

English Composition: 1A

TRANSFER STATUS: CSU/UC Degree Applicable: AA/AS

PREREQUISITES: New students will be placed based on the results of assessment (e.g., a qualifying score on the English Placement test or an ACT/SAT Score). Continuing Students must complete: English 104 (or English 92 or English 91A or ESL 91), and 2) the English 102 (or Reading 101 or Reading 101S or ESL 91 ESL 93) all with a C or better.

CONTENT: This course focuses on learning and acquiring good writing techniques, developing versatility and dexterity, and obtaining confidence in one's own writing. Through analysis of subjects, purposes, and styles, we will work constantly at the problem of planning, organizing, and developing an essay. To this end we will examine various rhetorical methods and their application in paragraph development and whole essays.

OBJECTIVES: The ultimate aim in this class is to emphasize *writing* as an effective tool and an important necessity, closely allied with the other aspects of communication: thinking, listening, and speaking. Thus, in addition to our involvement with the techniques of writing, this course will also concentrate on readings and careful observations as obligatory companions leading to the critical written response. Readings in *Thresholds*, for instance, will address topics and issues common to the human experience (e.g., identity, relationships) as found in nonfiction, fiction, and poetry. Moreover, they will serve as a stimulus for rhetorical discussions, formal or informal evaluations, analysis, argumentation and research.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS: Warner, *Thresholds: Literature Based Composition*
Erdrich, *Tracks*
Dictionary of the English Language (college level) Folders, Tot staplers, pens, **10 green** composition exam booklets, notebooks, and a double-sided/high density 3.5" PC floppy disk or flash drive.

METHOD: After a review of the composition process, we will begin to explore and examine our readings through reader response exercises (e.g., dialectical journals), class lectures, discussions, and collaborative activities. These, in turn, will lead to prewriting activities and essay drafts. We will do a good deal of writing in this class. There will be about *eight GRADED* essays (as well as rewrites) and a midterm essay, prewriting and editing exercises, a dialectical journal, several quizzes, and a Department Final Essay Exam (Friday, May 16, 2008 at 9:40 a.m.). Some essays will be written "in class," some essays will be composed in the "electronic classroom," and still others will be written, revised, edited, and rewritten at home. The objective (learning outcome) here is to become the *whole writer* who can critically read, think, react, and respond in writing to almost any topic or issue, in any given situation.

DIALECTICAL JOURNALS: Everyone in class will write a *dialectical journal* that I will collect every few weeks—possibly more frequently. A dialectical journal is not simply busy work; its numerous attributes include reinforcing the reading and writing connection as well as promoting critical and creative thinking skills via reflective entries. Another plus of the journal is that will still be interacting with the text and coming to class prepared to discuss assigned materials. Furthermore, writing a dialectical journal will give you practice in differentiating between source materials and your own ideas—something you will find essential when writing research papers. Such practice will undoubtedly make you more discriminating note takers as well! (Pages 10-13 and 29-33 in *Thresholds* explain and exemplify the format for dialectical journals in detail.)

**THE RESEARCH
PAPER & LIBRARY**

Since the Fall Semester 1991, English 1A has been the official course for teaching the research paper. During the first two weeks of class, we will have a tour of the library and consider issues such as locating primary secondary source materials on various subjects as well as documenting your references accordingly (i.e., MLA *parenthetical citations* and list of works *cited*). On Wednesday, February 20, you will submit a prospectus (a brief paragraph explaining the objective of your research paper and your plan of action), and, when we conference during the first week of October, I will go over it with you, making suggestions and answering questions you might have. NOTE: You are more than welcome to submit your prospectus to me before then; I encourage such initiative.

**DEPARTMENTAL
FINAL ESSAY EXAM:**

At the end of the semester on Friday, May 16, 2008 at 9:40 a.m., *all EVC English 1A students* will write a *department essay*, an essay which will be graded by at least two faculty readers and count as 20% of their course grade. The final exam must be written in the official EVC Written Exam Booklet; I suggest everyone purchase several booklets as soon as possible; the bookstore will not be open on the date of the final exam! (We'll be using them for in class essays as well). Please make any special work schedule, counseling appointments, airport drop offs, doctor/dentist appointments, travel arrangements, and so on far in advance of the English Department Final Examination date.

