American University of Beirut

**English 300: Writing in the Disciplines**

Spring 2014

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**Office:** Fisk Hall, Room 323 Ext **3101**

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**Course Description:**

Welcome to English 300: Writing in the Disciplines, a course designed to assist you with your graduate-level writing in English. We will begin with a broadly-based introduction to academic writing and then move to discipline-specific research projects. The reading and writing projects will help you identify the rhetorical moves scholars make as they pose problems, design and conduct research, report data, and draw conclusions. This section is offered in blended format with 2/3 of class time in the form of face-to-face (F2F) activities such as in-class writing workshops and discussions, while approximately 1/3 is online in the form of online discussion forums, collaborative wikis, online peer reviews, chats and mini projects with web quests to be done outside the classroom in any other location of your choice. In both F2F and online sessions you will have opportunities to reflect, both formally and informally, on your own writing in process as well as on your classmates’ drafts. We will also work closely with AUB’s librarians as we locate resources and consider the ways scholars work collaboratively and deal with issues of intellectual property and plagiarism. I hope that you will find this semester’s work useful and that you will be willing to help all of us learn more about the ways reading and writing construct our various disciplines.

**General Instructional Objectives:**

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

* read, evaluate, and respond critically to academic texts;
* identify features of the disciplinary discourse in your field;
* use academic writing style appropriately;
* use writing to learn;
* critique your own writing and the writing of your peers;
* reflect on your own learning and literacy.

**Texts and Materials:**

**Required Text:**

* English 300 Coursepack from the AUB Bookstore. The AUB Bookstore is located behind the Bliss building.

**Suggested Texts:**

* Joseph Harris. *Rewriting: How to do Things with Texts*. (e-book). To purchase the book, go to the AUB bookstore and pay for the book. They will take your email address and send you a link to the book. The purchase is not refundable. The e book requires Adobe Digital Reader. It is your responsibility to open the link and ask for assistance if you are not able to do that.
* John Swales and Christine Feak. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students,* available at Malek’s Books or the AUB bookstore.

**Materials:**

* Notebook & pens: Please be prepared to take notes and write every class period. While laptops are acceptable for note-taking, I will sometimes ask you to write with pen and paper. Thus, please bring to every class period writing utensils and plenty of paper.
* Dictionary & Thesaurus: You should also have access to a dictionary and thesaurus (online is fine)
* A USB drive
* Regular access to a computer with internet access (available throughout campus). You should alsoplan to check your AUB Imail address and Moodle account DAILY throughout the semester.

**Why blended format?**

This section of ENGL 300 is offered in blended format to allow you to:

* participate actively in integrated core learning
* exercise and utilize 21st century technology (wiki, forums, etc.)
* explore writing in the disciplines in a student-centered way
* work in teams on collaborative mini interdisciplinary projects
* develop inquiry-based learning strategies and practices
* manage and self-direct your own time

**Moodle:**

Moodle is the online course management system used at AUB. I will post the syllabus, course readings, formal assignments and other course information on Moodle. You will also submit most informal and all formal writing assignments through Moodle, and sometimes you will give/receive feedback on your written work via Moodle.

How to access Moodle:

You can access Moodle on the AUB homepage by clicking on “e-learning” (on the right-hand end of the toolbar at the top of the page).

\*A note on managing documents:

Naming electronic files

When you save and name files for this course, please follow this pattern:

[your family name] [assignment name-one word] [draft number]

For example: “Malik-Essay-1” or “Smith-Synthesis-2”

Identifying your written assignments

On the typed version of your written assignments, please include **all** of the following information at the **top** of the document:

* Your full name
* The course name
* Date
* Assignment name
* A title for your project (centered)

**Turnitin:**

Turnitin is an electronic program embedded in Moodle that reviews written texts and compares them to thousands of published and unpublished texts in a huge database. We will occasionally use this program as a learning tool to analyze some of your written work and to help you see how you are incorporating language from sources.

