



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

PAR 108 • Austin, Texas 78712-1164 • (512) 471-4991

September 13, 1990

Dear Colleagues:

With respect to the materials distributed by the LDEPC for our upcoming department meeting, I would like to share a packet that offers a different approach to teaching E306. I certainly do not presume that mine is the only way to teach that course; I merely wish to offer this syllabus as one of several alternatives that we might consider prior to deciding the future of E306.

Since I am teaching E306 this semester, I have been able to list in columns typical problems that have emerged in four representative essays at the beginning of this semester. As you will see, my students have serious deficiencies in basic writing skills.

The syllabus, in turn, seeks systematically to address such problems. Writing, revising, editing, and discussion about writing are the exclusive concerns in the syllabus. My goal is to impart to students a basic understanding of the mechanics of writing and a systematic approach for editing their work. Such skills will not arise solely from our requiring students to write a designated number of words and essays.

Whether or not you value every feature of the syllabus, I would respectfully urge you to compare it to that which we shall probably be asked to approve this Friday. Might we benefit from more prolonged dialogue before we finalize our plans for E306?

Were we to have more time for deliberation, I would be pleased, as well, to present a proposal (with respect to classes beyond E306) for a two-semester multicultural program that culminates in a course titled "Thinking and Writing about Social Issues."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim Duban".

James Duban

REPRESENTATIVE STUDENT PROBLEMS, E306--FALL, 1990

Student # 1
(24 pp.)

1. Mistaking adverbs for adjectives
2. Weak transitions between paragraphs
3. Wordiness
4. Repetitious sentence structure
5. Colloquialisms
6. Lack of continuity between consecutive sentences
7. Garbled phrasing
8. Illogical phrasing
9. Indefinite references
10. The use of plural pronouns to refer to singular nouns
11. Repetition of key words in close proximity
12. Pervasive summarial tone in an essay that ought to sound persuasive

Student # 2
(14 pp.)

1. Garbled phrasing
2. Awkward shift in tense
3. Wordiness
4. Repetition of key words
5. Poorly structured opening paragraph
6. Lack of continuity between consecutive sentences
7. Lapse of tone
8. Fused concepts, due to lack of commas
9. Choppy and unbalanced sentences
10. Indefinite references
11. Improper footnote form
12. Weak transitions between paragraphs
13. Weak and contrived concluding paragraph
14. Failure to punctuate in correct proximity to quotation marks
15. Failure to conclude a paragraph cogently
16. Inappropriate use of the passive voice

Student # 3
(24 pp.)

1. Failure to understand the need for definite articles
2. Conflating "there" and "their"
3. Failure to select appropriate tenses
4. Failure to place commas around appositives
5. Sentence fragments
6. Wordiness
7. Repetition of key words
8. Repetitious sentence structure
9. Triteness
10. Run-on sentences
11. Fused concepts, due to lack of commas
12. Inappropriate semicolons
13. Non-functional commas
14. Garbled phrasing
15. Errors in agreement
16. Failure to advance a progressively unfolding thesis
17. Illogical phrasing

Student # 4
(24 pp.)

1. Garbled phrasing
2. Illogical phrasing
3. Inappropriate shift in tense
4. Wordiness
5. Poorly structured opening paragraph
6. Redundancy
7. Lack of continuity between consecutive sentences
8. Lack of transition between paragraphs
9. Paragraphs that detract from the writer's flow of thought
10. Inappropriate use of the passive voice
11. Failure to conclude paragraphs cogently
12. Indefinite references
13. Failure to understand the need for definite articles
14. Lapse of tone
15. Conflating "a" and "an"
16. Lapse of tone



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

PAR 108 • Austin, Texas 78712-1164 • (512) 471-4991

August 31, 1990

Professor Joseph Kruppa
Chair, Department of English
PAR 108

Dear Joe:

I would like for you to have a copy of the syllabus that I have distributed to my freshmen in E306. Feel free to make this syllabus available to our colleagues who will be deliberating the future of that course. Should either you or any of them wish to discuss my approach to E306, I would be delighted to set aside time for that purpose.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Duban".

