# SYLLABUS FOR ENGLISH 306

1979 - 1980

James L. Kinneavy

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## INTRODUCTION: THE PROGRAM, AN OVERVIEW

The basic purpose of English 306 is to enable the student to achieve a minimum standard of effectiveness in writing expository themes. A fair number of skills are involved in such an achievement and this course is organized in such a way as to isolate the most important of these basic skills in both study and practice.

Isolating the basic skills for study and practice is consistent both with modern research findings in the teaching of composition and with the general procedure in intellectual activities. The physicist isolates gravity and his formulae ignore air resistance, shape of the dropping body, etc.; the musician isolates rhythm, melody, embouchure, etc., for special attention in his practices. In the real situation, gravity may be only one of several forces which must be considered in making a given decision, but the establishment of the formula in a vacuum, as it were, has prepared for the real situation.

Similarly, the effective writing of expository composition embodies certain basic skills. The skills are the subject of the nine units of the course. Generally the simpler skills come first and the more complex skills are taken up in the latter part of the course. The compositions in each unit thus focus on one of the basic skills.

Accompanying the composition exercises are three means to the dominant end; the three means are the rhetorical theory, the model readings, and the handbook exercises.

The rhetorical theory is partly traditional and partly modern and is drawn from several "schools" of rhetoric. It is not, for example, solely based on Aristotelian rhetoric (indeed only the analysis of propaganda and persuasion in Unit III draws heavily from Aristotle). The textbooks chosen represent different rhetorical orientations, though they have many important components in common.

The readings represent an attempt to see the rhetorical theory put into practice in a typical sample of writing emphasizing the skill in question. The syllabus frequently attempts to focus very carefully on the relation between the rhetorical theory and the readings. The specific relation between organizational patterns for the whole theme and the particular skill in question is also pointed out in the syllabus.

The handbook exercises represent an important emphasis in the syllabus. The Freshman English Policy Committee, because of several separate motivations, feels that more stress needs to be given mechanics. The subcommittee on evaluation's findings, based on corrections of 250 essays randomly chosen from 25 classes and from an objective test given to the same classes before and after the course, support this need. The findings of Mr. Sledd in a questionnaire distributed to 1400 students and faculty in the University also support this contention. Finally, the findings in the English Composition Test and in the Scholastic Aptitude Test-Verbal and other tests indicate the same deficiency. For example, only 28% of our entering students now exempt English 306--contrast this to the 49% who exempted

it some ten years ago, based on the same test, the English Composition Test, which is fundamentally a test in mechanics.

Consequently, in order to insure at least minimal coverage of the major problems, the Freshman Committee has adopted a handbook, making it obligatory for all freshman classes. Secondly, the major problems are systematically parceled out among the nine units.

It is expected that all of these major areas will be covered at some time during the course, so that by the end of the course the student can write prose which is at least free of these major errors. It is suggested that as one moves through the course and covers, for example, fragments and unnecessary punctuation in Unit I, the teacher will subsequently mark faults in these areas much more rigorously than others.

Class coverage of these items can vary, depending upon the preparation of the class. The handbook is also written to be used individually by the student on a referral basis. And, of course, some students can not wait till the class coverage of items particularly relevant to their own compositions.

If the compositions, the rhetorical theory, the readings, and the handbook exercises are covered adequately, the student who passes the course ought to possess the following skills: 1) he should be able to compile information on a given topic and make an intelligent comprehensive and accurate report on it; 2) with some degree of adequacy he should be able to recognize valid and invalid inductive generalizations in his own and others' writings; 3) he should be able to recognize the premises used by himself and others in deductive procedures; also be able to argue deductively from premises acceptable to his audience in his own writings; 4) he should be able to explore a new topic and recognize responsible hypotheses from those which are untestable and which do not really explain; 5) he should have some knowledge of the different types of explanation. The preceding skills are sometimes called the aims in expository writing. Just as necessary are certain fundamental skills in: classification and definition, description, narration, and evaluation. These are often called the modes. They are the different ways one looks at subject matter.

Versions of this Syllabus. This syllabus is the fourth version of a syllabus originally written in 1975. The syllabus that year was constructed by a comparison and collation of the topics common to the three rhetoric texts adopted for that year; these topics have continued to structure the three later versions of the syllabus.

The 1975 and 1977 versions were characterized by a careful rhetorical analysis of the reading selections recommended for each unit; and for that reason they are still useful. Copies of the 1977 version can be consulted in the Freshman English Office.

The 1978 version was written in language addressed to the entering freshman (instead of the teacher) and was tried in some classes experimentally. For that reason it is in simpler language than the other versions; it is also accompanied by student samples of the various units. Finally, it is considerably more expanded than the other three versions. There are copies of it available in the Freshman English Office for those interested.

OPERATING PROCEDURES - FRESHMAN ENGLISH OFFICE

(Parlin 16; PAX 708; CTX 471-5885)

The Freshman English Program, one of the largest in the country, involves approximately 11,000 students a year. This fall about 6000 students, distributed in 14 varieties of freshman English courses, will be accomodated in approximately 260 sections. These hordes are taught by about 160 teachers.

Because of the large numbers involved, the Freshman English Office asks you to please cooperate with some operating procedures which have been determined by the Freshman English Policy Committee (FEPC).

