

English 150: Rumination, Research, and Writing

Fall 2009. Section 92. M/W 5:10-6:35 p.m. W012 Benson

Instructor Information

Cassie Keller Cole

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Office Hours: 4:00-5:00 p.m. M/W, 1:30-2:30 F, or by appointment

Office Location: 3004 JKB

Box Location: Composition Office 4110 JFSB, 8-5 M-F

Required Texts and Supplies

The Brief Penguin Handbook 3rd Edition

Handouts and online resources

Pocket folder/notebook

Class Blog: ruminatitonresearchwriting.blogspot.com

Blackboard: blackboard.byu.edu

Course Objectives

By taking English 150, you will learn

1. To write in a way that enhances thoughtful communication in personal and academic discourse.
2. To appreciate how writing can empower you to become an influential citizen in a variety of contexts as you participate in the public sphere—both in and out of the classroom—by submitting your writing and sharing your ideas.
3. To recognize the importance of rumination, research, and writing in society and our lives as you critically evaluate your own and others' work and the many rhetorical situations surrounding you.
4. To think, read, and write critically by questioning underlying assumptions, conclusions, and forming your own connections between ideas.
5. To create and use a flexible and effective writing process (including prewriting, drafting, and revising) that will enable you to write well throughout your life.
6. To write coherent and unified texts (including effective introductions, clear direction throughout the body with supporting details and smooth transitions, and strong conclusions) as you control syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
7. To navigate the library in order to locate primary and secondary sources, to evaluate the appropriateness and credibility of those sources, and to incorporate and accurately document outside sources within your own writing.
8. To realize your capability to be a credible thinker, reader, and writer now and in the future as you further address the complexity of the world, challenge prepackaged explanations, and seek connectedness in all subjects and disciplines; you will write to create meaning and understand the writing process as a way to increase goodwill, cooperation, and compassion.

This is a writing class: expect to write a lot. This course will provide a foundation for your advanced writing and reading skills, particularly in your capacity to think deeply and with an open mind. As F. Scott Fitzgerald writes, "...the test of first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function."¹ I believe that each of you can surpass that test of first-rate intelligence. I hope that through our study of the essay, you will be inspired to research and critically consider your own opinions and ideologies. Expect to have fun as we improve our communication skills through extensive practice. In the long-haul, this class offers you the tools to

positively contribute to the publics surrounding you. **You** are the one who determines whether or not to utilize those tools.

A Warning: We have a lot of work to pack into a few short months. Stay on top of your daily assignments. Come to class alert and prepared to participate. I encourage each of you to meet with me regularly. E-mail me or stop by my office during office hours or by appointment.

Course Requirements

Your assignments add up to 1000 points. Point values for each assignment are specified below. Other requirements—such as attendance, reading responses, or conferences with me—have no positive point values, but may deduct points from your final grade. You will submit each major paper as a portfolio showing evidence of your writing process. The portfolio includes prewriting, all marked-up drafts, a reflective analysis, and the rubric. These are submitted with your final work in a pocket folder. **This means you should save everything you do in this class until the end of the semester.** More detailed information on each of the assignments will be given to you as it approaches. You are responsible to find out about the homework if you miss a class. I have a policy requiring 100% preparedness. I reserve the right to call on you at any time in relation to the reading or during class discussions.

Short Personal Essay (100): Over the course of the semester, you will write two personal essays that will critically analyze a question or quotidian topic. The purpose of the personal essay is to challenge the way you think and enable you to connect ideas in a new way. A personal essay is an art of substantial thinking on the page that invites a reader to also engage in your thought process. The short personal essay will be your first assignment. It will be 500-700 words long and will be worth 100 points.

Ruminative Research Essay (200): The second personal essay will be your last major paper due; it will be 8-10 pages long and exemplify the communication skills that you acquire and master throughout the semester. It is worth 200 points. You will write on a topic founded upon a question of personal interest and supplemented by substantial research. You will direct your work to a specific publication audience (such as—but not limited to—a BYU journal like *Americana* or *Intuition*). Your chosen topic and publication audience must be approved by me. The purpose of this assignment is to situate yourself, and participate, in a professional, public discourse.

