

ENGLISH 1301: Composition I (Distance Education)

Fall 2013

CRN: 59117/59194/60058

Distance Education (via Eagle Online)

3 Credit Hours

16-week Term

***** This syllabus covers all the policies and procedures relevant to you and your performance in this class; it is vital that you read this carefully. If you do not read this syllabus and ask me a question which is covered in the syllabus, I reserve the right to instruct you to refer to the syllabus carefully. It is your responsibility to read and understand the class policies. *****

This syllabus is organized in three sections: Basic Information; Department and Course Overview, Administrative Procedures; and Specifics of this Course. You are responsible for reading and familiarizing yourself with all this information.

Part 1: BASIC INFORMATION

1.1 Instructor

Dr. Ranjana Varghese

1.2 Office, Office Hours, and Phone Number

MW 4-5.30 and by appointment.

My office is in HCC's Central campus: FAC 206 (Fine Arts Center, 3517 Austin Street, Room 206).

I am not always in my office, but if you are unable to email me, you can leave me a message at the Central English Office: 713.718.6671. Note, however, that email is the best way to reach me. Please email me through Eagle Online's email. Only if you are unable to do that should you email me at my HCC email address: ranjana.varghese@hccs.edu

1.3 Eagle Online

The link to access your class on Eagle Online (EO) is: <https://hccs1.mrooms3.net/login/index.php>

NOTE: Eagle Online works best with Firefox or MS Explorer. Be sure that you open EO in one of these browsers.

1.4 Your Eagle Online ID and Password

Your username is the same as your ID for your [HCC Student System Sign In](#). If you don't know it, you can retrieve it at the following link:

https://hccsaweb.hccs.edu:8080/psp/cspwd/EMPLOYEE/HRMS/c/HCCS_CUST_MENU.HCC_UAT.GBL

Your initial password is the word "distance" in lowercase.

If you have created your own password after your initial login, and can't remember it, please call 713-718-5275 option 1 for assistance.

If it is your first time logging into EO, be sure to change your password after your first login.

Please visit the DE Technical Support website at (EO Help desk)

<http://bbcrm.edusupportcenter.com/ics/support/default.asp?deptID=8513> if you need additional assistance with your login. This link can be accessed by clicking on the "Student HelpDesk" tab on the EO login page. It can also be accessed from the main HCC web page at www.hccs.edu (click on the "Distance Ed" tab; on the new

page click on the “Eagle Online Help Desk” under “Tech Support”).

During the hours between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. (Monday-Friday and Saturday morning) DE support staff members will answer the phones—call 713.718.2000 and choose option 4, then option 2, then option 3. After hours, the phones roll over to a 3rd party help desk. You may also call the direct DE phone number at 713.718.5275.

First date to access Eagle Online: **Monday, August 26th, 2013**

Last date to access Eagle Online: To be announced, but at least until **Monday, December 9th, 2013**

1.5 Email

The best way to reach me is by email—I prefer that all our communication for this course is done through **email on Eagle Online**.

To do this:

1. Once you log in to this course on Eagle Online, you will see a box called eMail List in the top left side of the page.
2. Click on “Compose.”
3. Then click on the yellow “Contacts” button.
4. Use the alphabet lists to click on “V” for my last name, or “R” for my first name, or you may click on the button to see “All users in this course.”
5. Click on my name—Ranjana Varghese—or you may click on the “To” button.
6. Then click on the “Close this window” tab and this should take you back to the “Compose” page where you will see my name in the “To” box of the message.
7. Type in a subject for your message.
8. Type your message in the body.
9. If you are sending me an assignment, please upload it as a Word attachment. I prefer that you do this when turning in assignments rather than copying and pasting them in the body of the email.
10. Hit “Send” and you’re done.

*** **NOTE** ***: I can also be reached through my main HCCS email account: ranjana.varghese@hccs.edu. But I ask that you NOT send course assignments and work to this email address. Also, I do not send grades or coursework through internet email accounts—only through your email account in Eagle Online. Please use this email ONLY if Eagle Online mail is not available or working at the moment.

When emailing me, please allow at least a 24-hour turnaround to get a response. Normally I try to respond sooner, but please keep this in mind when emailing me.

1.6 Problems with Eagle Online

From time to time there may be problems logging into the class site. If you do have problems, note the links that I have posted above for Technical Support—these can be accessed from the Eagle Online login page (the “Student HelpDesk” tab) as well as from the main HCC page (“Distance Ed” to “Eagle Online Help Desk” under “Tech Support”). Network problems are not a major disruption for this course—at all—but I want you to be aware that they can happen. If that happens, just be patient—these always get resolved, usually in a timely manner.

You can also send general technical questions, through email to the following alias—a technician will be monitoring this address for questions and such: desupport@hccs.edu.

1.7 Dealing with Technical Problems

Sometimes, technical difficulties with Eagle Online, with the HCCS network, or with the Internet may make meeting deadlines difficult. When technical problems arise, I will work to adjust course deadlines accordingly. Also, I realize that class members may have technical problems with their computers or their Internet access—I understand such problems from my own experiences and will work to be flexible. If you are experiencing severe technical problems, repeatedly, however, you should work to resolve them in a timely fashion; otherwise,

completing course projects will be difficult.

*** One point about problems: you may need to "check" your browser for all of the functions of EO to work for you. Overall, EO works very well, but problems are not impossible. EO works best with Firefox or MS Explorer. Be sure to use one of these browsers when using EO. ***

PART 2: DEPARTMENT AND COURSE OVERVIEW, ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

2.1 Course Goal and Prerequisite

This course is primarily concerned with reading and comprehension, and with writing and confidence. We'll read essays by established authors; these essays will expose you to a wide variety of styles, subjects, and genres. You are encouraged to think objectively about these essays—what makes them work? how are they put together? etcetera—as well as subjectively—what style of writing interests you the most? how might you follow an author's example in writing your own essays? You will also write different kinds of essays and responses which allow you to understand style, tone, audience, etc.

This is a Core curriculum course. Students enrolled in this course must be placed into college-level reading and college-level writing.

In taking English 1301 on the Internet, you will be completing approximately the same assignments as students in the classroom. In addition, you will have the opportunity to practice your writing skills extensively as you send messages to me, your instructor, and to other students via the class discussion. You will benefit from the comments of other students and practice your own analytical skills as you read and comment on the ideas of the other English 1301 students in the class. As you do this, you will be practicing essential writing skills. You will write your essays and upload and send them to me; I will then make comments on the essays, assess grades, and upload and send them back to you.

I am interested in the ways in which we interact with the world around us, the various roles we play in society, and how our actions play a part in shaping our world. So the assignments that you write for this class will be concerned with exploring these issues.

2.2 Instructional Method

Distance Education via Eagle Online.

2.3 Textbook

The Little Seagull Handbook. Bullock & Weinberg. (required)

*** **NOTE** ***: It is essential that you have this handbook. This is the only book that this course requires, so be sure to buy the current edition of this handbook.

2.4 Other Materials

1. A USB flash drive (memory stick) or CD. It is important for you to save all your work for this class on an external drive, NOT on your computer's hard drive. Computers crash, so if you have your work saved on a USB flash drive, all won't be lost. Failure to turn in assignments because you did not save your work to a reliable source such as a USB flash drive is not acceptable or excusable.
2. A good university-level dictionary and thesaurus. I expect a college-level understanding and use of the English language from you, so having these will help you greatly as you read and write.

2.5 Basic Intellectual Competencies

English 1301, as part of the HCCS Core Curriculum, addresses specific intellectual competencies essential to the learning process. These include:

1. *Reading*: Reading material at the college level means having the ability to analyze and interpret a variety

- of printed materials—books, articles, and documents.
2. *Writing*: Writing at the college level means having the ability to produce clear, correct, and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion, and audience. In addition to knowing correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation, students should also become familiar with the writing process, including how to discover a topic, how to develop and organize it, and how to phrase it effectively for their audience. These abilities are acquired through practice and reflection.
 3. *Speaking*: Effective speaking is the ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent, and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience.
 4. *Listening*: Listening at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication.
 5. *Critical Thinking*: Critical thinking embraces methods for applying both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies. Problem solving is one of the applications of critical thinking used to address an identified task.
 6. *Computer Literacy*: Computer literacy at the college level means having the ability to use computer-based technology in communicating, solving problems, and acquiring information. Core-educated students should have an understanding of the limits, problems, and possibilities associated with the use of technology and should have the tools necessary to evaluate and learn new technologies as they become available.

