

EN100: Freshman Composition
Athletics and Academics: Partners in Practice?
Instructor: William Rogers
T, R 9:30-10:45, 122 Ingraham

CONTACT INFORMATION

Office: 7155 H.C. White Hall

Mailbox: 653

Office Phone: 263-3788

Office Hours: Tues., 12-3, and by appt.

I. OVERVIEW

A. English 100

English 100 is a course in *argument*. By “argument” I do not mean the common definition of a dispute or disagreement (“My roommate and I had an argument over who should do the dishes, and now we’re not speaking). Rather, this course defines argument as **a way of reasoning that takes a debatable point of view and, through the use of evidence, aims to persuade others of its validity.**

English 100 is also a course in *writing*. As part of the University’s *Communications-A* program, it is designed to help you develop your skills in college-level, argumentative writing. You will therefore spend the majority of your time in this class writing, brainstorming, drafting and outlining, revising, summarizing, *etc.*, and the writings of you and your peers will serve as the main “texts” for this course.

B. Our Topic: Athletics and Academics

In this particular section of English 100, we will be learning about argumentative reasoning and practicing argumentative writing through close attention to a particular issue: **the relationship between academics and athletics.** This issue asks us to take and defend debatable points of view on such questions as:

- What, if any, might be the relationship between academic and athletic forms of “practice”?
- Can high-level athletic pursuits, performances, and practices, be seen as analogous or complementary to their academic counterpart? Should they?
- Can athletic practices enhance academic development? Might they rather detract from them?
- Conversely, might there be ways in which critical skills at work in the classroom could be of use on the playing field?
- Are there ways in which thinking critically and argumentatively about athletic topics might be particularly fruitful for such a class, and at such a university, as ours?

We will largely be considering these questions within the context of the contemporary American educational system, specifically in regards to its athletic

and academic programming. To that end, we will be looking at areas--both in the classroom and on the playing field--such as ethical vs. skill-based educational programming; current, historical, and ideal definitions of the “student-athlete”; and the objectives and mission of the modern-day university.

To sum up, in this particular section of English 100, you will be pursuing the questions and issues above in an argumentative fashion, taking debatable points of view on each question. These points of view (i.e., your *arguments*) will be largely, though not exclusively, expressed through critical (i.e., argumentative) *writing*.

C. Our Method: *MAAX*, Service Learning, and “Learning in Practice”

As you know from having read the course description, this class is part of an exciting new program here at UW called the Madison Academic and Athletic Exchange (“*MAAX*”). *MAAX* seeks to extend the conversation taking place in this course about the relationship between athletic and academic practice to Madison-area high schools.

To this end, all students enrolled in this course/in *MAAX* are required to participate in a **collaborative learning partnership at Madison East High School**. This partnership will allow UW students to further pursue their own interests and insights on the course’s subject, by discussing and meeting with high school student-athletes several times during the semester.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

A. Objectives

The objectives of this course are three-fold:

1. **To develop your ability to write clear, argumentative prose at the college-level.** Since this a course in argument, all the essays you write will be argumentative in nature. Many of you are already very fine writers stylistically, however college courses will require from you an entirely new form of writing, and the goal of this class is to train you in that form. In this class, you will learn how to write persuasively and thoughtfully in defense of your own positions, and how to incorporate evidence in support of your claims.
2. **To develop your ability to think and read critically.** We will study various definitions and modes of argument not only by formulating our own persuasive argument, but by closely analyzing particular examples of argumentation regarding the content of the course. You will learn to identify the main claim(s) of an argument, to characterize and evaluate an argument’s use of evidence in its support, to make explicit the underlying assumptions driving an author’s position, and to follow arguments to their logical and consequential conclusions.

3. **To develop your ability to craft and execute college level research, presentations and revisions.**
 - a. **Research.** In this class, you will learn how to write a research proposal, how to conduct research using the campus libraries and their various and vast information resources, how to keep track of your research via an annotated bibliography, and how to incorporate your research into your writing.
 - b. **Presentations.** At various times during the semester, you will be asked to orally present some of your work to your peers. Throughout the semester we will work at developing the skills required for, as well as defining the characteristics of, an effective presentation.
 - c. **Revision.** Good essays do not happen overnight! You will be spending a lot (what may seem to you at first as *too* much) of your time revising your written work, as well as exploring various methods of revision designed to help you revise more thoughtfully, substantially, and efficiently. You will also be asked to provide thoughtful and constructive suggestions for revision to your peers, regarding their written work.

Finally, you will also learn **the kinds of rules for citation, documentation, and written presentation** required for all disciplines at the college level.

III. GRADING AND COURSE POLICIES

A. Grading

There are three aspects to your performance in this class: your own writing, your contributions to your peers' writing, and your work as a contributing member of the class as a whole. All three aspects will be evaluated over the course of the semester, and will factor into your final grade.

Each paper you write for this paper will consist of multiple drafts, and will be read by multiple readers, including myself and a number of your peers. You will be writing three (3) drafts of every paper; the final draft of each paper assignment will be graded, both in terms of its own merits, and in terms of the improvement it demonstrates over your earlier work. Your contributions to your peer review and other workshops will be demonstrated in the improvement of these drafts, and your active and meaningful participation in class will improve your writing as well as your grade.

