

expository writing

James E. Casey

Section 21, Online Spring 2012

Instructor:

James E. Casey
 Building 1 Room 115, ASC
 M – TH 7:30am – 4:00 pm
 F 7:30 am – 1:00 pm
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 252.940.6338

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites:

ENG 090/RED 090 or appropriate placement test scores

Course Description:

This course is the required first course in a series of two designed to develop the ability to produce clear expository prose. Emphasis is placed on the writing process including audience analysis, topic selection, thesis support and development, editing, and revision. Upon completion, students should be able to produce unified, coherent, well-developed essays using standard written English.

Course/Student Outcomes:

Students will write unified, organized, and developed essays. Rubrics for student writing will assess unity, development, and conventional English grammar and usage.

Students will identify and analyze rhetorical strategies. Rubrics will assess student understanding of rhetorical strategies.

Students will be proficient with conventional English grammar and usage.

Course Evaluation:

Your course grade will be calculated from the following components:

Writing Portfolio	60%
Process Work	20%
Reading Critiques	10%
Terms Exam	10%

This course will use a 10-point scale:

A	90 – 100
B	80 – 89
C	70 – 79
D	60 – 69
F	59 & Below

Textbook:

Aaron, Jane E. and Repetto, Ellen Kuhl. *The Compact Reader: Short Essays by Method and Theme, 9th ed.* Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011.

About the Course: As this class is process based (a notion we will be exploring in depth this semester), it will require a serious commitment on your part. Your engagement in the online community is vital not only to your personal success in this course but also to the life of the class itself.

Since writing is in many ways a communal activity, be prepared to interact with the other members of the class. Throughout the semester, you will be invited to share your writing with the class, and you will be called upon to respond to and critique the writing of others.

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Finally, a portion (20%) of your final grade will reflect the extent to which you have engaged the process of writing (prewriting journals, peer revisions, metawriting journals, etc.).

About the Writing Portfolio:

This course will use a portfolio approach to your writing. Over the course of the semester, we will be writing four full-length essays. Each essay will have a fixed date on which you will submit a completed draft, but you will be given the opportunity to continue to revise your essays on your own schedule throughout the semester.

You will receive feedback and commentary on each draft, but you will not receive a grade on your essays until they are submitted as part of your portfolio at the end of the semester. Your portfolio will contain a selection of the best writing you've produced along with a capstone essay which analyzes your experience and growth as a writer. The averaged grades on each portion of the portfolio will make up the bulk (60%) of your final grade.

About the Terms Exam:

The BCCC English Department requires that each student in ENG 111 learn a common list of writing terms to assist in discussing the art of writing in this and other classes. Near the end of the semester, you will be tested on these terms as a portion (10%) of your final grade.

About the Reading Critiques:

As we begin to discover various rhetorical strategies this semester, we will be reading essays from your textbook in which other

writers have employed similar strategies. For each of these readings, we will be summarizing, analyzing, and reflecting for a portion (10%) of your final grade.

Final Advice:

Over the course of the semester, we will hopefully learn some things about writing effectively. The key to that is, in many ways, learning about *how* we write. If you are willing to do the hard work of writing, while being mindful of the process, I can assure you that you will be better prepared to handle the various writing tasks in your academic studies, your career work, or your personal lives.

About Technology:

Since this course is entirely web-based, I will expect that you are already comfortable with using Blackboard, using a word processor, saving and attaching documents, sending and responding to email, etc. I do strongly caution you to make certain that you save your work regularly as you write for this course and that you maintain multiple backups of your work. Using a combination of your BCCC O: drive, your computer's hard drive, and an external USB drive is always a good idea.

Additional Policies:

Information regarding BCCC's policies on Academic Integrity, Special Populations, Student Discipline, and more is available online here:

www.beaufortccc.edu/LRC/Distance/policy.htm

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Spring 2012 Schedule

About this schedule:

This is a broad, weekly schedule intended to help keep you on track with your online work. As this section of ENG 111 is solely online, you are free to work ahead on assignments as you see fit.