2.6 Course Student Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate knowledge of writing as process.
2. Apply basic principles of critical thinking in analyzing reading selections, developing expository essays, and writing argumentative essays.
3. Analyze elements such as purpose, audience, tone, style, strategy in essays and/or literature by professional writers.
4. Write essays in appropriate academic writing style using varied rhetorical strategies.
5. Synthesize concepts from and use references to assigned readings in their own academic writing.

2.7 Learning Objectives

By the end of the semester, the student who passes with a final grade of “C” or above will have demonstrated the ability to:

1. Complete and comprehend reading assignments. Assignments vary in length.
2. Log on to Eagle Online (EO) regularly—at least once a week, but ideally, more.
3. Participate regularly in class discussions in which assigned work is analyzed and interpreted.
4. Write at least 3,000 words in completing written assignments of varying types and lengths that are relevant to course content. At least one written assignment will include information obtained through research that is presented in current MLA format.
5. Explain and illustrate the different types of writing included in the course syllabus.
6. Maintain an overall average of 70 or above on written assignments and exercises.

2.8 Student Services

The *Distance Education Student Handbook* contains policies and procedures unique to the DE student. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the handbook's contents and part of the mandatory orientation. The handbook contains valuable information, answers, and resources, such as DE contacts, policies and procedures (how to drop, attendance requirements, etc.), student services (ADA, financial aid, degree planning, etc.), course information, testing procedures, technical support, and academic calendars. Refer to the DE Student Handbook by visiting this link: <http://de.hccs.edu/de/de-student-handbook>

Please refer to the DE Handbook for information on various topics including the following:

HCC Policy Statement: ADA

DE Advising and Counseling Services

Early Alert Notification

How to Drop a Course
Online Tutoring*
Library Services

*ASKONLINE

AskOnline is an online tutoring service that you can use. I highly recommend that you use a combination of in-person tutoring that is available on various campuses as well as AskOnline. There is a link to AskOnline on your Eagle Online, or you can access it by visiting this link: hccs.askonline.net. AskOnline tutors can help you with grammar as well as other aspects of your essay—however, they will look at only ONE draft of the essay.

OPEN COMPUTER LABS:

HCCS has MANY computer labs. I encourage you to contact the campus closest to you. I know that labs at Eastside, West Loop, Stafford, and other sites are excellent. You may need to register at particular labs to use their computers—again, have your ID ready. At Central College, computers are available for word processing in SJAC 204, and the Computer Writing Lab in FAC 302. Check for open hours.

TUTORING:

At Central College, free tutoring is available in FAC 321B. Tutoring is also available at Southwest College and Northeast College—contact those colleges for times and procedures. I highly encourage you to take advantage of the tutoring services available to you.

USE OF CAMERAS OR RECORDING DEVICES:

Use of recording devices, including camera phones and tape recorders, is prohibited in classrooms, laboratories, faculty offices, and other locations where instruction, tutoring, or testing occurs. Students with disabilities who need to use a recording device as a reasonable accommodation should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities for information regarding reasonable accommodations.

2.9 HCC Policy Statement: Academic Honesty

My Webster's New World Dictionary defines plagiarism as "the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, or thoughts of another, and the representation of them as one's original work." Penalties for plagiarism range from failure of the course to academic probation or expulsion. ***Intentional or unintentional plagiarism is an offense; whether it is a paragraph or an entire paper that has been plagiarized, that paper will receive a Q.*** A student who is academically dishonest is, by definition, not showing that the coursework has been learned. And that student is claiming an advantage not available to other students. I am responsible for measuring each student's individual achievements and also for ensuring that all students compete on a level playing field. Thus, in our system, I have teaching, grading, and enforcement roles. You are expected to be familiar with the College's policy on Academic Honesty, found in the catalog. What that means is: If you are charged with an offense, pleading ignorance of the rules will not help you.

Often students plagiarize in order to avoid doing the work that is required of them in the course. However, doing this work yourself is what will make you a stronger, more skilled writer. Using work written by someone else (whether it is another student or from a paper mill such as Cheathouse) is plagiarism. Do your own work and you'll have nothing to worry about. When consulting sources, always, always, always give credit to the source which gave you the idea and/or the words. If you did not come up with the ideas and/or the words on your own (i.e., they are your original thoughts), then you must explicitly acknowledge the source from whom you are borrowing these ideas and/or words.

Other times students plagiarize without consciously intending to. Some ways in which this occurs is: (1) by not sufficiently rephrasing the ideas of the original source in their own words and style; and (2) not citing the sources correctly and consistently using parenthetical citations in correct MLA format. When the ideas from a source are represented in a work, they must be rephrased entirely in the student's own words—changing one or two words or a few phrases is not enough. Also, whether the ideas of a source are summarized, paraphrased, or quoted, they must always be cited using parenthetical citations. (You will learn more about what constitutes

plagiarism and how to avoid it once the semester gets started.)

If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, *please* email me. In this case, it is better to ask permission than to ask for forgiveness. Plagiarism—intentional or unintentional—is a serious offense. Forgetting to cite a source is understandable, but not a valid excuse. So learn to be conscientious of the sources from which you get your information. By being aware of your sources, you will also become a critical reader of sources, learning to choose ones that are more credible than others. Other types of scholastic dishonesty resulting in similar consequences include cheating on a test (by copying someone else’s paper or using unauthorized materials) and collusion (unauthorized collaboration).

One of the first units we will cover this semester will be on plagiarism. You will be required to do the assignments on this unit and demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it.

In any case, all your papers must be uploaded to the direct Turnitin links on EO which catch plagiarized sections in the work.

2.10 HCC Policy Statement: Withdrawal Deadline, Student Attendance, and Related HCCS Policies

WITHDRAWAL:

Please see the *DE Student Handbook* for more information on Withdrawal: <http://de.hccs.edu/de/de-student-handbook>

The State of Texas imposes penalties on students who drop courses excessively. Students are limited to no more than SIX total course withdrawals throughout their educational career at a Texas public college or university. To help you avoid having to drop/withdraw from any class or being dropped from a class, contact your DE professor regarding your academic performance. You may also want to contact your DE counselor to learn about helpful HCC resources (e.g. online tutoring, child care, financial aid, job placement, etc.).

In order to withdraw from your DE class, you **MUST** first contact your DE professor, **PRIOR** to the withdrawal deadline to receive a “W” on your transcript. After the withdrawal deadline has passed, you will receive the grade that you would have earned. Zeros averaged in for required coursework not submitted will lower your semester average significantly, most likely resulting in a failing grade of an “F.” It is the responsibility of the student to withdraw from the class—understand that you can withdraw yourself from this class if you so desire.

However, I, as your professor, reserve the right to withdraw you without your request due to excessive absences. If you do not feel comfortable contacting me to withdraw, you may contact a DE counselor. Please **do not** contact both a DE counselor and me to request a withdrawal; either one is sufficient. If you plan on withdrawing from your DE class, you **MUST** contact one of us prior to withdrawing (dropping) the class. This must be done **PRIOR** to the withdrawal deadline to receive a “W” on your transcript.

Fall Final Withdrawal Deadline: **4.30 p.m., Friday, November 1st, 2013**

*** Remember to allow at least a 24-hour response time when communicating via email and/or telephone with a DE professor and/or counselor. *** Do not submit a request to discuss withdrawal options less than a day before the deadline. If you do not withdraw before the deadline, you will receive the grade that you are making in the class as your final grade.

* * * One of my favorite architects is ANTONI GAUDI * * *

ATTENDANCE:

Attending class regularly is the best way to succeed in this class. Research has shown that the single most important factor in student success is attendance. Simply put, going to class greatly increases your ability to

succeed. In the case of this class, which is online, attendance is still a factor.

HCCS policy states that a student who is absent more than 12.5% (**6 hours**) of class may be administratively dropped from the course. Students who intend to withdraw from the course must do so by the official date or they may receive an F instead of a W. During the 16-week on-campus version of this course, 6 hours translates to two weeks; so in this 16-week version of this course you are indicating that you are "withdrawn" from the course after missing about 2 weeks of activity here in our distance format.

