

English 4: Composition

Fall Term 2015 ◆▲☀ T/Th 9:45-11:20 ◆▲☀ Dante 213

Instructor: Kelly Egan

ke6@stmarys-ca.edu

Office: Sichel 101A

Office Hours: 11:30-12:30 Tuesdays/

Thursdays and by appointment

Phone: (732) 266-3557

Required Texts:

-Everett, Don't Sleep, There Are Snakes

-Little, Brown Handbook/ Trimble Writing with Style

-Class Reader (distributed in class)

Welcome to English 4!

The purpose of this class is to make you a better writer and thinker, and to experience how these two things work hand in hand. The skills we build in this class will prepare you English 5 and Seminar, and will form the foundation of your liberal arts experience—your journey to become solid critical thinkers in the world. These skills will enhance your vitality in any major and extend to all aspects of your life, even beyond the academic and professional worlds.

So how will this happen? We'll be doing a lot of informal, "lightly graded" writing where we'll explore what it means to use writing as a way of thinking. We'll spend a lot of time focusing on the *process* of writing—considering early drafts of papers as places where we get our thoughts out, explore them, rearrange them, write more, get feedback, realize we disagree with ourselves, and at some point, finally figure out what we're trying to say. Only then will we shift our focus to the *product* of writing, our final papers, where we'll figure out how to best communicate what we've discovered to an audience through sound organization, plausible and well-supported thesis statements, and compelling style.

In this class we'll be reading texts that challenge our ingrained perspectives and the way we see certain aspects of our lives. The point is to expand our awareness of the multiplicity of experience, both within ourselves and among others. We'll be doing a lot of thinking on our own outside of class, and then, through class discussion, will share our inquiries with classmates in order to further challenge our own assumptions and deepen our explorations.



COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Participation (15%)

Because so much of the work we'll be doing will take place during class time, you are asked to be present in both body and mind for every class. In order to not be marked late, you need to be physically in the classroom in time to sign the roll sheet I will circulate at the beginning of each class. Please do what you need to do to be on time. You must also be sufficiently prepared with that day's readings and assignments, as well as well-slept, fed, caffeinated, stretched, meditated, or whatever you need to be focused and engaged during our 95 minute meeting. If you are sick, stay home and recuperate in order to be prepared for the next class. To receive full participation credit you are expected to contribute to class discussions, engage in small group work and peer review, and complete in-class writing assignments. **For a Tuesday/Thursday class schedule, the Composition Program's attendance policy (official policy follows) permits students no more than two absences without penalty.** In addition, two instances of lateness will count as one absence.

Students who are absent from class should contact a classmate and/or me for missed assignments, documents, and class notes. In the case of consecutive missed classes due to illness or accident, please e-mail. If you are absent on a day when we use class time for peer review or some other activity that earns you drafting points toward the paper we're working toward, you will have to make this work up to receive the points.

Exploratory Writing (15%)

In this class you'll be doing a significant amount of informal, exploratory writing that emphasizes writing as a way of thinking—an ongoing *process* that you will use to work your way toward the polished *product* that is your final, graded paper. Whereas the main goal of your formal, graded paper is to clearly and concisely communicate with your audience, the main goal of your informal, exploratory work will be to figure out what you even want to say. These assignments are a great way to surprise yourself through intellectual discovery and to get the juices flowing for interesting conversation with your peers in class the following day.

You will be required to post exploratory writing assignments on Moodle (privately just to me) as well as print and bring them to class the day they are due. Please type these assignments directly into Moodle, or copy and paste them from your own word document into Moodle (recommended). Do not upload them as files onto Moodle.

Exploratory writing is a great place to meander through your thoughts. That said, while this writing does not need to be polished and formal, it does need to be meaningful and intelligible. Assignments will be graded on a 3-point scale. You will be awarded 3 points for writing that satisfactorily fulfills the assignment and reaches the minimum word count, 2 points for writing that only partially fulfills the assignment and/or does not reach the minimum word count, and 1 or no points for writing that fails to fulfill the assignment and fails to reach the minimum word count. Late work will be eligible for a maximum of 2 points only. You may skip one exploratory writing assignment without incurring any penalty.

