Welcome to English 1. You are here to become a better writer. Why? No matter what you want to do—in college or in life—the ability to write well will help you succeed. We’ll practice expository writing in different forms, for different purposes, and we’ll examine what’s going on at various levels of written work by professionals and by you. You’ll be expected to take stock of your progress along the way, addressing your own areas of weakness and using your strengths to your advantage.

Here are some of the questions we'll discuss:
- What are the qualities of good writing?
- What are the goals of a good writer?
- How can you use the writing process to achieve these goals?
- What does it mean to ask and answer questions at the college level?
- How can you show yourself thinking in your essays?
- How can you surprise yourself and your readers?

SCHEDULE

Sept *9*: Introductions, Autobiography of a writer

Sept 12: What is good writing?
Sept. 15: “Modern Love” assignment due

Sept. 19: Cisneros, Caramelo prologue
Sept. 20: Kincaid, “Biography of a Dress”
Sept. 22: Smith, “Scenes from the Smith Family Christmas”

Sept. 26: Personal narrative draft due

Oct 3: Tan, “Mother Tongue”
Oct 4: Tonouchi, “Da State of Pidgin Address”
Oct 6: Essay 1 revision due [Dr. Sanders columns, “An Almost Automatic Problem Solver”]

Oct *14*: Essay II draft

Oct. 17: Gatto, “Against School”
Oct. 18: Gatto letters

**Oct 24: Essay II final** [“I Believe…”]
Oct. 25: Quindlen, “Execution”
Oct. 27: Kohn, “The Dangerous Myth of Grade Inflation”

**Oct 31: Essay III draft**
Nov. 1: Peer review prep
Nov. 3: Peer review

**Nov. 7: Essay III final**
Nov. 10: Read practice exam essay 1

Nov. 14: TBA
Nov. 15: Reread practice exam essay 1
* **Wed., November 16: Practice exit exam** after school. BRING practice exam essay. *
Nov. 17: Reread 2nd exit exam essay

Nov. 21: Sample student essays

**Nov. 28: Revision of practice exam due**
Nov. 29: Peter Beaumont, “The Truth about Twitter, Facebook, and the Uprisings…”
Dec. 1: Essay IV drafts (not handed in)

**Dec. 5: Essay IV final**
Dec. 6: Read exit exam essay
Dec. 8: Exit exam prep
Dec. 9: Exit exam prep

Dec. 12: Exit exam prep
Dec. 13: Exit exam prep

**FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 15.**

Dec. 19: Wrap-up

**COURSE POLICIES**

** Because this is a college-level course, I expect you to take responsibility for your own success. If you don’t understand an assignment, a discussion, or the feedback I’ve provided on an essay, or if you have questions about anything at all, please, please talk to me or email me. **
MATERIALS
Bring all readings and handouts to every class meeting, and a journal: a separate notebook designated for informal in-class and at-home writing specific to this class. This is mostly for your own brainstorming, idea-processing, and to track your own progress, but I will collect it once in a while, at random, to assess your work. If there is a question or prompt written on the board when you enter class as there occasionally will be, you should respond to it in your journal.

ON WRITING
I expect you to write carefully and honestly, always. Do not pretend to believe things you don’t believe. Don’t shy away from complexity. Dig deeper: ask why, and ask why again. It will help you if, to begin with, you choose to write about a subject that interests you, or from a point of personal interest within a given subject. If you ever feel completely stuck or bored with a given assignment, please get in touch with me. I want to help you find something interesting to write about. Otherwise, your writing is a waste of time—and a bore—for you and me both.

ON READING
Your success in this course (and in much of your college career) will depend on your ability to read carefully and well. Read everything slowly, at least twice. Look up words you don’t know. Use active reading strategies (underlining, questioning, rereading) to discern the author’s purpose and main idea. You are expected to have opinions about each reading, and to be able to say WHY you feel the way you do. It should go without saying that if you don’t do the reading, it will negatively affect your grade, not only because you won’t be able to participate in that day’s class, but because your writing won’t improve as much as your classmates’ for having read the assigned work.

