

REQUIREMENTS FOR **ENGLISH 103**

Overseen by S. A. Eisenstein, PhD., MFT. Office: JH302F Office hours by appointment. sameisenstein@hotmail.com for questions you are too shy to ask during class hours or for clarification.

English 103 is completely separate from English 101, though the desired outcomes for both are similar. They differ mainly in emphasis. 103 leans more heavily to critical thinking and clarity in the required essays, though 101 also requires evidence and objectivity. In 103 every student is expected to have gained sufficient experience and ease with the essay form in 101 to be able to start out with a rigorous and clear thesis right from the beginning of the semester.

Texts:

1. ONE HUNDRED GREAT ESSAYS, edited by Di Yannis.
2. Collegiate dictionary, NOT a pocket edition, NOT a paperback. It can be old, but it must be a Collegiate. Dictionaries are sold cut-rate at many bookstores, TARGET and COSTCO. At LACC you always pay full sticker price, an unnecessary luxury.
3. BOOK REVIEWS (2): The first review can be on the following: Any book of your choice, or RECTIFICATION OF EROS, NUDIBRANCHIA, THE INNER GARDEN, COSMIC COW, PRICE OF ADMISSION, MERCILESS BEAUTY - all preceding novels by Sam Eisenstein, which will earn you double credit, which you can buy at steep discount online, borrowed from libraries, or other students. The extra-long novel, COSMIC COW, will be credited as three book reviews. The second review should be on the topic of your TERM PAPER, about which more later.

Book reviews are available every day in the LA or NY TIMES and every other newspaper, with a special section devoted to reviews on Sunday. Learn as a kind of apprenticeship how to write one by following the form in the newspaper. A book review is an essay and always, always, has an underlined thesis at the beginning. Access them on the Net.

The second book review is based on a book with the subject you choose for your term paper, thus non-fiction. **BECAUSE ENGLISH 103 is a course in learning how to think critically, your daily essays and the book reviews must be subject to the kind of thinking which carefully examines many sides of the same subject, much like attempting to determine the substance of something under a microscope. Mere subjective and emotional responses belong to religion, not critical thinking. You must be prepared to defend**

your position on a subject. A semester spent in English 101 should be preparation enough for this rigorous examination of phenomena.

4. MAGAZINE REVIEW: Is essentially a book review, but this one is based on one issue of a magazine, any magazine. Your instructor will dispense without charge a variety of periodicals that you may choose for your review. The L.A. TIMES contains a plethora of reviews for you to learn how it is done.

Product Warning!!! This class will increase your ability to think for yourself, for which neither your tribe, social group, political party, nor religious organization will thank you. Furthermore, as focusing your neurons will cause pain to the system at first, none of this will come easy. In fact, many of you will drop away like fragile flowers, later to re-take the class with a teacher who may actually provide easy social, racial or jingoistic reasons for would-be students to rationalize their lack of ability to wrestle with thorny issues.

Most essays will be written in class. All must contain, every time, an underlined thesis (a complete sentence that stands by itself) that makes a definite specific argument, either as statement or question. The thesis is found at the beginning-- not the middle or end--of an essay. Think about it: do you appreciate people who hem and haw and finally come to the point only after wasting much of your "valuable time"? Tell them: "Put your thesis at the beginning!" A thesis is a statement that makes sense all by itself, not depending on a sentence before or after.

Every assignment will be returned, graded, with circles around many of the errors and sometimes comments on the margins or above the work. Keep every returned assignment. You MAY be expected at various times during the semester to re-submit the corrected paper. Or you may be asked to turn them all in at the same time late in the semester. At any event, you must guard them, correct them when you get them, as the correction grade is as important as the original grade. It is, in fact, the final grade for the paper.

If you have read this far, you may turn in at the class meeting following having read this syllabus an extra credit paper on any highly controversial subject. It must contain an underlined thesis and you will receive a grade of A just for reading this far with something approaching intelligence. You will receive credit only if the thesis is underlined and the required format is followed, exactly, as follows:

FORMAT FOR ALL IN-CLASS AND HOMEWORK PAPERS: All at-home papers are

to be typed or word-processed. Fold your 8 1/2x11 paper the long way, so that it opens like a book in English, with the pages in order after the fold is opened. It should open to page one, etc. The heading must be **totally printed with nothing abbreviated**.

Last Name, First Name (printed)
English 103 #(section number)
Date (**no abbreviations**)
Title (provided)

The primary purpose of this class is to enable you to open your minds, to question freely and without fear. Every source, every "given" is subject to challenge. There are no open-and-shut cases.