NOTE: You should log into Eagle Online AND participate in the week's activities; just logging in is not enough to be counted as present! So if you miss two weeks of activity, then you run the risk of being dropped from the class.

Attendance is based, in a sense, on participation in the course. In order to support your ability to succeed, I have made participation a factor in your final grade (through online discussion forums). This should be the easiest outcome for you to achieve in this class. You should log into the system at least once a week. Most likely, you'll need to log in even more than once a week, given the deadlines. ***** In addition, Eagle Online keeps track of statistics of when you log in and for how long and which pages you've opened. You should note that logging in by itself doesn't really count as attendance—if you log in but do not submit essays, or participate in the discussion forums, you're not really attending class or participating in it. *****

Please note, I will assume that class members who do not contact me for several weeks are, in fact, intending to drop the class. If, however, you face problems that make timely completion of this course difficult, please contact me—by email through Eagle Online. I'm flexible when it comes to things that are beyond your control, **but I must be consulted in advance, or as soon as possible.**

As a teacher, I do not like failing students who have stopped participating in the class. However, I view a decision to withdraw as the responsibility of each student in the course. Thus, I will not generally automatically withdraw students from the course, except those who never log into the Eagle Online course area or those who ask me to withdraw them.

HCCS POLICY ABOUT COURSE REPEATERS:

The HCCS Policy states: "Beginning in the Fall 2006, students who repeat a course for a third or more times will face significant tuition/fee increases at HCC and other Texas public colleges and universities. Please ask your instructor and/or counselor about opportunities for tutoring/other assistance prior to considering course withdrawal or if you are not receiving passing grades."

Thus, if this is the second semester that you have attempted to complete this course, and if you do not complete this course this semester, you **will** face higher tuition if you enroll in this course a third time. Work to complete the course work at a passing level this semester—and I will work with you.

IF YOU ARE AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT:

International Students are restricted to **ONLY ONE** online/distance education class per semester. Please contact the International Student Office at 713-718-8520 if you have additional questions about your visa status.

HCCS Policy regarding this states: "Receiving a W in a course may affect the status of your student Visa. Once a W is given for the course, it will not be changed to an F because of the visa consideration."

I view non-participation in a course as evidence of withdrawing. If a student stops participation in the course before November 1st, he or she may receive a grade of "W." But, this is NOT automatic. If you know that you want to drop the class, I suggest that you either contact me about it, or drop yourself from the class. Any student who has not dropped the class by the final drop date (November 1st) will receive a final grade.

2.11 Virtual Classroom Conduct

As with on-campus classes, all students in HCC Distance Education courses are required to follow all HCC

Policies & Procedures, the Student Code of Conduct, the Student Handbook, and relevant sections of the Texas Education Code when interacting and communicating in a virtual classroom with faculty and fellow students. Students who violate these policies and guidelines will be subject to disciplinary action that could include denial of access to course-related email, discussion groups, and chat rooms or being removed from the class.

As your professor and as a student in this class, it is our shared responsibility to develop and maintain a positive learning environment for everyone. I take this responsibility very seriously and will inform members of the class if their behavior makes it difficult for me to carry out this task. As a fellow learner, you are asked to respect the learning needs of your classmates and assist me in achieving this critical goal.

We'll spend a significant amount of time having open online discussions; please be respectful of your classmates. While you are encouraged to challenge both your own opinions and those of your peers, please do so with respect for different ideas. I will promise to do my best to try to keep the online classroom a safe place to share ideas, even tentative, uncertain ideas. In discussions, making connections with the readings, with topics discussed previously, and with the comments that others have made in class is especially helpful to you and to everyone else, and therefore is especially noted and appreciated. I follow the guidelines in the *Student Handbook* closely, so please be aware that any unprofessional, discourteous, or inappropriate behavior will have its consequences. Please follow the Golden Rule and be respectful of others and their values and beliefs.

BEING BLOCKED FROM THE EAGLE ONLINE CLASS SITE:

In certain situations I may disable your ability to log into the Eagle Online course area. Usually I take this action because I need to contact you about a serious enrollment or assignment issue—and other avenues have not been successful. If this happens, or if you are otherwise unable to log into the EO site for the course, email me at ranjana.varghese@hccs.edu.

2.12 Students outside Houston

Several class members are most likely living outside of the Houston Area. Generally, this causes no problems, since the Internet is our connection. But I've been asked to post the following: “Students who live or work outside the HCC service area and cannot take paper exams at one of our HCC testing locations **MUST** make arrangements for a proctor. Please see the DE Student Services Additional Resources webpage for more information.” However, note that we have NO on-campus exams in this course.

2.13 EGLS3 -- Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey System

At Houston Community College, professors believe that thoughtful student feedback is necessary to improve teaching and learning. During a designated time, you will be asked to answer a short online survey of research-based questions related to instruction. The anonymous results of the survey will be made available to your professors and division chairs for continual improvement of instruction. Look for the survey as part of the Houston Community College Student System online near the end of the term.

Part 3: SPECIFICS OF ENGLISH 1301

3.1 My Eagle Online for this course

THE CENTER OF THE PAGE

When you log into EO, you'll see that the information and assignments for each week are listed week by week down the center of the page. So the first week will list not only the complete syllabus, but also the other assignments and readings you are to do. You will need to click on the links and assignments listed in the center of the page for what you need to do each week. You need to do all the readings and assignments **in the order in which they are listed**. If you skip assignments, you will not have all the information that you need to successfully complete the required work for the class.

As you will see, assignments are described and posted well in advance of their deadlines. Assignments have deadlines by which they must be submitted—this means that you will not have the entire semester to do various

assignments. Those assignments that are not submitted by their deadlines will not be graded or will be penalized for lateness. So you need to log in regularly and finish assignments in a timely manner.

I strongly encourage you to click on and read all the links for each week in the order in which I list them. Do NOT skip reading any of the links for each week—doing so will not help you. If you don't read all of them, you won't know what you need to do to complete assignments, and I do reserve the right to reply to a student who is asking about a particular assignment, especially if the question suggests that he or she has not read the relevant link in the Course Content, to go to that specific link and then ask a more specific question. If something specific is unclear, please let me know. * * * A city I visited in the last three years is Vilnius. * * *

THE LEFT SIDE OF THE PAGE

On the left hand side you will see the eMail List and the Calendar. When you have any new mail you will see an alert in the eMail List. Any time there are major assignments due, you will see them on the calendar. You can add events to your own calendar which will not be seen by other members of the course. You will also see links to the semester's major assignments on the left side of the page, as well as a place for announcements. However, be sure to access each week's assignments from the links in the center of the page.

THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE PAGE

On the right side of the page you will see links to your Grades, Profile, as well as the list of Participants in the class.

3.2 Email Messages—reading and sending

The email feature of the Eagle Online system allows you to send and receive private mail. You will email me with any questions or concerns or comments you have about the class, your performance, etc.—this will be our primary mode of communication for this class. You will also send me your assignments (such as the major essays) through private email (as Word attachments). I ask that you make the subject heading of such email messages clear, indicating that you are turning in an assignment. Please allow at least a 24-hour turnaround time for a response from me, although I usually try to respond sooner. If your message is urgent to you, please include a subject heading that alerts me that I should respond to your message as quickly as possible.

Note that the mail system provides both an Inbox (where messages to you go) and a Sent Mail folder (where messages from you are placed). The Sent Mail folder is a great place to check to be sure you have indeed sent a message.

I encourage you NOT to erase messages from your Inbox or Sent Mail folder during the semester (I don't erase from mine, either). Keeping track of messages can help you keep track of what you've turned in and so on. You will find your graded essays go to your Inbox—so if you don't erase those messages you will have a record of graded work. Similarly, essays you mail to me will also be saved in your Sent Mail folder.

When you send essays to me, you will send them through private email to which you attach the files. Be sure that you send me files in Word format—I am unable to open files in any other format, so be sure that you are using a word processing program such as Microsoft Office or Open Office. In any case, you should be able to save your documents as Word files to send to me. If I receive an email message that seems to have had an attachment that didn't get attached, I will notify the sender to resend the file.

