

Instructor [Michael Buckhoff](#)
Online Writing Course

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Course Description

This Online Writing Course focuses on basic essay structure, particularly with taking in-class essay examinations taken under time constraint, and then progresses to writing summaries and critiques, two important writing genres associated with research writing. Therefore, after you satisfactorily complete this course, you will have the confidence to tackle a first-year or upper division collegiate writing course, especially one requiring a multi-draft research project. Also, upon completion of this writing course, you will have the confidence to take standardized admission exams such as the TOEFL or IELTS.

In addition to helping you become acquainted with the organizational patterns of academic writing, this course will focus on English as a Second Language grammatical and editing topics essential to helping you develop a keen eye toward editing as you work on polishing your two multi-draft writing assignments.

Finally, the activities you will complete will support the purpose of this course, which can be thought about in the following goals:

- Learn some of the conventions of writing expected in higher education, including in-class essay exams, summaries, critiques, and [source citation](#)
- Develop reading strategies that will help you to [read actively and critically](#)
- Learn how to organize an essay exam under time constraint
- Learn how to recognize typical writing errors that non-native and native speakers make when writing and how to minimize the frequency of those errors in academic writing assignments
- Write multi-drafts of your summary and critique based on peer and instructor feedback

Course Requirements

As an enrollee to this course, you are expected to read all the assigned topics; to complete all the essay exams and self-study editing quizzes; to complete all the writing practice exercises; to complete the grammar and editing pre-tests and post-tests; and to write and make required revisions for the summary and critique academic writing assignments. Each of these parts of the course will be discussed.

Assigned Topics

During the course, you will get instruction ranging from basic essay instruction to more complex forms of writing such as writing summaries and critiques. You will also get instruction on how to read critically: effective pre-reading and reading strategies, analyzing a writer's tone and style, making inferences, and understanding the organization of a reading passage. Additional instruction will be offered in paraphrasing, quoting, summarizing, and learning useful templates for introducing source information, all of which will be integral in helping you learn how to write summaries and critiques without plagiarizing. It is highly recommended that you integrate these templates to which you are introduced into your summary and critique writing assignments.

Writing Practice Exercises

At the center of this course are the writing practice exercises which are designed to reinforce the core instruction taught in the assigned topics. These exercises will focus in the following areas: decoding the writing task, pre-writing strategies, creating sharply-focused thesis statements and writing on-task introductions, recognizing well-organized paragraphs, writing effective topic sentences, using supporting details, writing coherent conclusions, and scoring practice essays. In all, there are 81 self-study practice exercises, the completion of which will help you to improve the organization of your writing for the three timed essay exams and the summary and critique writing assignments for this course.

Timed Essay Exams

During this course, you will take 3 timed 30 minute essay exams during which you will be given a writing assignment and then time to plan, write, and edit. These essays will be cumulatively worth 30% of your overall grade: Essay 1 = 05%, Essay 2 = 10%, and Essay 3 = 15%. You will be allowed 1 attempt for each timed essay exam, and, once you start the exam, you will have 30 minutes to complete it; then you must click the "Submit all and finish" button so that it can be read and scored.

Self-study Editing Quizzes

To help build your grammar, writing, and editing proficiency, you will complete 22 self-study editing lessons and exercises: simple sentence structure, prepositional phrases, participial phrases, appositives, compound sentences, adjective clauses, noun clauses, adverb clauses, multiple clauses, misplaced modifiers, subject-verb inversions, word forms, word choice, parallel structure, word order, count/noncount nouns, passive verbs, redundancy, articles, subject-verb agreement, adjective versus adverbs, and comma splices/run-ons/fragments.

Each topic will have targeted grammar and editing instruction followed by a 20 question self-study quiz. Though they are ungraded and will not count toward your overall grade in this course, these quizzes are designed to help you minimize typical ESL errors and to help you improve your sentence variety so that you write at college-level proficiency.

Grammar and Editing Pre-tests and Post-tests

These two 25 minute tests consisting of 25 questions will randomly draw from a test bank, thus giving you a different set of questions each time. Upon completing the pre-test, worth 05% of your overall grade, you are encouraged to diligently study the instruction leading to the self-study quizzes and then answer the test questions so that you can learn all the editing and grammar areas targeted in these two tests. You will be allowed 3 attempts to take this pre-test before clicking the "Submit all and finish" button.

