**Senior Composition 2017-18 (Stout, PCH Room 947)  
University of Missouri – St. Louis**

**Contact**

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**Turnitin.com Login**

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Register on Turnitin with an e-mail address that you use regularly. I will use this to e-mail the class updates, reminders, and information. You are responsible for any information I send to you via your Turnitin e-mail address.

**Senior Composition** is a college-preparatory course dealing with the organization and style of the various kinds of essays and term papers the student will be expected to write in his/her college career. A knowledge of the multi-paragraph essay, its components (introduction, supports and conclusion), the foundations of grammar, and previous success in the field are necessary. The essays will be based on social studies, current events, and controversial issues.

Refer closely to the individual handouts for each of the major essays for specific expectations and skills being taught and assessed per unit.

**Class Expectations**

1. Challenge your understanding by asking meaningful questions.
2. Own your language (verbal and written).
3. Reciprocate in the conversation gracefully.
4. Be trustworthy.
5. Respect the intellectual freedom of others.

**Grading Rubric** (weighted grade scale)

75% Formal Writing Assignments (final drafts)  
10% Final Exam (in-class essay)  
15% Participation, Process, and Class Management

**Citizenship**

Your citizenship grade depends on your participation, behavior, and attendance. Citizenship grades are especially important when applying to colleges and other post-secondary programs, so it is in your best interest to prioritize them.

A top “O” score is reserved for students who exhibit strong verbal communication and enthusiasm for the course. Students may be penalized with an “I” or “U” score due to multiple tardies and/or unexcused absences (most common reasons), as well as disruptive or disrespectful behavior, academic dishonesty, and/or refusal to work during class time.

**Major Units**

\*Essay 1 - Parkway Diagnostic

\*Essay 2 – Opposing Viewpoints

\*Essay 3 –Narrative Profile

\*Essay 4 – Proposing a Solution

\*Essay 5 – Speculating Causes

\*Essay 6 (Speech) – Evaluation

\*Essay 7—Final essay

**Texts** The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing, 8th edition  
A Pocket Style Manual, 5th ed. by Diana Hacker

**Daily Rules**

- Come to class prepared with readings as well as a notebook and pen or pencil.   
- Please **keep your cell phones and music devices put away**. Cell phone and headphone use during class instruction is disrespectful. If I must ask you for your phone, please hand it over without argument and I will be happy to return it to you after class. I will also obey the “no cellphone” rule as a sign of respect to you. Tell me in advance if you are standing by to receive an ‘emergency’ call or message.   
- Do not ask to go to the computer lab or your locker for forgotten materials.   
- Throw trash away. I will allow food and drink in class only if it doesn’t become a hazard.   
- No touching others, including friendly playfighting. You are too old to play and tease by groping and play-hitting each other; this conduct is not permitted amongst adults.   
- Do not be regularly tardy to class. It is disrespectful to assume that you can stroll in when everyone else is prepared for class to begin. (I drive 45 minutes from the city, so I expect you to be on time early in the morning.)   
- We uphold a strict Zero Tolerance policy against any acts of verbal, non-verbal, written, physical or mental harassment and abuse. Not only is bullying heavily discouraged for the sake of student safety; this is a place of learning where others’ intellectual freedom cannot be disturbed by harmful behavior.

**Late Work and Absences**

- You must meet deadlines to succeed in this class. To be “on time”, completed assignments are to be submitted (online or printed) by the beginning of class on the due date. Assignments are penalized 10% of the total value if late. (One day late equals -10%, One week late equals -20%, and two weeks late equals -30%.) **Late work is not accepted after three weeks late.** Process checks (drafts, peer editing) are not awarded any points if late; they may only be submitted for points on the due date, since the purpose of these assessments is to chart the productivity of your writing process. You are expected to share draft work online on time if you are absent.  **-** Final drafts of major written projects and essays are to be submitted on Turnitin. Print, Google Drive, or e-mail will be used to turn in drafts and other assignments (i.e. minor writing assignments, essay drafts, slide shows). **Technical difficulties are no excuse for late or missing work.** You are expected to back up work and plan around malfunctions in advance. Don’t rely on school computers to print or submit work during the due date before class begins. Also, print your Turnitin submission receipts so we can avoid “I *thought* I submitted it but I guess it didn’t work” excuses.   
**-** You cannot make up missed tests or quizzes due to unexcused absences or tardies.   
- If you are absent, email or drop off assignments by the due time and date. If an online document does not open or has technical errors, perhaps due to faulty formatting, it may be counted late.   
- You are responsible for any missed work or information while absent from class. It is your responsibility to communicate with me in advance if you are planning to miss future classes because of travel, field trips, or other circumstances. Contact me before the next class to learn about missed work. Do not wait for me to confront you about missed work or information.   
- Refer to the Infinite Campus gradebook regularly and ask me if you do not understand any assignments or notes on the gradebook within a reasonable timeframe (not months later). Refer to feedback comments on Turnitin for feedback on how to improve future assignments.

