Middlesex Community College

English 101/1181: Composition   **On-line Spring 2015**

Instructor: Mrs. Nancy D. Stover

Email: Blackboard Messages. If Blackboard is off line use: nstover@mxcc.commnet.edu

Office Hours: Meriden Center-Learning Center M/W 7:00 -7:30 PM or via message in our Blackboard Course.

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.

Location of class: On-line via Blackboard Learn

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

Textbooks:
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 books are required and used extensively. If you are having difficulty purchasing books or are waiting for financial aid, these books may be "borrowed" from the library in Chapman Hall or from the Learning Center at the Meriden Center.

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***.

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.

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.

Late Work: Late work will not be accepted in this class. 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 a 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. A make-up plan with new due dates will be issued to the student should the instructor feel that is warranted. Since this is a college level course, all work must be completed in order for a student to receive credit, even when life brings difficult things to bear.

Communication:
- Messages, public, and private discussion will occur within Blackboard Learn.
    - o Students are encouraged to pose private questions through the Messages tool. See my note above, regarding emergencies and late work.
    - o Private journals are also places to share personal thoughts regarding the work of the course.
- **Students are urged to check into the course frequently to access responses to messages, read announcements, and review grades.**
- **Announcements in English Composition:** An important tool that should also be checked regularly is the announcement tool.
    - o It is accessed on the homepage of our class, and will give students a "heads up" on new discussion; 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.
    - o Because they are time sensitive, announcements are deleted once a reasonable time has passed.
- Students are able to access Blackboard Learn through their mobile devices.
    - o Use the student support and training links on the front page when you log into Blackboard Learn.
    - o You may need to use the search feature to bring you to the links for Mobile Apps.
- **Student email: username@mail.ct.edu**
    - o All correspondences from MxCC will come to this address.
    - o Early intervention, announcements, and some other course info will as well.
    - o Students can arrange to have this correspondence "forwarded" to personal email.
    - o This is **strongly recommended** so that you are able to keep in touch with changes to our course such as changes in deadlines, etc.
- **Online Course Files:** Work will be delivered in PDF, PowerPoint, and RTF (rich text format). Students may need an adobe reader (www.adobe.com); a power point reader (www.microsoft.com) and a word processing application. Both the

adobe reader and the power point reader are free downloads. In many cases, power point presentations can be opened in Pages on a Mac and Slides in Google.

- o **It is the student's responsibility to ensure that he/she can open and read documents and presentations in this on line course.**
- **Due Dates:** All specific due dates can be found in the course schedule, as well as on the course calendar.

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.

Systems Issues: On line instructors receive notification when Blackboard, Banner and Mycommnet have problems. Unless I receive notice of an issue from the systems office, I will not extend a deadline. Plan ahead to allow for individual difficulties.

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:

- <u>Primary Title IX Coordinator</u>
  Dr. Adrienne Maslin
  Dean of Students/Title IX and Section 504/ADA Coordinator
  amaslin@mxcc.edu; 860-343-5759; Founders Hall Room 123|

- <u>Secondary Title IX Coordinator</u>
  Ms. Mary Lou Phillips
  Director of Human Resources, Middlesex Community College
  mphillips@mxcc.edu; 860-343-5751; Founders Hall Room 115

- <u>Secondary Title IX Coordinator</u>
  Ms. Queen Fordham
  Coordinator of the Meriden Center Welcome Desk
  qfordham@mxcc.edu; 203-608-3011

How does this course work?

On line learning is very independent. Students work to meet deadlines, but are able to control when and where that happens. This course is available 24/7. The teacher acts as a facilitator for learning: presenting experiences that help students explore and grow their writing abilities. The course is designed to allow students to choose the styles of writing that best suit their needs and interests. All students will maintain a portfolio of work, and complete a research project as part of this course.

You will need to establish a study schedule that fits into your work and family life. Working in the class each day, or at the minimum several times a week, will ensure that you do not get "jammed up" when deadlines approach. Most students who take on line classes have outside responsibilities. Therefore, excuses such as, "I had to work."…or…"My child had a bug."….will be ignored by your instructor. In order to receive college credit, work needs to be completed. Even students who have extenuating circumstances, such as serious illness in the family, or a death in the family, must make up the work in order to receive credit.