3.3 Class Discussion

In the Syllabus, you will find references to class discussion assignments. There are four forms of Class Discussion in this course: News Discussion Forum, Informative Essay Discussion Forum, Reflection Essay Discussion Forum, and General Discussion Forum.

News Discussion Forum:

This is where you will post your comments and ideas about the news readings, assigned essays, and podcasts. I will describe this in more detail later in the next section (see section 3.6). The discussions in this forum are

graded. These discussions must be posted during the week they are assigned. *** So the discussion for Week X will be available for credit until 9 p.m. on the Sunday at the end of that week. If you post to the discussion forum after the deadline of 9 p.m. on Sunday, you will NOT receive credit for that posting ***

Informative Essay Discussion Forum:

This is where you will discuss your ideas for your Informative Essay and comment on others' ideas. This is graded and is described in more detail later in this section (see section 3.6).

Reflection Essay Discussion Forum:

This is where you will discuss your ideas for your Reflection Essay and comment on others' ideas. This is described in more detail later in this section (see section 3.6). This is not graded; this forum is just for you to get feedback on your ideas from your peers.

General Discussion Forum:

This a place where you can share general ideas with each other—participation is optional and participation will not generally affect your grade (see section 3.5).

The main goal for all discussion forums is for you to have an informal area to explore ideas related to the readings of the course, working with other members of the class. In the process, you'll meet other members of the class, be exposed to many different perspectives, and have a chance to "try out" ideas before you write the major essays.

Participation in the class discussion is the key issue in its “grading”; I'll post more specifics about how these assignments will lead to the 20 percent of the final grade they represent in total, but for now, remember that the key issue in the discussion is participation. You will pay attention to how clearly you communicate your ideas to your classmates, since this is a writing class. In your discussion posts I will look for a willingness to share ideas, offer observations, take risks, and work with others. However, even more importantly, I encourage you to come back and see the responses that others in the class have submitted—and respond to those.

What you post in the News Discussion Forum will be graded. In these discussions you will post your thoughts and responses to the news articles and essays you read as well as the podcasts you listen to. Each original discussion post on an article you read from any of the websites or a podcast you've listened to from the list must be at least **250 words**. (This does not include your responses to your classmates' posts.) At the beginning of each original discussion you must post the word count. I encourage you not to view the discussion as a burden. Use these discussion posts to hone your ability to focus your writing and state your ideas and opinions articulately and clearly. (For those of you who might be worried that 250 words is a lot, this paragraph is 193 words.) Your responses must be clear and edited for grammar and content. Try to say what you notice; focus on your observations and assessments. One other thing about the discussion: do not send attachments to the discussion. These will have to be opened and or downloaded by class members—and they may not do this.

*** **NOTE** ***: Discussion posts that do not have a word count listed at the top of the discussion will NOT receive credit. Posts which fall short of the minimum word count will receive only partial credit.

3.4 Student Assignments and Grading Scale

HCC Grading Scale:

- A 90-100%: Sophisticated level of understanding; exceptional written work (superior in mechanics, style and content).
- B 80-89%: Above-average level of understanding; excellent written work (superior in one or two of mechanics, style and content).
- C 70-79%: Average understanding of basic concepts; good written work.
- D 60-69%: Below average understanding; written work noticeably weak in mechanics, style or content.
- F 0-59%: Failing; clearly deficient in understanding, mechanics, style and

content.

Here is how the final course grade is determined:

News Discussions	20%	(throughout the semester)
Informative Essay Discussion and Email	10%	(between September 9 th and 15 th)
Essay 1: Informative	30%	(due: by 9 a.m., Monday, October 28 th)
Essay 2: Reflection	20%	(due: by 9 a.m., Monday, November 18 th)
Journal	20%	(due: by 9 a.m., Monday, December 2 nd)

(**Note:** There are no exams in this course, and there are no on-campus final essays or exams—the above work determines the final grade.)

I will describe the assignments in general further down in this section. They will each be described in further detail in the appropriate links on EO. All major essays must be turned in in order to pass this course.

Calculating Your Grade:

As conscientious students, I expect you to keep track of your grades so that you can track your progress in this class. Here is how to calculate your overall grade:

$$\begin{aligned} 0.1 \times \text{Informative Essay Discussion grade} &= \underline{\quad\quad} + \\ 0.3 \times \text{Essay 1 grade} &= \underline{\quad\quad} + \\ 0.2 \times \text{Essay 2 grade} &= \underline{\quad\quad} + \\ 0.2 \times \text{Weekly Discussion grade} &= \underline{\quad\quad} + \\ 0.2 \times \text{Journal grade} &= \underline{\quad\quad} \end{aligned}$$

To find out your average in the class at any time during the semester, follow the above steps for the grades already received and divide the sum by the percentage total of the grades received thus far, and then multiply that result by 100.

For example, to calculate your average after you've received grades for Essay 1 and Informative Essay Discussion, this is what you'd do:

$$[(0.3 \times \text{Essay 1 grade}) + (0.1 \times \text{Informative Essay Discussion grade}) / (\text{Percentage of Essay 1} + \text{Percentage of Informative Essay Discussion})] \times 100$$

If you received 70 on Essay 1 and 100 on Informative Essay Discussion, your average in class thus far would be:
 $[(0.3 \times 70) + (0.1 \times 100) / (30 + 10)] \times 100 = (31 / 40) \times 100 = 77.5 \%$

NOTE: The Gradebook in EO keeps track of all your grades—you can check your average there as well. However, it is best for you to keep track of your grades on your own as shown above, just in case of technical glitches on EO.

3.5 Student Assessments

I will administer writing exercises and critical and research papers that you can use to determine how successful you are at achieving the course learning outcomes (mastery of course content and skills) outlined in the syllabus. If you find that you are not mastering the material and skills, you are encouraged to reflect on how you study and prepare for each class. I welcome a dialogue on what you discover and may be able to assist you in finding resources on campus that will improve your performance.

Students will write a minimum of 3,000 words for this class, which include major essays as well as weekly discussions and short assignments. Reading assignments are to be prepared for each week, and you will need to post discussions on these (more instructions on this follow). The major assignments are: weekly discussions, an informative essay, a reflection essay, and a journal. All major assignments must be turned in in order to receive a passing grade in the class.

Essays must be double-spaced and typed in standard Times New Roman 12-point font. On the first page they must contain your name, final word count, and an original essay title (not “Analysis Essay”!). *** If the essay falls short of the minimum word count, the paper will lose 10 points. ***

There is no final exam in this class.

Essay #1: Informative Essay: 1000-1250 words

An informative essay is organized by one of four primary functions: to report on a new or unfamiliar topic; to analyze for meaning, pattern and connections; to explain how to do something or how something works; and to explore questions and answers.

This essay requires that you consider both your relationship to your subject and your method of presenting it. The theme for this course is the ways in which the roles we play shape the world we live in. We are living during exciting, chaotic, and often troubled times. I would like you to choose a topic that has social relevance—look around you and you will find interesting, horrifying, and thought-provoking things happening in the world. Events of earth-shaking magnitude and significance are happening everywhere in the world—the economic crisis, the Occupy Wall Street movement, the Arab Spring, the rise of nationalist and anti-immigration groups in various countries, to name just a few. These events are the result of people coming together and acting in a manner to create some kind of change (positive or negative). Being aware of these events allows us as human beings to understand ourselves better and what roles we play in the world. I would like you to choose a socially significant and current topic to research for this essay.

You need to get your topic approved by me by the specified date on the syllabus. If you are stuck for ideas, consider writing on the subject of one of the news articles you read or podcasts you listened to. Choose your topic carefully.

You will do some research for this paper. You must have at least **3** sources. These sources will inform your paper—in other words, they will provide the content for the bulk of your essay. Choose sources that are credible—these include sources you find in the HCC library databases and/or the HCC library catalog; credible newspapers, journals, and magazines; academic journals. If you have access to another academic database/library catalog besides the HCCS one, you may use it, but please check with me to make sure. If you are unclear, I can help you incorporate them appropriately into your essay.

