**Importance Of The First Year Writing Program At The University**

The First Year Writing Program is your introduction to critical writing, thinking, and reading at the college level. Successfully completing ENG 111 and ENG 112:

- Makes you better prepared for the work of the university
- Fulfills the prerequisite to all advanced writing and many upper division courses
- Completes the university’s “English Composition” requirement
- Makes you eligible to receive a degree from the university

When you leave ENG 112, your education in writing and academic inquiry will have only just begun. The foundation that you build in the First Year Writing Program will be important to your success as a student at UM-Flint and to your sense of what you can accomplish as a writer and thinker in this world.

**Information about Class Size**

The First Year Writing Program puts a limit of 15 students per section in a three-credit ENG 109 and 24 students per section in ENG 100, 111, and 112. Maintaining small classes is essential to providing quality writing instruction and ensuring each student receives important feedback, therefore IT IS WRITING PROGRAM POLICY NOT TO OVERENROLL STUDENTS IN ANY WRITING COURSE. PLEASE BE AWARE THAT INSTRUCTORS ARE NOT AT LIBERTY TO ENROLL STUDENTS BEYOND THE COURSE CAP.

**Information about ABC>N Grading**

ENG 100, 109, 111, and 112 are all graded ABC>N. **THIS MEANS THAT THE GRADE OF C IS THE LOWEST GRADE FOR WHICH CREDIT IN ENG 100, 109, 111, AND 112 IS GRANTED. IF YOU DO NOT EARN A STRAIGHT C OR BETTER, YOUR FINAL GRADE WILL BE AN N (NO CREDIT). READ CAREFULLY THE SYLLABUS OR COURSE POLICY STATEMENT IN YOUR ELECTED SECTION AND/OR TALK WITH YOUR INSTRUCTOR TO LEARN HOW FINAL GRADES WILL BE CALCULATED.** An N signifies that you have received no credit for the course. Earning an N grade in a course does not affect your grade point average for that semester (for more information on N grades and how multiple Ns affect progress toward degree, see the College of Arts and Sciences “Grading System” section of the Catalog). **If you earn a final grade of N in ENG 100, 109, 111, and/or 112, you will have to retake the course.**

**A note on Incomplete grades:** Incomplete grades or “I” grades are rare in English 100, 109, 111, and/or 112. Incompletes are granted in extreme circumstances and only after
instructor and student have consulted and agreed to the terms of an incomplete. To be eligible to negotiate an incomplete, the student must be passing the course.

Our Pledge to Students

As instructors in the First Year Writing Program, we are interested in your success as writers. We believe it is our job is to provide an environment in which:

- You have abundant opportunity to write
- You interact with other writers
- You receive “frequent, timely, substantive feedback” on your work
- You are encouraged to practice strategies for revision and rethinking and
- You and your writing are taken seriously

[adapted from the National Council for Teachers of English standards for writing instructors: http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/why-class-size-matters]

Student Concerns

Should you ever have a question or a concern about your first year writing class:

1. **Contact your instructor.** Your instructor is your best first resource for information about the course. Contact your instructor first if you have specific questions about policies, procedures, assignments, grades, etc. Raise your concern in respectful terms.

2. **If talking with your instructor does not address your concern, contact the Writing Program Director.** You may stop by her office or email/call to make an appointment (see below for contact information). You will need to provide the Director with information about your concern and why your instructor’s response was unsatisfactory to you. The Director will then investigate and respond. If concern remains, you may then contact the Chair of the English Department (refer to the College of Arts and Sciences Student Grievance Procedures section of the current catalog).
First Year Writing Program Director Contact Information

If you have questions or concerns would like additional information about the First Year Writing Program, please contact the Director of Writing Programs:

Director: Dr. Stephanie Roach
Office/Campus Mail Address: French Hall 326, office 320K
Office Phone/Voice Mail: 810-762-3429
E-Mail Address: smroach@umflint.edu
Mailbox: English Department Office, FH 326
Mailing Address: Dr. Stephanie Roach
Director of Writing Programs
University of Michigan-Flint
English Department
French Hall 326
303 E. Kearsley St.
Flint, MI 48502-1950