1. NUMBER OF THEMES REQUIRED. In order to preserve a basic unity to the course, the FEPC asks each teacher to require the equivalent of 8 or 9 themes. These may include the journal, the library research paper, and the final examination as a theme if you so desire.

   The rationale behind this expectation is that there is no substitute for writing in a writing course.

   The committee further suggests that at least 3 of these be in-class themes--mainly as a protection against plagiarism.

2. NUMBER OF UNITS REQUIRED. The second recommendation of the FEPC is that at least 6 of the 9 units of the course be covered by each teacher. This insures a basic content to the course.

   Other alternative units which have been profitably used by faculty and AI's in the past include the following: description, narration, cause and effect, explanation, sentence combining, paragraphing, style, etc.

3. TEXTBOOKS AND EXPERIMENTAL COURSES. Textbooks for freshman English courses are usually determined in the spring by the FEPC. Departures from the various options offered by the committee are nearly always allowed, if requests are made at that time. The same policy holds for experimental variants from any of the present 14 varieties of freshman English. Such experimentation is encouraged.

4. WORK ORDERS. The Freshman English Office staff (Sheila Wallace and Eileen Carpenter) would like to ask you to follow the following suggestions concerning work orders:
   a. NOTICE--for ordinary requests, the staff should be notified 2 working days in advance to assure delivery on time. For large orders, more notice is required.
   b. COPYRIGHT--We will not reproduce materials that in our opinion violate copyright laws.

## SUGGESTED GRADING CRITERIA

F paper: Its treatment of the subject is superficial; its theme lacks discernible organization; its prose is garbled or stylistically primitive. Mechanical errors are frequent. In short, the ideas, organization, and style fall far below what is acceptable college writing.

D paper: Its treatment and development of the subject are as yet only rudimentary. While organization is present, it is neither clear nor effective. Sentences are frequently awkward, ambiguous, and marred by serious mechanical errors. Evidence of careful proofreading is scanty, if nonexistent. The whole piece, in fact, often gives the impression of having been conceived and written in haste.

C paper: It is generally competent--it meets the assignment, has few mechanical errors, and is reasonably well organized and developed. The actual information it delivers, however, seems thin and commonplace. One reason for that impression is that the ideas are typically cast in the form of vague generalities--generalities that prompt the confused reader to ask marginally: "In every case?" "Exactly how large?" "Why?" "But how many?" Stylisticall the C paper has other shortcomings as well: the opening paragraph does little to draw the reader in; the final paragraph offers only a perfunctory wrap-up; the transitions between paragraphs are often bumpy; the sentences, besides being a bit choppy, tend to follow a predictable (hence monotonous) subject-verb-object; and the diction is occasionally marred by unconscious repetitions, redundancy, and imprecision. The C paper, then, while it gets the job done, lacks both imagination and intellectual rigor, and hence does not invite a rereading.

B paper: It is significantly more than competent. Besides being almost free of mechanical errors, the B paper delivers substantial information--that is, substantial in both quantity and interest-value. Its specific points are logically ordered, well developed, and unified around a clear organizing principle that is apparent early in the paper. The opening paragraph draws the reader in; the closing paragraph is both conclusive and thematically related to the opening. The transitions between paragraphs are for the most part smooth, the sentence structures pleasingly varied. The diction of the B paper is typically much more concise and precise than that found in the C paper. Occasionally, it even shows distinctiveness--i.e., finesse and memorability. On the whole, then, a B paper makes the reading experienc a pleasurable one, for it offers substantial information with few distractio

A paper: Perhaps the principle characteristic of the A paper is its rich content. Some people describe that content as "meaty," others as "dense," still others as "packed." Whatever, the information delivered is such that one feels significantly taught by the author, sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph. The A paper is also marked by stylistic finesse: the title and opening paragraph are engaging; the transitions are artful; the phrasing is tight, fresh, and highly specific; the sentence structure is varied; the tone enhances the purposes of the paper. Finally, the A paper, because of its careful organization and development, imparts a feeling of wholeness and unusual clarity. Not surprisingly, then, it leaves the reader feeling bright, thoroughly satisfied, and eager to reread the piece.

## UNIT I: THE USES OF LANGUAGE AND RHETORICAL STANCE

### I. Objectives

1. Ascertain status of your class by an early in class theme.
2. The student should be able to distinguish among four major uses of language (expressive, persuasive, literary, and expository) in order to isolate the major focus of this course: expository writing.
3. Establish the notion of differences in rhetorical stance and in dialect registers for various purposes of language and levels of formality.
4. Mechanics: Fragments, Comma Fault, Fused Sentence.

### II. Rhetorics--relevant chapters.

Corder, Jim W. Contemporary Writing: Process and Practice. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1979. Ch. 5,"Connecting Author, Subject and Audience," pp. 75-79; and Ch. 3, "Claiming a Subject," pp. 50-56.

D'Angelo, Frank J. Process and Thought in Composition. Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop Publishers, Inc., 1977. Ch. 1, "Invention: Preliminary Considerations," pp. 3-26.

Ebbitt, Wilma R. and David D. Ebbitt. Writer's Guide and Index to English, Sixth edition. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1978. Ch. 1, "Getting Started," pp. 1-26.

