

Email: Blackboard Messages (if Blackboard is off line, then you may use: nstover@mxcc.commnet.edu)

Office Hours: *I am not on campus, so office hours are via Blackboard Learn course messages; general questions through public discussion board on Blackboard Learn. Responses to messages and posts will occur within a 24 hour period, and often times much sooner.*

Prerequisite: Reading Prerequisites: ENG* 073 or ESL *173 with a grade of "C" or better, or placement, or SAT scores; Writing Prerequisites: ENG *063 with a grade of "C-" or better, or placement, or SAT scores or ENG*096 with a grade of "C" or better. This is an "L" course.

First Time On-line Participants: Blackboard Learn Orientation via the link on your Blackboard Homepage; or on-ground orientation at the main campus. **An orientation is strongly recommended.**

Location of class: On-line via Blackboard Learn (access through www.my.commnet.edu. Click on the Blackboard Learn link on your commnet homepage or in the upper right hand corner)

Meeting Time: This class is asynchronous—you may access the course at any time—read the course schedule carefully to ensure that assignments and deadlines are completed accordingly. **Be aware that Blackboard Learn has a maintenance time each week, when Blackboard may be down. It is on Friday mornings from 2 AM to 6 AM. Plan ahead!**

Contact Hours/Credits: asynchronous on line/3 credits

Course Description Composition focuses on the study and practice of effective written communication across a variety of rhetorical situations. The course develops skills in applying language conventions, engaging with and using authoritative sources, and crafting logical arguments. Readings are included.

Texts:

1. Hacker, Diana and Nancy Sommers. *A Writer's Reference*. 7th edition. Boston: St. Martin's, 2007.
2. *The Little, Brown Reader*. 12th edition. Marcia Stubbs and Sylvan Barnet, ed. Boston: Longman, 2012.

Both textbooks will be used extensively throughout the course and are required.

General Objective of the Course: Students will learn to write substantial essays for varied purposes

Learning Outcomes: Students will:

- Focus on exposition as the main technique in essay writing.
- Identify ideas of substance and merit.
- Expand germinal ideas, developing depth and breadth.
- Appreciate the relative value of ideas through practice in subordination.
- Examine various ways of working with ideas by reading professional essays.
- Sequence ideas effectively.
- Create smooth, informative connections between thoughts and paragraphs.
- Use correct grammar, sentence structures, punctuation, and spelling.
- Cite effectively and correctly in research writing.
- Compose a variety of essays—expository, personal, and research.
- Employ various rhetorical formats (exemplification, cause/effect, description, etc.) within the larger forms.
- Vary sentence structures to create a pleasing flow.
- Choose appropriate vocabulary to insure clarity.
- Improve essays through revision.
- Identify what is an appropriate topic and scope of inquiry for research.
- Use a variety of research methods competently.
- Employ library and other information sources effectively.

Core Competencies—Why is this course important?

This course is important because you will strengthen your ability to analyze and write persuasively. Additionally, ENG101 meets all general education core competencies but one: Mathematical Reasoning.

- **Communication:**
The interactive process through which there is an exchange of verbal and/or nonverbal information.
- **Cultural Awareness:**
Acknowledgement that society is diverse with groups of individuals possessing differing beliefs, values, attitudes, and customs that are shared from one generation to the next.
- **Social and Civic Responsibility:**
Behavior that demonstrates adherence to legal/ethical standards established by society.
- **Critical Thinking:**
Modes of reasoning including analyzing data, evaluating alternatives, setting priorities, and predicting outcomes.
- **Mathematical Reasoning:**
Determination of approach, materials, and strategies necessary to solve a problem.
- **Technology Utilization:**
Use tools of the trade to achieve a specific outcome.

These core competencies are important personally, academically, and professionally.

