

California State University, Northridge
English 114A: Approaches to University Writing



Ticket Number: 13928 Instructor: Eric Barnhart Classroom: Juniper Hall 1230 Time: T/TH 12:30pm – 1:45pm	Office Hours: Tuesday 11:00am – 12:00pm or by appointment Location: SN 405 Email: eric.barnhart.998@my.csun.edu
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Required Texts

- ❖ *From Critical Thinking to Argument: A Portable Guide* by Sylvan Barnet and Hugo Bedau. ISBN: 978-1-4576-4995-0
- ❖ *How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe* by Charles Yu. ISBN: 978-0-3077-3945-2
- ❖ *Daytripper* by Gabriel Moon and Fabio Ba. ISBN: 978-1-4012-2969-6
- ❖ Various Supplemental Readings Available on the Class Moodle Site.

Suggested Texts

- ❖ *New Voices*.

Required Materials

- ❖ Working CSUN email and online access for regular participation on our class Moodle site.
- ❖ Binder for course material.
- ❖ Spiral/bound notebook to serve as your reading journal.
- ❖ 2 green books for in class essays.
- ❖ 2-pocket folder for essay submissions.

Introduction

The Approaches to University Writing, Semester I course, is designed to help you approach and obtain the reading, writing, and critical thinking skills necessary for success in the university environment (and beyond). We will read, discuss, and think deeply about a range of texts from a variety of disciplines and, in turn, practice entering into the conversation that is writing.

Course Description

Prerequisites: EPT score of 141-150. Expository prose writing with a focus on both content and form. Specific emphasis shall include the exercise of logical thought and clear expression, the development of effective organizational strategies, and the appropriate gathering and utilization of evidence. Includes instruction on diction, syntax, and grammar, as well as the elements of prose style. Students receive credit for only one course chosen from AAS, CAS, CHS, ENGL, and PAS 196UWA.

This course aspires to establish that writing is not a formulaic enterprise and that there is no one blueprint or recipe for college level writing to which students' ideas must conform. Rather, writing is a process of understanding available models of communication (and their advantages and disadvantages), solving problems, and making meaning for a given audience. With that said, this class will not be able to cover all means and genres of writing, but instead, will aim to provide a portion of what is available.

Course Objectives

Throughout the course, you will engage in the recursive process of writing, which includes developing ideas, drafting, and revising. As you read and analyze print materials, including fiction, non-fiction, graphic novels, and scholarly articles, as well as multimedia materials such as films, lectures, etc, you will:

- ❖ Demonstrate competence in university writing.
- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to use rhetorical strategies that include the appeals to audience, logic, and emotion.
- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to use conventions of format, structure, style, and language appropriate to the purpose of written texts.
- ❖ Demonstrate the ability to use library and online resources effectively to find scholarly sources and to document those sources properly.
- ❖ Demonstrate their understanding of and adherence to rules of academic honesty in presenting written work.

Student Learning Outcomes (English Department)

- ❖ You will gain the ability to read critically.
- ❖ You will gain the ability to write effectively.
- ❖ You will gain knowledge of the cultural diversity of literature.

In short, you will find new and exciting ways to look at and interact with the world.

Student Learning Outcomes (GE)

- ❖ Analyze and compare perspective, meaning, and style in different texts, including those that reflect multicultural images and voices.
- ❖ Construct a theme or thesis and organize and develop a substantial, balanced, and convincing defense of it in a voice, tone, language, and format (e.g., essay, autobiography, report, editorial, case study, inquiry, and research) appropriate to the purpose of writing.
- ❖ Use logical support, including informed opinion and fact, as well as their interpretations, to develop ideas, avoiding fallacies, biased language, and inappropriate tone.
- ❖ Demonstrate satisfactory competence in the conventions of Edited American English and the elements of presentation (including layout, format, and printing).
- ❖ Select and incorporate ideas derived from a variety of sources, such as library electronic and print resources, books, journals, the Internet, and interviews, and document them responsibly and correctly.
- ❖ Apply a variety of strategies for planning, outlining, drafting, revising, and editing written work.