ESSAYS
must be typed and printed, Times New Roman size 12, double-spaced, by the beginning of class on the day that they are due. All essays must be between 600 and 750 words, no shorter and no longer, unless otherwise specified. Late essays will be marked down one letter grade per day late—so, an A essay becomes a B if handed in on Tuesday instead of Monday. While first drafts will not be graded, late or incomplete drafts will count against the final essay’s grade by the same rule. I will not accept essays by email *except* if they are late, in which case I prefer to receive them as soon as possible.

PROCESS NOTES
must be handed in with all essays. These can be handwritten or typed, should be between four sentences and two paragraphs long (< 300 words), and should demonstrate your ability to reflect maturely on your own work. With a first draft, this should be a loose reflection, whatever thoughts you have about the work you’re handing in. With your final draft, the process note should clearly state: 1. the intellectual project of your essay (what question were you trying to answer?); 2. the most useful and challenging aspects of your writing process; 3. the most substantive difference between your drafts; 4. what satisfies you about your work; 5. any other questions, concerns, or reflections.

REVISED ESSAYS
are mandatory and held to a high standard. Revision, at the college level, means making *substantial* changes: not just fixing typos and adding a word here or there, but reconsidering the structure and content of the essay, and using your *own* ideas to improve it. Of course, I’d like you to take my feedback into account (as well as your peers’ feedback, if applicable), so if my feedback doesn’t make sense to you or feels wrong, please talk to me. Revised essays will be graded according to a rubric designed for each assignment; please don’t hesitate to ask for clarification. In
general... An “A” essay is excellent: it surprises the reader, shows college-level complexity of thought, proves by specific example and careful analysis, and achieves something the writer has not achieved before. A “B” essay is good: it demonstrates college-level thinking; its use of example and analysis is clear and its foundations sound. A “C” essay is satisfactory. A student who gets a “D” on an essay should make an appointment to see me; it means he/she is not yet sufficiently prepared to pass this class.

PRESENTATIONS
Each student will make one 3-5 minute presentation of his/her work on an essay this semester. This may involve reading a piece of a work-in-progress for peer feedback, or presenting a kind of before-and-after of the writing process. These will be scheduled in advance. The class is expected to listen actively and contribute constructive ideas to the conversation.

OFFICE HOUR
Every student must make an appointment to see me once this semester in my office in 2311 Boylan. Your timeliness and preparedness for this visit will count toward your English 11 grade, so bring relevant coursework and any questions you have. I encourage you to make your appointment early in the semester, as the one-on-one meeting will be to your own benefit.

COLLEGE RESOURCES
In addition to the resources you’ll have in this class and at BCA, you are urged to take advantage of the free tutoring and writing help available to you in the Learning Center on the first floor of Boylan Hall, in room 1300.

ATTENDANCE
is essential in a class like this one. If you’ve missed a class, please contact a classmate for notes and, if necessary, get in touch with me about making up the work. Per the Brooklyn College English department, after 5 absences (from a 3 day/wk course), you can no longer receive college credit for the course.

THE FINAL EXAM
is created by the Brooklyn College English department and administered to all the college’s English 1010 students on Thursday, December 15. It’s graded pass/fail—meaning that your performance on the exam won’t directly affect your final grade in this course. However, unusually good performance will count as extra credit. You must pass the final in order to receive college credit for this course.

FINAL GRADES
will be calculated as follows: Revised essays I, II, III: 20% each. Practice exit exam and revision: 15%. Essay IV: 10%. Presentation, in-class work, homework, classroom participation: 15%.

PLAGIARISM
cannot be tolerated. Any appropriation of others’ words as your own will result in an automatic F and possible suspension or expulsion.

English 1010, in the words of the Brooklyn College English department: A workshop in expository writing: strategies of, and practice in, analytical reading and writing about texts. Fundamentals of grammar and syntax. Frequent assignments in writing summaries, comparisons, analyses of texts and such other expository forms as narration, description, and argumentation. Emphasis on writing as a process: invention, revision, editing.