

VICTOR VALLEY COLLEGE SYLLABUS

Spring 2021 (Online)

COURSE:	ENGL 104: Critical Thinking and Composition	SECTION:	82073
TIME:	MW 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. (Zoom)	ROOM:	N/A
INSTRUCTOR:	Carl Lindner	PHONE:	[REDACTED]
OFFICE HOURS:	F 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. (Zoom)	EMAIL:	[REDACTED]

Course Texts

- [*The Bedford Guide for College Writers, 11th Edition*](#) (ISBN: 978-1319039592)

In addition to the textbook, I will also provide online readings on Canvas. Often, these will be crucial, project specific materials. Please check Canvas regularly so you do not accidentally miss them.

Course Description

English 104 is a transfer-level critical thinking and composition course. It is designed to sharpen your ability to recognize and analyze written, spoken, and visual arguments. We will focus primarily on improving your reasoning and writing skills, so you can express your own opinions in a more nuanced and persuasive way. The course is divided into distinct themes that cover the major areas of political discourse including the formation of the state, civil rights, and economic justice. The material and skills you learn in this course will be useful during and beyond college.

Prerequisite: ENGL 101 or ENGL H101 with a grade of C or better.

Course Objectives

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

- Critically evaluate expository and argumentative college-level material from a variety of sources
- Identify and analyze the structure of arguments, and then evaluate them for validity
- Distinguish between and use both inductive and deductive reasoning
- Identify common logical fallacies and recognize deliberate abuses and manipulations of rhetoric
- Recognize underlying assumptions a writer makes about audience
- Distinguish between factual statements and personal opinion
- Locate digital and print research material and evaluate them for use in your own writing
- Plan and write an essay that uses an array of diverse sources to support a clear thesis
- Provide constructive feedback and strengthen your writing through collaboration and peer review
- Revise an essay through multiple drafts to improve its clarity, organization, and persuasiveness

Student Learning Outcomes

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

1. Critique a text for logical fallacies.
2. Evaluate source material for validity.
3. Synthesize multiple texts and demonstrate sound logic to support and argument.

Online Delivery

Due to ongoing concerns regarding COVID-19, this course is entirely online. **All** course content will be delivered digitally through Canvas. I will provide course materials to you in a variety of formats including text-only, audio, and video. You will also use a variety of software to complete your assignments, some of which *may not* be familiar to you.

As your instructor, it is my responsibility to provide you the same level of instruction found in a traditional face-to-face course and support you in using the digital tools you need to succeed. **As a student, it is your responsibility to participate in the course as if it were a face-to-face course.** You are expected to keep up with the workload and regularly interact with your instructor and peers.

Grading

Grades will be determined on a percentage basis. Major assignments will be graded on a standard letter-grade scale. Minor assignments are typically pass/fail. Your overall grade is based on the following percentages:

A = 100 – 90 %

B = 89 – 80 %

C = 79-70%

D = 69 – 60 %

F ≤ 59%

Assignments

You will compose **four (4)** writing projects in this course. In the process of completing each project, you will have assigned readings and complete various writing exercises. *Each and every* assignment contributes to your final grade. Use the table below to track your performance in this class:

Components	Overall %	Points
Writing Project 1	10%	100.00
Writing Project 2	15%	150.00
Writing Project 3	15%	150.00
Writing Project 4	20%	200.00
Drafting and Peer Review	10%	100.00
Weekly Assignments	15%	150.00
Participation	15%	150.00
	100%	1000.00

Assignment Submissions

While each assignment is different, there are **three (3)** guidelines for their submission:

1. All assignments must be submitted through Canvas by the scheduled deadline. Projects submitted in the wrong location, in an improper format, or with an incorrect filename **will be considered late**.
2. All essays **must** be formatted according to MLA guidelines *and* they **must** meet the minimum length requirement, or they will be penalized a *minimum of one letter grade*.
3. Computer problems, related to computer malfunction or internet access, are **not** a valid excuse for late work or incomplete assignments. Assignments submitted late or incomplete will be graded as such.