### III. Readers--suggested selections.

Decker, Randall E. Patterns of Exposition 6. Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown and Company, 1978.
Donald Hall,"Reading Tastes and Habits," pp. 44-50.

Stubbs, Marcia, and Sylvan Barnet, eds. The Little,Brown Reader. Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown and Company, 1977.
Alice Walker, "Everyday Use," pp. 51-58; heavily expressive.
Ada Louise Huxtable, "The Rayburn Building," pp. 118-120; fairly persuasive
Lewis Closer, "The Family," pp. 8-9; neutral, referential, expository.
William Carlos Williams, "The Poor," p. 124; literary.

### IV. Handbook

Corder, Jim W. Handbook of Current English. Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1978. "Introduction," pp. 1-24 (Language elements, Varieties, Edited American English, Appropriateness of Language to Purpose).
Also: Ch. 2.1, Fragments.
Ch. 2.2, Comma Fault.
Ch. 2.3, Fused Sentence.

### V. Suggested Theoretical and Critical Readings (for teachers).

Britton, James, et al. The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18). London: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1975.

Booth, Wayne C., "The Rhetorical Stance," in Stanley A. Clayes & David G. Spencer, Contexts for Composition 3rd ed., pp. 198-206.

Jakobson, Roman. "Linguistics and Poetics." In Essays on the Language of Literature, Seymour Chatman and Samuel R. Levin, eds. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967. Pp. 296-322.

V. Suggested Theoretical and Critical Readings (for teachers) continued.

Kinneavy, James L., "The Aims of Discourse," A Theory of Discourse. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971. Pp. 48-72. Gives many other references.

## UNIT II: MODES OF DEVELOPMENT

I. Objectives

1. In the light of the diagnostic theme, work on one or several of the modes of development of paragraph and theme: description, classification (and definition), narration (cause and effect), and evaluation. Classification will be handled in a complete unit later on, however.
2. In mechanics, cover problems of agreement (subject and verb and noun and pronoun).

II. Rhetorics (For full bibliographical references see Unit I)

Corder. Ch. 7, "Developing Your Material," 130-162.
D'Angelo. Ch. 2, "Probing the Subject," 27-48.
Ebbitt. Ch. 2, "Developing Papers," 27-61.

Each of the rhetorics also has a chapter devoted to the paragraph: but, like the syllabus, each of the rhetorics works from the whole to the part.

III. Readers

Decker.
- Fromm, "Symbolic Language," 51-55; Classification.
- Taylor, "The Monster," 223-227; Description.
- Haley, "My Furthest-Back Person--'The African'," 251-261; Narration.
- Plimpton, "The American Tradition of Winning," 8-11; Evaluation.

Stubbs.
- Huxtable, "The Rayburn Building," 118-120; evaluation.
- Whitehead, "Technical Education and Its Relation to Science and Literature," 167-171; classification and definition.
- Fiedler, "Up, Up, and Away--The Rise and Fall of Comic Books," 344-349; narration.
- Bettelheim, "Joey--A Mechanical Boy," 510-517; description.

IV. Handbook

Corder. Ch. 5.1, 5.2, Agreement Between Subject and Verb.
Ch. 7.1, 7.2, Agreement Between Noun and Pronoun.

V. Suggested Theoretical and Critical Readings (for teachers).

Morris, Charles. Signs, Language, and Behavior. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1946. Pp. - . A semiotic theory of modes.
Moffett, James. Teaching the Universe of Discourse. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968. Section on "Orders of Discourse," A Piaget based (more or less) theory of modes.
Kinneavy, James, et al. Writing--Basic Modes of Organization. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1976. Pp. 1-19. An ontological theory of modes.

# UNIT III: ENCOURAGING SELF-EXPRESSION

I. Objectives

1. For students unaccustomed to the act of writing, to encourage scribal fluency; to this end, much informal rapid, and personal writing is encouraged. Often this is done in a journal, sometimes in class, often outside of class. The journal can last the entire course.
2. To encourage students to express their reactions to their personal lives--friends, enemies, homes, tragedies, comedies, games, etc.

II. Rhetorics (For full bibliographical references see Unit I).

Corder. "Looking for Subjects," 2-14; only tangential.
D'Angelo. "Invention: Preliminary Considerations," 4-11.
Ebbitt. "Getting Started," 1-26; only tangential.

III. Readers

Decker.
Elbow, "Freewriting," 125-128.
Roiphe, "Confessions of a Female Chauvinist Sow," 85-90.
Stubbs.
Didion, "On Going Home," 427-430.

IV. Handbook

Corder. Ch. 23.1, Words in Context and Situation
Ch. 23.4, Concrete and Abstract Words
Ch. 24.1, Formal Words

V. Suggested Theoretical and Critical Readings (for teachers).

Elbow, Peter. Writing Without Teachers. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.
Macrorie, Ken. Uptaught. Rochelle Pk., N.J.: Hayden, 1970.
Kinneavy, James L. A Theory of Discourse. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971. Pp. 393-449; an attempt at a phenomenological theory of self-expression.

