

Course texts

Bacevich, A. 2009. *The limits of power: the end of American exceptionalism*. New York: Holt Paperbacks.
Shakespeare, W. and F. Dolan, ed. 2000. *Timon of Athens*. New York: Pelican Shakespeare.
Wilde, O. and P. Smith, ed. 1993. *The picture of Dorian Gray*. New York: Dover Thrift.

Welcome to English 101, a requirement for virtually all college students. This course develops students' proficiency in college level reading and writing through practice of critical thinking and well-developed expository writing. 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. In-text citations and references should be arranged in APA-style format. For essay length requirements, one page ≥ 250 words. Online students will submit all work at the course message board (www.snorko.org/lacc) and should post at least one message each week on the message board to remain active in the course.

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 score on essay 2 or 3 would severely decrease course grades. Students are encouraged to submit drafts early, both for revision tips and to avoid being late due to emergencies. Note that the message board date/time stamps messages with its own time, not the time of students' computers, and that essay 1.1 is due on 6/22. Yes, that means 6/22, 11:59PM is on time, but 6/23, 12:00 AM is late. It may seem harsh, but classroom section students have the same limit. Plan ahead, post a draft on the message board early as back up for partial credit, and avoid late penalties.

Essay 1: Analysis and refutation (6 pages total, due in three 2-page parts: e1.1 due 6/22, e1.2 due 6/26, e1.3 due 6/29, with an optional bonus 1.b due 7/3)

Write three 2-page analyses of assigned text arguments contrasted with newspaper editorials, opinion columns, and persuasive essays or speeches. The three separate parts of essay 1 are due on different days but the different scores are averaged into one grade. For each part, students should choose one of two approaches: either refute the argument from *Limits of power* using the assigned essays and other supporting points, or use ideas from *Limits of power* and other sources to argue against the contrasting essays, columns, or arguments. Use the chart below to help organize your work.

Due date	Hypotheses, arguments, or claims of <i>Limits of power</i> (find links online, www.snorko.org/lacc)	Contrast to Op/ed column, persuasive essay, or thesis/argument
e1.1 6/22	"The United States today finds itself threatened by three interlocking crises. The first of these crises is economic and cultural, the second political, and the third military...The collective capacity of our domestic political economy to satisfy those appetites has not kept pace with demand. As a result, sustaining our pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness at home requires increasingly that Americans look beyond our borders. Whether the issue at hand is oil, credit, or the availability of cheap consumer goods, we expect the world to accommodate the American way of life...History will not judge kindly a people who find nothing amiss in the prospect of endless armed conflict so long as they themselves are spared the effects...Rather than insisting that the world accommodate the United States, Americans need to reassert control over their own destiny, ending their condition of dependency and abandoning their imperial delusions. Of perhaps even greater difficulty, the combination of economic, political, and military crisis summons Americans to reexamine exactly what freedom entails." (Bacevich, p. 6, 9, 13)	"Bacevich points the finger at domestic economics. Our desire to buy bigger things, better things and ever-more things, he writes, is bringing the country to ruin. It forces us to borrow (from China) trillions of dollars we might never be able to pay back and to be involved militarily in a region (the Middle East) we'd be better off avoiding...Bacevich's proposed solution, however, seems less sweeping than his stated problem. To save itself, he writes, the U.S. should focus on twin goals: getting rid of nuclear weapons and battling global warming...Our country has a serious problem, and it's time to set the pieties of environmental activists aside. That's why our new president favors economic growth -- even if that ends up generating more CO2." From Tucker, R. 2009, Jan. 23. Iceberg economics. <i>Town Hall</i> .