Students Speak About Their Experience In English 111 and 112

“I know what you are thinking. ‘Oh great, another boring English class I have to take.’ ‘Oh great, another stupid paper I have to write about something I could not care less about.’ Let’s face it, we’ve all been there. Everyone has had to take classes that they did not want to take [and] many times in college, there will be classes we take that give assignments that we think are totally irrelevant to our lives. Having gone through that and having gone through English 111, I can honestly say that English 111 is not like that at all. Writing is a very important and vital part of not only a college education, but in everyday life. Every time you write something, it is a reflection of you. English 111 definitely offers a student the skills to portray himself in a well-educated and professional manner. English 111 is only one of two required English classes [that] will benefit you greatly in all classes you take on the pathway of your college education. Many of the classes taken over the next few years in school will require finely crafted papers. In English 111, you will learn many great skills which you will be grateful for when you reach for them in your bag of tricks in the future.”—Greg Peter

“Face it, for the next four or so years you can pretty much guarantee that you will have quite a few papers or essays that will need to be done. This is your practice time to develop your writing skills.”—Sam Love

“With each essay that I wrote I had a better understanding of what I needed to work on. […] After reading the comments that were left on my paper, I had a better understanding of things that I had not caught onto in previous high school English classes. The more essays that I wrote the better my understanding became of how to interpret and explain my own point of view into an essay. I also learned how to avoid plagiarizing other
important Information for Students

essays, as well as how to cite a source of information that I incorporated into my own essay. All of these things were learned by reading others’ essays and writing essays on my own.”—Melinda Amidon

Students appreciated courses in the First Year Writing Program because:

“It teaches you how to think critically and analytically.”—Melissa Fisher

“Being able to write a good essay is very important for future classes and in the work force.”—Melinda Amidon

“[It] has helped me out with all of my writing fears and my overall thought process.”
Zach Frey

“It is a chance to express things that you feel are important and other people should know.”—Amanda McDonough

“English 111 is a class about writing and finding yourself as a writer. I felt that the class was very useful, and it will really come in handy in the near future.”—Ralkeita Lusane

“Reading, thinking, sharing, and writing are the key skills that you will be developing.”
— Sam Love

“I liked going to this class because I did see a difference in my writing techniques. I feel it has been easier to write an essay after going through this class. It gives a lot of helpful ideas on how to become a better writer.”—Jennifer Smith

“You will be challenged to reflect on the essays you read. You will be challenged to reflect on your own essays.”—Tim Ross

“I have enjoyed going through English 111 because it helped me develop skills that I never had before; it gave me a reason to stop saying that I am a bad writer and start saying that I am a good writer.”—Jon Doyle

Advice from Students on Surviving English 111 and 112

On Attending Class and Being Prepared:

“You have to go to all scheduled classes and get to them on time. If you miss important directions and writing exercises, it may impair your essay and not let you write at your full potential.”—Matt Jackson

“Make sure you always have a writing utensil and paper because these will be used in almost every class period”—Bobbie Hodge [And if you think that’s a pain, consider what one student said: “This pain that I hated to do every day was actually helping me. I felt really stupid that I was being negative about something that just helped me.”—Zach Frey]

“[A]ttend class as often as possible . . . the writing program has a fairly strict attendance policy and it could affect your grade if you miss too many days. Also, the more you are
in class, the more you get out of it. That is true of any class and this is a good place to start developing good attendance habits”—Sam Love

“If you don’t take time to review, study, write and read then you will have a whole lot of trouble surviving any class in college. English 111 is one of those classes.” — Melinda Amidon

“When I first entered English 111 I was scared that my writing was not up to standard and I would be a step behind everyone in my class. But [now] I know I had the skills and just needed to use them more. . . . A topic may sound hard, but it might just be the way its worded, so take your time and read the topic and ask yourself what they are asking—in a way, it’s like a word problem.”—Ebony Landers.