## UNIT IV: CLASSIFYING AND DEFINING

I. Objectives

1. In classifying, the student should be able to use the "principle of division," avoid overlapping classes, and use classifications that are relevant to the purpose of the theme. He should also be able to use the main organizational principle of classificatory discourse, the tree.
2. In defining, to be able to use at least the following types of definition: logical (genus and species), example, descriptive, operational.
3. Mechanics: study of parallelism and dangling modifiers.

II. Rhetorics (For full bibliographical references, see Unit I.)

Corder. "Developing Your Material," 130-148.
D'Angelo. "Patterns of Thought: Description and Definition," 139-156; "Patterns of Thought: Analysis, Classification, Exemplification," 168-184.
Ebbitt. "Dividing: Finding the Parts," 56-61; Classifying: Making Groups," 72-76; "Defining: Telling What It Is," 81-89.

III. Readers

Decker.
Berne, "Can People Be Judged by Their Appearance," 38-41; definition and classification.
Catton, "Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts," 79-83; comparison and contrast.
Stubbs.
Sommer, "Hard Achitecture," 107-119; definition and classification.

IV. Handbook

Corder. Ch. 26.3, Parallelism.
Ch. 4,4, Dangling Modifiers.

V. Suggested Theoretical and Critical Readings (for teachers).

Any general logic book gives the rules for definition and classification. For example, Harry S. Leonard, Principles of Right Reason: An Introduction to Logic, Methodology and the Theory of Science. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1968.
Kinneavy et al. Writing--Basic Modes of Organization, pp. 51-88; considers both classifying and defining.

## UNIT V: PERSUADING

I. Objectives

1. The student should be able to analyze in propaganda and other persuasion the ethical, pathetic, logical, and stylistic arguments.
2. The student should be able to write a theme in which he analyzes one or several of the persuasive arguments used by a given writer in a persuasive essay or in advertisements.
   OR: The student should be able to write a persuasive theme, employing ethical, pathetic, logical, and stylistic appeals appropriate to his audience and his topic.
3. The student should be able to recognize and use the traditional rhetorical organizational structure: introduction (prologue, narration, division, thesis), body (confirmation and confutation), conclusion (summary, peroration).

II. Rhetorics

Corder. "Arguments," especially 389-91, 394-95, 397-404, 412.
D'Angelo. He is including a chapter on persuasion in his forthcoming second edition, but this edition does not consider persuasion.
Ebbitt. "Persuading Readers," 163-203.

III. Readers

Decker.
Carter, "To Establish Justice in a Sinful World," 303-307.
Stubbs.
Kael, "High School and Other Forms of Madness," 153-156.

IV. Handbook

Corder. Ch. 7.6 and 8.1, Shifts in Pronouns
Ch. 8.1, Shifts in Tense
Ch. 8.3, Shifts in Voice

This is also a good unit in which to teach connotation and denotation (each of the rhetorics and the handbook have sections on the topic).

V. Suggested Theoretical and Critical Readings (for teachers).

Aristotle. Rhetoric. Bk. I, Ch. 1,2 (justification and definition); Bk. II, Ch. 1 (ethical), 2 (anger, an example of pathetic), 20 (induction, becoming example), 22 and 24 (deduction becoming enthymeme); Bk. III, Ch. 1 (style).
Corbett, E.P.J. Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.

## UNIT VI: THE LIBRARY RESEARCH PAPER

I. Objectives

1. The student should become acquainted with the basic resources of the Undergraduate Library. He should take the library tour, evince an ability to use the card catalog, and the dictionaries, encyclopedias, and indexes relevant to his paper.
2. He should write an informative paper that betrays the following characteristics: factuality, comprehensiveness, and surprise value.
3. He should use the conventional techniques of the library research paper.

II. Rhetorics

Corder. "Forms and Procedures in Research Writing," 442-460.
D'Angelo. "The Research Paper," 369-404.
Ebbitt. "Writing the Research Paper," 321-380.

III. Readers

The Decker and Stubbs readers do not contain examples of the research paper. But the rhetorics and the handbook do.

Corder, 434-439.
D'Angelo, 385-391.
Ebbitt, 363-380.

IV. Handbook

Corder. Sample paper, 443-463.
Ch. 14.1, Quotation Marks.
Ch. 14.2, Ellipses.
Ch. 14.3, Italics.

V. Suggested Theoretical and Critical Readings (for teachers).

The Undergraduate Library puts out a series of papers for the Library Research Paper: tours, tour quiz, choosing a topic, using dictionaries and encyclopedias, using the card catalog, using indexes. They are available through the Freshman English Office.

For the theory of the informative criteria given in I,2, above, see Kinneavy, A Theory of Discourse, 96-99, 129-141, 179-186.

For the basis of Kinneavy's theory, see Yehoshua Bar-Hillel, Language and Information. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, Inc., 1964. Pp. 221-313.

## UNIT VII: THE INDUCTIVE THEME

I. Objectives

1. The student should come to a minimal understanding of the three criteria for a good generalization: variety, randomness, and numbers in the choice of the sample. The necessity of adequate definitions is also stressed.
2. The student should be able to use these three criteria in an inductive theme of his own.
3. The student should be able to use the traditional inductive organization structure: introduction, thesis, definition of terms, procedures for gathering data, presentation of data, analysis of data, conclusion.
4. Mechanics: Comma review.

