

Language and Grammar Studies (ENGL 3335-11539)
MWF 8:00-8:50 in Irby 310
Dr. Katherine E.C. Willis

Three Ways to Contact Me:

Email: kwillis@uca.edu

- I only reply if you use basic etiquette (salutation, legible grammar, signature)
- Allow 24 hours for a response

Meet with me in Irby 317D:

- Stop by my office hours on **MWF 9-10, 11-12** or **T/Th 9:30-10:30**
- Schedule an appointment through the Calendly app: <https://calendly.com/katherinewillis>

Phone: 501-450-5100

Course Description & Objectives:

How correct do you think these sentences are?

- ▶ "Y'all should definitely come to the party tonight."
- ▶ "If anyone has questions, they can reach me via email."
- ▶ "She laughin' at you!"

From a prescriptive perspective, these sentences are each wrong in some way; they each break a rule. From a descriptive perspective, however, each of these sentences actually follows the rules of English quite well. How can both of those perspectives work at the same time?

Most students in American high schools receive little instruction in grammar beyond some dos and don'ts that can be confusing. This course is meant to fill in those gaps but also take you deeper into the underlying structures of our language. Most of the rules we cover will be "descriptive" rather than "prescriptive" in nature. That means that the rules will be descriptions of the patterns we actually use in making phrases, clauses, and sentences rather than a rigid set of dos and don'ts. At the beginning and end of the semester, we'll discuss how our use of grammar and our opinions about grammar interact with social and political issues.

You should know from day one that this upper-division course is information intensive and meant to challenge you. That means that you will have to memorize some definitions, apply terminology, and think of language like a puzzle to be solved. It also means that you will have to engage your best note-

taking and regular studying skills to keep up with the pace of the material. You will do best if you study a little bit each day or at least each week.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- ✓ explain the difference between prescriptive and descriptive approaches to language
- ✓ recognize some of the socio-political consequences of language use and perception
- ✓ define the major parts of speech in English with their grammatical features
- ✓ describe the major components of clauses and sentences as well as how they interact
- ✓ break down and grammatically analyze sentences, clauses, phrases, and words
- ✓ recognize different ways of teaching grammar and evaluating students' knowledge
- ✓ reflect critically on your own learning processes

UCA Core: This course satisfies the **upper division C (Communication)** requirement. For more info, go to <http://uca.edu/core>.

- Communication courses promote the ability to develop and present ideas logically and effectively in order to enhance communication and collaboration with diverse individuals and groups.
- For this course, we are using **rubric C**: Students will apply appropriate verbal and nonverbal strategies to promote collaboration.

Required Materials:

The following should be purchased in hard copy or ebook copy (your choice of format):

- *The Broadview Book of Common Errors*, by Don LePan
- *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*, by Lynne Truss

The following is a free ebook through the library (login required if you're off campus):

- *The Handy English Grammar Answer Book*, by Christine A. Hult

Other materials will be distributed on the class website or via email throughout the semester.

Assignments and Grading:

10% Participation: Come to class each day prepared to write and to discuss. Because this is a seminar course, our success as individuals and as a group depends upon your consistent, active, and vocal participation. Good participation means being regularly present and active in class, engaging with me and your classmates in generative, constructive discussion, and being prepared for each day of class (i.e., you completed the reading, finished the assignments, arrived with the text and/or notes in hand, etc). See the rubric online.

10% Quizzes: On most Mondays, we'll have a brief quiz based on the reading and lectures completed in the previous week. This is an information-dense course, so the quizzes are meant

to help you to learn and study as you go (rather than wait until the days before an exam). The questions will focus on key concepts, terms, and sample sentences.

- 15% Exercises:** The exercises will be graded partly on completion and partly on correctness. Each one will help you practice applying the material we're studying at that point. Some exercises will be completed in class, and others will be take home work (to be completed individually).
- 15% Mini test:** This assignment has 5 components: 1) a draft of your test, 2) a draft of your answer key, 3) a revised test, 4) a revised answer key, and 5) a reflection essay. The test should focus on a grammar topic of your choice that is suitably specific for the assigned length: ten original questions of your own design. Each question will be a sentence that needs correction/revision related to your topic. In addition to designing the questions, you will compose an answer key providing the correct answer and a helpful explanation. We'll workshop your drafts together so that you can successfully revise the test and answer key. After revising, you will also write a reflection essay about your learning process throughout the project. For more information, see the assignment sheet and rubric (available later in the semester).
- 15% Exam 1:** Expect a combination of multiple choice, matching, definition, short answer.
- 15% Exam 2:** Expect a combination of multiple choice, matching, definition, short answer.
- 20% Exam 3 (final):** This exam will be cumulative. Expect a combination of multiple choice, matching, definition, short answer. There will also be an essay component.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Readings and assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day on which they are listed. Some days may specify other materials you are required to bring. Note: I reserve the right to change the schedule below if it will help the class. I will announce any changes in class and via email.