You will also need to define the audience for this essay. As you will see when you read the files about the research project, you will also be required to investigate MLA style, documentation, and strategies to avoid plagiarism and cite sources accurately. Plagiarism will result in your receiving a 0 on the paper. (Note: You will use MLA style for the documented papers in this course.) Be sure to evaluate your sources for credibility and usefulness of information. I can help you with this.

Informative Essay Discussion AND Email

This is an important discussion about the possible research topics that you are considering for Essay 1. This is a helpful, vital discussion as students are not only inspired, but they are also able to narrow and enhance their focus on their own topics.

You will first need to read the documents that I assign you to read regarding this essay, particularly the one entitled “Topics that are Not Easily Argued,” regarding the topics that you are not allowed to write about. Then come up with at least **3** topics about which you are passionate and which you'd like to research. You will post these topics as a comment—giving as much information about each one as possible so that your interest and focus on each topic is clear to me and your classmates.

In addition to posting your own topics, you should also comment on at least **3** others' topics. The purpose of these discussions is to help your classmates refine their ideas and perhaps to be inspired.

So for this project you will post at least 4 comments. Again, you are welcome to make more than 4 comments!

You will be graded on the depth of your comments as well as how many comments you make. So if you make 3 comments out of a possible 4, your grade will be $(3/4) \times 100 = 75\%$.

You will also need to email me your topics—if you do not email me your topics, you will not get my approval of them and you getting started on your research may subsequently be delayed. In your email to me you must give me as much information on each possible topic as you can—what you hope to research and specifically your focus, what you already know about the topic, why you are interested in the topic, etc.

*** Please note that I must receive your email by September 15th. It is in your best interests to send me your possible topic choices by the deadline so that you can get my approval and get started on your research. ***

Essay #2: Reflection Essay: 750-1000 words

A personal reflection essay is a way to analyze something of importance to the writer and reflect on its effect on the author. A reflection essay is a search for significance in a past event, a comparison between who the author was and who the author is at the time of writing. Your essay should reflect on who you are today, what you think is your place or role in the world today, and how you came to that understanding. Choose something from your life that has had a bearing on who you are today and how you see your role in the world, and write about that. This could be an event, a person, or some experience that has opened your eyes to your understanding of who you are and what your purpose is in life. Your goal is an essay that applies your present knowledge of yourself to a past memory; a reflective essay should communicate a distinct and significant change in the writer between beginning and end. In other words, you are reflecting on something that has shaped your perception of your role in the world today.

Your essay should contain a clear and memorable focus that is developed by appropriate detail and reflection. Since this is a personal essay, you will use the first person. Your essay must make use of concrete ideas and examples to support your reflections. Consider the essay you read by Zora Neale Hurston. In her essay she reflects on how her self-perception affects her place in the world—how she sees herself and how others see her—and she does this by giving several concrete examples and images.

This is a personal essay, so you would use an experience from your past to illustrate your thoughts. Please try to avoid references to religious ideas or beliefs; keep this essay secular in its language and scope.

Journal: 1600+ words

Writing is a process, one that is ongoing. I would like you to keep a journal over the course of this term—one with **at least 8** different entries of at least **200** words each. Spread these entries over the course of the semester—do NOT write them all at once. You will turn this journal in as ONE document at the end of the term on Monday, December 2nd. (So save each entry in the same file; just be sure to date each entry and give it a unique title.)

Writing is about observing the world around you, observing and understanding yourself, understanding the different ways in which we communicate and get our needs met, and finally articulating all this in clear, precise, evocative language. So use your journal to note down your observations—they can be about something you read (in the textbook for this class, something you read for the class, something you read for fun, etc., as long as it's an appropriate piece of literature!), something you saw (a film, a TV program, a commercial, etc., as long as it's appropriate), something you encountered in the world, etc. This is further described in the journal document you will read. You can write about just about anything, as long as it is not simply recording what you did or saw, but rather, an analytical and thoughtful statement of each topic you address. Keep in mind the theme of the course: how a person's role and actions shape the world. You should document what you think about each topic and why—this is about critically analyzing your experiences. You can be informal in terms of your tone in your journal, but please pay attention to sentence structure, spelling, grammar, etc.

For example, if you watched a film about the virtues of capitalism and you wish to write about it, you may not want to describe its plot, but what it made you think of and why. This journal should demonstrate your critical thinking skills. The same would go for a news article you read, a commercial you saw, a conversation you heard, etc. In short, this journal should document your critical analyses of everyday things you encounter.

News Discussion

Periodically throughout the semester you will have to read an assigned reading from a website, find a newsworthy article that is interesting to you from one of the recommended websites, and/or listen to a news podcast from a list of podcasts (I will discuss these in more detail later). You will then have to post comments on what you have read/listened to. I would like you to think about these articles/essays/podcasts in two ways: subjectively and objectively.

1. When you think about what you read/listened to subjectively, you focus on what the content of the material makes you feel—what emotions does it evoke in you? Why? What do you think of the content of the material? Why? Can you relate to it in any way? Does it remind of you of some experience you had? What does this article say about the state of the world?
2. When you think about what you read/listened to objectively, you focus on how the piece is written/structured—in other words, how is the main argument presented and what devices are used to present it in an effective manner. You would consider the style of the material (the language, the tone, the literary and rhetorical devices used, etc.), how the main point is developed (in the case of a news forum with various speakers, for instance, you would think about the kinds of rhetorical devices each person uses or does not, how they try to be persuasive, etc.), the kinds of details used, and the overall effect of the material. If the piece is persuasive, you would also want to think about who the target audience is, the kinds of arguments that are used to support the main point, the effectiveness of these arguments, how effective the arguments are for the target audience, and the overall effectiveness of the piece itself.

For each assigned news discussion you must do **4** things:

1. Give a brief summary of the main point/s of the piece you either read or listened to—this should be no longer than **50 words**.
2. Comment on the essay/podcast from a subjective point of view. What is your personal, emotional response to it?
3. Comment on the essay/podcast from an objective point of view. What are the rhetorical devices, tone, language used to communicate the main point? Your subjective and objective responses should be at least **200 words**.
4. Comment on at least one of your classmates' posts. Your response to your classmate's post should be at least **100 words**.

Original postings which are under 250 words (at the top of each posting you must write the exact word count; if you do not, then that posting will not receive credit!) will receive only partial credit. Each week that a news discussion is assigned, the discussion post must be made by 9 p.m. on the Sunday at the end of that week (except for the discussion on Week 15, which is due by 9 a.m. on Thursday that week). For instance, if a discussion is assigned for the week of September 16-22 (Monday through Sunday), then the discussion must be posted by 9 p.m. on Sunday, September 22nd. Anything posted after that deadline will NOT receive credit.

If your comment on a classmate's post is less than 100 words, you will receive only partial credit for that week's news discussion. You need to post the word count of your comment on your classmate's posting; this word count must be written at the top of your comment. Your responses to your classmates' posts must be **at least 100 words** and must be thoughtful and analytical.

Each news discussion is graded out of 100—if your original posting meets the minimum word count (at least 250 words); has a clear summary and your thoughtful response to what you read/listened to; is phrased clearly and follows the rules of correct, standard American English; and your response to at least one of your classmates

meets the minimum word count (at least 100 words) and is thoughtful and analytical, then you should earn 100 on that posting. If you do not do all these for each assigned news discussion, then your grade for that particular news discussion will be partial.

Those comments that are not thoughtful or demonstrate critical thought will not be counted. If I find that your comments are superficial and not well thought out, I will contact you and ask you to rethink the way you respond to the questions.

It will be to your benefit to keep up with class discussions as this is not only an easy way to earn a good grade for this part of the overall grade, but also a way to listen to other students' thoughts, ideas, perspectives, and to learn from them as well as from what is happening around the world.

NOTE: The discussion postings for each week must be posted by 9 p.m. on the Sunday at the tail end of that week (except for the discussion on Week 15, which is due by 9 a.m. on Thursday that week). So if a discussion is assigned for Week 2, then it should be posted by 9 p.m. on Sunday, September 8th.

NOTE 2: Please note that no discussion posts will be graded after the final deadline of 9 a.m., Thursday, December 5th.

Reflection Discussion

This discussion will not be graded, however, I encourage you to discuss your top 3 ideas for the Reflection Essay with your classmates and give feedback on theirs.

