

**Note: This is a SAMPLE syllabus from past summers.
Please contact your instructor for a current syllabus and required materials.**

English Composition 50: Summer Writing Workshop (2 units)

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Course Description

This workshop serves as a basic introduction to critical reading and academic writing. More broadly, English Composition 50 will help orient you to all matters of language and communication at the university. This is a bigger task than you might imagine. If you think of it, you'll realize that every comment you make in class and every e-mail you write to an instructor or counselor occurs in a social context that is new to you as a first-term college student. We'll attend, therefore, to those small bits of class-related communication in addition to in-class exams and formal essay assignments. By the end of the course, you should find that this workshop has prepared you to speak, write, and learn more effectively as you move towards the full college experience.

Course Requirements

- **Reading assignments:** Read all materials as assigned. While the reading list in this course will be fairly brief, you must allow time not only to "get through" a certain number of pages but to understand and engage what you read. Be sure to allow time to read, re-read, annotate, and reflect as necessary. We will address reading strategies and habits in class.
- **Writing assignments:** Finish all written work on time. Written work is not only the final draft of the major assignment but in-class exercises and preliminary drafts of assignments. Remember that this course focuses on the writing *process*. Late work undercuts that process. There are two major writing assignments for this course:
 1. Critical analysis essay (3 to 4 pages or approximately 1200 words) – draft and revision required
 2. College application personal statement (draft only)
- **Attendance:** Please be sure to attend all classes. Attendance needs to be thought of as more than just showing up. Attendance involves being in class on time ready to learn. To *attend* is to arrive prepared and to *participate thoughtfully* in discussions and activities. If you already know that you must miss one class meeting for something urgent, talk to me right away. Missing more than one class constitutes a serious problem.

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Grading

English Composition 50 carries 2 units of college credit. To earn that credit, you must complete the required work according to the guidelines listed above. Because this workshop aims to help you prepare for work that comes later, final grades will largely be determined by the quality and consistency of your engagement with the course. In other words, attendance, participation, and the timely submission of all assignments will count heavily toward your final grade. The quality of your writing will carry some weight, but not so much as it would in a regular university course.

Required Texts

- 1) Bryan A. Garner and David Foster Wallace, *Quack This Way*
- 2) Richard Bullock, et al, *The Little Seagull Handbook* (3rd edition)
- 3) Additional readings—mainly commencement speeches—will be available online and/or distributed as handouts in class.

Course Schedule (subject to changes)

Day 1 Agenda:

- Introduction to the class
- Exploring the college campus
- Introduction to Critical Analysis Essay assignment (emphasizing the summary component)
- Strategies for and styles of reading

In-class readings for discussion:

- 1) Steve Jobs, “Find What You Love”
- 2) Toni Morrison, “Be Your Own Story”

For next class, read:

- 1) His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, “Education and the Warm Heart”
- 2) George Saunders, “Becoming Kinder”
- 3) Julia Alvarez, “A Few Supplies for Your Life’s Knapsack”
- 4) Richard Bullock, et al, *The Little Seagull Handbook* (pages TBA)

Day 2 Agenda:

- Analyzing style
- Crafting thesis statements
- Composing paragraphs

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Readings for in-class discussion:

- 1) His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, "Education and the Warm Heart"
- 2) George Saunders, "Becoming Kinder"
- 3) Julia Alvarez, "A Few Supplies for Your Life's Knapsack"
- 4) Richard Bullock, et al, *The Little Seagull Handbook* (pages TBA)

For next class, read:

- 1) Bryan Garner and David Foster Wallace, *Quack This Way* (pages 25-42)
- 2) David Foster Wallace, "Real Freedom?" [aka, "This Is Water"]
- 3) Barbara Kingsolver, "Your Money or Your Life"

Day 3 Agenda:

- Developing a complex response
- Styles of thinking
- Sample rhetorical analysis of David Foster Wallace's "This is Water"

Readings for discussion:

- 1) Bryan Garner and David Foster Wallace, *Quack This Way* (pages 25-42)
- 2) David Foster Wallace, "Real Freedom?" [aka, "This Is Water"]
- 3) Barbara Kingsolver, "Your Money or Your Life"

For next class, read:

- 1) Bryan Garner and David Foster Wallace, *Quack This Way* (pages 43-66)
- 2) J.K. Rowling, "Failure and Imagination"
- 3) Zadie Smith, "Many Hands"

Day 4 Agenda:

- Research and citation issues
- More readings for consideration (as topics, or to develop a response to the speech you've chosen for analysis)
- Schedule conferences for drafts of your analytical essays

Readings for discussion:

- 1) Bryan Garner and David Foster Wallace, *Quack This Way* (pages 43-66)
- 2) J.K. Rowling, "Failure and Imagination"
- 3) Zadie Smith, "Many Hands"

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- 4) William Gass, "On Learning How to Talk" (excerpts in class)

Draft of Critical Analysis:

Next week we will be meeting one-on-one to discuss the draft of your analytical essay. Please bring two hard copies of your full draft to your conference appointment.

For next class, read:

- 1) Bryan Garner and David Foster Wallace, *Quack This Way* (pages 76-97)
- 2) Richard Bullock, et al, *The Little Seagull Handbook* (pages TBA)
- 3) Sample college application Personal Statement #1 (handout)

Day 5 Agenda:

- Strategies for in-class essay exams and class-related emails
- Introduction to college application Personal Statement assignment

Readings for discussion:

- 1) Bryan Garner and David Foster Wallace, *Quack This Way* (pages 76-97)
- 2) Richard Bullock, et al, *The Little Seagull Handbook* (pages TBA)
- 3) Sample college application Personal Statement #1 (handout)

Day 6 Agenda:

- Discuss sample college application Personal Statement #2 (handout)
- In-class work on college application Personal Statement

Due:

Draft of college application Personal Statement due Sunday, by noon, via email. (No revision of this will be required as you will continue to work on it as you approach the time for applying to college.)

For next class:

Please come in with a written question about any college-related matter. For example, you might want to ask about approaches to writing or studying, how to balance life and work in college, advice for interacting with faculty or other students, etc. I will collect these questions at the beginning of our next class.

Day 7 Agenda:

- In-class exercise: Thinking about your future in college ○ Take 10 minutes to make a list of how you want to spend your time at college. What matters to you? Now take 10

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minutes to make a list of how you spent your time, on average, each day over the past week. Compare the lists. How well do these lists match up, if at all? If you want things to be different when you get to college, what can you do to help you change old habits and achieve your ambitions?

- Q & A about college

Due: Final draft of analytical essay. Please submit one copy with a copy of the first draft.