James Duban
Professor of English

E306

Dr. James Duban
Fall, 1990

Freshman Composition

Rhetoric and Composition

Syllabus and Policy Statement

Designed for freshmen who will enter UT in the fall of 1990, this section of E306 will prepare students for the sort of writing that they must undertake during the next four years of college--and beyond. Students will seek to acquire a foundation of editing skills necessary for success in other courses as well, and in numerous vocations. We shall review grammar and the mechanics of writing; we shall also edit anonymous mimeographed essays selected from assigned papers. This will allow students to revise prose other than their own and to witness the impact of their own writing on a random audience. In a related vein, we shall read and discuss a number of prose models from different academic disciplines. In doing so, however, we shall be neither prescriptive nor doctrinaire; our discussion of these prose paradigms will instead encourage dialogue about stylistics and about the ways that verbal and formal elements of an argument either advance or undermine thematic emphases.

Paper Topics: You may compose persuasive essays about topics of interest to you or you may write about topics that I make available for your convenience.

Plagiarism: automatic flunk.

Due Dates for Papers: See the syllabus. I accept no late papers.

Semester Grades: I shall award such grades primarily on the basis of your sustained improvement as a writer.

Formalities: All essays must be typed, double-spaced, and have 1 1/2 inch margins. If you have a word processor, please use a dark ribbon or printer. Always hand in two copies of your essay, along with all drafts that went into its creation.

Books:

Kirkland, James W., and Dilworth, Collett B. Concise English Handbook, 2nd edition. Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Company, 1990.

Watkins, Floyd C., et al. Practical English Handbook, 4th edition. Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1989.

Steward, Joyce S., and Smelstor, Marjorie. Writing in the Social Sciences. Glenview, IL.: Scott, Foresman, 1984.

Week I

Thursday, Aug. 30: Introductory remarks. I shall lecture about ways to research, structure, and compose college-level essays. Due September 6-7 are your typed argumentative essays about any topic in your projected field of study, about any current event or issue, or about a topic that I shall provide for your convenience. Whatever your topic, have at least three brief quotations in your essay.

Assignment: Over the weekend, read Chapter I of the Handbook (HB, pp. 8-73): "Composing the Essay." You needn't do the exercises in this chapter, but you should peruse the sections that address such concerns as

Determining Purpose and Perspective
Thinking and Writing
Determining Arrangement
Writing Effective Paragraphs
Revising
Induction, Deduction

Read, as well, about index cards, paraphrasing, and parenthetical modes of citation in HB, pp. 383-87, 395.

Week II

Tues., Sept. 4: Continuation of the above lecture. I shall also talk about your correction charts and the fifty-six editorial categories listed there. Today we shall review a sample of "A" prose. Also, by today you should have read the section on "Grammar" in your Workbook (WB, pp. 1-53). Concentrate on the parts of speech (nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections) and the parts of sentences (subjects and predicates, complements, phrases, verbals, verbal phrases, and clauses). Also come prepared to make several points about style, organization, and tone in Barbara Tuchman's "In Search of History," WSS, pp. 12-19. What do you think about her advice to writers? Specifically, consider her suggestions about listening to the sound of your prose, about the reader's incentive to turn the page, about clarification, about primary vs. secondary sources, and about the use of index cards.

By today, you should also have a first typed draft of the essay due on Thursday. Remember, you must edit that essay by using all of the categories on the fifty-six item editing sheet. (five at a time).

