

Academic Year: 2008-2009

Course: Composition **Instructor:** Mr. Kenneth Trani

Expectations

Classroom Behavior -- It is expected that all students will act with respect toward the teacher and all other members of the class.

Although water may be drunk during class, no other liquids are permitted without the approval of the school nurse. Gum chewing and eating are also not permitted; however, with the permission of the nurse, hard candy may be used when needed.

The desks are not waste baskets! Please dispose of any trash in the waste basket either before or after class. Also, desks may be used to store books overnight only with the teacher's permission.

Class Participation -- All students are expected to contribute to class discussions. Class participation does not mean that the teacher reaches into your throat to extract an answer or a comment; it means that you, the student, volunteer the same. Asking relevant questions is as important as answering them and counts toward class participation, as does respectfully commenting on what another person has said.

Class participation also includes having the correct materials for each class. This includes the correct book; paper for note taking, quizzes, or tests; and something which to write.

Except for work required to be typewritten, all written work must be done neatly in pencil or *blue or black ink*.

Homework -- Students are required to pass in all homework assignments on the due date when they are collected during class. Anything turned in after this will be considered late unless prior arrangements have been made. Points will be deducted from all late assignments, and persistent late assignments will adversely affect one's end-of-term grade. If a student is absent, assignments are expected on the date she returns to class. (In the event of protracted absences, special arrangements may be made ahead of time.) The school policy for late essays is one letter-grade deduction for each late day.

Grading: The trimester grade is determined by a combination of assessment methods. The weighting factors are as follows:

Quizzes 15%

Short essays 25%

Major essays 50%

Journal 10%

Please note that cheating and plagiarism, a topic that will be discussed in your regular English class, are unacceptable. A student caught cheating will receive a zero for a test or quiz grade; school policy requires that any student who plagiarizes will not only receive a zero for the paper but must do another one for no credit.

Book: Sebranek, Kemper, and Meyer, *Writers INC*.

Tentative Schedule for Composition

Please note that on a regular basis, students will write journal entries at the beginning of class. Sometimes these will be on topics of the student's choice; at other times, topics will be assigned by the instructor. The purpose of these exercises is to help students focus ideas and express them as clearly as possible in an impromptu manner, thus integrating skills that are necessary for any tests that require essays. Because these journal entries will be read by the instructor and count in grading, they should not be of an intimate or confessional nature, as a private journal might be.

Also, because correct grammar, punctuation, word choice, syntax, etc., are essential for written expression, these topics will be covered regularly throughout the course.

Week Work

- 1 Determining audience and writer's attitude (tone); introducing oneself in writing; introducing another person in writing
- 2 The written interview; grammar and punctuation review
- 3 Personal narrative
- 4 Sentence combining; formal outlines
- 5 Descriptive essay
- 6 Grammar, punctuation, syntax
- 7 Compare/contrast essay
- 8 Expository essay
- 9 Essays on exams and SATs; persuasive essay
- 10 Avoiding wordiness and overuse of the verb *be*
- 11 Forming a thesis statement and the analytical essay
- 12 Essay of choice

Composition Outline

- I. Grammar, Syntax, Usage*
 - A. Subject/verb agreement
 - B. Sentence structure
 - C. Varying sentence openers
 - D. Punctuation
 - E. Correct and precise terminology
 - F. Other areas of student need

* As mentioned above, this work will be covered at various times throughout the term. Much of it will be presented on an *ad hoc* basis -- in other words, as students present problems with particular areas of writing (punctuation, grammar, syntax, etc.), the instructor will tailor class presentations to suit the students' needs. As a result, the instruction in these areas will be determined, in part, by the students themselves. Therefore, in no two terms will the course be taught exactly as it was during a previous term.

II. Types of essays

A. Informal essays

1. Introducing oneself in writing
2. Introducing another in writing

B. Formal essays

1. Persuasive
2. Descriptive
3. Expository

C. Academic essays

1. On tests and examinations
2. Analytical