Attendance: On-line instruction requires attention and participation much in the same way that on-ground classes do. In this class, you will be able to work at any time of the day or night. However, you will be responsible for completing work on a scheduled basis to show that you are actively participating in class each week. Students will be notified through our early intervention system if they have not been present in class during a 7 day period. More on early intervention can be found later in this syllabus.

Late work will not be accepted in this class, unless a plan of action for make up work exists. Since this is an on-line course, only deeply extenuating circumstances will be considered a reason for late work. A death in the immediate family, or serious illness with documentation from your doctor, are two examples. If a student believes that extenuating circumstances exist, then a private message through Blackboard Learn Messages should occur, as soon as possible, to discuss the details and the impact to that student's progress in the class. Messages are checked frequently throughout each day, and is the quickest way to address serious issues.

ADDITIONAL SYLLABUS INFORMATION

For information about the college's policies and procedures regarding academic honesty, accessibility/disability services, attendance, audio-recording in the classroom, grade appeals, plagiarism, religious accommodations, weather/emergency closings, and more, please go to the following website: www.mxcc.edu/catalog/syllabus-policies/

On-line note re: inclement weather: Sometimes in bad weather, there are power outages. In most cases, power is restored within 24 hours. Only documented outages of greater than 24 hours will be considered a reason to extend a writing deadline.

Withdrawal Policy Statement

You may withdraw from this class any time before the end of the 11th week of the semester. A completed and signed withdrawal form must be on file in the Records Office by the deadline in order to receive a "W" on your transcript. **If you fail to complete this process on time, you will receive a letter grade at the end of the semester, which will include zeroes for any work not submitted.** Course withdrawals may affect financial aid and veteran's benefits. Please make this decision carefully and with the help of your advisor. See the Academic Calendar and the College Catalog for specific dates and procedures regarding the withdrawal process. In the case of this on line course, students communicate with the instructor via Blackboard Learn Messages, and permission to withdraw is given to the student through a response to that message. That return response replaces the instructor's signature. It is only when that message, and the other paperwork has been returned to the Registrar by the student is the withdrawal official. If your name appears on my final roster without a "W", I must give you a grade based on the work that has been completed.

Non-discrimination Statement:

Middlesex Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religious creed, age, sex, national origin, marital status, ancestry, present or past history of mental disorder, learning disability or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression or genetic information in its programs and activities. In addition, the College does not discriminate in employment on the additional basis of veteran status or criminal record.

The following people have been designated to handle inquiries or complaints regarding non-discrimination policies and practices:

- Primary Title IX Coordinator
Dr. Adrienne Maslin

Dean of Students/Title IX and Section 504/ADA Coordinator
amaslin@mxcc.edu; 860-343-5759; Founders Hall Room 123|

- Secondary Title IX Coordinator
Ms. Mary Lou Phillips
Director of Human Resources, Middlesex Community College
mphillips@mxcc.edu; 860-343-5751; Founders Hall Room 115
- Secondary Title IX Coordinator
Ms. Queen Fordham
Coordinator of the Meriden Center Welcome Desk
qfordham@mxcc.edu; 203-608-3011

How will this class work?

A composition class, by its nature, is about the statement of one's arguable opinion, i.e., a thesis, and supporting that thesis through concrete examples, original thought, and critical analysis. This class will focus on the rhetorical writing style of argumentation as a means of presenting and supporting student opinion in essay and research paper formats. Towards that end, students will be reading the opinions of others as a means of formulating a thesis, analyzing the validity of arguments, and supporting or refuting those arguments in **5 paragraph essay format. All essays will be organized in the persuasive argument organization that is presented in the Argumentation Learning Module.** Readings will be drawn from *The Little, Brown Reader* and will be used as the focus of essays, and discussion questions posted on the discussion board. Students will access outside supporting materials via the internet and the MXCC on-line library.

Students will respond to questions and the comments of classmates, write essays, and complete research as part of this course.

