

**Course Syllabus, Fall 2009**  
**English Composition 1**  
**801-136, 3 Credits**  
**Classroom Delivery, Blackboard-enhanced**

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**Office Hours:** By appointment or during the following days/times:  
Monday, Wednesday, Friday (11 a.m.-Noon)  
Tuesday and Thursday (10-11 a.m. & 5:30-6 p.m.)

### **Course Description and Goals**

This course is designed for learners to develop knowledge and skills in all aspects of the writing process. Planning, organizing, writing, editing, and revising are applied through a variety of activities. Students will analyze audience and purpose, use elements of research and format documents using standard guidelines. In addition, this course will also explore major forms of nonfiction and expository writing such as narration, description, definition, comparison, analysis, persuasion, and research. Students will also review the fundamental principles of grammar and mechanics. This course is designed primarily for students enrolled in Paralegal program; however, the course will also transfer to many other colleges/universities as a general elective credit.

English Composition 1 is not only a writing class, but it is also a reading-intensive course. From analyzing various readings, visual media, class lectures, outside activities, societal influences, and in-class assignments, students will hone their critical thinking skills and improve their writing. Significant attention will be paid to reading and writing critically and analytically. Overall, the course should help students improve their reading, writing, and verbal communication skills and learn to articulate meaningful ideas in clear, organized, and thoughtful prose.

### **Course Competencies**

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

1. Establish document purpose
2. Appraise audience
3. Organize document content
4. Differentiate essay parts
5. Construct topic sentences
6. Devise thesis statements
7. Compose paragraph types: Introductory, concluding, topical, and transitional
8. Employ rhetorical strategies
9. Apply revision skills
10. Prepare written documents
11. Establish critical reading skills
12. Investigate information sources
13. Integrate research techniques
14. *(Instructor Addition) Practice professional/occupational professionalism:*
  - a. *Demonstration of punctuality*
  - b. *Commitment to class preparation*
  - c. *Participation in and cooperation during class activities*
  - d. *Behaving in a respectful manner*
  - e. *Exhibition of autonomy and self-advocacy*

**CVTC's Core Abilities** (skills that prepare students for the workforce and life-long learning)

1. Communicate effectively
2. Think critically
3. Behave ethically
4. Cultivate cultural and global awareness
5. Use mathematics
6. Use science and technology
7. Develop self-awareness
8. Demonstrate social interaction

### **Course Materials and Technology Requirements**

1. Jane E. Aaron, *40 Model Essays: A Portable Anthology* (1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2005)
2. Diana Hacker, *Rules for Writers* (6<sup>th</sup> edition, 2009)
3. Composition book or notebook (for journal and/or in-class assignments)
4. Portable media storage device
5. Recommended: Internet access and e-mail account

**Learning Approach:** This course will be conducted primarily in the traditional classroom setting; however, it will include web-enhanced features such as assignment and course document postings (study guides, worksheets, class notes, etc.). Access to those materials is available via Blackboard, which can be accessed by students using computers at home (with the Internet) or in campus computer labs. This course will provide an overview of and highlight features related to the use of Blackboard; however, students are ultimately responsible for gaining individual competency with the technology.

### **Classroom Policies and Procedures**

**Attendance and Participation:** Please review the *Student Handbook* for CVTC's attendance policy. Regular attendance is crucial for students to succeed in this course. In all circumstances, students are responsible for obtaining any material or assignments missed due to absences or tardiness. Students should coordinate with the instructor any absences related to acute health problems, emergency situations, work-related tasks, court appearances, funerals, etc.

All in-class activities will be scored for grade points, participation credit, or both; these activities include lectures, worksheets, homework assignments, in-class writing activities (such as journal entries, which will be checked periodically), etc. Students not in attendance for such assignments and daily activities will be unable to make up that work and will receive a score of zero for each missed assignment. Excessive tardiness to class will also count as absences. In addition, if a student is absent on the due date of a scheduled major assignment, it is his/her responsibility to submit the work to the instructor in a timely manner. Criteria related to "excused absences" (which allow for make-up work) are detailed on page 162 of that publication.

