

COURSE GUIDE FOR FRESHMAN ENGLISH 003

The Department of English Writing Program

Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season. It is today that our best work can be done and not some future year. It is today that we fit ourselves for the greater usefulness of tomorrow. Today is the seed time, now are the hours of work, and tomorrow comes the harvest and the playtime.

W.E.B. DuBois

Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.

Zora Neale Hurston

OVERVIEW

The argument—the art of persuasive discourse—and research—the act of finding evidence for what must be proved—are highlights of African American intellectual practice. As Haki Madhubuti has put it, “Writers are questioners of the world and doers within the world. They question everything”—as students should—“and are not satisfied with quick surface answers.” Citing Richard Wright and W.E.B. DuBois, among other celebrated African American writers, Madhubuti continues, “The writer is also the lively but lonely investigator, the seeker of the unknown, the wanderer along back alleys, through power corridors, and into the far reaches of her and his own minds and that of his or her people.” The equation of reading and writing with self and group liberation is, after all, the fundamental theme of the early emancipatory autobiographies of self-liberated African American men and women. Howard students are, therefore, heirs of a literate tradition that has employed language rather than guns as the weaponry of self-realization, human rights, and the freedom to live productively and compassionately. It is a tradition that equates reading and writing with the expression of self-identity, self-possession, self-empowerment, and self-esteem. It is also a tradition that considers the self uncultivated unless, in the words of W.E.B. DuBois, it acquires *broad sympathy* (an understanding of others through the understanding of the self), *a knowledge of the world that was and is* (historical consciousness), and the self's relation to the world (self-esteem).

It is the mission of writing courses in the Department of English at Howard University to carry forward and transmit to students this liberating tradition of reading and writing skills. It is the purpose of these courses to make available to students the means of emulating these skills in their own and the world's best interest.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

One of Howard University's missions is to equip students with the skills essential for leadership and service. Preparing students to promote and defend issues of concern, English 003 emphasizes argumentation and, as a tool in argumentation, the research process. **Argumentation** is a discourse that seeks to change attitudes or to bring about

action. This course will enable students to argue effectively by stressing critical reading, logical thinking, research techniques, and an awareness of contemporary issues.

Some 003 courses are **theme-based**. Themes are related to a genre (e.g., editorials), period (e.g., the 1920s), event (e.g., the Civil Rights Movement), person (e.g., Frederick Douglass), discipline (e.g., genetic engineering), rhetoric (e.g., the rhetoric of Black female abolitionists), language (e.g., African American English), or an enduring question (e.g., “What is the Greatest Good?”). Some 003 courses focus on **general concepts of argument**. Essays may include the classical argument, the proposal argument, the definition argument, the causal argument, the Toulmin argument, and the evaluation argument among others. Some 003 courses may be part of the university’s **interdisciplinary research initiative**. Such courses may require participation in various learning community activities in addition to substantial research and writing.

PRE-REQUISITES

- Students must have passed English 002 with the grade of <C> or better.
- Transfer students must have transfer credit for a course that is the equivalent of English 002.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will write at least four essays (a minimum of 500-750 words) that incorporate research. At least one, possibly two, of these essays will be written in class over the course of several class periods. At least one of the essays written out of class will be a formal research project significantly longer than 500-750 words and using a minimum of six academic sources. At least one of the essays written out of class will be a substantive revision of another paper written in this class during the semester. Such revisions should significantly augment and improve the content and organization of the original drafts as well as reflect a reduction in the kinds of mechanical errors made in the originals. Such revisions require students to re-think as well as rewrite.

Instructors may require a final essay and/or a final exam. Details will be provided by individual instructors.

Students should keep all essays, class work, and homework in a folder. Instructors may require a formal **Grade Graphic Folder**. The date should be recorded on each essay in the folder, and revisions should be labeled as such. Instructors may ask students to use the folder for self-evaluation, remediation, and other instructional purposes. All papers will be evaluated using the attached rubric.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

After instruction and learning activities, students will be able to do the following:

- Read critically and respond logically to issues raised in fiction and/or nonfiction (including the media);
- Write effective argumentative essays that contain valid evidence, avoid logical fallacies, and refute and/or accommodate opposing views;

- Collect, synthesize, and access research data systematically; interpret findings; use research data to reinforce an effective argument; understand the form and function of the conventions that govern the research paper;
- Learn what plagiarism is and how to avoid it;
- Read newspapers and news magazines regularly as a means of developing a life-long interest in national and global issues;
- Become empowered, self-directed, life-long learners.