Thurs., Sept. 5: DUE TODAY IS YOUR FIRST ESSAY, along with all of the edited drafts that helped you arrive at this final product. You should also have prepared the following exercises. Here and for the remainder of the semester, read all pages prior to these exercises that are pertinent to the completion of the exercises:

Variety in Sentences
Variety in Sentences
Sentence Combination
(Combine as you wish)
Sentence Combination
Sentence Combination

WB, p. 161, ex. 11.6

WB, p. 169, ex. 11.9

HB, p. 133, ex. 2

HB, p. 123, ex. 4

HB, p. 128, ex. 2

Week III:

Tues. Sept. 11: I shall return your essays and expect you immediately to begin working on a revision. Be sure to see me (in office hours) about any remarks that you would like me to clarify.

Come prepared to discuss the following exercises:

Expletive Constructions/Conciseness	HB, p. 116, ex. 3
Sentence Combination	HB, p. 146, ex. 2
Conciseness	HB, p. 179, ex. 1
Excessive Coordination	WB, p. 123, ex. 10.1
Subordination	WB, p. 127, ex. 10.2

Also read about paragraph development (WB, pp. 357-60) and paragraph transitions (WB, pp. 365-66). Be prepared, as well, to discuss how matters pertaining to organization, style, and tone help to advance the argument of John Kenneth Galbraith's "Writing, Typing, and Economics," WSS, pp. 20-28. Among other things, consider Galbraith's transitional and concluding sentences in paragraph 3, his thoughts about "the flocking tendency of writers" (paragraph 8), his insistence upon multiple drafts (paragraph 9), his thoughts about the difficulties which writers must overcome (paragraph 9), his outlook on specificity vs. generalizations (paragraph 16), his warnings against humorous prose (paragraph 17), and his advocacy of "plain language" (paragraphs 21-23).

Thurs. Sept. 13: Come prepared to discuss the following exercises:

Sentence Fragments	WB, p. 61, ex. 4.2
Comma Splices	WB, p. 63, ex. 4.3
Sentence Fragments, Comma Splices, Fused Sentences	WB, p. 67, ex. 4.5
Case Forms	WB, p. 101, ex. 8.1
Case Forms	WB, p. 103, ex. 8.2
Case Forms	HB, p. 264, ex. 1
Case Forms	HB, p. 264, ex. 2

Also be prepared to discuss how matters pertaining to organization, style, and tone help to advance the argument of Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s "Politics and the American Language," WSS, pp. 44-54. Consider, among other things, the stylistic balance of paragraph 2, the use of brief quotations in paragraph 6, the alternate sentence structure in paragraph 7, the possibility that paragraph 9 came about from Schlesinger's use of index cards, the three-fold transition that introduces paragraph 10, the conclusive quality of the Emersonian quotation which ends paragraph 11, and the wry tone of the last sentence in paragraph 16.

Week IV:

Tues. Sept 18: Come prepared to discuss the following exercises:

Restrictive vs. Nonrestrictive	HB, p. 141, ex. 2
Commas with Non-restrictive Clauses	WB, p. 193, ex. 12.7
Passive vs. Active Voice	HB, p. 115, ex. 2
Voice	WB, p. 83, ex. 5.5
Agreement	HB, p. 280, ex. 1
	(Also read HB, 38a [p. 267] and remind me to comment on the red-colored section.)
Subject and Verb Agreement	WB, p. 89, ex. 6.1
Subject and Verb Agreement	WB, p. 91, ex. 6.2

Also be prepared to discuss how matters pertaining to organization, style, and tone help to advance the argument of Joan B. Kelly's "California's Children of Divorce," WSS, pp. 73-86. Where is her prose superior?

Consider, among other things, the strategies that Kelly employs to paragraphs 1 and 2 to engage her reader, her choice of a series to enhance the flow of paragraph 1, her punctuation in paragraph 4 (can you improve upon it?), her use of sub-headings as transitional devices (do you think well of that practice?), her sense of intra-paragraph transition in paragraph 7, her possible use of index cards in the creation of paragraphs 8-11, and concluding sentence in paragraph 15 (does it adequately crystalize the main point of the paragraph?).

