Michael Morris  
Office: C-264, Eastfield College  
Online course  
Fall 2018, Flex 1  
E-mail: michaelmorris@daccd.edu  
see schedule in Ecampus

Office hours:

Quick Writing Centers:  
Evaluation  
Attendance  
Academic Dishonesty  
Reading and Assignments’ Process  
Cell Phones and Recording  
Writing Hints and Formatting

Course Home Page:  http://ecampus.dcccd.edu  
Technical Support for eCampus:  972.669-6402  
Let’s make it a great semester!

Textbook and Other Course Materials

Required:  
Morris, Michael- *The Active Writer*  
(Third Edition)  
eBook ISBN: 9781524971489  
Speigalman, Art – *Maus*  
Print ISBN: 978-0679406419

*The Writer’s Circle* – Video lessons streamed on Ecampus and available in the Eastfield College library.

Required Materials: a valid DCCCD student i.d.; a DCCCD or other private email address that you check regularly; flash drives.  
Recommended: *The American Heritage Dictionary* or any good paperback *English* dictionary. Use of a cloud service, such as Dropbox or Google Docs to back work up.
Mission:
Eastfield College English faculty help students become confident, competent writers who can communicate effectively in diverse situations to a variety of audiences, using writing skills as well as critical thinking to develop and express their ideas.

ENGL 1301: Composition I

Course Description:
2014 Core Curriculum Foundational Component Area: 010 Communications

Course Description: Intensive study of and practice in writing processes, from invention and researching to drafting, revising, and editing, both individually and collaboratively. Emphasis on effective rhetorical choices, including audience, purpose, arrangement, and style. Focus on writing the academic essay as a vehicle for learning, communicating, and critical analysis. (3 Lec.) Coordinating Board Academic Approval Number 23.1301.51 12

Student Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, students will:
1. Demonstrate knowledge of individual and collaborative writing processes.
2. Develop ideas with appropriate support and attribution.
3. Write in a style appropriate to audience and purpose.
4. Read, reflect, and respond critically to a variety of texts.
5. Use Edited American English in academic essays.

Core Objectives:
ENGL 1301 develops the following Core Objectives:
- **Critical Thinking** - to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
- **Communication** - to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of idea through written, oral, and visual communication.
- **Teamwork** - to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.
- **Personal Responsibility** - to include the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.

Core Objective Development Statements:
ENGL 1301 develops **Critical Thinking** by requiring students to analyze a variety of texts in terms of audience, purpose and style. This analysis serves as the basis for written responses that require the justification of ideas through support and attribution.
ENGL 1301 develops **Communication** by requiring students to respond to a variety of texts in the form of revised and edited academic essays.

ENGL 1301 develops **Teamwork** by requiring students to engage in collaborative writing and editing processes such as peer review.

ENGL 1301 develops **Personal Responsibility** by teaching students the ethical and accurate use of research through proper citation and documentation.

**Course Outline with A More Specific Course Description**

The course is divided into four units, each focusing on reading and writing for different purposes. For each essay, you will receive an assignment that describes the features of the writing and refers you to relevant textbook information. When we meet as a class, we will discuss the readings, brainstorm topic ideas, as well as read and respond to others’ drafts. If you miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate or check the online calendar to find out what you missed so you will be fully prepared for the next class session. Even though we’ll work hard, I hope that we’ll have fun too as we read, write, talk, listen, and learn together.

**Essays**

With feedback from others, you will develop, revise, polish, and submit **four out-of-class essays**. For each essay you will receive detailed information, including features of the writing, and guidelines for selecting topics. You will choose a topic within those guidelines, but your **essay topic must be approved by me** to have your essay accepted and graded.

You'll also write **one in-class essay**.¹ You will have the topic in advance and may bring in one page of notes (NO complete sentences) to use. You may also use a dictionary or thesaurus during the in-class essay.

You will find the **Grading Standards for Essays** on this syllabus. **NOTE:** If the surface problems in an essay are so numerous or so severe that they make it difficult for readers to focus on your meaning or understand what you are trying to say, an assignment may get a "**flat F**" (all other criteria irrelevant).

**Process**

**Quizzes:** Scheduled quizzes are given primarily over assigned reading (though some may cover video lessons² or lectures). The formats and frequencies of quizzes are determined as the instructor deems necessary.

¹ This assignment may be dropped or changed if necessary. If the assignment is dropped, the grade breakdown will be appropriately changed and announced.

