

# Writing the Research Paper

English 201  
Fall Quarter 2010

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\* I am teaching on campus this quarter so you might be able to catch me in my office regularly. You can call my office number to leave a message but the VISTA/Blackboard and bellevuecollege.edu email addresses work the best.

## Required Texts:

Barnet and Bedau, *Current Issues and Enduring Questions*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. ISBN 9780312547325.

Palmquist, *The Bedford Researcher*, 3rd ed. ISBN 9780312667757

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## Introductory Remarks

This English 201 course is taught completely online; you are not required to attend classroom sessions on campus. However, this is not a correspondence course, completed on your own timetable in isolation. There are specific deadlines, and you will be communicating with your instructor and classmates regularly.

At the end of this course, students will be able to write a humanities-style research paper which includes as part of its composition or process:

- An objective summary of college-level material which identifies primary and supporting assertions
- An evaluation of different types of evidence (i.e., tone/diction, logical reasoning)
- A synthesis of source material with own writing
- An original and clearly supported thesis
- Proper in-text citations and works-cited page (MLA format)
- A breadth of varied primary sources which demonstrates a familiarity with library research skills

If you signed up for this course thinking that it would have less work than a course in the classroom, you were mistaken. Any online course has more writing work than a class on campus as all of our

communication must be written. Please be advised that the workload may be very difficult for you if work and/or family demands do not allow you a minimum of two to three uninterrupted hours every weekday to work on the assignments for this class. I have tried to focus and space assignments to facilitate as many learning styles as possible, but extra time may be needed, especially around paper writing/editing time.

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## Student Responsibilities

Because of the special method of course delivery, several requirements must be considered.

1. First, and probably most important, the student enrolled in this course **MUST** have a computer and some attendant software and services, including a word processor (Office 95/Word 7.0 or better minimum), an Internet Service Provider, and a browser (like Google Chrome or Microsoft Internet Explorer). Perhaps more importantly the student must be familiar with the use of the above-mentioned items. Whatever web browser you use, be sure to upgrade to the newest version. If you are not using Microsoft Word to write your papers, then make sure that your software allows saving documents in Word format (.doc or .docx) as this is the only form I can access. Be aware that I *do not* teach computer skills; I teach English. I will help if I can, but I am no expert in computer systems.
  2. **Always** keep me informed if you have problems with the technology, and I will try to find help for you. However, I expect that you bring some expertise with you to help in solving any problems that arise. Ultimately, your computer and Internet services are your responsibility. If you are signed up for the OAS section and you have computer problems, you may use the computer labs on the BC campus if you have an emergency. Additionally, please read and print the following linked page to help you if we run into technology problems with VISTA: [Server Problems](#).
  3. You will occasionally be required to access audio or video files. These files will be in a format accessible to most computers with typical software and will be usable even if you have a slow internet connection. However, you may find it easier to access these files from a faster system. Of course, if you are near campus, you can always use the computer lab in the N building—it even comes equipped with staff to help you out. An alternative would be your local library. Almost every public library has computers with fast internet connection for your use. Some will even loan out a laptop for you to use while in the library. Remember these options any time you experience hardware, software, or server problems.
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## My Expectations

As you know, every teacher has expectations. These are mine.

1. I expect that you signed up for this course because you want to learn to read, think, and write critically. We call that formal academic writing. Therefore, I expect that you will complete the work I have created to teach you these skills.
2. I expect that you have come to this class with a working usage of modern English grammar as English 201 does not teach grammar. If you struggled with passing English 101, then you will have real difficulty with this course. I may suggest additional non-graded work for students who struggle with grammar. I encourage you to utilize the Writing Lab's [virtual tutor](#) or go to the Writing Lab on campus for help with grammar problems. All papers with major grammatical errors lose points in this class.

