English Composition, WR121 Syllabus

# General Information

## Instructor Information and Availability

Tristan Striker

Phone number: 4574

E-mail: striket@linnbenton.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays, 9-10, or by appointment

Office Location: North Santiam Hall 214

## Course Information

Course name: WR 121 English Composition

Section number: 03

CRN: 20044 and 25173

Scheduled time/days: MW 8:30-9:50

Number of credits: 3

Classroom(s): North Santiam Hall 209

### Prerequisites:

Placement into WR 121

## Course Materials

Required:

* *They Say/ I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. Edited by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein. 4th Edition. Published by W.W. Norton and Company. ISBN: 978-0-393-63167-8
* All other readings and materials will be posted on Moodle! For Free!

Optional:

* A dictionary (dictionary.com will work just fine!)
* The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)
* *The Little Seagull Handbook with Exercises*. Edited by Richard Bullock, Michal Brody, and Francine Weinberg. 3rd Edition. Published by W.W. Norton and Company. ISBN: 978-0-393-60264-7

## Course-Specific Requirements

Your presence and a high tolerance for puns and bad jokes.

## Course Description

Welcome to English Composition! For many of you, this is your first encounter with college-level writing, and I am thrilled to be your guide through this exciting process. Writing is a journey. Ok, I know that is a cliché, but it really is. One of the key goals for us in this class will be to explore your unique writing process. For all of us, this process involves three basic steps: prewriting (exploring, brainstorming, drafting), writing (exploring, brainstorming, drafting), and rewriting (explo…wait, this sounds familiar!). Think of writing as a wonderful, never-ending cycle of creating, testing out, recreating, revising, creating again, and eventually tearing yourself away from your writing because you must submit it. While there may not be a straightforward “process” or “method” to writing (and this is what makes it so wonderful!), there are skills and models we can use as springboards. Let’s dive in!

In terms of tangible assignments and assessments, we will be exploring three types of writing: a reflective career narrative, an exploratory informative essay, and a persuasive research essay. We will devote our time together exploring grammar, rhetorical strategies, and the conversation skills from They Say I Say (our main textbook) to get ourselves a solid foundation upon which we can build our unique writing styles.

## WR 121 Student Learning Outcomes

1. *Analyze the* *rhetorical needs* (audiences, purpose, and subject) of a variety of academic and practical writing assignments.
2. *Apply critical thinking strategies* (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation) in response to the rhetorical needs of an assignment.
3. *Implement appropriate rhetorical elements and organization* (introduction, thesis, development and support, rebuttal, visuals, narration, conclusion, etc.) in response to the rhetorical needs of an assignment.
4. *Locate, evaluate, and integrate* *high-quality information and opinion* in response to the rhetorical needs of an assignment.
5. *Craft sentences and paragraphs* that communicate ideas clearly and effectively using words, sentence patterns, and writing conventions to make writing clear, credible, and persuasive.

# Class Policies

## Behavior and Expectations

You are held accountable to the [Student Code of Conduct](https://www.linnbenton.edu/current-students/administration-information/policies/students-rights-responsibilities-and-conduct), which outlines expectations pertaining to academic honesty (including cheating and plagiarism), classroom conduct, and general conduct.

### Guidelines for communication

1. Stay focused on the conversation. Refer back to texts we are reading in class to make your points.
2. Engage ideas instead of attacking each other.
3. If you start feeling defensive, attacked, or put on the spot, try asking yourself why you feel that way. Share your feelings with the class.

### Use of cell phones

Please put away your cell phones until class is finished. See it as a test to determine if screens and electronic devices really are addictive.

## Attendance/Tardiness Policy

I expect you to be on time and to attend every class. Attendance is worth 10 points out of 100 for the course. I understand that life happens. You have two (2) freebies, or absences that will not count against your final grade. My policy is simple:

1. Each absence is worth two (2) points. This means that each time you are absent beyond the two freebies, you will lose two points.
2. Every two tardies, or every two times you are late to class, will count as one absence. So, if you are tardy four times, that counts as two absences.

## Testing

One of our writing assignments will be the final exam for this class. This exam will be made up of two days. On the first day, you will write a rough draft of a given writing prompt. The second day is your chance to revise your essay. We will also have a practice run for this final exam towards the end of the quarter.

