English 103 (16733): Critical Reading, Writing, & Thinking
Fall 2015

Introduction

Welcome to English 103! I look forward to getting to know you as we work together to understand critical reading and writing. I will be your guide over the next 16 weeks as you navigate the world of expository writing and critical thinking. Even though this class meets 100% online, I will be with you every step of the way.

To many students’ surprise, an online class usually requires more discipline and determination than a traditional class. This is a reading and writing intensive course, conducted in a very different format than a Face-to-Face (F2F) course. As such, students are expected to devote a substantial amount of time to the class in order to successfully complete assignments and do well in the course. To determine if an online course is right for you, please carefully read the “Commitment” section of this letter.

Below you will find general information regarding the course and college that you may find useful. Please contact me with any questions or concerns you may have. I am available through email and generally respond within ten hours of your email being sent.

Class Information

Instructor: Michele DeGraffenreid
Course: English 103
Section Number: 16733
Course Length: 16 Weeks, August 24, 2015 – December 12, 2015
Class “Website”: http://bb.canyons.edu

We will be utilizing Blackboard (BB) as our course management system. All information regarding this course will be available through BB. The course will become available on August 24 for you to access through the website provided above. (Early access will not be provided, but you may wish to begin reading Amusing Ourselves to Death for a head start in the session.) If you have any questions or issues accessing BB, please use the following information:

Tech Support Email: bbsupport@canyons.edu
Phone Number: 661-362-3344
Tech Support Office: BONH-106/107

Required Textbook

The College of the Canyons bookstore has the required textbook available for purchase. Please confirm that you have the correct books, as there may be several versions of the text available. Not having the book is not considered a legitimate reason to submit the work late. Students are expected to have the textbooks beginning the first day of class. The following is the information for the required textbooks:
About English 103 at College of the Canyons

Course Description
Examines the principles of critical thinking as applied to writing and reading arguments on complex issues. Focuses on close textual analysis, argumentative writing, and logical reasoning.

Prerequisites
Successful completion of English 101.

Student Learning Outcomes
At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Evaluate the strength of written, visual, and multimedia arguments on a range of different issues and controversies.
2. Compose logical, well-reasoned arguments on selected topics such as popular culture, politics, social issues, and moral and ethical issues.

Commitment

English 103 is a 16 week, 3-unit class online class. As such, you should expect to spend extra time each week dedicated to this class. Since this course is also 100% online, we will not be meeting for any face-to-face sessions. This course is not a “traditional” course, as it is associated with the Distance Learning department. Plan on spending several days a week reviewing the “lecture” material, “activity” material, and all assigned homework.

Since this class meets 100% online, before we get too far into the semester, you should determine your own ability to complete a course that does not meet in a traditional classroom. Online courses require time management, organization, and self-motivation. To determine your ability, try completing MiraCosta College’s quiz, “Test Your Potential as an Online Student”, at the following website:

http://www.miracosta.cc.ca.us/Instruction/DistanceEducation/quiz.aspx

This quiz will enable you to determine where you fall in your own potential to succeed in an online course. If you earn a lower score, do not be discouraged or see this as an immediate warning to drop this course. Should you earn a lower score, I suggest you contact your academic advisor, mentor, and/or
online instructor to discuss available resources as well as any options that will help you to succeed. For tips on How to Succeed in Distance Learning, please visit

http://www.canyons.edu/offices/distance_learning/info/success.asp.

Expectations

To keep yourself aligned with the progress of the class, you are required to log in to the course website with a computer at least four times a week of no longer than a consecutive 72-hour period. Logging in to BB will serve to help in reminding of due dates, to check for post responses, and to be informed of updates, announcements, or clarifications regarding assignments.

In addition, because this is a college level writing class, I expect students to be respectful in their postings and communication with the Instructor and their fellow students. When you send an email, please follow proper netiquette:

1. Email subject should read, “103 Your Name Brief Question” (Example: “103 J. Smith- Problem logging in”).
2. Address the Instructor properly: “Dear Professor D.” (or your fellow student).
3. Employ proper language and style in your message, such as using complete sentences and proper punctuations.
4. Sign your name, and remember to use your Canyons email, as I cannot reply to personal email accounts.

Emails sent to me that do not follow the basic netiquette described above will not receive a reply.

Checking In

The course website will be available after 8 AM on Monday, August 24. Please do not email me for earlier access to the course. (If you want to get a head start in the class, begin reading Amusing Ourselves to Death.) You must log in and finish the first assignment (a Discussion Board posting) before 11:59 PM on Monday of Week 1 so that you are not automatically dropped from the class. (This is the same rule as the “first day no show” for F2F classes. This policy means: If a student does not show up for his or her first day class, he or she will be dropped by the Instructor.) The first assignment is relatively easy to do. If you complete your first assignment in time, I know that you have logged in and know how to use the basics of BB.