Disabilities Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act Requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester to discuss any such accommodations for this course.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation

This class is committed to the process of creating and maintaining a scholarly community. Therefore, attendance and participation are vital to your success and the success of your classmates. They are both mandatory. More than three (3) unexcused absences and your grade is in danger of dropping. More than six and you will risk failing the class. Additionally, lateness is a distraction, not only for yourself but your classmates, and not acceptable. For this reason, tardiness will count as one third of an absence. Please be here at the start of class, ready to work, participate, and learn.

I expect you to not only be on time, but also fully present. This means that you are responsible for fulfilling all readings and assignments *before* you get to class and that you bring the essential materials needed to participate. If you are not prepared for class, it will show. You will only get out of college what you are willing to put into it. Respect your time, as well as that of your classmates my own. If you commit yourself to the process, we will be able to use this classroom as an environment to grow in. Be present, be active, be involved.

Moodle Posts, Journals, Quizzes, and Various In-Class Writing Assignments

This is a writing course, so I expect you to do a lot of writing, in a variety of ways, utilizing various structures and forms. You will be expected to actively engage with the course materials thoughtfully, expressively, and analytically. There will be daily journal entries/writing assignments, random quizzes, and in-class writing exercises. These activities will be graded on a Credit/No Credit scale. As long as you stay up to date on your reading, you will be more than prepared to do well on these assignments.

Presentations and Discussion Leading

To aid you in your entire college experience and beyond, you will need to learn to be comfortable presenting your ideas to an audience. For this reason, I will be requiring that you do a presentation as well as lead a class discussion on a particular text during the course of the semester. Explicit instructions and sign-up sheets for these will be handed out later.

Peer Review

Writing is both a form of communication, as well as a process. Because of this, it is important to practice the skills of invention, drafting, and revision. To aid you in this endeavor, each essay that you are assigned will have a peer review component: sometimes in groups, sometimes in pairs. Participation in this type of feedback session is invaluable to you as a critical reader and writer, as it will provide you with a space

The Essay Writing Process

Every stage of the essay writing process is important; your grade will be determined not only on the “finished” product, but also the methods by which you get to that product. For this reason, you will be expected to turn in work at every step of the way. You will turn in your invention exercises, all respective drafts and revisions, along with your polished, final copy. If you do not have a complete essay packet, your work will not be accepted.

Also note that your essay will drop one ½ letter grade for every day that it is late. If you are having a problem completing an assignment for whatever reason, please come speak to me during office hours. I cannot provide help if I don't know you need it.

Course Policies

Plagiarism

The CSUN catalog states that plagiarism is “intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, or work of another as one's own in any academic exercise.” Plagiarism is considered a serious offence and an intolerable act. As required by CSUN, all cases of plagiarism will be turned over to the Student Affairs Office and the English Department. Students who are caught plagiarizing will fail the course. Furthermore, students who commit plagiarism may be suspended or expelled from the University.

The college workload may seem daunting, but there are a number of resources available for your assistance. Please do not hesitate to ask for help when you need it.

LRC

For every essay, you are required to meet with a tutor in the Freshman Lab at the Learning Resource Center (LRC). The LRC is located on the third floor of the Oviatt Library in the East Wing. You will need to make an appointment by email, in person, or by calling them. For more information, visit their website: www.csun.edu/lrc/. Upon completion of your session, you will receive a receipt from the tutor that must be attached to your final essay packet or you will lose points on your essay. These availabilities go fast so you will need to plan ahead (approximately one week before the essay is due).

Conferences

At the mid-point of the semester, you will be required to meet with me to discuss your progress in the class.

Classroom Conduct

Be respectful and you will be respected.

Please keep in mind that while I promote and encourage a free exchange of ideas and information, side-conversations or other disruptive talking when either a fellow student or myself is speaking is inconsiderate. Furthermore, all commentary needs to be respectful of the beliefs, opinions, and ideas of others. Students that do not comply with these guidelines will be asked to leave for the day, resulting in an unexcused absence. If the problem continues, further action will be taken.

