

Fall 8-15-2015

# ENG 1091G-099: Composition and Language, Honors

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# Eng 1091: Composition and Language

fall 2015 / Section 099 / 3.00 Credits

Dr. Chris Wixson

## syllabus

### course philosophy

The original prospectus for *The New Yorker*, an American periodical with which we will spend some time this term, contained a phrase that is appropriate for our endeavor: "We assume a reasonable degree of enlightenment on the part of our readers." One might argue that we assume the same thing on the part of our writers. This course is an opportunity to strengthen your skills of reading, writing, and thinking. Essentially, the assignments are designed to help you cultivate your critical voice as a member of an intellectual community. Accordingly, we will discuss and practice strategies for reading texts with understanding, writing about them with style and precision, and researching sources in various media. English 1091 is designed to allow each student the flexibility to pursue topics within their chosen major/field of interest and a chance to reflect, challenge, and share reactions, questions, and ideas within a diverse group of thinkers and writers. Since true education happens in communities, there will be a fair amount of collaborative work.

English 1091 is a writing course designed to improve skills in critical thinking and analytical expression in order to enable you to meet the challenges of future academic tasks and the self-examined life. In addition to being writing-intensive, the course is reading and thinking intensive, necessitating a commitment to class discussion (beyond merely showing up) and courageous consideration of ideas about interpretation, writing, culture, existence, and desire. The format of each class will be relatively fluid, changing with regard to the material, my ideas, and your interests. Remember this is not MY class but ours, its success dependent on the contributions of every class member. 1091 is a *writing-centered* course, from which you may choose to submit essays for inclusion in your university-required portfolios. Please let me know if you wish to discuss this requirement and its procedure.

### Learning Outcomes

1. To write expository and argumentative papers in which paragraphs, sentences, and words develop a central idea and employ primary and secondary research.
2. To read texts from various genres expressing a range of cultural perspectives and values, to recognize and respond to the choices made by other writers, and to think critically and write analytically about them.
3. To grow as writers by continuing to develop skills of research, process, and expression.
4. To write precisely, concisely, deliberately, self-reflectively, and articulately.
5. To engage in reading, writing, and discussion experiences so as to establish a foundation for continued social, cultural, and intellectual discovery.

## course texts

Selections from *The New Yorker* and selected *TED* talks; David Sedaris, *Me Talk Pretty One Day*; Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*; Jeanette Winterson, *Art Objects*; and shorter pieces by (among others) André Comte-Sponville, Zadie Smith, Colum McCann, Langston Hughes, and Paul Goldberger.

## contact information

Dr. Chris Wixson

cmwixson@eiu.edu

Coleman Hall 3871

Office Hours: TR 2-4:30 and by appointment

## Assignments

\*Four extended writing assignments of various genres that are engaged, engaging, and articulate.

\*Six Microthemes

\*Active, Engaged Participation in Class Activities.

\*A Final Exam

## final grades

Your final grade in the course will be determined by your performance on the following assignments:

Intellectual Autobiography/Literacy Narrative (4-5 pages)	10%
Six Microthemes (2-3 pages each)	10%
<i>TED</i> Summary and Genre Analysis (5-6 pages)	20%
<i>TED</i> Paper and Talk (7-8 pages)	20%
<i>TOTC</i> Paper (6-7 pages)	20%
Final Exam (3-4 pages)	10%
In-class Writings/Active Participation/ <i>TED</i> talk	10%

\*\*You must complete all written assignments and exams to complete the course. Failure to complete any one of the components represents incomplete work for the semester and anyone with incomplete work will not receive a passing grade for the course.

## attendance

Mandatory. I expect you to be in class awake and prepared every Tuesday and Thursday morning. In other words, arrive on time with your reading/writing assignment completed, prepared to participate in discussion. Because so much in this course relies upon in-class work, absences and habitual lateness will adversely affect your course performance. Attendance will be taken at each class session – you are allowed **two** unexcused absences before your grade is negatively affected. After two, each unexcused absence will lower your participation grade by half a letter. **More than six unexcused absences will result in a “0” for participation. More than eight unexcused absences will result in a grade of no credit for the course. Habitual lateness (beyond once) will also affect your grade negatively since it is disruptive and disrespectful.** Please notify me by email if there is unexpected illness or an emergency that causes you to miss class. Do **not** get in touch asking “for the assignment” or a “rundown of what you missed.” My responsibilities as an instructor lie with the students who do come to class. Excused absences are accompanied by appropriate legal or medical documentation. Any unexcused absence will seriously undermine your success in this course.

## class participation

Mandatory. To maximize your individual and our collective productivity in class, it is essential that you show up to class with reading and writing activities done and ready to work on assignments in progress. Class activities will include a mixture of informal lecture, discussion, short writing, and process tasks.

## late papers

These are no fun for me to keep track of and only put you further behind. For each day beyond the scheduled due date, late papers will be penalized a third of a letter grade. **After a week, I will no longer accept the paper, and it becomes a "0."** Again, if you become ill or the victim of emergency circumstances, please email me as soon as possible and stay in touch.

## cell phone and computer use

You may bring your computer to class with you, assuming that you use it in a scholarly and responsible fashion. This means that you will only have applications and windows related to the current discussion open. **You may not check** email, Facebook, or box scores, surf the web, send texts or Tweets, play games, or otherwise distract yourself and those around you from the class conversation with your computer. You are likewise expected to use cell phones in a responsible manner: **turn them off when you come in to class.** If you have an emergency for which you must be available, you must discuss it with me beforehand and keep your phone on vibrate. **Under no conditions are you allowed to** text message, take pictures or video (illegal in class), play games, or use the cell phone in any other manner during class. The nature of our scholarly endeavor together necessitates mutual respect and dedicated attention during the too short time we have to discuss these texts. Violating any of these policies will result in your participation grade being lowered by a full letter grade for each violation.