All students in Composition classes at MXCC are required to complete a research paper of greater than 5 pages in length that is argumentative in format and demonstrates proficiency in the use of MLA conventions, in-text citations, and works cited. This is the capstone project of the course, and is worked on throughout the semester to give students time to do scholarly research, as well as learn and practice the writing skills necessary to present their research objectively and effectively. The final draft of the research should represent the student's "best" representation of his/her skills in writing.

Discussion Boards in English Composition. This class employs discussion boards as a means of connecting students in the class through discussion and response. Since argumentation and debate is the format of the course, discussion boards give students the chance to practice their argumentation skills while connecting with classmates.

Periodically, a discussion question will be posted that is relevant to the readings and issues being considered. **These questions must be responded to substantially (minimum of 250-300 words).** In addition, students must respond to the post of one other student. **These responses will be based on the "discussion" that arises from the substantial posts. These responses need to be pertinent, on topic, and add to the thread of the discussion (minimum 100 words).** More details and the points assigned to this aspect of the course are outlined in detail later in this syllabus.

In addition, a public discussion forum has been created to enable students to pose questions in much the same manner as they would if they were in class and needed clarification on an aspect of the course. This discussion board is entitled **Our Neighborhood. Our Neighborhood** is accessible from our class homepage. Its purpose is to enable students to pose questions, receive answers and clarifications from the instructor, and to help each other. It is also the place where I will give the class special information, feedback, and encouragement throughout the semester. It is a link that should be checked regularly by students in order to keep up to date on all aspects of English Composition class.

Announcements in English Composition: An important tool that should also be checked regularly is the announcement tool. It is accessed on the homepage of our class, and will give students a "heads up" on new discussion in **Our Neighborhood**; let students know when grades have been posted and work returned; and to pass on college-wide information that filters down to instructors from the administration of MXCC. An announcement may be one sentence, or a paragraph with important up to the minute information that you need to complete an assignment. Because they are time sensitive, announcements are deleted once a reasonable time has passed. That is why it is important to check into the class regularly, and read announcements first.

The course will be organized into learning modules. Each module will consist of readings, discussion questions, web links and assignments.

- Deadlines and the points assigned to work will be posted within the learning module.
- All discussions will be posted to the discussion board.

- Assignments, including essays, will be submitted through the assignment link within the module.
- All learning modules are present and available to students throughout the semester.
 - This enables students to work ahead, and manage work, home and other school responsibilities and deadlines.
 - **The most successful students in an on-line English Composition course begin with each learning module, as it is assigned, and move from link to link within the module to build on knowledge and skills.**
- Skipping around or relying on the shortcuts menu bar is not a good idea!
 - Sometimes a student will feel that he/she can skip right to the assignment or discussion, and skip the module contents. This is not a good idea!
 - Information that is essential to good writing, and the requirements of the course are found inside each of the modules presented.
- Links can be found on the homepage of our course and the front page of Blackboard Learn that direct students to answers and help related to the use of Blackboard Learn, and our course.

Parts of the learning module, including the syllabus and course schedule will be in rich-text or html format. Some documents will be in pdf format due to their size. If you do not automatically see a pdf style document, follow these instructions to download or update the adobe reader on your computer.

You need to use Adobe Reader to access the .PDF files. If you don't have Adobe Reader on your computer, go to <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readermain.html> and download the Adobe Reader by clicking the graphic icon labeled Get Adobe Reader. Uncheck Free Google Toolbar, click on **Download**. Install the downloaded file on your computer. You also need to have the pop-up blocker turned off on your browser.