**No Show Policy:** During the first week of the semester, students in the following situations will be reported to the Registrar's Office as a "No Shows" and dropped from the class: students who 1) do not attend class or begin the course or 2) in the case of absences during that time, do not make contact by e-mail with the instructor. Additional information about this policy is available from the enrollment staff and the *Student Handbook* (page 173).

**Cell Phones and Texting:** Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. As a further courtesy, students will refrain from sending/reading text messages during class time. Repeated violation of these guidelines could result in a student's dismissal from the class session (or the course).

**Demonstration of Respect:** Students enrolled at CVTC come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Everyone is a unique individual and has his/her own views and perspectives on issues. Students should demonstrate civility and allow classmates to express their ideas in a reasonable manner. Those who become uncomfortable with discussion topics or comments made during class should speak up at the time or inform the instructor soon after the class session has ended. Similarly, students should remember to keep an open mind about being willing to have his or her ideas challenged in a constructive manner.

**Inappropriate Behavior:** There will be no tolerance for disrespectful comments and/or behaviors toward other students. Name-calling, inappropriate innuendoes, personal rude/disrespectful comments, swearing, using vulgarity, inappropriate touching, physical violence are unprofessional and inappropriate on the job and in the classroom. A student engaged in such action will be reminded once to refrain from doing so. If the behavior continues, the student will be asked to leave the room immediately, and security will assist if needed.

**Student Rights:** A document detailing students' rights at CVTC is available on the school's webpage. From the **My CVTC** page, follow the tab to **My Student Life**, then to the option "**Student Life**" (on the far right side), then to the document link, "**Student Rights.**" A copy of that document and a link to the CVTC webpage is also available in Blackboard.

**ADA Statement::** Students with disabilities will be afforded accommodations as required by law. Please let the instructor know if you need special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to participate fully. The confidentiality of the information you share will be maintained.

### Course Requirements

**Academic Dishonesty:** Students who engage in dishonest behavior will automatically fail the assignment with a grade of zero. Additionally, offenders will be reported to college officials for appropriate disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty includes the following:

- A) Cheating: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
- B) Fabrication: Falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- C) Facilitating academic dishonesty: Helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.
- D) Plagiarism: Representing the words or ideas of another person as one's own in any academic exercise.

### Assignments and Grading Policies

#### Assignment Expectations

All assignments are due *at the beginning of class on the day assigned*. Late submissions will receive daily penalties (to include weekends); after five days, late assignments will not be accepted. Daily deductions for late assignments: Reader Responses = 1 points; Essay Drafts = 2 points; Revisions = 4 points. Students who miss class on the day of a peer review assignment may submit a review sheet using their own essay draft and receive half credit for the review activity. (Such drafts must be submitted with the revised version to receive this credit.) Make-up assignments will not be offered for daily activities and in-class assignments unless students coordinate their absences at least 24 hours in advance. (Extenuating circumstances will be considered as exceptions.) Students missing class due to an official program-related function or school-sanctioned event will be allowed to submit scheduled assignments prior to their departure and without penalty IF they have coordinated with the instructor ahead of time.

Unless otherwise directed, assignments will be typed or printed from a computer and formatted according to MLA standards (See *Rules for Writers*, page 467-475 for an example.) These assignments include all essay drafts and revisions and out-of-class reader responses. A few research-related assignments (bibliography worksheets, outline exercise, etc.) will also need to be typed or printed from a computer course.

Each graded assignment (with the exception of daily activities and those submitted for participation credit) will include a detailed scoring summary/rubric to qualify the individual evaluation. Students are welcomed (even encouraged) to discuss assignment evaluations with the instructor.

#### Assignments

**Essay Drafts:** These assignments should be composed *as if* they were to be evaluated for a letter grade. Students' effort in the composition of quality drafts should be evident in the basic content, organization, and mechanical construction of the essays. These assignments will receive both an instructor assessment and peer feedback (in the form of editing and evaluative comments). Instructor evaluations will be based on how well students fulfilled the assignment criteria and adhered to MLA formatting and basic grammar and mechanical rules. Incomplete drafts – those lacking a clear introduction, body, conclusion or those not typed and formatted properly – will not receive full credit. Essay drafts requiring a research component should include proper MLA citations and documentation, areas that will be included in the assessment process. Additional information on essay draft assignments will be distributed prior to the due dates. (**Note: E-mail or electronic copies of essay drafts will not be accepted; it is the responsibility of students not in attendance on the due dates to submit hard copies of their essay drafts prior to the due date.**)

