Blended Course Proposal: ENGL 1020 – Dr. Amy Harris-Aber

**Section 1: Standard questions regarding online certification training, etc.**

**Section 2 of the application collects information about HOW you will meet the University's expectations for a Blended (formerly Web-Assisted) course. In addition to answering the questions below, you can also email a copy of your syllabus to the Gen Ed English office.**

**What is the rationale for converting the course to Blended (formerly Web-Assisted) delivery?**

MTSU is often described as a "commuter campus" with approximately 75% of students living off-campus, some of whom have a considerable commute. ENGL 1020 is a general education requirement and in order to remain a student-centered institution, it is essential to create Blended options that provide these members of our campus community with flexible choices. Furthermore, construction on campus has limited the number of classrooms available to English faculty who teach general education courses. By offering more Blended sections, the department can optimally utilize existing spaces.

**How many hours of instruction will be conducted in person? Note: All in-person instruction occurs during the courses' scheduled days/times. The class will meet in-person for at least 15 hours.**

Approximately 21 hours of instruction.

**What activities will take place during in-person instruction?**

In a blended course, activities will focus on what students are not able to achieve on a digital platform.

Each week, I will present a short lecture in PowerPoint that I will then upload to a folder on D2L which remains accessible to all students throughout the duration of the semester.

I also require students do in-class reading responses along with other invention activities that provide scaffolding for larger class projects. Reading responses are tasks students complete for credit, and they create additional opportunities for evaluation and mastery of the materials.

Example from Week #1 D2L Rationale:

During each Thursday meeting we have, you'll be asked to write something at the beginning of my class. Sometimes that will be a response to the reading that's due. Sometimes you'll be asked to do another exercise.

This will help us form dialogues during our class time together. I only have one day with you every week. That means it's better if I can understand any confusion you're having regarding the material as soon as possible. Your in-class writing will allow me to pinpoint where you need further assistance.

You must be present to get points for the responses.

You'll always know what it is you're being asked to write about and respond to.

You may receive permission to make up a response if you communicate clearly to me about the challenges you're having. Please note that your communication is key to your success in my class.

Our first week together will include a two-part response.

First, I'd like for you to come to class with the intention of sharing something about yourself with me and your classmates. You can use this as a show-and-tell, you can bring a picture of your pet, you can send us all the link to a favorite Spotify list - whatever your heart desires. The idea is that we want to get to know a little bit about you.

Second, please be ready to write a short response to Dufour and Ahern-Dodson.

I build my courses with the idea of respect and community in mind. We will be thinking a lot about community-based pedagogy and the arguments that we can use to make our communities better.

We can't do that if we're not able to speak among ourselves and recognize each other's humanity.

Let's get to know one another so that we can feel comfortable in our discussions and interactions.

**What activities will take place during online instruction?**

Students are expected to check our D2L page every Monday which will contain the weekly announcements and checklist. They are also expected to produce weekly practice tasks that are due by midnight each Sunday that require an application of practical skills we speak about in class.

Example of Week #1 Checklist & Practice Task Rationale:

* Become Familiar with D2L and Course Expectations
* Understand the Class Exigencies and Guidelines
* Weekly Reading
* In-Class Reading Responses
* Weekly Practice Task

Practice Task #1: This semester, you'll be expected to compose a series of practice tasks. I expect these to be turned in on time, but I also know that life happens. If you have to turn in one of these tasks late, please remember that they're only worth points through the end of whatever unit we're currently in.

For example, if you miss this task, you need to have it in before your first major project is due and we move onto the foundational work for our second project as a class. These tasks are meant to help you reflect metacognitively about the concepts and material we discuss in class.

Furthermore, I expect you to turn in these tasks and your major projects in MLA style.

Those who do not won’t receive full credit on their assignments.

Read through the documents on MLA formatting, and then practice these skills by writing a short essay that's 700-900 words on the last argument that you had.

Did you argue with a friend about what movie to watch?

Did you disagree with your partner about what to have for lunch?

Refer back to the notes you took for our first lecture and tell me whether the argument you had was forensic, deliberative, or epideictic in nature. Did you apply pathos, ethos, logos, or kairos to further convince your audience? Once you've completed writing your short essay, upload it to the dropbox entitled “Practice Task #1: Argument”

**We encourage you to think about accessibility concerns in your classes. How will you make content available when students miss in-person class meetings? For example: Recording class; assigning a student to be the notetaker; providing a transcript or detailed notes.**

I have a series of thorough PowerPoints on D2L that align with our discussion and give clear directions regarding the in-class activities a student may miss. In the event that this is not sufficient, I make myself available to students outside of class and assist them in offsetting their challenges with timelines and materials. I have been known to meet with students on Zoom if they cannot be on campus during office hours. In the event that a student needs to record my class, I am always happy to assist them in this venture.