“Out of all the tips I can offer you on English 111, trying to get something out of the class means the most. If you try to get something out of every class, you will pay attention, be prepared, and participate.” —Kasey Layman

“My advice to students coming into English 111 is to do your homework and go to class! If you’re not prepared to discuss what is going on in class, or your paper is not ready to be reviewed by others, you’re not getting out of the class what you could.” —Danielle Mikolaizik

“Above all others, timeliness is of utmost importance. For example, when a student walks into class 25 minutes late it not only breaks the concentration of the professor and the students, but that student has already missed much of the lecture and has shown incredible irresponsibly.” —Sammi Justice

On Meeting Assignment Deadlines:

“I have learned from this experience that you always have to stay on top of deadlines and start research and writing in plenty of time to have the essay well proofread and ready to hand in. My best piece of advice would be to start thinking about what your paper is going to be about and plan to have enough time for research, writing, and proofreading the first day the assignment is given. Also, make sure that you read over the directions of the essay and follow all the requirements very closely.”—Matt Jackson

“If you have a chance to work on a paper, do it; even if it is only 15 minutes.” —Steve McGrath

“I know that everyone says to start your paper early. But everyone says it because it’s true!” —Name withheld upon student request
“A useful guideline to remember is to expect to spend two to three hours outside of class for every one hour in class to study and prepare for the next class session. Working students also must remember that every hour worked is an hour lost for study time. So, make sure that there is a good balance of class load and work. It is better to have a good GPA with four classes than to try to do six classes and wind up on probation.”
—Sammi Justice

On Revision and Reflecting on Your Own Writing:

“I found it was easier to write about something one day and wait a couple of days to come back to revise it. I would read things over that seemed good at the time I wrote them and realize I didn’t like it.” —Jennifer Smith

“After you write an essay and before you turn it in, you may be asked to reflect on what you have just written; what is it that has made your essay good, what you are most proud of and what you can do to make your essay even better. This time of reflecting is a perfect opportunity to prepare for your next writing. As you consider what you may have done better, you can incorporate those fresh ideas into your next essay.” —Tim Ross

“If you ever have any trouble with revising your paper you can take it in to the writing center and they will look it over for you. They are there to help, and it is free of charge.” —Name withheld upon student request

“One common mistake students make is taking too little time with the final revision.” —Name withheld upon student request

“The best piece of advice I can give to an incoming student is to make sure you understand what the teacher is asking for.” —Adam Tallman

“When handing in a final draft of a paper, keep in mind that the paper is a direct reflection of you. Neatness is just as important as correct grammar, punctuation and, especially, content. I have too often heard from other students that they had eight pages of “filler” in their ten page paper. This fools no one—especially the professor who requested an eight to ten page paper. When putting a paper together for a class, always remember that the paper might be the only way in which the professor can judge if you know the material or not and that this might be your only chance to prove what you know.” —Sammi Justice

On Peer Review:

“During the first peer review I was worried about what others would think of my work but I tried to concentrate on their papers and how they went about exploring the topic. I found that the peer review was extremely helpful. By talking to my peers about my work I got to see what others thought and listen to their ideas for what I could do to make it better as a whole. Also, by reading my peers’ work I got to contribute my ideas to their papers, which then helped me realize that there is not a wrong way to go about writing as long as you clearly argue your point. As I wrote my final draft I took into consideration
the suggestions of my peers and kept in mind the discussion we had in class about what makes a good essay. I followed all assigned guidelines and took my time until finally I had a product I was proud of.”—Melissa Fisher

“When Peer Review day comes up, don’t think that your paper is ‘good enough’ to get by. Use the resources that are available to you!”—Steve McGrath

“Forget your high school peer reviews in which everyone said the same lukewarm things. You have the chance to achieve a better peer review in this class. Constructive criticism is not about being afraid to criticize; it’s about being useful when you do. The best peer reviewers are the ones who cut up your essay with marks and argue points with you. Don’t be afraid to question a writer’s work, whether it be your own or a peer’s. Especially your own! In fact, peer review is all about teaching you to improve your own work through revision.”—Name withheld upon student request

“Being a good peer reviewer not only helps your peers, but it also helps you. The better you get at critiquing other people’s writing, the better you will get at critiquing your own writing.”—Julie Eggert