Essays (70%)

The formal written requirement for English 4 is 5,000 words. To pass the course, you must complete all 4 of the essays listed below. Each will be composed in several steps, as you continuously revise and refine their content, structure, and language. We are emphasizing writing process in this class, so you will earn points toward your paper for each of these drafting steps. Essays are due at the beginning of class on the dates listed on the schedule.

- **Intellectual Discovery - 4 pages / double-spaced (1000 words)** This is an exploratory essay in which you will describe a time when you came to see some part of your life differently. Was it a place? A person? Your native language? A cultural or family tradition? Religious belief? Describe what you were like before the event, what happened, and how you were changed. Be specific and engaging in describing the person or event that changed you, reflect on what you have learned, and describe how you might change your thoughts/ behaviors in the future as a result.
- **Examining Assumptions & Systematic Analysis - 5 pages / double-spaced (1250 words)** How is our reality created and how does it influence the way we perceive our lives? In this unit, we will be reading excerpts from Daniel Everett's *Don't Sleep, There Are Snakes* and examining aspects of the Piraha worldview that challenge our own assumptions. The Piraha are a people of the remote Brazilian Amazon who live largely isolated from the rest of the world. Understanding that competing viewpoints are possible, we will analyze our own "reality" and compare and contrast it to that of the Piraha. After gathering evidence, you will be asked to evaluate and synthesize that evidence as the basis for your own valid conclusion about what the factors that create your reality are and how this reality influences your life.
- **Investigate a Topic - 6 pages / double-spaced (1500 words)** What is the impact of the tech boom on San Francisco and where do you stand on the controversy of gentrification currently occurring in the city? In this essay, you will consider the relationship between your own thinking and writing and a relevant issue in your local community. You will narrow in on a specific topic within this issue and, formulate an argument, and write a focused essay that convinces a specific audience of your point. This assignment will also serve as preliminary introduction to information evaluation and research and will include participation in a library session. In addition, in preparation for writing your paper, you will each present on your topic for 5-10 minutes.
- **Literary Analysis - 5 pages / double-spaced (1250 words)** Virginia Woolf, Mary Oliver, and Annie Dillard expand our perceptions of our world by transforming peripheral happenings into pivotal, transcendent moments. How do they do this? This assignment will introduce you to the Seminar method of shared inquiry by asking you to advance probing questions about a common text(s). Your essay should demonstrate a comprehension of the text(s) and an ability to engage in thoughtful analysis. It should also exhibit a clear understanding of the authors' thesis, style/genre, and structure.

Submitting Your Essay

Please attend to the following guidelines for submitting your essays:

- Essays should be typed in black-ink, 12-pt. Times New Roman font, double-spaced
- Essays should have 1” left and right margins
- Each page should be numbered and labeled with the writer’s name (e.g. Egan 2)
- Include a heading with your name, my name, the course name, the assignment name (e.g. Intellectual Discovery), and the date
- The essay should be assembled in the following order, from top to bottom: final draft and then all drafting steps in the order they were assigned
- Each draft should be stapled and the entire packet should be placed in a folder with your name on it
- **Note that hard copies should be given to me or placed in my box on the third floor of Dante. Please do not send them via e-mail.**

MLA Style research paper

The diagram illustrates the layout of an MLA style research paper. It features a header with the author's name and page number, followed by the author's name, affiliation, course, and date. The title is centered below. The body text is double-spaced with 1-inch margins on all sides. A note on the right side of the diagram states: "The body of the paper should be double spaced." A note on the left side of the diagram states: "1 inch margins on both sides and bottom of page".

