuasive Essay</u>	Freewriting prompt; Defining the Genre; "Letter From Birmingham Jail" (MLK, 1963)	Grammar/ Usage/ Vocab Quiz #4	Large/small group discussion, Peer review (workshopping), Modeling
Mon, July 11	The Persuasive Essay	Freewriting prompt; Grammar/Usage; "The Creation Myths of Cooperstown" (Stephen Jay Gould, 1989) (BAE); Workshop Half of Class (Feature Essay)	Feature Essay Due	Large/small group discussion, Independent writing, Assessment, Peer review (workshopping), Individual conferences w/ instructor
Tue, July 12	The Persuasive Essay: <u>Literary Criticism</u>	Freewriting prompt; Grammar/Usage; Poetry Criticism: x, y, and z (TBD); Workshop Half of Class (Feature Essay)	Grammar/ Usage/ Vocab Test	Large/small group discussion, Independent writing, Peer review (workshopping), Individual conferences w/ instructor, Independent reading (Acceleration)
Wed, July 13	The Persuasive Essay: <u>Literary Criticism</u>	Freewriting prompt; Defining the Genre; Poetry Criticism: x; Short Fiction Criticism: y (TBD)	Feature Essay REVISION Due	Assessment, Tiered assignment, Independent writing, Peer review, Individual conferences w/instructor, Individual conferences w/ instructor, Large/small group discussion, Modeling

Date	Topic(s)	In-class Activities	Assignments/Assessments	
Thur, July 14	The Persuasive Essay: Literary Criticism	Freewriting prompt; Short Fiction Criticism: x and y (TBD)	Literary-Critical Essay Due; All remaining post-workshop revisions/ Portfolios due	Independent writing, Individual conferences w/ instructor, Large/small group discussion, Independent reading (Acceleration)
Fri, July 15	Celebration and Presentation	Portfolio Exhibition	Retake the Diagnostic	Individual conferences w/ instructor

CTD Statement on Third-Party Web Sites

Instructors are required to thoroughly review any third-party web sites they intend to use in their courses for inappropriate content. However, because web content continuously changes, CTD disclaims any responsibility for any of the content contained on third-party web sites used in course materials. If you become aware of anything that may be inappropriate, please notify CTD staff immediately.

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