Hello Online Students,

Welcome to English 103, Critical Reading, Writing, & Thinking! My name is Lonnie Kent-Stacy, and I’ll be your instructor. This letter is meant to provide you with essential information regarding this online class and to explain how it differs from taking a traditional course.

- **Note: This letter is not the course syllabus.** The syllabus provides all necessary course information, and you will have access to the syllabus once you have logged into the Blackboard course website. **This sixteen week course is 100% online** and will begin on **August 24, 2015**. The course will not be available until this date, so please wait until then to try to log in.

- To confirm your spot in the class, begin participating no later than August 24th, 11:59 p.m. To log in to this course, you’ll find the Blackboard website at [http://bb9.canyons.edu](http://bb9.canyons.edu), and you will need your Student ID number. Your password is “student”. Please personalize your password, but keep a copy of it for yourself as I will not have access to your information. If you have an existing COC student Blackboard account, you will see Eng 103 appear in your account.

- Prior to logging in to this class, you should become familiar with Blackboard at the Distance Learning website. Please closely review the Blackboard tutorial, which contains instructions and tips on how to use Blackboard. You can find the tutorial on the distance learning website at [http://www.canyons.edu/offices/distance_learning/](http://www.canyons.edu/offices/distance_learning/).

- If you do not log on to the class website on the first day of the semester and begin participating by posting on the “Attendance” thread on the course Discussion Board, then you will be dropped from the class as a no-show. This mimics the policy in place for on-campus courses. Also, your post will show me that you’ve successfully logged in and know how to use the basics of Blackboard.

So, why do I need this class, anyhow? Well, the author Gustave Flaubert believed writing offered people the ability to discern their thoughts and form new ideas. He once said, “The art of writing is the art of discovering what you believe.”

In English 103, students examine the principles of critical thinking as applied to writing and reading arguments on complex issues. This course focuses on close textual analysis, argumentative/persuasive writing, and logical reasoning. Critical thinking and writing is accomplished through close reading, discussion, and interpretation of nonfiction essays. Objectives will be addressed through lecture, discussion, analysis, and quizzes, as well as evaluation of assigned readings and writing activities concerning various concepts and interpretations.

**The Student Learning Outcomes for English 101:**

- Analyze the principles of logical reasoning
- Evaluate the strength of written and visual arguments on a range of different issues and controversies
- Compose logical, well-reasoned arguments on selected topics such as popular culture, politics, social issues, and moral and ethical issues
Required Texts: (Students will be unable to complete the course without obtaining the books needed.) Books are available at the Valencia campus bookstore, though you may choose to buy your books online or elsewhere. However, shipping delays will not result in me extending your deadlines as late work is not accepted. These texts can also be found for limited use in the TLC or the Library on the Valencia Campus.


**What’s the difference in an online class, anyway?** Some students presume that an online course is going to be easier than a traditional one since there are no regular class meetings and course work can be completed at the student’s convenience. An online class does certainly offer advantages in terms of flexibility; however, an online course can present distinct challenges that prospective students need to consider. An online course’s flexibility requires organization, discipline, and self motivation on the students’ part. Thus, please answer these questions for yourself before this course begins:

1. **Can I rely on myself to do the reading, manage the workload, complete required assignments on time, and communicate regularly with my instructor and classmates on the course discussion boards?**

2. **Do I have reliable, daily home/work access to a computer with Internet access and a properly configured web browser, a private e-mail address, and a word processing program, such as MS Word?**

If you answered “yes” to these questions, then an online course should work well for you. Also, it’s important to mention that your involvement necessitates more than merely submitting assignments electronically on assigned dates—although submitting your work on time is essential to succeeding in the course. You are also expected to be a part of the community that will make up this class. You will communicate with me and your classmates several times a week via the group discussion boards, both posting and responding to comments on all of the readings and assigned work, and you will be required to offer editorial feedback during peer review of your classmates’ essay drafts. Because of the compressed summer session, you should plan to visit the course’s website at least once every day during the week. Also, if you do not log on to the course website for any period of seven days or more, you may be dropped from the course or failed. Deadlines are firm and will not be extended.

In order to begin to create this sense of community, your first task will be to write and post a short (1-2 paragraphs) biography of yourself in the “Attendance” thread on the discussion board by 11:59 p.m. on 8/24/15. Follow the prompt, but give us a glimpse of who you are. Also, please drop by “The Corner Booth” thread during the semester to relax, vent, joke, or just share a bit of social space with your classmates.

I’m looking forward to a productive and enjoyable semester ahead with you in English 103. I promise that you will leave this course with skills and knowledge that will aid you in examining the issues and decisions you’ll confront both personally and professionally in your lives.

Sincerely,
Lonnie Kent-Stacy  
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