

English 370 Syllabus

English 370, Section 80749: English Fundamentals
Fall 2011: Tu&Th 2:00-3:15, room 701
Office Hours & Place: 11:00-12:20 Tu&Th in Room 717

Instructor Dave Badtke
(707)334-4882
Dave@Badtke.com

→ Online Reference: www.Badtke.com or www.QCounty.com (follow link to Solano College classes)

Prerequisites: A score of 70-101 within the last three years on the sentence skills section of the assessment test; or recommendation of a counselor or English instructor based on a Multiple Measures Evaluation; or a grade of “Credit” and a score of 6 or more on the Composition Mastery Final Examination upon completion of English 305 or 350 or 355.

Visceral Course Objectives: E. M. Forster wrote, “How can I know what I think until I see what I say?” When we write to understand, we slow our thought processes down. We read, daydream, brainstorm, plan, pre-write, break to eat, talk to friends, write, edit, take some more breaks, get some exercise, and revise, repeating this process again and again until we begin to discover what we really mean to say. Becoming familiar with and comfortable with this reading, thinking and writing process while simultaneously learning how to correctly structure sentences, paragraphs and essays is what we’re going to be doing in this course. This process is critical to your becoming a successful college student and will, if mastered, change the way you think and write, which will ultimately change your life.

Required Texts:

1. *40 Model Essays: A Portable Anthology* by Jane E. Aaron;
2. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie;
3. A bound composition book that you will use for your journal;
4. A college-level dictionary of your choice;
5. An English 370 Writing Lab folder available in the bookstore.

Suggested Texts:

1. You may be helped by a grammar handbook, e.g., the one by Little Brown, *LB Brief*, which is available in the bookstore, or you may find that online sources such as [Purdue's Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](http://Purdue's Online Writing Lab (OWL)) are sufficient to help you with your grammar and writing style.

Specific Course Objectives: This Credit / No Credit course will prepare you for English 1 by helping you become critical readers, able to understand and summarize texts, and by helping you become more well-informed and confident writers, able to communicate information clearly and persuasively. These objectives will also help you prepare for the Composition Mastery Exam, CME, that will be held on Friday, December 2, from 2:30 to 4:30.

Ethical class behavior: In order for us to cover this material successfully, we have to engage in ethical behavior.

By this I mean that in dealing with me and your classmates, treat others as ends, not as means; have empathy for others when they struggle and be happy for them when they succeed; be respectful of others’ beliefs, most especially when they’re different from your own; and give proper credit to those who help you understand our very complicated world.

Requirements & Grades: To receive credit for this course, you must satisfactorily complete three parts: 1) receive a passing grade, 70%, in your classroom activities; 2) complete your Writing Lab assignment, which begins next week since you’re in Group 1; 3) and receive an 8 or higher (4 + 4) on the Composition Mastery Exam, CME, that you will take on Friday, 12/2, from 2:30 to 4:30.

I will consider the following in determining your classroom grade:

1. **Class attendance:** Since your on-time attendance and classroom participation are critical to your success, I will take attendance at that beginning of each class. It is imperative that you be in class ready to work with *40 Model Essays*, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, your journal, a dictionary, pencils and lined paper. Because you are allowed by school policy to miss one class for each credit, you have two free passes, but for each additional class missed beyond 2, 10 points will be subtracted from your overall quiz grade.

2. **70% of grade:** You will write essays of various lengths, from 250 to 750 words (one to three pages), in which you will learn to summarize readings and will practice using various Writing Patterns (see below). Essays done as homework need to follow MLA formatting conventions and be double-spaced and typed. Each writing assignment is due on the assigned date, but if you turn your paper in on time, you will be allowed to rewrite certain papers, in which case your rewrite will be due no later than one week after your paper is returned. Near the end of the semester you will also write practice CME responses that will count as writing assignments. In addition, you will need to write a final paper due on the last day of class prior to your final exam period.

3. **10% of grade:** You will keep a writer's journal in which you will record class notes and reactions to your readings. To help you with your journals I will assign study questions as well. I will usually collect journals at the same time that you hand in an essay rewrite.

4. **20% of grade:** I will give frequent quizzes on your readings and the composition skills that you are learning.

Important: One-on-one help can be the best kind of help, which is why the Writing Lab can be so beneficial if you make the experience work for you. So if you need additional assistance, come see me during office hours or make an appointment to meet with me.

