

English 111  
Professor Julianne Newmark  
Fall 2008

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Writing Critically:  
Thinking and Writing Between and Across Disciplines

**Mechanical Engineering Learning Community**

Section 04: M-W-F: 10:00 to 10:50 a.m.

Classroom: Cramer 120

Phone: 835-5901

**Office hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. I am also available at other times by appointment, so don't hesitate to set up a time to meet with me.

Welcome to English 111! This class constitutes part of your Mechanical Engineering Learning Community! In this class we will be exploring many different kinds of writing. Specifically, we will be exploring various *genres* of writing that you may encounter (and that you have already encountered) in various communities, in your educational experience (so far and that you will in the future), and in the world around you. Our goal is that you will be prepared to recognize, once our class is complete, the ways in which writing does and must change depending on the needs of an audience, be it an academic audience or a "popular" audience. Within our university, you will be required to express yourself in writing in the area of your major, Mechanical Engineering, and in other disciplinary areas. Many writing skills are transferable across disciplinary areas. These skills are "interdisciplinary" and we will pay close attention to these as we encounter them. Some disciplines have particular writing requirements, and we will investigate the ways that engineers write and the ways that non-experts write about engineering. As you'll see, we will read various essays about "engineering disasters" as well as many textbook chapters that specifically concern the process of critical and productive thinking about the writing process – and other processes! We will discuss the ways that writing changes based on community needs and audience. Finally, we will grapple with the idea that all writing shares the essential goal of communicating information, and we will seek to communicate effectively, clearly, and in many different written ways before our course is over.

**New Mexico Tech's objectives for English 111 are that you will learn:**

*To read and think critically*

- define problems
- examine claims and evidence
- organize and evaluate information

*To demonstrate awareness of audience*

- knowledge of audience expectations
- knowledge of particular audience needs
- knowledge of conventions of academic writing

*To write and speak coherently*

- present a strong thesis
- write coherent paragraphs with clear topic sentences
- write clear sentences with correct grammar and punctuation

*To recognize writing as a process rather than a product*

- making changes through several drafts
- participation in peer review

**Required texts:**

1. Lunsford, Andrea A. *The Everyday Writer*. Third Edition.
2. Chiles, James R. *Inviting Disaster*.
3. Chaffee, John. *Thinking Critically*. Ninth Edition.
4. I will also provide links to online readings at various times throughout the term.

**Required work and grading scale:**

Your grade will be based on various factors, including attendance, participation, completion and quality of written work. You will be expected to participate in peer review exercises, group work in class, and conferences with me. The “reading responses” are marked in the course calendar with large asterisks: \*  
Below is the point distribution.

**Point Distribution**

Paper 1 (drafts and final)	60
Paper 2 (drafts and final)	100
Paper 3 (drafts and final)	140
Group project	200
Six reading responses (P/F)	60 (10 points ea.)
Conferences (3)	30
Quizzes (2 – 25 points ea.)	50
Revision	75
Particip./Attend./In-Class Work	85

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**TOTAL 800**

**Grading scale:**

A	744 and above
A-	720-743
B+	696-719
B	664-695
B-	640-663
C+	616-639
C	584-615
C-	560-583

**Revision**

Over the course of the semester, we will be working on revision, with assignments small and large. Your group project will include a large revision component as will both essays in the first sequence. You **must** participate in an in-class revision exercise during in the last week of class, and I will provide you with more information about this as the end of term approaches.

**Class Participation**

You will be evaluated on your ability and willingness to participate in classroom discussions and other activities. Keep this in mind and be sure to be alert in class, prepared for class work, and engaged in our subject matter.