**Assignments: (To be updated with more details)**

All F2F and online writing assignments and activities are on Moodle. Please read instructions carefully and check the attached rubrics for more guidance. Check the course calendar for deadlines on a regular basis and allow yourself enough time to complete all assignments/activities promptly. Postings for all online activities have to be made by 6:00 pm on the due date. Once enrolled in this blended section, you have agreed to become part of a very dynamic and engaging learning community which is built on mutual respect for the opinions and privacy of others.

**Grading and Feedback:**

Since this is a Pass/Fail course, you will receive credit/no credit on each assignment based on the guidelines provided in each assignment description. You will need to receive a “credit” for each assignment submission in order to pass the course.

This is a writing-intensive course, which means that you will be expected to submit drafts of your writing before the deadlines and my feedback will come in the form of comments on your writing. I will use the guidelines to provide you with feedback on your writing. My feedback will come in the form of track changes in Word and the comment feature in Word. Often, if you submit an online activity, I will provide you will feedback if there is an issue or if I need to ask you to revise a submission. However, if you receive a “credit” with no feedback, this means you have met all the guidelines for the assignment. Please note that for the Peer Reviews with detailed instructions, you will be given a rubric. This is to ensure that you complete the assignment in a timely manner and as thoughtfully as possible. If you have any questions about my feedback on your writing, please do not hesitate to ask me.

**Classroom Etiquette:**

Arrive to class on time. If you show up to class late, you will be counted late. Two late appearances equal an absence. Be sure to turn off cell phones and put them away during class time. Please listen to others and follow appropriate rules for respectful discussion in class.

**Online Netiquette:**

How you post a message to a topic is just as important as what you post. If your behavior does not follow the course etiquette standards stated below, the grade you receive for a posting may suffer.

* Be courteous to others when posting your online messages
* Use people’s names when responding online
* Capital letters MEAN SHOUTING!
* Sign each forum posting with your name
* Abide by the word limit for each assignment
* Provide constructive comments rather than discourteous remarks
* Avoid curses or improper language
* Remember this is a writing course, so avert from using texting acronyms and slang.
* The instructor reserves the right to remove any discussion messages that display inappropriate language or content. Do not use offensive language.
* Rudeness or slamming will not be tolerated.
* Show respect for your fellow students, even if you disagree with something that was stated.
* Clearly state what you believe, even if it means that you’re disagreeing with someone. Never, however, respond in anger – take care to discuss ideas, not the person.

**Self-Access Corner:**

One important module in this course is the **Self-Access Corner**. There you will find a number of useful interactive websites that will offer you supplementary material and further support for your Eng 300 assignments. Please let me know if there are any other items you wish me to add to this student study space on your Moodle page.

**Participation:**

Because this is a small, discussion-centered class, I expect you to come prepared and on timeto class in order to participate in a meaningful way: This means completing close and careful readings of assigned texts, posting on Moodle prior to class (when required), and bringing hard copies of your writing as requested. We are all, individually and collectively, responsible for how this class proceeds; therefore, you will be expected to attend class regularly, to be on time, to complete reading and writing assignments (in and out of class), and to participate in all discussions and activities.

**Working Groups:**

In addition to regular individual participation, you will be expected to work in and outside of class with a two- to three-person “working group”, to which you will be assigned at the beginning of the semester. The group’s purpose is to emphasize the fact that writing and research is a social and ever-evolving activity; no one writes in a vacuum. Throughout the semester, your group will share and provide feedback on individual writing with one another; discuss and conduct collaborative research on a selected theme; occasionally write collaboratively; and give at least one in-class presentation.

Because so much of the work of this class depends on your collaborative participation in a group, it is important that you take responsibility to expend equal effort in every assigned task, that you participate thoughtfully in group discussions, and that you give group members the same consideration and respect that you expect from them. Although I will assess your individual work and writing, you must participate actively in your assigned Working Group to pass this class.

