English 900.30	Communication Skills	Fall 2009
Instructor: J. Grimes	**CRN:** 5630	
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Days & Time: August 24-December 18	**Office Hours:** T/W 6:00-8:30 p.m. or by appointment	
Class website: http://faculty.taftcollege.edu/jgrimes/includes/Testpage.html		

COURSE DESCRIPTION

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:
This course reviews basic communication skills, specifically targeting academic writing through composing, revising, and editing essays. It fuses writing and reading skills through vocabulary acquisition and reading short works. Particular attention is placed on applying grammar, punctuation, and mechanics to writing.
Prerequisite: Qualification by assessment process or successful completion of English 800 with a grade of "C" or better or requalification by assessment process after completion of English 800.

COURSE THEME:
This course emphasizes writing as an integral part of life and teaches its process: brainstorming, writing, revising, and rewriting. Central to writing well is a foundational understanding of the conventions of English; therefore students will learn grammar, punctuation, and mechanics and will learn how to apply these rules to their writing.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS:
- Cisneros, Sandra. The House on Mango Street. New York: Vintage Books, 1984.[1]
- Longman Dictionary of American English. 4th ed., 2008.
- Wilson, Paige, and Teresa Ferster Glazier. The Least You Should Know about English. 9th ed. Boston: Thomson Wadsworth, 2008.
- SSR[2] Journal (1-Subject Notebook)

CLASS OBJECTIVES:
By the end of the course, a successful student will be able to
- demonstrate a mastery of the grammatical elements of sentence structure and parts of speech,
- indicate a mastery of usage of skills regarding subjects/verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions,
- show a mastery of the mechanics of punctuation and capitalization,
- use a computer to write coherent, unified paragraphs containing topic sentences, detailed support, and concluding sentences,
- compose one and three paragraph essays, and
- edit and revise his/her work recognizing errors.

COURSE SLOs:
At the end of the course, a successful student will be able to do the following:
- compose paragraphs using grammatically correct English,
- identify and correct grammatical and mechanical errors in written work, and

[1] The following acronyms are used for the books of this class: HOMS, (The House on Mango Street), LD (Longman Dictionary of American English), and LYSKE (The Least You Should Know about English).
[2] Sustained Silent Reading

- use new vocabulary accurately in written work.

OFF-LINE

What Is a Distance Learning Off-line Course? An off-line course means that students do not meet on campus or on-line but use other modes of correspondence to receive and turn in assignments. Within the first week of class, you will receive a form to fill out. On the form, you may choose how you would like to receive and turn in assignments. You will have **four options**: e-mail, Internet, fax, or mail. If, for example, you choose e-mail, then I will send you assignments to your e-mail, and you will send your completed work through e-mail too. However, if you do not have Internet access, you may choose to have your work faxed or mailed. If you choose to mail your work, you will need to be mindful of the time delay between mailing your work and its arrival. This means that you should post your work in advance so that it arrives on time. Whichever mode of correspondence you choose will depend on you. Once you have chosen, you will need to be consistent to avoid confusion.

Since you are **not** meeting face-to-face, it is extremely important that you **read this syllabus thoroughly** as it is a **contract** between the instructor and you on what is expected and covered in the course. Even though you may be enrolled in other classes, it is important to keep pace with the work and not fall behind. This is **not** an independent study course but an offline course, which means that you still have assignments that have specific due dates. **Exams will be taken in the Library** where you will have a proctor. More information regarding proctors for exams is covered later in the syllabus under "Exams". *Even though this course is conducted off-line, it doesn't mean that you are on your own. Contact me for any questions, and I will be happy to assist you.*

COURSE POLICIES:

Plagiarism completely undermines the learning process. Any form of cheating whether it is appropriating someone's work or allowing others to use your work is not acceptable. You will receive a zero for the assignment, and other disciplinary measures may be taken. Taft College defines plagiarism as "any illegitimate act by any student, such as plagiarism or falsifying documents that would gain that student an advantage in grading, graduating from the college, or qualifying for entrance into any academic program" (Student Handbook 125).

Attendance: Since this is a distance, learning course, attendance is determined by completing assignments on time. Assignments and due dates are explicitly stated on the syllabus, which should be turned in weekly. If a student doesn't turn in assignments after the first two weeks, s/he will be dropped from the course unless s/he contacts me beforehand. After the first two weeks, then students are responsible for dropping themselves from the class.

Homework and Late Work: Each student will receive a packet of work that will include lecture notes and a syllabus, which should be used to understand and review lessons. Since work will be turned in weekly, assignments must be turned in on time to receive full credit. Homework will be graded to assess a student's understanding of the material. If a student wants to turn in a homework assignment that's been graded for a better score, s/he should turn it in the following week for a better score. Turning in an assignment late will result in a 50% grade reduction; therefore, it's advisable to turn in assignments when on the due date.

