

Instructor: Dr. Erik M. Bachman / embachman@gmail.com
Office Hours: HU203, Tuesdays 5:30-6:30PM

English 1A, Section 4338: Essaying America

This course will introduce students to the techniques and practice of expository and argumentative writing based on critical reading and thinking about texts. Readings will be focused primarily on works of non-fiction prose, chosen to represent a broad spectrum of opinions and ideas, writing styles, and cultural experiences.

Course Meeting Times: T 6:30-9:20PM

Course Room: HU203

Required Texts

Robert Atwan (series editor), *The Best American Essays 2017*
Leslie Jamison, *The Empathy Exams: Essays*
Cheryl Strayed, *Tiny Beautiful Things: Advice on Love and Life from Dear Sugar*
David Foster Wallace, *Consider the Lobster and Other Essays*

Students are also required to obtain a writer's handbook published within the last five years (examples include *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*, *The Bedford Reader*, *The Pocket Wadsworth Handbook*, etc.).

Goals of the Course

1. Read, analyze, and evaluate a variety of primarily non-fiction texts for content, context, and rhetorical merit with consideration of tone, audience, and purpose.
2. Apply a variety of rhetorical strategies in writing unified, well-organized essays with arguable theses and persuasive support.
3. Develop varied and flexible strategies for generating, drafting, and revising essays.
4. Analyze stylistic choices in their own writing and the writing of others.
5. Write timed essays in class exhibiting acceptable college-level control of mechanics, organization, development, and coherence.
6. Integrate the ideas of others through paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting without plagiarism.
7. Find, evaluate, analyze, and interpret primary and secondary sources, incorporating them into written essays using appropriate documentation format.
8. Proofread and edit essays for presentation so they exhibit no disruptive errors in English grammar, usage, or punctuation.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this class, students will have demonstrated the ability to:

- Form a provable thesis, develop it through factual research, and distinguish between fact and opinion.
- Be conscious of multiple factors affecting both verbal and written communication.
- Recognize the nature of persuasion in written, visual and oral argument.
- Use accepted academic techniques to complete research-based assignments.

General Education Outcomes:

AREA A1: English Composition

Upon successful completion of this area, students will have demonstrated an ability to form a provable thesis, develop it through factual research, distinguish between fact and opinion, and make effective rhetorical choices in relation to audience and purpose.

Course Requirements

In a nutshell, these are the things you agree to do if you would like to continue to be a member of this class. Likewise, your final grade will be determined based on your performance in each of the following areas. Please note that you will be dropped from this course should you fail to satisfactorily fulfill the requirements set forth as follows:

Reading

There will be reading assignments for every class meeting. Students will be expected to have completed these assignments in advance of each of these meetings so they can meaningfully contribute to discussion. The assigned reading(s) must be brought to class, and each student must complete the journal assignment for that day as well (see Journal below).

I reserve the option of integrating pop quizzes into the course schedule. Carry out your reading and journal-keeping accordingly.

Participation

Participation (in the form either of contributions to classroom discussion or of expansive journal responses) is required of everyone, and substantive participation throughout the semester will be reflected in your course grade.

Writing

There are **five major essay assignments** for this class, two of which will be written in class before being radically re-written in MLA style outside of class. The week before each of the four out-of-class essays are due, you will be asked to submit complete drafts of each respective paper. These drafts are required and will be workshopped by your peers. Students may fail to present a draft to one workshop; **failing to submit drafts to more than one workshop will adversely affect your final grade.**

The second essay will only be written in class over the course of two hours, and students will be apprised of the relevant prompts ahead of time. This essay cannot be made up.

All essays and drafts are due on the dates listed in the course schedule below.

Please note that it is not possible to get a passing grade in this course if you fail to submit final drafts for all five papers.

Journal

Active reading and note-taking are essential to drafting cogent and insightful essays

for this course. To that end, students will be asked to keep a journal in which they record the questions, arguments, problems, and insights that come up in the course of completing the reading and research assignments. Treat your journal as an opportunity to engage the course materials in a conversation and to reflect upon your writing process. Also, many homework assignments and all of the in-class freewrites will be completed in **your journal, which should be brought to every class**. I will be spot-checking your journals throughout the semester.

Attendance

If you miss more than three class meetings during the first eight weeks of the semester, you will be dropped from the class. If during the second eight weeks of the semester your CUMULATIVE TOTAL of absences is more than three class meetings, you may petition (in writing, 125 words) to remain in the class. If your petition is not successful, you will be dropped from the class. (Or, if the excessive absences occur after the last drop date, you will receive a failing grade in the class.) Also, you may be dropped from the class at any time if you do not turn in enough of the assigned work to maintain a passing (“C”) grade.

Final Grade Breakdown

To successfully pass this section of English 1A, you must receive a passing grade (“C” or better) on each of the core requirements for the class:

Five Formal Writing Assignments (60%)
 Participation and Quizzes (20%)
 Journal and Informal Writing Assignments (20%)

Note: I reserve the right to reward students who make steady improvement over the course of the semester. That is, if a student receives only passing grades during the first part of the semester, but then begins to do consistently outstanding work toward the end, that student may receive a higher grade than if all assignment grades were simply averaged together.

