

COURSE OUTLINE**English 104  
Critical Thinking and Argumentation****I. Catalog Statement**

English 104 helps students to develop their critical thinking and writing skills beyond the level achieved in English 101. Students learn to read and think critically and to develop their analytical and argumentative writing skills providing a more advanced understanding of the relationship of language to logic and by further promoting the ability to reason effectively and reach valid conclusions. Writing forms and strategies are taught within the contexts of contemporary ideas and cultural diversity as reflected in selected readings. In addition, the course provides instruction in advanced research techniques and students will be required to complete a fully documented research paper. Furthermore, students develop an appreciation for the role and scope of rhetoric in their daily lives.

Total Lecture Units: 3.0

**Total Course Units: 3.0**

Total Lecture Hours: 48.0

**Total Faculty Contact Hours: 48**

Prerequisite: English 101.

**II. Course Entry Expectations**

Skills Level Ranges: Reading 7; Writing 7; Listening/Speaking 7; Math 1

Prior to enrolling in this course, the student should be able to:

1. read critically and write critical, thesis-based essays from the rhetorical perspective of example, comparison/contrast, analysis, definition, and argument;
2. organize, develop, and revise original writing using appropriate tone, style, and semantics;
3. understand induction and deduction, evaluate claims and assumptions, identify logical fallacies, and present reasoned arguments;
4. analyze, synthesize, distinguish fact from opinion or belief, seek credible sources, and reach logical conclusions;
5. examine values, identify bias and prejudice, and objectively summarize the views of others;
6. prepare a research paper using proper documentation and format.

**III. Course Exit Standards**

Upon successful completion of the required coursework, the student will be able to:

- A. Critically read and evaluate expository and persuasive texts which address current issues and cultural diversity.
1. identify thesis or unifying theme;
  2. identify traditional reasoning and logic (including induction and deduction, denotation and connotation);
  3. identify and evaluate supporting evidence (relevance, accuracy);
  4. distinguish fact from opinion, recognize assumptions and fallacies;
  5. evaluate text in terms of diction, tone and unity;
  6. identify the ways in which expository pieces and arguments are shaped by an author's social, historical, moral and psychological, and philosophical assumptions.
- B. Write logical, coherently structured and mechanically sound, thesis based expository and persuasive essays which address current issues and which demonstrate appropriate use of primary and secondary research materials.
1. select topic and adjust it in terms of breadth and complexity;
  2. clearly establish thesis;
  3. demonstrate appropriate use of supporting evidence in terms of accuracy, relevance, and freedom from faulty assumptions and fallacies;
  4. demonstrate ability to refute counter-argument;
  5. maintain unity and coherence between paragraphs;
  6. maintain college-level prose standards (mechanics).

**IV. Course Content****Total Faculty Contact Hours = 48 hours**

This course will help students further develop their writing skills (with emphasis on both form and content), understand the relationship of language to logic, understand affirmative and negative theories of argumentation, and understand the process of research and the notion of proof, leading to an ability to analyze and criticize ideas.

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| A. Critical reading                                    | 9 hours |
| 1. Examination of argumentation                        |         |
| 2. Denotative and connotative meanings                 |         |
| 3. Stated and underlying assumptions                   |         |
| 4. Synthesis of ideas                                  |         |
| 5. Relevance of ideas                                  |         |
| 6. Analysis of theories proposed                       |         |
| 7. Relevance of theories proposed                      |         |
| B. Foundations of written argument                     | 3 hours |
| 1. Prewriting  |         |
| 2. Presenting thesis or main idea                      |         |
| 3. Organization and development of supporting evidence |         |
| 4. Rhetorical modes                                    |         |
| 5. Editing   |         |

- C. Language in written argument 12 hours
  - 1. Emotionally biased language
  - 2. Denotative and connotative meanings
  - 3. Definition of terms
  - 4. Elliptical and implicit statement
  - 5. Effects of diction and style in argument
  - 6. Effects of figurative language and analogy
- D. Evaluation of written argument 12 hours
  - 1. Statements of fact, opinion, preference, and convention in the formation of thesis statements
  - 2. Sufficiency of evidence
  - 3. Relevance of evidence
  - 4. Verifiable conclusions
  - 5. Stated and underlying assumptions
  - 6. Deductive and inductive approaches to argument
  - 7. Quality of statistic evidence
- E. Fallacious reasoning in written argument, such as the following: 12 hours
  - 1. Casual fallacies
  - 2. Either-or fallacies
  - 3. Faulty analogy
  - 4. Begging the question
  - 5. Overgeneralization

**V. Methods of Instruction**

The following methods of instruction may be used in the course:

- 1. lectures, directed class discussions, small-group discussions, peer group writing workshops, individual conferences, small-group conferences, and student presentations;
- 2. films, audio-visuals, slides, and hand-out materials may be used to supplement lectures, discussion, and readings;
- 3. debate, role-playing activities, group projects, or other active learning;
- 4. guest speakers from related disciplines may be invited to present special topical material;
- 5. student ownership and presentation of assigned course material.

**VI. Out of Class Assignments**

The following out of class assignments may be used in the course:

- 1. essays of analysis, evaluation, argumentation;
- 2. documented research paper that includes close reading of primary and secondary sources and that incorporates the principles of logic, analysis, and argument taught in the course;
- 3. reading journal;
- 4. preparation for oral presentations and group projects;
- 5. annotated bibliography.

## **VII. Methods of Evaluation**

The following methods of evaluation may be used in the course:

1. essay exams or other writing assignments (students will write a minimum of 8000 words throughout the course);
2. midterm or final examinations;
3. peer review or instructor critique of essay drafts;
4. reading journal;
5. oral presentations or debates;
6. participation in class discussion, group work, group projects, partner exercises, or other collaborative exercises.

## **VIII. Textbooks**

Bamet, *Current Issues & Enduring Questions*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2010.  
14<sup>th</sup> Grade Textbook Reading Level. ISBN: # 978-0312547325.

Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011.  
14<sup>th</sup> Grade Textbook Reading Level. ISBN: # 978-0312601447.

Mayfield, *Thinking For Yourself*. Stamford: Wadsworth Publishing, 2009.  
14<sup>th</sup> Grade Textbook Reading Level. ISBN: # 978-1428231443.

Rotternberg, *Elements of Argument: A Text and Reader*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2011.  
14<sup>th</sup> Grade Textbook Reading Level. ISBN: # 978-0312646998.

Yagelski, *The Informed Argument*. Stamford: Cengage Learning, 2011.  
14<sup>th</sup> Grade Textbook Reading Level. ISBN: # 978-1428262300.

## **IX. Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion, the student will be able to:

1. critically read and evaluate expository and persuasive culturally diverse texts which address current issues. Identify thesis or unifying theme of text and traditional use of reasoning and logic. Identify and evaluate supporting evidence for relevance and accuracy and evaluate text in terms of diction, tone, and unity;
2. demonstrate appropriate application of supporting evidence from primary and secondary sources. Evaluate evidence in terms of accuracy, relevance, and freedom from faulty assumptions;
3. write sophisticated, coherently structured, mechanically sound expository and persuasive essays which address current issues.