

Number: English 210-01
Term: Fall Semester 2006
Meetings: Tuesday 3:30-6:15 pm
Location: LC 02
Credits: 3.0

Office: Renner Hall, Room 238
Hours: Mon-Fri 11 am to 12 noon
Phone: 614.236.6555
Home Phone: 614.837.8010

Advanced Writing

Dr. Michael C. Kapper
Capital University

*Sure, you'll write in your career,
But what about those 405,600
other minutes each year?*

It's Not About The Job!

Required Texts, etc.

Textbooks. There are no required textbooks for this course, *per se*.

You should, however, make sure you have the following books on hand:

- ◇ Any writing handbook with a guide to documentation of sources. You might have *The SF Writer* from when you took UC 110; if so, great. If not, you should pick up *The Pocket Wadsworth Handbook* (\$20 at the bookstore). You will want something like this when you need to follow standard guidelines for documenting sources.
- ◇ Any college-level dictionary copyrighted 2001 or after. The copyright date is a suggestion based on the rapidity with which the English language changes and new words are adopted.

Other. You should also have (or have access to) a computer with Internet/Web and email capabilities, as well as industry-standard software such as Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher), and perhaps more powerful tools like the Adobe Creative Suite or Macromedia Studio (available as free trial versions). The reasons for these suggestions will become clearer as you read on.

Course Description

According to the Capital University Undergraduate Bulletin for 2005-2006, English 210 is described as follows:

Further practice in the writing of expository prose essays. Emphasis on improving style and voice in writing. Prerequisite: UC110 or completion of Gen. Ed. 1.

With this course, as with most others I teach, however, reading the Bulletin description of the course is the beginning of wisdom, not its full measure. And while I certainly could make this a course about conducting research and writing essays like any other writing class, I choose not to. I also certainly could, as I have in the past, knowing that the primary audience for this course is business majors, and senior business majors at that, turn this course into a business writing course. I also choose not to do this.

This will not be a course in writing reports, conducting client research, and other such activities—of which most of the audience for this course already receives a steady diet. And it will not be wholly a course in conducting research in the library and writing argumentative “papers”—though we will “check-up” on your abilities in these areas at the beginning of the course. Instead, most of this course will be devoted to the activities of less academic (and less business-oriented) expository prose composition.

There are five major projects for this course—four that you will complete individually and one that you will undertake as part of a group. In each of these projects, there will be research and there will be writing. But the goal is that both will mostly be of unaccustomed sorts. You will do, in the name of “research,” some things you probably never thought of as research before. You will put the types of research you have learned to do in other courses (UC 110 and your management, marketing, and other business courses) to both accustomed and unaccustomed uses. The courses will be discussed further in the **Projects** section, below. For now, just know that “research” and “writing” are part of this course, but you may well be surprised by how.

The bottom line here is this: you know how to do what you will be doing 2,000 hours a year for the rest of your life; this course focuses on what you might do with the remaining 6,760.

Course Policies

Conferences & Workshops. At each class meeting throughout the term, you should come to class prepared to discuss your work in progress with the instructor and your peers. That is, a portion of nearly every class session will be devoted to workshopping (working with your peers) and conferencing (discussing your work with the instructor). Though there are project deadlines, you are expected to be working on your projects throughout the time we're discussing them, not to complete them at the last minute, and you are expected to bring evidence of your progress to class each week, to be prepared to discuss that progress with the other members of the class, and to offer feedback to your peers on their work in progress. Whenever workshops/conferences are scheduled, you will meet with the instructor and a number of your peers to discuss the work you are doing. Workshops and conferences, then, are *very* important components of this course, and failure to attend class, to be prepared for the workshops and conferences, and/or to participate actively in them will impact your final grade in the course, and not in a good way.