Email Policy

This class will rely heavily on email communication. You must have a CSUN email account in order to send and receive class emails. Please check your email frequently for updates and reminders about the class. I will not respond to non-CSUN email accounts. When sending or replying through email, please use an appropriate heading (include the Class Name), address me accordingly, and use complete sentences so that I am clear on what you are saying. I will not respond to inappropriate emails.

Grading

Everything you do for this course will play a part in your success in the course, so everything will count for something. Do your work, to the very best of your ability, and you will do well in this class.

Assignment(s)	Percentage of Grade	Total Points Possible
Attendance and Participation	• 10%	• 100
Presentations and Discussion Leading	• 5%	• 50
Reading Journals	• 10%	• 100
Progression 1		
• Exercises	• 5%	• 50
• Essay	• 10%	• 100
Progression 2		
• Exercises	• 5%	• 50
• Essay	• 15%	• 150
Progression 3		
• Exercises	• 5%	• 50
• Essay	• 15%	• 150
Portfolio	• 20%	• 200

Grading Scale

I will use a +/- grading scale and the standard grading system (A-F). There are, as you can see above, a total of 1000 points for the semester. Grades are determined as follows:

(A) 930 – 1000	(B+) 880 – 899	(C+) 780 – 799	(D+) 680 – 699	(F) 599 or below
(A-) 900 – 929	(B) 830 – 879	(C) 730 – 779	(D) 630 – 679	
	(B-) 800 - 829	(C-) 700 - 729	(D-) 600 - 629	

A more elaborate point breakdown and/or rubric will be provided for the various assignments when they are assigned. This is just a basic breakdown of how your grades will be evaluated/calculated at the end of the semester. When I hand back assignments, they will include a point value. Keep track of your points and you will have a good idea of your grade in the class. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me how you are doing at any time during the semester.

Coursework: *The Progressions*

A progression is a series of interconnected reading, writing, and thinking exercises that link to class work. As each progression is completed, the combined drafting builds the foundation and process of an essay. This movement grows out of specific assignments and collaborative nature of the progression and leads to essays that bear marks of distinction, direction, and development.

There are three progressions, consisting of three exercises and one essay each. There is also a fourth, informal, reflective essay, which will serve as an introduction to your portfolio. The portfolio is a collection of the work you've done over the semester.

Progression I: Reading, Writing, and Seeing the Self (The Power of Literacy)

- Exercise 1: Summary, Paraphrase, Quotation
- Exercise 2: Summary of a Central Event
- Exercise 3: Letter to a Person Who Should Read This Speech
- Essay 1: Personal Literacy Narrative

Progression II: Reading, Writing, and Seeing Culture (*How to Live Safely in a Science Fictional Universe*)

- Exercise 1: Annotated Bibliography
- Exercise 2: The Dialogue: Entering the Research Conversation
- Exercise 3: Paper Proposal
- Group Presentation 1: Grammar Presentations
- Essay 2: Argument

Progression III: Reading, Writing, and Seeing Rhetoric (*Daytripper*)

- Exercise 1: The Word Picture: Visual Rhetoric
- Exercise 2: The Scene: Deconstructing Rhetorical Strategies in Media
- Exercise 3: Reading Beneath: Written Rhetoric
- Group Presentation 2: Rhetorical Analysis
- Group Essay/Project: Multimodal Essay

Reflective Essay

Portfolio

Instructor's Notes

Above all, I want to help you succeed in both this class and throughout your time at CSUN and beyond. The ENGL 114A experience is unique in its ability to provide you with a small, supportive community within the large and sometimes intimidating world of college. I encourage you to ask questions, explore new ideas, and acquire valuable skills that you will use in both the academic world and beyond. My hope is that this will be both a challenging, but ultimately rewarding experience.

Ask question, take notes, listen, and share.

I look forward to working with each and every one of you this semester. Know that my door is open to you for questions, comments, and concerns.

The syllabus is subject to change.