## academic integrity

Any paper with your name on it signifies that you are the author—that the wording and major ideas are yours, with exceptions indicated by either quotation marks and/or citations. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use (appropriation and/or imitation) of others' materials (words and ideas). We will discuss how to avoid it. Evidence of plagiarism will result in one or more of the following: a failing grade for the assignment, an F in the course, and a report filed with the Student Standards Office.

## student success center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center ([www.eiu.edu/~success](http://www.eiu.edu/~success)) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9<sup>th</sup> Street Hall, Room 1302.

## booth library

Located in the center of campus, Booth Library is the best place to do research, find expert help, or study in a calm, distraction-free environment. In addition to the many print resources, Booth provides access to high quality e-books, journals, and scholarship not freely available on the Web. Stop by the Reference Desk or go to <http://library.eiu.edu> to explore library resources. Visit in person, call 581-6072, or go to <http://booth.eiu.edu/ask> to get expert help with your research connect from a reference librarian.

## special needs and situations

If you have a *documented* disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

## Short Paper Assignment Prompts

**\*\*WARNING:** The intellectual pre-writing work for these assignments will be challenging and time-consuming. I provide the prompts here so that you may start early.

**8/27/15** Write (typed and double-spaced) two or three paragraphs responding to her ideas. Demonstrate your close, careful reading of Winterson's essay but do not summarize it. Also, discuss why we might be reading this piece at the beginning of a writing course.

**9/1/15** Using specific examples from the essay and examples from your own experiences, answer the following questions in two or three well-organized paragraphs. Demonstrate your close, careful reading of Sedaris' piece but do not summarize it.

**\*\*What, for Sedaris, is the relationship between language, voice, and authority? (You might focus on the details Sedaris includes to illustrate the power of his instructor over the students.)**

**9/3/15** In three to four well-organized and engaging paragraphs, using Goldberger's essay as a model, choose something and analyze it in terms of something else that a reader would not ordinarily think is related. Goldberger analyzes classic cookies in architectural terms. In a previous section, a student analyzed his class subjects in terms of dining hall food. Another analyzed her textbook covers as if they were guys at a party.

**9/8/15** Using specific examples from the essay, write two or three well-organized paragraphs in which you articulate your sense of Hessler's larger point for the reader and the quoted evidence you use to support your interpretation. Again, demonstrate your close, careful reading of Hessler's essay but do not summarize it.

**9/22/15** In one paragraph, based on the selections we have read so far, describe the genre of the "Talk Of The Town." What are its conventions? What is its structure or narrative formula?

**12/10/15** In a few sentences for each one, identify which of the TED talks given in class last week did the best job on each of Heller's "stages." Be specific why the speaker's choice was effective.

# Eng 1091: Composition and Language

Dr. Chris Wixson

## course calendar

\* \* Because this schedule can and probably will change, it is imperative that you bring it to each class meeting so as to make the appropriate revisions.

August	25	Course Introduction / Writing Self-Analysis
	27	Winterson's "Art Objects" (pp. 3-21) / <b>Microtheme #1 Due</b>
September	1	Sedaris' "Me Talk Pretty" / <b>Microtheme #2 Due</b> / McCann's "The Word Shed" Essay #1 Workshop
	3	André Comte-Sponville quote and Zadie Smith's "Joy" / Essay #1 Workshop Goldberger, "Quick! Before It Crumbles!" / <b>Microtheme #3 Due</b>
	8	Hessler's "Go West" / <b>Microtheme #4 Due</b> / Essay #1 Workshop
	10	Mandatory Conferences
	15	Mandatory Conferences
	17	<b>Essay #1 Due</b>
	22	<i>Talk of the Town</i> selections / <b>Microtheme #5 Due</b> / Essay #2 Workshop
	24	<i>Talk of the Town</i> selections / Essay #2 Workshop
	29	Essay #2 Workshop / Contrera's "The End of the Waffle House"
October	1	Mandatory Conferences
	6	Essay #2 Workshop / Student <i>TOTC</i> selections
	8	<b>First Draft of Essay #2 Due</b> (2 copies)

- 13 Revision Workshop
- 15 **Final Essay #2 Portfolio Due** / Project #3 Assignment Sheet  
Watch TED talks by Sherry Turkle and Hasan Elahi in class
- 20 Heller's "Listen and Learn"  
Watch TED talks by Chris Anderson Clay Shirky in class
- 22 Summary and Persuasive Analysis Workshop
- 27 Turkle's "The Documented Life" / Two TED Talks by Ken Robinson (Education)
- 29 **Summary and Persuasive Analysis Due**

- November
- 3 Argument Workshop / TED Talk by Benjamin Zander (Classical Music)
  - 5 Mandatory Conferences
  - 10 Mandatory Conferences
  - 12 **First Draft of Argument Due** (two copies) / Peer Critique
  - 17 Revision Workshop
  - 19 **Argument Final Portfolio Due** / Workshop on *TED* presentations

HAPPY THANKSGIVING BREAK!!!!

- December
- 1 *TED* Talk Workshop
  - 3-8 *TED* Presentations
  - 10 **Microtheme #6 due** / Exam Preparation / Evaluation

\*\*Final exam date: Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 8:00-10:00