Wilson 1

Janice Wilson
Professor Aarnsworth
English 560
10 January 2004

Tempting Tangents:
A Writer's View of the Internet

This is the text of the paper. The first paragraph needs to include an introduction to the paper and capsulize the writer's primary idea. Clever writers will find a way to engage the reader's interest here, with a question, perhaps, or an anecdote.

This is more of the text of the paper, in the body of the essay, where the sentences tend to go on for a bit. Here, every once in a while, we will see a short sentence. This sort of thing tends to be rare, however, in such documents, since there tends to be a surfeit of factual information that must be interpreted.

The body of the paper should be double spaced.

1 inch margins on both sides and bottom of page

Turnitin.com

The College has begun to use Turnitin.com, a web-based plagiarism prevention system, to help students do their work correctly and to support those students who observe and uphold the College’s Academic Honor Code. In addition to submitting paper copies of your essays to me, you are required to submit electronic files of your essays to Turnitin.com on our Moodle course site. ***Note: Both paper and electronic forms of your essay must be submitted on time in order for your essay to be considered on time.***

Grading

Essays will be graded according to the official grading rubric of the College Composition Program. If at any time you feel you need clarification on the meaning of the rubric, my comments, or your grade, please come discuss with me.

Late essay policy

A late essay will be marked down 1/3 of a grade for every day it is late, including weekends. Note that a paper that is a week late will no longer be eligible for a passing grade. Please see me before a paper is due to discuss an extension (if extenuating circumstances arise, I may grant extensions on an as-needed basis.)

Rewrites

You will have the option to rewrite one essay for a higher grade. To rewrite a paper, you must meet with me first to discuss it at least a week before the due date. Please give me ample notice if you'd like to set up a meeting. The grade of the revised essay will be averaged with the original grade to produce the final essay grade. Optional revisions are due by 4pm Tuesday, December 8th, 2015.

Note: Please be sure to keep electronic files and paper copies of all drafts and final essays that you have submitted. Also, be sure to keep the essays that have been graded and returned to you.

COURSE GRADING

Attendance and Participation	15%
Exploratory Writing	15%
<u>Essays:</u>	
Intellectual Discovery	15%
Examining Assumptions & Systematic Analysis	20%
Investigate a Topic	20%
Literary Analysis	15%
<hr/>	
	100%

Note: You must maintain a satisfactory attendance record and submit all four essays in order to receive a passing grade in this course. A grade of C- or above is required to proceed to English 5.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Student Disability Services extends reasonable and appropriate accommodations that take into account the context of the course and its essential elements for individuals with

qualifying disabilities. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Student Disability Services Office at (925) 631-4358 to set up a confidential appointment to discuss accommodation guidelines and available services. Additional information regarding the services available may be found at the following address on the Saint Mary's website: <http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/sds>

ASK A LIBRARIAN

Need library sources but don't know where to start? Searching for a book, article, or data on your topic? Not sure how to cite a source in your Works Cited? Ask a librarian! Research help is available at the Reference Desk, or by phone ([925-631-4624](tel:925-631-4624)), text([925-235-4762](tel:925-235-4762)) or IM. Visit the Library's Ask Us webpage for details: <http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/library/ask-us>.

SUCCESS and the CWAC:

Center for Writing Across the Curriculum, on the first floor of De La Salle Hall (next to Hagerty Lounge), CWAC offers two options for students – of all disciplines and levels:

Writing Circles: During weekly, small-group workshops, students discuss their own writing projects, at all stages of the process. To join a Circle, students visit www.stmarys-ca.edu/WritingCircles before or during the first week of the semester. Writing Circles begin meeting in week two. Once scheduled into a Circle time, students register for that section of COMM 190: Writing Circles.

