

Course texts

Johnson, C. 2006. *Nemesis*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

Shakespeare, W. and R. McDonald. 2000. *Titus Andronicus*. New York: Pelican Shakespeare.

Vonnegut, K. 2006. *Mother night*. New York: Dial Press Trade Paperback.

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. 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. For essay length requirements, one page ≥ 250 words.

Attendance is required, and as per college policy, students may be dropped after missing a week of class time, or about 3 hours of a 3-unit course. Arriving late and leaving early adds up to unexcused absence as well as does skipping class completely. An attendance record will be posted each day, and students should sign in upon entering class. Online courses are available for 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.

Essay #1: Analysis and refutation (6 pages total, due in three 2-page parts—part 1.1 due 1/7, part 1.2 due 1/9, and part 1.3 due 1/10, with an optional bonus 1.b due 1/14)

Write three 2-page analyses of assigned text arguments contrasted with newspaper editorials, opinion columns, or persuasive essays. The three separate parts of essay #1 are due on different days but averaged into one score. For each part, students should choose one of two approaches: either refute ideas from *Nemesis* using the assigned essays and other supporting points, or use *Nemesis'* ideas 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 (find links online at http://www.snorko.org/lacc)	Contrast to <i>Nemesis'</i> hypotheses, implications
E1.1 1/7	<p>Chalmers Johnson in his recent book <i>Blowback: the consequences of American empire</i>...has now taken up the banner <i>du jour</i> of a backlash to U.S. global hegemony. He portrays bin Laden as "a former protégé of the United States," with no mention that the Saudi terrorist brought his own financial resources and political agenda to the anti-Soviet struggle. To Johnson, America's imperial structure, made up of military and economic power, invites a spate of inevitable, if unspecified, paybacks.... Coming out of the hate-America woodwork for the first time since the Gulf War, these activists [such as Chalmers and Noam Chomsky] predictably protested any effort on the part of the Bush administration to support the ouster of the Taliban by the Afghan people. The mounting evidence of the Taliban's support of the horrific assault on the United States did nothing to extinguish the misplaced belief held by many in this quarter that thousands of innocent people—Americans and others—deserved their fate because of a blowback legacy.</p> <p>Henriksen, T. 2001, Oct. 15. The blowback myth: how bad history could make bad policy.</p> <p>For years, some of the shriller voices on the left have argued that 9/11 was a classic example of "blowback" from our support of the mujahedin's struggle against Afghanistan. But the fact is we didn't "create Bin Laden" -- he largely created himself.</p>	<p>My [January, 2001] book <i>Blowback</i> was not much noticed in the United States until after 9/11, when my suggestion that our covert policies abroad might be coming back to haunt us gained new meaning. Many Americans began to ask—as President Bush did—"Why do they hate us?" The answer was not that some countries hate us because of our democracy, wealth, lifestyle, or values but</p>

	<p>And to the extent that any superpower can claim credit for him, it's the Soviets. It was their withdrawal, not our support, that convinced the foreign fighters that their pinpricks felled the Soviet bear. Today, a new "blowback" thesis is in the works. The <i>Washington Post</i>, <i>Time</i> magazine and the Associated Press are just a few of the news outlets that have asserted the U.S. is arming the Sunnis in Iraq. This is simply not true, Gen. David H. Petraeus insisted in congressional testimony Monday. But it's no surprise that so many people are leaping to that conclusion because the familiar "blowback" story line is the only plausible one for millions of people who've made up their minds that the war is, was and forever shall be hubristic folly. Goldberg, J. 2007, Sep. 11. The real blowback behind Osama.</p>	<p>because of things our government did to various peoples around the world. ...The terrorist attacks of September 11 are the clearest examples of blowback in modern international relations. (p 2)</p>
<p>E1.2 1/9</p>	<p>America has picked up where the British left off. Whatever sway the U.S. holds over far-flung reaches of the globe is derived from the fact that we have been, and hopefully shall continue to be, the leader of the free world, offering help and guidance, peace and prosperity, where and when we can, as best we can, and asking little in return. If that makes us an empire, so be it. But I think "leader of the free world" is the only label we'll ever need or -- one hopes -- ever want. Goldberg, J. 2007, Nov. 27. At peace with <i>Pax Americana</i>.</p> <p>The real debate, then, is not whether to have an empire, but what kind. Should America pursue a go-it-alone strategy as it did in 1910, when the United States exerted its power largely at the point of the bayonet and ignored the views of others? Or should it be the empire of 1950, when Washington embedded American power in multilateral institutions that reflected American interests but also constrained its freedom of action? This question was the crux of the dispute with the United Nations over whether to invade Iraq and the one preoccupying the world now as the reconstruction begins. Daalder, I. 2003, May 10. American empire, not "if" but "what kind."</p>	<p>...even more than in most past empires, a well-entrenched militarism lay at the heart of our imperial adventures. It is a sad fact that the United States no longer manufactures much—with the exception of weaponry. We are without question the world's greatest producer and exporter of arms and munitions on the planet. Although we are going deeply into debt doing so, each year we spend more on our armed forces than all other nations on Earth combined. In <i>The sorrows of empire</i> [2004], I tried to analyze the nature of this militarism and to expose the harm it was doing, not only to others but to our own society and governmental system. (p 5)</p>
<p>E1.3 1/10</p>	<p>Those who condemn the United States should perform a thought experiment involving a global "Bedford Falls Vision." Imagine that the United States had never become a world power, or never existed at all. Would the ideals of democracy and free markets wield the same power in the world? Would murderous dictatorships have claimed more victims – or fewer? Would the community of nations strain under the lash of Nazism, or Communism, or some vicious combination of both? Would multi-ethnic, multi-religious democracy flourish anywhere on earth without inspiration from the ground-breaking example of the USA? Would the threat of jihadist violence and resurgent Islamic fundamentalist menace humanity more grievously, or not at all? Medved, M. 2007, Nov. 14. Propaganda, and perspective, on "American Empire."</p> <p>There were many Americans—John Adams among them—who made the case that it was better policy to pay the tribute. It was cheaper than the loss of trade, for one thing, and a battle against the pirates would be "too rugged for our people to bear." Putting the matter starkly, Adams said: "We ought not to fight them at all unless we determine to fight them forever." ...President Madison's words on this occasion could scarcely be bettered: "It is a settled policy of America, that as peace is better than war, war is better than tribute. The United States, while they wish for war with no nation, will buy peace with none." ...Perhaps above all, though, the Barbary Wars gave Americans an inkling of the fact that they were, and always would be, bound up with global affairs Hitchens, C. 2007, Apr. 26. Jefferson versus the Muslim pirates.</p>	<p>...the combination of huge standing armies, almost continuous wars, military Keynesianism, and ruinous military expenses have destroyed our republican structure in favor of an imperial presidency. We are on the cusp of losing our democracy for the sake of keeping our empire. Once a nation is started down that path, the dynamics that apply to all empires come into play—isolation, overstretch, the uniting of forces opposed to imperialism, and bankruptcy. Nemesis stalks our life as a free nation. History is instructive on this dilemma. If we choose to keep our empire, as the Roman republic did, we will certainly lose our democracy.... There is an alternative, however. We could, like the British Empire after World War II, keep our democracy by giving up our empire. (p 279)</p>