II. Rhetorics

Corder. "Arguments," especially 395-397, 405-408.
D'Angelo. "The Inductive Research Paper," 392-404.
Ebbitt. "Testing Logical Relationships," especially "Testing Inductions," 204-210.

III. Readers

Decker.
Peter and Hull, "The Peter Principle," 21-34.
Clarke, "You'll Never Conquer Space," 279-285.
Stubbs.
Mannes, "T.V. Advertising: The Splitting Image," 334-340.

IV. Handbook

Corder. Ch. 11.1 through 11.8, Commas.

V. Suggested Theoretical and Critical Readings (for teachers)

Most general logic books give basic treatments of induction. The logician whose terminology is adopted here is: John Day, Inductive Probability. New York: Humanities Press, 1961.
A simpler version of induction, using the same criteria and the same terms is Wesley Salmon, Logic. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964.

## UNIT VIII: THE DEDUCTIVE THEME

I. Objectives

1. The student should be able to recognize, assess, and use the basic elements of a deductive system: axioms, conclusions, rules of inference, and rules of definition.
2. The student should be aware of the basic deductive organizational structure: introduction, definitions, axioms, inferences, and conclusions.
3. Mechanics: Paragraph Continuity and Sequence.

II. Rhetorics

Corder. "Arguments," especially 395-397, 405-408; "Critical Writing," 414-417; there is no explicit treatment of deduction.
D'Angelo. "Patterns of Thought. . .Exemplification," 184-190; no explicit treatment of deduction.
Ebbitt. "Testing Logical Relationships," especially "Testing Deduction," 210-227.

III. Readers

Decker.
Solzhenitsyn, "Wake Up, America!" 327-332.
Stubbs.
Freud, "Dear Professor Einstein," 366-374.

IV. Handbook

Corder. Ch. 21.3, Relating Paragraphs in Sequence
Ch. 26.3, Paragraph Continuity.

V. Suggested Theoretical and Critical Readings (for teachers).

Symbolic logic texts and axiomatic theory are the basic sources for my own treatment of deductive logic in Kinneavy, A Theory of Discourse, 116-126.
The text recommended for inductive logic, Salmon, Logic, is also quite incisive and clear.

## UNIT IX: EXPLORING A TOPIC

I. Objectives

1. The student should learn to use an intelligent exploratory system in analyzing a problem. The system used in the larger version of the syllabus is the Kuhn model: dogma, dissatisfaction, crisis, search for a new model, hypothesis, testing the hypothesis, accepting or rejecting the hypothesis. These stages also can serve as an organizing structure.
2. The student should be able to write an exploratory paper, using one or several of the stages of the model.
3. Mechanics: Sentence style.

II. Rhetorics

Corder. "Exploring Subjects," 25-49.
D'Angelo. "Invention: Probing the Subject," 27-48.
Ebbitt. "Pro-and-Con, or Exploratory Structure," 95-107; and some parts of "Discovering Proof," 171-191.

III. Readers

Decker.
- Lawrence, "Pornography," 201-205.
- Kristol, "Censorship: Where Do We Draw the Line?" 322-326.

Stubbs.
- Hall, "Proxemics in the Arab World," 286-293.

IV. Handbook

Corder. Ch. 12.1, semicolons
Ch. 12.2, colons

V. Suggested theoretical and critical readings (for teachers)

Kuhn, Thomas S. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Chicago, Ill.; University of Chicago Press, 1962.
Hairston, Maxine. "The Rogerian Approach to Argument," A Contemporary Rhetoric, 2nd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1978. Pp. 281-286.

THE FINAL EXAMINATION

In the spring of 1976, as the result of an inquiry from the office of the Dean of the College of Humanities, the Freshman English Policy Committee reconsidered the stand it had taken the year before, allowing for optional final examinations. Although the Committee did not reverse this stand, it did feel that some statement should be made in the syllabus about the final examination.

The basic reason for the 1975 position making the examination optional was the desire of the Committee to bring the policy of Freshman English into agreement with the general University policy. The Committee recognizes the right of teachers to structure their courses differently, with varying techniques of grading. Since the course already requires a minimum of nine themes, a final examination for the purpose of a grading function as such does not carry much weight as an argument.

However, the intention of the Committee never was to abolish out of hand the final examination. As a matter of fact, in a questionnaire last year, it was revealed that by far the vast majority of teachers still preferred to retain the final examination.

The advantages of a final examination are not to be discounted. And a quick review of some of them, especially as they relate to English 306 particularly, might be of some use.

One of the reactions from several quarters of the University community (including a member of the administration) was that it seemed anomalous that freshman English, charged as it was with teaching people how to take essay final examinations, should itself have no final examination. If one accepts this as one of the objectives of the course, the argument seems plausible. However, since little feedback to the student usually is given the student after the final exam (except a grade), it would seem better to assign some exam-like quizzes during the course so that the student could learn from them rather than waiting for a no-feedback final.

The English 307 syllabus is specifically written with a planned orientation to the final exam. However, English 306, though progressively more difficult, is not so organized. The increasing complexity of Units I through IX does make it possible for one of the later units (especially exploration), to incorporate many of the preceding skills and material. This is more true of the composition skills and of the rhetoric than of the handbook assignments.

