

Mastering the Academic Environment

UNC 100 – Buffalo State College/ ENG 351- NFHS

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Welcome to a new and exciting course that will prepare you for a college level course with interesting texts, engaging assignments, and supportive teaching. You will learn how to strengthen your reading, writing, and speaking skills at Niagara Falls High School along with the expectations of a first-year college student including independent reading, thoughtful text analysis, the research process, mature discussions, and a wide range of informal and formal writing tasks.

This course supports the academic performance, social development, and persistence of first year students at Buffalo State. The seminar class engages students in meaningful inquiry and activities that develop core cognitive skills such as critical thinking within an academic discipline and develop students' skills that will increase academic success.

The first 20 weeks of the school year, we will focus on building foundational elements that are integral to your growth as a high school student and as a prospective college student.

In this class we will:

- Read and analyze a wide range of fiction and non-fiction literature along with case studies that reflect realistic life situations.
- Write essays and other creative pieces that will give you a chance to voice your thoughts and opinions.
- Learn the skills necessary for research assignments.
- Learn and apply grammar lessons in your speaking and writing.
- Strengthen vocabulary skills in your reading, writing, and speaking.
- Read closely for key pieces of information through annotation and highlighting.
- Read closely for textual details in non-fiction and fiction.
- Establish clear central ideas in our reading and writing that is supported with evidence from the text as well as your own original, thoughtful analysis.
- Participate in meaningful class discussions.
- Learn various skills and lessons to utilize in real life situations such as planning, organizing, personal accountability, and problem solving.

Supplies

These are essentials that must be with you every day:

- Pens
- Paper
- Highlighter
- 3-ring binder

- 8 dividers (Writing/Essays, Research, Speech Unit, Non-Fiction, Fiction, Grammar, Journal Responses, Poetry)

Q1 – Review of Buffalo State expectations, college skills, and class expectations

- Review and implementation of Xello for career interest and exploration.
- Close reading, response development, analysis skills, and discussion skills will be the focus for the start of the year.
- Use of short texts (“My Name” by Sandra Cisneros and “What’s in a Name?” by Henry Louis Gates) with informal responses along with longer writing tasks (Introduction Letter and Photography Essay) will form the foundation of these skills.
- Text analysis of informational texts (“Address to the First Women’s Rights Convention” by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and “Atlanta Compromise” by Booker T. Washington) will continue to enhance and strengthen skills.

Q2 – Introduction to research skills

- Instruct students on the formatting and process of conducting research and writing a research essay.
- Teach students APA or MLA rules, format, and style as well as how to evaluate reliable source information.
- Inform students how to access and use the NFHS library database (Gale)
- Learn how to find sources, take notes, compose a rough draft, along with the revision process (teacher and peer revision).
- Properly craft a thesis, organize ideas, blend cited facts with original commentary and include a Works Cited/References page
- Topics: Student Selected Speech Analysis and Important Person Research Essay.

Assignments

- Narrative, Expository, and Argument Essays – You will be writing essays in response to fiction and non-fiction texts. Your writing should be personal, reflective, honest, informational and thoughtful. These formal pieces of writing will require an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. You will be including textual evidence to support the analysis you present in the essay.
- Research Essays – In order to prepare you for your senior year and college, you will be learning about the process involved with writing Modern Language Association (MLA) research essays. We will build upon any experience you have had in the past and continue to learn all that is involved with writing a paper with correctly cited sources, balanced commentary, and a Works Cited page.
- Analysis Responses – You will be writing informal responses to fiction and non-fiction selections. These assignments will require you to respond to multiple

questions based on a reading, include textual support, and offer your own thoughts on the pieces.

- **Vocabulary** – Each week, you will be completing 20 minutes of vocabulary lessons on Membean. The purpose of this component of the class is to allow you to broaden your vocabulary in your writing, reading, and speaking. Someday, you will be out in the working world and I want you to be able to make a strong and positive impression with your language skills.

The remaining 20 weeks of school will shift to the work of Buffalo State College following the student learning outcomes presented here:

1. Explore the components of global integration, cultural, racial, and gender differences; and the concept of citizenship.
2. Clarify responsibilities and benefits of critical thinking and applied practice as it pertains to diversity, literacy, cultural fluency, and social capital to meet the dynamic demands of the 21st century.
3. Demonstrate oral and written communication skills: students will clearly state, defend orally and in writing their ideas, arguments, and research questions within the liberal arts.
4. Investigate answers, research information, and critically assess the relevance and value of that information within the liberal arts context.
5. Examine career goals, specifically how it relates to their interests, abilities, career choice, and personal development at Buffalo State University.

Textbook (Provided): *On Course: Strategies for Creating Success in College and in Life* by Skip Downing

Grading Policy

DEADLINES ARE IMPORTANT! You will be given ample opportunity to complete all assignments. Since no one can afford a zero averaged into his/her grade, pay close attention to due dates as they are posted for each assignment.

- The lowest grade will be dropped, **unless it is a zero**. All assignments **must** be turned in on time!
- If you are absent when an essay assignment is due, you are to bring in a valid excuse from a parent/guardian with a phone number so I can verify the absence and reason for not turning in the work. If you do not have a valid excuse for missing the due date, you will not receive full credit for the assignment.
- All work will be posted on Microsoft Teams with a due date and time – you must submit work by those posted deadlines.