GRADES:

Essays (average)	40%
Research Paper	20%
Midterm Essay	10%
Dialectical Journal	10%
Department Final Essay Exam	20%

GRADE POLICY:

Grades in English 1A are based on performance, not the person; the effect, not the effort; the writing, not the writer. (See the attached sheet for detailed look at the characteristics of A, B, C, D, and F papers.) In order to pass English 1A and move on to English 1B—or college classes with an English 1A prerequisite—you must *earn at least a "C"* in this class. In other words, for this class a "D" grade means neither "barely passing" nor "below average" on your final grade report. Like an "F", a "D" grade indicates unacceptable writing proficiency at the college level and will require you to repeat English 1A. In order to receive a "W" (withdrawal) you must be making satisfactory progress, you must inform your instructor, and you must withdraw on or before the date designated by the registrar.

ATTENDANCE:

For the next semester, commit yourself to regularly attending English 1A on Monday and Wednesday. The lectures, discussions, and exercises during class meetings provide you with helpful guidelines for your papers. For the most part, late papers will not be accepted. Likewise, missed assignments may not be "made-up" without a detailed letter justifying your inability to complete a designated task on time. In short, prompt, consistent attendance and up to date class work is essential in order to successfully complete this course. If you are unwilling to commit yourself to class today or feel you will be unable to satisfy the demands of our rigorous reading and writing schedule, I suggest that you forfeit your seat to someone on the waiting list who is eager to meet the challenge of such intensive study. *Please be fair to yourself and others.*

PAPER FORMAT: Papers written outside of class must be typed on 8 1/2 X 11 inch paper double spaced, and thoroughly revised and proofread before turning them in. You may use the word processors in the "Language Arts Electronic Classroom" to complete out of class work. No hand written copies of out of class essays will be accepted. For in-class essays, please use a felt tip pen or ink—no pencil.

LATE PAPERS & REWRITES: Plan on submitting all of your papers to me on time! Though most *unacceptable* essays may be rewritten for a "C" grade, *no rewrites will be accepted after May 3rd and no rewrites will be allowed for the midterm essay, research paper, or the final exam.* Bear in mind that rewriting an unacceptable composition does not guarantee you a passing grade on an assignment. Your rewrite must show demonstrated improvement.

Evergreen Valley College English 1A

If you attend all classes and complete all reading and writing assignments proficiently, you should be able to do the following at the end of the semester:

- 1) Read a wide range of academic writings critically, discuss them in detail, and use them as sources to document their writing;
- 2) Critically analyze and evaluate writing for its rhetorical and technical merit, with consideration of the principles of unity, coherence, tone, persona, purpose, methods, and the effects on a target audience;
- 3) Organize information (support) from reading, experience, and class discussion into an argument with a clear thesis;
- 4) Organize paragraphs into a logical, effective, sequence, developing the central idea of the essay to a logical, satisfying conclusion;
- 5) Use a variety of rhetorical strategies, which will include textual analysis, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, causal analysis, and argument;
- 6) Revise and edit drafts of essays at the thesis, paragraph, and sentence levels;
- 7) Apply conventional mechanics (e.g. punctuation, spelling, grammar) competently, demonstrating standard English usage;
- 8) Function effectively in written work as a transfer student;
- 9) Find, analyze, and interpret outside sources, including online information;
- 10) Write a research paper, using research/documentation techniques and library resources, integrating the ideas of others through paraphrase, summary, and quotation into a paper that expresses his or her own voice, position, or analysis.

LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS & THE DISABLED STUDENTS PROGRAM

Equal access to education means equal opportunity to learn. Under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as well as the American Disabilities Act of 1990, students with verified disabilities— or who are otherwise qualified— have a right to equal access and appropriate accommodations to classes at Evergreen Valley College. If you are a DSP student or believe you have a learning disability, please conference me within the first week or so of class. The DSP staff at EVC and I would like to work cooperatively to insure your equal access to learning materials, supportive services, and appropriate accommodations as early in the semester as possible. You may also wish to contact the Coordinator of the Disabled Students Program at Evergreen Valley College: (408) 270-6447 Voice, (408) 238-8722 TDD, Learning Resources Center Building.

DROPPING CLASSES: At Evergreen Valley College, students—not instructors—are responsible for dropping their classes, even if they assume instructors will disqualify them due to excessive absences. (These days' instructors no longer even receive drop sheets!) In short, assume nothing; instructors can no longer back date withdrawals which means if you neglected to make sure you were dropped from a class, instructors must issue you a letter grade—No exceptions. For more information, consult your college catalogue.

OFFICE HOURS: You can find me in my office, R3-321 on Monday from 2:00 to 4:00, Wednesday from 11:00 to 12:00, and Tuesday/Thursday from 1:45 to 2:45 — as well as by arrangement. Please make an attempt to see me often during the semester—not just when I mandate student conferences.

MESSAGES: If I am not in my office, please leave your messages for me on the answering machine (274-7900, extension 6605), or email: me c/o: *Sterling.Warner@evc.edu*

READING ASSIGNMENTS: *Some* of the reading assignments and interactive class exercises from *Thresholds* will be given on a day-to-day basis, and everyone is responsible for them. If for some unforeseeable reason you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact one of your colleagues, get the reading assignments for the following day, and come to class prepared. An absence is not a justification for a lack of ingenuity, creativity or responsibility. (I *suggest* you get the phone numbers of three classmates today!)

Colleague #1: Phone Number:
Colleague #2: Phone Number:
Colleague #3: Phone Number:

PLAGIARISM: Please acquaint yourselves with Evergreen Valley College's policy on plagiarism. The act of presenting another's work as your own will not only guarantee you an "F" on an assignment, but may also be grounds for your dismissal from class. For further information on this matter, consult your College Handbook. "Evergreen Valley College believes that Honesty in the classroom and in the entire college community is vital to the integrity of the college, its courses, and its programs.

As a part of our college's standards and policy on academic integrity, the following defines academic honesty. It will serve to inform students of the consequences of violating these standards, as well as advising them of their rights.

At Evergreen Valley College, dishonesty (such as cheating) is defined as the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent or deceptive means. Academic dishonesty and/or cheating at Evergreen Valley College includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying, in part or in whole, from another's test or other evaluation instrument;
- Submitting work previously presented in another course;
- Using or consulting during an examination, sources or material not authorized by the instructor;
- Altering or interfering with grading or grading instructions;
- Sitting in for an examination by another student or for another student;
- Allowing anyone else to see your paper during an exam, test, or quiz;
- Plagiarizing, copying sentences, phrases, or passages from an uncited source while writing a paper or doing research.

***BRING GREEN WRITTEN EXAMINATION BOOKLETS
FOR ALL INCLASS ESSAYS***

**English 1A
Department Final Topic/Issue
*(SAMPLE)***

You have thirty minutes to think about the following passages. You may make notes and an outline on this sheet and on your scratch paper. At the end of the prewriting phase, the proctor will distribute the examination booklets in which you must write your essay. Once the booklets have been distributed, you will have about SEVENTY minutes to complete this Department Final Essay exam.

The power of speech, the freedom to engage our hearts and our bodies in dialogue is the most precious freedom of all. To secure all other rights granted to us by either our religions or our laws it is necessary to raise our voices. An idea inside our heads is, to our fellow humans, the same as no idea. It must be expressed if it is to have power. And the voice, the pen, is far mightier than any sword, any jail, any attempt to silence. Censorship is an anathema to a free people. We may not always like what we hear but we are always the poorer if we close down dialogue.