* Our final exam is scheduled for the following days during Finals week: Monday, 12-12:50, and Tuesday, 11:30-12:20. Students must test both days.

## Grading

Here’s how the class breaks down (out of 100 points):

* Career Narrative paper- 20 points
* Informative paper- 22 points
* Persuasive paper- 33 points
* Practice Final Exam- 10 points
* In-class Participation- 5 points
* Attendance- 10 points

**Important**: our final exam is not counted in this breakdown. The final exam is 30% of your total grade. At the end of the term, we will use a nifty calculator to factor your final exam scores into your class grade. The first three papers will be broken down into smaller parts. Each part will have you address a specific part of each assignment that connects to specific learning objective or goal. The smaller parts will add up to the overall assignment.

**Final Grade Calculation:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Letter Grade | Percentage | Performance |
| A | 90-100% | Excellent Work |
| B | 80-89% | Good Work |
| C | 70-79% | Average Work |
| D | 60-69% | Poor Work |
| F | 0-59% | Failing Work |

**Late Assignment Policy**

Because of how short quarters are, I cannot and will not accept late papers. However, do not hesitate to contact me if you are feeling overwhelmed or something happens. It is always better to let me know than to not hand anything in.

# College Policies

## LBCC Email and Course Communications

You are responsible for all communications sent via Moodle and to your LBCC email account. You are required to use your LBCC provided email account for all email communications at the College. You may access your LBCC student email account through Student Email and your Moodle account through Moodle.

## Disability and Access Statement

LBCC is committed to inclusiveness and equal access to higher education. If you have approved accommodations through the Center for Accessibility Resources (CFAR) and would like to use your accommodations in the class, please talk to your instructor as soon as possible to discuss your needs. If you believe you may need accommodations but are not yet registered with CFAR, please visit the [CFAR Website](https://www.linnbenton.edu/cfar) for steps on how to apply for services or call 541-917-4789.

## Statement of Inclusion

To promote academic excellence and learning environments that encourage multiple perspectives and the free exchange of ideas, all courses at LBCC will provide students the opportunity to interact with values, opinions, and/or beliefs different than their own in safe, positive and nurturing learning environments. LBCC is committed to producing culturally literate individuals capable of interacting, collaborating and problem-solving in an ever-changing community and diverse workforce.

## Title IX Reporting Policy

If you or another student are the victim of any form of sexual misconduct (including dating/domestic violence, stalking, sexual harassment), or any form of gender discrimination, LBCC can assist you. You can [report](https://linnbenton-advocate.symplicity.com/public_report/index.php/pid073717?) a violation of our sexual misconduct policy directly to our Title IX Coordinator. You may also report the issue to a faculty member, who is required to notify the Coordinator, or you may make an appointment to speak confidentially to our Advising and Career Center by calling 541-917-4780.

## Public Safety/Campus Security/[Emergency Resources](http://www.linnbenton.edu/public-safety-emergency-planning):

In an emergency, call 911. Also, call LBCC Campus Security/Public Safety at [541-926-6855](about:blank) and [541-917-4440](about:blank).

From any LBCC phone, you may alternatively dial extension 411 or 4440. LBCC has a [public safety app](http://lbccpublicsafety.mobapp.at/landing/Desktop) available for free. We encourage people to download it to their cell phones. Public Safety also is the home for LBCC's Lost & Found. They provide escorts for safety when needed. Visit them to learn more.

# Campus Resources

## Learning Center

This is an amazing resource. You should go here for all of your classes. For this class, you can go to the Writing Center for help with your writing assignments. I strongly encourage all of you to use this resource as much as you can. Many studies have shown that students who use the Writing Center perform better on their assignments. Did I mention that it’s free?

## Library

The library is your best friend. We have excellent librarians here who are trained in helping you with your research projects. You can use the library online or in person. Either way, use it! It is such a wonderful place. Why wouldn’t you want to go?

## Me

Seriously? Seriously. I am here for you. I want you to succeed. I am not a gatekeeper. I am not here to see whether you make the cut. I am here to do whatever I can to get you where you want to go. We are in this together, so please remember that I would LOVE to help you succeed in this class beyond our given class time. Use my office hours or let me know if there is a better time for you. We can make it work.