General Discussion

This is a separate discussion that will remain open all semester. This is ungraded, but it represents a place for you meet and get to know your classmates, as well as try out some of your ideas on your classmates.

3.6 Comments on Papers

When you send in work to me, I will copy it to my word processing software and make comments within your text. To do this, I highlight write my comments as well as the specific sentences/passages in your essay on which I am commenting in yellow on your writing assignments.

I will also attach a grading rubric unique to each essay with the grading breakdown for different aspects of the essay such as organization, focus, mechanics, etc. I have posted a sample grading rubric in the Course Content so that you can see what I look for in your writing.

When you receive your graded papers back from me, be sure to open them in a word processing program such as Microsoft Word or Open Office (which can be downloaded for free from the Internet) so that you will be able to see my comments highlighted in yellow on your essay as well as on the grading rubric.

***** NOTE ***:** Generally I try to return graded work to you three to four weeks after I receive it.

3.7 Turnitin

All major papers must be uploaded to Turnitin to run a plagiarism check. In order to do this, you can either click on the Turnitin Assignment link that is posted in the center of the page on each week that a major assignment is due, or on the "Turnitin Assignments" link on the left hand side of the Eagle Online home page for this class. This link will give you a list of assignments. Click on the appropriate one and upload your essay to it.

In addition to uploading your work to Turnitin, you must email me your essay in Word format (that is, your essay must have a .doc extension). If you do not email me your essay, I cannot grade it. It will be counted late until you email it to me as the right attachment, and you will lose the appropriate number of points for lateness. If you email me your essay but do not upload it to Turnitin, I will not grade it until you do so. In this case as well you will lose points for lateness. So remember, every time you turn in a major assignment (not including the

weekly discussions), you MUST upload your essay to Turnitin AND email me your essay as a Word attachment

Be sure that when you are uploading a paper you have created your essay in a format that is acceptable such as Word and WordPerfect. I prefer Word documents, so please use this format. If your computer does not have Microsoft Word, you may download the free software for OpenOffice (simply Google Open Office in your internet browser). OpenOffice is very similar to Microsoft Word. If you have another word processing program such as Microsoft Works, remember to save your work as a .doc file. I cannot open other kinds of files, so remember to save your work as .doc or .docx files before sending them to me.

Also, remember to save your work on an external source such as a USB flash drive or CD so that you may upload your paper from any computer.

3.8 Sending files created in word processing software

Most likely, you will want to write your major papers and even short assignments in your word processing software (such as Microsoft Word or Open Office). When you wish to turn this work in you will use EO email and attach your work to the email message. (You may copy and paste the essay into the body of the email, however, I prefer that you NOT do this because it can mess up your formatting such as indenting, spacing, etc.)

For discussions, you MUST copy text directly into the message window—or write directly in the message window.

(1) When you choose to upload a file as an attachment to email messages, it's MOST essential that you name the file clearly. I encourage you to include your last name or the first few letters of it in the file name. Be sure to include your full name within the text of your file (along with the date and the assignment). Otherwise, your file may be, in a sense, lost, and end up in my folder of anonymous files. When I download your file, I will usually rename it based on your name and the assignment (Jane Doe Essay 1)—but your names will help me make sure I name your work appropriately. Please do not give your files generic names such as “Essay 1” or “Essay 2”—these are much harder for me to process as they come to me. Please give each essay an original title.

*** I encourage you to send files sent as attachments in a “document” format. Every so often I receive files I cannot open, that have viruses, or filled with lots of odd characters and control codes. If I receive such a file, I'll ask you to resend it. Files with the extension “wps” are usually problematic for me—try to save the files as “.doc” instead. (If you use Word Perfect or Microsoft Works, you will need to save your files in a “.doc” format—I use Microsoft Word—and Word Perfect and Microsoft Works files tend to be hard to read legibly.) Also, if you have the new Microsoft Vista operating system, your files may have a “docx” extension. Very rarely I am unable to open these—if this happens I will contact you and you will have to save them in a lower format such as “.doc” and resend them. This is generally not a big problem, but it is important that you are aware of this. ***

Remember: a file containing an essay that I can't open is a file that, unfortunately, hasn't yet fulfilled its assignment—I hope this makes sense.

How I return files to you: I've found it best for myself to upload files as attachments when I return them to you. You will have to open these attachments, after which you can save them to your desktop or USB flash drive.

Finally, and MOST IMPORTANT: Be sure to keep backups of all work you send me; I have to view this as your responsibility.

Keep all your work in a USB flash drive at least until the end of the term. This is very important—a student in a recent semester did not keep copies or work that did not get to me and the work thus had to be done, again. Furthermore, since you know how much each assignment is worth, I encourage you to keep track of your progress in the class—keep a record of what your grades are and how you are doing in the class.

*** Again, all the work that you do should be saved on an external device such as a USB flash drive or CD. Do

NOT save your work on your computer's hard drive as computers can crash and the work could be irretrievably lost.

*** Some class members will do their work for this class in open computer labs at libraries and school campuses. For such people, keeping copies of their work is especially important, and saving the work to a USB flash drive is imperative. Remember that the Eagle Online Sent Mail folder will maintain copies of what you send. * * * One of my favorite musicians is Olafur Arnalds. * * *

3.9 Late Work, Make-ups, and Extra Credit

Most major assignments for the course are due by 9 a.m. on Mondays. Please be sure to check on the due date for each assignment—this is clearly stated in the weekly course calendar that follows at the end of this document, as well as listed in the Course Calendar on EO. After this date, I will view the assignment as late, at a reduction of 10 points for each day the assignment is late. Late work may receive fewer comments, and I would hope that late work would show the results of more time perfecting the writing. You do not have to wait until the due date to submit an assignment—you may turn it in earlier with no penalty.

*** Please note, however, that late major assignments (including the 2 essays) that are 1 week late will not be accepted for credit. ***

*** Also—the very last date I will accept work for this semester is **9 a.m. on Thursday, December 5th**—there are no extensions to this date—sorry! ***

The class discussion assignments are due the week period in which they are assigned (unless I post an extension to an individual deadline). Each weekly discussion is due by 9 p.m. on the Sunday at the tail end of the week, except for the discussion on Week 15, which is due on Thursday at 9 a.m. that week.

You'll see assignments in advance. Be aware of them, work on them in a timely way, and if you're unable to submit them because of network problems, don't panic. Sometimes, as I mentioned earlier, due to technical reasons you may not be able to access the Eagle Online site of the class. I try to keep aware of downtimes for our network, and in these times I know it's impossible for a class member to submit work. *** When I know the distance education or HCCS network is down, I automatically push deadlines back to compensate.***

I am sympathetic to those things that are beyond your control. However, it is imperative that you communicate clearly and in a timely manner with me so that I can best help you. It is your responsibility to email me at your earliest about any issues that come up which interfere with your performance in the class.

You're welcome to write me at ranjana.varghese@hccs.edu if you wish to alert me to problems, but you should NOT send essays and work to that address. If you have a question or concern about an assignment and the network is not working, please do write me at this address.

I do not generally assign or accept Extra Credit assignments; I encourage each of you to do your best on the major assignments; view participation in the class discussion as a vehicle for demonstrating your interest in the course. (One additional reason for this—especially if you work on all of the assignments diligently, there is enough work in the class, already, and you will not need extra credit....)

Also, understand that the grade you earn in this class is a reflection of how well you have been able to incorporate and apply the course material to your writing. I do not “give” grades; you earn your grades. Be aware of your grade in the class over the course of the semester. Do NOT ask me for a better grade or attempt to negotiate for one—this is unprofessional. Rather, work hard and do your best the first time around.

3.10 Expectations

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT OF ME:

I am here to help you succeed and grow in any way you can in this course. I am interested in your ideas and

thoughts and I am always willing to listen to them. Please contact me if you have any concerns or apprehension; I am here to help and offer support to you in any way I can. You do not need to wait until you have received a poor grade before asking for my assistance. Email on Eagle Online is the best way to reach me. If Eagle Online is not working and you have to contact me, you may email me at ranjana.varghese@hccs.edu. I am also available during my listed office hours to meet with you to help you with anything that will ensure your success in this course and enrich your experience as a student. I want you to succeed in this course and I know that with hard work and effort, you can do that. Please have a dialogue with me about anything that you need help with so that I can best help you. I am available to hear your concerns and just to discuss course topics. I have high expectations of you, but I am a fair teacher. I want you to excel, so I will challenge you in an effort to help you expand your horizons. Hard work and effort pay off, and this will be reflected in your outlook as well as your final grade. I am sympathetic to things that are out of your control, so never hesitate to let me know what is going on with you that may affect your experience as a student.

