

## 01 From the Coordinator of Freshman Writing

As Coordinator of the Freshman Writing Program, I would like to welcome you to English 101 at Coppin State University. English 101 is one of the most important courses you will take in your career at Coppin, providing you the foundation of strong academic skills that will serve you well in whichever major or career track you choose to pursue. Below are some questions that students have about the course.

### **What is English 101?**

English 101 is Freshman Composition I, the University's introductory level course in writing. The course seeks primarily to help you improve your skills in two primary areas: a.) written and oral communication and b.) analytical reasoning.

Improving your written and oral communication skills enables you to relay and explain your ideas effectively to a wide variety of audiences, a skill that is absolutely necessary for professional and academic success. Almost every profession, from administrative assistant to police officer to nurse to lawyer or small business owner, requires that its practitioners communicate clearly and efficiently. A police officer, for example, must write incident and arrest reports and briefings for her superiors; a nurse will write patient care plans and patient updates for the next nurse on duty; a small business owner might have to write a business plan to secure a small business loan or create marketing materials to sell his latest product. Writing (and speaking) clearly and effectively makes success in all these professions far more likely.

Analytical reasoning, the second of the two primary goals of the course, is the ability to break down, understand, and contextualize problems, and presumably to formulate approaches to solving them. In every phase of your academic, professional, and even personal life, you will be asked to understand complex situations and problems. In an advanced criminal justice course, for example, you might be asked to analyze the root causes of crime in a particular location or demographic, or examine how race affected the perception of a certain law or police action. Similarly, in a nursing class, you might be required to analyze a certain set of symptoms in a patient and to discuss how those symptoms might influence a treatment plan. English 101 will help you develop the basics of analytical reasoning skills.

### **What will I do in English 101?**

English 101 is first and foremost a class in *writing*, and therefore writing itself makes up the core of the course. In English 101, we teach you three primary things about writing: a.) the writing process (how to write about *anything*), b.) the rhetorical modes of writing (how to write about *specific things and in specific situations*) and c.) the mechanics of writing (how to ensure that your writing sounds professional and appropriate to its task).

*The Writing Process (How to Write About Anything)*

Our philosophy at Coppin State University is that good writing is not a spontaneous outpouring of thought that magically appears on the page in finished form, but rather that good writing is produced using a *process* of pre-writing, drafting, and revising that can be learned, applied, and refined over time. English 101 focuses first and foremost on instilling this idea, and enabling students to follow some core steps that will help them craft the most clear and effective writing possible. At the conclusion of the course, you will be able to approach *any* writing situation by using the basic steps of the writing process.

*Rhetorical Modes (How to Write About Specific Things and in Specific Situations)*

At the heart of English 101 are the four major writing assignments; these make up the English 101 portfolio (see below). These assignments are: the Narrative Essay, the Compare-Contrast Essay, the Argument Essay, and the Writing Process Analysis Essay. Each of these four major projects will assist you in developing your communications and analytical skills in a different way, and will help you discern the most effective ways of tailoring your writing for specific tasks and situations.

*Mechanics and Grammar (Using Language Appropriate to the Writing Task)*

The third goal of English 101 is to develop your sense of an appropriate language for a given writing task. In most cases, “appropriate language” means using Standard English Grammar (SEG), the dialect of English most used in public and professional contexts. Writing effective sentences and paragraphs that are consistent with the conventions of Standard English Grammar is a necessary component of successful writing, and English 101 will help you learn how to do this.

**The English 101 Portfolio**

The end-product of your work in English 101 over the next semester is the production of an English 101 portfolio. The English 101 portfolio is a selection of your best work over the course of the semester that demonstrates that you have successfully applied the skills covered in the course. The portfolio is collected and graded twice during the semester, once at midterm and once at the conclusion of the course. Specific requirements and due dates for the English 101 portfolio are listed on each semester’s syllabus and by each English 101 instructor.

If you have any questions about the course, please ask your instructor—he or she is there to help you be successful.

Best Regards,

Dr. Matthew Hill, Coordinator of Freshman Writing, Fall 2012

## Who Am I?

Name:

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Date:

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Year: (Freshman, Sophomore, etc.)

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In the space provided below, please introduce yourself briefly. Where are you from? What schools have you attended prior to coming to Coppin State? What made Coppin attractive to you? What majors or areas of study are most interesting to you at this stage in your education? Similarly, what do you hope to do with a degree from Coppin?

## Writing Autobiography

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: (Freshman, Sophomore, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions about your background with writing. Try to write at least a few sentences on each topic, without stopping to revise or correct yourself. While informal language is fine, please be aware that you may be asked to share this writing with the class or with a classmate.

1. Briefly describe your previous experiences with writing, both in a school setting (High School or College) and outside of school. What kinds of writing have you been asked to do?
2. Most effective writing is created as part of a *process* consisting of several steps: generating ideas, planning, drafting, editing, and proofreading. Do you follow a particular process when you write? If so, what is it?
3. What is the longest or most difficult paper you have ever been asked to write? What was this paper about? How did you go about writing it? How did you feel about the results?

4. What have you learned from other writing courses or writing assignments?

5. If you had your choice of any topic to research and write on, what would it be? Why?

## In-Class Diagnostic Essay

### Student Instructions:

Please write an essay on one of the following topics. Your essay should have a recognizable thesis statement, and should also include an introduction, at least two well-developed body paragraphs, and a conclusion. If you don't know what a thesis statement is, request that your instructor briefly introduce this concept before you begin writing.

Essays should be at least 500 words and written in a blue book or a worksheet provided by your instructor. If it is required by your instructor, you must purchase your own bluebook, available in the campus bookstore. It may be useful to begin with pre-writing or preliminary planning (outlining, listing, clustering, etc.) on a separate piece of paper that will be submitted with the blue book.

Your essay will be scored for its organization, development, clarity of main point, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Your handwriting must be legible, and you may cross out mistakes and write in corrections. It is not necessary to use white out. Be sure to review, revise, and proofread your essay. Depending upon your score, you may be assigned hours in the Writing Center or specific MyWritingLab tasks by your instructor.

1. We all make major decisions in our lives: choosing a career, deciding to go to College, whether or not to get married, or what to do about a significant problem. Write an essay in which you describe **one** of the major decisions you made. Why did you make the choice you did? Was it the right one? What have been some of the long range consequences of your choice? If you were making the same decision again today, would your choice be different? Why or why not?
2. A high school diploma is a necessity in today's world; however, not all students graduate from high school. Write an essay in which you discuss some **reasons** that students drop out of high school and also speculate on the **consequences** for those who do so.
3. Did you ever succumb to peer pressure and do something "to go along with the crowd"? Write an essay about that incident, telling the results of your actions and what you learned from the experience.
4. According to the popular proverb, "Honesty is the best policy." Most of us, however, break this rule by lying from time to time. Write a narrative about a time that you lied to someone, and then analyze the decision-making process you went through when you did so. Was your lie justified? Why? Explain your answer to a reader who may need to be convinced of your justification, or your critique if you think the choice to lie was wrong.

## Student Information

Name	_____	Your Year	_____
Email Address	_____	Phone #	_____
Student ID	_____	Native Language	_____
Engl 101 Teacher	_____	Section	_____

Have you taken English 101 at Coppin State prior to this semester? List the semester, instructor, and grade you received in the spaces below.

Semester	Instructor	Grade
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

What English classes have you taken at Coppin, if any?

What English or writing classes have you taken at other colleges?

If you have any certified learning disabilities or special concerns about the course, please list them here; this will enable us to assess your needs and arrange appropriate accommodations for you.