Analysis (100): You will write a short analysis examining the significance of a single word in a contemporary rhetorical situation (i.e. an advertisement, a song, class readings, etc.). It will be 2-3 pages long and worth 100 points. The purpose of the analysis is to train you to examine how language works to influence action. You will consider how and why rhetorical appeals are used to represent (and sometimes manipulate) specific situations.

Final Portfolio and Presentation (200): You will choose one of your major papers (described above) to submit to a public audience for actual publication. This may include entering one of your pieces in a contest, submitting it to a print or online journal, etc. Since the submission process can require significant time and effort, choose early which piece you would like to present to readers outside of class. Your final portfolio will include a sparkling sample of your semester work: the essay you submit to a public sphere, reflection on the submission process, all of your other main papers that have been at least superficially revised, four of your favorite journal assignments typed and revised, and an evaluation of the course. You will professionally and creatively bind your work together as a book. Your final presentation will be 5-10 minutes; you will address your work and one of the most valuable things you

learned about writing. Because your final is primarily based on your portfolio, keep all of your work! The final exam period is scheduled by the University for Wednesday, December 16, from 5:45 p.m.-7:45 p.m. in our classroom. No early presentations will be given; you will fail the course if you miss the final. Please inform your family immediately and plan travel arrangements, weddings, etc., accordingly.

I suggest keeping a folder or notebook to preserve handouts, write notes from discussion, ideas for your essays, lists of resources, etc. Such a notebook will mark your writing process and aid you in completing your major papers and progress as a writer. It will also make your final much easier.

Blog Journal and Stylistics Activities (130): You will post your weekly journal assignments on the class blog: ruminatonresearchwriting.blogspot.com. The purpose of a class blog is to practice writing, allow public response to your work, critically analyze the work of others, create discussion within and beyond the classroom, respond to class readings, explore the writing process, and share our writing with others. This will enhance the classroom community as well as providing an online forum for you to exchange ideas and apply what you learn to personal and public experience. Each journal will require about forty minutes. I will grade your journals weekly—which means you should be consistently writing and commenting on it.

Library Tour, Tests, and Research Sessions (45): You are required to complete a tour of the library, do an online tutorial, and take two quizzes on the information you learned. These resources can be obtained in the LRC on the 4th floor of the library and on blackboard. In addition, for two class periods this term we will meet in the library. Since the library will become one of your most valuable resources throughout your college career, these sessions are *not* optional. It will be conducted by a member of the library staff who will present you with a few simple tutorials on how to utilize the library as a resource for your studies.

Grammar Quizzes (50): A grammar and punctuation packet will be given to you to supplement the *Penguin Handbook*; from the information in this packet you will be given five quizzes to complete in the first half of the semester. You will also complete weekly grammar and stylistics assignments to improve your writing abilities. Other available resources to help you improve your grammar are webclips.byu.edu, and Writing Center mini-classes.

Class and Workshop Participation (30): The more you participate the more you learn! I will assign activities and small writing assignments as needed throughout the semester. These are not necessarily listed on your course calendar. For each major paper, you will workshop your peers' work and offer quality feedback on how that student succeeded and what could be improved. Participation in peer workshops is not optional. I expect you to use peer workshops as a time to help your classmates while introspectively examining your own writing.

Reading Responses: Periodically throughout the semester we will have reading response rush-writes and quizzes. On the days that we do not have reading responses, I will pass around an attendance sheet on which you will mark the amount of reading you completed (1=less than half, 2=more than half, 3=all).

Extra Benefit Opportunities: Throughout the semester, I will inform you of opportunities that can open your mind to new ideas and perspectives. Extra benefit opportunities will help you become a better person and increase your capacity to contribute to your community and your educational experience. Extra benefit does not mean extra credit—yet, it might in certain instances.

Conferences: You will meet with me in my office about your papers at least three times over the course of the semester.

Required Format: *All* papers submitted for this course must be as follows: typed in Times New Roman 12-point font, double spaced, set with 1 inch margins, pages connected with a paper clip or staple, in MLA (Modern Language Association) style. The heading will be in the upper left-hand corner and list your name, my name, the course, and the date. Don't lose points for not following something so easy.

