

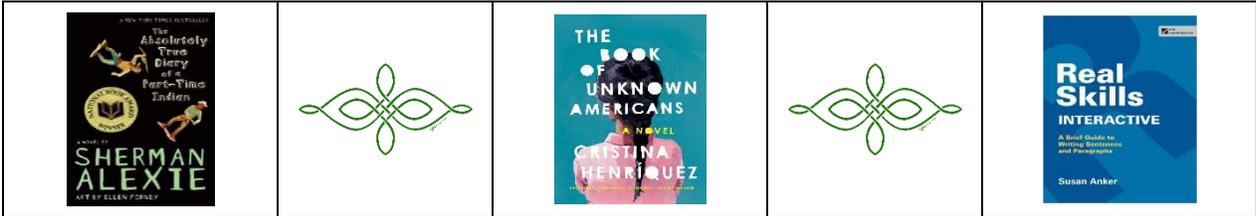
**MJC Spring 2017, ENGL 50
Basic Composition and Reading**

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Office Hours: 10:45-12:00 Monday-Thursday and by appointment

For more course information,
check out our class website:

<http://wohlstadterj.faculty.mjc.edu>

Course Theme: “Hearts and Minds: Reflecting on Our Thoughts, Emotions, and Relationships”



Required Texts [MJC East Bookstore:](#)

- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie
- *The Book of Unknown Americans* by Cristina Henríquez
- *Real Skills Interactive: A Brief Guide to Writing Sentences and Paragraphs* by Susan Anker

Other Required Materials: Two large green books, a pack of scantrons (form 815E), and about 40 pages of reading to be printed from our website during the semester. Watching the film *The Mask You Live In* is also required; we’ll see it in class, and it’s also at the MJC library and Netflix.

Course Overview: This class is designed to improve reading and writing skills. With this goal, we’ll be working with the book *Real Skills Interactive*. We’ll also read two novels as well as selections from a variety of authors, and you’ll be writing essays in response to topics the authors address. The topics can be grouped under one thematic heading: self-understanding. How do we see ourselves? What’s our mindset toward self-improvement? How can we be more mindful of our habits? What makes it difficult to share emotions? How can we improve our relationships? These are the kinds of questions our readings will encourage us to explore.

Course Learning Outcomes:
Upon satisfactory completion of this course, students should be prepared to

1. Explain and support in writing reasonable inferences about the attitudes and thoughts of a writer based on evidence supplied in a reading selection;
2. Express in writing the main idea of a reading selection;
3. Construct coherent thesis-driven essays with the use of appropriate diction, spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Important Dates:

- **Jan. 22:** Last day to drop without a W.
- **Apr. 3:** Last day to withdraw (and receive a W).

Second-Day Rule: When students are absent on the second day of class, their spot will be given to students on the waitlist, so please be sure to attend the second class (or contact me beforehand) to secure your spot.

Attendance:

- Good attendance leads to better class participation, better comprehension of course material, and better quiz scores, especially since there are no make-up quizzes, so strive to be at every class session.
- Attendance helps to maintain students' enrollment in the course:
 - **Note:** Students may be dropped if they have more than eight absences.
- It helps to save absences for illnesses and emergencies because the allotment is not for eight absences plus illnesses and emergencies—it's simply for eight absences.
- Being absent does not mean a student has more time to submit an assignment; assignments are due on their due date even if a student is absent.
- Roll is taken at the beginning of class. Students who arrive after roll is taken are marked late, and being habitually late affects one's participation grade.
- Students who arrive to class more than ten minutes late—or who leave class early—may be counted as being absent.

Credit for Course Work:

- Work must be submitted at the beginning of class to be considered on time.
- In-class essays may not be done late, unless we've made a prior arrangement.
- Take-home essays can be submitted one class meeting late, but they will automatically be reduced one full letter grade. Beyond that point, "extra-late" essays can still receive credit but automatically receive a failing mark—59 points or less, depending on quality.
- Students who plan to turn in late work should inform me of it on the day the work is due or earlier (inform me at the end of class, call me, or e-mail me).

Note: More details regarding attendance and late work is posted at the end of the syllabus, and the general campus policy on attendance is listed in the school catalog.