² If have trouble with playing videos, first contact the help desk (not me) at 1-866-374-7169 or 972-669-6402. They should be able to walk you through the problem to see what needs to be done on your end. Be sure to write down the name of the person you speak with and the ticket number. If this does not work, you have access to the Eastfield College library, go to the Media section and check out the DVD of *The Writer’s Circle*. 
**Journals:** Short, in-class assignments are given during class. Most of these are prewriting exercises for the essays you will be working on.

**Workshops:** When a draft is due, you will be required to submit the paper, correctly saved and formatted, online prior to class time. You will also need a printed copy to share with a group member.

**Discussion Board:** Because the Discussion Board is part of our college classroom and not a chat room or a form of IM, you will need to use Standard American English. Fortunately, the discussion board includes Editing Tools, so correct and proofread your posts before hitting Submit. Although you cannot remove a post once you have submitted it, you can modify your own posts to correct careless editing or add explanations, etc. For other important information about Discussion Board posts and replies, read the Netiquette Rules handout under Course Documents. If posts or replies violate the Netiquette Rules in either content or form, I will remove them and the author will receive a zero for that board. If that happens more than twice, the writer will be blocked from Discussion Board participation. For full credit, you need to post a short, but complete response to the question or prompt provided and also a reply to three other posts. Also, while I do not wish to discourage good dialogue, all posts must be made on different days for full credit. Keep in mind that while you do not have to write an essay here, responses like “I agree” or “I don’t like this” won’t suffice. Each post should probably be a good paragraph in length.

**Late Work:** Late work is not accepted except under extreme circumstances (and only for major assignments). Documentation will be required. If you must be absent when a paper is due, it is your responsibility to get it turned in on time and in the appropriate fashion.

**Attendance and Participation Policies**

**Classroom Participation:** To be considered present and earn the relevant process points, you need to be fully prepared, present (both mentally and physically) for each entire class session, and a productive participant in individual, small group, and large group activities. Examples of productive participation include behaviors such as listening carefully to others, making relevant comments, asking useful questions, responding thoughtfully to your peers’ drafts, helping to keep small-group discussions on task,
and volunteering to serve as recorder or spokesperson for small group activities. All electronic devices, including cell phones, MUST be turned off and not looked at during class—even explain to family, friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc. that your English professor does not allow you to even look at your phone during class!

**Attendance:** In this course, both in-class and on-line activities (e.g. writing, talking, reading, responding) play an important role in your development as a writer, reader, and learner, so your attendance and participation are crucial for your success. *To be considered present on class days,* you need to be a **productive participant** (see the definition above) who is prepared and physically present for the entire class session; *to be considered present outside of class,* you must have completed the on-line work by all deadlines. Here are specific penalties connected with attendance.

- **For 3 absences,** you will lose **10 points** from your course total.  
  - If you are more than ten minutes late, you are considered absent.  
- **For 5 or more absences,** you will receive an **automatic F in the course.**

So plan to attend and participate regularly. If an extenuating circumstance causes you to miss a class day for any reason, it is **your responsibility** to find out before you **return** what information you missed. I do not allow make up work for in-class (Process category) assignments for any reason. Check the calendar on our class web page (see info below) and contact a classmate or me so that you can come to class fully prepared.

**Participation and feedback:** As a part of the attendance policy, you should note my guidelines on properly formatted writing assignments. After two warnings to format work correctly, I stop providing feedback for any writing assignments that do not adhere to the **formatting guidelines provided for you on this syllabus** and on the course website (“Formatting Your Papers”). This is because I believe the student may not be reading feedback, and thus not fully participating in the course. If in doubt, ask.

Note: “Students who are receiving any form of financial aid should check with the Financial Aid Office prior to withdrawing from classes. Withdrawals may affect your eligibility to receive further aid and could cause you to be in a position of repayment for the current semester. Students who fail to attend or participate after the drop date are also subject to this policy.”

**Notes on feedback:** Do not expect traditional feedback in this course. On your first rough draft, I will note examples of up to three sentence-level errors. I will do this on no other paper. Instead, I will focus on content and organization, leaving general notes about sentence-level problems. I urge you to take advantage of my offer of extra credit for taking work to the Writing Center, and if you need more help, to make arrangements to meet with me during office hours.

