

Professor: Judit Barta

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Course description: The course lays an emphasis on the following elements of college writing: read closely to analyze texts and question sources, reason with evidence, organize persuasive and well-structured arguments, communicate your ideas in a clear and effective prose. Based on the interest of the group, the reading of a short novel can also be incorporated. Writing assignments will be given on a regular basis, to be submitted in an electronic form before the class. Computer mishaps are not accepted as excuse. Attendance is mandatory, late arrival by more than 15 minutes is accounted as absence. More than 3 unexcused absences will result in failing the class. No cell phone use is accepted during the class, because your full attention is required. The use of Thesaurus online dictionary is recommended. The selection of readings will be based on the level of English of the students.

Learning outcomes:

- Students demonstrate an ability to construct well-supported arguments using different patterns of organization
- Students became familiar with rhetorical terminology
- Students significantly improve their vocabulary, with a focus on academic language
- Students gain practice in critical reading and are able to spot reasoning errors, a.k.a. logical fallacies
- Students can effectively follow specific essay instructions (evaluate, criticize, define, compare, define, etc.)

Requirements and grading:

- Class participation: 15%
- Weekly, writing assignments 20%
- Midterm essay (take-home) 20% - 1000 words
- Final essay (take-home) 40% - 2000 words
- Development in individual language challenge 5%

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Week 1 January 29-February 2 Description, Narration – Literature, the writer’s voice . Introduce yourself in 200 words as in an e-mail message. Topic: A life-changing experience/ A revelatory moment

Read: Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave

Grammar: Basic Parts of Speech, Verbs plus subjects

<https://americanliterature.com/author/frederick-douglass/book/narrative-of-the-life-of-frederick-douglass-an-american-slave/chapter-2>

Week 2: February 5-9 Topic sentence (topic + controlling idea) and supporting ideas; Use of cohesive devices: pronouns, synonyms, linking words. Transition sentences. Close reading of a text, annotating

“Shaping Paragraphs.” In-class work on grammar and expressions.

Assignment: Write a description of a person who helped you the most to become who you are today. Explain what qualities make this person exemplary for you and/or how that person played such an important role in your life (500 words)

Week 3. Febr 12-16. Writing definitions. Using and unpacking quotes, Skimming; vocabulary-using context clues

Assignment: Write a definition of 6 terms related to your major, indicating the sources.

Grammar: articles, prepositional phrases, spelling

Week 4. February 19-23 - What is an argument? Guessing meaning from context, inferring writer’s assumptions

Grammar: relative clauses, adjectives+ verbs +prepositions

Week 5. March 5- Writing: Interpretive summaries, practicing paraphrasing

Read: <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/07/is-google-making-us-stupid/306868/>

Assignment: Complete a reading response for “Is Google Making us Stupid?”

Grammar: Abstract nouns, joining sentences

Week 6. March 12-16 Submit the draft of your midterm essay related to **religion and society**. Introductory paragraph, including thesis. Outline as well if you want.

In class: timed writing

Individual conference.

The cause and effect essay

Week 7. March 19–23 MIDTERM WEEK

Take-home midterm paper, consisting of critical reading tasks + essay

Looking at punctuation rules, correcting sentence problems (stringy, run-on, sentence fragments)

Week 8. April 3-6 Preparing outlines

Week 9. April 9-13 - Writing effective introductions

Comparison-contrast (on two artistic trends/political leaders/theories/political ideologies/works of art/business methods) (500 words)

Week 10. April 16–20 Writing effective conclusions.

Week 11 Apr 23-27 + Submit the draft of the final essay

Week 12 May 7-11 Debate motion, spotting logical fallacies, individual conferences

Read:<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/21/us/oregons-legal-sale-of-marijuana-comes-with-relief.html?smprod=nytcore-iphone&smid=nytcore-iphone-share>

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/sep/26/tinder-personal-data-dating-app-messages-hacked-sold>

Week 13 May 14-18 Submitting and presenting the final essay. Wrap-up the semester