WHAT I EXPECT OF YOU:

I expect you to be familiar with all the policies that are described in my syllabus and keep up with the assignments listed in the course calendar. I expect you to be responsible for your learning and for the grade you earn in this course. I expect you to challenge and push yourselves. I expect you to take initiative in seeking knowledge and information and to be active learners. I expect you to think critically and to interact not only with the texts, but also with your peers and me in an intellectual and professional manner. I expect you to contact me as soon as possible if you have any concerns. I expect you to do all the work assigned in a timely and industrious manner. I expect only your very best work. Your success in this course depends on your effort and attitude!

COURSE SCHEDULE

(This is a tentative schedule and is subject to change. I will announce any changes on Eagle Online. It is your responsibility to stay on track. The activities and readings for each week are listed—you have the entire week to do them and I suggest doing them in the order in which I have listed them. You have until 9 p.m. of the Sunday at the end of the week (except for Week 15 when the discussion is due by 9 a.m. on Thursday that week) to post to discussion forums, however, I suggest you post them as soon as you finish working on them. In order to stay on track, you need to complete the assignments for each week within that week. Please do all readings and assignments in the order in which they are listed. Try to stay ahead of the deadlines as much as possible. While each week seems to have a lot of assignments, they are manageable if you stay organized and complete them in a timely fashion.)

Week 1: Aug. 26-Sep. 1: Getting Acquainted: Introduction to the Course

1. Read the Online Orientation and Professor's Greeting (<http://de2.hccs.edu/courses/index.php?sem=6141>)
2. Log in to Eagle Online and take care of any technical problems you may have with EO.
3. Read the complete course Syllabus carefully; as you read it, look carefully for the answers to the questions about the course and the syllabus that are required to be answered in the Diagnostic Essay. The answers to the questions about me are set off by ***.
4. Write and send me the Diagnostic Essay—by **6 p.m., Thursday, August 29th**.
5. Read “An Introduction to your Professor and your DE class.”
6. Read “Myths of DE Classes.”
7. Read “Online Etiquette.”
8. Introduce yourself to your classmates on the Student Introductions Discussion Forum.
9. Read at least 1 article on one of the listed websites (*BBC World News, Huffington Post, Washington Post*) **OR** listen to at least 1 report on one of the listed podcasts (Tell Me More, BBC World Have Your Say, The Diane Rehm Show).
10. Post your original comments (including a brief summary of the article you read or listened to) on the discussion site (it should be at least 250 words; no more than 50 words of summary, the rest your thoughts on the topic). In order for your discussion posts to receive credit they must be posted by 9 p.m. on Sunday, September 1st.

11. Comment on one of your classmates' original posts (it should be at least 100 words). In order for your discussion posts to receive credit they must be posted by 9 p.m. on Sunday, September 1st.
12. Email me (through Eagle Online; only if you're having troubles logging in, you may use my regular HCCS email address) if you have any questions about anything.

Week 2: Sep. 2-8: Introduction to the Informative Essay and Understanding Plagiarism

1. Read "Writing the Informative Essay."
2. In the *Little Seagull Handbook (LSH)* read W-1, W-2, W-7.
3. Read the documents on plagiarism ("Academic Honesty and How Plagiarism is Handled in This Course," "A Quick Look at Academic Honesty" and the Plagiarism Powerpoint).
4. Complete the Library's Begin Research Module: Go to the following link and follow the instructions: http://library.hccs.edu/?q=Begin_research
5. Read "Topics That Are Not Easily Argued."
6. Brainstorm for at least 3 possible ideas for your Informative Essay.
7. Read "Pre-Writing Activities."
8. Work on Prewriting Activities—choose any activity and work on it for each of your 3 topics. This should give you a better idea of what you already know (or think you know about each topic), what you need to find out, how interested you are in the topic, etc. You do NOT have to email these to me.
9. Read at least 1 article on one of the listed websites (*BBC World News, Huffington Post, Washington Post*) **OR** listen to at least 1 report on one of the listed podcasts (Tell Me More, BBC World Have Your Say, The Diane Rehm Show).
10. Post your original comments (including a brief summary of the article you read or listened to) on the discussion site (it should be at least 250 words; no more than 50 words of summary, the rest your thoughts on the topic). In order for your discussion posts to receive credit they must be posted by 9 p.m. on Sunday, September 8th.
11. Comment on one of your classmates' original posts (it should be at least 100 words). In order for your discussion posts to receive credit they must be posted by 9 p.m. on Sunday, September 8th.
12. Read Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" at the following link: http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html
13. Comment on King's essay on the Readings Discussion board; comment on one of your classmate's posts as well. In order to receive credit for this your responses must be posted by 9 p.m. on Sunday, September 8th.
14. Read "Writing the Journal."
15. Start writing in your Journal.

Week 3: Sep. 9-15: Starting your Library Research

1. In the Informative Essay Discussion Forum post your top 3 choices for the Informative Essay—give as much information as possible about what you want to research on each topic (you have until the 15th to post your choices and comment on your classmates' choices).
2. Comment on at least 3 of your classmates' choices (you have until the 15th for this).
3. Email me your top 3 choices (give me as much information as possible on what you want to research for each topic). If you do not email me your topics you will not receive my approval of them.
4. In the *LSH* read R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4.
5. Read "Doing Research and Finding Credible Sources."
6. Start looking for available sources on each of your 3 topics (pending my approval of them) on the HCCS Libraries' databases (remember to try different keywords and keyword combinations)—you need to have at least **3** for this essay. You could use any other academic database and/or library that you have access to, as long as you let me know. (You would ultimately choose the topic that has the most credible sources and about which you are most passionate.)
7. Email me with any questions about the Informative Essay (you may do this at any point before the essay is due).

8. Read at least 1 article on one of the listed websites (*BBC World News, Huffington Post, Washington Post*) **OR** listen to at least 1 report on one of the listed podcasts (Tell Me More, BBC World Have Your Say, The Diane Rehm Show).
9. Post your original comments (including a brief summary of the article you read or listened to) on the discussion site. Remember to put the word count at the top of your posting (at least 250 words).
10. Comment on one of your classmates' original posts. Remember to put the word count at the top of your comment (at least 100 words).
11. Read Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" at the following link:
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1080/1080-h/1080-h.htm>
12. Discuss this essay on the Readings Discussion page for it.

Week 4: Sep. 16-22: Purpose and Audience of the Essay

1. Based on your library research and my approval of your topic choices, choose your topic for the Informative Essay.
2. Look through the sources you have found for your chosen topic carefully—you must have at least 3 credible ones from the HCCS Libraries' databases/catalog or any other academic database/library catalog that I have approved.
3. Read "Purpose and Audience of the Informative Essay."
4. Work on the two practice Audience exercises (in the same document). These are for your practice only; you do NOT have to email them to me.
5. Read the sample student Audience Analysis examples; use them as guides when writing your own audience analysis for the Informative Essay.
6. Think about and create an audience analysis for your essay topic—be as detailed and specific as you can be by answering all the questions for demographics and values and beliefs as stated in the "Purpose and Audience of the Informative Essay" document.
7. Read "Formatting a Paper."

Week 5: Sep. 23-29: Organizing the Essay

1. Read at least 1 article on one of the listed websites (*BBC World News, Huffington Post, Washington Post*) **OR** listen to at least 1 report on one of the listed podcasts (Tell Me More, BBC World Have Your Say, The Diane Rehm Show).
2. Post your original comments (including a brief summary of the article you read or listened to) on the discussion site. Remember to put the word count at the top of your posting (at least 250 words).
3. Comment on one of your classmates' original posts. Remember to put the word count at the top of your comment (at least 100 words).
4. In the *LSH* read W-2, W-3, S-4, S-8, P-1.
5. Read "Organization and Outlining."
6. Read "Paragraphing and Topic Sentences."
7. Once you've read through the three sources you found on the HCCS libraries' databases for your topic and taken notes on the information in them that is relevant to your essay, create a preliminary outline—be as detailed as you can.