**Our Class Site on eCampus**

You will use our class site to check for class announcements, email classmates or
me, participate in on-line class discussions, and submit all assignments. You will find all course documents there (e.g. Syllabus (with course calendar), essay assignments, peer review forms) plus buttons for the video lessons and resource activities, and external Writing Centers to a few of many excellent writing-related sites. To access our homepage, go to the DCCD eCampus page at http://ecampus.dcccd.edu and follow the log-in instructions. When the page appears that says “Welcome ___your name__,” you should find English 1301 listed as a course you are enrolled in. Click on it and our class homepage should come up. To familiarize yourself with the site and begin the first assignments, click the Begin Here button and complete the orientation.

Academic Dishonesty Statement

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on tests, plagiarism and collusion. **Cheating** includes copying from another student's test or homework paper, using materials not authorized, collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test, knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, or soliciting the contents of an unadministered test, and substituting for another person to take a test. **Plagiarism** is the appropriating, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one’s own written work. **Collusion** is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of course requirements. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense in college. You can be given a failing grade on an assignment or test or even be suspended from college. Students who are determined to be involved in such activities shall be punished as prescribed by college and Board policies outlined in the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Please note that in this course, it is your responsibility to keep all drafts of your writing from your initial plans and notes to the final draft so that you can demonstrate your process and the originality of your work. Also note that in this course, in addition to any other penalty that might be deemed appropriate, students will receive a zero on any work that involves academic dishonesty, and I will submit letters describing any incidents of academic dishonesty to the appropriate authorities. I take academic dishonesty quite seriously, and so should you.

The [DCCCD Student Code of Conduct](#), available on-line, includes additional information about academic dishonesty as well as information about other unacceptable behaviors. I expect all students to be familiar with their rights and responsibility, and to consider the Code of Conduct part of this syllabus.

Institutional Policies

Policies not covered in this syllabus which pertain to the Eastfield College can be found [here](#).

**Cell phones and devices**

Unless given specific permission from the instructor of the course, students must keep cell phones and other electronic devices turned off and put
away. I will require students who use them during class to leave for the remainder of the period.

If you have purchased electronic versions of either of the books for the course, you may use your computer or a proper device (i.e. iPad or Kindle) to access your texts. However, photographing your texts is a violation of the law, and subject to severe penalties.

Lecture and lesson notes are typically available on Ecampus. Any unauthorized recording of any class activity will result in the student or students being removed for the class period at the very least. I am willing to work with students on an as need basis, but all permission for recording must come in written form.

Statement concerning HB11

Starting August 1, 2017, students with a concealed weapons permit will be allowed to carry their weapons onto the Eastfield College campus. Despite a number of reasonable objections to the law in total, and despite strong efforts of people on both sides of the issue to create reasonable safe spaces on this campus, the Dallas County Community College District has continued to ignore the concerns of its instructors.

It is imperative that all my students understand certain issues regarding this law:

- The law was passed without adequate representation from teachers in this State, most of who vehemently oppose it.
- The Dallas County Community College District's top administrators and Board\(^3\) did not listen to faculty who opposed this law, and its efforts to give voice to concerns, were a mockery, the likes of which I have only seen in dystopian novels.

In addition, if you choose to exercise your right to legally carry a firearm into my classroom or my office, you must keep in mind the following.

- You are limiting and infringing upon the First Amendment rights of your fellow students and of myself. Your weapon and potential use of such poses a threat to anyone who wishes to speak freely on any topic.
- You are creating a danger for me, your classmates, and yourself. Numerous studies have demonstrated you are less safe in this environment with a weapon than without one.\(^4\)
- In the case of a "shootout," trained police officers will not be able to tell the difference between the "good guy" and the "bad guy." You cannot communicate your good intentions in your head.
- You have helped to create and exacerbate a climate of fear. Fear has no place in a civilized society. If you think it does, you do not belong in my class, because I believe in teaching the value of reason over fear, logos over pathos.
- Just because you can do something does not mean you should.

\(^3\) I do not wish to suggest that administrators at Eastfield College are responsible. The various problems in policy have occurred at the district level.

\(^4\) See Anaya, Donohue, and Zhang, "The Impact of Right to Carry Laws and the NRC Report" and Branas et al, "Investigating the Writing Center Between Gun Possession and Gun Assault."
Should your concealed weapon no longer be concealed, whether deliberately or by accident, I will take appropriate measures to have you removed.\(^5\)

If you are in any way concerned about the presence of a firearm in this classroom, please note:

- On a day to day basis, you should not be worried. We expect the number of licensed firearms users to be small. I urge you to research the requirements for have a Concealed Handgun License.
- If you are politically minded, I suggest contacting your state representative to voice your concerns.
- If you are afraid, or if you feel that you cannot freely express your opinion or your ideas in this class for any reason, please make that known to me.