The most important part of learning to write is learning to take advice and revise one's work so that it is a clear form of communication to the reader. The best way for that to happen is to re-write and revise work several times. To keep that organized and to show the progress a written piece has made, portfolios are used. Portfolios will contain all parts of the writer's "process": pre-writing, planning, drafting, self-review, e-tutor review, and final drafts. A self-review tool will be provided to each student to use throughout the semester. The **E-tutor** service is an easy way for working students to receive feedback on a draft. **SafeAssign** is also a great way to check for appropriate use of supporting sources in an essay or research. Directions and links for these services will be provided separately.

Portfolios:
Students will maintain a portfolio of work that will be reviewed 4 times in the semester by the instructor for the purpose of giving feedback on writing, and also grading student work. The portfolio resides "in the cloud".

➢ **All students must**:
- Go to www.dropbox.com
- To sign in-use email: nstover@mxcc.edu
- Password: 2015Spring
- Open folder: Eng 101.1181 On line Spr 2015
  - Create a portfolio folder (click on the folder icon with the + sign that is in the upper right of the window)
  - Name your folder this way.
    - Last name, first name, the word "Portfolio" (ex: Stover, Nancy Portfolio)
    - Inside this folder you will create a total of 5 sub-folders that contain your writing and research work.
  - Unfortunately, folders are not "secure"
    - Students are advised to keep their own electronic folders with copies of their work in case of accidental deletion of a document stored in drop box.

Four sub-folders will contain the essay writing work. One sub-folder will contain research work**. The main folder creation task will be completed in the first week of the course.** Sub-folders will be created as the course progresses. Directions specific to those folders will be given separately. Check the course schedule for the due dates.

Research Paper:
All students in Composition classes at MXCC are required to complete a research paper of greater than 5 pages in length that is thesis driven 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. A portfolio sub-folder will be created and contain all parts of the research process. The course schedule will contain a series of due dates for the research paper to keep students on track.

Discussion Assignments:
Students will be given the opportunity to interact and share ideas with each other throughout the semester through the use of discussion board topics. Students will be asked to share their thoughts on a prompt style "starter" and respond to the ideas of two other students in the class. These discussion will be graded. The course schedule and calendar will have due dates for this work.

Journal Entries:
Each student has been provided with a private journal in which he/she will post assigned reflections on their writing work, pose private writing related questions, and receive feedback on writing and discussion from the instructor. Reflections will be graded assignments. In addition, the journal is the place to interact privately with the instructor about writing. Posing questions directly related to the writing that is in process, or

getting one on one tutorial advice are two examples of how the journal will be used outside of graded reflection.

Exams:
Students in English Composition will complete a mid-term and final exam essay that will be submitted through Blackboard. These assignments are separate from the portfolio and represent an assessment of each students writing progress throughout the semester. The dates will be listed in the course schedule.

Grading–1000 point grading system.
All work in this course earns points. This allow students to take charge of learning and takes into account the effort that is necessary to be a successful college student. Students "earn" points; they are not "given" by the instructor. It is <u>very rare</u> that any student receives the maximum number of points on any given assignment.

Portfolio
- **Essay Writing:**
  - **(4) reviews (100 points each review)**
    - All directions followed/all materials present
- **Research Writing:**
  - **(1) review (300 points)**
    - All directions followed/all materials present
    - **Note: A final research draft must be submitted, or the grade is zero.**

Exams
- **Mid-term Exam Essay (50 points)**
- **Final Exam Essay (50 points)**

Discussion
- **(4) discussion topics (25 points each)**
  - **Post and 2 responses**
    - All directions followed

Journal Entries
- **(4) reflections (25 points each)**
  - All directions followed

There are no bonus or extra credit assignments given in this course.

All assessment is done using rubrics and checklists to ensure uniform and fair assessment of writing. Rubrics will be attached to all submission/discussion and reflection windows so that students are able to see how they will be assessed before they submit their work and ideas.

Specific directions and specifications for all aspects of the course will be provided in writing and placed in multiple locations throughout Blackboard so that students always have a clear idea of requirements.

General Discussion board:
A general discussion board has been placed on the homepage of the course to enable students to pose general questions that pertain to all students and interact informally with each other. This is the place where the instructor will disseminate information, advice, clarifications and words of wisdom that will help make the class move forward through the semester.

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.**
- 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.

Note: I am asking students to submit work to e-tutor as part of receiving feedback for their writing in a convenient way that can be placed in a portfolio. The Learning Centers in Middletown and Meriden, and the instructional librarians are additional and very valuable resources to student success in Eng. 101. They bring a "human" interaction to the impersonal nature of on line learning.

January, 2015