# Tips for Success in This Class

1. Hand in your assignments, even if they aren’t finished.
2. Take on the mindset that you are coming to class on time every day. Treat our class like a professional environment.
3. Come to office hours or communicate with me in some other way. Do this as often as you want to. The relationships you build with your instructors here are vital to your success.
4. Make friends and build a community here! Your classmates are perhaps your most valuable resource (even more valuable than me, and that’s saying something).

# Changes to the Syllabus

I reserve the right to change the contents of this syllabus due to unforeseen circumstances. You will be given notice of relevant changes in class, through a Moodle Announcement, or through LBCC e-mail.

**Unit 1: Writing for Yourself, Writing Yourself**

To start off the semester, we will explore how writing can be used as a tool for personal reflection and growth. The first part of this unit will have us look at how writing is a form of critical thinking. When we write about complex ideas, thoughts, and even emotions, we are actually putting these ideas, thoughts, and emotions outside ourselves onto a piece of paper, allowing us to create what is called critical distance between ourselves and the ideas. This critical distance is like hindsight. When we write, we tap into a subconscious part of our brains that houses all kinds of nifty information. Critical distance allows us to apply this untapped knowledge to things we are grappling with in our conscious brain.

In this first of four units, we will build up to a narrative reflection. This reflection will be centered around our perception of ourselves as burgeoning professionals. Our first assignment will be a brief summary of a job ad that interests us. After we have found a job we may want to apply for in the future, we will write a full-fledged cover letter for said job. Finally, we will write a narrative reflection on how we see ourselves as professionals, how we envision our futures, and how we cope with uncertainty, fear of failure, and feeling overwhelmed.

Please take a look at the schedule below for detailed, step-by-step instructions for each class day and each assignment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, and like always, I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule based on need.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **In-Class Discussion/Activity** | **Homework for Next Class** |
| Mon  9/30 | Introductions | [Shawna Shapiro’s “Why building community-even through discomfort-could help stressed college students”](https://theconversation.com/why-building-community-even-through-discomfort-could-help-stressed-college-students-121398)  Chapter 14 in *TSIS* |
| Wed  10/2 | Building a better classroom  Writing Center Tour 8:30-9  Wednesday 10/2 | Chapter 8 in *TSIS*  Finish your job hunter paragraph for Sunday |
| Mon  10/7 | How to Write a Cover Letter  Last Day to Add/Drop  Payment Due Date | Work on Cover Letter |
| Wed  10/9 | Cover Letter in-class workshop  (bring your laptop or paper and pen) | Read Chapter 2 in TSIS  Finish your cover letter for Sunday |
| Mon  10/14 | Columbus Day-No Class |  |
| Wed  10/16 | Career Reflection: What did you learn from this experience?” | Read Chapter 3 in *TSIS*  Read Chapter 1 in *TSIS*  Finish career narrative for Sunday |

**Unit 2: Writing About Others For Others**

Now that we have some writing under our belt, and now that we have explored audience, purpose, close readings, and some basic grammar devices, we can begin writing about others and for others. In this unit, we will learn how to use our close reading skills to not just understand what others are saying, but to think about how we fit into the larger conversation. We will also expand on rhetorical strategies, audience, and grammar. Where in Unit 1 we wrote a cover letter and reflected on our career aspirations, in this unit we will build on summarizing and paraphrasing towards creating an informative paper.

For this informative paper, we will have to pick a topic or issue that matters to you. Once we have picked an issue, and once we have practiced summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting, we will craft a paper with as little bias as possible. So, instead of marketing ourselves and reflecting on our own experiences, desires, and emotions, we will inform our peers about an issue or topic. Since we are choosing a topic about which we care deeply and for which we may feel strong emotions, we must learn to distance ourselves from what we are writing. The goal here is to understand as thoroughly as possible every dimension of our chosen topic or issue so that we can ultimately join the conversation in a responsible, ethical, and productive way.

