

LANGUAGE AND GRAMMAR STUDIES

ENGL 3335 (CRN 23554) — spring 2018

MWF 1:00-1:50 in Irby 312

Professor: Dr. Katherine E.C. Willis
Office: Irby 317D
Office hours: MWF 10-11 am and 12-1 pm
W 2-3 pm
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COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES:

This course is primarily meant for individuals who want to be teachers. You will be expected to master the material for the sake of your own knowledge, but also with the understanding that you will eventually need to teach what you learn to others in a thorough and accurate way. Be prepared for the fact that what we learn will come from the perspective of linguistics, not from an education program, and there may be differences.

English grammar can be opaque even to those who seemingly know how to use it well. This course will break down the basic components of our grammar and train you to apply its most essential rules. By “rules,” however, we mean more than a set of dos and don’ts. “Correct” or “proper” English is only one dialect among many in our language, and an artificial one at that. It’s called Standard Written English (SWE), and it will be our main focus. We’ll talk openly about the politics of SWE and about what you, as a teacher, can or should do about it.

Be prepared to work the left side of your brain by memorizing and applying terminology, rules, and concepts. Be prepared to learn and also to teach your peers along the way.

COURSE FORMAT: Although we will have a series of discussion days to cover theoretical material, most days will be information-heavy because this is an upper-division course in language (rather than literature). That means that your participation on most days will be in the form of answering questions, volunteering ideas, and doing group activities, among other things.

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

- ✓ explain the difference between prescriptive and descriptive approaches to language
- ✓ identify the major parts of speech and major components of sentences
- ✓ parse noun and verb phrases
- ✓ explain the rules for combining phrases and clauses into sentences
- ✓ identify types of punctuation and correctly apply rules for their use
- ✓ understand the politics of Standard Written English (SWE) in our culture and education system

- ✓ understand the benefits of spoken language for helping improve students' writing
- ✓ conduct scholarly research related to issues of teaching language
- ✓ write analytically about scholarly resources
- ✓ incorporate scholarly research into practical teaching activities
- ✓ effectively teach a specific point or issue of language and grammar
- ✓ reflect critically on your own philosophy in teaching language and grammar

COURSE SCHEDULE

UNIT 1 — THE POLITICS OF “GRAMMAR”: Jan. 12 - 26

- › Introduction to the course
- › The definition of grammar [read *Grammar* chapters 1-2]
- › Prescriptive vs. Descriptive approaches to grammar; SWE [read *Grammar* chapter 3 and *Vernacular Eloquence* intro to part 3]
- › Sociopolitical dimensions of language use [read *Vernacular Eloquence* part 4, chapter 17]
- › Prescriptive grammar and punctuation in standardized testing

UNIT 2 — PRESCRIPTIVE GRAMMAR FOR WORDS & PHRASES: Jan. 29 - Feb. 26

- › Defining the parts of speech
- › Form vs. Function
- › Nouns [read *Grammar* ch. 4 and *BBCE* “Singular or Plural Difficulties”]
- › Pronouns [read *BBCE* “Pronoun Problems”]
- › Modifiers: Adjectives and adverbs
- › Modifiers: Prepositional phrases [read *BBCE* “Preposition Problems”]
- › Verbs [read *Grammar* chapters 5 and 8 and also *BBCE* “Verbs and Verb Tense Difficulties” and “Irregular or Difficult Verbs”]
- › Participial phrases [read *BBCE* “Dangling Constructions”]

EXAM 1 (UNITS 1 & 2) ON FEB. 26

UNIT 3 — PRESCRIPT. GRAMMAR FOR CLAUSES & SENTENCES: Feb. 28 - March 28

- › Compound sentences [read *Grammar* ch. 6 and *BBCE* “Word Order Problems”]
- › Complex sentences: subordinating clauses [read *Grammar* chapter 7]
- › Complex sentences: relative clauses [read *Grammar* chapter 9]
- › Complex sentences: noun clauses

MINI TEST ON GRAMMAR:

- a) first draft due on March 14
- b) workshops on March 16 and 26
- c) final draft on March 28

UNIT 4 — PRESCRIPTIVE PUNCTUATION: March 28 - April 16

- › The history of punctuation and its modern role [read *Grammar* chapter 10]
- › Punctuation marks and functions [read *BBCE* section on “Punctuation”]
- › Commas [read *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* chapter on commas]
- › Apostrophes [read *Grammar* chapter 11 and *Eats, Shoots and Leaves* chapter on apostrophes]
- › Different approaches to punctuation [read *Vernacular Eloquence* part 3 chapters 13-14]

