

**MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

**DEPARTMENT of LEADERSHIP & FOUNDATIONS**  
**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**Course Prefix and Number:** EDF 3413

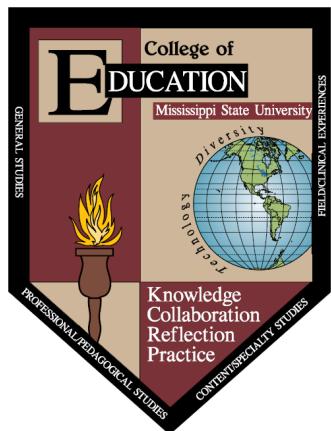
**Course Title:** Writing for Thinking

**Credit Hours:** Three (3) semester hours

**Type of Course:** Lecture/Lab

**Catalogue Description:** (Prerequisites: Completion of EN 1103 and 1113 or equivalent with grade of C or better in each and junior standing). Designed to enhance participants' writing/thinking skills and to prepare participants to use writing as a learning process with groups they teach or lead.

**College of Education Conceptual Framework:**



The faculty in the College of Education at Mississippi State University are committed to assuring the success of students and graduates by providing superior learning opportunities that are continually improved as society, schools, and technology change. The organizing theme for the conceptual framework for the College of Education at Mississippi State University is educational professionals - dedicated to continual improvement of all students' educational experiences. The beliefs that guide program development are as follows:

1. **KNOWLEDGE** - Educational professionals must have a deep understanding of the organizing concepts, processes, and attitudes that comprise their chosen disciplinary knowledge base, the pedagogical knowledge base, and the pedagogical content knowledge base. They must also know how to complement these knowledge bases with the appropriate use of technology.
2. **COLLABORATION** - Educational professionals must continually seek opportunities to work together, learn from one another, forge partnerships, and assume positions of responsibility.
3. **REFLECTION** - Educational professionals must be willing to assess their own strengths and weaknesses through reflection. They must also possess the skills, behaviors, and attitudes necessary to learn, change, and grow as life-long learners.
4. **PRACTICE** - Educational professionals must have a rich repertoire of research-based strategies for instruction, assessment, and the use of technologies. They must be able to focus that array of skills on promoting authentic learning by all students or clients, while exhibiting an appreciation and commitment to the value and role of diversity.

## **Course Objectives:**

The overall purpose of the course is to enhance the student's on reading, writing, and communication abilities in both technical and non- technical literature and to further improve skill in writing documents with clear utilitarian purposes in mind: to communicate effectively and forcefully one's responses to a number of issues written by professional writers; to write practical documents in several formats; and to write standard English through a review of basic grammatical structure. The particular content and teaching methodology will vary with the teacher of record.

## **Goals:**

1. To increase the student's proficiency in decision making and problem solving through the development of critical, creative, and reflective thinking skills.
2. To assist the student in acquiring key knowledge concerning English essentials (e.g., parts of speech, punctuation, mechanics, spelling, and grammar), sentence construction, and paragraph construction, and paragraph development necessary for success in a professional career.
3. To help the student gain an understanding of the oral and written communication standards required to function effectively as a professional (e.g., writing memoranda and research reports).
4. To assist the student in developing proficiency in oral and written communication.
5. To enhance the student's awareness of ways (e. g., professional demeanor) to promote multi-cultural awareness, gender sensitivity, and racial appreciation through verbal and nonverbal communication.
6. To develop the student's capability to communicate effectively with various cultural, racial, and special interest groups.

## **Topics: (approximately 2 hours per topic)**

Several communication topics will be addressed in the course. Written communication topics include the following: outlining, essays, short stories, descriptive and explanatory, analytical pieces, article and book reviews, film reviews, research reports, statistical tables and graphs, memoir, business letters, resume development, memoranda, electronic messages, and notes. Oral communication topics include talks, reading aloud and storytelling. Nonverbal communication and interviewing techniques will also be covered.

The overall theme for the fall semester EDF 3413 Writing for Thinking course is the Path to 2014. Creative projects include kites, paper air planes, blimps, propeller-driven airplanes, and rockets.

## **Required Texts:**

Strunk, W. (2000). *Elements of Style 4th edition or Fiftieth Anniversary Edition*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc.

Blenderger, J. & Nicholson, J. (2010). *Walking the talk: Modeling literacy*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing.

Note: Handouts of a manuscript developed for a new textbook on communication which is in process of being written (Communicate Like a Pro) will be periodically furnished to students enrolled in the course. Students should organize the handouts in a three ring notebook.

In Addition to the two required textbooks, students will also need the following: portable dictionary, pencils, pens, blank paper, ruler, and color highlighter. Purchasing the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association style guide is optional.

Reading assignments in *The Elements of Style* text are divided into four parts. Each part will be systematically addressed throughout the course. Part one consists of the *Forward* by Roger Angell (pp. ix-xi), *Introduction* by E. B. White (pp. xiii-xviii), and Chapter I *Elementary Rules of Usage* (pp. 1-14). Part two focuses on Chapter II *Elementary Principles of Composition* (pp.15-33). Part three is comprised of Chapter III *A Few Matters of Form* (pp. 34-38), and Chapter IV *Words and Expressions Commonly Misused* (pp. 39-65) Chapter V *An Approach to Style* (pp.66-85) completes the reading assignments. Approximately 25 quizzes will be given in relation to the assigned reading material.