Grading: Course grades are determined by the following:

Percentages:		Course Grades are based on a standard scale:		
Essay #1 (letter)	5%	A	90-100	Excellent
Essay #2	15%	B	80-89	Good
Essay #3 (in-class)	15%	C	70-79	Satisfactory
Essay #4	15%	-----		
Essay #5	20%	D	60-69	Not Yet Passing
Essay #6 (in-class)	15%	F	Below 60	
Quizzes	5%			
Participation	10%			

Essays:

- Papers must follow MLA standards, including standard 12 pt. font size and 1” margins.
- All work prepared outside of class for a grade must be typed, unless otherwise noted.
- Final drafts of essays will lose 3.5 out of a possible 100 points if students miss or are late for peer review. Drafts that are unprepared for peer review because they aren’t typed or long enough will also result in a loss of 3.5 points.
- E-mailed work may be accepted, but I prefer to receive course work on paper; please see the details about e-mail posted at the end of this syllabus.
- Students, especially those who re-take my course, must keep electronic copies of essays and hold on to graded and marked copies of all their course work.

Note: To be eligible to pass the course, one must complete the six major essay assignments and have a passing overall average on one’s writing grade (all assignments except participation). If one’s overall writing grade is below passing, then one’s participation grade cannot be factored in to raise one’s average to a passing total.

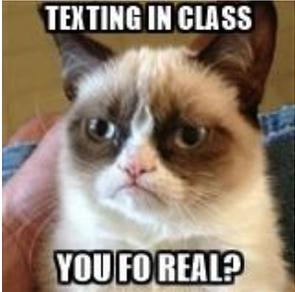
Journals: During the semester, students will be assigned about 12-16 brief writing activities focused on responding to readings and developing essay ideas. Students who keep up with these often contribute more to discussions and tend to earn higher participation marks. More details about these informal “journals” are on our class website and will be discussed in class.

Quizzes: There will be about 10 quizzes over the course of the semester. Upcoming quizzes are usually announced in class a day or two ahead of time, but they may be unannounced. A student’s lowest quiz score will not be factored into his or her quiz grade.

Participation is based on one’s level of engagement in class. This includes listening politely and participating effectively in discussions and class activities such as peer review. The highest marks go to students who volunteer to share ideas with the class. Students who rarely volunteer and students who disrupt the class learning environment (texting, lateness, etc.) earn the lowest marks. Participation also depends upon preparation. Coming to class without assigned books, print outs, journals, and other homework leads to a lower participation mark.

Class Expectations:

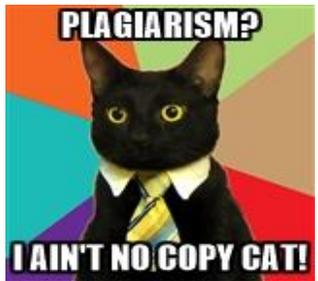
In the MJC Catalog, detailed information about class conduct is listed under the heading “Student Rights and Responsibilities.” We’re here to learn as individuals and as a class, so be sure to promote ways to make the classroom a positive learning environment:

<p>Please help us stay focused and connected in class by keeping electronic devices silent and out of sight.</p>		<p>To minimize distraction, laptops are not allowed during class without permission, and permission depends on evidence that laptops are necessary and not distracting to others.</p>
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- One of the best things students can do in class is to participate in discussions by expressing themselves; however, when students speak in class it should contribute to the class environment, not disrupt it. Please share your views and also be mindful of others.
- Even though input is always greatly appreciated, please note that if individual students have already been generous in sharing ideas on any given day, there are times when those students will be praised but passed over to promote a greater diversity of voices.

Academic Integrity:

Cheating, academic dishonesty, and plagiarism are violations of academic integrity, and serious violations will be reported. In its catalog, MJC defines plagiarism as “the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words or statements of another person as one’s own, without acknowledgement.” The consequences of plagiarism, as outlined in the school catalog, are as follows:

<p>“The grading of a student’s work rests on the fundamental idea that an instructor is evaluating a student’s own work, so cheating or plagiarism demonstrates a failure to complete this most basic requirement of any course. Thus a faculty member may administer academic consequences for violating the Academic Integrity Policy ranging from partial credit to an F on the assignment or exam. The instructor may also consider that a student’s violation of academic integrity should be a consideration for disciplinary measures.”</p>	
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- For more on information on plagiarism, please see me or the following handout from MJC’s Writing Center: http://libguides.mjc.edu/ld.php?content_id=10197357

Getting Help: I like helping during office hours and over e-mail, but the two are very different!