Attendance & Participation. Given the statements about *Workshops & Conferences* above, attendance at and active participation in all class sessions are mandatory and expected. There is no specific grade value attached to attendance, but if you don't attend, you can't participate, and participation is 15% of your final grade: for each class session you will either participate actively, or not; if you do, you get a point; if you don't you don't—your score out of these fifteen points will be added to the average of the 85% of your grade. Attendance and participation are *very* important and should be taken *very* seriously!

Completing Work. In order to receive a passing grade in the course, all of the required work listed above must be completed. Regardless of the weight assigned to a project component in the final course grade, failure to complete any project component will result in a failing grade for the class. Under *only* the most extreme circumstances, the grade of I [incomplete] will be considered.

Late Work. Turning in work late will severely impact your final grade in the course. All work should be turned in on deadline. Grades on any work not completed and submitted on time will be lowered by *one full letter grade* (e.g., from *A* to *B* for each day—not *class session, day*—late. (See the section *Paperless Class* below.)

Drafting. As you might have guessed while reading *Conferences & Workshops* above, a good part of the work in this course will be drafting your projects. We will discuss planning, drafting, revising, and editing strategies in class, and you should *always* be working on some phase of some project during this course. Most times, I'll let you know where you should be with which project for each class session. If I don't give you specific instructions, however, you should still be working—planning, writing, revising, or editing some piece of writing for this course.

Policy Highlight:

Academic Integrity & Intellectual Property

This is a course in writing, and it is a course in which you will be expected to integrate your ideas with those of others, to build on knowledge and information that others have previously put forth, and to generally use information and ideas not your own in your work. In order to do this, you must appropriately give credit for ideas where that credit is due; we will devote attention in class to doing just this. In short, you must respect the intellectual property of others and not claim their work as your own—to do otherwise leads to plagiarism and piracy of ideas and expression. Please take seriously the need for appropriate citation and documentation of source material; if you have questions about how to do these things, ask them. While this course focuses more on learning how to appropriately cite and document sources than on “catching” plagiarists or pirates, you should know that academic dishonesty, especially in the form of plagiarism, is taken seriously in the academy, and can have a range of consequences: failure of an assignment, failure of a course, academic probation, suspension from an institution, and dismissal from an institution. Please take your responsibility to the intellectual property of others and for your own academic integrity seriously.

Course Policies (continued)

Blackboard. All course materials will be distributed through Capital's Blackboard Course Management System. You should know how to log in to Blackboard and gain proficiency in using it. For the purposes of this course, everything will be distributed and submitted through the Blackboard CMS (see *Paperless Class*). This includes: replacement syllabi, course readings, writing assignment guidelines, and calendar and schedule information. In addition, when you are working in a group on a project in this course, you should make use of the discussion groups feature in Blackboard to collaborate outside of class (can take the place of some meetings—and can even facilitate exchange of information). You will also become comfortable exchanging drafts of papers with your peers via the Blackboard system, and you will submit all work to me via Blackboard before class on the day it's due. Work submitted after the beginning of class will be considered *late*. It may seem strange at first, working without paper, but you will get used to it, and it is—in a lot of ways—the wave of the future. Please remember, though, that you probably should make print copies of your drafts for revising and, especially, editing; most of us are still better at spotting errors on the printed page than we are at seeing them on the screen. Also, please note that while we will be using Blackboard *extensively*, I **will not** be using the grading system on Blackboard: when I've used it in the past, it's been more trouble than it's worth. You can, likely, keep track of your own grades, and I can show you how to do this—several different ways—if you would like.