--Nikki Giovanni

WRITING ASSIGNMENT: Write a complete essay in which you

- 1) Explain Giovanni's attitude towards the power of words and one's freedom of speech.
- 2) Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with Giovanni's point of view, supporting your position with examples drawn from your own readings, observations, and personal experience. (HINT: Give your essay an argumentative edge and thoroughly! defend your own point of view) Your essay will be evaluated on the persuasive merit and clarity of your argument. **Make sure your complete both parts of the assignment!**

1A ESSAY SCORING GUIDE: RANGE OF SCORES

- 6** **OUTSTANDING** The "6" essay will be fluent, well developed, and well organized, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will:
- show the student's ability to use language effectively
 - be generally free of errors in sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics
 - demonstrate a clear sense of essay form, paragraphing, and sentence complexity and variety
 - support a thesis with specific, convincing evidence going beyond the personal narrative
- 5** **IMPRESSIVE** A "5" essay, in general, will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the "6" essay. It will:
- be somewhat less fluent or display less facility of expression than the "6" paper
 - perhaps contain some minor grammatical or mechanical flaws
 - demonstrate a sense of essay form, paragraphing, and sentence variety
 - display intellectual content, thesis support, and vocabulary superior to that of the "4" essay
- 4** **COMPETENT** The "4" essay will adequately complete all tasks set by the assignment. It will:
- demonstrate a basic knowledge of sentence structure, but lack the variety of the "5" paper
 - demonstrate support of a thesis, but lack the specificity and development of the "5" paper
 - display mechanical errors that will not distract or confuse the reader
- 3** **INADEQUATE** The "3" paper may not provide adequate development, may lack detail and specificity, or may be poorly organized. It usually has problems in diction, grammar, and mechanics. It will probably:
- reveal a minor misreading of the topic or neglect one of the assigned tasks
 - respond to the topic in a superficial or simplistic way
 - display mechanical errors that will not distract or confuse the reader
 - contain sentences showing no syntactic complexity or variety
- 2** **POOR** The "2" paper, though it addresses the topic, may reveal a combination of the following weaknesses:
- misreading of the assignment
 - problems in organization and focus
 - errors in sentence construction, grammar, and mechanics serious enough to distract and confuse the reader
- 1** **UNACCEPTABLE** The "1" paper is clearly incompetent on the mechanical, syntactical, or rhetorical level. It may:
- be badly marred by serious and persistent writing errors
 - be unfocused, illogical, incoherent, or undeveloped
 - reveal the writer's inability to comprehend the question

Characteristics of the "A" Paper:

1. The "A" paper shows imagination in language and structure and evidences superior knowledge of the conventions of written English.
2. The paper addresses and shows understanding of the topic or assignment.
3. The thoughts, ideas, and information are presented clearly; they are carefully planned and organized. What you write should be clear to me and other readers on first reading.
4. The main idea of the paper is introduced in a way that makes the reader want to go on and is stated explicitly early in the essay. The "A" paper moves smoothly from its introduction into thorough, logically ordered development/support, with the help of transitional devices, and leads to an emotionally satisfying conclusion.
5. The "A" paper topic and its discussion will be interesting and seriously thought through.
6. The "A" paper is concrete, not abstract; specific, not general; clear, not vague; vivid, not bland.
7. The paper is virtually free from errors in grammar and spelling.
8. The "A" paper is clean and lean. All "fat"—unnecessary words, repetition, rambling, padding (for length's sake)—has been removed.
9. Each paragraph develops only one idea or topic (UNITY).
10. Papers avoid clichés, jargon and worn out expressions; words are well chosen.
11. Sufficient evidence supports each generalization.
12. The style and tone are appropriate to the subject and the audience--not pompous or flowery. Sentences are straightforward, verbs are active, reference is specific, and word choice is accurate, lively, and descriptive.
13. An "A" paper represents original thinking, sensitivity, enlightened opinion, and an active imagination.

IN SUMMATION, ***UNUSUAL COMPETENCE IN WRITING*** (AN "A" PAPER) REPRESENTS THE FOLLOWING:

- A. An ability to avoid the obvious and thus gain insights that is personal and often illuminating.
- B. A capacity to develop ideas flexibly and fluently, yet with control and a definite sense of purpose.
- C. An ability to punctuate rhetorically, using it for effect as well as for clarity.
- D. A willingness to be inventive with words and structures in order to produce a clearly identifiable style, even though at times the efforts may be too deliberate or fall short of the writer's intentions.