With that said, all due dates are firm, and late work will complicate the process of peer review, hamper my ability to provide timely feedback, and adversely affect your process grade.

Each due date falls on a Friday, and work will be accepted through 11:59 pm that day.

WEEK 1	JAN 5 – 6	First Things
	Introductory Quiz DUE by January 6	
WEEK 2	JAN 7 – 13	The Process of Writing
	Semester Topic Commitment & Metawriting Journal DUE by January 13	
WEEK 3	JAN 14 – 20	Descriptive Narrative
	Reading Critique DUE by January 20	
WEEK 4	JAN 21 – 27	Descriptive Narrative
	Completed Draft DUE by January 27	
WEEK 5	JAN 28 – FEB 3	Descriptive Narrative
	Peer Revisions DUE by February 3	
WEEK 6	FEB 4 – 10	Preference
	Reading Critique DUE by February 10	
WEEK 7	FEB 11 – 17	Preference
	Completed Draft DUE by February 17	
WEEK 8	FEB 18 - 24	Preference
	Peer Revisions DUE by February 24	
WEEK 9	FEB 25 – MAR 2	Persuasion
	Reading Critique DUE by March 2	

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WEEK 10	MAR 3 - 9	Persuasion
	Completed Draft DUE by March 9	
WEEK 11	MAR 10 - 16	Persuasion
	Peer Revisions DUE by February 24	
WEEK 12	MAR 17 - 23	Analysis
	Reading Critique DUE by March 23	
WEEK 13	MAR 24 - 30	Analysis
	Prewriting DUE by March 30	
WEEK 14	MAR 31 – APR 6	Analysis
	Completed Draft DUE by April 6	
WEEK 15	APR 7 - 20	Analysis
	Peer Revisions DUE by April 20	
WEEK 16	APR 21 - 27	Portfolio
	ANY FINAL REVISIONS DUE by April 27 for instructor feedback	
WEEK 17	APR 28 – MAY 4	Portfolio
	Portfolios DUE by MAY 4	

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Semester Topic Commitment

Name:

General Topic Area:

Related Sub-Topics:

Why have you chosen this topic?

What do you already know about this topic? What Specifically are you interested in learning?

What resources do you have for this topic? What other kinds of resources are available to you?

List a prospective topic for each of the first three required essays:

Descriptive Narrative:

Preference:

Persuasive:

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Reading Critique

One of the best ways to improve your own writing is to think critically about the writings of others. Understanding how various pieces of writing work allows you to understand something about the idea of writing in general. In writing your critique of the assigned readings, be sure to follow the three steps outlined below.

SUMMARIZE The first step in thinking about a piece of writing is to understand the information that the author has communicated. A summary, then, is a brief discussion of the main points of the reading. For this assignment, try to keep your summary limited to one paragraph. Be sure to look for organizational hints given in the text; these are often clues to the main points of the reading. For more information on summarizing, refer to page 365 in your textbook. You may also use paraphrasing and quotation in this section.

ANALYZE The second step in thinking about the writing is to consider how the author has communicated these main points. In this step, you will be considering ideas such as the following:

- What type of essay has the author written, and what seems to be its purpose?
- What tone do you sense from the reading (argumentative, humorous, nostalgic, etc.)?
- How does the author's language establish that tone?
- What kinds of illustrations has the author used to develop the text?
- How is the piece organized? How can you tell? Is that organization effective?
- Who is the audience for the writing? Does it exclude other audiences?

This portion of the assignment will essentially answer the question, "How did the author do what he or she has done?" Quotations from the text will likely assist you in making your points here.

REFLECT Since a text depends (whether in part or completely) on the interaction of the reader for its meaning, the last step in thinking about your reading is to reflect on it on a personal level. How does the text make you feel? Is it important to you? Are there things with which you can identify? Does the writing fail to affect you? Why?

This final portion of the assignment, although it will be the least structured of the three steps, is actually the most important overall. Writing is a tool of interaction between human beings, so in many ways, understanding your own response to a text will give you insight into the total effectiveness of that text, and it will better equip you for generating your own.