Submitting Work: Work may be submitted through a variety of formats: mail, e-mail, or fax. Within the first week of school, contact me regarding how you would like to submit and receive work. If

you choose to submit through correspondence (mail), it should be addressed to me using the following format:

Your Name Address J. Grimes Taft College 29 Emmons Park Drive Taft, CA 93268

When completing a packet of work, make sure each assignment is labeled appropriately using the following format:

Your Name Date Assignment Name (HOMS, LYSKE, or LD) Page number Title (if it's an essay)

Exams: Throughout the semester, you will take two exams: a midterm and a final exam. Each time an exam is scheduled, you can complete it on campus at the library under a proctor **if you are within driving distance**. Current library proctoring hours are Monday through Friday 9:00-11:00 a.m., 1:30-4:30 a.m., or Monday through Thursday 5:30-8:30 p.m.. If you do not live within driving distance, then it is your responsibility to set up a proctor who meets one of the following qualifications and who has been pre-approved by your instructor:

- full-time school or public librarian
- guidance counselor/counseling staff
- full-time teacher
- school principal
- school superintendent
- seminary principal
- IST officers
- corporate training officer
- military base/station education officer
- base commander
- librarian

To download and complete the proctoring form, visit http://web.taftcollege.edu/academic/distance%20learning/proctor_procedures.shtml.

Writing Assignments: Writing is a process of pre-writing, drafting, revising, and rewriting. Clear, coherent writing requires practice in and out of class. Each time an essay is due, students will write a rough draft, turn it in, and revise it for the final draft. Rough drafts may be handwritten; however it is **strongly recommended that final drafts should be typed if a student has access to a computer or typewriter**. **If a student does not have access to a computer, then s/he may turn in a handwritten essay, provided it is double spaced and written in black ink.** Each essay must have a ROUGH DRAFT and a FINAL copy to be considered complete. Failure to comply with this rubric for outside essays will result in a grade penalty.

Revisions: After a student turns in the final essay and receives a grade, she or he may revise it up to ten percent provided it is done before the next essay or test is due. A revision must be comprehensive, meaning that grammatical and mechanical errors should be revised in addition to the content of the paragraph. A student who chooses to revise must conference with the instructor before rewriting. Additionally the student must include a typed explanation of how he or she revised the paragraph along with the revision.

Academic Success: Research indicates that academic success stems from a variety of factors; among these factors, such as studying, completing work, and participating in class, meeting with the instructor during office hours increases a student's understanding of the material. It is therefore, highly recommended that each student keep in contact with the instructor. Office hours are conducted through e-mail or by appointment.

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) Journal: You must have a one-subject notebook of at least fifty pages to write short quick writes responding to the novella, House on Mango Street (HOMS). Points will be granted based on completing short quick writes responding to the vignettes in the story.

Statement on Disabilities: Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in the class are encouraged to contact Supportive Services at 763. 7841 or 763. 7927, as soon as possible to better ensure such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

GRADE RUBRIC FOR PAPERS:

GRADE	REQUIREMENTS
A	**Superior paper:** clear response to topic, coherent, virtually free of sentence-level errors, and demonstrates above-average control of mechanics and diction.
B	**Good paper:** clear response to the topic, but may show problems with paragraph structure, minimal sentence-level errors, and average control of mechanics and diction.
C	**Average paper:** responds to the topic, reasonably organized (although some inconsistency) with sufficient paragraph structure, some sentence-level errors, and acceptable control of mechanics and diction.
D	**Incompetent paper:** limited or repetitive response to assignment, disorganized and lacking transitions, a variety of sentence-level errors, awkward mechanics and diction.
F	**Incomplete paper:** confused response to assignment, disorganized and weak paragraph structure, sentence-level errors obscure the meaning of essay, confused mechanics and diction.

GRADE SUMMARY:

ASSIGNMENT	WORDS	POINTS
SSR Journal	HOMS and In-Class Work	100 points
AWL Vocabulary	10 AWL assignments	100 points
LYSKE		150 points
Rough Draft of Essay #1	250-500 words or 1-2 pages	25 points
Essay #1	250-500 words or 1-2 pages	75 points
Rough Draft of Essay #2	250-500 words or 1-2 pages	50 points
Essay #2	250-500 words or 1-2 pages	100 points
Rough Draft of Essay #3	500-750 words or 2-3 pages	50 points
Essay 3	500-750 words or 2-3 pages	200 points
Exams (2)	50 - Midterm/100 - Final	150 points
TOTAL POINTS		1000 points

GRADE SCALE

Letter Grade	Percentage
A+ to A-	100-90
B+ to B-	89-80
C+ to C-	79-70
D to D-	69-60
F to F-	50-0

Complaints/Questions Regarding Grades: If a student has a question regarding a grade, s/he must follow the following protocol.

1). Allow 24 hours before speaking to the instructor about the assignment.
2). Make an appointment with the instructor and come to the instructor's office hours to discuss the complaint BEFORE the next paper/test is due.
3). After a week, the student may not make a complaint about the grade.
4). The student must explain why the grade was unmerited and bring the original assignment sheet showing where he/she adhered to the rubric.
5). If the student's grade was wrong, then the instructor will revise the grade appropriately. If the student received a fair grade but would like to try for a better grade, s/he may revise it as long as it is turned in BEFORE the next paper/test is due. If the subsequent paper is better than the first, then I will average the first and second paper, and the student will receive the average. If the subsequent paper is worse than the previous paper, then the student will receive the better of the two grades.

I _____ understand the syllabus and what is expected of me. I agree to comply with the policies and rules outlined in the syllabus. I agree to follow the conditions outlined for each assignment and understand the penalties for not complying. In addition, if I have a complaint I agree to follow the protocol to resolve any issues that I might have regarding grades.

"Learning never exhausts the mind."
-Leonardo da Vinci

The SYLLABUS MAY CHANGE; IF IT DOES, YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED VERBALLY, AND IT WILL BE SENT TO YOU.