**Individual Conferences with Instructor:**

Individual meetings with the instructor will be assigned at the end of the semester. The purpose of these meetings is to address your work and performance in class in more detail and give you the opportunity to ask questions. Please come prepared to discuss your work in a productive way. These meetings are mandatory.

**Attendance Policy:**

You must attend class regularly. Official FAS policy mandates that you be withdrawn from the course if you are absent more than 1/5th of the class meetings within the first 10 weeks of class. After week 10, if you miss more than 1/5th of the total class meetings, you will fail the course. No exception to these rules will be made. Missing a class online constitutes submitting an assignment past the deadline. Please note that even if you submit an assignment late, you will be considered absent.

**Late Work:**

You must turn in all final drafts of assignments electronically via Moodle in addition to bringing a hard copy to class when requested. In order for your assignment to be considered on time, you should submit BOTH hard copy and Moodle electronic copy. Bringing in a hard copy and failing to upload a hard copy to Moodle will constitute a late assignment. Late work is generally unacceptable and will hinder your progress in this course. Whenever possible, turn in your work on time; *if your work is turned in late, you will receive feedback late, or not at all*.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:**

In this course, academic honesty means the following:

* Documenting all proprietary information that is received from outside sources, including books, articles, websites, lectures, interviews, television, radio, and etc.
* Putting quotation marks around the words that were written or spoken by someone other than oneself.
* Applying this standard to all assignments.

In all writing, ideas and words taken from any source should be documented. Failure to credit ideas or material taken from secondary sources constitutes plagiarism, a violation of the University’s academic regulations, and is subject to disciplinary action.

Therefore, all writing you do for this course must be your own and must be exclusively for this course, unless the instructor stipulates differently. Please pay special attention to the quotes, paraphrases, and documentation practices you use in your papers. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please ask me.

More specifically, "if a faculty member has reason to believe that a student has violated academic standards," the following actions will be taken: 1) The first time a student is caught plagiarizing, he/she will receive a failing grade of a zero on the assignment, and the incident will be reported to the University Disciplinary Committee. 2) If the student continues to plagiarize even after receiving a zero, he/she will again be reported and will be given a Dean's Warning (Academic Integrity at AUB, Chapter Two).

Please refer to the AUB Student Handbook, “Academic Integrity” section: http://pnp.aub.edu.lb/university/handbook/158010044.html.

Students should be aware that engaging in any of the following activities constitutes plagiarism:

* Submitting a paper written by another student
* Requesting or paying someone to complete an assignment for you
* Deliberately taking material from secondary sources without proper documentation
* Copying, word for word, someone else’s writing without putting that passage in quotation marks and identifying the source
* Taking someone else’s writing, changing some of the words, and not identifying the source
* Taking someone else’s ideas or organization of ideas, putting them into his/her words, and not identifying the source
* Having someone else change your writing – a tutor, friend, or relative, for instance – and creating the impression that this writing is your own work.
* Purchasing or downloading papers or passages from the Web.
* Using facts, data, graphs, charts, or other information without acknowledging the source with a footnote or reference. Borrowed facts or information obtained in one’s research or reading must be acknowledged unless they are “common knowledge.” Students should check with their teachers regarding what can be viewed as “common knowledge” within a specific field or assignment, but often the student will have to make the final judgment. When in doubt, footnotes or references should be used.

**Other Resources:**

*Writing Center:* The center offers free, one-hour consultations for AUB writers at Ada Dodge Hall, 2nd floor balcony; West Hall 336; or Jafet Library, second floor reading room. Check the Writing Center webpage on the AUB website. Make an appointment by walking in or by logging on to <http://www.rich75.com/aub>

*Library Information Services:*

Reference librarians and information specialists in the AUB libraries can support you individually with finding academic sources for your research. Jafet information librarians can be contacted in person in their office in the Jafet Library lobby, by email at [libinfo@aub.edu.lb](mailto:libinfo@aub.edu.lb), or by phone, extension 2629.