**Attendance and Tardiness**

If you miss more than four classes, you will be asked to drop the course or you will receive a failing grade. There are, of course, extraordinary situations in which absences might be excused. A stay in the hospital, for example, is what I would call “extraordinary.” I do take attendance into consideration in the calculation of your final grade, along with the above-mentioned factor of participation. Be sure to attend all class meetings and to be on time. Every three days that you are tardy (more than five minutes) count as one "absent" day. I consider this syllabus, incidentally, as your contract with me, and mine with you. If you choose to continue in this class, after reading this syllabus, I expect that you will abide by the requirements of this course. If you

call or email me PRIOR to class time with a legitimate excuse for an absence, I will excuse you for that day. If, however, you will be missing more than three “excused” days because of illness, you will need to work with Academic Affairs to ensure that you have properly documented your illness. I will not continue to excuse absences after three emails or calls without the proper involvement of Academic Affairs.

### **Late Papers**

Papers must be turned in at the beginning of our class time on the day the assignment is due. After this time, for each day an assignment is late, I will deduct one letter grade (meaning, if the paper begins at an "A" and is one day late, I will begin grading it from an "A-" -- etcetera). Again, extraordinary circumstances might excuse a late assignment, but these are rare. I will not accept emailed versions of papers; you must come to class, or arrange to see me in my office, to turn in your paper-copy of your assignment. *I reserve the right not to accept late writing assignments or group projects. Even if you miss class on a paper due-date because of a documented illness, you must submit your paper to me on the due-date (by receiving authorization from me to submit an initial copy by email) or receive an extension due to a documented illness. An excused absence does not automatically mean you can turn your paper in late with no penalty.*

### **Courteousness and Cell Phones**

I expect all students to behave appropriately and respectfully in class. You are expected to be courteous to me and your classmates. One sign of courteousness is that you turn off your cell phone before entering class. If there are repeated problems with your cell phone, I will ask you to leave the classroom for the day. You will take an absence that day.

### **Equal Access**

Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner. Handouts are available in alternative accessible formats upon request.

### **Plagiarism**

In our course, we will spend ample time covering what is required of you in terms of correct citation, academic honesty, and intellectual property. After this information has been presented to you in class, you are responsible for it and cannot claim ignorance as a defense against an accusation of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism, in very general terms, is the use of someone else's words or ideas without proper citation. Your style guide, *Everyday Writer*, includes information about plagiarism. I suggest that you become familiar with pages 168 and 173-175 and commit to memory the information regarding plagiarism that I provide for you in class. Also, the NMT library offers a handy website addressing many plagiarism issues and provides advice on avoiding plagiarism:

<http://infohost.nmt.edu/~nmtlib/INFO/ORef/plagiarism.html>

### **Essay Format**

All work that is to be handed in must be typed, double-spaced, printed on white paper in black ink, and must use twelve-point font (preferably Times New Roman). If your paper does not conform to these stylistic requirements, I will hand it back to you without a grade and you will be required to reformat in and will suffer a late-paper penalty.

### **Conferences**

On the course calendar, you will notice that several class sessions have been cancelled in order to accommodate individual student conferences with me. These conferences are mandatory, and your failure to show up will affect your grade: not only will you not receive any of the participation points for the conference, your failure to show up will count as an absence.