This progression thus makes it possible to assign a theme as a final exam that would draw on most of the major resources of the course.

The same line of argument, however, also makes it possible for one of these final themes itself to count for a final exam. However, there are several advantages which a final in-class examination possesses over such a substitution. In the first place it can make the student achieve a unification of the separate elements of the course in a conscious way. This is true of the composition skills, the rhetorical components, and the handbook mechanics. Giving a separate set of questions on the rhetorical principles forces the student to read the text throughout the course and thereby at least poses the possibility that some theory can be translated into practice. The same, during the course, can be said of the readings

in the anthology. If the teacher makes no checks, by factual quizzes, on reading assignments, either in the rhetorics or in the anthologies, he should not be surprised that a fair number of his students don't read them.

Thus a final examination, written in the classroom and made up of a composition assignment, questions on the rhetorical principles, and a check on the mechanics, does allow for a synthesis of the ingredients of the course into a whole.

Some teachers have given an additional, and recent, purpose for the final. It is required that the student write nine themes in English 306. Only three of these must be in-class themes, and even these may be revised out of class. Consequently, some teachers have become worried that the large majority of the work handed in by a few students is heavily edited by friends or paid consultants. It is perfectly permissible, under such circumstances, for the teacher to announce that he will base his grade for the course only on work done in class. Therefore a final in-class examination can serve as the acid grading exercise. A teacher who does this must announce this possibility in his policy statement, however, at the beginning of the term.

To understand the role that E306 plays within the cluster of 14 courses that make up the complete Freshman English Program, a copy of a description of that program is here enclosed.

It originally appeared in Options for the Teaching of English: Freshman Composition, ed. Jasper P. Neel, (Boston, Mass.: MLA, 1978).

# The Freshman Composition Program at the University of Texas at Austin

James L. Kinneavy, Director of Freshman Composition

**Department responsible for the composition program** English
**Full-time faculty in the department** 99
**Enrollment policies**
Maximum Enrollment 25
Minimum Enrollment 10
Average Enrollment 24
**Staffing**

| | |
|---|---|
| Percentage of freshman composition courses taught by graduate students | 69+ |
| Percentage taught by part-time faculty (excluding graduate students) | 4+ |
| Percentage taught by full-time instructors or lecturers | 12+ |
| Percentage taught by assistant, associate, and full professors | 12+ |

**Program size**

| | |
|---|---|
| Number of students enrolled in the freshman composition program in the fall term of 1976 | 5,158 |
| Number of sections of freshman composition offered in the fall term of 1976 | 205 |
| Number of sections at all levels—literature, composition, film, graduate, undergraduate, etc.—offered by the department in the fall term of 1976 | 446 |

## *Freshman Composition*

At the University of Texas at Austin, entering students are placed in one of three categories for their first course in freshman composition. Students who score between 550 and 620 on the English Composition Test of the CEEB are given a *B* for the first course in the freshman sequence, E 306 (see Figure 1), and go into classes designated *special* (see lower half of Figure 1); students scoring 620 or higher are given an *A* and go into the same classes. About thirty percent of entering students exempt the first course. Native students scoring below 550 on the ECT go into one of the three variants of E 306 (the choice is up to the student).

Foreign students scoring below 500 on the TOEFL test are put into one of the six levels of intensive English courses run by the International Office of the university (noncredit). Those scoring 500 or higher are placed in E 306Q.

The average student in the freshman classes is from a middle- or upper-class urban background, has an average national score on the SAT and ECT tests, and has a reading level of about twelfth grade. Only about 1.5% of these students are black, and about five percent are Chicano (this compares to a state population average of 8% and 16% respectively).

## Structure of the Program and Description of the Courses

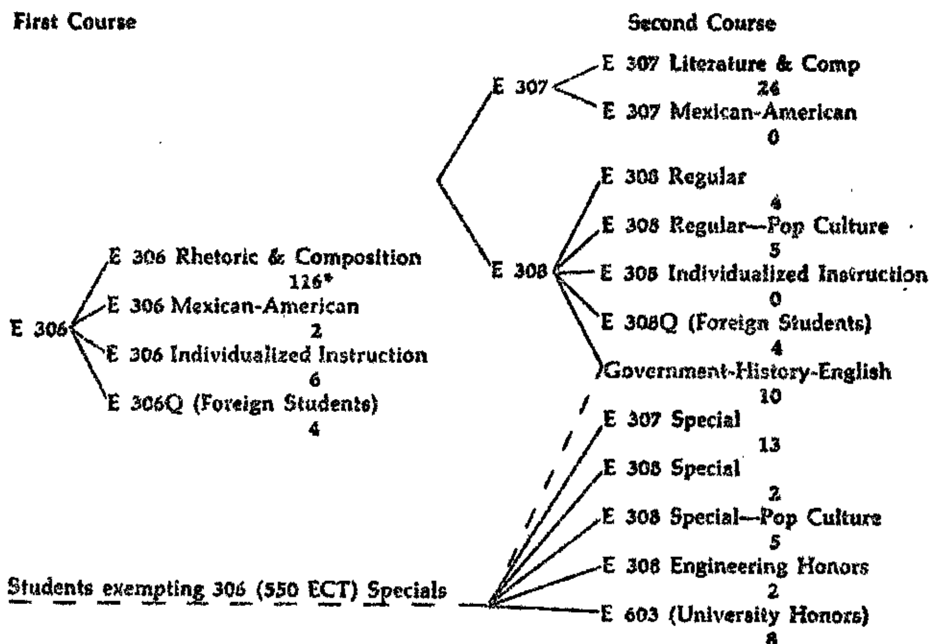
Figure 1 shows the general structure of the freshman composition courses at the university. The following descriptions of courses follow the structure of the diagram.