### Reading and the process for major assignments

For this course to be successful, you must keep up with reading. You are responsible for completing all assigned reading before all assignments which pertain to them. Please remember that I reserve the right to alter the schedule as I see necessary.\(^7\) It is very important that you regularly check your email from me, announcements on the class website, and the course calendar for any news of changes. An up to date and accurate email address, posted on the class website, is mandatory.

I will post a specific calendar on the class website. Note due dates (and changes) carefully. Semi-monthly discussion boards (four posts) must be complete by Midnight of the due date assigned unless otherwise noted. Quizzes are done only in class on the day scheduled. Also, note that there other in class writing assignments and peer review/rough draft assignments. Failure to complete these not only gives you a zero for a minor assignment (see the Process category), but also damages your chances to learn what you need for the final drafts of your papers.

I also recommend that before you read this material, you take the time to view any available power point presentations or lessons about important concepts. This will hopefully provide valuable information that will help you succeed in the course.

\(^5\) For the complete policy regarding the Concealed Carry law, follow this [Writing Center](#).

\(^7\) Significant changes to the schedule are usually posted on the class website and sent to members of the class via email.
Writing each major essay will follow a pattern similar to this:

- In class discussion of the assignment
- Writing to generate ideas and develop points
- Quizzes over assigned reading and video lessons.
- Journals to work out some parts of the process.
- Revision of essay (not editing).
- Editing and Submission of essay

Most of these elements do have a grade attached (see the Process category), and success on the essays depends largely on how you respond to each part of this process, including your response to feedback.

Information about each essay is found on the class website. Go to the Essays section, and click on the folder for the appropriate assignment.6 Please read all parameters carefully, at least once before the class when the assignment will be discussed.

**General Writing Hints and Formatting Information**

Essays that generally succeed at a greater level are those where the writer has taken the task and the subject seriously (which does not mean a sense of humor is out of place), shown some originality where needed, and revised a great deal from draft to draft. The best papers demonstrate that real thinking has occurred, not just regurgitation of stale and disparate thoughts. While writing is not the easiest or most enjoyable task you are likely to have, your attitude and approach may make the difference between doing well and just doing.

Take the time to compose your papers as if you really care about the subjects. You are likely to gain more from the experience of writing if you do a little at a time, reflecting on each part of the process, rather than all at the last minute. Connect what you read for class and do in class to what you are trying to say in each paper. Learn something new with each essay. You’ll also note that no assignments have a length requirement. The answer to the question, “How long does my paper have to be?” is “Enough.” Pay attention to all parameters for each assignment, and review carefully all handouts and power points designed to help you. **Note that all topics must fit the given parameters.**

Failure to adhere to standard writing and formatting conventions can result in lower grades or having the paper returned to you to be re-done. I typically return papers to be revised when I have reached five errors in sentence-level writing and/or documentation. This is called the “Five Error Rule.”
Formatting “do’s”: All essays are to be typed and double spaced according to MLA standards, and must be saved in the latest version of Microsoft Word (docx) or Portable File Format (pdf). They must also be uploaded to the class website. There should be one-inch margins all around each page. Use 12-point type. Times Roman is the required font. Do not attach a cover page. On the first page (not in the header), in the upper left hand corner, you should type a heading that includes your name, the class (with section number), date, and assignment. Each page after the first should have your last name, a blank space, and the page number in the upper right hand corner (use the header feature). Center your title. Double-space the entire document, and make sure extra spaces between paragraphs are removed. Run the spell check and proofread carefully.

Keep hard copies of all work, including drafts, notes, and workshop materials. I may request any of that material at some point in the semester.

Formatting “don’ts”: Do not place your paper in a plastic folder or attach a “cover sheet.” Do not add extra spaces between paragraphs. (Some word processing programs have a default setting for this, so you need to check.) Do not bold, underline, or enlarge the title, or put it in quote marks. Do not try to use large fonts or wide margins to artificially lengthen your paper. Do not send a Works Cited page in a separate file. Do not skip class to write your paper. Do not make excuses. Do not panic.

Do keep in mind that improperly formatted writing assignments or those which do not adhere to the standards of written English at this level may not be graded or provided feedback. If a paper is returned to you to be revised, a zero is recorded until the revision is complete. I typically allow one week for revision.

