

Ohio Wesleyan University

GUIDE TO ENGLISH 105

COLLEGE WRITING SEMINAR

REQUIRED IN ALL SECTIONS OF ENGLISH 105

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The guidelines for College Writing Seminar (hereinafter referred to as ENG 105) were developed by Ohio Wesleyan English Department faculty in discussions partially sponsored by The Columbus Foundation, which provided funds for a workshop and reading materials.

The information in this booklet regarding the College Writing Seminars (ENG105) is not contractually binding. The information published here is subject to revision and change without notice.

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INTRODUCTION

The College Writing Seminars (hereinafter referred to as ENG 105) are designed to enhance and improve the writing abilities of students in the first year at Ohio Wesleyan University. The sections of the course may vary in content, teaching methods, and course materials. However, all instructors share a commitment to helping students become confident and competent college writers. All sections of ENG 105 therefore share the following common goals and requirements.

COURSE GOALS

Students who complete ENG 105 with a C- or better will have learned:

1. To think critically about both reading and writing, and to reflect that thinking in what they write.
2. To practice a writing process that works for them, and to adapt that process to a variety of writing tasks, particularly analysis.
3. To analyze rhetorical contexts (audience, purpose, and occasion) of writing and reading assignments, and to extend that analysis to their own writing and reading.
4. To evaluate and integrate information and ideas from a variety of sources through paraphrase, summary, and quotation; to synthesize researched information in a substantial piece of writing; and to provide appropriate documentation, using a standard citation format.
5. To use library skills appropriate to their ENG 105 assignments.
6. To communicate clearly in writing by rethinking, restructuring, rewriting, and editing.
7. To assess their own writing strengths and weaknesses in order to improve their skills and abilities.

REQUIREMENTS

Writing. Students will write a minimum of 4,000 words of formal writing assignments, including at least one documented essay (1,500 words), developed through invention, planning, drafting, gathering responses, revising, and editing. Students may also be asked to complete other kinds of writing (e.g., journals, response papers, in-class essays, annotated bibliographies) in addition to formal writing assignments.

Reading. Students will read and analyze their own and their classmates' writing, as well as works by professional writers.

Attendance. The success of the ENG 105 depends on the sense of community created by student participation and involvement in each class meeting. Students are expected to attend all classes and arrive on time. While attendance requirements may vary with each instructor, all instructors agree that in-class participation is crucial to student success in the course.

Library Component. Students will be expected to become acquainted with and use productively the online and print resources of Beeghly Library; instruction includes attending sessions with a Beeghly public services librarian in a wired classroom.

Conferences. Students will meet with their instructor at least two times during the semester to discuss their writing.

REQUIREMENTS (continued)

Final Activity. Students will complete either a final examination or another writing activity that brings the course to completion (as determined by the instructor).

Minimum Grade. Only students who earn a C- or better in ENG 105 will pass the course (see “Grading Policy in ENG 105” on pages 3-4).

OTHER COMMON FEATURES

Handbook. All ENG 105 sections require students to purchase *The Little Seagull Handbook*. Parts of the book may be incorporated into ENG 105 assignments. A student will also use this book as a reference tool for writing and revising papers in ENG 105 and other Ohio Wesleyan courses. The handbook will be useful throughout their college career as a guide to the writing process, grammatical rules, writing conventions, and documentation styles.

Common Experience. Students in ENG 105 share the experience of attending at least one lecture and other campus events. In the fall semester, for instance, all sections of ENG 105 may attend a reading by a prominent visiting writer. In the spring semester, ENG 105 students also attend talks by visiting speakers.

Grading Criteria. Writing done in ENG 105 will be evaluated by common criteria established by English Department faculty. Those criteria are outlined on page 3 (see “Evaluating Writing in ENG 105”).

PLAGIARISM AND OTHER FORMS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

A writer’s authority depends in large part on the reader’s sense of their integrity. Readers must trust that writers will be accurate and honest. Therefore it is essential that students do their own work and that they acknowledge any help that they receive in gathering information and developing ideas.