The intensive English courses are not properly a part of the freshman composition program. The courses are noncredit and emphasize speaking more than they emphasize writing. They are usually taught by teaching assistants from the Foreign Language Education Center.

The first course in the regular freshman writing sequence is E 306. This is a writing course with four major ingredients: a requirement of nine complete compositions between seven hundred and a thousand words in length, a rhetorical basis determining the kinds of compositions, a required handbook to integrate mechanics with the rhetorical progress of the course, and an anthologized reader illustrating and sometimes modeling the rhetorical kinds of composition. The themes embody the following rhetorical skills: classifying and defining, self-expressing, persuading, informing (library research), exploring, proving by induction, proving by deduction, explaining, and analyzing cause and effect. The *self-expressing* theme is usually accomplished by means of a journal that is kept throughout the semester and is akin to the free-writing recommended by Ken Macrorie, Peter Elbow, and Lou Kelly, among others. The *informing* paper is often combined with the exploring, explaining, and cause and effect themes to provide three small library exercises rather than one major paper isolated from the rhetorical skills.

There are three variants of the main E 306 track: E 306 for Mexican-Americans, E 306, "Individualized Instruction," and E 306Q for foreign students. The Mexican-American variant differs from the main course only in having an additional reader that includes material of interest to Chicano students and relevant to the various themes. The individualized instruction variant meets as a regular class for the first several weeks, then is individ-

**Figure 1: The Structure of Freshman English Courses at UT-Austin**




* Indicates numbers of sections for that course for the fall semester, 1977.

ualized in laboratory meetings with undergraduate tutors and teachers; the course emphasizes initial grammar and sentence-combining work more than the regular course, although the students do whole themes at the end of the class. The E 306 II has not yet been used as a remedial course, but it may soon be given that orientation. The E 306Q courses do not emphasize writing and rhetorical skills as much as the regular course; speaking and grammar are also important elements of the course.

After E 306 the student takes one of the courses listed under *Second Course*. Only students exempting E 306 can take *special* courses listed in the lower half of the chart.

The four major courses offered under *Second Course* are E 307, E 308, GS 913, and E 603. All of these are basically composition courses with specified required writing assignments. (E 307 and E 308 require seven themes.) For mechanics, all of these courses use the handbook used in E 306. All but E 603 have a strong rhetorical syllabus, and all have anthologized readers or specified reading assignments. Indeed, it is the reading assignments that differentiate the courses. In all of the variants of E 307 the students read fictional materials (short stories and short novels) and write themes related to the readings. The kinds of themes required in the following units are, in order: an expressive autobiography or biography, a paper on fiction versus nonfiction unity (usually the rewrite of a myth to achieve a different aim), creating or analyzing a plot, creating or analyzing a character, an analytical paper emphasizing close reading of a text, a paper emphasizing library research, an

evaluative paper. The E 308 courses generally emphasize nonbelletristic readings. The E 308 popular culture variant, for example, stresses current mass media scripts from contemporary speeches, radio and television broadcasts (documentaries, soap operas, etc.), Gonzo journalism, and so on. The themes focus on the following types of assignments: persuading (creative or analytical), advertising (creative or analytical), comparing or contrasting two reports of the same incident, describing or narrating in the style of the new journalism, presenting the same material in a traditional journalistic manner, defining a culture hero or describing a cultural pattern of behavior from an outsider's point of view, or persuading by means of an oral presentation to the class.

The readings in GS 913 are literary, historical, and theoretical. The English classes meet conjointly with required government and history classes, and the themes are closely correlated to the content demands of these two classes.

The readings in the engineering honors classes, E 308 EH, are both literary and scientific. Initially, the readings were preponderantly scientific, including classical and contemporary essays; but the students insisted on the inclusion of more literary materials.

The readings in E 603, the university honors course for both freshman composition and sophomore literature, are drawn from masterpieces in world literature. Often, though not necessarily, they follow a chronological sequence. The writing assignments differ more from instructor to instructor than in the other English classes.

## Rhetorical Basis and Pedagogical Assumptions Underlying Freshman Composition at UT Austin[1]

The freshman composition program at UT Austin has had a rhetorical foundation for a good number of years. At the present time, there is a systematic and articulated rhetorical basis for each of the three basic courses in the freshman program. Some of the more important principles underlying all three syllabuses are:

(1) There are specific rhetorical and mechanical skills which can be taught, at least at the level of ordinary workaday prose.

