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WRIT 101.H1: College Writing I - Hamilton

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WRIT 101 College Writing

Instructor: Matthew Kaler
Email: matthew.kaler@mso.umt.edu

Class Dates and Location: This 15-week course runs from August 26-December 4. The class meets Tuesday/Thursday from 11:40-1:00 pm at BC in Room 2. Students will be responsible for completing course assignments online or by submission in class.

Office Hours: You can schedule an appointment with me in class or by email to meet in person or via Skype. I will respond to all emails within a 48 hour period, Monday-Friday.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

WRIT 101 is a course in public writing, a kind of writing that is meant to communicate with and engage a specific audience toward a specific purpose, and it is based on community. Your purpose will ultimately be to write a proposal that could have positive impacts on an important issue within your local community. To do so, we will work on three Formal Writing Assignments throughout the course, culminating in a proposal that would ideally be sent to the decision maker(s) and argue for the specific change requested.

We begin with a *community profile*, an assignment that asks you to vividly describe a specific community. This assignment offers you the opportunity to look more deeply at a community, whether that community is your current hometown, a community where you intend to live, or a different kind of community, such as a club, a religious organization, an online group, a civic group, an artistic group, or a learning community that you are currently involved with or intend to be. The only requirements in terms of the selection of the community are that it is of significant personal interest and that you can provide an insider's perspective on it. Ideally, the community you select for the first assignment will be the one you will work with throughout the course.

We continue with an *exploratory essay*, an assignment that asks you to resist any immediate conclusion about your community and to truly explore difficult questions and possible answers. The assignment includes research of both local and national sources and leads to the selection of a community issue. It then leads to additional questions about that issue, and, finally, to possible answers to the questions from multiple points of view. It is truly an exploration without any expectation of determining a thesis or supporting the thesis. Instead, it narrates the process of exploratory research and assessment of sources.

Finally, you will compose, refine, and polish a *proposal* that asks its audience to implement a specific change in order to improve the community in a positive way. Your proposal will outline specific actions necessary, argue for their importance based on observation and evidence, support evidence for their feasibility, and anticipate alternative solutions and objections. Ideally, the proposal would be submitted to an actual committee or individual authority within the community.

COURSE TEXT:

The St. Martin's Guide to Writing, 10th ed., Bedford e-book, Axelrod and Cooper.

Required Technology: Campus E-mail Accounts and Moodle:

Please activate your campus e-mail account right away. Every student is issued a university e-mail account, and there is no cost. Go to any technology help desk on campus for assistance. *You will need to activate your email before you can access Moodle.*

This course requires essential computer skills so that you can access email and negotiate Moodle. *Early in the semester, UM offers a number of Moodle workshops. If you are unfamiliar with Moodle or if you have limited computer experience, please attend these workshops.* You will be expected to work with computers for appropriate class assignments, and most correspondences will be conducted via email/Moodle. Most class materials and instructions will be posted in Moodle. *With the exception of some initial explanations during our first classes, please do not expect extra time in class for any learning curve you might face with technology.* Likewise, please do not expect any extensions on due dates for an assignment because of any technical difficulties you have not conquered. Backup all work.

Course Requirements and Policies:

Writing

You will have the opportunity to develop all of your major projects through a process of inquiry and drafting. You will compose papers in and out of class, alone and with your small group. For some of your writings, I'll ask you to bring enough draft copies to share with your group or ask you to email your papers to group members for workshop. We will include whole-class workshops into the drafting process. *All projects must be completed for you to pass the course.* I will respond to these with written comments focused on suggestions for revision.

All of the three Formal Writing Assignments below must be submitted in a Portfolio to pass the course:

- * **Three** Essays, edited and polished submitted in a **Final Portfolio**
- * "As Is" Drafts (and any revisions) of each of the Three Formal Writing Assignments
- * Thoughtful, active, and responsible participation and citizenship, including discussion, preparation for class by reading all assigned materials, in workshops, and informal writing.

Portfolio Evaluation

You will turn in "As Is" drafts of all essays/projects when required on assigned dates, and you will receive feedback from me, but not final grades on individual papers. These drafts will receive an "As Is" grade; this evaluation weighs the effort given and workshop participation on early drafts where applicable. A Final Portfolio of your work will be submitted at the end of the semester for which you receive a final grade. The portfolio should include all previous "As Is" drafts. This type of evaluation gives you the opportunity to revise your essays until you submit your portfolio at the end of the semester.

GRADING SUMMARY:

Community Profile:	25%
Exploratory Essay:	30%
Community Proposal:	25%
Revision/Participation	10%
Informal Writing	10%

OTHER COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Participation and Preparedness:

Throughout the course, you will be asked to complete assignments that serve as building blocks to the course assignments, either in clarifying the theories that guide our writing processes or in working through stages of the essays themselves. These assignments are designed to produce your best results, both in course performance and in overall learning. The more assignments you neglect, the poorer your performance will be. Make use of this experience by completing all assigned homework and drafts and by participating in class and with your peers. This class is

based on the discussion and production of writing about community issues. That writing makes use of an individual's knowledge and research to argue for a new understanding or a better way of operating that benefits the entire community. You have not had the same experiences I have, and vice versa. I am relying on your contributions to class discussions and to the work of your classmates. Treat this component of your course as another rhetorical situation. I am the grading audience, but your peers are an audience as well. We will be watching for intelligent and appropriate contributions to the class discussions, for engagement with the topics and the lessons, for preparedness for class, and for quality effort on your projects.

Attendance Policy

You are allotted 3 "free"/"unexcused" absences: you do not need permission, and I don't need an explanation. Use these three wisely. More than three absences will compromise your grade.