Communication:

- Messages, public, and private discussion will occur within Blackboard Learn.
- Students are encouraged to pose private questions through the Messages tool. See my note above, regarding emergencies and late work.
- **Students are urged to check into the course frequently to access responses to messages, read announcements, and review grades.**
 - As is indicated below, students will have the opportunity to “re-do” essays submitted for higher points. The due dates for “re-do’s” arrive very quickly, so checking into the course frequently is essential for those who wish to submit an additional draft for review. See the details in the grading section of this syllabus.
- It is not uncommon for students to have difficulties, initially, with various aspects of the course, and the “ins and outs” of submitting work.
 - When I see that this is the case, I will return work to students to resubmit without penalty.
 - The student who does not check into the course regularly, misses this chance. Therefore, it is essential that students check announcements, **Our Neighborhood**, read course messages, and review grades, so that ongoing communication occurs.
- Students are able to access Blackboard Learn through their mobile devices.
 - Use the student support and training links on the front page when you log into Blackboard Learn.
 - You may need to use the search feature to bring you to the links for Mobile Apps
- **Student email: username@mail.ct.edu**
 - All correspondences from MxCC will come to this address.
 - Early intervention, announcements, and some other course info will as well.
 - Students can arrange to have this correspondence “forwarded” to personal email
 - This is **strongly recommended** so that you are able to keep in touch with changes to our course such as changes in deadlines, etc.

All specific due dates can be found in the course schedule, as well as on the course calendar.

Grading Policy:

Grades in this course will be on a **1000** point grading system. It will be as follows:

Discussion Question Response	3 @ 50 pts each	150
Response to others	3 @ 25 pts each	75
Student essays	4 @ 75 pts each	300**
Mid-term Exam		100

Final Exam		100
Research Paper:		
	working bibliography	25
	note cards	25
	formal outline	25
	first draft of paper	75
	final draft of paper	125
	Total:	<hr/> 1000

****Re-do's on Essays:**

- **Students will be allowed to “re-do” these four essays one time in order to increase their points.**
 - **The due date for “re-do” drafts will be three days after the return of the original submission with my comments and rubric.**
 - For example, if the original essay is returned on Wednesday, then the “re-do” draft is due on Saturday by 11:59 p.m.
 - The new essay will be reviewed, and the same rubric applied to that draft. The higher score will prevail.
 - **“Re-do” essays submitted after the three day deadline, will not be read. No exceptions will be made to this policy.**
- **Students are not required to “re-do” their work.** This opportunity is made available to help those who wish to immediately apply advice, or try for higher points. Students who are satisfied with the points they have received do not have to submit additional drafts.

“Re-do” drafts will not be allowed on the mid-term and final exam essays since these essays are “assessments” of student ability.

Performance Feedback:

- I will comment on your essays using margin notations.
 - **You should see them on the right side of your work.** These will be shown to you in Blackboard Learn.
 - If I download your work to view offline, I will return a pdf formatted document to you in which the margin notes can be automatically seen.
- Additional comments will be made in the grading part of the submission window and on the **rubric** associated with the assignment.

Rubrics:

- Rubrics showing point values and evaluation criterion will be posted on Blackboard Learn in the grade book.
- Some rubrics are “holistic”—they evaluate your work as a whole to determine how effectively you used the tools presented in class to “debate” a topic.
- Some rubrics are “item by item” rubrics that look to see if you have completed all of the directions/specifications of an assignment.
- Comments will be made on the rubrics in various areas where feedback can be shown.
- All comments—those made in the margins of the essay and those made on the rubric should be considered by the student so that improvement can be made.
- **If you do not see comments on your essay or your rubrics—speak up right away via Messages so that I can help you with that problem. It is important that students have feedback available to them to improve their writing.**

My Grades:

- Students will be able to use Blackboard Learn to keep track of the points they have earned through “My Grades” in Blackboard Learn.
- A link will show you rubrics and other comments that are made on the assignment.

Students need to realize that the total number of points is given for "perfect" writing in essays, research, discussions and responses. Since no one is "perfect", it is unrealistic to expect that any student will receive the maximum number of points on every assignment. Here are some guidelines that can be used for judging progress towards your final grade that is being made throughout the course.