Thurs., Sept. 20: Due today is the revision of your first essay. **MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE RE-EDITED YOUR REVISED ESSAY (in blocks of 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, etc.) FOR EACH OF THE FIFTY-SIX ITEMS ON YOUR CORRECTION CHARTS, AS WELL AS FOR ANY INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS LISTED AT THE BOTTOM OF THAT CHART.**

Also be prepared to discuss the following exercises:

Emphasis	HB, p. 185, ex. 1
The Comma	WB, p. 201, ex. 2
The Comma	WB, p. 203, ex. 3
Commas with Independent Clauses	WB, p. 183, ex. 12.2
Commas with Items in a Series	WB, p. 185, ex. 12.3
Commas with Coordinate Adjectives	WB, p. 187, ex. 12.4
Dangling Modifiers	HB, p. 301, ex. 1

Week V:

Tues., Sept. 25: Come prepared to discuss the following exercises:

Parallelism	HB, p. 316, ex. 1
Parallelism	HE, p. 317, ex. 2
Parallelism	WB, p. 153, ex. 11.4
Parallelism	WB, p. 157, ex. 11.5

Bring to class twenty-five copies of three published sentences (type these, double-spaced, with at least three inches separating each sentence) which you think in need of revision. During the next several weeks, we shall edit these.

The Semicolon	HB, p. 212, ex. 7
Semicolons	WB, p. 211, ex. 14.1
Semicolons	WB, p. 213, ex. 14.2

Thurs., Sept. 27: Come prepared to discuss the following exercises:

The Colon	HB, p. 216, ex. 8
Dashes and Hyphens	HB, p. 223, ex. 9
Colons and Dashes	WB, p. 215, ex. 14.3
Brackets, Ellipses, and Quotation Marks	HB, p. 232, ex. 11
Parentheses and Brackets	WB, p. 217, ex. 14.4
Italics	WB, p. 229, ex. 16.1
Read about italics, slashes, hyphens	WB, pp. 235-44

If time permits, we shall edit several more sentences from Sept. 25.

DUE TODAY IS THE FIRST TYPED DRAFT OF THE NEW ESSAY THAT YOU WILL
COMPREHENSIVELY EDIT (categories 1-56, five-at-a-time) BEFORE PASSING
IT IN NEXT THURSDAY.

Week VI:

Tues., Oct. 2: Be prepared to discuss how matters pertaining to organization, style, and tone help to advance the argument of Albert Rothenberg's "Creative Contradictions," WWS, pp. 87-96. Consider, among other things, Rothenberg's strategy in paragraph 1 for engaging the reader; the combination of paraphrasing and quotation in paragraph 2 (what benefit does he derive from paraphrasing?); the tone of conclusiveness at the end of paragraph 2; the structure of the three-fold, lead sentence in paragraph 3; the series and use of dashes in the concluding sentences of paragraph 5; the well-balanced series and prose in paragraphs 7-8; and the elliptical punctuation in the last sentence of paragraph 8. Also prepare the following exercises:

Wordiness
Wordiness
Wordiness
Triteness
Digressive Sentences

WB, p. 313, ex. 21.1
WB, p. 309, ex. 21.2
WB, p. 313, ex. 21.3
WB, p. 299, ex. 20.16
WB, p. 345, ex. 23.4

(Read WB, 336-39: paragraphing and sentence functions.)

In-class editing of sentences from Sept. 25.

Thurs., Oct. 4: YOUR NEW ESSAYS ARE DUE TODAY. Also prepare the following exercises:

Verb Forms
Verb Forms
Tense and Sequence of Tenses
Pronouns: Agreement and Reference
Pronouns: Agreement and Reference

WB, p. 73, ex. 5.1
WB, p. 75, ex. 5.2
WB, p. 81, ex. 5.4
WB, p. 95, ex. 7.1
WB, p. 97, ex. 7.2

Be prepared, as well, to discuss how matters pertaining to organization, style, and tone help to advance the argument of William Graybeal's "How Changes in Enrollment Will Affect Higher Education," WSS, pp. 99-111. Notice how writers who use charts and graphs clarify, often in elegant prose, the importance of these visual aids. Be aware, as well, of how clear, concise, and flowing technical prose can be (paragraph 14).