*Your reading critiques should be at least one full page, typed in MLA format.
Each critique will be evaluated with the accompanying grid.*

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Reading Critique

Student:

criteria	ineffective	effective	exemplary
summary			
analysis			
reflection			
strengths			
suggestions & questions			
overall			

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Essay 1: **The Descriptive Narrative**

Using the raw materials you've amassed through your prewriting journal or other invention sessions, narrate a particular, significant event from your past which relates to your subject, and reflect on that event's relevance for you today. Use descriptive language to make your story vivid and compelling.

As you compose, remember that your narrative should

focus on a limited, unified period of time.

suggest how and why the event holds significance for you.

employ sensory details, active verbs, and figurative language.

demonstrate a clear organization through the use of transitions and paragraphing.

establish a personal voice appropriate to your audience through your choice of words.

follow all conventions of grammar, mechanics, and MLA format.

"The active mind is a composer, and everything we respond to we compose or re-compose."

—Ann Berthoff

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Essay 1: **The Descriptive Narrative**

Student:

criteria	ineffective	effective	exemplary
focus, unity, reflection			
descriptive detail, active verbs, figurative language			
organization, transitions, paragraph development			
style, voice, audience			
grammar, mechanics, format			
strengths			
suggestions & questions			
overall score			

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Peer Revisions: **The Descriptive Narrative**

After reading your classmate's draft carefully and thoroughly, respond to the following questions:

1. Summarize, in one sentence, the narrative. That is, what is the story about?
2. What time period is covered in the narrative? Is this too little or too much time? How could the author better focus the events of the narrative? Do all the events described fit the story? What might the author consider leaving out? What events might the author add or develop?
3. What is the most vivid description in the draft? That is, what portions can you easily visualize as you read? What portions could use additional description? Identify any uses of figurative language.
4. Consider the paragraphs used in the narrative. Do they flow smoothly from one to the next? Are any too long or too short?
5. What sort of tone do you sense from the author's story? Which words give you that sense? Are there words which don't work well or don't seem to belong?
6. What other suggestions could you offer?

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Essay 2: **The Preference**

Using the brainstorming notes you've collected in your prewriting journal or in other invention sessions, compose an essay which explains the distinguishing criteria involved in your preference between two similar items or ideas related to your subject. Your preference essay is, in essence, an evaluative comparison, focusing primarily on the contrasts which allow you to evaluate two items or ideas and make a choice.

As you compose, remember that your preference essay should

- focus on a clearly specified preference between your two items or ideas.

- explain the criteria which influence your choice.

- employ narration and/or descriptive details to fully illustrate your criteria.

- demonstrate a clear organization through the use of transitions and paragraphing.

- establish a personal voice appropriate to your audience through your choice of words.

- follow all conventions of grammar, mechanics, and MLA format.

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Essay 2: **The Preference**

Student:

criteria	ineffective	effective	exemplary
focus, unity			
development, illustration			
organization, transitions, paragraph development			
style, voice, audience			
grammar, mechanics, format			
strengths			
suggestions & questions			
overall score			

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Peer Revisions: **The Preference**

After reading your classmate's draft carefully and thoroughly, respond to the following questions:

1. What are the two choices being discussed in the essay, and which is the author's preference?
2. How is the essay organized? How could the organization be improved?
3. Identify the criteria on which the author bases his or her judgement. Are those criteria sufficient to make the preference clear? What other criteria might the author have considered?
4. How has the author used description and narration in this essay?
5. What comments or suggestions could you make about the author's word choice?
6. What other suggestions could you offer?

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Essay 3: **The Persuasive**

Using the notes you've collected in your prewriting journal or in other invention sessions, compose an essay which persuades your audience to accept your point of view on a controversial issue related to your subject matter. Your essay should also encourage your audience to take some form of action which follows from your argument. A truly persuasive argument should appeal to your audience through some combination of reason, ethics, and emotion, and the opposition to your argument should always be acknowledged and addressed.

