

Course texts

Chomsky, N. 2006. *Failed states*. New York: Metropolitan.
 Mosley, W. 2004. *White butterfly*. New York: Norton.
 Shakespeare, W. and P. Holland. 2000. *Richard III*. New York: Pelican.

Welcome to English 101, a requirement for virtually all college students. This course develops students' ability to grasp content of college level materials and write well-developed, logical expository essays. Find below details on the assignments, readings, and other course information. Dates and schedule subject to slight revision due to class needs or unforeseen events. Essay assignments below show basic requirements. Much more detail and practice will be provided in class. All essays should be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Verdana font, 1" margins, with in-text citations and references arranged in APA-style format.

Attendance is required, and as per college policy, students may be dropped after missing a week of class: this means that students may be dropped after accruing more than two unexcused absences on our schedule. Arriving late and leaving early adds up to unexcused absence as well as skipping class completely. An attendance record will be posted each day, and students should sign in upon entering class. Online courses might appeal to students looking for a more independent schedule.

Warning: late essays are not accepted for credit. Late essays will not be scored but will be marked zero. Don't be late: a zero on any of the essays would severely decrease course grades. Students are encouraged to submit drafts early, both for revision tips and to avoid being late due to emergencies. Students may find and use the online course bulletin board (www.snorko.org/lacc), for additional information on our course and past courses plus examples of previous students' work, and students may also post drafts there as backup or for printing on campus.

Essay #1: Analysis and refutation (8 pages total, due in four 2-page parts—part 1.1 due 1/4, part 1.2 due 1/8, parts 1.3 and 1.4 both due 1/11, and an optional bonus 1.b due 1/16) Write three 2-page analyses of assigned text theses, newspaper editorials, opinion columns, or persuasive essays. The three separate parts of essay #1 are due on different days but averaged into one score. Students should choose one of two approaches: either refute ideas from *Failed states* using the assigned essays and other supporting points, or use *Failed states'* first chapters to argue against the contrasting essays, columns, or ideas. Use the chart below to help organize your work.

Due date	Op/ed column, persuasive essay, or thesis/argument	Contrast to <i>Failed states'</i> hypotheses, implications
E1.1 1/4	<p>"It may sound melodramatic, but the future of U.S. power rests on our ability to remake a government still structured for Industrial Age warfare to do battle with decentralized adversaries in the Information Age. After all, aren't we the mightiest, richest nation in history? How could our hegemony possibly be endangered? That's what previous superpowers thought too. But their dominance lasted only until they missed a revolutionary turn in military technology and tactics."</p> <p>Boot, M. 2006, Oct. 29. Are we the Mongols of the Information Age? Los Angeles Times.</p>	<p>"The [US government] 'system' is coming to have some of the features of failed states, to adopt a currently fashionable notion...applied to states regarded as potential threats to our security (like Iraq) or as needing our intervention to rescue the population from severe internal threats (like Haiti)...[1] inability or unwillingness to protect their citizens from violence and perhaps even destruction...[2] tendency to regard themselves as beyond the reach of domestic or international law...[3] 'democratic deficit' that deprives their formal democratic institutions of real substance."</p> <p>(Chomsky, <i>Failed states</i>, p 1–2)</p>