Writing Patterns: In this English 370 class you will be practicing the craft of reading, thinking and writing because these activities are central to critical thinking. But the process by which we learn to improve our reading, thinking and writing may seem overwhelming and disconnected unless we classify and analyze its various parts in a systematic way. To help learn this process you'll be learning about and practicing sentence, paragraph, essay and content patterns:

1. **Sentence Patterns** are arrangements of sentence components, which include nouns, verbs, conjunctions and modifiers, into complete thoughts. For example, when I write that one succeeds in college by working hard and by learning to think critically, I'm using a few simple patterns to construct a complete sentence. You'll learn to identify these patterns and to use them correctly in writing your own sentences.
2. **Paragraph Patterns** are arrangements of sentences that present and support a specific topic. You'll learn what's required for a topic and what it means to have primary and secondary supports for that topic. In the Writing Lab you will receive considerable one-on-one help writing these paragraph patterns.
3. **Essay Patterns** are arrangements of paragraphs that present and support a specific thesis. You'll learn how to create a thesis and how you might organize your paragraphs to explore the ramifications of your thesis. Again, you will receive considerable one-on-one help with essay patterns in the Writing Lab. In addition, writing good essays requires an understanding of the various rhetorical methods that writers use to explore ideas and experiences. The central patterns (methods) are description, comparison and causation, and these are further developed with example, illustration, division or analysis, classification, definition and process analysis.
4. **Content Patterns** are arrangements of ideas that will help you read, think and write critically. For example, a narrative pattern, which you might use to tell a story, can be expressed as a conflict, turning point and resolution. A response pattern, which will help you prepare for your CME, can be expressed as Listen, Speak, and Learn. In addition, and very importantly, a critical-thinking pattern involves description, comparison and causation, which is why these three are central to the essay pattern listed above.

Finally, will you be successful in English 370? History, perseverance and time are the three reasons you may struggle in this class.

History: If reading and writing have been a problem for you in the past, you may have convinced yourself that you'll never be good at either. I suggest that you consider this class a fresh start. Do not burden yourself with the past. You can learn to analyze readings and write well, and you will in this class if you persevere in your efforts.

Perseverance: This class will require a reasonable, not excessive, amount of work. If you find it frustrating or if my approach is not helping you, then persevere in your education – college is all about taking charge of your education – by seeing me, by raising thoughtful questions in class, by talking to your classmates. Make this class work for you so that you're convinced you're becoming a better reader, writer and thinker. Also, make sure that your Writing Lab experience helps you. Remember to treat the lab staff ethically and to ask thoughtful, probative questions that help you improve your reading comprehension and writing.

Time to focus: Many students who struggle in my classes are trying to do too much because when they get up Monday morning, the week seems long enough to get everything done. To help you understand how little time you actually have, let's analyze your week.

To begin with, if you want to do well in a class like English 370, you need to expect to spend two hours for homework for each class unit. This means that for a three-credit course like this one you'll be spending about six hours each week on homework. If you're taking three other similar courses, each three credits, a total of 12 credits, you'll be spending a total of $12 \times 2 = 24$ hours each week on homework. Adding back in the courses themselves, the 12-credit load will amount to $12 + 24 = 36$ hours each week. In addition, of course, you'll also be spending extra hours during the first half of the semester in the lab, some 4 hours each week, so we should increase this number to 40 hours per week.

Given that there are $16 \times 7 = 112$ hours during the week when you're awake – here I'm counting 8 hours of sleep each day, not daydreaming time – you may be saying to yourself that $112 - 40 = 72$ hours per week is more than enough time to get everything else done since you've been nurtured on efficiency and speed. You're students empowered by new technology. You're students who can talk on your phones, meet with your friends, twitter your life-changing news, search the Internet, watch American Idol, listen to your iPod and nod yes and no to your parents' or spouse's or friends' queries – take your pick – all while doing your homework. So what's the problem?

In fact, the [New York Times recently reported](#) on a study at Stanford University that showed that the “. . . most persistent multitaskers perform badly in a variety of tasks. They don't focus as well as non-multitaskers. They're more distractible. They're weaker at shifting from one task to another and at organizing information. They are, as a matter of fact, worse at multitasking than people who don't ordinarily multitask.”

But isn't going to school and working and being with friends and family all about multitasking?

Of course it is, which is why you need to be very careful with your scheduling. If, for example, you're working 40 hours each week, then that 76 available hours is down to 36 hours each week or about 5 hours each day to eat, spend time with friends and family, to travel to and from work and school and home, to relax, watch a little TV and do the other things you need to do to stay physically and mentally healthy.

Whatever you do – and I can not overemphasize the importance of this – do not fall into or out of love because love is the master of time, forcing time to do as love pleases. Love, in other words, no matter which direction you're falling, will really mess with your mind and schedule. The one exception to this hard and fast rule regarding love is, of course, true love, which we're powerless to do anything about.

I'm joking, of course, because I know you're helpless in the face of all love, whether true or false.

The point I'm making here is that you need to think carefully before you sign up for too much. It's better to take more time to give yourself time to do a great job than to think you can squeeze time into an education schedule. When you don't understand what you're reading or you don't have a clue how to write your essay or your professor's instructions are as helpful as knowing that the end of the earth will happen in roughly 5 billion years—when, in other words, the going gets tough—only time for reflection and hard work will help you find your way, and time to focus may be hard to find if you're overextended.