

**Course Syllabus: English 200: Advanced Composition (online)**

**Spring 2018 CRN 1128 Professor:** Adam Florida

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**Course Description**



A thorough study of rhetoric, prose style, argumentation, and editing through sophisticated non-fiction readings. Minimum of three extensive essays with various levels of research. This may not be used as a 200 level literature course. **Prerequisite:** *Either ENG\*101ALP, ENG\*101E, or ENG\*101 with a "B-" or better. (Updated Fall 2017) (Fulfills an "L" course requirement for students who enrolled in a degree program prior to the Fall 2016 semester.)*

**Office Hours**



Any questions, comments, concerns? Want some one-on-one instruction? Come visit me during my office hours!

- **Tuesday 1:45-3:15 (Snow 520),**
- **Tuesday 4:15-5:15 (Meriden)**
- **Wednesday 9:30-11:30 (Snow 520),**
- **By appointment**

**Texts**



- ❖ *Everything's an Argument with Readings, 7<sup>th</sup> edition* edited by Lunsford et al. ISBN: 978-1319085742 (Make sure you get the edition **with readings.**)
- ❖ *Palm Sunday* by Kurt Vonnegut (any edition is fine)

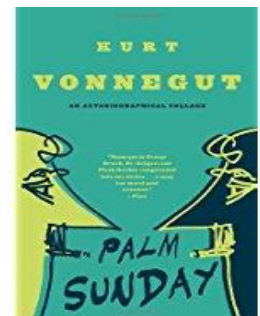
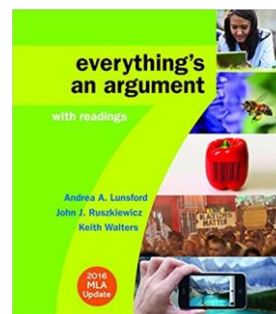
**BlackBoard Mail Policy**



-I will always do my best to reply within 48 hours.  
-PLEASE use the "**BlackBoard Mail**" link (**NOT external e-mail**) to send me questions that are of a personal nature.

-Otherwise, **PLEASE** post all other questions (anything about the readings or the assignments or simply the course that is unclear) on the "**Course Questions**" **discussion board**. That way, other students can see both the question and the answer I post.

**-Note:** Be sure to check both your BlackBoard mail and the "Course Questions" board as I expect you to **know/follow any answers I post there whether or not you are the one who asked the question.**



## Assignments:



### \*Unit 1: Rhetoric

Discussion Posts	15%
Essay 1	20%

### \*Unit 2: Academic Argument

Discussion Posts	7.5%
Essay 2	25%

### \*Unit 3: Public Argument

Discussion Posts	5%
Essay 3	27.5%

## Revision



I really, sincerely believe that the best way to improve your writing is not simply to do grammar exercises over and over (although that does help) but to learn from your own mistakes; that means carefully revising papers. In fact the majority of the actual writing instruction I give will be in the form of specific feedback on your papers.

I encourage you to rewrite the first two essays if they receive a “B-” or lower. You may re-write the paper regardless of the grade, BUT to earn a higher grade I need to see that you have made extensive improvements rather than simply minor edits (which is often more difficult for a paper that has already earned an above-average grade). **Your final grade for the paper will be determined by averaging the grade of the original and that of the rewrite--**note what I mention below about the range of “F” papers before you think about handing in garbage because you know you can re-write it.

(Note: You may *not* revise discussion posts, but there are plenty of those.)

## Grading



A 100.0 - 93.0	B 86.9 - 83.0	C 76.9 - 73.0	D 66.9 - 63.0
A- 92.9 - 90.0	B- 82.9 - 80.0	C- 72.9 - 70.0	D- 62.9 - 60.0
B+ 89.9 - 87.0	C+ 79.9 - 77.0	D+ 69.9 - 67.0	F 59.9 - 0.0

**A** papers are *exceptional* in critical thinking, style, structure, development, and mechanics. Ideas are engaging, original, *well-developed*, and *convincing*—which also means that these essays tend to be close to the higher end of the required page limit. Textual analysis is thorough and insightful.

**B** papers are *well above average* in those areas, with a few grammatical issues and generally less development. Textual evidence is present, but analysis could be more thorough.

**C** papers are *average*, with relatively minor grammar, organizational, or development problems that distract from the easy flow of the essay. Generally these lack true depth of thought and are closer to the minimum page requirement. Ideas lack depth and analysis of quotations is limited and often just summary.

**D** papers are *below average* and contain numerous grammatical/mechanical errors, are not organized logically, have repetition rather than development, demonstrate limited understanding of the text. Textual evidence is sparse.

**F** papers are *very weak* and have significant error patterns in grammar and/or mechanics, lack basic essay structure/organization, lack coherent paragraphs, have little/no development or direct textual support, and/or do not follow the assignment.

