

College-Now "Finding Your Voice" Fall 2012

College-Now at Murry Bergtraum High School

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This FYV writing course is offered to 11th graders who are motivated to succeed and move on to college level studies during their high school years. The course provides the students with necessary academic skills that will enable them to take and complete college-credited courses offered by CollegeNow at Baruch College. In addition to the academic readiness, FYV students will also find a more distinctive voice within them as a writer and become more confident, oriented and skillful toward college application.

Through the course, students will learn-

- purpose of writing through examining “Why I Write”
- various literary techniques to voice their opinions through writing
- effective ways of writing a personal essay for their college application
- rhetoric techniques, interpretive and evaluative skills to write a researched argument paper
- skills of online data base research
- key elements, skills and steps to writing an academic research paper
- MLA style of citation
- oral debate procedures
- skills to conduct an effective oral debate

Purpose of Writing

Through reading several famous writers’ “Why I Write”, students will self –reflect and examine the reasons or motivations of their own writing, whether it’s the need to imagine, reason, argue, explain or express emotionally. There is a reason to “Why I write”- the purpose of writing.

Deriving from the purpose of writing, we examine the elements that affect our ways of expression. We will examine the shape and structure of an essay, the audience and purpose it addresses to and the elements within a powerful paragraph.

Researched Argument Paper

From voicing our own opinions to finding out the experts’ opinions on a topic, we will evaluate information through online research and decide whether the information will serve our purpose; we’ll learn how to defend our argument, persuade audiences and refute misrepresented ideas.

To write an argument paper through research, students learn to evaluate and interpret various types of information (facts and opinions) about a topic by analyzing them from a specific perspective. When students cite experience and opinions of others in their essay, they engage in a dialectic discourse with other writers, thinkers and researchers. The results of such dialogues are essays that cite information for specific purposes and seek answer to genuine inquiries on a researched topic.

Personal Essay

By reading excerpts of published memoirs, we examine moments in our own life and how they have affected our attitude, perspectives and action. We also learn to discern how ordinary moments of our life could be rich resources for personal writing. We also reflect on people who have affected us and events that have changed us forever. We write freely what choices we might need to make in our life and why. These reading and writing activities will help students generate ideas for personal essays.

Research Paper

Since writing research paper is an integral part of college studies, being able to write a research paper from scratch is an essential component of this course. Students will learn to brainstorm to narrow down the subject to a specific topic and write an effective thesis statement to defend one's thesis with convincing argument and proof through data base research. Through online research, students will learn to identify and read primary and secondary sources carefully and use the thesis as a critical lens to examine and evaluate information they find; they will learn to evaluate and synthesize the information for a specific purpose (refute, counter-argue, support, elaborate, persuade, etc.) and cite sources using conventions by the Modern Language Association (MLA). .

Conclusion

To sum it all, through this course, students will be more prepared to take college-credit courses and equipped with skills to voice their opinion whether it is to express their position on an issue, or argue against a point of view or even tell a personal story. They will become more aware of their voice, point of view, purpose, audience and therefore, learn the art of effective oral and written communication.

Course Materials

1. George Orwell and Joan Didion *Why I Write*, and Cynthia Ozick's *On Permission to Write*.
2. Malcolm Gladwell's article *Brain Candy*
3. **An Excerpt from The Kite Runner** by Khaled Hosseini
4. **Amy Tan's "Mother Tongue"**
5. Excerpts from **Teacher Man** by Frank McCourt
6. Zitkala Sa's essay from *the School Days of an Indian Girl*
7. Excerpt from *When I Was Puerto Rican* by Esmeralda Santiago
8. Eric Liu's "Becoming American –Chinese Experience" & "Notes of a Native Speaker"
9. "Written on the Wind" by Stewart Brand (<http://longnow.org/essays/written-wind/>)
10. "Runners Vs. Smokers" by John Epstein
11. Donald Murry's "The Maker's Eye"
12. **Manual for Using MLA Style**

Final Grade:

20% Independent Research Paper

15% Argument Essay

15% Personal Essay

35% Attendance

15% Oral Debate

Course Calendar Fall 2012

Class 1 09/25 – Intro: course syllabus review, Why I Write-Intro/Motivation

Class 2:

- 09/27: A. Intro to a researched argument paper
B. Questionnaire on how much time students spend watching television”
C. Describe personal experiences
D. Personal Reflection on the topic

Class 3: 10/02

- A. Introduce the argument paper on the topic of –“The Impact of Television & Internet on Intelligence and Learning”
B. Formalize their position on watching television and its impact on learning by including either pros or cons that they listed for watching television from their questionnaire.
C. Read Malcolm Gladwell’s article *Brain Candy* a review of “Everything Bad is Good for You” by Steven Johnson as a class.
D. Review the article, annotate it and highlight points which they find interesting, agree with, disagree with, are unsure about, etc.
E. Ask students to choose points that Gladwell makes in the review that aid them in strengthening their own position.