E1.2 1/8	<p>"the campaign [in Iraq] was not aimed at crushing whatever threat Hussein's regime posed to us. 'Shock and awe' bombing never materialized. Our brave and capable forces were hamstrung: ordered not to bomb key targets such as power plants and to avoid firing into mosques (where insurgents hide) lest we offend Muslim sensibilities. Instead, we sent our troops to lift Iraq out of poverty, open new schools, fix up hospitals, feed the hungry, unclog sewers--a Peace Corps, not an army corps, mission...U.S. troops were sent, not to crush an enemy threatening America, but (as Bush explained) to 'sacrifice for the liberty of strangers,' putting the lives of Iraqis above their own. They were prevented from using all necessary force to win or even to protect themselves. No wonder the insurgency has flourished, emboldened by Washington's self-crippling policies."</p> <p>Jorno, E. 2006, Dec. 8. What Bush did wrong in Iraq. Capitalism Magazine.</p>	<p>"The willingness of top planners to risk an increase in terrorism, possibly with awesome consequences, does not of course indicate that they welcome such outcomes. Preventing terrorist attacks is simply not a high priority in comparison with serious geopolitical and strategic objectives—specifically, controlling the world's major energy resources, recognized to be 'a stupendous source of strategic power' and 'one of the greatest material prizes in world history'" (Chomsky, <i>Failed states</i>, p 36)</p>
E1.3 1/11	<p>"Whereas Americans should not have to look for guidance on how to live their lives from the often contradictory decisions of any of hundreds of other foreign organizations; and Whereas inappropriate judicial reliance on foreign judgments, laws, or pronouncements threatens the sovereignty of the United States, the separation of powers, and the President's and the Senate's treaty-making authority: Now, therefore, be it <i>Resolved</i>, That it is the sense of the Senate that judicial interpretations regarding the meaning of the Constitution of the United States should not be based in whole or in part on judgments, laws, or pronouncements of foreign institutions unless such foreign judgments, laws, or pronouncements inform an understanding of the original meaning of the Constitution of the United States." "</p> <p>Cornyn, J. 2005, Mar. 20. S Res 92. US Senate.</p> <p>"It's the greatness of the United States of America which -- (applause) -- which stands in stark contrast to what these ideologues believe....Their vision of the world is dark and dim. They have got desires to spread a totalitarian empire.... they have no heart, no conscience. They kill innocent men, women and children to achieve their objective. These folks cannot be appeased. We can't hope that nice words will change their point of view."</p> <p>Bush, G.W. 2006, Jan.23. President discusses Global War on Terror. White House.</p>	<p>"One of the [Bush] administration's legal specialists, [UN ambassador John] Bolton writes that 'in the rest of the world, international law and its 'binding' obligations are taken for granted.' But no such binding obligation can apply to the United States. This follows from the fact that the 'accumulating force' of international law interferes with Washington's freedom to act as it chooses and 'more dramatically impede us in the future.' Treaties are not 'legal' obligations for the United States, but at most 'political' commitments...The reasoning throughout is straightforward, and is in full accord with what Bush calls 'new thinking in the law of war,' which takes international law and treaties to be 'private contractual rules' that the more powerful party 'is free to apply or disregard as it sees fit'; sternly enforced to ensure a safer world for investors but quaint and obsolete when they constrain Washington's resort to aggression and other crimes."</p> <p>(Chomsky, Failed states, p 68)</p>
E1.4 1/11	<p>"My wife would like to see us kick the United Nations out of the United States. I, for one, think it's a swell idea."</p> <p>Prelutsky, B. 2006, Feb 18. It's time to evict the UN. Townhall.com.</p> <p>"it would be one thing if the U.N. actually, you know, worked. But the problem is that the history</p>	<p>"The hideous crimes of the twentieth century led to dedicated efforts to save humans from the curse of war. The word <i>save</i> is no exaggeration. It has been clear since 1945 that the likelihood of 'ultimate doom' is much higher than any rational person should be</p>

E1.4 1/11 con't	<p>of the U.N. is a history of unrelenting failure.” Goldberg, J. 2006, Jul. 21. The great UN delusion. Townhall.com.</p> <p>“there is no United Nations. There is an international community that occasionally can be led by the only real power left in the world, and that's the United States, when it suits our interest and when we can get others to go along. And I think it would be a real mistake to count on the United Nations as if it's some disembodied entity out there that can function on its own.” Bolton, J. 1994. quoted in Goodman, A. 2006, Jul. 27. Democracy Now.</p>	<p>willing to tolerate. These efforts to end war led to a broad consensus on the principles that should guide state action, formulated in the United Nations Charter...[which] opens by expressing the determination of the signatories 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought 'untold sorrow to mankind.' The 'scourge of war' had threatened not just 'untold sorrow' but total destruction.” (Chomsky, Failed states, p 79)</p>
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For each of the four parts of essay #1, study both the week's reading from *Failed states* and the contrasting essays. Determine what each author believes (topic + opinion = thesis) and why (reasons, examples, and evidence = argument). Organize your 2-page analyses into three long paragraphs in the following fashion:

The first sentences of the first paragraph should list the author, title, date and thesis of the work and identify that it is to be refuted. Here are a couple models: **On page 11 of his 2006 book *Failed states*, Chomsky wrongly blames the US government of inciting attacks by planning or building space-based weapons that could "crush someone anywhere in the world"—or—Cornyn's 2005 bill S Res 92 wrongly argues that cooperating with the rest of the world "threatens the sovereignty of the United States."** Next, briefly list the reasons given in the original as support. The last sentences of the first paragraph should state a contrasting opinion on the topic to be argued as the alternate thesis.

The second paragraph should explain in detail the original argument of the refuted position and argue against the original, point by point. Explain why the original has misunderstood the situation, gone too far in its approach, forgotten important information, presented an impractically idealistic goal, or otherwise created a flawed analysis.

Try to use ethical, associative, and predictive reasoning to critique the argument refuted:
 Ethical reasoning: judge right and wrong standards of morality as applied to topic
 Associative reasoning: compare to other situations or events as they inform topic
 Predictive reasoning: predict hypothetical future results as models for action

The third paragraph should explain reasons, examples, or other evidence to support the alternate thesis. Do not simply repeat the refutation of the second paragraph, but argue a case in support of the alternate thesis. Try to use ethical, associative, and predictive reasoning to support your alternative thesis. Use as an example at least one outside source of information on the topic found through research and give an author, title, date reference.