<p>e1.2 6/26</p>	<p>“The preferred American approach was to rely, whenever possible, on suasion. Yet if pressed, Washington did not hesitate to use force...As is actually expressed and experienced, what is freedom today? What is its content? What costs does the exercise of freedom impose? Who pays? ...Simply put, as the American appetite for freedom has grown, so too has our penchant for empire...empire has seemingly become a prerequisite of freedom...Meanwhile, American political leaders—especially at the national level—have proven unable (or unwilling) to address the disparity between how much we want and what we can afford to pay...[history will not] view with favor an electorate that delivers political power into the hands of leaders unable to envision any alternative to perpetual war” (p. 2, 8, 9, 10, 13).</p> <p>“Preserving the environment means reducing the global consumption of fossil fuels while developing alternative energy sources. In addition to saving the planet, leadership in this arena will enhance national security...when it comes to keeping security problems within tolerable limits, self-sufficiency has a value greater than even the largest army...whereas spending trillions to forcibly democratize the Islamic world will achieve little, investing trillions in energy research might actually produce something useful...large-scale technological innovation has tended to be an American strong suit. By comparison, when it comes to large-scale efforts to engineer political, social, and cultural change abroad, the American track record has never been better than mixed. Since September 2001, it has been downright abysmal” (p. 180—181).</p>	<p>“Washington created a vast new permanent security apparatus...These bodies, and a compliant Congress, enabled a huge expansion in executive power....The vast bureaucracy quickly proved more hindrance than help; individual agencies put their interests above the nation’s; the generals just looked out for themselves and their particular services...In relatively short order we got the Bay of Pigs, Vietnam, the ’70s oil crisis, Lebanon, Star Wars, the Persian Gulf war of 1991, Somalia, Kosovo and then, after 9/11, the “Long War” on terror, which has made conflict a “permanent condition.” Then came Iraq: proof, for Bacevich, of our political, economic and military rot...many of Bacevich’s points are well taken...Unfortunately, Bacevich is not very good at offering suggestions. Given the sweep of his attacks, the alternatives he comes up with are surprisingly small-bore: America should live within its means, pursue a more modest foreign policy, act to abolish nuclear weapons and combat global warming — all sensible ideas but hardly the sort of grand transformation he says the country needs. Perhaps Bacevich doesn’t feel he has to provide detailed answers because he sees himself more as a prophet than as a policy maker.”</p> <p>From Tepperman, J. 2008, Sep. 14. We got trouble. <i>New York Times</i>.</p>
<p>e1.3 6/29</p>	<p>“...centered on consumption and individual autonomy, the exercise of freedom is contributing to the gradual erosion of our national power...the United States is ill-prepared to wage a global war of no exits and no deadlines...American power has limits and is inadequate to the ambitions to which hubris and sanctimony have given rise...U.S.troops in battle dress and body armor, whom Americans profess to admire and support, pay the price for the nation’s collective refusal to confront our domestic dysfunction.... The day of reckoning approaches. Expending the lives of more American soldiers in hopes of deferring that day is profoundly wrong” (9, 11—13).</p> <p>“The antidote...is not to try harder but to think differently...To preserve that which we value most in the American way of life, therefore, requires modifying that way of life, discriminating between things that are essential and those that are not. If Obama grasps this essential point and acts on it, he just might fulfill the expectations of those to whom he is such a symbol of hope. If, however, he indulges the pretense that our way of life is sacrosanct and our power without limits, then hope will surely give way to disillusionment” (p. 188—189).</p>	<p>“Bacevich...seeks to tear down the importance of counterinsurgency, as well as those who have advocated its development within the Army...He tars them as “Crusaders” who are wedded to counterinsurgency as the solution to all foreign policy problems, rather than simply as part of a community of innovators who have helped devise more effective ways to prosecute the wars of today. When did striving to fight America’s current wars better become the wrong thing to do? ...what of Iraq and Afghanistan today? Is America supposed to simply turn its back on those countries and act like the past seven years never happened? Is the Army supposed to go back to preparing only for the conventional wars it wants to fight rather than the irregular ones it actually is fighting? We humbly submit that the answer is no.”</p> <p>From Valkovic, M. and B. M. Burton. 2008, Oct. 1. Crusader mentality: a response to Andrew Bacevich. <i>Small Wars Journal</i>.</p>

For each of the three parts of essay 1, study both the week's reading from *Limits of power* and the contrasting readings. 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: **Andrew Becevich's 2009 *Limits of power* mistakenly claims that the US faces a crisis of overconsumption due to too much debt and too many imports—or—In his January 23, 2009 essay *Iceberg economics*, Rich Tucker wrongly overcredits consumption as the key to economic recovery.** Next, briefly list the reasons given in the original as support. The last sentences of the first paragraph should state the student's own contrasting opinion on the topic to be argued as the alternate thesis. Don't simply restate that the refuted work is wrong; state what instead is more correct on the topic.

The second paragraph should explain and refute the original argument in detail, point by point, reason by reason. 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 judges right and wrong standards of morality as applied to topic

Associative reasoning compares lessons from related situations or events to topic

Predictive reasoning predicts hypothetical future results from proposed models for action on topic

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 source of information on the topic not presented in class but personally found through research and give an author, title, date reference (also document these researched sources in the annotated bibliography for the journal assignment below).