If time permits, we shall also conduct in-class editing of the sentences from Sept. 25.

Week VII:

Tues., Oct. 9: Be prepared to discuss the following exercises:

Adjective or Adverb	WB, p. 109, ex. 9.1
Adjective or Adverb	WB, p. 111, ex. 9.2
Comparative and Superlative	WB, p. 113, ex. 9.3
Consistency	WB, p. 137, ex. 10.6
Quotation Marks, End Punctuation	WB, p. 223, ex. 14.4

Also come prepared to discuss how matters pertaining to organization, style, and tone help to advance the argument of Lester Thurow's "A Zero Sum Game," WSS, pp. 123-28. Notice, among other things the author's effort to speak in plain language about a potentially complex issue (paragraphs 1-4). In what ways do the concluding sentences of paragraphs 9, 12, and 13 enhance the author's tone of authority? How, specifically, does punctuation contribute to that authoritative tone in the last sentence of paragraph 13? Does the series at the beginning of paragraph 11 help to enhance the author's tone of authority?

In-class editing of sentences from Sept. 25.

Thurs., Oct. 11: Come prepared to discuss the following exercises:

Position of Modifiers	WB, p. 145, ex. 11.1
Position of Modifiers	WB, p. 147, ex. 11.2
Separation of Elements	WB, p. 149, ex. 11.3

Be prepared to discuss how matters pertaining to organization, style, and tone help to advance the argument of Carl Becker's "Freedom of Speech," WSS, pp. 130-37. Comment on the innovative technique that Becker uses to advance his thesis. In a different vein, identify the three steps of Becker's transition at the outset of paragraph 2; does that transition convey a sense of the author's having arrived at an exciting new stage of his argument? Note, as well, Becker's use of a colon to introduce an elaborative quotation in paragraph 3, and study the effectiveness of the series that concludes paragraph 3. Why does Becker use a semicolon, rather than a comma, in the last line of p. 131?

BY TODAY, YOU SHOULD BE WELL UNDERWAY WITH THE REVISED ESSAYS DUE NEXT THURSDAY. AGAIN, SUBJECT YOUR WORK TO THE EDITORIAL CATEGORIES (1-5, 6-10, etc.) LISTED ON THE CORRECTION CHART.

- Pick up a ditto and thoroughly edit it for Tuesday's class.

Week VIII:

Tues., Oct. 16: Discussion of the ditto. Using all the editorial categories now at your disposal, be prepared to discuss the essay's strengths and weaknesses. Offer specific stylistic corrections.

Also come prepared to discuss how matters pertaining to organization, style, and tone help to advance the argument of Philip Rhinelander's "Stereotypes--Their Use and Misuses," in WSS, pp. 139-53. Consider, among other things, whether Rhinelander's essay engages the reader prior to his/her encounter with the thesis, which concludes paragraph 1. How successful do you deem the metaphorical language of paragraph 3? Does the metaphor enhance Rhinelander's argument? How effective do you deem the transitional and concluding sentences of paragraph 4? Do the verbal and formal elements of paragraph 7 support or contradict the thematic thrust of the argument?

Thurs., Oct. 18: DUE TODAY ARE YOUR REVISED ESSAYS.

° Pick up a ditto and thoroughly edit it for Tuesday's class.

TODAY WE SHALL EXPLORE THE LIBRARY RESOURCES AT U.T.

Week IX:

Tues., Oct. 23: Discussion of the ditto. Using all the editorial categories now at your disposal, be prepared to discuss the essay's strengths and weaknesses.

