Instructor: Dr. Teddi Chichester  
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Office hours: T/TH right after class—LuValle Commons

Meeting dates/times:  
July 7-28  
T/TH 10:00-12:30

Course location:  
Public Affairs 1323

Course Description:

This workshop serves as a basic introduction to critical reading and academic writing. More broadly still, English Composition 50 will help orient you to all matters of language and communication at the university. It is a bigger task than you might imagine. If you think of it, you’ll realize that every comment you make in class and every e-mail you write to an instructor or counselor occurs in a social context that is new to you as a first-term college student. We’ll attend, therefore, to those small bits of class-related communication in addition to in-class exams and formal essay assignments. By the end of the term, you should find that this workshop has prepared you to speak, write, and learn more effectively as you move towards the full college experience.

Course Requirements:

In addition to assigned reading, you will need to complete

- daily in-class exercises plus an out-of-class journal entry
- one short email to a Writing Center tutor, cc’d to your instructor
- one in-class essay
- one brief (3 pages) formal paper/critical analysis (draft and revision required)
- one college application letter (draft only)

In a class like this where you learn actively (that is, by doing), it is essential that you

- Attend regularly. Attendance needs to be thought of as more than just showing up. Attendance involves being in class on time ready to learn. To attend is to arrive prepared and to participate thoughtfully in discussions and activities. If you already know that you must miss one class meeting, talk to your instructor right away. Missing more than one class can constitute a serious problem. Note the section on grading below.

- Keep up with the assigned reading. While the reading list in this course will be fairly brief, you must allow time not only to “get through” a certain number of pages but to understand and engage what you read. Be sure to allow time to read, re-read, annotate and reflect as necessary.
• Finish all written work on time. Written work is not only the final drafts of the major assignments, but in-class exercises and preliminary drafts of assignments. Remember that this course focuses on the writing process. Late work undercuts that process.

A Note on Journals

Journals are informal, though thoughtful and detailed, responses to the texts—written or visual—that we’ll be encountering this summer. This exercise, and other journal assignments, are not tests or quizzes—just opportunities to express your ideas freely, without pressure, and to (re)discover the pleasure of writing.

Course Grading:

English Composition 50 carries 2 units of college credit. To earn that credit, you must complete the required work and attend to the guidelines listed above. Because this workshop aims at helping you prepare for work that comes later, final grades will largely be determined by the quality and consistency of your engagement with the course. That is to say, attendance, participation, and the timely submission of all assignments will count heavily toward your final grade. The quality of your writing will carry some weight, but not so much as it would in a regular university course.

Our readings will focus on three (sometimes intersecting) themes: Home and Away; Education; Communicating/Living in Cyberspace.

Please bring your bluebook (for journal entries), your syllabus, and all course readings each day to class.

Course Texts:

• Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing

• Richard Bullock and Francine Weinberg, The Little Seagull Handbook

• In addition, please buy one large bluebook (exam booklet)

Course Outline (3 1/2 weeks/7 meetings):

7/7: Intro to class
Clifton, “When I Go Home”
First writing assignment: email to tutors/instructor

7/9: Watkins, “Keeping Close to Home”
Lubrano, “The Shock of Education”
Wheelan, “Your Parents Don’t Want What’s Best for You”
Roethke, “My Papa’s Waltz”
Assignment for analytical essay handed out

7/14: Reading Visuals: Please bring one image representing family/home
Olds, “Rite of Passage”
Shell, “In Praise of Boredom”
McKibben, “Television and Happiness”
Finish They Say/I Say (to page 201)

7/16: Prep for in-class essay
Personal statement assignment handed out
Turn in journals
Rosen, “The Importance of Societal Forgetting”
Detweller, “Smiling for ‘Auschwitz Selfies’”
Vankin, “Museum Selfies and Younger Visitors”

7/21: Nolan, “Poker Face”
Shulevitz, “In College and Hiding from Scary Ideas”
In-class essay (one hour)
Analytical essay draft due: bring 3 copies

7/23: Goldwasser, “What’s the Matter with Kids Today”
Stoll, “Isolated by the Internet”
Staples, “What Adolescents Miss Growing up in Cyberspace”
Peer groups: bring partners’ drafts with comments and filled out response guide
Draft of personal statement due

7/28: Course Wrap-Up
Hakala, “There’s a Modern Affliction Ruining Our Friendships”
Stout, “Let’s Get Drinks”
Final revision of analytical essay due. Please submit with the first draft (commented on by instructor), plus all peer responses and self-response

Below is a list of themes/issues we hope to cover over the course of the workshop. Please look these over on your own, then select at least three topics and, by 7-14, write down (in your bluebook/journal) some specific questions you have that relate to those topics.

The College Experience
What do you want from college?
What will college want from you?

The Importance of Writing in College
What is the academic community?
What place does writing hold in that community?

The College Campus
What can we learn about college life by observing the campus environment?

High School and College
What’s different about studying for college classes?
What’s different about college reading?
What’s different about college writing?

Writing to Learn
How can writing be a study tool?
How can writing lead to discovery?

Approaching the Task
How is writing a “process”?
How can I make the process work for me?

Understanding Revision
What is the difference between revising and editing?
What is the difference between editing and proofreading?

Academic Genres
Why do even good writers sometimes produce weak papers?
What is the difference between a convention and a formula?

Are There Rules for Writers? If so,
Which rules need to be broken?
Which rules should be followed?

Feedback and Grades
What do college instructors really expect?
What do grades really mean?

Special Resources in College
What if I need help with writing?

Research and Writing
Why aren’t Google and Wikipedia enough?

Writing in a Digital Age
Audience issues 4 U 2 consider

The Whys,Whats, and Hows of Citation
What is plagiarism and how can I avoid it?
Do citation forms have to be so complicated?

Style and Correctness
Why is grammatical correctness important?
Why isn’t grammatical correctness enough?
Writing the Personal Essay/Admissions Essay
  What kinds of approaches work (or don’t work)?
  How do goals and values shape approaches?
  How does a person show in a letter?

Writing In-Class Essays/Exams
  How does a process approach work in a timed exam?
  How can one prepare for an essay exam?

Little Things and the Big Thing
  What are the most common editorial slips?
  Why are some small mistakes important?

Reflecting on Revised and In-Class Writing
  What did you accomplish through changes you made?
  How can you improve further?
  What do you carry away from the class that you can bring to your next class?
  How does close reading relate to compelling writing?
  What editorial issues are you now especially alert to?