Grading rubric for each part to essay 1; four categories, up to one point each = top score 4

_____ Author, title, date of an assigned work are identified in the first paragraph; thesis and argument are summarized and designated unsatisfactory;

_____ As an alternate thesis on the topic, student's contrasting opinion on topic is presented at the end of the first paragraph as more correct than that of the refuted work;

_____ The argument supporting the original is refuted, short quote example by example, 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: Social/political analysis, contrasting academic non-fiction and short story fiction styles (3-page academic analysis + 3-page short story = 6 pages total: half-done draft due 7/10; complete final draft due 7/17)

Research and evaluate a specific aspect of US consumer or political culture. Review a wide variety of information and opinion. Analyze at least 4 newspaper articles, editorials, opinion columns, or government speeches (these may include two sources previously used for essay 1, if desired). At least one source should be a Congressional bill. Judge the value that Becevich's argument on the crisis of profligacy or politics in the first half of *Limits of power* offers in understanding the student's determined proper course of action in the situation. 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. Consider Wilde's *The picture of Dorian Gray* and the way the novel comments on issues related to Becevich's argument and the student's selected situation of focus. Create an original, fictional character who experiences and evaluates important aspects of the situation or event in a 3-page short story. Fictionalize researched details into a plot. Use rubric presented in class to help organize and revise both halves of essay project. More details and practice provided in class.

Essay 3: Literature's lessons on today's world (6 pages: half-done draft due 7/27; final draft due 8/3)

Create and argue a thesis comparing the metaphoric lessons two different characters from Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* offer toward understanding a specific issue on military culture. Develop a metaphor on your thesis in which the two Shakespearean characters are interpreted to represent better and worse arguments for action on the issue or event. Research a wide variety of editorials and news stories. Include in body of argumentation 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. Judge the value that Becevich's argument on the crisis of the military in the second half of *Limits of power* offers in understanding the student's determined proper course of action in the situation. Prepare in-text references and reference page in APA style. Use rubric presented in class to help organize and revise essay. More details and practice provided in class.

Journal: prepared weekly, collected, and uploaded as a file by the last day of class, 8/8

The journal is comprised of all written evidence of study for the course: all ideas posted to the course website, including weekly research, ideas for upcoming essays, responses to instructor's notes on the texts and assignments, responses to other students' ideas. All rough and final drafts of essays should also be organized on an ongoing basis and included as part of the journal. To help students prepare their research and drafts of essays, journals should also include two APA format annotated bibliographic references for each week of class (cf. www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm). Students' journals should comprise at least three pages combined class notes, rough drafts, and one annotated APA-style bibliographic reference for each week of class. At the end of the semester, students should copy and paste all online posts as well as all drafts of essays into one file and upload it to the course website by the last day of the term, Sunday, August 8.

Grade weights and scales: (all assignments are scored on 4-point rubric; these scores are then weighted to their designated percentage of 100 total for the course)

Essay 1: 30% of course grade (4-point rubric score x 7.5 = student's weighted score of 30 possible)

Essay 2: 30% of course grade (4-point rubric score x 7.5 = student's weighted score of 30 possible)

Essay 3: 30% of course grade (4-point rubric score x 7.5 = student's weighted score of 30 possible)

Journal: 10% of course grade (4-point rubric score x 2.5 = student's weighted score of 10 possible)

Total: 100% (100 weighted score points possible)

A = 90—100% (4-point scale scores 3.6—4.0)

C = 70—79% (4-point scale scores 2.8—3.19)

B = 80—89% (4-point scale scores 3.2—3.59)

D = 60—69% (4-point scale scores 2.4—2.79)

Calendar of assignment due dates and reading schedule

The due dates for the course essay assignments are listed below as e1.1, e1.2, e1.3, e1.b, e2, and e3. The notes LP 1, 2, 3, etc., refer to the chapters of Andrew Becevich's *Limits of power*. LAPL has a several copies. PDG 1, 2, 3, etc., refer to the chapters of Oscar Wilde's novel *The picture of Dorian Gray*. LAPL has a several copies, and it is also available online (<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/174/174-h/174-h.htm>). TA I, II, III, etc. refer to the acts of William Shakespeare's play *Timon of Athens*. Again, LAPL has a few copies (more in volumes of the author's complete works), and the play is also available online (<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/timon/full.html>). Readings for the first week are available at the course online site (<http://www.snorko.org/lacc>).

Weeks 1—2, June 15—28

e1.1 due Monday 6/22; e1.2 due Friday 6/26

LP Introduction, Conclusion, Afterword

PDG Chapters 1—2

Weeks 5—6, July 13—26

e2 final draft due Friday 7/17

LP 2: the political crisis

TA I, II

Weeks 3—4, June 29—July 12

e1.3 due Monday 6/29; optional e1.b due Friday 7/3

e2 half-done draft due Friday 7/10

LP 1: the crisis of profligacy

PDG Chapters 3—20

Weeks 7—8, July 27—August 8

e3 half-done draft due Monday 7/27

e3 final draft due Monday 8/3

LP 3: the military crisis

TA III, IV, V