10 Also be prepared to discuss how matters pertaining to organization, style, and tone help to advance the argument of Isaiah Berlin's "The Hedgehog and the Fox," WSS, pp. 160-65. Undertake an analysis of Berlin's 18-line sentence on p. 161. Does the sentence work? Comment, too, on the way semicolons and dashes enhance the flow of paragraph 2. How do you feel about the use of multiple colons and semicolons atop p. 162, lines 2-10? Also, do you believe that Berlin's reiteration of his thesis in the first sentence of paragraph 5 convinces the reader that all artists may be divided into "hedgehogs" and "foxes"? In a different vein, can you think of an alternate, and perhaps clearer, way of punctuating the long sentence in the middle of paragraph 7?

- Pick up a ditto and thoroughly edit it for Thursday's class.

Thurs., Oct. 25:

11. Discussion of the ditto. Also be prepared to discuss how matters pertaining to organization, style, and tone help to advance the argument of Daniel Boorstin's "Experimenting with Education," WSS, pp. 170-79. In what way might the series in Boorstin's second sentence help to establish his tone of authority? Do you believe that his two-paragraph "introduction" best serves to advance his thesis, or would you prefer to know Boorstin's thesis by the conclusion of the opening paragraph? How does the use of dashes in the first sentence of paragraph 5 enhance Boorstin's authority? With respect to other concerns, comment on the rhythmic quality of Boorstin's prose in the first sentence of paragraph 9.

DUE TODAY IS THE FIRST TYPED DRAFT OF THE NEW ESSAY THAT YOU WILL COMPREHENSIVELY EDIT (categories 1-56, five-at-a-time) BEFORE PASSING IT IN NEXT THURSDAY.

- Pick up a ditto and thoroughly edit it for Tuesday's class.

Week X:

Tues., Oct. 30: Discussion of the ditto. As usual, point out its strong and weak points. Offer specific revisions for the latter. Also read Daniel T. Rodgers' "The Working Day," WSS, pp. 189-94. I shall speak extensively about Rodgers' use of consolidated footnotes.

- Pick up an ditto and edit it for Thursday's class.

Thurs. Nov. 1: DUE TODAY ARE YOUR NEW ESSAYS. We shall also discuss the ditto that you edited. I shall then distribute an "application" essay for your consideration. The notion of "audience" will figure importantly in our discussion.

- Pick up a ditto and edit it thoroughly for Tuesday's class.

Week XI:

Tues., Nov. 6: Discussion of the ditto. Again, be prepared to offer specific points of praise and revision. I shall again distribute an "application" essay and we shall talk about a writer's sense of "audience" for such essays.

Each of you should come to Thursday's class with twenty-five copies of a particularly challenging revision that you are trying to effect for your essay #6.

Thurs., Nov. 8: Co-editing of revisions mentioned above

Week XII:

Tues., Nov. 13: Co-editing of the revisions mentioned above.

- Pick up a ditto and edit it for Thursday's class.

Thurs., Nov. 15: DUE TODAY ARE YOUR REVISED ESSAYS.

Discussion of the ditto. We shall also edit another "application" essay.

Week XIII:

Tues., Nov. 20: Bring to class twenty-five copies of a published passage that you deem a prose paradigm. I would especially be interested in excellent samples of prose from different fields of study. We shall discuss these passages and perhaps offer at least some editorial suggestions.

[Wed., Nov. 21]: DUE IN MY MAILBOX (PAR 230) IS A XEROX COPY OF THE PRELIMINARY ESSAY THAT YOU WILL COMPREHENSIVELY EDIT PRIOR TO ITS FINAL SUBMISSION ON NOV. 29.

Thurs., Nov. 22: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week XIV:

Tues., Nov. 27: Class survey

Thurs., Nov. 29: YOUR FINAL ESSAYS ARE DUE TODAY. We shall continue to discuss the prose paradigms from Nov. 20.

Week XV:

Tues: Individual conferences to discuss your progress and semester grades

Thurs.: I hope to have a distinguished guest-speaker who will discuss the differences between academic and journalistic prose.