As you compose, remember that your persuasive essay should

articulate clearly the position and action you are proposing.

explain your argument fully, appealing to your audience's reason, ethics, and emotion.

consider and discuss what are likely to be the opposing views of your argument.

employ narration and/or descriptive details where appropriate to fully develop your position.

demonstrate a clear organization through the use of transitions and paragraphing.

establish a personal voice appropriate to your audience through your choice of words.

follow all conventions of grammar, mechanics, and MLA format.

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Essay 3: **The Persuasive**

Student:

criteria	ineffective	effective	exemplary
focus and unity of argument			
development, illustration, use of reason, ethics, emotion			
consideration of opposition			
organization, transitions, paragraph development			
style, voice, audience			
grammar, mechanics, format			
strengths			
suggestions & questions			
overall score			

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Peer Revisions: **The Persuasive**

After reading your classmate's draft carefully and thoroughly, respond to the following questions:

1. What argument is the author making in this essay, and what action is being suggested?
2. In what ways does the essay appeal to your reason? Your ethics? Your emotion? Which is most effective for you?
3. How does the author address any opposing viewpoints in the essay. Are there other opposing views you could express?
4. How has the author used description and narration or comparison and contrast in this essay?
5. What comments or suggestions could you make about the author's word choice? Are there any words or phrases which you find off-putting?
6. Do you agree with the author, and would you be willing to take the suggested action? What other suggestions could you offer to make the essay more persuasive to you?

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Essay 4: **The Analytic Capstone**

Using the materials you've amassed in your metawriting journal over the course of the semester, compose a process analysis which explains your *personal* process for writing the essays you'll include in your portfolio.

For this assignment, you may choose to focus on one particular essay (perhaps your strongest piece), or you may choose to discuss how your writing process changed with each essay through the semester.

As you write, recall the four broad phases of the writing process we've discussed this semester: prewriting, drafting, revision, and editing. These phases may serve as an organizational pattern for your essay. Be certain to explain how you've worked through (or deviated from) those four phases in your writing.

As you explain the parts of your writing process, consider ways in which you might use the rhetorical strategies we've already covered this semester. How might you use narration and description, comparison and contrast, or argument and persuasion in your essay?

Finally, be mindful that this process analysis will serve as a capstone for your portfolio, offering your personal reflection on the essays you've written as well as offering insight into how you've grown or changed as a writer.

As you compose, remember that your process analysis should

focus and reflect on the significance of the process.

explain and develop the process through the use of varied rhetorical strategies.

demonstrate a clear organization through the use of transitions and paragraphing.

employ the writing terms you've studied this semester where appropriate.

establish a personal voice appropriate to your audience through your choice of words.

follow all conventions of grammar, mechanics, and MLA format.

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Essay 2: **The Analytic Capstone**

Student:

criteria	ineffective	effective	exemplary
focus, unity, reflection			
development, illustration, use of varied rhetorical strategies			
organization, transitions, paragraph development			
use of writing terms			
style, voice, audience			
grammar, mechanics, format			
strengths			
suggestions & questions			
overall score			

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Peer Revisions: **The Analytic Capstone**

After reading your classmate's draft carefully and thoroughly, respond to the following questions:

1. What is the main point you take away from the analysis?
2. What kind of organization is used in the analysis? How does it help to follow the author's writing process?
3. Identify the various rhetorical strategies the author has used in the analysis (description, narration, comparison and contrast, argument, etc.). Are there other strategies the author might have used?
4. How many of the ENG 111 writing terms did you recognize from the essay? Which others could have been used?
5. In the end, what sense do you take away from the analysis about the author's writing process? How does this compare with your writing process?
6. What other suggestions could you offer?

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The Final Writing Portfolio

Now that we have completed our set of essays for the semester, and you have chosen to revise them based both on my suggestions and on feedback from your peers, you should be ready to compile your final portfolio to be graded.

Your portfolio must contain the following items:

Your choice of two of the following essays which you have thoroughly revised and edited:
Descriptive Narrative, Preference, or Persuasive.

Your Analytic Capstone essay

There will be, then, a total of three essays which will be graded for 60% of your final average. In assessing your final versions, I will take into account both the effectiveness of the final draft as well as the extent to which you have worked to revise and edit earlier drafts of the essays.

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—Ann Berthoff