The Ohio Wesleyan Course Catalog lists various kinds of academic dishonesty, including cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and abusing academic resources. Plagiarism might be the most difficult for students to discern, since it sometimes may seem to result from carelessness rather than intentional dishonesty. Any time students represent “words, ideas, figures, or materials from other sources as [their] own” (OWU Course Catalog), they are plagiarizing, or falsely claiming ownership of them.

English 105 instructors will address plagiarism and will teach students how to acknowledge their sources and avoid inadvertent plagiarism. The *Little Seagull Handbook for Writers* includes tips on avoiding plagiarism. Students may discuss their writing projects with others, and they may obtain advice about revising or correcting their work. However, all writing and rewriting must be unquestionably students’ own work, and they should always acknowledge any help they received.

The penalty for a first violation of academic integrity can range from a zero for the assignment to a failing grade for the course, along with a letter to the Dean of Student Success, to be kept on file until graduation. For a full discussion of the Ohio Wesleyan policies regarding academic dishonesty, consult the “Academic Honesty Policy” (a handout distributed to all English 105 sections), as well as the catalog and your OWU Student Handbook (available online under OWU Course Catalog and Handbooks).

EVALUATING WRITING IN ENG 105

A satisfactory paper has the following characteristics:

- The reader can discern the purpose or point of the whole piece and of most paragraphs.
- The writer develops ideas with some detail.
- The organization and expression do not interfere with the reader's ability to follow the piece.
- Errors, if they do occur, are not so frequent that they distract the reader or interfere with the readability of the piece.

To be effective, writing must be clear, thoughtful, and authoritative. To be outstanding, it must additionally be inventive, imaginative, and venturesome.

Instructors will evaluate writing completed in ENG 105 by asking these questions:

Content. How interesting is the writing? How well are thoughts developed? Is the focus clear? How substantial are the ideas? How relevant?

Organization. Is a structure discernible and easily followed? Is the controlling point/purpose presented clearly and developed fully? Does the writing cohere as a whole, within and between paragraphs, and within and among sentences? Is unity achieved throughout?

Style. How accurate, economical, and rich is the expression? How effective are the sentences? Do sentences move in rhythms and patterns appropriate to the subject and voice? Is the wording concise, and does the language convey meaning accurately?

Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics. Does the writing follow standard conventions of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization? Do the format and preparation of the manuscript follow standard guidelines?

Revision. Has the writing been reworked (when appropriate) after careful reflection, and in response to the instructor's or peers' comments? Have revision strategies been applied productively?

GRADING POLICY IN ENG 105

General. Students who complete ENG 105 with a C- or better will pass the course. Final grades of D or F do not constitute passing marks; students who receive a D or an F will be required to retake the course.

Unsatisfactory. If a student's writing is deemed unsatisfactory, their instructor will give them one of the following grades:

- **Letter grade/U.**
When a student's writing difficulties may be remedied by working with a tutor in the Writing Center for the following semester, their instructor will give them a passing grade with a U (for example, C-/U). Once the Writing Center staff decides their work is satisfactory, the Writing Center director will remove the U.

GRADING POLICY IN ENG 105 (continued)

- D or F.
 - A student will receive a D or an F when their instructor believes that their writing is not yet at the college level. While a student may do all the work for the course and come to every class, their instructor may determine that they should continue working on their writing in another section of ENG 105 the next semester. The D or the F will be replaced by the grade earned when they pass ENG 105.
 - When a student does not complete all the writing for the course or when they miss too many classes, even if they write superior papers, they will fail the course and be expected to repeat it in the following semester.

EXEMPTION FROM ENG 105

All incoming students take ENG 105 unless they are exempted on the basis of test scores, or in rare instances, at the discretion of the Director of the First-Year Writing Program.