A Note on Plagiarism

The English Department’s plagiarism policy is as follows:

“Derived from the Latin word *plagiarius* (‘kidnapper’ and also ‘plagiarist’ in the modern sense), plagiarism is defined by Alexander Lindey as ‘the false assumption of authorship; the wrongful act of taking the product of another person’s mind, and presenting it as one’s own’” (*Plagiarism and Originality*).

“Plagiarism may take the form of repeating another’s sentences as your own, paraphrasing someone else’s argument as your own, or even presenting someone else’s line of thinking in the development of a thesis as though it were your own. In short, to plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written or thought something that you have in fact borrowed from another. Although a writer may use another person’s words and thoughts, they must be acknowledged as such” (*MLA Handbook*).

Plagiarism is grounds for expulsion. In the event of instructor leniency, a student may be dropped from the class and receive a “W” before the final drop date or an “F” after that

date. The instructor may issue a “0,” “NC,” or “F” for the work in which the plagiarism appears, or the instructor may issue a written warning, or the instructor may refer the student to the Vice President for Student Services for disciplinary action.

English and Study Skills Center (ESSC)

Students who need help with assignments from English classes or classes that require English skills are encouraged to come to the English & Study Skills Center for assistance.

The ESSC offers the following services:

- Free writing, research, and computer assistance
- Self-paced classes to improve your reading, writing, vocabulary, or study skills
- State-of-the-art technology for research, composing, and printing
- Scanners, copiers, and a color printer for your academic projects
- A quiet academic atmosphere

The ESSC also offers free 30-60 minute workshops on a variety of writing and study skills topics. Learn to combat test anxiety, use the MLA documentation system, or improve your textbook reading skills. More information can be found at <http://www.mpc.edu/academics/academic-divisions/humanities/programs-centers/english-study-skills-center>.

Trigger Warning

This course is intended for adults and may include films, language, images, or comments by other students, which some people may find offensive or disturbing. While our consideration of such material is strictly academic and related to instruction, if you are sensitive to profanity, violence, harsh language, and/or sexual content, please use caution and proceed at your own risk. Your continuance past this warning creates a contractual readiness to view/hear/read these materials of your own free will and to allow others to discuss them.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

(Reading assignments to be handed out are denoted by *)

Week One

01/23 T Course Introductions and Overview
 Rubrics for Essays
 Thesis-Writing
 Mock Writing Workshop

Week Two

01/30 T *George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language” (1946)
Consider the Lobster, pp. 66-127
 Journal Assignment (due in class): Handouts

Week Three

02/06 T *The Best American Essays 2017*, pp. ix-59
 Journal Assignment (due in class): Five questions and five insights regarding the day’s readings
Students will write the first draft of Essay 1 (1,000 words) in class.

Week Four

02/13 T

READING QUIZ*The Best American Essays 2017*, pp. 60-103

Assignment (due in class): Typed Revision of Essay 1 (Critical Analysis)

Week Five

02/20 T

The Best American Essays 2017, pp. 104-231

Journal Assignment (due in class): Five questions and five insights regarding the day's readings

First and final drafts of Essay 1 (1,250 words) are due.**Week Six**

02/27 T

The Best American Essays 2017, pp. 232-82

Journal Assignment (due in class): Five questions and five insights regarding the day's readings

Students will write and submit Essay 2 (1,000 words) in class.**Week Seven**

03/06 T

Tiny Beautiful Things, pp. 3-146

Journal Assignment (due in class): Tone and Audience Analysis Handout

Week Eight

03/13 T

Tiny Beautiful Things, pp. 147-214

Journal Assignment (due in class): Five questions and five insights regarding the day's readings

Students will write the first draft of Essay 3 (1,000 words) in class.**Spring Break**

03/20 T

NO CLASS**Week Nine**

03/27 T

READING QUIZ*Tiny Beautiful Things*, pp. 215-353

Assignment (due in class): Typed Revision of Essay 3 (Advice Letter)

Week Ten

04/03 T

READING QUIZ*The Empathy Exams*, pp. 1-90

Journal Assignment (due in class): Five questions and five insights regarding the day's readings

First and final drafts of Essay 3 (1,250 words) are due.**Week Eleven**

04/10 T

The Empathy Exams, pp. 91-183

Journal Assignment: Handout

Week Twelve

04/17 T *The Empathy Exams*, pp. 185-218
 Assignment (due in class): Typed First Draft of Essay 4 (Comparative
 Critical Analysis)

Week Thirteen

04/24 T **Meet in MPC Library for Research Session.**
Final draft of Essay 4 (1,250 words) due.

Week Fourteen

05/01 T **READING QUIZ**
Consider the Lobster, 3-65 and 128-55
 Assignment (due in class): One of your research sources (complete book
 and/or article)

Week Fifteen

05/08 T *Consider the Lobster*, 156-274
 Assignment (due in class): Annotated Bibliography for Research Essay

Week Sixteen

05/15 T *Consider the Lobster*, 275-343
 Assignment (due in class): Complete draft of Essay 5 (Research Essay)

Essay 5 Due at Final Exam on Tuesday, May 22nd, 6:30-9:20PM