Essays carry differing grade values, from 1x for in-class assignments, all the way to 7x, that is, seven times the weight of a daily paper for the term project, which is called:

1. THE RESEARCH PAPER: (7x) This entire semester is a preparation and rehearsal for the Research Paper, due on the first day of the last week of class before finals. The RESEARCH PAPER must be typed or processed, stapled into a manila folder, 9"x12", with precisely three staples on the **outside** spine, regular heading on the outside cover. The term project is a research paper about an argument you passionately want to "sell" to your class-mates and to the instructor. However, in order to sell anything on any world, you must be able to convince others that your product is worth buying. Thus, you must do considerable research into the question that burns your mind. The highly-touted subjects done to death in tabloids and tabloid television--Oprah, Rivera, others--tend to be easy, pre-digested. Avoid them--you will have nothing new and interesting to say on any subject they "cover." The research paper must be researched by you, not lifted wholly or partially from someone else's work. Copying from any source--whether on-line, or from companies that advertise on the side-boards of some classrooms, will surely earn you an **F**. Such lifting is called plagiarism, and means, quite simply: theft. By the time TP time comes around I will know your writing better than your mother knew (or knows) your bottom. Therefore, do not even dream of copying this assignment or buying it from a TP (term paper, not toilet paper)factory, nor cribbing from yourself by way of using a TP you wrote last year for geology, nor stringing together quotations.

The research paper is 7-? pages and includes footnotes, whose form you learn from a collegiate dictionary or text book, as well as a bibliography, which is NOT the same material as found in footnotes.

Research comes from books, oral communications, interviews, newspaper essays and articles, the Web, even TV. Research can be defined as anything from any source that may help to convince your reader of your arguments and to take you seriously.

The THESIS, always underlined, ALWAYS UNDERLINED, always a complete single sentence, makes a coherent argument that stands by itself and leads to pro and con argument. If you do not show many sides of an argument, you may be guilty of writing a sermon or a propaganda piece. That sort of thing may be effective in your church or politics, but is not rewarded in English 101.

Reading carefully is a skill you must learn in order to interact with the text, not simply to agree or regurgitate. As you read any essay, you have the right and privilege as well as the obligation to dispute some or all of the author's arguments. If you don't, you run the risk of treating it as sermon, revelation, divine message. That's OK for church, mosque or synagogue, but in this class the burden of proof is on the message.

No essay, whether written in 10-40 minutes in class, or at home, or the term project itself, is acceptable if turned in without an underlined thesis that stands by itself in one sentence that can be argued. No matter how earnest, it will be awarded the dreaded F grade. This will be enforced from the very first assignment.

2. PERSPECTIVE: more important even than hamburgers or Twitter, is a necessity in every one of your written pieces, something without which you could not live one day of your life. For example, if you burn with indignation about the U. S. internment of Japanese during WWII, and you wish to prove that this was a racially-motivated act, you will need to research what other countries did to "enemy" races during that time, among other facts. Do you believe that President Thomas Jefferson was racist? A hypocrite? Then you must define what you mean by the word "racist," as well as researching how and where Jefferson stood concerning race relations in the society of his time. It is worthless to apply the stock and received wisdom of one age to another. Perspective gives you the task of weighing different facts and opinions about a particular subject. Without perspective you are in the same position as Chicken Little who feared the sky was falling in pieces because he had never before experienced rain.

If you get to this point, you may reward yourself with writing an essay(thesis underlined) based on a newspaper article, attached to your essay, about a subject of current and burning importance. It must be turned one week to the day at the beginning of the class meeting from your receiving this syllabus. (What a sports figure

does or says is not important for purposes of this class)

The word "essay" itself comes from a word meaning "to weigh," or "assay," as in how much gold a piece of ore contains. If you are fervently pro or anti capital punishment, you must find out what crimes have been considered to be capital in other times and places. If you are pro hemp, when did the U. S. make possessing marijuana a crime?

Thus: thesis, pro/con, and perspective **must** be found in all your essays. In your life too, if you don't want to grow up as simple as certain political parties would like you to be.

3. BOOK REVIEWS: (3x, that is, worth three of the in-class essays)
Two. Careful and intelligent students who are able to look more than a nanosecond ahead may want to review books on the same subject he/she has chosen for his/her research paper. A book review is neither a summary of a book, nor is it a compilation of blurbs or others' reviews. It is a free-standing essay that **uses** the book you review as a source, but only one of many sources, for the reviewer's(your) opinions. Good places to learn the form and substance for book reviews are: LA TIMES, NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS, NY TIMES, THE REVIEW OF CONTEMPORARY FICTION. If your "review" turns out to sound like a junior high school simpleton's run for office, you may certainly expect the lowest possible grade. The book review, like the term project, is stapled on the outside, inside a letter size manila folder, the regular heading on cover, and typed. Book reviews must be in the bibliographical form learned by way of the Bibliography Assignment. That is, author, title, etc., just before the first sentence of the review.