THE FOLLOWING BRIEFLY SUMMARIZES WHAT AN ESSAY OF ***DEMONSTRATED COMPETENCE*** (A "B" PAPER) REPRESENTS:

- A. An ability to absorb ideas and experience and to interpret them meaningfully in a context of the writer's own conception.
- B. A capacity to develop an idea with a clear sense of order.
- C. A capacity to draw on words adequate to express the writer's own thoughts and feelings.
- D. An ability to use mechanics as an integral part of the meaning and effect of the prose.
- E. A capacity to consider alternate ways of expression as a means of making stylistic choices possible.

Characteristics of Papers (continued)

Characteristics of the "C" Paper:

1. Organization is weak; little planning is evident.
2. Most paragraphs are units of thought; some are incoherent.
3. General statements are not always carefully supported with details and examples; this "causes the writing to seem thin."
4. The "C" paper is frequently filled with absolute phrases and hearsay evidence demonstrating little intellectual involvement with the subject.
5. The paper may be vague and/or general; sentences often follow a dull, uneven pattern.
6. Awkward, muddled sentences interfere with the flow of thought.
7. The "C" paper is comparatively free from grammar and punctuation errors.
8. There are lapses into jargon, slang, or colloquialisms, which lead to inconsistencies in tone and unintentional humor.
9. Writers of "C" papers may not be less fluent than writers of better papers, but they make words count for less. The writing may be padded and repetitious.
10. The paper is not very interesting. The writer is not original in his/her thinking. He/she takes the easy path by either repeating what he/she has heard from others on the subject or by dealing with the obvious and commonplace.

IN TERMS OF GENERALIZATIONS MENTIONED ABOUT "C" PAPERS, WE MAY SUMMARIZE BY SAYING THAT WRITING WHICH *SUGGESTS COMPETENCE* (A "C" PAPER) REPRESENTS:

- A. A tendency to depend on the self-evident and the cliché and thus for the writer to write uninformative discourse.
- B. A tendency either to make organization obvious or to write aimlessly
- C. A limitation in the range of words and thus a dependence on the clichés and colloquialisms most available.
- D. An ability to use mechanics correctly or incorrectly in proportion to the plainness or complexity of the style.
- E. A general awareness of choices that affect style and thus an inability to control the effects a writer may seek.

Characteristics of the "D" and "F" Paper:

The "D" paper is easy to identify. It shows a lack of careful thought, organization, unity, support, coherence, and effort. The typical "D" essay is messy and full of grammatical and spelling errors. Since "D" and "F" paper each represent degrees of incompetency, the characteristics can be described as the opposite of those for competent writing. The following summarize general tendencies that mark inferior writing:

1. A tendency to exploit the obvious either because of lack of understanding, inability to read, failure to grapple with a topic, or, in many instances, lack of interest. The substance of "D" and "F" papers, therefore, ranges from superficial to barren.

Characteristics of Papers (continued)

2. A tendency to wander aimlessly because of a lack of overall conception or, in some instances, to have a semblance of form without the development that makes the part a whole.
3. A tendency to play safe with words, using ones the writer ordinarily speaks or the ones the writer can spell. These tendencies place obvious limits upon the writer to vary the expression.
4. A frequent inability to make careful distinctions between periods, commas, and semicolons--although some writers in this category can write correct sentences if they keep the structures simple. The incidence of error, however, is high.
5. Either a tendency to write convoluted sentences that are close to the rapid associations of our thoughts before we straighten them out or a tendency to play safe by avoiding the sentence elements that invite error (introductory modifiers, embedding, coordination, and various sentence combining techniques).