- **Office Hours** are great for questions that call for a conversation (such as discussing a draft).
- **E-mail** is great for questions expecting a reply that's very brief (like the length of a text).

There's time for detailed discussion during office hours, and I enjoy using that time for that purpose. Over e-mail, however, time does not permit me to answer broad, open-ended questions such as "did we do anything in class today?" or "what do you think of my draft?" Over e-mail, time constraints allow me only to offer brief replies to focused questions.



"In a growth mindset, challenges are exciting rather than threatening. So rather than thinking, oh, I'm going to reveal my weaknesses, you say, wow, here's a chance to grow." – Carol Dweck



MJC Writing Center:

- At the libraries on both East and West Campus, free and helpful tutors are there to assist you. For more details, see <http://libguides.mjc.edu/writingcenter>

Disability Services:

- MJC is committed to equal opportunity for all students and encourages students with documented disabilities to contact their instructors early on in the semester to discuss any accommodations that may be necessary. The MJC Disabilities Services Center is located at room 112 in the Student Services building on East Campus (phone: 575-6225).

Other Resources at MJC:

- MJC's website includes a list with information about all sorts of helpful services and programs such as these:
 - CalWORKS
 - Campus Safety
 - The Counseling Center
 - Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) and Cooperative Agency Resources for Education (CARE)
 - Financial Aid
 - Health Services
 - The International Student Program
 - TRiO/Educational Talent Search & TRiO/Upward Bound
 - The Veterans Office
- Details about these resources can be found at <http://www.mjc.edu/student-services/> and <http://www.mjc.edu/student-services/enrollment/admissions/servicesandprograms15s16.pdf>

Additional Class Details about E-mail, Absences, and Late Assignments

E-mailed Work

- When students e-mail work, they do so at their own risk, so it's best to submit it in class.
- If you choose to e-mail your work, please send your work both as a Microsoft Word or PDF file attachment and as a message pasted into the body of your e-mail.
- Also, ask for a receipt (example: "please respond letting me know you received this message") since it helps to prevent this sort of scenario: "Did you get the work I sent? I swear I e-mailed that to you."

Accommodations for Unavoidable Absences

- With a legitimate excuse, written class work may be accepted and evaluated without a grade deduction. Only a documented illness or emergency will be regarded as a legitimate excuse. Such documentation must include a phone number and address of a professional.
- If you have a documented excuse and want your work evaluated without a grade deduction, it's your responsibility to let me know and to provide me with documentation in a timely manner. In other words, I won't ask for documentation; it needs to be presented as soon as possible without being asked for it.

Late Assignments

- Some assignments will be accepted late, but quizzes, the midterm, and the final cannot be taken late. However, if, for some legitimate reason (like a documented illness or emergency), you can't be in class on the day of a quiz, in-class essay, or final, and you let me know of this conflict ahead of time or as soon as possible, then we may be able accommodate you.
- Grades on unexcused late assignments will reflect the fact that they were submitted late:
 - Grades will be reduced by a full letter when essays are turned in one class meeting late. For example, a paper due Thursday can be submitted as late on Monday, or a paper due Monday can be submitted as late on Tuesday. Both would be reduced 10 points out of 100.
 - After being more than one class meeting late, "extra-late" essays may still receive credit but will automatically receive a failing mark—59 points or less, depending on quality.
- If you ever submit work one class meeting late (with a grade reduction), you don't need to explain why. No excuse is necessary, though I appreciate knowing to expect the work late.



Note: If there's ever anything you'd like me to know about your circumstances, please feel free to communicate it with me.



- All assignments are due at the beginning of class. This means, for example, that an essay due on Monday at 8:00 that is submitted at 8:10 will be considered late. This helps make the classroom a better learning environment because it discourages disruptions caused by late arrivals late on days when assignments are due.
- Be sure your computer and printer are working—and that you have extra ink. And be sure you have a backup plan if you run into technical difficulties. Students often tell me that they had a problem with their printer, and I always believe them because I've experienced such problems so often myself. Even so, despite my sympathy for students hampered by such situations, those technical difficulties will not be regarded as legitimate excuses for late work.