Mechanics. Many people have a phobia about writing and writing courses because they believe they are deficient in the mechanical areas of writing: grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage. In many cases—especially for native speakers of the language being written—this is nonsense. You already know all the grammar you need to know. Spell-checkers and dictionaries are there to help with spelling. Punctuation is actually relatively straightforward when you don't get hung up on linguists' terminology. Dictionaries also help with usage. These elements of writing *are not* the primary focus of this course. Granted, they are important to clear and elegant writing, but they are not the focus of this course. So some tips: use spell-check; proofread carefully for misspellings and typos; have others proofread for you; offer to help others proofread; understand the uses of the basic punctuation marks (period, comma, colon, semicolon, question mark, exclamation point, quotation marks, apostrophe); use a dictionary; if you use a thesaurus, also use a dictionary—every time; do not be afraid to ask for help. The teaching team will be happy to help you, but remember we are not your proofreaders; our job is to help you be able to do these things for yourself, not to do them for you.

Spell-Check. Spell-check is *not* infallible. It doesn't know the difference between *there*, *their*, and *they're* or between *here* and *hear*; to be honest, it can't tell whether you mean *to get her* or *together*. Spell checkers are good: they'll tell you when you've put too many *cs* in "neccessary" (which is incorrect). But don't just take their word for it—whatever "it" is. If you can't figure out what the correct spelling is, use a dictionary to verify your spell-check's suggestions: it may have several and only one is both correctly spelled *and* the word you want. Remember, too,

Policy Spotlight:

Paperless Class

Today is the only time I will be handing you paper of any sort in class. The printed copy of the syllabus you received today will be the only paper you will receive from me. Moreover, I do not expect to *ever* receive any paper from you. All drafting and commenting will be handled electronically (see *Blackboard* at left). You may, from time to time, have handwritten planning activities to show me, but I generally will not collect them (so you can hang on to them), and anything that I read and comment on outside of class should be handed in electronically (this is why it is important that you use standard software—why Microsoft Office is preferred and Microsoft Works is not). Additionally, all assignment sheets will be distributed electronically, as well. You must know how to use your Blackboard account and email to successfully complete this course.

Course Policies (continued)

that spell-checkers can only account for words that are misspelled: they can't help you with homophones (*their/there/they're*) or with words that are often confused, such as *imply* and *infer* or *compose* and *comprise*. So, to close: Dictionary, Dictionary, Dictionary!

People-Friendly Environment. Guess what—we're grown-ups. And we're expected to act like it. In this class, and when working on projects for this class(, and in life in general!), treat other people like you want to be treated. In practical terms, that means discuss things rationally, even when you disagree; it means that while some ideas are better than others (have more merit, are more practical, will produce a better product), and while some ideas will ultimately be rejected, there are no “stupid” or “lame” ideas. And there are no “stupid” people here, either—everyone here is in college, and that means *something*. Belittling people, their ideas, their identity, or their beliefs will not be tolerated in this class—*period*.

Other Policies. In addition to these explicitly stated policies, this course will be governed by the policies laid out in the Capital University publication *What Every Student Should Know* (<http://oldsite.capital.edu/cc/stusvcs/2006-students-should-know.pdf>), and other university policies governing student conduct and the conduct of courses on Capital's campus.

Policy Spotlight:

Project Formats

Your projects for this course may well not be traditional papers; some will be traditional manuscript documents, others may not. You may, for example, based on your concept of the project and its intended audience, choose to create your project in any number of media. Delivering a project in a medium in line with its concept should simply be considered part of completing that project. Note that having a specific project in mind is often the best way to learn a new software application or package for media creation (perhaps with the help of a book).

Required Course Projects

There are five (5) required projects for this course; as stated above, all components of each project must be completed in order to pass the course. There are four (4) individual projects and one (1) group project. Each project will be explained in more depth later in the semester; the project overviews, below and at right, will provide you with a basic introduction to each project for the time being.

Individual Projects:

- ◇ *Academic Research Project* (25% of final grade).

This is probably where your last writing course, especially if it was UC 110, left off. In this course, we will begin by refreshing your skills for academic research. You will complete a **project proposal**, an **annotated bibliography**, a **research essay**, and a **visual representation** of your research. In this project you will argue for a position on a topic you have chosen, supporting that position with information you have gathered, and you will do bring logic, expertise, and emotion to bear on persuading your audience of your point.

