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## SCC LIBRARY STUDENT HANDBOOK
English Department Faculty

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INTRODUCTION: FOR THE STUDENT

This handbook will help you answer the following questions:

- What courses are offered by the English Department?
- What are these courses like?
- How am I going to be graded?
- What are my responsibilities in the course?
- What are my rights as a student in these courses?
- Where can I go for special help?
- Is there special help for students whose first language is not English?

As you look through the course offerings, you will notice a rich diversity of selections. The English Department attempts to meet the needs of students from a variety of backgrounds. Courses, therefore, range from developmental writing through creative writing and cover literature stretching through the ages.

Having Trouble in a Course?

If you ever have trouble in a particular course, the best advice is to go and see your instructor. Instructors are here to help you and post office hours when they are available to see students. Your instructor will help you clarify assignments, assess your progress, and provide counseling relating to any part of the teaching and learning process. Remember, though, that your instructors are people, too. They have a wide range of responsibilities that are not always directly student related. Interacting with your instructor in a reasonable and professional manner, as you would with your supervisor at work, will help both of you solve problems as they arise.

Finally, college learning is very different from your past experiences in school. Success at this level becomes linked to independent study and individual effort. You should be spending a minimum of two hours studying at home for every hour you spend in the classroom. Genuine college achievement demands that most learning is done outside of class - the classroom is a supplement to your independent study - not the other way around. You will find that setting aside a certain amount of time each day for studying, reading, and writing will facilitate learning and the good grades that are its reward. Because of the amount of work and length of writing assignments you are given at this level of education, waiting until the last minute to complete assignments will likely hurt your chances for success.
Academic Writing: What It Is and Isn't

In college you will find that most courses, not just English courses, demand that you write often – both papers and essay examinations. Some of your instructors will assume that you already know how to write — something you learned to do in high school. This assumption is based on a variety of misconceptions:

- writing is a skill that should have been mastered in high school or in a single writing course in college
- papers should be written quickly, in one draft
- nice-looking, correctly spelled writing is the aim of good writing
- good writers in freshman composition will automatically be good writers in other courses
- good writers write alone without help from others

In reality, writing is a complex activity that lasts over an entire lifetime. Even professional writers revise often and seek advice from others about their work. Writing is very difficult to do well and takes a long time. Knowing the characteristics of good writing will help you approach your writing with more confidence and a realistic attitude. Most academic writing requires the following:

- a synthesis of information that goes beyond mere summary
- a use of evidence to support claims made in the paper
- a central point or argument informed by careful reading of a variety of authorities on a given issue
- a precise and sometimes special vocabulary allowing the writer to convey ideas without ambiguity

If you have surmised that good writing is hard, demanding, and time-consuming--you're right!! But the good news is that you can be successful. The moment you know the assignment--begin! Don't wait! Give yourself the necessary time to write a rough draft, reflect and revise your thoughts, type, edit and let someone else read your effort. Often, someone else can see things (mechanical errors and flawed logic) that you can't. Time is on your side if you use it wisely.
The Writer's Rights/Responsibilities

As a college writer, you are assuming a number of responsibilities. Instructors in all disciplines from art to math to zoology, not just English, have a right to expect good writing from you. You have a responsibility to:

- produce carefully thought-out writing with few or no errors that would distract the reader from the content
- revise your thoughts in accordance with any comments from your instructor or peers that are consistent with the basis of your paper's central point
- conduct thorough research, if indicated
- document your sources according to the format outlined by your instructor
- submit neat, professional looking papers
- turn the paper in on-time (late papers are often graded down or not accepted at all)

Along with these responsibilities come certain rights. When you are asked to complete a writing assignment as part of earning your grade in a course, you have the right to:

- understand the purpose of the assignment
- receive instructions explaining the assignment
- ask questions about the writing assignment
- understand how your assignment will be evaluated
- know what format and documentation styles are acceptable
- receive comments on a rough draft submitted to your instructor
- have graded work returned within a reasonable time (remembering that your instructor probably has essays, exams, and quizzes from four or five other classes to grade in addition to yours)

These are your rights and responsibilities as a college level writer. Your instructors take these obligations seriously, and so should you. Be professional and reasonable and your college level writing experience will prove to be an invaluable, lifelong skill.
Non-Sexist Language in Writing

Writers in all disciplines now commonly recognize the importance of making language choices that include rather than exclude. The following examples demonstrate how to conform to non-sexist language in writing.

Non-sexist Word Choice

**Instead of:**
- mankind
- chairman
- policeman
- fireman
- mailman
- lady
- the common man
- the best man for the job

**Write:**
- humanity or people
- chair
- police officer
- fire fighter
- letter carrier
- woman
- the average person
- the best person for the job

Non-sexist Pronoun Use

**Instead of:**
- The average student is worried about his grades.
- Give the student his grade right away.

**Write:**
- The average student is worried about grades.
- Give the students their grades right away. (or) Give the student the grade right away.