The following scores exempt a student from ENG 105:

1. A score of 4 or 5 on the Advanced Placement Examination in English Literature and Composition.
2. A score of 710 or higher on the verbal portion of the SAT.
3. A score of 710 or higher on the English Achievement Test of the College Entrance Examination Board.
4. A score of 30 or higher on the ACT sub-test in English.
5. A score of 5 or 6 on the High Level IB English exam.

Any special exemption made by the Director of First-Year Writing will be based on very high scores on one or more of the above tests and outstanding writing done for OWU courses in the student's first semester, including a documented paper. Advanced transfer students will also be considered for exemption after presenting to the Director outstanding papers written recently at another institution.

In the event a special exemption is granted, the Director of the First-Year Writing Program will notify the Registrar to note the exemption on the student's record. If a student has questions about the exemption policy, contact the English Department Office (Sturges 205 - 740.368.3590).

Those who exempt ENG 105 are encouraged to enroll in a writing intensive course ("R" course) during their first semester at Ohio Wesleyan.

THE LAUREATE AWARD FOR EXPOSITORY WRITING IN ENG 105

Purpose. To identify and congratulate the outstanding writers in ENG 105 as evidenced by a short essay (750-word minimum) written for a class assignment.

Award. A certificate to the OWU bookstore. A total of no more than five awards for fall and spring semesters will be given. The writers of the winning essays will be recognized at the end of spring semester.

THE LAUREATE AWARD FOR EXPOSITORY WRITING IN ENG 105 (continued)

Submission. Essays from both fall and spring ENG 105 sections may be submitted at any time up to the deadline.

Each spring semester the department will send out a call for Laureate submissions that includes instructions for preparing and entering submissions. Please reach out to eng@owu.edu for more information or with additional questions about the submission process.

Judging and Oversight

1. The judges will be the student members of the English Board. In the event of a tie, a faculty member who has no students among the finalists will make the final decision.
2. Entries will be judged by the same criteria described in “Evaluating Writing in ENG 105.”
3. The judges will categorize the essays (reflective, analytic, evaluative) and, to the extent allowed by the quantity and quality of the essays in each category, make awards in several categories.
4. The judges will inform the Director of First-Year Writing with their decisions.
5. The Director of the First-Year Writing Program will be responsible for publicizing the awards, convening the judges, and seeing that all entrants are notified of the winners.

BEYOND THE COLLEGE WRITING SEMINAR (ENG 105)

Students will continue to improve their writing as they complete the Writing Across the Curriculum requirement (three writing-intensive, or “R”, courses) in their sophomore, junior, and senior years (see the catalog).

In addition to the writing courses below, the English Department frequently offers literature courses as “R” courses. We also offer a number of writing courses for students who wish to develop their writing skills beyond the introductory level.

WRITING COURSES

ENG 200.3 – Introduction to Fiction Writing

It is said that fiction is the lie that tells the truth. All are welcome to join in this spirited workshop one night a week with intentions of writing fiction, improving their fiction and moving their fiction beyond the ordinary. We will discuss all things fiction from the elements of short story to the wide culture within which we write. We will discuss “the new” and ideas of originality. We will discuss what we mean to each other and to ourselves. Rather than answers we will seek the deeper questions that surround us and these we will embroider into our work.

WRITING COURSES (continued)

ENG 215 – Writing Essays

From its inception, the word “essay” implied a sense of experimentation, and in this course, that’s exactly what we’ll do: attempt, to the best of our ability, to weave the abstract qualities of beauty and truth in an effort to construct artful narratives of our lives. This course takes as its premise the idea that nonfiction writing and essays inherently move beyond personal experience to include and engage larger issues of identity, society, and culture; essays enlarge, inhabit, and assume positions that must necessarily resonate with readers unfamiliar to the writer and his or her world. Throughout the course of the semester, students will read and study a wide variety of both contemporary and canonical essayists and essayistic forms—including personal essays, narrative essays, braided essays, lyric essays, experimental essays, and graphic and video essays, to name a few—and together, we’ll discuss the craft and formalistic guidelines inherent to each while simultaneously drafting our own through exercises that target point-of-view, form, voice, and structure. Students should expect to produce ample writing throughout the semester and to share this work with others regularly in a formal workshop environment. The course will culminate in a final portfolio comprised of original drafts and revised work, notes taken during workshop, and a thoughtful reflection.