Late Work

All assignments can be turned in *up to a week* past their due dates. “Late” is defined as after midnight on the day it is due. Any assignments submitted late will earn *no higher* than a C (75%). Anything **not** submitted within a week of its due date will earn a *permanent zero* (0%). This is an across-the-board policy—no excuses or explanations needed.

Peer Review

If you do not submit your draft for peer review on time and/or you do not complete peer review by its due date, you will earn a *permanent zero* (0%) for the peer review. **There is no way for you to “make up” missed peer reviews.**

Late Paper Pass

You will receive **one (1)** Late Paper Pass to turn in the Final Draft of **one (1)** Writing Project late without affecting its grade. The fourth writing project will **not** be accepted late. If you **do not** use your pass, you will have the opportunity to turn it in for *extra credit* at the end of the semester.

Class Participation

To receive full credit for participation, you must be prepared *and* participate in all class activities. This means you have completed any reading or writing assignments required and are ready to discuss them with your classmates. Since this course is delivered online, **all** activities will take place online and **active participation is necessary**. You **will** need to keep your video on during webinars, contribute to discussions, and regularly engage in the activities posted on Canvas.

Discussion

Canvas Discussions will simulate “class time” in a traditional face-to-face classroom. In addition to engaging in various conversations, you can post questions about homework, projects, materials, and/or the due dates to the forum for anyone to answer it. Not only does posting serious questions and responses count toward your participation points, but providing answers to other students count towards participation as well.

In addition to Canvas Discussions, I will periodically require you to participate in a discussion using other software such as Flipgrid and Padlet. I will provide prompts to these discussions, but you will need to take it from there. Like a traditional classroom, not everyone has to “speak,” or respond during a particular discussion, but if you consistently choose not to respond, then your participation grade will be lowered just like a traditional class.

Live Class Sessions

Once a week during our scheduled class time, we will have an online seminar (webinar) using Zoom that provides lectures, workshop opportunities, live demonstrations, and Q&A sessions. You can access these sessions by clicking on “Live Class Time” in the sidebar menu within our Canvas course.

Your attendance and contributions to these sessions also **count** toward class participation. The more you attend and participate, the higher your participation grade. If you miss one of these sessions, a recording will be available on Canvas afterward along with any connected notes, so you can catch up if necessary.

Attendance

You are not graded on “attendance” in this online course, but on your participation in both the Discussion Forums and the Live Class Sessions. If your participation consists solely of logging into Canvas and attending our Zoom meetings without speaking or engaging in the activities, you **will** be dropped on or before the last withdrawal date.

Class Conduct

We are a class full of adults, so I expect considerate behavior. **Respect your classmates and instructor as you would have them respect you.** General rudeness, abuse, and/or ridicule directed toward others or me will not be tolerated. Victor Valley College follows a “zero tolerance” policy when it comes to any behavior that disrupts the learning environment. After an initial verbal and/or written warning from me, students who are deemed disruptive or dangerous will be removed from the online classroom and administratively dropped from the course.

Ethics Policy

Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of our campus community. Plagiarism and cheating offenses are taken *very seriously* by Victor Valley College. By choosing to join the VVC community, you accept the expectations outlined in the Student Conduct Code and are encouraged to always take the ethical path. For a complete list of definitions, procedures, and sanctions, see: <https://catalog.vvc.edu/>

Plagiarism, whether intentional or accidental, constitutes grounds for failure in this course. Students who commit academic plagiarism—using the words or ideas of another, from the internet or any other source, without proper citation of the source—will receive an **F** for the assignment. If it occurs a second time, the student will receive an **F** for the course.

Instructor Communications

If you wish to speak to me about your work or the course, you have **three (3)** options:

Phone Call

Phone calls are for longer conversations and/or questions. You can call me from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. any weekday and I will answer if I am able. If the issue is time-sensitive, texting me would be faster. If the issue is more complicated, an email would be better. This is the *least* preferred method for you to contact me.