Avoiding Sex-role Stereotyping

**Instead of:**
- stewardess
- waitress
- lady lawyer
- male nurse
- All doctors and their wives are invited.

**Write:**
- flight attendant
- server
- lawyer
- nurse
- All doctors and their spouses are invited.
Writing Placement/Appeals - Incoming Students

St. Charles Community College expects students to exhibit certain academic skills and competencies before they take college level courses. Qualified counselors in the office of Student Development administer several tests and assessment tools and provide skilled interpretations of the results so that students can make the best possible choices of majors and courses.

Appeals: Students wishing to appeal their placement in ENG 095 (Developmental English I) or ENG 096 (Developmental English II) may do so by completing the ENGLISH PLACEMENT APPEAL FORM in the English Department and completing the appeal.

Repeating a Course: Students who place in either Developmental Writing I (ENG 095) or Developmental Writing II (ENG 096) must enroll in and pass these courses before enrolling in college level classes. Students may attempt writing classes twice. For the third attempt, they will need permission from a counselor.

Writing Class Objectives:

ENG 095 Developmental Writing I (this course is graded pass/fail)
1. Students write grammatically correct, complete sentences.
   a. Correct use of subject-verb and noun-pronoun agreement.
   b. Correct use of standard punctuation.
   c. Correct spelling including the ability to differentiate among commonly used homonyms.
2. Students use a variety of sentence types including simple, compound, and complex.
3. Students organize coherent paragraphs with specific content in support of a main idea.
4. Students write in an objective third person voice as well as a personal narrative voice.
5. Students learn to use the writing process.

ENG 095 Departmental Exam:

Departmental Final Exam: A special requirement for all students completing 095 is a departmental final exam. Normally, the instructor gives this exam during the last week of classes. This departmental final exam is based on the original placement criteria for entry into ENG 096, college level writing. All students enrolled for 095 will be given a timed writing to a common prompt. The exam is then holistically scored by the departmental assessment committee with the addition of any other 095 instructors who have the time or inclination to score.

Results of the exam will be given to instructors as advisory only. Passing the departmental final does not guarantee passing the course nor does failure of the final mandate failure of the course. The instructor is always the last authority in assigning grades.

Upon the recommendation of the instructor, students may request evaluation for direct placement into ENG 101 without completing ENG 096.
ENG 096 Developmental Writing II (this course is graded pass/fail)

1. Students review the writing process with a focus on the basics of the short essay which may demonstrate rudimentary research skills.
2. Students learn the construction of thesis statements that have a focused audience and purpose.
3. Students develop an understanding of how to use different modes of development as a way of organizing information, including rhetorical modes appropriate to developmental writing, such as comparison/contrast, definition, and example.
4. Students build sentence and paragraph development skills and improve word choice and clarity.
5. Students learn careful editing skills and build an editing list for personal use that defines their own error patterns.
6. Students continue to review problematic grammatical constructions and sentence building, including the ability to recognize and revise sentence-level problems most apparent in developmental writing, such as fused, run-on, and comma splice sentences, as well as vague pronoun references and other pronoun disagreement issues.

ENG 096 Departmental Exam:

**Departmental Final Exam:** A special requirement for all students completing 096 is a departmental final exam. Normally, the instructor gives this exam during the last week of classes. This departmental final exam is based on the original placement criteria for entry into ENG 101, college level writing. All students enrolled for 096 will be given a timed writing to a common prompt. The exam is then holistically scored by the departmental assessment committee with the addition of any other 096 instructors who have the time or inclination to score.

Results of the exam will be given to instructors as advisory only. Passing the departmental final does not guarantee passing the course nor does failure of the final mandate failure of the course. The instructor is always the last authority in assigning grades.

ENG 101 English Composition I

1. Students develop – through writing – defensible approaches to critical thinking, reading and argumentation using a variety of texts.
2. Students learn to form an active thesis and to develop that thesis through paragraphs which exhibit strong controlling ideas and specific supporting details.
3. Students learn to construct an essay that is rhetorically effective in its organization, development and language, and in its appeal to specific audiences.
4. Students learn to assess and employ sources in order to garner new knowledge, as well as to substantiate ideas and support assertions.
5. Students learn effective and appropriate methods of documentation.
6. Students learn drafting, revising and editing skills by analyzing and evaluating their own work as well as the work of others.
7. Students learn to view writing the essay as a way to discover knowledge, not merely record it.

