JE001: Grammar, Style and Expository Writing

Course Description

JE001: Grammar, Style and Expository Writing is a year-long course which integrates twice-weekly seminar instruction in close-reading and expository writing with the study of basic principles of grammar and style. Grammar theory is emphasized in the fall and consolidated in the spring; the practice of concise, correct language is emphasized throughout the year. The fall semester uses three versions of Chaucer’s The Canterbury Tales to examine the rhetorical ramifications of word choice and sentence structure and to introduce close-reading techniques to improve comprehension of unfamiliar language and difficult texts. The spring semester uses Shakespeare’s Hamlet to study further rhetorical choice, grammatical construct, close-reading, and to introduce research skills, literary analysis, and historical context for literary works. Paragraph structure, purpose and placement will be emphasized throughout the course along with revision strategies and proofreading skills. By year’s end, students will be able to compose a succinct, organized, and clearly articulated five paragraph essay, an essential skill for academic achievement.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of JE001: Grammar, Style and Expository Writing,

- You will be able to identify and use commonly recognized parts of speech in written expression
- You will be able to diagram complex sentences
- You will be able to compose grammatically correct complex sentences which accurately and lucidly explain your thoughts
- You will be able to organize paragraphs to communicate your ideas clearly and effectively
- You will be able to decode difficult and unfamiliar texts
- You will be able to explain which grammatical structures writers use and why they do so
- You will be able to write a cogent and succinct five paragraph essay
- You will be able to understand and analyze a complex literary text in terms of both rhetorical expression and historical context

Required Texts

The Canterbury Tales: A Selection (Paperback)
by Geoffrey Chaucer, Colin Wilcockson (Editor, Translator, Introduction).

The Canterbury Tales (Paperback)
by Geoffrey Chaucer, Nevill Coghill (Translator).

Hamlet (Paperback)
by William Shakespeare , R. Braunmuller & Stephen Orgel (Editors).

Garner’s Modern American Usage, 3rd Edition (Hardcover)
by Bryan A. Garner.,
Oxford University Press, USA, 2009

Analytical Grammar: A Systemic Approach to Language Mastery,
created by R. Robin Finley,
Raleigh, NC, 1996 (www.analyticalgrammar.com)
Grading

This course will be graded based on your participation in class discussions, your short homework assignments, longer papers, and a final exam at the end of each semester. The grading breakdown for each semester is:

- **Papers:** 38%
- **Homework:** 30%
- **Participation:** 16%
- **Final exam:** 16%

Assignments

- **In class participation:** You are expected to participate in in-class discussions to create an active learning environment. This portion of your grade will be based on both your attendance and your asking/answering questions in class.
- **Online posting:** You will be required to maintain an online vocabulary journal and to post answers to questions posted in discussion threads online.
- **Grammar study:** We will work on identifying parts of speech in class but you will also be asked to do short assignments as homework. The majority of your work here will involve correcting mistakes found in your own writing.
- **Written assignments:** You will be asked to complete short writing assignments of 1-3 pages throughout each semester.
- **Final paper (Spring only):** The culmination of this course is a longer, 3-5 page analysis of language in *Hamlet*.

Sample Assignment: *Hamlet* Log. Use at least 3 of the 8 components below for each scene.

- **Summary:** tell what occurred in the scene.
- **Significance:** why do you think the scene is important or not? What would the play be like without it? If you were a theater director trying to make the play shorter, could you cut all or part of the scene without loss of meaning?
- **Questions:** Open a dialogue with a character and ask questions. Is anything in the scene unclear? Should the character have the answer? The answer may not be revealed yet but you, writing as the character, should try to answer. The answer may change later but asking when the question arises should clarify your thinking. You may add notes later to the entry.
- **Language:** quote lines from the scene that you enjoyed and comment on them. Be sure to note the speaker and the line number in the accepted format – Horatio (I.1.43) “Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder.”
- **Reaction:** describe your reaction to a character, action or idea you confronted in the scene.
- **Character:** Identify and discuss a personality trait that a character displays in the scene, using examples from the text to support your findings, as we did with Chaucer’s “Prologue.”
- **Relationships:** Discuss the relationships between two characters in the scene, quoting specific words or phrases to give evidence for your opinion.
- **Actor:** Pretend you are an actor playing one of the characters in the scene. Get inside that character’s mind. Describe how the character feels about herself or himself, about other characters, about the situation of the scene. What props would you need? What line from the scene would you most emphasize and how would you deliver that line?