(2) The major teachable rhetorical skills relate to the different purposes for which we use language and the different general perspectives taken of subject matters. The major purposes for which we use language, the aims of discourse, are exposition (informing, proving and explaining, exploring), persuasion, literature, and self-expression. The major perspectives from which subject matters are viewed are classification and definition, narration, description, and evaluation.

These skills have to be differentiated in teaching, because they are fundamentally quite distinct. The criteria for effective propaganda (persuasion) are not at all the same criteria for effective literature or effective expository writing. Similarly, the criteria for a good narrative are quite dissimilar to those of classifying and defining.

It is quite true that these different aims often overlap in practice—as do different modes. But, just as tennis players spend hours practicing the

serve and other hours practicing backhand and forehand volleys, so different skills are necessary to achieve overall competence in writing. And a person quite expert in one skill can be extremely deficient in another.

(3) These different skills cannot be taught all at once. Experience has demonstrated that we can learn them best by focusing on one major rhetorical skill analytically in a given theme and by relying on our already learned competencies instinctively with regard to other major skills. We have used all of these skills with some degree of confidence intuitively since childhood. Thus we have all told stories without an analytical awareness of the nature of narrative. In college, for the first time systematically, it is possible to improve these skills by a conscious analytic awareness of their processes.

(4) These skills are most successfully achieved when the writer says something he really believes in, for a specific purpose, to a well-defined audience. Therefore, individual choices of subject matter, especially in E 306 and E 308, and to some extent in E 307, are encouraged. This is an application of situational rhetoric to freshman composition.

In addition to a rhetorical basis, the program at UT Austin has also consciously followed some fairly well-established educational principles, a few of which are articulated below.

(1) A student learns to write by *writing*. Many students write as many as twelve themes a semester (counting revisions). Although anthologized readings, rhetorical principles, and handbook exercises may assist, they are not substitutes for the act of writing.

(2) A student learns to write by writing *whole* themes. There is a frankly holistic approach to writing. The whole themes may be quite short, even one-paragraph themes, but they should have something to say, a specific purpose, and a clearly defined audience.

(3) The teaching of mechanical skills (grammar, spelling, punctuation, kinds and registers of dialect, etc.) isolated from the actual writing of themes is not useful. The isolated teaching of rhetorical skills (such as library research, logic, and rhetoric) is almost equally useless.

## Training Program for Teaching Assistants

In the fall of 1977, about seventy percent of the courses in the freshman program were taught by teaching assistants. About two thirds of these were graduate students in English; one third were graduate students in other areas such as linguistics, comparative literature, philosophy, English education, and so forth, but with B.A.'s or M.A.'s in English. Because of the preponderantly literary emphasis in their earlier degrees, most of these teaching assistants did not have the background necessary to teach some of these courses. Consequently, a training program was instituted to train new teaching assistants. The program contains an orientation program of one week prior to their first semester of teaching, an observing period of apprenticeship in which the inexperienced teaching assistant learns the syllabuses by working with a full-time faculty member but does not teach his own class, and two three-hour, semester-long courses, specifically related to the course that the beginning teacher is teaching his first two semesters. These graduate courses closely

follow the syllabus of the course the beginning teacher is teaching, supplying the rhetorical basis for the lessons and suggesting practical techniques for handling the rhetoric, the readings, and the handbook exercises. The course tries to stay about a week ahead of the freshman courses to enable the beginning teacher to prepare ahead of time. This requires a close synchronization of all teaching assistants in the syllabus sequence when they take the teacher-training course. Afterward they may depart from the syllabus.

Teaching assistants' reaction to the training program has progressed from resentful compliance to enthusiastic reception. Some older teaching assistants who were not required to follow the training program now follow all or part of the teacher-training courses. And some full-time faculty participate in the orientation program and parts of the courses in teacher training. To date, eight different faculty members have taught the training course.

Besides the faculty contribution to the training program, older experienced teaching assistants act as counselors to the incoming teaching assistants. Six or seven new teaching assistants are assigned to each counselor. He or she meets with these new teachers in a group once or twice a week, observes them once or twice during the semester, and helps them in grading, lesson preparation, and personal problems. The counselor component of the training program is possibly the single most valuable component of the training sequence.

## Weaknesses in the Program

Although the program at UT Austin has experienced continual growth and improvement over the past fifteen years, there are still some obvious deficiencies. For this reason, the Freshman English Policy Committee, a group of four faculty members and four teaching assistants, is continually experimenting with innovative suggestions that question either the procedural matters of the syllabuses or the very basis of the courses. Experimental suggestions are requested every semester and tested with whatever research facilities are available to the program. Experiments usually involve pre- and post-tests and a minimum regard for research design. This semester six different programs are being tested by these criteria.

We are now attempting to eliminate grade inflation (partly arising from required student evaluations), to provide an intelligent rationale for the sequence from first-semester to second-semester freshman courses to sophomore literature courses, and to make provisions for minority students whose performance is weak.

## Notes

[1] The rhetorical principles outlined in this section can be found articulated in detail, with evidence and documentation, in James L. Kinneavy, *A Theory of Discourse: The Aims of Discourse* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971). A less scholarly presentation of the aims of discourse, intended for upper-division undergraduate students, can be seen in James L. Kinneavy, John W. Cope, and J. W. Campbell, *Aims and Audiences in Writing* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1976).