**ENG 102 English Composition II**

1. Students will polish formal documentation skills.
2. Student writing will reflect the varying perspectives on events both globally and locally as reflected in both literature and expository essays.
3. Students will learn to evaluate the reliability of sources.
4. Students will be able to reconcile diverse opinions and reactions.
5. Students will be able to locate, identify and use standard academic sources including computerized sources.
6. Students will learn to support an interpretive stance using logic and sources.
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT POLICIES

Prerequisites: All students taking English courses are required to make a grade of "C" or better in prerequisite courses before progressing to the next course in sequence. For example, students are required to make a "C" or better in English Composition I before entering Composition II.

Students placed in developmental writing classes must complete those courses with a grade of “P” prior to enrolling in college level writing.

Students who have not met the prerequisite for English classes will be administratively withdrawn from inappropriate course(s). Students will be refunded the tuition paid for the course(s).

It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation that all prerequisites have been met before being allowed to register.

Attendance: Attending class is considered essential to your success in coursework. While attendance requirements vary from instructor to instructor, more than three (3) hours of missed class can result in your receiving a failing grade. Check each course syllabus for specific attendance policies.

Computer Generated Papers: Most of your out of class writing assignments will be generated on a computer. Check each course syllabus for specific requirements. If you do not have access to a computer, there are computers available on campus for your use.

In general, finished papers are double-spaced, in dark print on standard 8½” x 11” paper. Computer generated text should be dark enough to be easily legible. MLA manuscript style is generally required.

It is a good practice to keep a copy of your paper.
**Plagiarism:** To present someone else's work or ideas as your own is plagiarism. A student commits plagiarism in the following circumstances:

- when the student copies word for word someone else's writing and does not put that passage in quotation marks and identify the source

- when the student takes someone else's writing, changes some of the words, and does not identify the source

- when the student takes someone else's ideas and puts them into his or her own words and does not identify the source

In each instance, either through ignorance or with intent, the student takes credit for the work of others.

Punitive action may include a grade of “F” on the assignment, or an “F” on the course. **The Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs is notified of all incidents of plagiarism.**

The recent availability of papers for sale on the internet has created new temptations for students. Students should be aware that there are also sites and searches which enable their instructors to identify those papers. This form of plagiarism is an intentional attempt to substitute a purchased paper for a student’s own work. All such papers receive a grade of F.

**Incompletes:** Incomplete grades normally must be satisfied by the middle of the semester following the semester in which the incomplete was made. If not satisfied, incomplete grades become “F” grades. Arrangements for incomplete grades are made by each instructor.

**Auditing:** allows the student to attend a class without receiving credit, taking examinations, or writing essays. The student pays the regular tuition rate and can change to credit status within the first four weeks of class. The student must, however, receive permission to audit from the instructor if course prerequisites are not met. Veterans or students receiving financial aid cannot use audited courses to satisfy full-or part-time status.
Required Textbooks: The following are the required textbook(s) for courses and must be used. Some instructors may also have supplemental textbook(s) that may be required for specific sections.

ENG 095  Langan, *Exploring Writing: Sentences and Paragraphs, Special Edition*

*English Department Handbook* – please see the English department website on the college website.

ENG 096  Langan, *Exploring Writing: Paragraphs and Essays, Special Edition*


*English Department Handbook* – please see the English department website on the college website.


* A Writer’s Reference (7th edition) – e-book or print – up to the discretion of instructor.

*English Department Handbook* – please see the English department website on the college website.

* (Topic sections) Instructors will notify students of required text(s).

ENG 102  Booth and Mays, *Norton Introduction to Literature* (Shorter Edition)

* A Writer’s Reference (7th edition) – e-book or print – up to the discretion of instructor.

*English Department Handbook* – please see the English department website on the college website.

* (Topic sections) Instructors will notify students of required text(s).


AWARDS AND PUBLICATIONS

**Mid Rivers Review:** *Mid Rivers Review* is the literary journal of St. Charles Community College containing stimulating and candid poetry, fiction and essays. *Mid Rivers Review’s* contributors come from a broad spectrum—students, staff, faculty and community members. On sale in the campus bookstore, *Mid Rivers Review* is published annually in the spring by the English Department. See Jacqueline Gray (Editor), Virginia Guneyli (co-Assistant Editor), or Christy Gant (co-Assistant Editor) of the English Department for more details on how you can contribute your creative writing to the college’s literary journal. You can also visit the English department website for more information.

**Annie Dillard Award**

The Annie Dillard Award for Creative Non-Fiction, named after the American Pulitzer Prize winning essayist and novelist, is an annual writing award contest sponsored by the SCC English Department. This award honors an outstanding creative non-fiction essay written by a student. A creative non-fiction essay is a short work of prose written in first person and deals with a subject experienced by and important to the author. Creative non-fiction often includes descriptive language and a clear reflection on the significance of the experiences discussed in the essay.

Flyers announcing entrance requirements and process will be posted around campus during the fall semester, or ask your English composition 101/102 or Literature instructor for details.