You will also be keeping a “**service journal**”, in which you will be asked to reflect upon your experiences in *MAAX*. While the assignments for these journals will vary from week to week, all of them will ask you to synthesize your own ideas with your experiences in service, as well as with the overriding course concepts and themes.

In addition to these drafts and assignments, there will be numerous intermediate assignments, like summaries and proposals, meant to help you prepare for these

major assignments. There will also be a good bit of daily work: reading, discussion, drafting, peer response, revision, etc.

Your grade in this course will be determined as follows:

Essay 1: 15%

Essay 2: 15%

Essay 3: 25%

Class Participation (library exercises, class discussions and presentations, quizzes, and other short assignments): 20%

Service Journals: 10%

Final Portfolio: 20%

B. Attendance

Attendance at class meetings is mandatory. As you can see from the description above, we have a tremendous amount of ground to cover, and a relatively short amount of time in which to cover it. Missing class will set you back significantly, and your work (and grade) will suffer as a result.

You are allowed **two unexcused absences** from class, and **one excused absence** from our learning sessions at Madison East High School. Subsequent absences from class will result in the lowering of your final grade by a half-grade. Six or more absences from class or two or more unexcused absences from our “learning sessions” will result in a failing grade for the course.

If you know you cannot make a class meeting or learning session—for any reason—please let me know in advance so that I may plan accordingly.

IV. ADDITIONAL NOTES

A. A Note on Class Participation

While specific percentages have not been assigned to all these elements, here are some things to keep in mind as factors contributing to your participation grade, and a successful semester in EN 100:

1. **Classroom Behavior.** Listen to your classmates when they are talking, and respond attentively and respectfully (by name, when possible) to the points they raise. This course is designed as a group discussion and argument, not as a series of individual, unrelated presentations.
Any show of disrespect towards another student in the class, or towards the conduct of the class in general, will not be tolerated. This includes excessive socializing, eating or sleeping, headphones, cell phones, pagers, *etc.*
2. **Participation**
Yes, you have to talk. Remember though, class participation does not simply mean “talk a lot in class”; you should strive for quality over

quantity in your comments. I will call on people (including you!) if I have to, although I would prefer everyone volunteer their thoughts. As they are the fabric of argument, disagreement and dissenting viewpoints are encouraged, and “you never call on me” is not an excuse.

3. **Be Prepared.** Coming to class is not enough; you need to come everyday prepared to contribute thoughtfully to the day’s efforts. Do any assigned reading and/or peer editing before class; make sure you bring drafts of your work to class on the days they are due; and be on time, both for classes and student conferences.

Failure to appear at a student conference, to bring a draft to class on the assigned day, or to otherwise be prepared for class will count as an absence.

B. A Note on “Service-Learning”

For most of you, your experience at the high schools this semester will be your first experience in what is called “service-learning.” “Service-learning” is an educational experience in which students receive credit for participation in an organized community activity, and reflect upon this experience in a way that brings these experiences into dialogue with the course content. Service-learning offers students a unique opportunity to put their learning into practice, and through that practice to augment and deepen their understanding of the course materials.

This service is just as important and integral to the class as the readings, writing assignments and class discussions, and I’ll have more to say about service-learning and the unique educational opportunities it affords as the semester progresses.

C. A Quick Note on Plagiarism

Don’t do it. Plagiarism is the use, inclusion of paraphrase of another person’s thoughts or ideas without attribution. Plagiarism is a very serious academic (and, in some cases, criminal) offense that will get you in a lot of trouble (at the very least, receiving zero credit for the assignment in question and being reported to the Director of Freshman Composition).

If you are having trouble in the course, or with a particular assignment, it is **always** better to come and talk to me so that we can work together to try and find a solution. As soon as I receive a plagiarized paper, I can’t help you.

V.

REQUIRED MATERIALS AND DATES TO
REMEMBER

A. Required Materials

- *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace* by Joseph Williams, 8th ed. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2005) (available at University Book Store on State St.);
- *Writing with Sources: A Guide for Students* by Gordon Harvey (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1998) (also available at University Book Store);
- Course Reader (price and availability TBD)
- Two notebooks: one in which to take and keep class notes, homework, in-class exercises, *etc.*; one of which to keep as your “**MAAX** service journal”;
- Two folders: one in which to keep handouts, *etc.*; one in which to collect the drafts of each essay you turn in to me and circulate among your peers;
- A copy card for printing and photocopying your work (approx. \$20); and
- A good desktop dictionary (see me to see if you have questions about a particular dictionary).

B. Recommended Materials

- *The Elements of Style*, by Strunk and White (any edition—available at most bookstores).
- A good writing and grammar guide, such *A Writer’s Reference*, by Diane Hacker, or *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*
- *An Introduction to Writing Argument* (New York: Pearson, 2004) (available at University Book Store)

C. Dates to Remember

Paper 1, Final Draft	September 26
Paper 2, Final Draft	October 27
Paper 3, Final Draft	November 13
Final Portfolio/Synthesis	December 13

I’m looking forward to working with all of you this semester. Please feel free to come by my office to talk to me about the course, the writing assignments, or about any concerns you may have. As mentioned on the hand-out on “University Resources”, the English 100 Tutorial program is also available to help you work through the writing process and to develop thoughtful, well-argued and provocative arguments. To schedule a tutorial session, visit the Tutorial website at: <http://www.wisc.edu/english/100tutorial>.