**Cheating and Plagiarism**

Any use of outside materials (aside from required research) or copying of others’ ideas on assigned work is an act of plagiarism, particularly for but not restricted to formal and creative writing assignments. Also, you cannot submit the same or similar work twice in two different classes. Note the district’s policy on ‘Academic Integrity’ in your handbook. The result is a zero on the assignment as well as notification of parent/guardians and administration.

“Doing research” is not an excuse for using outside materials on an essay. Common literary essays are not research assignments. Your only resources for those assignments should be the primary text, class notes and discussions, and your own thoughts.

I regularly conduct “process checks” on major writing assignments (checking research, drafts, peer edits, etc.) to further ensure honest work. If you refuse to work during class time, fail to meet process deadlines, and do not visit for help in academic lab, I might not accredit your finished work on grounds of suspicion that it might be the work of someone else. (Failing to meet these checkpoints are sometimes symptoms of family, friends, tutors, etc., writing your paper for you or facilitating your thoughts and/or structure.) I must witness your process to guarantee the legitimacy of your work. You may only seek outside help as editors of your completed drafts.

While there is a difference in motive whether acts of cheating/plagiarism are purposeful or out of ignorance, the consequences are the same. At a college level, these mistakes could lead to expulsion from the school. Unlike late/missing work, there is no recovery from penalty for academic dishonesty except to move forward and adjust one’s choices on future upcoming assignments.

**Extenuating Circumstances**

Communicate with your instructors to ensure greater success in your schoolwork. I welcome your conversation and expect you to let me know if anything is preventing you from succeeding or focusing. If you are suffering from something such as a bereavement or a medical, emotional, or psychological issue, I must still insist that we follow a plan in advance regarding course expectations and assessments.

If you cannot meet class expectations due to such issues, go through the correct channels (counselors, doctors, administrators) if you hope for exemptions or extensions. Usually a doctor’s note and a confirmation from your grade level principal is required if the situation is medical. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from meeting the requirements of the course (completing assigned reading and writing, etc.), the proper course of action may be to communicate with administrators and counselors for an “Incomplete” grade in the course rather than a failing grade. You will not earn the credit for the course, but this will not negatively affect your GPA.

Sometimes students in danger of failing ask “what else” they can do to make up for weeks or months of missing/neglected work. I do not offer alternative or extra credit which would replace the core reading and writing requirements of the course.

**Philosophy**

I ultimately believe in the independent freedom of choice, and with that belief comes the reality that we are responsible for our own decisions. Take ownership of your choice to attend class and make the most of it.

Because I believe greatly in your abilities and value your growth, I have little tolerance for excuses and weak-willed attitudes. I believe in your ability to rise above your difficulties; in the spirit of equality, I maintain the same expectation for success from each student. I rarely, if ever, grant extensions or exemptions, especially more than once for the same student.

If a student considers themselves weak in a given area, I believe this is all the more reason why they should exercise these skills. Students sometimes claim to be “bad” at tasks such as creative writing or public speaking, for example. If you are “not creative” or “can’t talk in front of people”, these are precisely the reasons why I should ask you to try these things. It’s not my job to ask you to do things you already know how to do. It’s my job to challenge you.

All learning is valuable and contributes to lifelong growth. Even if you are not driven to pursue and English degree in college, or if your choice of profession has nothing to do specifically with literature, you are still learning how to learn. This is a Humanities course which explores the depths of yourself and our collective living experience. We are not robots waiting on a conveyor belt to be built into our predetermined professions. As a leader in whatever future field you may pursue, an articulation in arts and literature, along with the critical thinking skills which we exercise in our writing and speaking, will enrich your existence and your success.