Project Spotlight:

Group Assignment: Campus Proposal

(25% of final Grade) This assignment asks you to identify a problem on campus, to identify those impacted by that problem, to identify a solution to that problem, and to craft a proposal regarding your problem and your solution to those on campus with the ability to implement your solution. This project will be undertaken in seven (7) parts, and will culminate in your written report and oral presentation to be (really) presented to the person/people on campus who could implement your solution.

Required Course Projects (continued)

- ◇ *Media Review* (10% of final grade). In this project, you will write an essay providing your opinion on some newly-released media work; this media work can be an musical album or performance, a theatrical performance, a film, a book, a game, a DVD—any media work. You will then offer your opinion (good or bad) and tell why.
- ◇ *Editorial/Guest Column* (7% of final grade). Here, you will write a position/opinion piece suitable for the Opinion/Editorial page of a local or national newspaper. Your work will be of the length generally reserved for “Guest Columns” (or something similar) in newspapers: longer than a “Letter to the Editor” but shorter than a “Professional” editorial. The word length on this one will be short, but the range will be enforced; don’t be fooled—this *won’t* make it easier!
- ◇ *Non-Academic, Non-Journalistic, Non-Fiction Essay* (18% of final grade). There’s a lot here saying what this essay is *not*. In fact, you might think these three *nons* exclude everything you think of as writing—it must be either academic (done like a “school paper”), journalistic (done like a newspaper), or fictional (like a book or a short story). This, however, is not the case. This assignment will ask you to write an essay that might appear in a publication like *The New Yorker* or *Atlantic Monthly*. This is not a *Sports Illustrated*, *Cosmo*, or *Popular Mechanics* essay, though, or a “human-interest” feature; instead, it will address an important issue in our culture/society, be aimed at an educated audience, and be based on research—it just won’t look like you’ve probably been taught such an essay *should* look.

Each part of each of these assignments **must be** completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course; failure to complete any of these assignments in all their parts will be grounds for failure of the course (in much the same way you wouldn’t expect to keep a job very long when you didn’t do all the work your supervisor asked you to do).

Grading

The subject of grades is always a delicate one. Students want good grades, and—though it may not always seem so—instructors want to give good grades. Grades, after all, reflect the quality of student work, and they are also often taken to reflect the quality of instruction. Everyone would be happiest if every student could earn an A in every course.

You may have heard, too, that instructors and administrators are concerned with “grade inflation,” a perennial worry in the university setting which can take two forms: either the grades awarded in the course are too high in relation to the quality of the work completed, or the course is so easy that every student can turn in a stellar performance in the course. In either case, these high grades mean little—even less than a grade as a measure of performance should be taken to mean. But you may also have heard (or more likely *overheard*) instructors complaining about a sense of “entitlement” to high grades among students: some instructors feel that some students believe their tuition dollars entitle them to a “good grade”—and it’s not really hard to see why when many instructors have had at least one student say, to their faces, “I pay your salary”; after all, the retail adage tells us, “the customer is always right.”

For me, and for this class, however, the biggest issue with grades comes down to a fundamental misunderstanding of what grades are, how they function, and their purpose in the educational setting. Grades lower than *A* are not punishment. I do not believe that every student starts with an A in every course, or on every assignment, and goes down from there when s/he “does something wrong.” When I give an objective exam, for

Grading (continued)

instance, I do not keep track of how many points to *deduct* from the total possible points ($-8 = 92/100 = A-$); rather, I keep track of how many points the student has earned through correct answers ($+92 = A-$). Grades in my courses are related to students' *accomplishments*, not their failings. My grading strategies are meant to make grades into reinforcement, not punishment; I want to focus attention at all times on what students have done *right*, not on what they have "done wrong"; I want students to realize that an A- (or a B+, B, B-, or C+) is a grade they can be proud of.