ENG 216 – Writing Poetry I

This class will teach students how to write poetry. We will read, discuss, and write poems in order to learn how they are made and how we can make them. No knowledge of poetry is required, only an interest in learning about the art form.

ENG 265 – Literary and Cultural Criticism

In this class, we will study and practice cultural criticism: that is, interpretative and evaluative writing for a general audience. Students will write and revise reviews (e.g., book, film, music) and try their hand at other forms, such as the critical analysis of a cultural trend. Other assignments will include peer editing and a substantial diet of reading, since good writing depends on the study of first-rate examples. While this class cultivates many of the skills that are central to the study of English, it is suitable for all majors.

ENG 310 -- Writing for the Workplace

In this course, students learn a contemporary approach to business communication commonly found in today’s workplaces, including writing letters, memos, emails, social media posts, blogs, resumes, cover letters, reports, and LinkedIn profiles. Students sharpen writing, editing, and page design competencies. The course considers business communication from an audience-centered and purpose-driven perspective. Since oral communication skills are vital in the workplace, this course requires both formal and informal oral presentations.

ENG 312 – Writing for the Sciences

We live in an age when ordinary people are increasingly skeptical about science, and discoveries in the pure sciences seem increasingly remote from everyday experience. This course focuses on the techniques of description, storytelling, and persuasion that help writers bridge the great divide between scientific and common knowledge. To achieve this goal, we will closely study the work of scientists, science “popularizers,” nature writers, and journalists, as well as discuss student writing in workshop format.

Science majors interested in writing about their fields for a popular audience, journalism majors interested in science writing as a potential career focus, and all writers interested in learning about science or integrating scientific concepts into their writing are welcome.

WRITING COURSES (continued)

ENG 314 -- Writing Fiction

However inadequate it may seem, we compose our lives with narratives. It's how we know ourselves and how we know each other. We talk and write in the direction of clarity and wisdom. We fervently wish to be understood and we sincerely wish to understand others. This workshop is for those who want to commit to the art of writing short stories, those narratives of single focus that presume to speak on behalf of so many and wish to be read by all.

ENG 316 -- Writing Poetry

In this class, we will learn how to write poetry. To do so, we will write poems in different styles and forms, read and discuss poems, and enjoy SKYPE conversations with poets. Requirement: ENG 120 or permission of the instructor.

ENG 318 – Playwriting

“The play’s the thing...” Join fellow lovers of the page and the stage and release your inner Shakespeare (or August Wilson or Marsha Norman...). In this class, we will analyze traditional play structure, study the nature and process of playwriting as an art form, and explore how playwrights develop ideas through character and action. Each week, you will complete writing assignments and exercises, share your work, and respond to others' writing. Your work will culminate in the completion of two short one-act plays. An adventurous spirit and openness to collaboration strongly recommended! Prerequisite: ENG 105 (or credit) plus a college theatre or college creative writing course, or permission of the instructor. *Cross-listed as THEA 369.*

WRITING CENTER

Students taking ENG 105 will work closely with their instructors; however, they may also work with a Writing Center consultant for assistance in developing their writing skills, either with or without the recommendation of their instructor.

Students may stop by or call the Writing Center to set up an appointment, of fifty minutes or less, to talk about their questions or any challenges they encounter in their writing. During the appointment, their writing consultant can help them to understand the writing process, generate ideas about their assignment, or offer other constructive suggestions.

Contact us to make an appointment:

Phone: 740-368-3925

Website: writing.owu.edu,

Email: writingcenter@owu.edu

Office: 316 Corns Building (in the Sagan Academic Resource Center).