MINI TEST AND EXAM ON PUNCTUATION:

- a) first draft due on April 11
- b) workshop on April 13
- c) final draft and exam 2 (Units 3 & 4) on April 16

UNIT 5 — ENGLISH AS A LIVING LANGUAGE: April 18 - 25

- The history of the English language [reading TBA in library reserve]
- The future of the English language [reading TBA in library reserve]
- Texting, emojis, and web speak [reading TBA in library reserve]
- Review/catch-up day Wed. April 25

FINAL EXAM ON MON. APRIL 30 FROM 11:00 AM TO 1:00 PM

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Purchase:

- *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* by Lynne Truss (~\$11)
- *Broadview Book of Common Errors in English*, by Don LePan, 5th ed, ISBN 9781551115863 (~\$25 paperback or \$17 ebook online)

Free ebooks through UCA's library:

- *Grammar: A Friendly Approach*, 2nd edition, by Christine Sinclair
- *Vernacular Eloquence*, by Peter Elbow
- other readings and materials (posted/linked online or on library reserve)

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

Below is an overview of the grade components for this course and the weight assigned to each. The descriptions for each category are an overview; any further requirements/details and information about grading will be distributed separately in assignment sheets. Be sure to save all of your work during the semester.

- 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 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 force you to learn and study as you go (rather than wait until the days before an exam). The quiz questions will focus on key concepts, terms, or examples.
- 15% Mini lesson on grammar:** Once we have covered all the material related to grammar, you will write a short test with original questions of your own design. Choose a specific topic of grammar that you know you need to work on. You will compose 10 sentences that each attempt to use your topic, but the sentences should do so incorrectly. You will also

compose an answer key that corrects each of those sentences. In class, we'll exchange and take each other's mini tests. After going over each other's answers and discussing them, you will have an opportunity to revise your test and answer key. You will turn in the original and revised copies on the due date. The mini test will help you better learn concepts and will help you prepare for the exams. For more information, see the assignment sheet.

- 15%** **Mini lesson on punctuation:** Same idea as the mini test on grammar except that this one will deal with a specific topic in punctuation. For more information, see the assignment sheet.
- 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):** Expect a combination of multiple choice, matching, definition, short answer. There will also be a reflective essay component.

MY POLICIES FOR THIS COURSE

EMAIL ETIQUETTE:

I will respond to your email within 12 hours (if you do not hear from me in that time window, contact me again). That means you should not email last minute concerns. In addition, I only respond to emails that follow basic etiquette. That includes the following:

1. Salutation line with my name
2. Decent grammar and spelling
3. Signature line with your name

OFFICE HOURS:

My door is open for you during the office hours listed above, so you do not need an appointment to see me then. If you cannot make those times, however, just ask to set up an appointment.

STUDENT CONDUCT:

You are solely responsible for your conduct. I expect you to conduct yourself professionally and courteously in the classroom and in my office. That includes engaging respectfully with the material, with me, and with your peers. If your behavior disrupts or negatively affects my ability to teach or the learning experience of other students, you may be asked to leave the classroom and/or the course.

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.*

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 might accept late work for partial credit, but you must discuss it with me first. For example, after you discuss it with me, I might accept a late paper for a letter grade off per day late.
- *In all circumstances of unexcused reasons, acceptance of late work and the loss of credit is ultimately at my discretion on a case by case basis.*

ATTENDANCE AND DROP POLICY:

- Participation is part of your course grade, but in a larger sense, all of our other assignments and activities will require you to build on what happens in class. In other words, irregular attendance will affect not just participation but will also hinder your ability to complete major assignments and activities.
- If you are absent or late for any reason, it is your responsibility to let me know in a timely manner, acquire notes from a classmate, and then come see me with questions and concerns.
- I reserve the right to drop students for non-attendance by the date specified in the UCA academic calendar.
- Your attendance at each class meeting throughout the semester is the foundation of your grade in this course. 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.”

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

In all cases, it is your responsibility as a student to be familiar with all policies and requirements outlined in the Student Handbook. The Sexual Harassment Policy and the Academic Policies are particularly important. The policies below are ones that are most pertinent to our course.

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.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT STATEMENT:

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 PLANS:

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 he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

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.

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 Evals button in the top right.