Course Requirements

Reliable Internet Access:

Because this is an online class, no homework will be excused due to unreliable internet access or issues with technology. If your internet has gone down for more than a day, you will need to complete your homework on campus, at a library, internet café, or a friend’s house. MAC USERS: Please note that Google Chrome is NOT compatible with BB. You may NOT use Google Chrome as your browser if you are using a Mac. Work submitted through Google Chrome on a Mac cannot be saved by BB. Your work will show as “not submitted”, and you will earn a “0” on the assignment. All other browsers are compatible with BB on Mac, and ALL browsers, including Google Chrome, are compatible with PCs. TABLET USERS: It is not recommended that work be submitted through a tablet or smart phone. These devices have been known to be problematic in the past.

Your Own Email Address:

To ensure that the Educational Code regarding student privacy is followed, you are required to use your Canyons email. I cannot share your course information or grades with anyone else, including your parents or legal guardians. Regardless of your age, when you are enrolled in a
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college class, you are treated and considered as an adult who is responsible for your own grades. Since I rely almost exclusively on online communications, such as email, to communicate with you when it comes to your grades and class performance, I will only do so through the Canyons email system.

**MS Word Processing Capacities Required:**
All course documents are written in Microsoft Office 2013, which is currently the most popular and accessible word processing program. This class assumes that students can open the course documents composed in MS Word and PowerPoint, and that students will submit essays that can be opened in MS Word. This does not mean the student has to buy MS Word if he/she does not have it; it means that, if the student does not use MS Word, it is the student’s responsibility to save the document in either .rtf, .doc, or .docx (no pdf files) and to make sure that I will have no problem opening his/her documents in MS Word. When I open the essay, the format needs to remain intact as required. In other words, it is the student’s responsibility to make sure that I can open and comment on his/her essays, and when I return the essay with comments and a grade, the student can read them with no difficulty. **OPTIONAL:** If you would like to purchase Microsoft Office, a discount is available to you as a student as long as you use your Canyons email (Microsoft Office Professional Plus $39.99) through [http://store.collegebuys.org/](http://store.collegebuys.org/)

**Turnitin.com:**
All formal essay assignments will need to be submitted to turnitin.com. You will be required to create a Turnitin.com account if you do not already have one. A step-by-step handout on how to create/register with turnitin.com is available in BB.

**Discussion Board (DB) Postings and Quizzes:**
Several Discussion Board posts with responses will be due each week. Occasionally, there will be some pre-announced quizzes. All these will take place on BB. Each posting asks for a minimum word count that will increase as the weeks progress. Please expect to write significant responses, in addition to formal papers. All assignments are due by 11:59PM through Turnitin.com or BB.

**Four Formal Essays:**
You will write a total of three formal, critical essays, and one reflection essay, with a minimum of 6,000 words to fulfill the department requirement. Each essay will be submitted in required portions throughout the semester. Please see the syllabus and handouts for further detail.

**Resources**
This course has been carefully designed according to Universal Design and satisfies all policies under Section 508 of The Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Any student who has a registered disability is encouraged to contact the Disabled Students Program and Services (DSP&S). DSP&S can offer students specific services that will provide registered students with valuable resources that will further your success throughout your academic career. For more information, please contact DSP&S directly:

Website: [http://www.canyons.edu/offices/dsps/](http://www.canyons.edu/offices/dsps/)
Phone: 661-362-3341
TTY: 661-255-7967
DSP&S Office: Seco Hall 103

For those of you who are new to online learning, or if you simply want more information about a class that is held 100% online, please visit Distance and Accelerated Learning (D&AL). Whether you visit the
department on campus or online, you will find many valuable resources that will help you on your “academic online journey”. I strongly suggest you review the “Student Checklist” for online classes which you may find very useful: [http://www.canyons.edu/offices/distance_learning/online.html](http://www.canyons.edu/offices/distance_learning/online.html). This checklist provides helpful links to supplemental resources, including a BB Orientation site and a list of Computer Requirements for online classes.

D&AL Website: [http://www.canyons.edu/offices/distance_learning/index.html](http://www.canyons.edu/offices/distance_learning/index.html)
Phone: 661-362-3600
Email: distancelearning@canyons.edu

**Final Note**

This may seem overwhelming at this point as you enter into the realm of the unknown. I promise that with a little planning, organization, and dedication, you have the potential to do quite well in this course. **However, if you are unable or unwilling to dedicate a significant amount of time per week to this class, you should consider taking English 103 as a F2F course.** Should you decide to remain in this course, I will be available throughout the session for any of your questions or concerns. Please do not hesitate to email me at Michele.DeGraffenreid@canyons.edu; I am more than happy to provide support throughout the semester.

I look forward to working with you this session and am excited to be a part of your journey as a college writer!