One-on-one sessions: Students make appointments or drop in 5-8 p.m. Sunday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday, and 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday. [925.631.4684](tel:925.631.4684), www.stmarys-ca.edu/cwac. Writing Advisers guide their peers toward expressing ideas clearly, always weighing audience and purpose. Writers bring their assignment sheets and readings in order to brainstorm ideas, revise drafts, or work on specific aspects of writing, such as grammar, citation, thesis development, organization, critical reading, or research methods. They may discuss any genre, including poetry, science lab reports, argument-driven research, or scholarship application letters.

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE

The College's academic honor code asks students to pledge to uphold and abide by certain standards of academic integrity. The pledge reads as follows: "As a student member of an academic community based in mutual trust and responsibility, I pledge: to do my own work at all times, without giving or receiving inappropriate aid; to avoid behaviors that unfairly impede the academic progress of other members of my community; and to take reasonable and responsible action in order to uphold my community's academic integrity." Students in this course will be expected to understand the Academic Honor Code and to abide by it in all aspects of the course.

COMPOSITION PROGRAM ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Composition Program class attendance policy allows students to miss no more than one week of classes in the course of a semester (i.e. three classes if the class meets on a MWF schedule, and two absences if the class meets on a TuTh schedule). More than one week of absences will result in a lowered grade. Repeated lateness will be counted as absence. While

course grades will be based primarily on student writing, missing more than three weeks of class will ordinarily result in a failing grade.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

In order to ensure that we maintain an open and respectful environment that is conducive to learning, all students are asked to uphold the following standards of conduct. Students who fail to do this will be downgraded in the area of Attendance and Participation.

In general

- Come to class prepared. Bring the appropriate text(s), the homework that has been assigned, and the necessary supplies for writing and note-taking. Bring your red writing handbook (Little, Brown/Trimble) and class reader to class everyday to make it available as a resource for our various writing activities.
- Please do your best to avoid leaving the classroom unless totally necessary. Your departure or re-entry will distract us from our work.
- Students with documented disabilities may request permission to use laptops and other electronic devices in class. All others will be asked to refrain from the use of such devices. Please turn your phone off or on silent and put it away when you come to class.
- You may bring a beverage to class, but please, no food.

In class discussion

- Treat your classmates' opinions, beliefs, and perspectives with respect. Only one person should be talking at a time; no one should engage in private or side conversations.
- Be mindful of your level of participation. If you are dominating the conversation (have spoken more than 3 times), offer some silence to give others a chance to have a thought and voice it. On the other hand, if you have something relevant to contribute but are not speaking up, take the leap! We want to hear from you.
- Please avoid talking just to talk—your participation should arise from good listening and should respond to what your peers are saying and to the discussion at hand.
- Try to frame your contributions to class discussion in ways that will not intentionally offend others. You are welcome to have strong opinions and beliefs, but please do not present them as the final word on the matter.
- Don't withdraw from the discussion when you hear things that you disagree with. Instead, pose a thoughtful question or ask for clarification. And be sure to question and analyze your own assumptions in the process. Try at all times to foster a respectful and courteous exchange of ideas in the classroom.

- Last but not least, if you are uncomfortable with any aspect of the course or the classroom conversation, please bring your concerns immediately to the professor. I cannot address your concerns if I do not know about them, so please do not wait to report such concerns to me.

SCHEDULE

*Reading and writing assignments should be completed by the day they are listed on the schedule.
Note that the syllabus dates and assignments may change through the semester.*

Week 1

Sept. 1 First day of class, get ready!

Unit I: Intellectual Discovery

Sept. 3 Read: Jamie Gullen, *The Danish Way of Life* (Reader)
Mark Twain, *Two Ways of Seeing a River* (Reader)
New Yorker article on Marginalia (Moodle)

Write: Choose one culture to which you belong and think of it as a world. Describe this world. What are the behaviors, beliefs, rituals, and norms associated with it? **(200–300 words) (5 exploratory points)**

Week 2

Sept. 8 Read: Amy Tan, *Mother Tongue* (Reader)
Annie Dillard, *Living Like Weasels* (Reader)
Trimble, Chapter 1

Write: Think about a time when you experienced a way of life or point of view that was new to you. It could be a different language or word, or a different custom, or just a different way of sitting down to a family dinner you experienced in a friend's home, or a way of doing things that your new roommate here at Saint Mary's has. Describe what happened. How was this thing different than what you know? How did it feel to experience it? Why do you think you felt this way? **(200–300 words) (5 exploratory points)**

Other: Copy 3 Trimble "Golden Lines" into your notebook.

