

ENG 1450: Writing and Reading for Problem Solving

Fall 2015 • W 6:00-8:55 p.m. • F219

Instructor: Dan Mills

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General Course Information

Prerequisites

Placement into ENG 1060 or higher.

Course Description

This course focuses on effective workplace (industrial, technical, retail, service and health professions) and academic communication in the context of the problem solving process. Working collaboratively and individually, students will practice strategies for identifying and defining problems, establishing criteria for effective decision-making, generating solutions, implementing plans and evaluating outcomes. Students will apply these tools to problems drawn from everyday life, academic contexts and the workplace. At every stage of the problem solving process, students will use specific, appropriate written, graphic and/or oral forms of communication.

General Education Attributes

This class will enable you to meet the General Education Attribute in Critical Thinking.

Methods

The emphasis in this course is on active learning with several hands-on exercises to be completed individually and in small groups. Students will be given a number of opportunities to practice and demonstrate written and oral communication skills.

Required text

Strategies for Creative Problem Solving by Fogler and LeBlanc (Third Edition, ISBN 0-13-309166-X)

Course Objectives

Problem Solving

Identify and define problems using appropriate reading, observation, and other information-gathering techniques. • Analyze causes by observing patterns and sequences. • Collect, process, interpret, and evaluate information. • Determine and weight appropriate, explicit evaluative criteria. • Generate feasible solutions. • Implement solutions and evaluate outcomes.

Critical, Creative Thinking

Use brainstorming and other idea-generating strategies. • Evaluate the credibility and applicability of information and ideas.

Communication

Understand the importance of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills on the job. • Use communication skills in conflict resolution and customer relations. • Prepare letters and memos. • Communicate with a non-technical audience. • Present information orally. • Use electronic means of communication.

Team Functioning

Form a team and delegate roles and tasks for effective results. • Balance independent decision-making with the needs of a team and the problem to be solved.

Course Policies

E-mail

You must use your OCC e-mail address to communicate with me. I will use your OCC e-mail address to communicate with you. This is college policy. If you e-mail me from a personal address, I will respond with a polite note indicating that you should e-mail me from your OCC e-mail. Plan to check your OCC e-mail daily.

Attendance

- Regular attendance is required. Please e-mail me if you must miss class. You are responsible for submitting any assignments due and for updating yourself on information presented in class. You will not be allowed to make up quizzes or classwork that you miss due to absence.
- As indicated above, your grade will suffer if you are absent. Additionally, if you are absent five or more times this semester, you will earn an F in the course.

Participation

- In this class it is not enough to just turn in homework regularly. You must also actively participate in discussions and work in teams. Your participation in class is an important indicator of how well you are learning the material.
- 25% of your course grade will be based on participation. Many in-class activities will be designated as participation grades. Homework assignments will be designated as participation activities.

Deadlines/Submitting Assignments

- All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified. Late assignments will be marked down 10% *per day*. Therefore, do not wait until the next class to turn in your work. If you have a late assignment, it's best to submit it as soon as possible via e-mail.
- Being absent does not excuse the late penalty. If you know ahead of time that you will not be in class when an assignment is due, please make arrangements to submit your work on time. Again, the best way to do this would be to e-mail me your assignment prior to class.
- All assignments that are completed outside of class must be typed. Please use an academic font and double-space your documents.

Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty

Please refer to the OCC Student Handbook for the college's definition of what constitutes academic dishonesty. Any student in this course who plagiarizes or is otherwise academically dishonest may face the following consequences: (1) a zero for the assignment in question; (2) a "F" grade in the course; and/or (3) referral to the department chair or dean to determine other sanctions.

Withdrawal, Incomplete, No Show

- If you wish to withdraw from this class and receive a "W" grade, please refer to policies and dates posted at <https://www.oaklandcc.edu/Calendars>. If you do not formally withdraw and you miss classes and assignments, you will be assigned a score of zero for the work missed, and your course grade will be calculated accordingly.
- In order for a student to receive an incomplete for this class, he or she must have completed 75% of the course with a grade of "C" or better.
- If a student does not show up at all during the first 20% of the semester, the grade of "N" will be entered in Online Services, notifying the college. Once posted, this grade cannot be changed. Students will not be permitted to enter class after an "N" grade has been issued. Once the "N" grade has been posted, a student cannot drop the class, and students will be expected to pay for the course. I will enter an "N" grade for any student who has not reported by the end of class on September 23.