"A" range grades 900-1000 points

"B" range grades 800-899 points

"C" range grades 700-799 points

"D" range grades 600-699 points

A grade of "F" will be assigned to points below 600.

A “perfect” student who completed only the assigned work would have a grade 500 points at the midterm. By taking advantage of the bonus opportunities described below, a “regular” student could have more than 500 points at the mid-term, and be well on his/her way to a successful final grade.

Since writing is graded on an individual basis, there are no "curved" or "scaled" scores in this grading system. Students are strongly encouraged to monitor their progress during the semester and make informed decisions about their future in the course.

Keep an eye out for “bonus” opportunities:

- The SmartMeasure Test Assignment (25 points)
- The Syllabus Quiz (25 points)
- MLA thesis statements; in-text citations and works cited self-tests (up to 20 points each)
- Essay Self-review Surveys (10 points each)
- 2 bonus discussion/responses (30 points each)

Bonus Point 411:

- Students are not required to complete bonus activities. However, they constitute a total of 230 points that can be gathered in addition to those needed to complete the class.
- **Most bonus points are given before the mid-term.**
- **The essay self-review surveys will be given throughout the semester before each essay assignment, the mid-term, and final.**
 - This can be very helpful to students who may not have had experience with on-line learning or with the requirements of MLA.
- Working on bonus point activities, not only reinforces skills needed for success in the course, but also helps make up for an unexpected lower grade on an essay or a required post/response discussion.
- **Since bonus opportunities have been provided in the course, other extra credit work will not be created at the request of students.**
- Some advice about bonus points:
 - Some students mistakenly believe that they can ignore these opportunities, do the minimum required work, and are surprised at mid-term, when they are way behind their goals for this course.
 - The writing requirements in this class require critical thinking, demonstration of skills presented in the course, and steady growth.
 - Bonus opportunities help to make up for a lower grade on an essay or a discussion.
 - It is recommended that all students try to take advantage of these “gifts” so that they make their grade goal for the semester.

Early Intervention System:

- Blackboard Learn has an Early Intervention System that enables instructors to see when students are logging into the class and completing work.
- Students who have not logged into our class within 7 days will receive an automated notice to their college email address.
 - This will also happen when work has not been completed.
- Students need to pay attention to these messages, since they are “heads-up” reminders to refocus on success, or address issues that have been placed on the back burner.

Role of the Instructor/Facilitator:

By their nature, on-line courses do not have classrooms, so the role of the instructor changes to that of facilitator. I have designed this course to lead students through the writing process so that they may become better academic writers. Learning is facilitated via the learning modules which include reading, activities, discussions and writing on all aspects of composition and research. **Since this is a “distance” learning class, I do not have an office on campus, and am not able to give “one to one” tutoring to students. Occasionally, a student will request that we meet. I am not able to do this.** As indicated in my introduction in **Our Neighborhood**, I work full-time at another school that is miles away from the Meriden and Middletown campuses.

Questions, and requests for extra guidance can be made through **Messages** and through the **Our Neighborhood** discussion forum. Posing questions in **Our Neighborhood**, or through a course message when directions seem unclear, or when work is returned and comments are made on rubrics and on essays, is a good time to address your needs as a writer and learner. I check into the course several times each day, and try to respond to questions and concerns as quickly as possible. When necessary, I attach additional documents, or illustrations to help students.

Learning Center Extra Help:

- Students can avail themselves of “one to one” tutoring through the learning centers on the Middletown and Meriden campuses. The tutors are familiar with the course expectations.
- Bringing a copy of the assignment and the rubric will help the tutor to help you to meet the expectations of an assignment.
 - Many of the tutors can also help with computer related skills such as word processing, and accessing on-line research tools through our library.
 - Using the computer to show the tutor our course, and the expectations of the learning modules will help the tutor see what my specific requirements are.
- **The Learning Center is a fabulous resource for students who need extra assistance with writing. Many students who have used this valuable form of assistance have gone on to get great grades in this and many other classes that require writing and research.**
- For those students who wish to use **e-tutor**.
 - I release all of the assignments at the beginning of the semester. This way, students do not need to wait for me, and have plenty of time to send work to be reviewed, before due dates.
- As students prepare for their research paper, there is electronic and on-ground assistance at the library in Chapman Hall.
 - Instructional librarians are available to help with individual student’s research needs.
 - **Using this resource is strongly recommended. It is very helpful, and will make the research process go smoothly for you.**
- All of these resources are **free of charge**, and part of your experience at MXCC.

