

English Department Minutes
Monmouth College
Tuesday, August 21, 2007
9am-11:20am

Absent: None; Price out at 10:30am; Watson out at 11:10am

1. Rob welcomed everyone back for the fall semester.
2. English 110
 - *The following are changes agreed upon from the meeting:*
 1. For the research paper, a maximum of 40 pages of articles may be used for the source packet (previously 25)
 2. The reading analysis piece may be about the diagnostic or another essay of instructor's choice
 3. The grade for the portfolio/self-assessment will be included in the 30% section of grades for the course
 4. The Fall, 2007, first-day diagnostic reading will be "Under the Sign of Mickey Mouse & Co." from the course text, Good Reasons, on p. 444. If students do not have the text for the first day of class, there will be copies on reserve in the library for all sections
 5. The grading rubric for English 110 will be amended to evaluate the extent of personal experiences students use in the essay
 6. The course description, goals, and lexicon for English 110 have been changed; see attachments
 7. The first-day diagnostic now has a specific, written guideline: "The purpose of the first-day diagnostic is to show how thoroughly students understand a written argument, how successfully they take a position on the issue the diagnostic reading addresses, and how effectively students support their argument with evidence from the diagnostic reading."
 - *The following are specific notes/comments from the above discussions, following the meeting's agenda from Hale:*
 1. Review minutes from May department meeting

Marlo asked about the maximum of 25 pages for all sources combined for the 110 research paper. It was established that this was a guideline and could be changed. The purpose of limiting all sources to 25 pages total was created in order for students to focus more on integration of material without being overwhelmed by too much source information, which has previously occurred. The department decided to increase the maximum to 40 pages total, but instructors may increase that if they have solid rationale for doing so, particularly based on student ability in a section.

The reading analysis piece for English 110 can be the first-day diagnostic or another essay from the instructor. The

point of working with such a piece is to help students with summarizing of main points, dissecting how an author's argument operates, and to investigate the strategies a writer uses in an essay.

A discussion ensued regarding grades in 110. Rob suggested that the final exam might be worth the same percentage for each instructor's section, but the department agreed that a more qualitative method should be used to assess students' progress in the course. It was also agreed that portfolio grades would be calculated into the 30% section of the course, as opposed to the 70% paper section.

Rob reminded everyone that Kevin and Steve will be collecting sample student essays from everyone for future use in English 110.

Rob also noted that teachers in upper-division courses should review how to more fully engage students in revision and work ethic—we made some suggestions that are listed in the May 2007 meeting minutes.

3. English 110 Diagnostic Essay

The department agreed from last spring that the diagnostic reading should be relatively brief, but substantive. Craig referred to the previous Prose piece as a good essay for the diagnostic since it would challenge students and send a message that the course will be a challenge. The purpose of the first-day diagnostic was then discussed; does it need to address reading or writing or both? Mark noted that students' reading and writing skills could be separated due to poor skills in reading. The diagnostic should get students to generate fifty minutes of writing, then reading analysis can be addressed in class.

The purpose of the diagnostic was then defined and a change in the rubric was noted in order to facilitate use of support in the diagnostic essay. Of the seven choices presented, the "Mickey Mouse" essay was selected despite waffling away from a clear argument.

4. Transfer Credit for English 110

Rob has been working with the registrar and the admissions offices in order to solve the problem of students opting out of English 110 with transfer credit from other colleges or dual credit courses from high school. The plan is to allow students to transfer credit for English 110 if they have four hours of a proven argumentative writing course or two three-hour composition courses. The issue of dual credit courses is on the horizon and one that the curriculum committee is supposed to consider this year.

5. Writing Center

Steve left a detailed handout of the writing center's traffic for last year. Overall, use of the center is, although most students are from English classes.

6. MLC

The transition for the use of the building is still unclear. There is a mission statement, but not everyone is aware of it. This should be addressed at the fall conference.

7. Bi-Weekly Department Meetings

Sept. 10—College Writing (Price)

Sept. 24—Writing Pedagogies (Price)

Oct. 8—TBA

Oct. 22—TBA

Nov. 5—TBA

The meetings will be from 3pm-4pm, place TBA. Rob wanted topic suggestions generated and the following were suggested:

- Revision/peer editing/conferencing
- English 110 assignments and how to develop modes
- CATA meeting/conversation
- English 110 sourced essay topics

Rob will continue to sort out topics for the meetings.

8. English 110 Paragraphs

Craig and Kevin discussed various ways to teach paragraphs at the beginning of the course. Craig will use essays from the book as source material and will include the paragraphs in student portfolios. This will take the first 3-4 weeks of class. He will begin with the Silko essay with Classification and Division as a rhetorical strategy.

Kevin offered several handouts regarding basic structures of paragraphs and rubrics to grade different types of paragraphs along with possible topics.

9. Student Worker/Secretary Changes

Rob noted that Carol Whiteside would begin as English Department secretary Thursday afternoon, August 23. She will be in the Education Department in the mornings, then in MLC, first floor, in the afternoons. Her office will have the color printer, the fax machine (may or may not have a new phone number), and the building may have a new photocopying machine.

Marlo noted that many students are not eligible for student work releases. She offered Laura Dumont, but Laura may not be eligible. Marlo passed around a list of eligible names for everyone to scan and to circle possible workers.

Respectfully submitted by Kevin Roberts.