

## English 132—College Writing and Research

Are you a good thinker? If so, then I expect you are a good writer. Come on in and share some of your good thinking and writing with us. Hello folks, and welcome to English 132. My name is Dr. Elaine McKeand and I will be your instructor this term. I am one of those lucky people who enjoy my job so I look forward to a new semester because it's an opportunity to meet many new people who want to do some good thinking on paper. Some students are very nervous and others enter this course bursting with confidence. Regardless of your level of fear or excitement, let me reassure you: Good college writing is made possible through good, critical thinking. If you think richly and well, your work will reflect this.

You may be wondering how English 132 differs from English 131. In English 131, we expose students to a wide variety of readings, mostly non-fiction. And, generally, we ask students to emulate various writing styles, or to be more precise, various modes of essays. So in your last course, you probably familiarized yourself with argumentative and persuasive essays, process analysis essays, narrative essays, etc. In this course, we will spend a good deal of time focusing on one type of essay: the critical analysis. We will read a good deal of fiction and we will spend much time learning exactly how to analyze a piece of fiction in order to write a great paper. Once you learn how to think analytically about what you are reading, writing a critical essay should be—dare I say it?—challenging and fun.

As you probably already know, this is also the course in which you write a research paper. I generally do not assign a literary topic for these papers for one simple reason—most of you (sadly) will not become English majors and so giving you a literary topic may not be very inspirational. Instead, I will ask you to help design a paper topic that will be built around making the world a better place. This paper assumes an emphasis on environmental topics (a former student of mine who was also a young mother designed her topic to compare using paper diapers—and the landfill implications—with laundering cloth diapers—with the added work and expense). Another student who frequently went fishing in Lake Michigan wrote a wonderful paper about the horrible threat the Asian Carp poses to those waters. So, you get the idea. I want you to design a topic that speaks to your sensibilities.

Now because this course is 95% online, you will probably be asked to complete one or two assignments here on campus in a proctored environment. Generally, students complete their on-campus writing in the Learning Resource Center which is easy to find and staffed by many helpful folks. Otherwise, all semester long, you may complete your work from the comfort of your favorite chair. This, of course, is one of the delights of online learning.

This semester, I have chosen a rich and wonderful anthology (which I hope will remain part of your permanent library even after this semester). It is titled—Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and Writing, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. By X.J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia. I have ordered copies for the book store, but of course you may purchase it wherever you like.

Again, welcome and I look forward to seeing each of you online.