UNIT A — LANGUAGE: HISTORY & POLITICS

- Aug. 24 Introduction to course. What is grammar and why does it matter?
- Aug. 27 A brief history of the English language.
READ: *Handy English* chs 1-2
- Aug. 29 Prescriptive vs. Descriptive approaches to language.
READ: *Handy English* ch 3 (just the section on "Important Grammatical Concepts")
READ: *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* introduction.
- Aug. 31 The sociopolitical dimensions of language. No reading.
- Sept. 3 No class — Labor Day

Sept. 5 Assessment of grammar and punctuation knowledge in American high schools. No reading.

UNIT B — THE GRAMMAR OF WORDS AND PHRASES

- Sept. 7 Nouns and articles.
READ: *Handy English* ch 4 pp 47-49; sections in ch 3 on "What is Case?" and "What is a Determiner?"
READ: BBCE "Singular and Plural Difficulties"
- Sept. 10 Pronouns.
READ: *Handy English* ch 4 pp 49-51; sections in ch 3 on "What is gender," "What is number," "What is person," and "What is subjective or objective case"
- Sept. 12 Pronouns, cont.
READ: BBCE "Pronoun Problems: Who Cares about Whom?"
- Sept. 14 Practice with nouns, pronouns, and articles. No reading.
- Sept. 17 Modifiers: adjectives and adverbs
READ: *Handy English* ch 4 pp 55-57; section in ch 3 on "What are cumulative adjectives"
- Sept. 19 Modifiers: prepositions and prepositional phrases.
READ: *Handy English* ch 4 p 58; section in ch 3 on "What is a preposition and a prepositional phrase"
READ: BBCE "Preposition Problems: 'Up with which I will not put'"
- Sept. 21 Practice with modifiers. No reading.
- Sept. 24 Verbs: person, number, tense, and aspect.
READ: *Handy English* ch 4 pp 51-55 (skip sections on "linking," "transitive," and "intransitive") and pp. 62-65
READ: BBCE "Irregular or Difficult Verbs"
- Sept. 26 Verbs: voice.
READ: *Handy English* ch 3 sections on "What are active and passive voice" and "What is voice"
- Sept. 28 Verbs: mood.
READ: *Handy English* ch 3 sections on "what is an imperative" and "what is the subjunctive mood"

- Oct. 1 Verbs: participial phrases.
READ: *Handy English* ch 4 p 54; section in ch 3 on "What is a participle or participial phrase"
- Oct. 3 Practice with verbs. No reading.
- Oct. 5 Practice analyzing words and phrases. No reading.
- Oct. 8 EXAM 1**

UNIT C — BUILDING CLAUSES AND SENTENCES

- Oct. 10 Major building blocks of simple sentences: subjects, verbs, and object(s).
READ: *Handy English* ch 4 pp 59-62; sections in ch 3 on "what is an object" and what is a subject"
- Oct. 12 No class — fall break
- Oct. 15 Transitivity
READ: *Handy English* ch 4 pp 51-55 (just the sections on "linking," "transitive," and "intransitive"). Review ch 4 pp 59-62.
- Oct. 17 Transitivity, cont.
READ: *BBCE* "Infinitives, Gerunds, Objects"
- Oct. 19 Independent vs. Dependent clauses. Compound sentences.
READ: *Handy English* ch 4 pp 57-58; sections in ch 3 on "what is a compound sentence" and "what is a conjunction"
- Oct. 22 Complex sentences: subordinating clauses.
READ: *Handy English* ch 3 sections on "what are coordination and subordination" and "what is subordination"
- Oct. 24 Overview of the mini test assignment.
Complex sentences: relative clauses.
READ: *Handy English* ch 3 section on "what is a nonrestrictive or a restrictive element?"
- Oct. 26 Complex sentences: noun clauses. No reading.
- Oct. 29 Practice with clauses and types of sentences. No reading.
- Oct. 31 Review/catch-up day.
- Nov. 2 EXAM 2**