REQUIRED BOOKS AND MATERIALS

- Maimon, Elaine P, ed. *Writing Matters: A Howard University Student Handbook*. 2nd edition. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2009.
- A reliable dictionary and thesaurus. Students may use online or print versions.
- Instructors will provide a list of other texts and/or materials required for individual sections (for example, a self-assessment portfolio or additional texts required for a thematic seminar).

PLAN AND INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This course may take the form of a symposium in which classes explore research issues related to one topic, *or* it may take the form of a forum or panel that examines several topics. Through reading and writing, students will discover and question the assumptions, sources of evidence, and critical questions behind these topics at the same time they become acquainted with the broad conventions that govern argumentation in an academic context.

Instructional methods may include the following: student led discussions, response journals, writing workshops (grammar, usage, and essay development), class handouts, handbook exercises, reading and interpretation of primary and secondary texts, revision (**revision is a critical part of the writing process. Instructors will determine how revision impacts the original grade**). Students enrolled in interdisciplinary courses are required to participate in interdisciplinary learning community activities.

ARGUMENTATION AND RESEARCH FOCUS

The course will introduce students to the following strategies of argumentation and research:

Argumentative Essays

- Understanding the principles of logic (i.e. inductive and deductive reasoning; fallacies in reasoning);
- Identifying issues within the topic(s) being studied;
- Understanding the characteristics and purposes of argumentation through reading and discussing model essays and other readings;
- Applying the principles of logic in writing argumentative essays, which should contain the following components (but not necessarily in the order listed): identification of the issues; statement of the

proposition (thesis); supporting evidence; recognition and refutation/accommodation of opposing points; conclusion;

- Understanding different approaches of argument (i.e. classical, proposal, causal, evaluation, definition, etc.).

The Research Process

- Selecting a topic and narrowing it;
- Maintaining a working preliminary bibliography;
- Locating materials in the library and/or collecting lab or field data;
- Evaluating sources and data;
- Taking notes (paraphrasing, summarizing, and quoting) either on note cards or in a digital form;
- Integrating source material into an argument;
- Citing sources--see attached statement on plagiarism;
- Composing a sentence outline;
- Preparing a rough draft;
- Preparing a final draft

STUDENT RESOURCES AND CLASSROOM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the representation of another person's words and ideas as one's own. This misrepresentation is a breach of ethics that seriously compromises a person's reputation. Professional careers have been ruined by revelations of plagiarism. Researchers, therefore, must scrupulously acknowledge sources to give proper credit for borrowed materials. The following rules should be observed to make sure that the distinction between the writer's own words and ideas and those of others is justly maintained. Of course, submitting a paper that is completely the work of another person is plagiarism in its most extreme form.

1. Words, phrases, and sentences of another person should be enclosed in quotation marks and cited in proper form.
2. Paraphrases and summaries of the ideas of others should be properly cited. These paraphrases and summaries should not represent merely the rearrangement of sentence elements but should be rewritten in your style.
3. Quotations, paraphrases, and summaries should be introduced with the name of the writer being cited.
4. Every item cited in a paper (i.e., all sources of others' words and ideas) should appear in the bibliography in proper form.
5. Citations should contain all the information required by standard conventions and specifically indicate the location of the material cited. Page numbers should be checked for accuracy before a paper is submitted; the reader must be able to find the source of the material quoted, paraphrased, or summarized. Forms of citations and bibliographies should conform to those specified in *Writing Matters*.

Instructors may use the Safe Assign tool in Blackboard to deter and detect plagiarism. Within Blackboard, Safe Assignments will automatically check students' papers for plagiarism as students submit them online or when instructors submit selected papers to the database. All submitted papers are checked against (a) public web pages, (2) ProQuest's scholarly databases, (3) a database of all papers submitted by students at Howard, and (4) a database of papers volunteered by students at Blackboard, Inc.'s client institutions.

Students should read the Academic Code of Conduct at this link: <http://www.howard.edu/policy/academic/student-conduct.htm>. Students who plagiarize all or part of an assignment can expect severe penalties, ranging from failure in that assignment to being recommended for a hearing before a judiciary body of the University. In most cases, a letter will be placed in the student's permanent file.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center's is located in Locke 100, and its services are free and available to all Freshman English students. Some areas of assistance offered at the Center are as follows:

1. help with identifying errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics;
2. help with focus (topic sentences, thesis statements), organization and clarity;
3. help navigating the research process (documentation procedures and formats);
4. explain strategies for improving the writing process;
5. explain innovative proofreading techniques to help students find and correct mistakes;
6. help understanding instructors' assignments and MUCH MORE!