Class 4: 10/04

- A. Focus on creating an argument that is balanced through the use of counterargument
B. Research online an alternate point of view (POV) from Johnson.
C. Complete a small group webquest activity (by completing a worksheet with questions that center on the research topic)
D. Each student will present his/her points from the previous assignment.

Class 5 : 10/09 Collecting data and discussion on how to analyze data for the argument; citations (in-text citation and work cited sheet)

Class 6: 10/11 Research workshop and paragraph-based focus writing

Class 7: 10/16 How to use logos, ethos and pathos in an argument paper

How to identify the “pitch” in an article and use it to support your claim or counter argue against a claim

Class 8: 10/18 Claim workshop and structure of an argument paper

Class 9- 10: 10/23 & 10/25

Writing Workshops: Introduction, Conclusion and Evolving a Claim

Students will spend the next two classes organizing their claim and evidence into an outline and writing the first draft. (**Argument Paper due on 10/30**)

Class 11-12: 10/30 & 11/01 Personal Essay Workshop #1#2 Intro to Writing a Personal Essay (http://litstudies.org/MemoirWriting/tips_on_writing_a_personal_essay.htm)
http://www.litstudies.org/CollegeNow/personal_essay_writing_workshop3.htm

Use the excerpt from *The Kite Runner* and *When I Was Puerto Rican* as examples to introduce the concepts of **social setting**, **details** (of characters, relationships etc) and the **scope** in personal writing.

Class 13: 11/06 Personal Workshop #3 Discuss excerpts from **Teacher Man to examine tone, selections of details and diction**

Class 13: 11/08 Personal Essay Workshop # 4 Discuss Eric Liu’s personal account of “Becoming American, the Chinese Experience) to examine

A: Use Point of View as a view lens to examine personal situations, feelings and relationships.

B: Consider the POV of other people or institutions and examine reasons why the misunderstanding occurs.

http://www.pbs.org/becomingamerican/ce_witness15.html

Class 14: 11/13 Personal Essay Workshop # 4

A: Continue their inquiry into a time or a situation when a person or institution misunderstood them

B: Learn to avoid letting their personal feelings about the situation influence the other’s POV and how to maintain objectivity

C: Discuss language choices

Class 15: 11/15 Peer Editing & Evaluation; Tips on Revision

Class 16 11/20 Personal Essay Due; Personal Essay Presentation

Class 17 11/27 Comparison / Contrast Essay *Smokers vs. runner* (Read and annotate the article provided)

Elicit traits, comments, evidence associated with each topic

Claim workshop

Class 18 11/29 Research for more evidence on each topic; select data that point to your claim; analyze your data to make the point evidence to the reader

Class 19 12/04 Introduce the structure of a comparison/contrast essay

Work on the 1st draft (**Essay due on 12/11**)

Class 20 12/06 Modeled Mini Research Paper #1-

A: Preliminary Research-intro to online databases
B: Narrow down to a specific topic

Class 21: 12/11 Modeled Mini Research Paper #2

A: Research Paper - note cards with annotations
B: Generate thesis statement
C: Create an outline

Class 22: 12/13 Modeled Mini Research Paper #3

A: Generate topic sentences and find supporting evidence
B: Citations and sources

Class 23 : 12/18 Independent Research Paper #1

A: Preliminary Research
B: Narrow down to a specific topic using KWL chart

Class 24: 12/20 Independent Research Paper # 2

A: Use online databases to find information on the topic
B: Annotate the articles
C: Gather and Analyze the evidence
D: Generate a thesis statement

Class 25: 01//01 Independent Research Paper # 3

A: Create an outline
B. Start the first draft

Class 26: 01/ 03 Independent Research Paper # 4

A: Work on the 1st draft of the paper
B: MLA format
C: Citations and sources

Class 27: 01/08 Independent Research Paper # 5 Writing Workshop on Revision

Class 28: 01/10

Introduction to Portfolio and Research Paper presentation

Portfolio due on Jan. 15, 2013