Week 6: Sep. 30-Oct. 6: Thesis, First Paragraph, Using Sources

1. In *LSH* reread W-2.
2. Read "Thesis."
3. Work on your thesis for this essay and email it to me.
4. Read "The First Paragraph."
5. Work on your first paragraph.
6. Revise your thesis, if needed, based on my feedback.
7. In *LSH* review R-3, R-4; look through the MLA Style section.
8. Read "Using Sources."
9. Work on "Citation Exercises."

10. Work on “Exercises on Paraphrasing, Summarizing, and Quoting.” You do NOT need to email me these exercises; they are for your practice.
11. Find passages in your sources that are relevant to your essay, summarize these sections in your own words, and cite these summaries in correct MLA format in-text, parenthetical citations—use the MLA Style section in your *LSH* to cite your sources correctly. Be sure to change the language of your summaries from the original.
12. Read at least 1 article on one of the listed websites (*BBC World News, Huffington Post, Washington Post*) **OR** listen to at least 1 report on one of the listed podcasts (Tell Me More, BBC World Have Your Say, The Diane Rehm Show).
13. Post your original comments (including a brief summary of the article you read or listened to) on the discussion site. Remember to put the word count at the top of your posting (at least 250 words).
14. Comment on one of your classmates' original posts. Remember to put the word count at the top of your comment (at least 100 words).

Week 7: Oct. 7-13: Filling in the Essay

1. Read “The Characteristics of a Good Academic Essay.”
2. Using your outline, continue working on your essay. Be sure to cite your sources carefully as you use information from them in your essay—use the MLA Style section in your *LSH* to cite correctly in MLA format.
3. Read “You and Your Credibility as a Writer.”
4. Read at least 1 article on one of the listed websites (*BBC World News, Huffington Post, Washington Post*) **OR** listen to at least 1 report on one of the listed podcasts (Tell Me More, BBC World Have Your Say, The Diane Rehm Show).
5. Post your original comments (including a brief summary of the article you read or listened to) on the discussion site. Remember to put the word count at the top of your posting (at least 250 words).
6. Comment on one of your classmates' original posts. Remember to put the word count at the top of your comment (at least 100 words).
7. Continue working on your Journal entries.

Week 8: Oct. 14-20: List of Works Cited and MLA Format

1. In the *LSH* read S-1, S-2, S-3, S-4; MLA Style.
2. Read “List of Works Cited.”
3. Cite your sources for the essay (you should have at least **3**) in correct MLA format (use the MLA Style section of the *LSH*).
4. Read “Avoiding Plagiarism.”
5. Continue working on your essay.
6. Read at least 1 article on one of the listed websites (*BBC World News, Huffington Post, Washington Post*) **OR** listen to at least 1 report on one of the listed podcasts (Tell Me More, BBC World Have Your Say, The Diane Rehm Show).
7. Post your original comments (including a brief summary of the article you read or listened to) on the discussion site. Remember to put the word count at the top of your posting (at least 250 words).
8. Comment on one of your classmates' original posts. Remember to put the word count at the top of your comment (at least 100 words).
9. Continue working on your Journal entries.

Week 9: Oct. 21-27: Finishing up the Informative Essay

1. Work on Informative Essay: due by 9 a.m. on Monday, October 28th.
2. Read S-9, L-1, L-2, P-2, P-4 in *LSH*.
3. Work on the conclusion of the essay—it must be round and address the main points of the essay in a thought-provoking way that does not simply repeat the first paragraph.
4. Read “Editing Worksheet for Informative Essay” and answer the questions as they pertain to your essay.
5. Email me with any questions about the Informative Essay.
6. Read “Common Grammar Errors” and work on grammar in your essay.

Week 10: Oct. 28-Nov. 3: Starting the Reflection Essay

1. **Informative Essay—due by 9 a.m. on Monday, October 28th.**
2. Read “Writing the Reflection Essay.”
3. Read Zora Neale Hurston's “How it Feels to Be Colored Me” at the following link:
<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma01/grand-jean/hurston/chapters/how.html>
4. Discuss Hurston's essay on the Readings Discussion page for this essay.
5. Start brainstorming for ideas for the Reflection Essay and post your top 3 on the Reflection Essay Discussion forum.
6. Email me your top 3 ideas for the Reflection Essay.
7. Read at least 1 article on one of the listed websites (*BBC World News, Huffington Post, Washington Post*) **OR** listen to at least 1 report on one of the listed podcasts (Tell Me More, BBC World Have Your Say, The Diane Rehm Show).
8. Post your original comments (including a brief summary of the article you read or listened to) on the discussion site. Remember to put the word count at the top of your posting (at least 250 words).
9. Comment on one of your classmates' original posts. Remember to put the word count at the top of your comment (at least 100 words).
10. Freewrite on your best idea—pending my approval.

Week 11: Nov. 4-10: Organizing the Reflection Essay

1. Read “Organizing the Reflection Essay.”
2. Create a working outline for your essay.
3. Using your outline, start working on your Reflection Essay.
4. Email me with any questions about your essay.
5. Read at least 1 article on one of the listed websites (*BBC World News, Huffington Post, Washington Post*) **OR** listen to at least 1 report on one of the listed podcasts (Tell Me More, BBC World Have Your Say, The Diane Rehm Show).
6. Post your original comments (including a brief summary of the article you read or listened to) on the discussion site. Remember to put the word count at the top of your posting (at least 250 words).
7. Comment on one of your classmates' original posts. Remember to put the word count at the top of your comment (at least 100 words).

Week 12: Nov. 11-17: Completing the Reflection Essay

1. Email me with any questions about the Reflection Essay.
2. Read “Editing Worksheet for Reflection Essay” and answer the questions for your essay.
3. Read “Common Grammar Errors” and work on grammar in your essay.
4. Work on Reflection Essay: due by 9 a.m. on Monday, November 18th.
5. In *LSH* read W-8.

Week 13: Nov. 18-24: Working on the Journal

1. **Reflection Essay—due by 9 a.m. on Monday, November 18th**
2. Continue working on your Journal.
3. Read at least 1 article on one of the listed websites (*BBC World News, Huffington Post, Washington Post*) **OR** listen to at least 1 report on one of the listed podcasts (Tell Me More, BBC World Have Your Say, The Diane Rehm Show).
4. Post your original comments (including a brief summary of the article you read or listened to) on the discussion site. Remember to put the word count at the top of your posting (at least 250 words).
5. Comment on one of your classmates' original posts. Remember to put the word count at the top of your comment (at least 100 words).

Week 14: Nov. 25-Dec. 1: Evaluations and Journal

1. Fill out the EGLS3—Evaluation for Greater Learning Student Survey.
2. Email me with any questions about your journal.

3. Work on completing and revising your journal entries.
4. Proofread and edit your journal—due by 9 a.m. on Monday, December 2nd.
5. Read at least 1 article on one of the listed websites (*BBC World News, Huffington Post, Washington Post*) **OR** listen to at least 1 report on one of the listed podcasts (Tell Me More, BBC World Have Your Say, The Diane Rehm Show).
6. Post your original comments (including a brief summary of the article you read or listened to) on the discussion site. Remember to put the word count at the top of your posting (at least 250 words).
7. Comment on one of your classmates' original posts. Remember to put the word count at the top of your comment (at least 100 words).

Week 15: Dec. 2-8: Journal and Final Discussion Forums

1. **Journal: due by 9 a.m. on Monday, December 2nd**
2. Read at least 1 article on one of the listed websites (*BBC World News, Huffington Post, Washington Post*) **OR** listen to at least 1 report on one of the listed podcasts (Tell Me More, BBC World Have Your Say, The Diane Rehm Show).
3. Post your original comments (including a brief summary of the article you read or listened to) on the discussion site. Remember to put the word count at the top of your posting (at least 250 words).
4. Comment on one of your classmates' original posts. Remember to put the word count at the top of your comment (at least 100 words).

Week 16: Dec. 9-13: Wrapping Up

1. Email me with any final questions you have.
2. Enjoy your winter break—you've earned it!