Sept. 10 Read: Trimble, Chapter 2
Little, Brown pgs. 9–14
Shitty First Drafts

Write: A list of at least 5 possible topics/ideas for what to write about.
Post to Moodle & print and bring to class.

Other: Copy 4 Golden Lines from Trimble/ Little, Brown into your notebook

Week 3

Sept. 15 Peer Review Workshop with CWAC (in our classroom)

Write: First draft of paper. Send to partner by MIDNIGHT on Sunday, September 13th.

Read: Strategies for Peer Review (Moodle). Print and bring to class.

Other: Print, read, and post-outline your partner's first draft. Bring your partner's printed and marked up copy, as well as one extra copy of your own paper, to class.

Sept. 17th Write: FINAL DRAFT OF ESSAY 1. See syllabus for submission guidelines and remember to submit to Turnitin!

Unit II: Examining Assumptions & Systematic Analysis

Week 4

Sept. 22 Read: Chapters 1 & 5, Don't Sleep... Bring questions to class and note passages to discuss.

Write: Short reaction paper. What is one thing about Piraha culture that struck or surprised you? Reflect on why it caught your attention and how this feature of Piraha life is different from your own life/culture. What is your reaction to this feature of Piraha life? Do you admire it? Are you appalled? Why or why not? Note the page number of the passage you are referring to. **(200–300 words) (5 exploratory points)**

Sept. 24 Read: Chapter 6, Don't Sleep... Bring questions and note passages to discuss. ALSO: Note all passages where you feel your own assumptions being challenged (this will help you later when planning your paper!)

Write: There are several places in this chapter where Everett explicitly describes how his own assumptions were challenged while living among the Piraha. Summarize one of these experiences. Describe what about the Piraha culture was not what Everett expected and how his assumption was challenged. Finally, draw from evidence in the text and/or from your own life experience to explore what about Everett's cultural background led him to his assumption. When referring to the book, be sure to cite the title of the book, author, and page number of the passage you are referring to. Start your paragraph with a topic sentence that tells us where we are going. **(200–300 words) (5 exploratory points)**

Week 5

Sept. 29 Read: Chapter 7, Don't Sleep... Bring questions and note passages to discuss. ALSO: Note all passages where you feel your own assumptions being challenged (this will help you later when planning your paper!)

Read: Trimble Chapters 3-4.

Write: A list of 3-5 possible paper topics in the form of a one-sentence working thesis statement for each. (These will change as you freewrite but should provide a place to start)
Post to Moodle & print and bring to class.

Other: Copy 4 Golden Lines from Trimble into your notebook

Oct. 1 **Class Cancelled for Individual Conferences. Conferences held in Dante 213 unless otherwise specified.**

Read: Little, Brown 18-22

Write: A one-page proposal for your paper. Include your working thesis statement. Print and bring to your conference. (Do more freewriting as necessary)

Other: Copy 1 Golden Line from Little, Brown into your notebook

Week 6

Oct. 6 Read: Little, Brown 23-25 (4c. Examining a sample first draft) & 25-29 (revision)

Write: A complete first draft of your paper. Bring two copies to class for peer review.

Other: Copy 2 Golden Lines from Little, Brown into your notebook

Oct. 8 Read: Trimble 5.

Other: Post-outline two of your classmates' papers

Other: Write one Golden Line from Trimble in your notebook

Week 7

Oct. 13 Write: FINAL DRAFT OF ESSAY 2. See syllabus for submission guidelines and remember to submit to Turnitin!