Of course, with more subjective assignments (essays and the like), this can be trickier. It is tricky because subjective assignments come with a set of guidelines and a plethora of possible strategies for fulfilling the assignment. The question then becomes one of where those guidelines set the bar: do they establish the bare minimum for a passing grade? do they describe what an A paper will do? do they establish an "average" performance that will earn a student a C? When this is unclear, one of the commonest mistakes that students make is to assume that the guidelines are for an A paper: that meeting the guidelines will guarantee them an A, leading back to the question of "what did I do wrong?" when the instructor issues a B+ or a C for a paper that meets all of the assignment guidelines.

When making these subjective assignments in this course, I promise that—at the very least—I will tell you where the bar is set. When you receive the guidelines, you will know what grade you will earn by meeting those guidelines. I will also make every effort to let you know how exceeding (or failing to meet) those guidelines will impact the grade you will earn on the project. While I will be more specific with each assignment, know that, in general, I apply the following understanding of letter grades:

A	Outstanding work; work of the highest quality receives this grade
A-, B+	Well above average work
B, B-, C+	Above average work
C	Average work; the assignment guidelines will generally set the bar here
C-, D+	Work slightly below average; adequate but not up to expectations
D, D-	Below average work; only marginally adequate to the task
F	Severely below average work; inadequate to the task

Please do not expect that assignment guidelines will tell you what you must do to earn each grade ("if you want a B+, do this..."); instead, expect that they will tell you what the general expectations are, what grade you will earn by meeting those expectations, and the ways in which exceeding or not meeting those expectations may impact

Grading Spotlight:

Grading Breakdown

Your grade in the course will be determined by the following proportions:

Assignment	Value
Research Project	25%
Proposal	10%
Ann. Bibliography	20%
Essay	50%
Visual Representation	20%
Media Review	10%
Editorial	7%
NA, NJ, NF Essay	18%
Campus Proposal	25%
Problem Statement	10%
Stakeholders Rep.	10%
Method Proposal	10%
Ann. Bibliography	15%
Final Report	25%
Presentation	20%
Progress Reports	10%
Participation	15%
Total	100%

The left-hand percentages above represent the weight of each component in that project's grade; those on the right represent the weight of each project or requirement in the computation of the final grade. All projects will be written in multiple drafts, which will factor into their grades, even if no breakdown is given here.

Grading (continued)

the grade you earn.

Finally, please note that I have been careful throughout to refer to “the grade you earn” rather than “the grade you get” or “the grade I give.” You will earn your grades in this course; it’s true that I will *assess* your work and *assign* those grades, but my primary goal in this course is to help you *earn* a grade that you and I can both be proud of.

And, again, if I can help you figure out the calculation of your grade, please don’t hesitate to ask; I don’t want the process to be a mystery to you, and I am more than happy to help!

Calendar

The calendar presented below presents a detailed plan of what you should have completed before each class session, what is due in class for each session, and what we will do in class each session. I have put significant thought and effort into creating this plan, and it *should* closely represent the way in which this course will be implemented. I do not, however, have the power of precognition (would that I did). This means that I cannot know what will come up in the course of the semester, and to borrow a phrase, “Stuff happens.” If it becomes clear that I have not allotted enough time for a particular assignment or activity, I’m willing to admit that and to change the calendar accordingly. If an interesting line of discussion or investigation presents itself, but is not on the calendar, we will likely pursue it, either adding it to the calendar or replacing something else with it. I want you to know, from the outset, that any changes to the calendar will be made clear to you, and that they will be made in response to the changing situations of the course. That said, I think that you can largely plan on the calendar, as presented below, being correct.