For each of the four parts of essay #1, study both the week's reading from *Nemesis* 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: **On page 40 of his 2006 book *Nemesis*, Chalmers Johnson mistakenly claims President Bush could be held responsible for failure to exercise command authority in cases of torture—or—In his April 6, 2007 column, Christopher Hitchens wrongly holds up Jefferson as a model of how and when the US' brilliant and noble Constitution should be conveniently broken.** 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 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: 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 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

_____ 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: Political analysis, contrasting colloquial fiction and academic non-fiction styles (3-page academic analysis + 3-page short story = 6 pages total, with half-done draft due 1/16; complete final draft due 1/22)

Research a current foreign policy situation or event to evaluate Johnson's model of blowback, empire, and decline.

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 (these may include two previously used for essay #1, if desired).

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 Vonnegut's novel *Mother night* and the way the main character leads double lives, secretly critical of what he pretends to be. Create an original, fictional character who similarly infiltrates 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: Metaphorical lessons from literature on today's world (6 pages total, half-done draft due on 1/28; complete final draft due 1/31)

Create and argue a thesis comparing the metaphoric lessons two different characters from Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* offer toward understanding the situation of US military bases/actions in a specific country (other than Japan, which is extensively discussed in chapter 5, which may serve as a model) or specific military project (other than chapter 6's examples on missile defense and GPS). 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, 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. Prepare in-text references and reference page in APA style. Use rubric presented in class to help organize and revise essay.

Journal: scored weekly and averaged

Class notes, students' ideas on discussion, responses to other students' ideas, and drafts of essays should be collected on an ongoing basis and presented as the journal for scoring in class on Wednesdays. To help students organize their research and drafts of essays, the journal should also include two annotated bibliographic references for each week of class, presented in APA format (see examples at <http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm>). Students' journals should comprise at least one page combined of class notes, rough drafts, and annotated bibliography for each day of class.

Final exam: 1/30 & 31

Final exam will be a presentation of essay #3 to the class. More details and practice will be provided in class.

Grade weights and scales (all assignments scored on 4-point scale then adjusted to fit 100 point total)

Essay #1: 25% (4-point rubric score x 6.25)

Essay #2: 30% (4-point rubric score x 6.25)

Essay #3: 30% (4-point rubric score x 6.25)

Journal: 10% (4-point rubric score x 3.75)

Final exam: 5% (4-point rubric score x 2.5)

Total: 100% (100 adjusted points total)

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

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

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

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

Calendar of readings and assignment due dates

Nemesis 1, 2, 3, etc. refer to the chapters of Chalmers Johnson's *Nemesis*. LAPL has many copies, including several audiobook versions. *Mother night* 1—10, 11—27, and 28—45 refer to chapters in Kurt Vonnegut's *Mother night*. LAPL has a few copies of the book and a couple copies of the film. *Titus* I, II, III, IV, and V refer to the acts of the play *Titus Andronicus*, 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 in the public domain (for example at MIT's <http://shakespeare.mit.edu>) are 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. E1, E2, etc. refer to the essays and their due dates.

Week 1 (1/2—3): *Nemesis* prologue & Ch. 1; *Mother night* 1—10;

Week 2 (1/7—10): *Nemesis* 2 & 7; *Mother night* 11—27; *Titus* I; E1.1 due 1/7; E1.2 due 1/9; E1.3 due 1/10

Week 3 (1/14—17): *Nemesis* 3 & 4; *Mother night* 28—45; *Titus* II; Optional E1.b due 1/14; E2 half-done draft due 1/16

Week 4 (1/22—24): *Nemesis* 6 & 5; *Titus* III & IV; E2 final draft due 1/22

Week 5 (1/28—31): *Titus* V; E3 half-done draft due 1/28; E3 final draft due 1/31; Final exam presentations 1/30 & 31