Also note that the use of Wikipedia or any similar website for any work whatsoever will earn the writer an automatic zero.

Other conventions: Titles of articles, stories, and poems go in quotation marks, as in “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning” and “Everyday Use.” Long plays, books, magazines, newspapers, webpages, and names of databases are italicized, as in King Lear and The Dallas Morning News. Unless you know personally the person whose work you are writing about, do not refer to her or him by the first name. A Works Cited page is the last page of the document and paginated accordingly. Understand the difference between quoting directly and paraphrasing. Do both properly, accurately and fairly. Though I plan to discuss other elements of academic writing, you should ask if you have any questions.

Formatting review:

Double space all writing with no extra spaces between paragraphs. (If you don’t know how to fix this, see the Word Processing Tips section on Ecampus for help.)

Use 12 point, Times New Roman type.

One inch margins all around (Most programs are defaulted for this.).

A heading belongs on the first page (not inside the header) in the upper left corner, and contains: your name, your class with section number, your instructor’s name, the date, assignment.

3 See the section Formatting Your Papers section of the class website.
The header should contain your last name, a blank space, and the page number. It is not necessary on the first page. It should appear in the upper right corner.

All work MUST be saved in Microsoft Word (docx) or Portable File Format (pdf). See the Word Processing Tips section on Ecampus for instructions).

STANDARDS AND GRADING: Grades on written work will range from A to F based on content as well as form and must be appropriate (and approved) according the criteria set forth for each paper. The following criteria will serve as qualitative standards:

A  This is an excellent paper, an innovative, creative and perceptive response to the assignment. It states and develops its central idea with originality. Its ideas are clear, logical, and innovative. The support is not only interesting and relevant but boldly thought-provoking. It contains all the positive qualities of good writing listed below: structurally flawless and demonstrates a clear application of creative insight. The “A” range paper is not at all formulaic or clichéd.

1. substance: meaningful, not hackneyed, ideas
2. concentration on a main purpose with strong development and firm support
3. careful construction and organization of sentences and paragraphs
4. careful choice of effective words and phrases
5. absence of flagrant and repeated errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
6. effective use of any research and source material with appropriate documentation
7. strong and clear thesis around which the entire paper revolves
This paper goes beyond a routine response to the assignment. It contains many of the qualities of an “A” essay as described above. A significant central idea clearly defined, supported with concrete, substantial, and consistently relevant detail. It is comparatively free of errors in the use of English. Although the B paper clearly and logically develops a central idea, it lacks the originality of thought, style, and development which characterizes the A paper.

This average paper carries out the assignment in a competent way. It has a central idea that is somewhat developed and organized, but not clearly enough to convey its purpose to the reader as the A and B papers above. It may, in fact, have few errors in the use of English but a weak thesis. Basically, it lacks the vigor of thought and expression, which would entitle it to an above-average rating. This paper may also have a few fairly well developed ideas, but so many writing errors as to make the reading experience very difficult.

This is a paper that begins to meet the requirements of the assignment but is flawed in one or more of the following ways. It indicates below-average achievement in expressing ideas correctly and effectively. Most D papers contain serious errors in the use of English and fail to present a central idea or to develop it adequately. If a thesis exists, it is extremely weak (unclear and/or difficult to identify). However, D papers barely meet the goals of the assignment.

The failing paper does not meet the requirements of the assignment or has several interrelated flaws in purpose, support, organization, voice and tone, and style; it is the combination of these distracting flaws that renders the paper essentially ineffective. It indicates failure to state and develop a main idea. It may also indicate failure to avoid serious errors in grammar, spellings, punctuation, and sentence structure. The following are weaknesses which characterize F caliber writing:

1. inadequate statement or development of main idea
2. serious sentence-level writing problems

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4 Please keep aware of the Five Error Rule: If an essay contains more than five mistakes that should not be made at this level of education, the essay will be returned to be revised with specific guidelines for that revision, including at least one visit to The Writing Center and a short time period during which that revision must take place. If the revision is not completed,
3. lack of a thesis
4. content inappropriate to assignment standards/instructions as well as previous approval by the instructor.
4. plagiarism (see syllabus and DCCCD Student Code of Conduct)

**One (somewhat) final note:** This syllabus reflects my initial plans for this course. If I determine we need to adjust or develop new policies, I reserve the right to do so.