Then, at the end of the course, you will take the post-test which is worth 15% of your overall grade. Hopefully, you will show a marked improvement on the post-test, an indicator that you have mastered the grammar and editing instruction taught throughout this course. You will NOT be allowed to review these two tests nor will you be allowed to take these tests repeatedly. You will be allowed 3 attempts to take this post-test before clicking the "Submit all and finish" button.

Summary Writing Assignment

This is a 1 to 1 1/2 page double-spaced, typed writing assignment in which you will read a 10 page article by sociolinguist Deborah Tannen titled [Talk in the Intimate Relationship: His and Hers](#)

[and](#)

[2\) Write a summary of her ideas.](#)

After this assignment is graded, you will be allowed 1 revision of this essay which is worth 15% of your overall grade. The final grade for this assignment will be determined by whatever score you receive on the first or second submission (whichever applies).

Critique Writing Assignment

This is a 3-4 page double-spaced writing assignment consisting of two parts:

1. You are asked to critique Tannen's article. In a sense, you are "repackaging" your summary so that it is framed as a critique; this time, instead of objectively reporting Tannen's thesis and critical supporting points, you are asked to evaluate or critique her article perhaps by judging the essay's structure, tone, clarity, and overall effect.

2. Then, you should answer the following question, "Do you agree with Tannen that there are cultural differences between men and women, including how they use talk and view its role in relationships? Why or why not?" Be sure to support your opinion with examples from your own experiences or from the experiences of people you know.

After this assignment is graded, you will be allowed 2 revisions of this essay which is worth 35% of your overall grade. The final grade for this assignment will be determined by whatever score you receive on the first, second, or third submission (whichever applies).

Grading Policies

This course is graded on a Credit (CR)/No Credit (NC) basis. Students who receive a CR will be given a certificate of completion; students who receive a NC must repeat the course if they want a letter of recommendation for graduate or undergraduate study. You are guaranteed a CR if you earn 85% of the possible 100 percentage points, distributed as follows:

| | | |
|--------------------|---|----|
| Timed Essay Exam 1 | = | 05 |
| Timed Essay Exam 2 | = | 10 |
| Timed Essay Exam 3 | = | 15 |
| Grammar Pre-Test | = | 05 |
| Grammar Post-test | = | 15 |
| Summary | = | 15 |
| Critique | = | 35 |

100 pts

Assessment of Written Work

The two multi-draft writing assignments will be assessed in the following areas: meeting the assignments' requirements, exploring the issues thoughtfully and in depth, coherently and logically organizing ideas supported by apt reasons and well-chosen examples, and being generally free from errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure.

Plagiarism

The university has strict guidelines regarding this issue: "Plagiarism is the presentation as one's own ideas and writings of another. Students must make appropriate acknowledgment of the written source where material is written or compiled." Keep in mind the following forms of plagiarism and the consequences for each offense:

Cheating: Borrowing, buying, or otherwise obtaining writing composed by someone else and submitting it under your name. Minimum penalty is "NC" in the course; the maximum penalty is suspension from the university. Dean of students is notified of the offense.

Non-attribution: Writing your own paper but including passages from another work without providing parenthetical notes citing the source and quotation marks or block indentation to indicate exactly what has been copied from the source. Minimum penalty is subsequent revision of the paper to avoid a "NC;" depending on the degree of deception, another penalty may be "NC" in the course; the maximum penalty may result in suspension from the university. Dean of students may be notified of the offense.

Patchwriting: Writing passages have not been copied exactly but have been borrowed from another source. Even though parenthetical notes citing the source have been provided, you have paraphrased the source's language too closely. Though patchwriting may appear in your preliminary drafts, it is not acceptable in final draft academic writing. Minimum penalty is a subsequent revision of the paper. Dean of students is not notified of the offense.

Final Note

Welcome to my online writing course! Together we can make this a great course, and I will do everything I can to help you reach the high expectations this university has set forth. If you have questions, please contact by E-mail or by Skype. As a result, we can work out any questions or concerns that you may have relating to matters of instruction.