Note: An **F** can be anywhere from a zero to a 59, and I have given single digit grades to papers that earn single digit grades. Please follow directions carefully, refer back to all course materials, and **proofread** (I recommend, slowly and out loud!): the three papers make up 72.5% of your grade!

## Discussion Board



In an average week you'll have two assignments due on the week's discussion boards for Unit 1 and one assignment due on the week's discussion board for Units 2+3. Unfortunately, for this class "discussion" is really a misnomer. You're basically just posting your homework there. Why? Glad you asked. While you don't *have* to read anyone else's work, *I strongly encourage you to*. In the first unit, I hope that you are intrigued, impressed, and entertained by your classmates' work. In fact, I even encourage you to "vote" on your favorite posting of the week. **The more active you are on the discussion board, the more brownie points you're earning. I STRONGLY ENCOURAGE any attempts at actual discussion on the weekly "discussion" boards!** In addition, there's a whole discussion board dedicated to...well, *discussion*. On the "Wanna Chat" board, please feel free to post anything relevant, interesting, humorous, *whatever* that connects to the class in some way—even if it's a stretch 😊.

**Discussion board posts are not editable once submitted; do not post until you are sure you have clearly said what you have to say.**

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### Discussion Board Grading Scale

- The majority of your posts will be graded based on a two part rubric: content and writing. All assignments should reflect your best academic writing—that means proper paragraph structure, spelling, grammar, mechanics, no slang, etc. (This does not apply to the informal "Wanna Chat" board, of course.)
- Please note that I rarely give out As on discussion board posts – your work really must be extraordinary. As are reserved for those students who are going above and beyond basic course expectations and who are thus producing exceptional work. Simply meeting the criteria for the assignment does not earn you an A.
- If you meet the criteria for the assignment and do average, satisfactory work, you will earn a C.

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### Obvious Online Rules

1. No personal attacks are permitted. If there is a difference of opinion, mature discussion and conflict resolution are expected. Disagreement can lead to wonderful discussion and insight—just keep it civil!
2. If I have to delete your post from a discussion board (for personal attacks, inappropriate language or action, etc.), you will receive an automatic zero for that week's discussion. Basically, remember that even though you're a mysterious, semi-anonymous, online presence this is a college class. Appropriate behavior/interaction is expected.
3. ALL writing for the course should be academic in nature—unless otherwise noted. Yes, you are writing in an online format; No, you are not writing an e-mail to friends. **Wording, usage, development, thought, clarity, professionalism should all meet high academic standards. That said, I really want you to get creative with your examples for Unit 1—these do *not* have to be academic (even though your analysis does).**
4. You are expected to login several times over the course of the week (to view lecture notes, to post and to respond). Logging in once a week for one hour will not lead to success in this course.

## The Syllabus



Think of this syllabus as a contract. It's my best attempt to tell you honestly and accurately what you can expect in the course. All rules and expectations are clearly outlined (I hope), and unless you experience some major medical emergency and notify me ASAP there won't be any exceptions. You probably have jobs and family responsibilities and other classes and friends and such. So do I; so does everyone else in this class. That means that none of us are special, so none of us should expect special treatment.

## (NO) Late Work



I have no tolerance for late work. All assignments must be submitted **BEFORE** the posted deadline. It does not matter if work is turned in one week, one day, one hour, or one *second* late: I will not read or grade any late work. Please see the "Late Work Addendum" in the "Syllabus" section of BlackBoard for further explanation.

Everything will be due *before* 11:59 PM on either a Tuesday or a Saturday.

## Odds & Ends



- ❖ **Follow Directions:** One of the most important skills required to successfully complete an online course (or any course, really) is the ability to follow directions. I have done my best to make the design of BlackBoard as intuitive as possible and to clearly label everything. I have arranged the class into weekly folders, each starting on a Sunday and ending on a Saturday. In each folder, you will see a "To Do" list: follow that. There will be powerpoints, and handouts, and checklists, and directions: refer back to them regularly.
- ❖ **Get Ahead:** Never wait until the final seconds, or minutes, or even hours to submit work. What happens if your internet fails, or BlackBoard kicks you off, or...whatever! Don't risk getting a zero by cutting it close. Remember my late work policy and know that you can work up to a week ahead of schedule. I have programmed a new week's worth of work to "unlock" and become visible Saturdays at 11:59 PM.
- ❖ **My Class:** In my section of ENG 200, you will gain a fuller understanding of rhetorical terms and devices and analyze how rhetorical strategies are utilized in everyday life. Through numerous non-fiction readings you will enhance your critical reading skills and craft intelligent, insightful questions that should lead to sound research. Finally, you will hone your writing skills by writing for both formal and informal audiences using both scholarly/peer-reviewed and non-academic sources. Because of the prerequisites for this course, I'm assuming everyone enrolled knows how to write a basic academic essay (clear thesis at the end of the intro, unified body paragraphs with clear topic sentences, etc.). In this class you will be learning some more formal types of arguments as well as gaining a much deeper knowledge of what makes a strong argument. In a sense, this course won't be teaching you so much in terms of new ways to write, but rather new ways to *think*.
- ❖ **Effort:** Here's where I echo the words of David Foster Wallace (great author—check him out!) from a course syllabus of his: "If you are used to whipping off papers the night before they're due, running them quickly through the computer's Spellchecker, handing them in full of high-school errors and sentences that make no sense and having the professor accept them 'because the ideas are good' or something, please be informed that I draw no distinction between the quality of one's ideas and the quality of those ideas' written expression, and I will not accept sloppy, rough-draftish, or semiliterate college writing. Again, I am absolutely not kidding."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roiphe, Katie. "The Extraordinary Syllabus of David Foster Wallace: What his Lesson Plans Teach Us About How to Live." *Slate.com*. The Slate Group, 23 Nov. 2011. Web. 4 Dec. 2011.



