

**WRITING SKILLS
(SECTIONS 80358 & 80340)**

County College of Morris
Randolph, NJ
Fall, 2008

Dr. Matthew T. Jones

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Course Description

The purpose of Writing Skills is to prepare students to meet the requirements of the departmental exit examination for admittance into English Composition I. More specifically, it is intended to increase the student's proficiency in asserting and supporting a thesis statement, paragraph development, transitional techniques, comprehension, and supplemental structure and grammar. Short essays and workbook exercises will be the basis of evaluation in this course.

Course Objectives

1. Train students to make proper use of English grammar in sentence construction.
2. Train students to develop cohesive paragraphs.
3. Train students to write thesis-driven essays supported by assertions that are organized into grammatically correct and well organized sentences and paragraphs.

Anticipated Learning Outcomes

1. The ability to compose a well-constructed essay.

Methods of Instruction

1. Lecture: A brief introduction to the topic by the instructor.
2. Audio-Visual Presentations: Short presentations that are intended to provoke writing topics.
3. In-Class Writing: Students writing and revising essays during class time.
4. Class Readings: Students read their work aloud in class for evaluation by instructor and peers.
5. Textbook Exercises: Students performing textbook exercises in class.

Required Textbook

Kirszner, L. G. & S. R. Mandell (2006). *Writing First: Practice in Context*. Boston & New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Additional Resources

<http://mattsmediaresearch.com>: This will serve as the official website for this class. The syllabus and other material will be made available through the "Students" hyperlink at the top of the homepage.

Course Requirements

1. *Attendance*: Students are expected to attend all class meetings.
2. *Reading and Participation*: Students are expected to come to class having read any assigned material and prepared to participate in class discussions and activities.
3. *Writing & Workbook Assignments*: Students are expected to write essays and complete workbook sections in class.
4. *Tests*: All assignments in this course are designed to provide students with the skills to pass the departmental exit examination for admittance into English Composition I. That exam is composed of a multiple choice section and a final essay.

Evaluation

1. *Attendance Policy*: All students are entitled to one unexcused absence from class. Beyond this single absence, 1/3 of a grade will be deducted from the final grade for each additional unexcused absence (e.g. B- reduced to C+). Excused absences are accepted only if accompanied by documentation relating to the nature of the excuse (e.g. auto repair receipt, doctor's note, jury duty notification, etc.). Four unexcused absences are equivalent to a failure in this course.
2. *Participation*: All students are expected to take part in class assignments and group activities. Failure to do so will result in a "0" participation score that is equivalent to an unexcused absence.
3. *Essays*: Students are permitted to earn points that contribute to passing the course through writing and revising essays until they meet the necessary criteria (see section on "Grading").
4. *Tests*: The departmental exit examination has two parts: (1) multiple choice and (2) essay writing.

Grading

"P" = Clear thesis, excellent expression, excellent support and very few or moderate mechanical problems.

“F” = Absent or unclear thesis, basic expression, missing or weak support, numerous mechanical problems, obvious or blatant errors.

Visit <http://mattsmediaresearch.com/essay.html> for a very brief guide to essay-writing criteria.

Course Calendar

Mon-Thrs 830-945 80358(Mon/Wed) 80340(Tues.Thrs)

Week 1

9/2/08 & 9/3/08

❖ **Overview:**

- Fill out index cards.
- Personal introductions.
- Introduction and overview of the course.

❖ **Class Work:**

- Reading: *The Suspected Shopper* (Goodman).
- In-Class Writing: Describe the single most important event in your life and explain how it contributed to your personal identity.

❖ **Assignments:**

- Read Chapter 12 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

9/4/08

❖ **Overview:**

- General overview of essays.

❖ **Class Work:**

- Reading essays aloud and offering suggestions.

❖ **Assignments:**

- Read Chapter 12 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

Week 2

9/8/08 [Last Day to Drop] & 9/9/08

❖ **Overview:**

- General overview of essays.

❖ **Class Work:**

- Reading essays aloud and offering suggestions.
- Writing Topic: Essay revision.

❖ **Assignments:**

- Read Chapter 13 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

9/10/08 & 9/11/08

❖ **Overview:**

- General overview of essays.

- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Writing Topic: Essay revision.
 - Complete and hand in **Essay #1**
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapter 14 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

Week 3

9/15/08 & 9/16/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Essays
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - **Group Quiz #1**
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - TBA

9/17/08 & 9/18/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Reading and Writing.
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Reading: *Thirty-Eight Who Saw Murder Didn't Call the Police* (Gansberg).
 - In-Class Writing Topic: Do you have a personal hero?
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapter 1 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

Week 4

9/22/08 & 9/23/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Critiquing essays.
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Read essays aloud and offer suggestions.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapter 2 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

9/24/08 & 9/25/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - How to revise essays.
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Essay revision.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - TBA

Week 5

9/29/08 & 9/30/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
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- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Complete and hand in **Essay #2**
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - TBA

10/1/08 & 10/2/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Paragraphs
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - **Group Quiz #2**
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - TBA

Week 6

10/6/08 & 10/7/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Reading and Writing.
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - In-Class Reading: *Summer Picnic Fish Fry* (Angelou).
 - Writing Topic: If you could visit anywhere on earth, past, present or future, where would it be?
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapters 15 & 16 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

10/8/08 & 10/9/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Critiquing essays.
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Read essays aloud and offer suggestions.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapters 17 & 18 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

Week 7

10/13/08 & 10/14/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - How to revise essays.
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Essay revisions.
- ❖ **Assignments:**

- Read Chapters 19 & 20 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

10/15/08 & 10/16/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
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- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Complete and hand in **Essay #3**
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - TBA

Week 8

10/20/08 & 10/21/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Sentences
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - **Group Quiz #3**
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - TBA

10/22/08 & 10/23/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Reading and Writing.
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Reading: *Slice of Life* (Barker).
 - In-Class Writing: What will you be like fifty years from now?
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapters 21 & 22 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

Week 9

10/27/08 & 10/28/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Critiquing essays.
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Read essays aloud and offer suggestions.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapters 23 & 24 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

10/29/08 & 10/30/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - How to revise essays.
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Essay revisions.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapter 25 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

Week 10

11/3/08 & 11/4/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 -
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Complete and hand in **Essay #4**
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - TBA

11/5/08 & 11/6/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Sentence Problems.
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - **Group Quiz #4**
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - TBA

Week 11

11/10/08 & 11/11/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Reading and Writing.
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Reading: *The "Black Table" Is Still There* (Graham).
 - In-Class Writing: What are the qualities of a good president of the United States?
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapters 26 & 27 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

11/12/08 & 11/13/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Critiquing essays.
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Read aloud and offer suggestions.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapters 28 & 29 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

Week 12

11/17/08 & 11/18/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - How to revise essays.
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Essay revisions.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapter 30 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

11/19/08 & 11/20/08

❖ **Overview:**



❖ **Class Work:**

- Complete and hand in **Essay #5**

❖ **Assignments:**

- TBA

Week 13

11/24/08 & 11/25/08

❖ **Overview:**

- Grammar

❖ **Class Work:**

- **Group Quiz #5**

❖ **Assignments:**

- TBA

11/26/08

❖ **Overview:**

- Individual assistance.

❖ **Class Work:**

- Individual assistance.

❖ **Assignments:**

- TBA

11/27/08-11/30/08

Thanksgiving Break

Week 14

12/1/08 & 12/2/08

❖ **Overview:**

- Reading and Writing.

❖ **Class Work:**

- Reading: *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* (Gray).
➤ In-Class Writing: Are there any negative consequences of our increasing dependence upon computer technology?

❖ **Assignments:**

- Read Chapters 31 & 32 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

12/3/08 & 12/4/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Critiquing essays.
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Read essays aloud and offer suggestions.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - Read Chapters 33 & 34 (Kirszner & Mandell, 2006).

Week 15

12/8/08 & 12/9/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - How to revise essays.
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Essay revisions.
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - TBA

12/10/08 & 12/11/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 -
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - Complete and hand in **Essay #5**
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - TBA

12/15/08 & 12/16/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Final Exam
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - **Final Exam (Multiple Choice)**
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - N/A

12/17/08 & 12/18/08

- ❖ **Overview:**
 - Final Exam
- ❖ **Class Work:**
 - **Final Exam (Essay)**
- ❖ **Assignments:**
 - N/A