Grading rubric for each part to essay #1; four categories, up to one point each
 _____ The original source info, thesis, and argument of an assigned work are identified in the first paragraph and designated unsatisfactory;
 _____ An alternate thesis on the topic is presented at the end of the first paragraph;
 _____ The argument supporting the original is refuted point by point in the second paragraph;
 _____ An argument supporting the alternate thesis is developed and sufficiently explained in the third paragraph, perhaps using ethical, associative, and predictive reasoning; one referenced outside source explained as support.

Essay #2: Community analysis, contrasting colloquial fiction and academic non-fiction styles (3-page short story + 3-page academic analysis = 6 pages total, due half-done on 1/16—3 pages total, half-done draft of each part; due complete 1/22)
 Research a current event in a local LA neighborhood and analyze it using Chomsky's three features of failed states to test his hypothesis on the local level. Find several sources of

information on the topic and different opinions on what should be done. Consider Mosley's novel *White Butterfly* and his non-fiction work in essays, interviews, and other writings. Create an original, fictionalized version of the LA event in a 3-page short story. Create characters, describe the setting, and explain the plot using at least three other literary devices to convey the story's theme(s). Outline, draft, and revise a 3-page formal academic persuasive analysis of the situation with clear introduction (including thesis and outline of argument), fully explained body of argumentation (perhaps structured around ethical, associative, and predictive reasoning), and conclusion (restating thesis and summarizing argument). Prepare in-text references and reference page in APA style. More details and practice provided in class.

Essay #3: Metaphorical lessons from literature on today's world (6 pages, due 2/1)

Create and argue a thesis comparing the metaphoric lessons two different characters from Shakespeare's *Richard III* offer toward an issue or event discussed in *Failed states*. Develop a metaphor on your thesis in which the two characters are interpreted to represent correct and incorrect courses of action on the issue or event. Research a wide variety of editorials and news stories, and include analysis of at least 4 newspaper articles, editorials, or opinion columns published in the last six months and not previously used for essay #1 or #2. Cite sources in APA format as above. Use rubric presented in class to help organize and revise essay.

Journal/participation: scored weekly and averaged

Class notes, students' ideas on discussion, responses to other students' ideas, and drafts of essays should be collected to be scored weekly. Students may choose a quote from the week's readings, research online for supporting or contrasting opinions, then explain the topic and personal opinions. Choose the quotes and research that offer the most interest and promise for upcoming essays, and make the journal on the readings the first steps in researching topics to consider. Include research notes and drafts toward upcoming essays. Students should expect to write about two pages (500 words) of draft-quality notes and analysis each class week. Half of this 10% of the course grade is earned through active participation in the course. Reading the texts before class, comparing the ideas of the texts to research for essays and journal notes then sharing personal ideas in class discussion will earn these points. Only sitting in class will earn little credit. Students who do not attend class may be dropped according to college procedures.

Grade weights (all assignments scored on 4-point scale)

Essay #1: 30% (4-point rubric score x 7.5)	A = 90–100% (4-point scale 3.6–4.0)
Essay #2: 30% (4-point rubric score x 7.5)	B = 80–89% (3.2–3.59)
Essay #3: 30% (4-point rubric score x 7.5)	C = 70–79% (2.8–3.19)
Journal/participation: 10% (4-point rubric score x 2.5)	D = 60–69% (2.4–2.79)
Total: 100%	

Readings

FS 1, 2, 3, etc. refer to the chapters of Noam Chomsky's *Failed states*. LAPL has many copies. *WB* 1, 2, 3, etc. refer to the chapters of Walter Mosley's *White Butterfly*. LAPL has many copies of this novel. *RIII*, I, II, III, IV, and V refer to the acts of the play *Richard III*, by William Shakespeare. The Pelican paperback in the bookstore is good, but most libraries will have annotated Shakespeare texts that will serve as well—perhaps included in a volume of the collected works. Free online non-annotated versions are in the public domain (for example MIT's www-tech.mit.edu/shakespeare), also useful for searching with an edit→find computer function. Other reading assignments will be freely available online, particularly in newspaper editorials and opinion columns.

Calendar of readings and assignment due dates

Week 1 (Jan 2–4): <i>FS</i> Preface/1; <i>WB</i> 1–5;	E1.1 due 1/4
Week 2 (Jan 8–11): <i>FS</i> 2–3; <i>WB</i> 6–15; <i>RIII</i> I;	E1.2 due 1/8; E1.3 & E1.4 due 1/11
Week 3 (Jan 15–18): <i>FS</i> 4–5; <i>WB</i> 16–26; <i>RIII</i> II;	E2.1 due 1/16 (+optional E1.b bonus)
Week 4 (Jan 22–25): <i>FS</i> 2–3; <i>WB</i> 27–40; <i>RIII</i> III;	E2.2 due 1/22
Week 5 (Jan 29–Feb 1): <i>RIII</i> IV–V;	E3 due 2/1