Other Important Items:

- √ All assignments must be word processed, double spaced with margins (MLA style).
 - For more information on format, consult *A Writer’s Reference* for MLA formatting and sample essays. This text is required and is listed on page one of the syllabus.
- √ All essays and research papers must be typed in a size 12 font, Times New Roman and double spaced as required for MLA. This is to preserve my eye sight!
 - Essays and research that is not double spaced in a size 12 font **will not be graded. There will be no exceptions to this policy.**
- √ Header format:
 - Name, instructor’s name, class, and date will be placed in the upper left corner of page one.
 - Student’s last name and the page numbers will be placed in the upper right corner. **Ex: Stover 1**
 - **Examples of a header format can be found on the sample 5 paragraph essays that are in the MLA and Essay Writing Basics and the Argumentation learning modules.**
 - A title page is not necessary for work submitted in this class.
- √ **5 Paragraph Essay and Research Paper Length:**
 - minimum of 600 words per essay
 - Maximum of 1000 words
 - Page minimums and maximums do not include citations or the Works Cited page.
 - **Overly long essays are not acceptable.** Less is more in this class. We are learning to express our thoughts and to debate concisely. ***The average essay should be about 3 full pages of written text.*** This does not include the Works Cited page. Essays that do not conform to this guideline will be returned, and students will have a chance to re-do them during the regular re-do process described above.
 - ***The research paper will be a minimum of 5 full pages*** not including the Works Cited page. This paper is a multiple paragraph work that extends beyond the 5 paragraph essay, but maintains the structure of the argumentative writing style.
- √ Outside Sources:
 - All essays and the research paper will use outside sources drawn from the internet and the MXCC on-line library.
 - These sources will be used as quotations, paraphrased and summarized material within essays.
 - **MLA in-text citations and an MLA Works Cited page will be expected with all essays and the research paper.**
 - *A Writer’s Reference* (a required text) has numerous examples of the formatting of both these essential parts of the English Composition essay.
 - The academic learning module that is presented to you will be MLA and Essay Writing Basics.

- Numerous examples and practice are provided in this learning module to help facilitate this important requirement.
- √ Electronic Submissions:
 - All work will be submitted through the submission window that is part of Blackboard Learn.
 - These electronic formats are the only formats that can be opened by my computer:
 - pdf/.doc/.docx/.rtf. The rtf (rich text format) is a good choice if your word processing software is not Microsoft Word.
 - **I can not open “opendoc” or “pages” documents on my computer.**
 - **It is the student’s responsibility to save his/her documents in the formats listed above. Rich Text Format (rtf) is the easiest and best way to do this.**
 - **One warning will be given. If I cannot open your work, it will not be graded. There will be no exceptions to this policy.**
 - Submissions of essays and research papers are **attached** to the submissions window.
 - They are not “cut and paste” or directly keyboarded into the window itself.
 - Discussion post/response may use the submissions text window directly.
 - When in doubt—ask!
- √ Midterm and final exams will be similar to the essays completed during the semester. However, the points for each are higher since students will be demonstrating their progress and mastery of skills learned during the semester.
 - Re-do is not available for these two essays since they are assessments.

A course schedule with a week by week breakdown of all activities associated with the course will be provided separately. Look for that link in the folder marked Syllabus and Course Schedule on the Blackboard Learn English 101 homepage.

July, 2014