Text Message

Text messages are for quick questions and/or short conversations. You can text me 24/7, but I will only respond from 7am to 10pm when I am able to do so. This is the quickest way to speak with me, but I am not always available to respond right away. It may take up to an hour or two to respond.

Canvas Conversations (Email)

The **Inbox** in Canvas allows you to send and receive email messages from ALL your VVC courses. Inbox is for detailed, personal, and/or private questions. Monday through Friday (excluding VVC holidays), I will answer emails **within 24 hours**. Emails submitted **after 12:00 p.m. on Friday** will receive a response on the following Monday, unless an issue is important and/or time sensitive. If you **do not** receive a response in a timely fashion, feel free to inquire via email.

Revision Policy

Most writing in academic contexts must be professional quality (i.e. excellent), so document review and revision is commonplace. You will have the opportunity to receive help from both me and your peers before submitting any writing project for a final grade.

However, since you have limited experience with academic writing, "failure is always an option." If you receive less than an B (80%) on any major assignment, you have the opportunity to resubmit it for a higher grade provided you meet the following requirements:

1. You submitted the project on time and you *fully* participated in Peer Review
2. You re-submit the revision within **one (1)** week of receiving the project evaluation
3. You provide an explanation of the specific changes, additions, and subtractions you made

Once you have re-submitted your work, I will re-evaluate it. However, if your revisions appear haphazard and/or you do not show significant consideration of my comments on your paper, your grade will remain *unchanged*.

Grade Disputes Policy

If you disagree with my evaluation of a project and/or the grade you earned, I am *always* willing to discuss it and to reevaluate my assessment. I will ask that you do **two (2)** things before we talk:

1. Take the time to carefully consider my comments on the assignment and reread the requirements
2. Define the specific reasons that you feel that the assignment deserves a different grade

Then, contact me and we will set up a time to discuss and evaluate the assignment together.

Special Accommodations

Students with special needs are encouraged to meet with me as soon as possible to discuss academic accommodations and potential referral to Accessibility Coordination Center and Educational Support Services (ACCESS) so your specific needs can be addressed. You can find more information and resources at the following web address:

http://www.vvc.edu/offices/disabled_student_program_services/index.shtml

Student Guidance and Counseling

Victor Valley College provides academic assistance to all students taking VVC courses. Whether you want additional information on courses, continuing on to earn a degree, or transferring to a four-year college, guidance counselors are available to help you achieve your academic goals as well as discuss personal issues with you in confidence. You can find more information at: http://www.vvc.edu/offices/guidance_and_counseling/index.shtml

Tutoring

One-on-one assistance with writing is available to all VVC students at the Writing Center, located in the Advanced Technology Center Building 21, Room 177. Walk-in consultations are available, and you can e-mail writing questions and/or essays to one of the tutors through the Writing Center website. You can find more information at: <http://www.vvc.edu/tutoring-services/writing-center.shtml>

Withdrawal Policy

A student may drop or withdraw (or be dropped by an instructor), before the 44% point of the completion of the class. Students **may not** drop or be dropped after this point, and instructors **must** issue a grade beyond this point. A student who drops a class (or who is dropped by an instructor) on or prior to 20% of the course will have **no** record of that class on their permanent transcript, although they may still be responsible for payment of fees. Drops that occur after 20% of the course, and on or before 44% of a course, will result in a **W** symbol being entered. **Students may be dropped for lack of attendance or for 'good cause'** as defined in the Education Code, Article 3, Sect. 76033.

NOTE: CAMPUS IS CLOSED, and CLASSES WILL NOT BE HELD ON THE FOLLOWING DATES:

- Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday: January 18th
- Lincoln Day Holiday: February 12th
- Washington Holiday: February 15th
- Spring Break: April 12th – April 16th
- Memorial Day Holiday: May 31st