English 003 students whose essays indicate weaknesses in writing skills may be **required** to attend regularly scheduled, documented tutorial sessions in the Writing Center. Instructors will determine the number of sessions and may decide whether to lower grades for non-participation. Instructors will also provide additional information concerning the Center's hours of operation and location.

Attendance and Participation

Students are required to attend class promptly and regularly, to read all texts thoughtfully, and to participate actively in class discussions without exception. In the event of absences, students are responsible for the entire work assigned or covered during the class period(s) of absence. Excused absences must be officially documented. Students will be allowed to make up missed assignments and exams only when they have submitted adequate (to be determined by the instructor) documentation. Any student who does not take a scheduled mid-term or final examination must obtain the approval of his or her instructor in order to take a substitute examination. A student who does not secure such approval will receive a grade of zero for the examination missed. Students who miss more than 3 classes (on MWF) or 2 classes (on T/TH) may find earning a passing grade in this course difficult.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the semester, all students should participate in the online and/or paper course evaluations process conducted by the College of Arts & Sciences and used by the Department to strengthen our ability to achieve learning outcomes effectively.

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades (<I> plus tentative grade if work is not completed; i.e. <IF>) are given only when such a circumstance exists that justifies such a grade and when a student can produce documentation that shows why s/he cannot complete course requirements. An overwhelming majority of the work must have already been completed, and the student must have attended class regularly to receive an incomplete grade.

Cell Phone Use in the Classroom

Under no circumstances should a student text or talk on his/her cell phone during regular class time. All cell phones should be silenced or turned off during regular class time. Should a student receive what seems to be an emergency phone call, he/she should exit the classroom quietly and respectfully, keeping in mind that he/she is disrupting the class and should only exit for this purpose under extreme circumstances. Students are expected to remove all Bluetooth devices upon entering the classroom.

Mp3 Player Use in the Classroom

Students should not come to class nor sit through class with headphones in his/her ears. In the event that a student does wear headphones in the classroom, the instructor may ask the student to leave the classroom regardless of whether the connected Mp3 player was on or not.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Howard University is committed to providing an educational environment that is accessible to all students. In accordance with this policy, students in need of accommodations due to a disability should contact the Office of the Dean for Special Student Services for verification and determination of reasonable accommodations as soon as possible after admission to the University, or at the beginning of each semester. The Dean of the Office of Special Student Services, Dr. Elaine Borne Heath, can be reached at (202) 238-2420.

FAQs ABOUT TILT: THE INFORMATION LITERACY TUTORIAL

Who should take TILT? All Freshmen students enrolled in English 002/003.

What is TILT? TILT is an interactive educational web site designed to introduce first-year students to *research, information sources* and *information skills*. It will help students understand what information resources are available and how to locate them.

The program is divided into *three modules* which can be completed in any order. Students must complete all three modules, following these steps:

1. Take the *quiz* at the end of each module.
2. An email to the instructor will be generated when students have all 3 quiz scores.
3. Students may print scores as they complete the quiz for each module.
4. Each module will take approximately 30-minutes to complete.

The department would like students to score 80% or better in each module. If a student has difficulty achieving this goal, he/she should visit the reference desk in Founder's Library to see a librarian.

Why take TILT? The Howard University Libraries provide access to a variety of resources in *print*, on *microfilm*, on *video*, and on the *Web*. In order to take full advantage of all these resources, it is imperative to become familiar with and understand online information access. TILT, *The Information Literacy Tutorial*, will prepare students to explore and research the online world, thereby increasing their information literacy skills. With this new-found tool, students can more effectively *select, search, locate, evaluate* and *cite* relevant sources for assignments. The concepts acquired through TILT are fundamental and will be invaluable to success as a student.

When should students take TILT? Students should finish the assignment by the time required by the instructor.

Where should students take TILT? On any computer, on or off campus. TILT is listed on a column to the extreme right of the library's home page, www.howard.edu/library.

How do students access TILT? Click on TILT and follow the logical steps. Freshmen should log in as a *First time student registrant*. Click on *First time student* and complete the form. English 002/003 students and others who need credit for TILT must register here also. After the first visit, i.e. after logging on and completing one module, students must enter as *Returning Students*.

Note: *Be sure to have your professor's email address before taking the online quizzes.*