4th "unexcused" absence: final grade drops one letter grade; 5th absence: final grade drops two letter grades, and so on. More than 6 "unexcused" absences will result in failure.

Why the policy? Without attending class, you cannot participate as a member of a learning community, and you cannot be a writer and collaborator with your peers. Participation includes taking part in class discussions, asking questions, and contributing to the classroom experience. Of course, this includes doing the required reading and writing assignments.

Excused Absences

What warrants an excused absence? A death in the family, a court or legal issue (for example: jury duty, parole meeting, court date, incarceration), an appointment for public benefits or entitlements that cannot be scheduled at any other time, or a severe health issue. What is a severe health issue? Being contagious (with flu or pink eye, for example), an incident that requires a visit to the emergency room or hospitalization, or having a medical condition requiring an immediate appointment that cannot be scheduled at any other day/time. Upon returning to class, the student must show documentation regarding the exact date of the absence (except in the case of family death). Absences due to a severe health issue can be excused only if, upon returning, the student brings a signed note from his or her attending health care provider (physician or RN, not a member of the secretarial staff) stating that the student was ill the day of the absence and sought medical attention. The note must include: the exact date of class missed and the actual signature of the attending physician or RN and his/her contact information.

How to be absent

If you must be absent for a class, email one of your classmates, (even if you don't know them very well) asking him/her to pick up missed handouts, announcements and homework assignments. Also ask if you can copy his/her notes. **You are responsible for all missed material and the homework assigned during your absence.** You may make an appointment with me to go over notes that you got from a classmate to see if they are complete. Unless we have previously agreed to some other arrangement, all assignments are due on the announced due dates regardless of your class presence.

Registration Issues

If you miss the first two class meetings (and haven't communicated with me in advance about extenuating circumstances), you need to drop the course on Cyberbear and enroll another semester. The reason for this policy is that important groundwork for the semester is put in place in the first couple of class meetings, and students without that foundational framework are better served by taking the course when they can give it the attention it deserves. Note: Important dates can be found on Cyberbear.

Grading Scale:

94-100 A	87-89 B+	77-79 C+
93-90 A-	86-83 B	76-73 C
	82-80 B-	72-70 C-

Final Grade

I encourage you to talk with me at any time to better understand my comments or to discuss your overall progress and success in the class. Success in this class depends on:

- Meeting all the requirements
- The quality of your written, electronic, and oral work
- Your willingness to enter into the spirit of inquiry, which includes intelligent and appropriate contributions to the class discussions, engagement with topics and lessons, and quality effort on your projects.

Please note: There is no credit applied to attendance. Students are expected to attend all class meetings and complete all assignments for courses in which they are enrolled. [Academic Policies and Procedures](#)

Late Paper Policy

Formal Writing Assignments turned in after their due date will be deducted **one full letter grade**, from the Final Draft grade, per class day until received. Essays turned in more than four days late will be given an “F”. I also reserve the right not to accept any late Essay after its due date.

Late Paper Extensions

Extensions on assignment due dates will only be granted for good reason (I reserve the right to determine this) **and** if you contact me prior to the due date. No extensions will be granted if you fail to communicate with me prior to the assignment due date.

Late Work

If you miss a draft deadline, you’ve missed a crucial chance for feedback on your work. If you aren’t ready with a response to a group member’s draft, you’re letting down someone who is counting on you for help. If you aren’t prepared for class, you limit your own voice and contributions to the class and community of writers and readers. For all these reasons, *late work is unacceptable*. Deadlines are not negotiable after you’ve missed them.

Informal Writing Assignments

These writings usually deal with a reading assignment, other media, or class discussion. Informal writing must be submitted in class or as email attachments. None of these writing assignments will be accepted late. We will regularly share these in class, so be sure to write things you are comfortable discussing with others.

Civility Clause

You must abide by the rules for academic conduct described in the [Student Conduct Code](#). I will tolerate neither disruptive language nor disruptive behavior. Disruptive language includes, but is not limited to, violent and/or belligerent and/or insulting remarks, including sexist, racist, homophobic or anti-ethnic slurs, bigotry, and disparaging commentary, either spoken or written (offensive slang is included in this category).

While I do not disagree that you each have a right to your own opinions, inflammatory language founded in ignorance or hate is unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately.

Disruptive behavior includes whispering or talking when another member of the class is speaking or engaged in relevant conversation (remember that I am a member of this class as well). This

classroom functions on the premise of respect, and you will be asked to leave the classroom and a formal process of Student Conduct Code violation will be pursued, if you violate any part of this statement on civility.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Communication: I am available to speak with you and answer questions after class, by scheduled appointment in person (or via Skype), and through email. By University policy, all email communication must be conducted to my UM email account through your UM email account. I will only communicate with registered members of this course.

I am available to discuss any problems or needs for accommodation, but you need to come and talk to me beforehand. That includes letting me know if you have children or any obligations outside of class that will affect your presence in the class.

Course Accommodations Statement (DSS): Students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodations in this course. To request course modifications, please contact me as soon as possible. I will work with you and Disability Services in the accommodation process. For more information, visit the Disability Services website (<http://life.umt.edu/dss/>) or call 406.243.2243.

Contact UMonline if you have questions about or problems with any of our online course materials or your UM email account. UMonline Technical Support: 406-243-4999, UMONline-help@umontana.edu

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: All work submitted for this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented according to MLA formatting standards. (We will discuss these and learn how to use them together.) In cases where plagiarism has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course grade is the standard practice. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources.

Disclaimer

Please be advised that I reserve the right to change and/or modify any of the aforementioned points within this Syllabus, details of the Papers and Projects, Important Due Dates, and the course Weekly Plans. If I do, I will verbally announce any changes in class as well as post them to Moodle immediately.