UNIT D — MAKING GRAMMAR WORK IN WRITING

- Nov. 5 "Grammar Gremlins"
READ: *Handy English* Appendix L
- Nov. 7 "Grammar Gremlins," cont.
- Nov. 9 **DUE: ROUGH DRAFT OF MINI TEST AND ANSWER KEY**
- Nov. 12 Workshop mini tests, cont.
- Nov. 14 The frustrating vocabulary of English.
READ: BBCE "Word Meanings"
- Nov. 16 Frustrating vocabulary, cont.
READ: *Handy English* Appendix H
- Nov. 19 **DUE: FINAL DRAFT OF MINI TEST WITH ANSWER KEY AND REFLECTION (ALSO TURN IN DRAFTS)**
- Nov. 21-23 No class — Thanksgiving break

UNIT E — GRAMMAR IN A DIVERSE WORLD: BIAS, DIALECTS, GLOBAL ENGLISHES, AND POLITICS (AGAIN)

- Nov. 26 Why say "Englishes" instead of "English"? No reading.
- Nov. 28 Case study: African American English. No reading.
- Nov. 30 English for non-native speakers: ESL, TESOL, ELL???
READ: *Handy English* ch 15
- Dec. 3 Grammatical gender and issues of bias.
READ: BBCE "Bias-Free Language"
READ: *Handy English* ch 9 pp 140-142
- Dec. 5 Review/catch-up day
- Study Day: Dec. 7
- Final exam: Dec. 12, 8-10 am**

MY POLICIES FOR THIS COURSE:

STUDENT CONDUCT:

You are responsible for your conduct. I expect you to conduct yourself professionally and courteously in the classroom, in my office, and in your work. If your behavior seriously disrupts the learning experience of other students or my ability to teach, I will ask you to leave the classroom and/or the course.

ATTENDANCE AND DROP POLICY:

Your attendance and active participation in each class meeting throughout the semester is the foundation of your whole grade in this course. I reserve the right to drop students who have an excessive amount of unexcused absences. For a MWF course, that begins at 4 unexcused absences. For a T/Th course, that begins at 3 unexcused absences.

As the Attendance section of the Student Handbook explains, "A student's official program is regarded as his or her obligation to the institution, full performance of which requires regular and punctual class attendance and active participation. A student is responsible for coming to class prepared, completing any missed work, and knowing the dates and places of required course examinations."

GRADING POLICIES:

If you are unable to submit work on time due to an excused reason, it is your responsibility to contact me as soon as possible to document your reason and to make timely alternative arrangements. As the Student Handbook specifies in the section on Attendance, "Make-up examinations and assignments are required only for valid absences as determined by the faculty member. Students who miss an examination or assignment without a valid excuse may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment."

Excused reasons include (but are not limited to): official university-sanctioned athletic or organizational events (requires appropriate documentation), severe illness, death of a family member, court appearances, jury duty. For such excused reasons, late work will be accepted for full credit. However, be aware that some in-class activities may not be possible to make up.

Unexcused reasons include (but are not limited to): computer/printer malfunctions, traffic problems, family vacations/travel, or forgetfulness. For such unexcused reasons, I may be able to accept late work for partial credit, but you must discuss it with me first. The standard deduction for late work is one letter grade off per day.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE:

I will respond to your email within 24 hours. If you do not hear from me in that time window, contact me again. This means you should not, if at all possible, email last minute concerns. In addition, I only respond to emails that follow basic etiquette. That includes the following: a salutation line, readable grammar, and a signature line.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

As a general rule, you should know the policies described in the Student Handbook. The Sexual Harassment Policy and Academic Policies are especially important. You can find the current edition of the Student Handbook online here.

Academic Integrity: The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

Title IX Disclosure: If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to "student-on-student" or "employee-on-student"), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved. Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation. Each situation differs, and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on the specific set of circumstances. The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator. For further information, please visit: <https://uca.edu/titleix>. *Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.

Americans with Disabilities Act: The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Disability Resource Center, 450-3613.

Building Emergency Plan: An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which they spend time for classes or other purposes.

Course Evaluations: Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the

thirteenth week of instruction through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Course Evaluations task. This semester, course evaluations open on Monday Nov. 19.