## Plagiarism and Academic Honesty:



**College Policy:** “At Middlesex Community College we expect the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in accordance with the Board of Trustees’ Proscribed Conduct Policy in Section 5.2.1 of the Board of Trustees Policy Manual. This policy prohibits cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaborations on assignments, unauthorized access to examinations or course materials, plagiarism and other proscribed activities. Plagiarism is defined as the use of another’s idea(s) or phrase(s) and representing that/those idea(s) as your own, either intentionally or unintentionally.” (Board of Trustees’ Policy 5.2.1)

**My Explanation:** If you do any of the following, then you have plagiarized:

- Turn in material you did not write,
- Turn in papers written by you for another class (either high school or college),
- Turn in papers you drafted but that were revised or edited by another,
- Fail to paraphrase, summarize, or quote sources,
- Turn in papers written by someone else and edited or revised by you, or
- Get any of your *ideas* from another source. (*Anywhere* on the internet, for example)

### **My Penalties:**

- Presenting another person’s **ideas or language** as your own will result in an automatic “F” (zero) on the assignment.
- Plagiarism may also result in an “F” for the course because I will report the incident to the Chair of the English Department and to the Academic Dean since it is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.
- If you plagiarize *any* of the discussion posts, then you will receive a Zero for *all* discussion posts (past, present and future) in that unit

**Finally...**



I swear, the goal of this syllabus is not to scare you off. I am a stickler for rules, but other than that I’m a pretty nice, down-to-earth guy (I think so at least). The nicest thing I can do is to plainly lay out all rules, expectations, and deadlines on day one so that everything is crystal clear. I promise that I will be busting my butt, too, and I will return all work as quickly as possible (usually within the week submitted). None of the assignments are “busy work.” Your time and mine are too valuable for that. I really have tried to thoughtfully design a course that will help you become a stronger reader, writer, and thinker. While there will be a lot of work, I truly hope that you are able to enjoy the class and feel rewarded for everything you put into it. Remember, what you get out of anything depends on what you put into it.

G’Luck!

## TAP Competencies and Course Outcomes



### Learning Objectives

#### Critical Analysis and Logical Thinking (TAP full competency)

- Students will be able to organize, interpret, and evaluate evidence and ideas within and across disciplines; draw reasoned inferences and defensible conclusions; and solve problems and make decisions based on analytical processes.

#### Written Communication (TAP full competency)

- Students will be prepared to develop oral messages and written texts of varying lengths and styles that communicate effectively and appropriately across a variety of settings.

#### Outcomes/Objectives of Course

Students will learn to write extended essays on challenging topics.

<b>Content</b> learn to focus on ideas of substance or merit learn to present (orally) and discuss synopses of their essays learn to expand germinal ideas, developing depth and breadth learn various ways of working with ideas by reading professional essays	<b>Form</b> learn to compose a variety of essays—expository, personal, and research learn to employ various rhetorical formats (exemplification, cause and effect, description, etc.) within the larger forms
<b>Research</b> learn to use a variety of research methods competently learn to use the library and other information sources effectively learn how to approach sophisticated problems in research	<b>Organization</b> learn to develop a complex thesis learn to place their ideas in effective sequences learn to create smooth, informative connections between thoughts and paragraphs
<b>Style</b> learn to vary sentence structures to create a pleasing flow learn to use appropriate vocabulary to insure clarity learn to apply rhythm and sound through punctuation and diction	<b>Mechanics</b> learn to write the extended sentence learn to use elegant verbal constructions learn to use correct forms of citation in research writing
<b>Process</b> learn to improve their essays by means of repeated revision	

#### College Policies



All students should familiarize themselves with the college's policies, which can be found here:

<http://mxcc.edu/catalog/academic-policies>

Hey, are you still reading?

The syllabus is over—go get started on the actual work! 😊

Click on the “Unit 1: Rhetoric” Unit and go into the first week’s folder

