ORIENTATION LETTER FOR ENGLISH 101 (Section 15094)

Winter Session 2015, Professor Gifford

Professor Randy Gifford

Welcome to English 101. I’m Randy Gifford, the instructor of this course, and I’m looking forward to working with you! Let me be very clear right now – this letter is not the syllabus for the course. The syllabus provides all necessary course information and can be viewed and/or downloaded from the Blackboard course site once the semester begins.

The Details

English 101 Catalogue Description:
Builds critical reading and expository writing skills through the analysis and evaluation of college-level, non-fiction readings and the composition of well-organized, full-length essays containing properly documented evidence.

Some Basic Information:
This is a 100% online class. There are no class meetings and work can be completed at the student’s convenience— within the rigid framework and deadlines provided.

Please do not take this class if you are too busy to take a regular one, as it requires just as much—if not more—time and effort. You will be expected to complete the same amount of work that is required in a face-to-face class (‘class time’ plus ‘homework’) and the same amount that is required of a regular-length semester. Add to that the fact that this is a five-week course and you can expect to spend a minimum of 25-30 hours a week on work for this course. This is not a self-paced course and requires a tremendous amount of discipline, organization, and participation. You will be required to post/respond several times a week, often including evenings and weekends, since the majority of students work full time. Deadlines are followed strictly and no allowances are made for late postings and submissions.

Textbooks
The required text for this course is:


You are expected to have this textbook by the beginning of the class. The book can be found in the COC bookstore and at other online outlets. Please be aware that not having the text could seriously put you behind in the class.

Free online readings and resources will also be used.
If you are still wondering if an online course is for you, please consider the following:

Students who do well in online courses tend to share the following qualities:

* They are good at motivating themselves to complete work by deadlines
* They are strong readers and communicate well in writing
* They have strong time management skills
* They enjoy active, cooperative learning experiences
* They have reliable access to the Internet
* They have basic computer skills, including the ability to cut/copy and paste between documents, send and receive email attachments, and create and save UNZIPPED documents in .rtf (rich text format)

**Course Requirements:**

In order to successfully complete this course, you must log onto our class site several times a week to retrieve and submit assignments and to participate in message board and email exchanges. All of these activities involve strict deadlines, as late work is not accepted.

If you will not be able to participate in this manner, this is not the course for you. However, just as in a traditional class, if you know in advance that you are going to “miss” a few class periods, doing one or two assignments ahead of time may lessen the negative impact of your “absence” on your grade.

This course requires the same amount of total work hours (including time spent in class) as a regular face-to-face, full semester length section. In a regular semester, that would mean time spent in class plus reading and homework, which usually totals 8-10 hours. In a five-week session, that means 25-30 hours. If you cannot devote this amount of time, please reconsider whether this is the appropriate course for you.

This is not a class in which you can complete work far ahead of your classmates or make up work during the last minutes of the semester. Our class-wide discussion boards (where most of our class work will be conducted) will be asynchronous, not synchronous—meaning that you can log in at a time of day convenient to you—as long as you meet the deadlines. However, let me repeat that participation and meeting deadlines several times a week is expected, and late work is not accepted.

As for me, I will be online at various times during the week to facilitate discussion, make announcements, and provide schedule reminders.

I will evaluate your performance based on specific assignment instructions. Assignments may include weekly discussion boards (including responses) and other short writing assignments, quizzes on the reading, and researched essays. Specifically, the learning outcomes for the course are:
1. Analyze and critically evaluate college-level, non-fiction texts for argument, structure, and rhetorical strategies.
2. Compose persuasive, well-organized, grammatically correct full-length essays, synthesizing properly documented and relevant research and other evidence to develop and support a unified thesis.

Quick Review

- Class will be able on the first day of the semester.
- There will be an assignment posted and due at the end of Week One (the Friday)
- There will be no on-site class meetings.
- All assignments will be posted on discussion boards or submitted online through the Blackboard site.
- Any tests or quizzes will be done through the Blackboard site.

Once again, I want to welcome you to the course and I look forward to “seeing” you soon.

Sincerely,

Randy Gifford
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