Class Policies

Attendance: According to department policy, students attending a section of English 150 that meets two times a week during a fall/winter semester are permitted to miss 2 classes, no questions asked. **Each additional absence will result in a one-third reduction of your final grade (B to B-).** If a student misses more than **20 minutes** of any class period, he or she will be considered absent for the day. Excused absences for student athletes and students participating in other student groups authorized by the university count toward the permitted number of absences; however, these students are not penalized for additional excused absences. An important note: I expect you to e-mail me before you will be missing any class period as a courtesy to me and also so that I can catch you up on important information.

Tardiness: Come to class on time. You will not be able to make up the rush-writes, quizzes, or other essential activities you miss if you are late. Three tardies = one absence.

Late Assignments: **Late assignments will not be accepted.** Seven minutes into a class period when an assignment is due I will collect your work. Anything after that will receive 0 points and falling behind will prove detrimental to your progress in this class. Drafts will be required for each paper so that you will have plenty of time for revisions. One of the aims of this course is to teach you how to take responsibility for your own learning and I will provide you with guidance and assistance. If you are going out of town, plan to hand in your paper early. In case of an emergency, please contact me as soon as possible. I understand that there can be problems with computers and printing, etc. If this is the case, e-mail a copy of your paper to me **before** class so that I know you finished it by class, and then you are responsible for turning in a hard copy to my box in 4110 JFSB by 5:00 of the same day.

Failure Policy: If you do not complete any of the major assignments (short personal essay, analysis, ruminative research essay, and the final)—you automatically fail the class.

Revision: Writing is a process. You will revise their work extensively leading up to each of the main papers. If, after receiving your final grade, you wish to further improve your piece, you can but you must follow my instructions listed here exactly. I allow one week from when you receive your graded paper to do the following: significantly revise your paper *twice* (two separate copies), write a reflection of why you made the changes that you did and how they improve your paper, print off a new final with the changes highlighted, and turn in your re-vamped portfolio. You may only revise a paper originally turned in on time. Your grade will be the average of the two papers.

Grading: While grading may seem wholly subjective, I try to make the process as objective as possible by providing you with clear-cut grading standards. Read your grading rubrics. When you submit the portfolio for each major paper, you will also include how you would grade yourself based on the rubric and why. This will make the grading process a bit more collaborative between us. Grades are simply a form of communication, both to you and ultimately to the university, of the quality of your performance

in relation to the standard and to your peer group. It is not a measurement of your personal value. If you ever believe that your work has been mistakenly or unfairly evaluated, please express your concerns to me. I ask that you reread both your work and my comments before doing so, and that you wait at least one day from the time you receive your graded work back to contact me. Do not e-mail me about grading concerns. I will only handle these issues in person.

Grading Scale (BYU Standard)

Points	Grade		Points	Grade		Points	Grade		Points	Grade
1000-940	A		869-830	B		769-730	C		669-630	D
939-900	A-		829-800	B-		729-700	C-		629-600	D-
899-870	B+		799-770	C+		699-670	D+		Below 600	E

Honor Code and Plagiarism: Do NOT claim work that is not your own. I am a rabid reader and will notice when students change registers of language in a paper. Students are expected to uphold the Honor Code they signed. Academic dishonesty is not tolerated at the University. Any paper that is deliberately plagiarized will not be accepted. The student will receive zero points for the assignment, fail the course, and be referred to the Honor Code Office. Please see full detail on Plagiarism as constituted in the Honor Code at <http://campuslife.byu.edu/honorcode>.

Sexual Harassment: BYU's policy against sexual harassment protects both employees of the University as well as students. Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, students who encounter sexual harassment from other students are protected. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your professor, contact the campus EEO office (422-5895), or contact the Honor Code Office (422-2847).

Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (enacted in 1990) prohibits discrimination based on disability in employment, public service, public accommodations, telecommunications, and transportation. The Act is intended to afford the disabled equal opportunity and full participation in life activities. If you have a disability and need accommodation, please contact the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (378-2767).

¹ Fitzgerald, F. Scott. "The Crack-Up." *The Art of the Personal Essay*. Ed. Phillip Lopate. New York: Anchor, 1995. 520.