3. I expect that you will participate in all class activities, including peer reviews, seminars, and essay discussions. You must complete every assignment in a timely manner to pass this course.
4. I expect that you will take care to back up your papers and journal assignments on more than one disk and/or store them on your hard drive AND a disk or other portable media. It is your responsibility to keep track of this material. If some computer catastrophe should occur, you will still be responsible for producing the work by the due date in order to get a grade. **Be careful--save and back your work up regularly!**
5. I expect that you will show respect to everyone by responding to e-mail and discussion postings in a way that is not judgmental, degrading, or derogatory. Even though we may disagree with the interpretations of others, please use some self-restraint and compassion in dealing with these issues. Logical and questioning responses are encouraged. Choose your words and the tone of your message with utmost care. I also expect tolerance for others' abilities and learning styles. Please notify me immediately if you feel another student has not extended these courtesies to you.
6. I expect that you will try, to the best of your ability, to master the skills taught in this class. According to the English department at BC, by the end of the quarter, you should be able to:
  - use a variety of prewriting methods to develop ideas and organize a writing plan.
  - revise, edit, and proofread papers (both on and off the computer) until the final submitted draft shows the skill and effort you have put into it.
  - write for a specific audience with a specific purpose, as assigned, using an appropriate voice and tone.
  - build a complex, but coherent paper around your own thoughts and analyses.
  - use a single, well-stated sentence that clearly expresses the central idea of your essay, focuses your topic, and controls ideas to the point of creating unity.
  - connect paragraphs to the thesis and each other; produce a smooth flow of ideas using appropriate coherence techniques.
  - construct paragraphs that develop and support the main idea with specific examples and concrete details.
  - analyze, evaluate and interpret complex material.
  - write essays with effective introductions and conclusions.
  - construct clear, grammatically correct sentences of precise and appropriate words.
  - understand and apply subordination and coordination in sentences to emphasize important ideas.
  - be able to differentiate your personal opinions and assumptions from another's.
  - be able to self-assess.
7. I expect each final draft will be submitted to the appropriate locations and in the manner specified on the assignments page by the date shown on the specific assignment page and the class calendar. Papers submitted after that date will lose 10 points per 24 hour period that they are late. I will not accept papers more than 4 days late. Do not wait until the last minute to submit your work to avoid losing points for late work.
8. I expect honesty. I expect that you will neither do work for others nor use work done by others. Cheating and/or plagiarizing will not be tolerated. Plagiarizing is cheating, as is copying answers on a test, glancing at nearby test papers, swapping papers, buying papers, using ideas from other sources without proper documentation, writing papers for others, or having them written for you. BC utilizes a plagiarism detection software, and I use it for random spot checks. Plus, if I even remotely suspect your paper is plagiarized, I will submit it to this site. If you cheat or plagiarize, the following actions **will** be taken:

- o You will receive a grade of "0" on the work (no exceptions).
  - o A report of the incident will be filed in the Dean of Students' Office. This report may become part of your permanent record or the Dean may choose to pursue further disciplinary action.
9. Personal conferences on your paper can be held in my office if you can to come to the campus at a convenient time; otherwise, an e-mail conference can be held. You will NOT be able to just "catch me" in my office so please contact me first to set up an appointment BEFORE coming to the campus.
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## What do I have to do for this course?

### Grading

Discussions (15 points per week)	150
Reading Journals (15 points per week)	150
Response Paper	50
Essays	150
Peer Reviews	100
Preliminary Bibliography	50
Informative Research Paper	50
Research Project	<u>300</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>

To figure out your grade at any time, simply divide the total points you have earned by the total points you have submitted to that point. I use standard percentage markings:

**94-100% = A, 90-93% = A-, 87-89% = B+, 84-86% = B, 80-83% = B-, and so on. . .**

**You must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this course.** The instructor reserves the right to adjust assignments or points as needed throughout the quarter. Students will be notified when this happens.

Reading: There will be a tremendous amount of reading in this course. The average amount is 20 pages per day. I strongly suggest that you read these pages as early in the week as possible. Your best plan is to read them the weekend before so that you will be ready to participate in the Discussions and write your weekly Journals. There is no point value for reading (I can't exactly look over your shoulder while you do it) but every other weekly assignment is based upon the reading. **DO THE READING.**

Discussion: I have created an individual forum in the discussion area for weekly discussions. Instructions and requirements for participating in discussions are posted in the Assignments area. I do my best to participate in the discussion, however, I cannot possibly respond to every comment or answer.

You are required to participate in ALL discussions. The minimum requirement (which will earn you a C for your participation grade) is three (3) substantial posts for EACH WEEK (not each discussion thread). These posts must be cogent, relevant, and respectful. A simple "I agree/disagree" is not sufficient.

Reading Journal: Every week you are required to write down some of your thoughts about what you are reading. In the Discussions section of the course, you will find a category called "Personal Reading Journal." Here you will respond to prompts from the instructor (found at the top of each

weekly assignment). As you read *Current Issues and Enduring Questions*, you will notice that each essay ends with a list of “Topics for Critical Thinking and Writing.” Each assignment sheet will list which specific Topics I expect you to respond to; these responses go in your journal. You are welcome to respond to other Topics if you choose.

Note that, unlike the other Discussions, these journal entries are only accessible by you and the instructor. Other students will **not** be given access to them. It is perfectly acceptable (even expected) that many of your Discussion responses will come from what you write in your journal, so don't worry about repeating yourself. You can find a sample of a typical journal entry in Course Info.