Reading assignments in *Walking the Talk: Modeling Literacy* text focus on *The Letterman* manuscript and are divided into five parts into five parts. Each part will be systematically addressed throughout the course. Part one consists of Section 1 Reaching for Your Pen (pp. 3-9). Part two focuses on Chapter 1-8 in *The Letterman* manuscript (pp. 11-13), and addresses *The Kentucky Years* (pp. 14-59). Part three comprises Chapter 9-21 in *The Letterman* manuscript and features *The California Years* (pp. 60-125). Part four calls attention to chapters 22-41 in *The Letterman* manuscript and hones in on *The Oklahoma Years* before concluding with the Epilogue (pp. 126-238). Section III *Putting Pen to Paper* (pp. 239-250) completes the reading assignment. Students will be expected to participate in brief (five minutes each) in-class descriptive and explanatory writing exercises based on material covered in the assigned readings.

### **Methods of Instruction:**

Lecture

### **Student Activities:**

#### **Student Expectations (2 Hour)**

Course Credit is three (upper division) semester hours. Student grades for the course will be determined according to three criteria: X-Factor, nano-assignments, and examinations.

#### **The X-Factor (8 hours)**

The X-Factor involves attendance, coming to class prepared, and participating in class activities. These elements will be considered in determining the student's final course grade. The course is designed to be highly interactive. Student participation activities include quizzes, brief descriptive and explanatory pieces of writing, case studies, problem solving, class discussion,

and so forth. Attendance, preparedness, and participation will have either a positive or negative effect on the student's overall grade for the course. X-Factor evaluation is based on the judgment of the instructor and constitutes 20 percent of the course grade.

#### Nano-Assignments (Brief Writing Pieces) (8 Hours)

Nano-assignments constitute 30 percent of the student's course grade. The term "nano" as it is used in science means something very, very small. In the context of this course, the term refers to brief pieces of writing (from 200-1000 words). Brief writing assignments include essays, book reviews, film reviews, scripts, short stories, memoirs, newspaper columns, letters, memoranda, and so forth.

Nano-assignments are due at the start of class for the date specified. An assignment not submitted at that time will be considered late. A late assignment may be submitted up to the start of the next class session unless a special arrangement is made due to extraordinary circumstances (judgment of the instructor). An assignment will not be accepted after that time and zero entered. A "B" is the maximum grade that a late assignment may receive. Place late assignments on the table with the sign in sheet as you leave.

#### Writing Project and Presentation (8 hours)

Each student will be responsible for researching facts about previous generations of their family. The basis behind this project is to learn the culture of the previous generations when comparing school, family environments (location city vs country living). Identify likes and differences of you and your family. You will start the paper with your oldest ancestor studied and end the paper with yourself. You can end similar to an autobiography or you may talk to me about other formats. All papers and presentations must be professionally written using appropriate language.

#### Creative Problem-Solving Project (8 hours)

Creative (hands-on) problem-solving project constitute 10 percent of the student's course grade. The two projects are (1)The *Interview of a Family Member* and (2) The *Spring at Bullyland*. The *Interview of a Family Member* requires students to interview the family member. Find out important family information you are able to document for and fun stories to share with the class. Classroom activities will consist of preparing for interviewing and developing questions. Please keep these stories decent. The *Spring at Bullyland* project require the student to create objects that represent spring at Mississippi State. This can include all aspects of the environment including transportation, housing, and food.

#### Oral Assignments (Brief Talks and Stories) (8 hours)

Oral Assignments constitute 10 percent of the student's course grade. They consist of brief talks and storytelling.

Credit will be awarded on an all or nothing basis. That is, the oral assignment was carried out as expected (100): the assignment was not carried out as expected (zero).

#### Midterm and Final Examination (4 hours)

Two examinations---midterm and final---constitute 20 percent of the student's course grade.

The midterm examination will be administered during the time specified by the university. The final examination will be administered on the date specified in the university's final examination schedule. Consideration shall be given, based on the judgment of the instructor, to students who are not able take the examinations as scheduled due to extraordinary circumstances.

**MSU Honor Code:**

**"As a Mississippi State University student I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do."**

The Mississippi State Honor Code can be found at <http://www.honorcode.msstate.edu/>.

**Technology:**

Technology is not an integral aspect of this course.

**Diversity:**

Writing for Thinking celebrates the diversity of professional teaching voice through a variety of activity which challenge participants to consider multiple perspectives including diversities of gender, ethnicity, religion, age, culture, income, language are central to the content.

**Disability:**

Students with disabilities will be afforded appropriate accommodations. Contact disability services at 325-3335 or visit the Student Support Services website or office for more information.

**Field Component:**

The course does not have a field component.

**Evaluation of Student Progress:**

As noted in the previous subsection, numerous assignments are planned for the course in order to assist students to achieve the goals articulated. A variety of assessment measures will be used to collect evidence to show that students have met the goals. To reiterate, each student's grade for the course will be determined as follows:

X-Factor: Attendance, preparedness, and participation (20%)  
Nano-Assignments (30%)  
Writing project and presentation (10%)  
Midterm and Final Exam (20%)  
Creative problem-solving projects (10%)  
Oral Assignments (10%)

Specific Percentages for grading purposes are as follows:

90 - 100 = A

80 - 89 = B

70 - 79 = C

60 - 69 = D

Less than 60 percent = F

A rubric shall be used to evaluate a student's performance on assignments.

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Gay, G. (2000). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, & practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

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