Other: Grade your own paper according to the rubric

Unit III: Investigate a Topic

Oct. 15 Read: NY Times Article (High Rents Elbow Latinos...) (Moodle)
View: Balmy Alley Mural (Moodle)
Write: Write a summary of either the article or mural. Begin with a topic sentence that captures the article/mural's main idea or point. Then describe several pieces of evidence the article/mural uses to support this point. Finally, analyze the point of view of the writer/muralist. Are they on a particular side of the argument? If so, what side is it and how can you tell? (200–300 words) **(5 exploratory points)**
Print: Solnit and Adler articles (Moodle). We will read these in class.

Week 8

Oct. 20 **Library visit. Meet at library.**
Read: Finish reading Solnit and Adler articles.
Other: Read and annotate 3rd paper assignment. Bring questions to class.
Write: Freewrite on at least TWO research questions. Use questions listed in the paper prompt or come up with your own. Include which questions you are responding to at the top of the freewrite. This will prepare you for our research session in the library. Post on Moodle and print and bring to class.
(200–300 words)
Watch: 3 short tutorials on library research: The Research Process, How to Narrow Your Topic, & Research on the Open Web (Moodle)

Oct. 22 **Holiday. No class.**

Week 9

Oct. 27 Watch: 2 more short tutorials on library research: Using the Library Website & Choosing and Using Keywords (Moodle)
Other: Conduct more research on your own. If you haven't already, narrow your search down to ONE topic you'd like to write about. Collect at least 5–7 articles that present interesting, informative, and diverse points of view on your topic. (You may not end up using all of them but should cast a wide net and narrow down as you craft your paper) Bring all sources to class.

Other: Visit library reference desk on your own time to get advice from a librarian on your research. Get signature from librarian.

Other: Consider starting to work out an outline/thesis statement for your paper (will be due Oct. 29)

Oct. 29 Write: A working thesis statement and outline for your paper. Print and bring to class. (NOTE: In the last unit we outlined the paper PROMPT -- this time you are outlining your paper itself)

Week 10

Nov. 3 **In-class peer review workshop**

Write: A first draft. Bring three copies to class.

Read: Building an effective paragraph from an outline (Moodle)

Nov. 5 **In-class presentations**

Other: Plan your 5-minute presentation

Week 11

Nov. 10 Write: FINAL DRAFT OF ESSAY 3. See syllabus for submission guidelines and remember to submit to Turnitin!

Unit IV: Literary Analysis

Nov. 12 Read: Virginia Woolf, Death of a Moth (Reader)

Write: Your reaction to this essay. Meditate on it a bit and respond however feels right for you. Some possible questions to consider are: How did this essay make you feel and why? What stood out? Does it trigger an emotion or an experience from your own life? Or do you have a more philosophical or intellectual response? What are your questions? What do you think Woolf is saying?
(200–300 words) (5 exploratory points)

Week 12

Nov. 17th Read: Mary Oliver, Moles (Reader)
Trimble, Chapters 6–7

Write: A poem that imitates Oliver's style in Moles. You can imitate content or form or both. See what happens!
(5 exploratory points)

Other: Copy 5 Golden Lines from Trimble into your notebook

Nov. 19th Read: Annie Dillard, Living Like Weasels (Reader)

Write: ...TBD

Week 13

Nov. 24th Write: Drafting steps...TBD

Nov. 26th **Thanksgiving Break**

Week 14

Dec. 1st Write: Drafting steps...TBD

Dec. 3rd Write: Drafting steps...TBD

Week 15 – FINAL EXAMS WEEK

Dec. 8th **No class.**

FINAL DRAFT OF ESSAY 4 due in my box by 4pm. See syllabus for submission guidelines and remember to submit to Turnitin!

Dec. 10th **Final Exam Class Meeting is 8–10AM**