**Peer Reviews:** Students are not expected to be writing "experts" when it comes to evaluating peer essay drafts; however, editing feedback and peer critiques should provide thoughtful, worthwhile information that fulfills the assessment guidelines provided. Students who demonstrate a lack of cooperation or who fail to offer significant feedback to their peers will not receive full credit. In addition, students absent during peer evaluations will not be awarded the participation credit and are not guaranteed peer feedback for drafts that might have been submitted.

*Reader Responses (Scheduled):* These assignments should be considered as “practice essays.” The expectation is that students’ writing should reflect thoughtful responses either to the writing prompt provided or specific themes, issues, or ideas expressed in the assigned readings. Assessment of these assignments will be based on how well students focus on the assignment criteria, proper MLA formatting, and adherence to *basic* grammatical and mechanical guidelines.

*Essay Revisions:* Your instructor will assess these assignments formally, with extensive attention being paid to the works’ fulfillment of assignment criteria – content, organization, formatting, grammar/mechanical guidelines. These drafts should demonstrate significant effort by students to reevaluate and critique their own ideas – merely “cleaning up” faulty formatting and mechanical errors will not suffice as “significant” revision work. Original essay drafts (with peer edits and instructor comments) must be submitted with the revised essays. (*Note: E-mail or electronic copies of essay drafts will not be accepted; it is the responsibility of students not in attendance on the due dates to submit hard copies of their essay drafts prior to the due date.*)

*Participation Credit/Daily Activities/In-class Assignments:* Most of these activities – involvement in class discussions and activities, worksheets, handouts, reading, completion of homework activities, grammar/mechanics exercises, etc. – will be scored on a five-point scale based on completion of the assignment and/or effort. Short reading quizzes (multiple choice or short responses) will be assessed for quantitative accuracy (based on a ten-point scale), while brief, in-class reader responses will be scored based on development of assigned topics/prompts and demonstration of reading comprehension (10 points).

### Evaluation Criteria

The following grading philosophy and procedures will be in effect:

- A = Excellent: a wonderful treat that “glows” with insight and clarity.
- B = Worthwhile, commendable effort with only a few minor flaws.
- C = Adequate: meets minimum standards.
- D = Inadequate work or effort but includes some redeeming merit.
- F = Fails to meet basic standards (lacks quality, effort, and/or completion).

Final grades will be based on the number of points students accumulate during the semester. Scores for graded assignments will be tallied, divided by the total number of points awarded, then recorded as a percentage to determine a final grade based on the following scale:

98 - 100% .....	A+	73 - 77% .....	C
93 - 97% .....	A	70 - 72% .....	C-
90 - 92% .....	A-	68 - 69% .....	D+
88 - 89% .....	B+	63 - 67% .....	D
83 - 87% .....	B	60 - 62% .....	D-
80 - 82% .....	B-	59% and below .....	F
78 - 79% .....	C+		

Students are encouraged to keep track of their grades using the Student Progress Chart that will be distributed in class.

### Assessments (values approximate)

The following assignments and point values will determine students’ final grades:

• Essay Drafts = 5 points each (5 assigned) .....	25 points
• Essay Revisions = 30 points each (5 assigned) .....	150 points
• Research Essay Topic = 10 points .....	10 points
• Research Essay Draft = 30 points .....	25 points
• Research Essay Revision = 60 points .....	60 points
• Peer Reviews = 5 points each (6 assigned) .....	30 points
• Reader Responses (out-of-class assignments) = 15 points each (8 assigned) .....	120 points
• Reading Quizzes (or in-class reading responses) = 10 points each (approximately 8) .....	80 points
• Participation/Daily activities/In-class assignments = 2 points each (approximately 35) .....	70 points
Worksheets, handouts, grammar/mechanics exercises, etc.	
• Additional Activities .....	30 points
<b>Total (approximate) .....</b>	<b>600 points</b>

*Disclaimer (the fine print): The instructor reserves the right to make any necessary changes to this course syllabus and the accompanying schedule.*