**E.B. White Award for Expository Writing** This award honors an outstanding student expository essay. An expository essay focuses on a main topic or idea, asserts a thesis, and is supported by examples and evidence. The essay should show evidence of logical organization and contain smooth transitions. Argument, research, and analysis papers are three examples of expository writing.

**The Jim Haba Award for Poetry:** This award honors an outstanding poem submitted to the *Mid Rivers Review.*
HOW ARE ESSAYS GRADED?

Essay grades are based on content as well as form. The objective of the composition courses is to achieve clear, precise, and mature writing. Therefore, an essay free of errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling but without significant content or development merits probably no more than a “D” and could receive an “F”. Conversely, an essay with significant insight and topic development but with considerable technical error will also probably receive a “D” and could receive an “F” grade.

An “A” paper is characterized by the following:

1. It shows individualized thought.
2. It develops a clearly-stated thesis intelligently and supports it with convincing detail.
3. Paragraphs and sentences are carefully constructed and organized.
4. Words are used effectively and precisely.
5. It is virtually free from mechanical error. *

A “B” paper contains most of the qualities of the “A” paper.

1. It has a clearly-stated thesis adequately and clearly developed.
2. Paragraphs and sentences are carefully constructed and organized.
3. Most words are used effectively and precisely.
4. It is virtually free from mechanical errors.*
5. It may lack the individualized thought and vigor of the “A” paper.

A “C” paper is average—neither outstanding nor conspicuously defective.

1. It presents a thesis and supports it adequately.
2. Its organization and development is adequate.
3. Paragraph structure is satisfactory.
4. Sentence structure lacks variety.
5. Word choice is conventional and colorless.
6. It usually lacks individualized thought.
7. It often contains mechanical errors that detract from the overall effect of the paper’s content.*
A “D” paper is below average.

1. It fails to present a thesis with sufficient clarity and completeness.
2. It lacks sufficient development.
3. Paragraphs lack unity and coherence.
4. Sentences are choppy, immature, or monotonous.
5. Word choice is imprecise or inappropriate.
6. It contains serious mechanical errors.*

An “F” paper may be characterized by lack of content or by excessive mechanical errors.

1. It has no thesis or an irrelevant thesis.
2. It lacks sufficient development.
3. Paragraphs lack unity and coherence.
4. Sentences are choppy, immature, or monotonous.
5. Word choice is imprecise or inappropriate.
6. It often contains so many mechanical errors that meaning is obscured.*
7. An essay that does not follow the directions of the assignment also deserves an “F”.

*Some examples of mechanical errors are:

1. Sentence Fragment
2. Lack of subject-verb agreement
3. Lack of pronoun-antecedent agreement
4. Faulty verb tense
5. Run-on or comma splice sentence
6. Misspelled words
THE ACE CENTER – ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

The Academic and Career Enhancement Center (ACE) is located on the second floor of the Social Science Building (SSB). The ACE Center provides academic support, including testing, computer aids, career development and study skills assistance. The ACE Center is open for student and faculty use both days and evenings.

If you are experiencing problems in your classes, this learning center provides supplemental resources to help you build stronger academic skills. In particular they offer help in note-taking techniques, test-taking strategies and overall help in reading and writing. Students who are non-native speakers of English can find tutors to help with reading, writing and test taking.

If you need assistance with a specific writing assignment, you should make an appointment with a qualified writing assistant.

First Alert

First Alert is an early intervention program for students who are having severe difficulties with college courses. Often instructors refer students who need additional help, but you may also refer yourself for additional help with any college class.

Accessibility

To request academic accommodations for English classes, please contact the Office of Accessibility Services, Student Center, SC 133, 636-922-8247. Updated documentation must be reviewed prior to approval for any accommodations.
CREDITING SOURCES IN COLLEGE WRITING
Modern Language Association (MLA) Documentation

Essays, reports, and research papers written for college classes and for publication, as well as for business purposes, are often developed with information gathered from a variety of sources such as books, periodicals, and personal interviews. For each quote, paraphrase, or summary included in a document, credit must be given to the author or expert providing the data. Not to do so would be not only unprofessional, but also unethical and in some cases illegal. (See also: plagiarism on page 12)

There are a number of ways to credit sources.* The system most commonly used is probably that recommended by the Modern Language Association which specifies the use of in-text, parenthetical citations of sources and a list of works cited at the end of a document. Always check with your instructor to find out the documentation system to use.

You do not need to credit the source of short dictionary definitions or of commonly known facts, such as that water boils at 212 degrees F. However, when you include in your writing quotations, paraphrases or summaries, you must acknowledge the source of the information. Even if you have rewritten the material in your own words, you must acknowledge the source of the idea, if not the exact language.

*Among those systems used at SCC are MLA (Modern Language Association) APA (American Psychological Association) and the Chicago Manual of Style. As a supplement to the texts, brief handouts are available to students in the LRC.