**Papers:** You will write 1 response paper (2-3 pages), 1 informative research paper (3-4 pages), and 2 formal academic papers (3-4 pages) in this class plus a final large (8-10 page) research paper. The process for writing, revising and submitting work is on a tight timeline. We will follow this process for all papers (except the response paper):

1. You will post an original, self-revised draft of each paper to the discussion area in the appropriate peer review forum by the date on the calendar. This draft **MUST** be attached to a message in the correct forum. If you expect to get help on your papers, you must post them early. Papers posted late in the review process may be overlooked by other students as the deadline nears.
2. While you wait for comments on your paper, you will give peer comments on two other group members' papers which have been posted. Specific guidelines for this process can be found under Course Info.
3. After giving comments, collect the comments on your paper. Then, revise and edit your paper before submitting it to me by the date and time listed on the calendar, using the editing tools provided under Course Info.
4. Directions for submitting your final draft to me are posted in the Course Info. Once the paper crosses my virtual "desk," its grade is permanent.

You can find sample research essay on pages 313-325 in *Current Issues* and pages 317-321 in *The Bedford Researcher*. Take note of not just the content but also the format. All essay assignments must be double spaced with a 12-point font and no extra space between paragraphs. We will be learning to follow the rules of MLA formatting so you will need to make sure that your essays look just like these. **Written assignments must be submitted by midnight on the due date.**

**Peer Review:** Much of what you will learn in this course will come from participating in a peer review of others' papers. Do not fail to participate in this area of the course. See the Assignments area/Peer Tools & Instructions link located under Course Content for how to complete this critical work. In general, to participate successfully in peer review, you will complete these tasks:

(1) You will analyze two other students' papers using the Peer Review guidelines. You **MUST** follow the Peer Review guidelines completely that I have provided in order to earn full credit for comments on student papers. After you have analyzed and evaluated each student paper, copy-and-paste your evaluation of each paper as a **REPLY** to the paper you reviewed in the peer review forum. Remember this work must be completed at least 24 hours before the paper's due date and time according to the class calendar. I have set aside class days for this work; do not fail to do it. If you fail to meet these deadlines, you will **NOT** receive points.

(2) After posting your comments to each student whose paper you reviewed, you will write (off-line) a summary of your remarks for each student paper that you reviewed. This summary should be a unified and coherent piece of writing with specific support

for your assertions about the paper reviewed. You may use short quotes from the paper evaluated if necessary to make your evaluation clear to me. Be sure to refer to the student writer by name in your summary.

(3) Last, you will submit both summaries to me. I will check to be sure that you are posting feedback to the student as well as submitting the summary to me; however, I grade from the summary you send to me. Summaries must be complete. More information is also posted under the Course Info/Peer Review Guidelines.

**(4) Peer Reviews must be submitted on time. There will be no extensions.**

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## How do we communicate with each other?

In the toolbar at the top of each page, you will find links to class announcements, your mailbox, your gradebook, and the class discussion area.

- Announcements will be posted for you as needed throughout the quarter. Please read these announcements carefully so that you will know of any important changes or issues in the class.
- A mailbox has been provided for private e-mail communication between you and I or you and other classmates. Please use this rather than my BC email (syarboro@bellevuecollege.edu) for everything but the most dire of emergencies. Since I get between 40 and 50 e-mail messages every day at my various work addresses, I will appreciate "URGENT" notices in the subject line, but only if you have a real emergency. I do my best to respond in a timely manner to all messages, whether or not they are urgent. Please do not use e-mail to submit your work unless you have contacted me for approval FIRST.
- The My Grades link will take you to the grade book for this class. This area will contain all of the grades for your work WHEN I have completed the grading.
- The Discussion area provides a place for discussions of course materials. The discussion area has several topics (areas) each of which has a specific purpose.
  - The Student Union - This area is for student-to-student discussion. For example, you may post announcements here if you wish to petition your classmates to join you in a face-to-face discussion group or a chat room discussion. However, be aware that I do not read this forum regularly; therefore, do not post questions for me here.
  - Questions for Instructor - Post questions for me in this area if you think that others in the class may benefit from knowing the answer to your question. I will check this area at least twice per weekday. However, if your question is of a very personal nature, please use my VISTA/Blackboard mailbox.
  - Weekly Discussion - These topic areas will house your discussions about our readings. Each forum is listed with the weekly topic. Please follow the dates on the class calendar for posting questions and for commenting. I have allowed time for you to do this work; don't fail to do it before the deadlines posted on the class calendar.
  - Peer Review – You will be split into Peer Review Groups. Here is where you will post your rough drafts and evaluations for peer review.

You are responsible for posting the discussion messages into the correct area depending on its purpose. You must also handle the postings, downloading messages you wish to keep to your home computer and creating folders to store that information. Please do save any messages you wish to keep as I will get rid of excess information every two weeks or so as too much of it clogs up the system.

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