Special Assistance

The Academic Support Center (ASC) in G230 (248-232-4435) and the English as Second Language (ESL) office offer reinforcement in academic areas.

ADA Notification

Students requiring special assistance, including those covered by the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, should contact the ACCESS (Accessibility Compliance Center & Educational Support Services) office and inform the instructor of any special conditions pertaining to their learning. The ACCESS office at the Auburn Hills campus is located in Building B, Room B112. Their phone number is 248.232.4080.

Important FERPA Reminder

Per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), college personnel are not allowed to release students' personal information to anyone, including other students. If you have any questions regarding FERPA, please refer to page 17 in the college catalog.

Activities & Assessment

Reading

You will be asked to complete readings from your textbook and from outside sources in order to practice effective reading strategies and to acquire new information. The readings from the textbook are scheduled on the syllabus. Additional readings may be assigned on a weekly basis. You may be asked to complete reading quizzes.

Homework

Each week you may be given a homework assignment that will be due the following week. Sometimes, these homework assignments will consist of problem-solving exercises in the textbook, but I may elect to substitute different activities. You will be asked to share your homework answers in class.

Writing

- You will be required to write a number of short reports on course topics. Each of these reports will be assigned on a weekly basis. The format of these reports will vary and will be indicated when the reports are assigned.
- You should expect to write various short responses and essays during our class meetings.

Oral Presentations

- You will make two brief, informal, individual presentations.
- You will work with a team to create and deliver a longer, formal presentation at the end of the course.

Quizzes

Periodically, you will take a quiz on the material covered in the preceding classes. The information covered in any given quiz may be recent or cumulative. The quiz dates are listed on the course calendar. The format of these quizzes may vary (short answer, multiple choice, etc.). As mentioned above, you may also be asked to complete reading quizzes.

Attendance and Participation

Please see the Course Policies section of this syllabus.

Grade Components

- quizzes = 25%
- writing = 25%
- oral presentations = 25%
- participation = 25%

Grading Scale

- 94-100% = A
- 90-93 = A-
- 87-89 = B+
- 84-86 = B
- 80-83 = B-
- 77-79 = C+
- 74-76 = C
- 70-73 = C-
- 67-69 = D+
- 60-66 = D
- 0-59 = F

Course Calendar

Note: While I plan to make every effort to adhere to this schedule, I reserve the right to make occasional changes or modifications depending on needs and interests of students. If there are changes, they will be announced ahead of time. It is your responsibility to update your copy of the syllabus as necessary.

For each date, please read the assigned chapters/pages prior to class.

Sept 9 introductions
recognizing problems
course orientation & expectations

Sept 16 **meet in G240**
individual assets
working in teams
introduce individual & team presentations
reading: ch. 1-3

Sept 23 getting started with problem solving
breaking down barriers
reading: ch. 4, 6

Sept 30 develop research action plan for team presentation
quiz #1

Oct 7 situation appraisal
effective reading strategies
reading: ch. 8, p. 187-93

Oct 14 problem analysis
Kepner-Tregoe, fishbone diagrams, etc.
effective writing strategies
reading: ch. 5, p. 103-11; ch. 7, 157-59

Oct 21 problem definition
present state/desired state, Duncker diagrams,
statement/restatement, etc.
reading: ch. 5, p. 93-102
quiz #2

Oct 28 generating solutions
reading: ch. 7

Nov 4 generating solutions, cont.
writing reports & proposals

Nov 11 decision analysis
reading: ch. 8, p. 194-208
quiz #3

Nov 18 decision analysis, cont.
making oral presentations

Nov 25 work on presentations

Dec 2 potential problem analysis
reading: ch. 8, p. 208-14

Dec 9 implementing the solution
evaluating outcomes
ethical & safety considerations
reading: ch. 9, p. 229-42; ch. 10
quiz #4

Dec 16 **team presentations**