

EWRT 2 - Critical Reading, Writing & Thinking - Adam Sandel – Spring 2025

Office Hours: Following each live Zoom session Tuesday at 11:00 a.m., and by appointment. For an appointment, email: adamsandel@yahoo.com.

In this course we'll develop critical thinking, reading and writing skills by analyzing how writers use techniques of written argument (including assumptions, evidence, logic, and reason) to craft persuasive essays.

We'll explore the use of argument in essays on a broad spectrum of controversial topics, and in plays, where conflict is argument in action. Students will write essays that analyze other writers' arguments, as well as create compelling written arguments of their own.

Note: Since the class is 100% online, Zoom sessions can be viewed at any time. We are not requiring live attendance.

The Zoom sessions will be recorded on Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m. so you may join us live then if you are free. If you can't join us live, be sure to view each Zoom recording at your earliest convenience.

Communication:

- **Zoom Class Sessions:** We will hold live Zoom class sessions each Tuesday at 11:00 a.m. These sessions will be also recorded and posted on Canvas for viewing at a later time.
- If you are not able to join the Zoom sessions live, be sure to view the recordings at: Pages>Archived Zoom Recordings.
- **Course Updates:** The instructor will communicate with students via Announcements on Canvas and email. Log onto Canvas a few times per week to check for Announcements and to review assignments and due dates in Modules.
- **Course Contact:** Students will turn in assignments and essays via Canvas. They will communicate with the instructor via email

at adamsandel@yahoo.com. (This email is checked more often than the Canvas email.)

- **Email Hours:** Monday through Friday, between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm, the instructor will respond to student emails and questions within 24 hours.
- **School Updates:** Pay close attention to updates that are sent to you from the college via email.

Zoom and Canvas Support:

<https://www.deanza.edu/library/librarycomputer.html> Links to an external site.

Got a question? Re-read the assignment or the syllabus. Chances are your answer will be there. If it's not, you may email the instructor at: adamsandel@yahoo.com.

For information relating to student services and resources available, go to: <http://www.deanza.edu/news/2020/virtual-help-desks.html> Links to an external site.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply critical thinking skills to writing and complex readings;
2. Demonstrate academic (analytical and argumentative) writing based on reading of complex texts;
3. Demonstrate analysis, comparison, synthesis, and documentation of independent research.

Required Books:

The following textbooks are required. You may use hard copy or e-book versions if available.

Critical Thinking, Reading and Writing (10th Edition) (Barnet, Bedau & O'Hara)
Make sure it's the 10th Edition. We will use this one first so get it ASAP.

Inherit the Wind (Lawrence & Lee) The published paperback edition is required. Online versions may not work.

The Laramie Project (Kaufman) Any published edition will do.

Writing Requirements:

Students will write a total of 25-30 pages of critical analysis, including written responses and four essays.

- **Written responses to reading assignments:** The reading and writing assignments and due dates are listed in the weekly Modules section (access on the menu to the left).

The responses will be due whenever we have a reading assignment (most sessions). They will be graded on a scale of 1-5 points each, depending on the amount of thought, depth and detail that has gone into each response. They must be completed by each due date.

If you fall behind, make them up as soon as possible. Late and make-up responses will receive a maximum of 3 points. If you fail to complete three or more written responses in a row, you may be automatically dropped from the class. Written responses are required assignments. It's not possible to pass the course without completing them.

According to college policy, students who have not turned in any responses within the first two weeks of class may be dropped.

- **Journal entries:** These will include class notes that you should take during Zoom sessions, as well as prewriting and brainstorming exercises. They are confidential but can provide a great source of writing topics. They will not be read or evaluated by the instructor.
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- **Essays:** Students will write four essays. These will be developed through the process of prewriting, outlining, drafting, revising, and editing.

There are no opportunities for extra credit assignments.

Guidelines for Essays:

- All essays must be typed (using standard 12 pt. fonts) and double-spaced.
- They must be submitted as either Word docs or pdf files via Canvas.
- Late essays will not be accepted. In case of emergency, arrange to have someone submit your work on time, or you may submit it in advance. Any essay not completed will receive a grade of zero (or "F").
- Plan ahead. It's a little-known fact that essay deadlines *cause* computers and wifi to malfunction right before the essay is due.
- All work must be original. If your name is on it, you wrote it. Any instance of plagiarism will result in an automatic "F" in the course and disciplinary action will be taken by the college.

Essay Grading:

College level writing is characterized by excellence, not mere competence. It's assumed that all students have mastered basic English grammar. If you need additional help with basic grammar, sign up for writing lab assistance.

A: *Outstanding* - The essay engages the reader in a thoughtful, perceptive, and vigorous response to the assignment. There is a clear, meaningful central idea which is supported by specific, detailed, relevant examples. No significant errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation.

B: *Good* - The essay precisely and fully addresses the assignment in a thoughtful, well-rounded way. The central idea is supported with clear and relevant examples. Consistent use of standard grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

C: *Acceptable* - The essay addresses the assignment in a thoughtful but perhaps underdeveloped way. The central idea is apparent but may not be stated specifically or supported by sufficiently detailed examples. Errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation may distract the reader from following the writer's ideas.

D: *Less than acceptable* - The main idea may be unclear; support and examples may be underdeveloped; and/or the essay may not respond to the topic as

assigned. Excessive errors in basic grammar, spelling or punctuation make it difficult for the reader to follow the writer's ideas.

F: Fails to meet the minimum requirements of the assignment.

Attendance at live Zoom meetings live is not required, but viewing the Zoom recordings is required, and staying on top of the written responses, will be vital to your understanding of the material and your success in the course.

Once again: *If you fail to complete three or more written responses in a row, you may be automatically dropped from the class.* If you fall behind, make up the written responses as soon as possible. Late and make-up responses will receive a maximum of 3 points. Written responses are required assignments. It's not possible to pass the course without completing them.

Final grades are based on your percentage of the total points possible.

Final Grade:

94%-100% - A

90%-93% - A-

87%-89% - B+

83%-86% - B

80%-82% - B-

77%-79% - C+

73%-76% - C (A grade of C or better is required to pass the class.)

70%-72% - C-

67%-69% - D+

63%-66% - D

60%-62% - D-

Below 60% - Fail

Student Responsibilities:

- Purchase all required texts by the first week of class.

- Attend class Zoom meetings live (or view the recordings). Take notes, be prepared and ready to engage in discussion.
- Log onto Canvas a few times per week to check for Announcements and review assignments and due dates posted in Modules.
- Be aware of all class information sent via Announcements and emails.
- Turn in all written responses and essays by their due dates.
- Inform the instructor of any incident, situation, or special circumstance that might affect your performance in class as soon as possible.
- Set aside sufficient time in your weekly schedule to complete your reading and writing assignments. *You should set aside six hours per week to do the reading and writing assignments for this class.*
- Bring any questions about the class, assignments, readings, or essays to the instructor as soon as possible.
- Take advantage of all legitimate help including tutors, libraries, handbooks, and especially, the instructor.
- Make your performance in this class a priority. Decide that you are going to learn and know that you can succeed. People do it all the time.
- Remember that with writing, it takes time and repeated effort to produce anything of value. No one gets it perfect the first time.
- How to get an A: Do everything on this list. Everyone who has ever gotten an A has done everything on this list.