Make up work such as tests or quizzes will be administered to you when you return to school. Work can be completed after school, during a free period (lunch or study hall)

or during class depending on the agenda of the day. ***If you are truant from class, you will not be able to make up your work and will receive a zero.***

Class Rules

I have basically one main rule – **RESPECT!** This works for all of us. We will listen to each other and be open to the opinions and thoughts of everyone. Remember to raise your hand, cooperate with others, and be courteous and respectful of everyone. Do the best you can in everything that you do.

This also involves technology usage. Please put aside cell phones when I am speaking, teaching lessons, and when participating in class discussions and activities. I will allow access to phones when appropriate, to facilitate learning, writing, and accomplishing required work. Using your phone (texting, browsing, gaming, etc.) during my lessons is not respectful. You will always have my respectful attention and I expect the same from each of you.

Consequences

Since it is my intention to have a safe, successful, and productive school year, I will not tolerate students who do not adhere to those goals. Students who choose to be disruptive, disrespectful, and break school and class rules will have to face the consequences to their decisions.

- If there is a problem, I will speak to you privately to address the issue.
- Students who are truant, late, or in violation of any school policy will be written up and face the deans of discipline.
- Parents will be called and informed of student behavior.
- Depending upon the infraction, such consequences will be time in ISR, suspension, and grade deductions.

If you have any concerns or difficulties either in school or at home, please do not hesitate to see me. I am here to help you and direct you to where help is available. It is my responsibility to make sure you are safe; therefore, I have the right to share discussions and written correspondence with an administrator or other staff member if I find that your health and/or well-being are at risk. I encourage you, along with your parents/guardians, to feel free to contact me anytime. ***You may contact me through my work phone number (278-5800 Ext. 41233), via email – awolf@nfschools.net, or through a Teams Chat.***

Your input is always valuable and welcomed. Reading, writing, thinking, and speaking are all part of this class, as well as your future. Get involved with school and life. I am confident that this will be a year filled with interesting and enjoyable experiences. I look forward to the year ahead!

Course Content:

- I. Liberal Arts Education and Buffalo State
 - a. What's a liberal arts education?
 - b. Understanding the culture of Higher Education
 - c. History of Buffalo State
- II. Getting on Course to Your Success
 - a. Understanding the Expectations of College and University Expectations
 - b. Financial Management
 - c. Understanding yourself
- III. Accepting Personal Responsibility
 - a. Personal Responsibility
 - b. Developing Self-motivation
 - c. Growth (creator) mindset vs. fixed (victim) mindset
 - d. Responsibility and Culture
 - e. Mastering the Language of Responsibility
 - f. Making Wise Decisions
 - g. Critical thinking
- IV. Discovering Self- Motivation
 - a. Creating Inner Motivation
 - b. SMART Goal Setting
 - c. Committing to your Goals
- V. Mastering Self-Management
 - a. Acting on Purpose
 - b. Time and Culture
 - c. Time Management Tools
 - d. Developing Self-Discipline
 - e. 32-day commitment
- VI. Employing Interdependence
 - a. Creating a Campus support system
 - b. Active listening skills
 - c. Respecting cultural differences
 - d. Communicating with a growth mindset
- VII. Gaining Self-Awareness
 - a. Recognizing when you are off course
 - b. Self-defeating patterns
 - c. Critical thinking and self-awareness
- VIII. Adopting Lifelong Learning
 - a. How to develop a growth mindset
 - b. Discovering your preferred learning style
 - c. Employing critical thinking
 - i. Asking probing questions
 - ii. Constructing logical arguments
 - d. Developing self-respect
- IX. Developing Emotional Intelligence
 - a. Understanding emotional intelligence
 - b. Reducing stress
 - c. Developing self-acceptance

- X. Staying on Course to Your Success
 - a. Planning your next steps
 - b. Post-assessment
- XI. Study Skills: A Toolbox for Active Learners
 - a. Study skills and pre-self-assessment
 - b. How the human brain learns
 - c. CORE Learning system
 - d. Strategies to improve reading
 - e. Strategies for note taking
 - f. Organizing study materials
 - g. Rehearsing and memorizing study materials
 - h. Test-taking skills
 - i. Writing: the big picture
 - j. Study skills post-self-assessment

Nonfiction:

“What’s in a Name” by Henry Louis Gates

“My Name” by Sandra Cisneros

“Address to the First Women’s Rights Convention” by Elizabeth Cady Stanton

“Atlanta Compromise” by Booker T. Washington

Short Stories

“Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid

“Hills Like White Elephants” by Ernest Hemingway

“Reunion” by John Cheever

“The Red Convertible” by Louise Erdrich

“The Things They Carried” by Tim O’Brien

Novel

Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi

Poems:

“On Being Brought from Africa to America” by Phyllis Wheatley

“Theme for English B” by Langston Hughes

“I am Offering This Poem” by Jimmy Santiago

“The Fish” by Elizabeth Bishop