*Counseling Center, Student Affairs:* The center offers counsel and help to students with a range of academic and non-academic problems. If anything happening in your life is causing you distress and influencing your academic performance, and you feel you could benefit from professional help, contact Dr. Antoine Khabbaz. Ext. 3178. [ak28@aub.edu.lb](mailto:ak28@aub.edu.lb) or Dr. Nay Khatcherian. Ext. 3158. [nk63@aub.edu.lb](mailto:nk63@aub.edu.lb). West Hall 210.

***Technical Support: If you face any technical problems especially using Moodle please contact the e-learning helpdesk through: Email: [moodle@aub.edu.lb](mailto:moodle@aub.edu.lb" \t "_blank) Campus phone: 3518 / 3586***

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| **Tips for Success** |

Most online and blended courses use discussion forums to engage and sustain a community of active learners outside of the classroom. These tips focus on best practices when contributing to discussion forums.

Time Management

* Check the discussion on a regular basis. You should plan to login to your course Web site several times a week, not just once or twice.
* It's recommended that you schedule your time in advance each week to login and do course work for at least 2-3 hours. This will help keep you from falling behind.

Assignments

* Make sure that you read and reread your assignment — print it out for safety's sake — to ensure that you have completed all aspects of the assignment. It's very easy to overlook something in an online assignment.

Communicating

* If you are posting to a discussion forum, read any earlier postings first to find out if you are on track, and to find out what others have said. It's not cheating to learn from others' insights!
* If you are responding to someone else's posting, make sure that you hit the "Reply" button so that the response will be linked by discussion thread to the original posting. Also make sure that the "Subject" header of your posting is the same as the actual content of your response. If it isn't, the discussion may have wandered off topic or your response may be inappropriate.

Netiquette

* It's typically a good idea to address the person you're responding to by name, just as if you were speaking to them face-to-face. It's also a good idea to sign your posting. This will make your online discussion more personal, and remind you to be polite!
* It's ok to disagree with someone, as long as you give good reasons for doing so. Remember that people are perfectly entitled to debate both sides of a course idea or topic, and that reasoned argument is an important part of a university education. Your response should never ever attack someone personally. You can disagree with someone, and they with you, while still remaining respectful.
* Use care when interacting online, since you don't have the ability to gauge a person's reaction or feelings as you do in a face-to-face conversation. In particular, humor should always be used very carefully and where needed, labeled as such.

Backups

* When you post, it's always safer to write your posting first using your local word processor, and save it as a separate file to your local computer. That way you can never lose your work if you are posting directly to the course Web site and your connection fails for some reason.

Writing Style

* When you post online, you should always use relatively short paragraphs, each one two or three sentences only. This will make your writing much easier to read.
* No SHOUTING! Capitalize words only to highlight a point or for titles.

Citations & Formats

* Identify your sources if you use quotes, references, or resources. Your work must always be distinctively your own writing, unless you have indicated otherwise.
* Most online discussion forums now have the ability to allow you to post while retaining formatting such as bullets, italics, bold text, etc. Ask your instructor or your Help desk how to do this, since the more professional your work appears, the more highly it will be regarded (and graded).

**English 300: Writing in the Disciplines**

**Course Grading Contract**

You are guaranteed a grade of “Pass” in this course if you:

1. Attend class regularly;
2. Complete **all** writing assignments using your own words;
3. Meet due dates and writing criteria for all major assignments;
4. Participate in all in-class exercises and activities;
5. Complete all informal or low-stakes writing assignments (on Moodle, at home, or in class);
6. Give thoughtful feedback during class workshops and work faithfully with your working group (WG) on other collaborative tasks (such as sharing papers, commenting on drafts, responding to discussions on Moodle);
7. Sustain effort and investment on each draft of all papers;
8. Make substantive revisions, when the assignment is to revise—extending or changing the thinking or organization—not just editing or touching up;
9. Copyedit all final revisions of main assignments;
10. Attend scheduled conferences with the instructor to discuss course work.

If you agree to the ten points on this contract, please sign and date the contract and return it.