“Peer review provided someone to read over my paper, tell me honestly what they thought, and then give me suggestions on how to make the paper better. I got more out of peer review every time we had it, and my papers were getting stronger every time I turned them in.”—Luke McMunigal

**On Research:**

“Don’t be scared away by things like the MLA format and the research that is needed for some papers. After practice, the MLA comes naturally and you get comfortable with research and knowing what to use and what is reliable information.”—Matt Jackson

“Be well aware that the library has many useful things to help you, so take advantage.”—Name withheld upon student request

**On Reading:**

“In order to be a writer you must be a reader. Reading the works of other writers will make you a stronger and more confident writer.”—Greg Peter

**On Plagiarism:**

“Plagiarism is a very serious thing and easy to do if you don’t pay close attention to your words.”—Matt Jackson.

“If you don’t cite your sources, it is considered plagiarism, whether it was intended or not.”—Danielle Mikolaizik
Important Information for Students

On Attitude:

“Your attitude is the key to your success. Although that may be an obvious answer, not many people actually adhere to this piece of advice. If you have a positive attitude towards the class, it will seem like one of the easiest courses you’ve taken. However, if you come in with a negative outlook, it will seem impossible. For example, when many students are assigned to write a paper, they dread it and usually put it off as long as possible, rebelling against the inevitable. That kind of attitude will make this class incredibly difficult and cause unnecessary anxiety. Now I’m not saying that when you are assigned a paper you should be bursting with excitement, hardly being able to refrain yourself from jumping onto your desk and shouting ‘Woo-hoo!’ Frankly, that would just be weird. But, a positive attitude will make the semester easier and prevent procrastination-induced panic attack.”—Amanda McDonough

“I quickly noticed that this English class was trying to help me [. . .] Have a positive outlook while taking English 111. If you and English never got along your whole life, you should relax and just listen to the people that are trying to help you out. I hope you will get as much out of this class as I did.”—Zach Frey

“My best suggestion is to just keep an open mind to everything that will happen in English 111 and take everything as a learning experience in order to improve the writer you are now.” —Amy Sawade

“Don’t be afraid of what people will think of your topics or how you write.” —Amy Sawade

“Choose a topic that you feel strongly about and put that feeling into your essay. It makes it more interesting to read if the author of the paper cares about it and for more than the grade it is worth.” —Adam Tallman

“It is amazing how many messages are conveyed without uttering a sound. For example, think of the student who sits in the back of the class, slid way down in the seat, half asleep. Obviously this has happened to many of us and occasionally we have a good reason, but if this type of behavior is exhibited often, to what conclusion would a professor come? Remember: how you present yourself is the first impression (and often a lasting one) for professors.” —Sammi Justice

On Communication/Conferences with Instructors:

“Something to remember is that teachers can be very helpful if you are having trouble. Don’t be afraid to go ask for their help. One time I was really stuck on how to make my paper work. I scheduled a meeting with my teacher so that I could get her advice on what I needed to do. In the meeting we talked about what was a good idea for my paper, and

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how I could elaborate on that to make the paper the required length. I used her advice, plus the advice from all of my peer reviewers, to write a great paper.” —Kasey Layman

“Most importantly if you do not understand, or you are having trouble with the assignment, do not hesitate to talk to your professor.” —Paige E. Anderson

“Another great tip for survival is if your professor offers optional conference periods where he/she will read your paper and discuss it with you before the paper is due, utilize them! During these conferences, your professor will tell you exactly what he or she expects for the assignment and will give you ideas on how to improve your paper to their standards and expectations.” —Ron Krawczyk

“On those assignments that are so hard, don’t give up; instead keep pressing on. Ask your peers for advice on where they found information. Ask them to help you organize your thoughts so that you can clearly portray them in the fashion that you need. If that doesn’t work, go to the English Writing Center. They can help get you on track to where you need to be. If still that doesn’t float your boat, ask your professor. There have been plenty of times that I’ve E-mailed my professor and asked to have a conference to help me with the current assignment.” —Steve McGrath