THREE EVENT REVIEWS: (1x): (no two in the same genre--look up the word): As in any newspaper review of a live event, the reader needs to be offered some summary, some venue, some sense of how the event came off, and with his thesis, an argument pro-con for or against the event and how it compared with one similar to it experienced at another time in the past. These are to be typed, **not** stapled inside a manila folder, but folded like in-class papers. Due anytime.

OUTSIDE ESSAY: Find an essay in any publication, newspaper, magazine, throw-away. Locate the essay's thesis and underline it, print or cut it out and include with your own essay response, thesis underlined. Include also 3 words previously unfamiliar to you, their definition and use it in a sentence. This assignment will be due every class period, without fail (or you fail).

FINAL EXAMINATION: (5x) This will be written in one or more large-

format blue (examination) books. As with all other quizzes or examinations, this is an open-book test. Two hours.

In this class, if you get behind, you will find it nearly impossible to catch up. But if you read carefully every day, not only will you be able to complete requirements, you will become more literate and lively. Moreover, you will find yourself more skeptical, harder to convince, more careful to be on guard for blurbs, propaganda and lies. You will be slower to scapegoat others for what you don't understand or admit in yourself.

No topic is too hot to handle, out of bounds or forbidden in this class. But every topic must be approached with respect for the reader, not written merely to shock him with your daring. You must substantiate your thesis or what you write is trash, and it will be trashed.

ATTENDANCE: Any two unexcused absences in combination with two or more tardies will result in your being dropped. I expect students to be in class on time. Roll will be taken. If you have a job or other obligation that forces you to be late or to miss class altogether for several times, do not even start.

TEXTS: Please do not explain to me about your poverty. LACC is a synonym for poverty. The total cost of the DiYannis is far less than that of many used textbooks. As an apprentice in the field of communications you need tools in order to become a journey-person, finally even a master. The dictionary should be bought immediately. Target or Costco, etc., has them at discount. Our bookstore requires full price. Don't be caught short.

PHILOSOPHY: English 103 definitely is not a remedial course. It is a college-level introduction to composition and critical thinking, with built-in transfer to upper-division college or university. Therefore, scant time will be spent on grammar, diction or spelling because I assume you to have mastered these bases of acceptable English language usage. However, if you prematurely popped out of a basics class like an underdone waffle with an above average grade on account of your teacher's love, consideration, or pity for you, or if you have self-placed in this class because of unsupported certainty that you will succeed because you are deserving, sincere, and needy, English 103 will prove to be an uncomfortable, chilly, and finally uninhabitable place.

Poor grades earned early in the course will **not** be held against the student who improves steadily or even all at once late in the semester. A poor grade, even a failing grade, **is** still a grade. However, the student who does not even attempt to complete the

assignment "earns" a zero, which never goes away.

If you have had trouble reading and understanding this syllabus, the chances are you have prematurely registered in a class too advanced for your present capacity. On the other hand, if you have read this far you probably are ready for the class and will do well.

In fact, if you have read this far, please write a one-page essay on what you expect to learn during this semester in this college-level English composition class. (thesis) Include experiences you recall of other composition classes, as well as reminiscences of the best classes in your entire school experience. This essay will automatically earn you your first **A**, if you follow the simple directions above. If this essay is not turned in at the beginning of the third meeting, the offer is terminated.

For those whose schedules prevent them from meeting with me for help with grades, corrections, or up-coming assignments, I am available at sameisenstein@hotmail.com.

Critical thinking involves making connections "outside the envelope." That is, not allowing what you have always thought to interfere with new inputs.

Please feel free to post on one or any of the bulletin boards material you deem important, vital or emergent.

Also feel free to do "extra" credit work, like another book review, a fourth event review, another bibliography. However, extra credit is like building hotels in the game of Monopoly--you must first build the houses, do the regular work before you may build hotels.

This class is horrifically short, EVEN AT SIXTEEN WEEKS. You will carry the same load as you do in most five credit courses, and I expect the same amount of work. If you cannot spend a large percentage of your time on the class it is fruitless to begin it. The assignments come hard and fast.

An event is defined as any situation--movie, TV drama, overheard conversation on the bus, art exhibit, play--which allows you to find a thesis, pro/con and perspective.

Please feel free to challenge any or all of the instructor's statements. At least ask questions if anything, any assignment, is unclear as to content or due date.

Especially, bring to class to announce or post significant events taking place in the world outside the classroom or college.