Please take a look at the schedule below for detailed, step-by-step instructions for each class day and each assignment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, and like always, I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule based on need.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **In-Class Discussion/Activity** | **Homework for Next Class** |
| Mon 10/21 | Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting, oh my! | Find one other popular source related to your topic |
| Wed  10/23 | Evaluating Sources | [Read J.M. Metzl and Kenneth T. MacLeish’s “Mental Illness, Mass Shootings, and the Politics of American Firearms”](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4318286/)  Finish Summary/Paraphrase/Quoting Assignment for Sunday |
| Mon  10/28 | Writing objectively: how to use voice to distance yourself from the conversation | chapter 5 in TSIS |
| Wed  10/30 | Persuasion and Argumentation | Michelle Alexander’s “The New Jim Crow” (p. 261-274 in *TSIS*) |
| Mon  11/4 | Cognitive Bias | [Paul Bloom’s “The Root of All Cruelty”](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/11/27/the-root-of-all-cruelty) |
| Wed  11/6 | Informative Paper Peer Review  (Bring hard copies of your papers!) | Finish informative paper for Sunday  Chapter 4 in TSIS |

**Unit 3: Entering the Conversation**

Now that we have some basic research skills under our belt, we will move on to synthesizing that research with our own voice. So, where Unit 2 is all about what “They say,” Unit 3 will be about what “I say.” In this unit, we will build on the skills we learned in the first two units, namely summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, and evaluating information. However, we will build on our informative paper by responding to the conversation outlined therein. In other words, our persuasive paper is persuasive because we are entering the conversation with our own insights, interpretations, and arguments. Where the informative paper was more of an exploration of a specific conversation, the persuasive paper is a place where we can demonstrate our mastery of subject or topic.

Let’s say you walked in on a conversation about anime. People are making all kinds of claims about the meanings of current animes like One Punch Man. They are arguing about whether the anime, manga, or webcomic is better. They are theorizing about who Blast is and who the strongest S-class hero is. You stand there, smiling, nodding, and utterly confused. Unit 2 represents your effort to get to know the subject. You watch One Punch Man, you read the manga and webcomic, watch Youtube videos on the subject, and get generally familiar with the larger discussion. However, you also find that you begin to form your own opinions on the topic. You begin to identify with specific characters. You form your own opinions about who Blast is (is he Watchdogman?). You have your own opinion about the strongest S-class hero (after the last manga update, it’s gotta be Flashy Flash). You prefer the art in the manga, but love the webcomic all the same. This is where your persuasive paper comes in. Where your informative paper was addressing an assumption people may have had about One Punch Man, your persuasive paper is you coming back to that anime conversation with all kinds of ideas of your own to share.

Please take a look at the schedule below for detailed, step-by-step instructions for each class day and each assignment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, and like always, I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule based on need.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **In-Class Discussion/Activity** | **Homework for Next Class** |
| Mon  11/11 | Entering the conversation | Read Chapter 5, 6, and 10 in *TSIS* |
| Wed  11/13 | Passive vs Active voice | Finish Position Paragraph for Sunday  [Azarian’s “Dunning Kruger Effect”](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/mind-in-the-machine/201808/the-dunning-kruger-effect-may-help-explain-trumps-support) |
| Mon  11/18 | Practice Final Exam prep | Read Chapter 7 in *TSIS* |
| Wed  11/20 | Practice Final Exam prep | Read Chapter 11 in *TSIS*  Read Chapter 9 in TSIS |
| Mon  11/25 | Practice Final Exam |  |
| Wed  11/27 | Practice Final Peer Review | Finish your persuasive paper for Sunday |

**Unit 4: The Final Exam**

This unit is simple: we will prepare for the final essay exam. I know what you are thinking. Don’t worry, we are in this together. Take a deep breath and remember that we have prepared all term for this moment. Also, we will have a practice exam. That should help.

The most important thing to remember is to answer the questions. Each final exam question will have multiple parts. Make sure to identify each part of the question. In fact, it may be a good idea to spend the first five minutes of the exam making a list of each part of the question. Once you have done this, you can organize your essay by question part, devoting one paragraph to each question. Remember, you will be able to revise this essay on your second testing day. It may be a good idea to leave your introduction and conclusion for last, giving you a chance to answer each part  of the question first. Once you have answered each part of the question, begin thinking about what general thesis of your answer will be. We will talk about this more specifically during our prep and practice test.

For now, remember that we are in this together, that you have prepared for this test, and that you can ask me and your classmates any questions you may have.

Please take a look at the schedule below for detailed, step-by-step instructions for each class day and each assignment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me, and like always, I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule based on need.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Mon  12/2 | Final Exam Prep | Read final exam essay again |
| Wed  12/4 | Final Exam Prep  Potlatch? | Read exam essay again |
| Mon 12/11 | Final Exam part 1-noon to 12:50  Room TBD |  |
| Tues 12/12 | Final Exam part 2-11:30-12:20  Room TBD |  |