**What technologies will be used to deliver course content during the asynchronous online portion of the course? These technologies may include but are not limited to:  
o lecture notes, video lectures, slideshow presentations, or other materials posted to D2L;  
o peer reviews or workshops conducted electronically, either via email exchanges or online discussion boards;  
o D2L quizzes and/or exams;  
o instructor-mediated discussions of assigned material via D2L discussion boards; and/or  
o online text chats, or other forms of asynchronous instruction.**

I provide lecture notes, video lectures, slideshow presentations, assignment sheets, assignment examples, and other assistive material on our D2L classroom page.

Peer review is scheduled for in-person days as are discussions and other activities.

**What grading policy will you use?**

I employ a labor-based grading practice which is outlined on my course policy statement in the following way:

Labor-Based Assignments: My Methods of Assessment

While designing this course, I thought about ways in which introductory writing classes I took as a student could have fostered a better sense of motivation, curiosity, and scholarly risk-taking. I also considered why we assess student work in the ways that we do.

So how will I determine your grade? Great question. Here’s the answer.

Your grade is determined by your work in the course – in other words, the work you complete and goals you reach.

Do the work, and you’ll get a strong grade in the course. How “good” I think your paper is does not factor into your grade at all. You’ll still get lots of coaching on how to make your writing as effective as possible. As you plan, research, and draft your writing, I’ll read it and give you feedback. You’ll get feedback from your classmates. You’ll use feedback to revise your paper. You’ll also spend a lot of time thinking about what makes your paper effective. Before you turn in your work, you can review what we’ve identified as attributes of a successful paper/essay/project. All of this effort – the coaching, the feedback, the reflections, etc. – helps you learn and become a stronger writer!

You will get a certain number of points for an assignment, but to head off any subjectivity, the elements that you receive points for will always be pretty concrete i.e. meeting the word count, citing your sources, etc. You get credit for submitting each project, draft, and in-class reading reflections, but in order to get full credit, you must meet specific, clear requirements.

As a teacher, I want to be as fair as possible. I want everybody to have the best chance to succeed in our class. Labor-based grading seems to be the answer to this.

Weirdly, focusing solely on grades and percentages for every assignment makes you less likely to actually learn. That means, if you’ve always felt nervous or lacked confidence in your writing, or if you’re worried about learning to write online, or if you’ve always gotten A’s and are nervous about keeping up a high GPA –– don’t be nervous! You’ll be able to take risks, try new ways of writing, and get better without worrying about your grade. Do your work, keep up with the class, and the grade will follow.

To be successful, you’ll need to complete all major projects, do thorough and significant revision of at least one project, complete your drafts, and engage with us (me and your colleagues) during peer workshops.

Failure to complete work will result in a failing grade in the course. But don’t freak out – this class isn’t designed so that you’ll fail. Be challenged? Sure! Fail? No. Just do the work and talk to me if you need help.

Grading Contracts

Although your grade is dependent on labor, to receive credit for a project it must be complete. Thus, if your project does not meet the requirements of the assignment (if it does not include required research, use appropriate citation, meet length requirements, or adhere to academic integrity standards, for instance), then it will not receive credit.

A = satisfactory completion of all four major projects, one documented University Writing Center tutoring session, thorough and significant revision of one project, and completion of 90% or more class work (including drafts, workshops, and in-class reading responses)

B = satisfactory completion of all four major projects, thorough and significant revision of one project, and completion of 80% or more class work (including drafts, workshops, and in-class reading responses)

C = satisfactory completion of all major projects, one revision, and completion of 60% or more class work (including drafts, workshops, and in-class reading responses)

\* To pass, students must earn a C- or higher.

\* Failure to complete all major assignments (Projects #1 - #2.3 and one revision) will result in a failing grade. However, there is no need to fail! Just do the work and talk to me if you get in a jam.

**What will be the attendance policy?**

There is no stringent attendance policy per se but rather an expectation of participation. Each weekly reading response acts as a way to remain aware of each student’s in-class attendance. While I am able to use the responses as an assessment tool allowing me to gauge where my students are regarding the material during the semester, I add up the points from each response they give and assign a “response score” which figures into their overall final grade.

**Do you have any questions or concerns for the General Education English team? Share them here, and we will respond within 48 hours. (Optional)**

N/A