Date	In Class Today	For Next Class
29 Aug	Introduce Course, Materials, Syllabus Introduce <i>Research Essay</i> Project Assign <i>RE: Proposal</i> Lecture: Documenting Sources Invention Activity Discuss Invention Activity Group work on Shaping Proposal	RE: Proposal Due Get Annotated Bibliography Assignment Sheet (Blackboard) Get Evaluating Sources Lecture Notes (Blackboard)
05 Sept	Assign <i>RE: Annotated Bibliography</i> Lecture: Evaluating Sources Group Annotation Activity <i>Conferences/Workshop</i>	RE: Annotated Bibliography Due Get Research Essay Assignment Sheet (Blackboard) Get Arrangement Lecture Notes (Blackboard)
12 Sept	Assign <i>RE: Essay</i> Lecture: Arrangement Discussion: Revising and Editing, Strategies <i>Conferences/Workshop</i>	Get Design (Contrast, Repetition, Alignment, Proximity) Lecture Notes (Blackboard) Get Design (Fonts and Colors) Lecture Notes (Blackboard) Get Visual Representation Assignment Sheet (Blackboard)
19 Sept	Assign <i>RE: Visual Representation</i> Lecture: Design (CRAP) Lecture: Design (Fonts and Colors) Group Design Activity <i>Conferences/Workshop</i>	RE: Essay & RE: Visual Due Get <i>Media Review</i> Assignment Sheet (Blackboard) Get Criteria Lecture Notes (Blackboard)

Calendar (continued)

Date	In Class Today	For Next Class
26 Sept	Assign <i>Media Review</i> Lecture: Criteria Group Media Review Activity <i>Conferences/Workshop</i>	Get Visual Ranking Lecture Notes (Blackboard) Get Style/Audience Lecture Notes (Blackboard)
03 Oct	Lecture: Visual Ranking Lecture: Style/Audience Group Style/Audience Activity <i>Conferences/Workshop</i>	<i>Media Review Due</i> Get <i>Editorial</i> Assignment Sheet (Blackboard)
10 Oct	Assign <i>Editorial</i> Group Editorial Analysis Activity Invention Activity <i>Conferences/Workshop</i>	Get Complete & Concise Lecture Notes (Blackboard)
17 Oct	Lecture: Complete & Concise Group Editing Activity Discussion: Revising <i>after</i> Editing <i>Conferences/Workshop</i>	<i>RE: Editorial Due</i> Get <i>Problem Proposal</i> Assignment Sheet (Blackboard)
24 Oct	Assign <i>Problem Proposal/Presentation</i> Identifying a Problem Activity Identifying Stakeholders Activity <i>Conferences/Workshop</i>	<i>Preliminary Problem Report Due</i> <i>Preliminary Stakeholders Report Due</i> Get Data Collection Lecture Notes (Blackboard)
31 Oct	Lecture: Data Collection Data Collection Activity <i>Conferences/Workshop</i>	<i>Preliminary Research Methods Report Due</i> Get Data Analysis Lecture Notes (Blackboard)
07 Nov	Lecture: Data Analysis & Conclusions Group Data Analysis Activity <i>Conferences/Workshop</i>	<i>Preliminary Data Analysis Due</i> Get Putting It All Together Lecture Notes (Blackboard)
14 Nov	Lecture: Putting it All Together Revising to Put it Together Discussion: Presentations Discussion: Formatting <i>Conferences/Workshop</i>	<i>Problem Proposal & Presentation Due</i> Get <i>Essay</i> Assignment Sheet
21 Nov	Assign <i>Essay</i> Group Essay Analysis Activity Invention Activity <i>Conferences/Workshop</i>	Get Citing without Citing Lecture Notes (Blackboard)
28 Nov	Lecture: Citing without Citing Discussion: Depth of Research <i>Conferences/Workshop</i>	
05 Dec	Summas Discussion: Keeping on Point Editing/Revising Activity <i>Conferences/Workshop</i>	<i>Essay Due:</i> Monday, 11 December, uploaded to Blackboard by 12:00 noon.

During the weeks of November 27, December 4, and December 11, groups will present their findings to appropriate campus officials. Meetings will be arranged.