Evergreen Valley College
English 1A Course Learning Outcomes/Objectives

Upon completion the of this course, the student who successfully passes the class will be able to:

- Read a wide range of academic writing critically, discuss it in detail, and use it as sources to document their writing.
- Organize information (support) from reading, experience, and class discussion into an argument with a clear thesis.
- Revise drafts of essays at the thesis, paragraph, and sentence levels.
- Write clear sentences that demonstrate variety.
- Organize and develop body paragraphs effectively.
- Use vocabulary appropriate to the topic of the essay, demonstrating standard American usage.
- Handle conventional mechanics (e.g. punctuation, spelling, grammar) competently.
- Demonstrated critical thinking skills in oral and written work.
- Function effectively in written work as a transfer student.
- Write a research paper, using research techniques and library resources.

ESSAY/RESEARCH SKILLS EVALUATION FORM

+ Excellent

// Good

√ Needs Work

Rhetoric

- Clear focus on a central idea _____
- Consistent flow of reasoning _____
- Specific details and example to support the main idea _____
- Sufficient commentary following quoted material _____
- Effective introduction _____
- Satisfying, appropriate (logical) conclusion _____

Style/Diction

- Effective word choice (avoid using jargon or clichés) _____
- Honest and clear tone or voice _____
- Syntax (word order) _____
- Clear expression (avoid wordiness) _____
- Use of concrete nouns and active verbs _____

Editing

- Grammar/Spelling _____
- Format (essay structure) _____

Documenting Sources

- Parenthetical references _____
- List of works cited _____
- Variety of resource materials (when applicable) _____

Comments:

ENGLISH 1A: KEY DATES TO NOTE SPRING SEMESTER 2008

January 28 (Monday)	REGULAR SEMESTER BEGINS
January 30 (Wednesday)	ESSAY #1 (DIAGNOSTIC, IN CLASS: NO GRADE)
February 2 (Saturday)	Weekend classes begin; EVC Distance Education Program Orientation
February 8 (Friday)	<u>Last Day</u> to DROP regular semester classes for a refund of eligible fees. (10% of term)
February 10 (Sunday)	<u>Last Day</u> to ADD via TREG/WEBREG regular semester classes
February 11 (Monday)	Census Day
February 13 (Wednesday)	ESSAY #2 DUE
February 15-18	Presidents Day— <u>No Classes Held/Campus closed.</u>
February 20 (Wednesday)	RESEARCH PAPER PROSPECTUS DUE
February 22 (Friday)	<u>Last Day</u> to drop a class WITHOUT a “W” on record <u>Last Day</u> to apply for a refund of enrollment fees if classes were dropped on or before February 8, 2008 <u>Last Day</u> to submit Credit/No Credit Option forms in the Office of Admissions and Records
March 5 (Wednesday)	ESSAY #3 DUE
March 7 (Friday)	Graduation/Certificate Petitions for Spring 2008 DUE (All forms due in the Office of Admissions and Records)
March 12 (Wednesday)	ESSAY #4: MIDTERM (IN CLASS— BRING GREENBOOKS)
March 17-23	Spring Break— <u>No classes held</u>
March 21 (Friday)	Cesar Chavez Day— <u>Campus closed</u>
April 3 (Wednesday)	<u>First Day</u> to Drop without having to return Financial Aid
April 4 (Friday)	Professional Development Day— <u>No Classes Held</u>
April 7 (Monday)	ESSAY #5 DUE
April 21 (Monday)	ESSAY #6 (RESEARCH PAPER) DUE
April 25 (Friday)	<u>Last Day</u> to drop a class and RECEIVE a “W” on record
May 5 (Monday)	ESSAY #7 DUE
May 12 (Monday)	ESSAY #8 DUE (IN CLASS— BRING GREENBOOKS)
May 16 (Friday)	English Comp Final Exams— <u>No DAY classes meet</u> > Friday evening classes will meet as scheduled.
May 23 (Friday)	REGULAR SEMESTER ENDS
May 23 (Friday)	Evergreen Valley College Commencement
June 6 (Friday)	Spring 2008 grades available by calling StaREG 408-223-0300 or online at http://webreg.sjeccd.org/