**Course calendar:**

	DATE	ITEMS DUE	IN-CLASS ACTIVITY/OUTCOME
1	Wednesday, August 27		First day writing exercise. Discuss EW 1-9
	Friday, August 29	EW 9-22	Introductions Common grammar errors. Paper format. What is a summary?
2	Monday, September 1	NO CLASSES	NO CLASSES
	Wednesday, September 3	EW 25-35, TC 43-57 EW 167	What is a "rhetorical situation?" What is a "critical thinker"? Why is it important to be a critical thinker as a mechanical engineer? Discuss response papers.
	Friday, September 5	*Response One Due* ID 1-17 (Introduction)	Discuss chapter. What is the "genre" of <i>Inviting Disaster</i> ? Who is the audience?
3	Monday, September 8	*Response Two Due* ID 37-65 (Ch. 2)	Assign Essay One
	Wednesday, September 10	EW 49-62	Constructing paragraphs.
	Friday, September 12	TC 80-100	Introducing and citing sources. Examining problems and solutions.
4	Monday, September 15	TC 116-128	Perceiving, interpreting, presenting.
	Wednesday, September 17	<b>Essay One due.</b> EW 70-78 EW 139-142	Introduce "logical fallacies." Assign Essay Two.
	Friday, September 19		[film viewing] <i>Modern Marvels: Engineering Disasters</i>
5	Monday, September 22		Thinking critically about film. [film viewing] <i>Modern Marvels: Engineering Disasters</i>
	Wednesday, September 24	*Response Three Due* ID 65-95 (Ch. 3)	Discuss essay two problems and concerns. Model essay.
	Friday, September 26	Essay Two peer review day.	
6	Monday, September 29	Conferences	Conferences
	Wednesday, October 1	Conferences	Conferences
	Friday, October 3	<b>Essay Two due</b> Cumulative Quiz 1	Begin group project
7	Monday, October 6	Group Project ***	Individual expertise narratives, "open form" writing. EXERCISE ONE.
	Wednesday, October 8		TC 220-235 EXERCISE TWO
	Friday, October 10		TC 235-248 EXERCISE TWO continued
8	Monday, October 13		EXERCISE THREE
	Wednesday, October 15		TC 166-189 EXERCISE THREE continued
	Friday, October 17		Meet in library EW 145-164 EXERCISE FOUR
9	Monday, October 20		Meet in library EXERCISE FOUR continued

	Wednesday, October 22	Meet in library	EXERCISES FIVE & SIX
	Friday, October 24	NO CLASSES	NO CLASSES
10	Monday, October 27	TBA	TBA
	Wednesday, October 29		Discuss group essay. View examples. View sample binders.
	Friday, October 31	Conferences	Conferences
	Monday, November 3	<b>GROUP SCRAPBOOK DUE!</b>	In-class writing exercise.
11	Wednesday, November 5	TC 341-361	Exploratory vs. argumentative writing. Structures of argumentation. Written arguments.
	Friday, November 7	TC 361-374	Arguing about popular debatable issues.
12	Monday, November 10	*Response Four Due* ID 117-139 (Ch. 5)	
	Wednesday, November 12	TC 376-396	Essay Three assigned
	Friday, November 14	*Response Five Due* ID 205-229 (Ch. 9)	
13	Monday, November 17	TC 396-416	Revisiting logical fallacies
	Wednesday, November 19	*Response Six Due* ID 259-275 (Ch. 11)	
	Friday, November 21	EW 164-175	
14	Monday, November 24		Thesis development exercises
	Wednesday, November 26		Genres of argumentation
	Friday, November 28	NO CLASSES	NO CLASSES
	Monday, December 1	Essay Three peer review day.	
15	Wednesday, December 3	Conferences	Conferences
	Friday, December 5	Conferences	Conferences
16	Monday, December 8	<b>Essay Three Due.</b> EW 62-70 Cumulative Quiz 2. Course evaluations.	
	Wednesday, December 10	Revise-for-Credit One. <b>Bring Essay Two to class.</b>	
	Friday, December 12	LAST DAY OF CLASSES Revise-for-Credit Two. <b>Essay Three will be returned.</b>	(We have no final exam!)

### Information regarding your Learning Community:

The classes that constitute your Learning Community are EDUC 101, ENGL 111, and MENG 110. These classes will work in synchrony with each other this Fall semester and you will be a member of a cohort of students that will share these classes in common. Also, some of your assignments from each of these courses will do double (or triple!) duty in these classes. Each class has its own objectives as to what you will learn during the Fall semester, however, as components of the Learning Community, there are certain goals that all of the classes (and the instructors) share. We hope to help you to acclimate to your new life as an NMT student and equip you with the writing, critical thinking, and college-life-awareness skills that will contribute to your success at NMT. We hope that you enjoy being a member of the Mechanical Engineering Learning Community.