

English 28 – Fall 2011

Intermediate Reading and Composition

Professor Jessica Mintz

Welcome English 28 students. I invite you to enjoy a new learning experience as we journey through this online course. Our focus will be on language – how to use it, read, it, analyze it, write it, and hopefully, come to a greater understanding of its power and influence in all that we do.

In this English 28 class you will practice writing paragraphs, essays, and summaries. You will be introduced to the critical reading of non-fiction prose. If you already enjoy language, hopefully you will gain an even deeper appreciation of its exciting possibilities. If you are less than excited about the English language, maybe this is your opportunity to be open-minded.

If you have taken an online class before, then you know how it works. You understand that the entire class is conducted without actually meeting face-to-face, that we have ‘discussions’ online, that assignments are submitted online (NOT via email), that the technology is durable, exciting, and flexible.

But for those of you who have never taken an online class before, the idea that we never sit in a classroom together, that you never see me ‘lecture’ at the front of the room, that no paragraphs or essays or assignments are actually ‘handed’ over to me, may all seem like a foreign concept. I suppose it’s like explaining an *iphone* to someone from the 19th century: “Yeah, it’s this little 3 inch plastic rectangle that holds hundreds of songs, emails, and contact information, and you can access the Internet, find driving directions, weather reports, and the latest news, all by simply tapping the screen with your finger and sliding it across the screen. Oh, and it takes photographs.” I imagine the 19th century person would be quite perplexed.

Have no fear! If you can navigate through this ‘Welcome Letter,’ visit the Virtual Valley site on the LAVC homepage, find your username and password, take a quiz on the VV site to determine if you’re ready for an online class (and you succeed), then you are good to go!

Virtual Valley Website

Please take a visit to the Virtual Valley site by clicking the link below:

<http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/index.html>

Remember, whether you're an online class pro or a relative beginner, **please read this entire letter** to understand some specifics of the class. Also, make sure you purchase the required textbook **before the class begins on Monday, August 29th, 2011. In order to achieve a high level of success in the class, you must own a copy of the textbook, as this tool is an integral part of the course.**

How to Begin

To start, you will want to know the structure of the class:

The class is entirely on-line – there are no required on-campus meetings.

The class will begin August 29th, 2011 through the ETUDES-NG website. The website and information on how to determine your username and password can be found at:

<http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/index.html#>

The most direct way to logon to the Etudes class is the following: myetudes.org

This class will travel at the same pace as the in-person classroom sections. To keep up with the class and important announcements and discussions, you will need to log on regularly, if only for a short time to check in.

Important Note: You must complete the first week's two assignments in order to remain enrolled in the class. If you fail to complete the two assignments (Treasure Hunt Assignment found on the Assignments, Tests, and Surveys site and Getting to Know You Assignment on the Discussion site) by the end of the first week (September 6th by 2:00 PM which is really a week and a day!), you may be dropped from the class.

An online class can be both challenging and exciting. You need to have and make the time to complete all the assignments, participate in discussions, and be open-minded to learning. You also need to be self-motivated and self-disciplined to succeed. If you want to determine if an online class is really for you, take the quizzes at:

<http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/tutorials.html>

What You Need For An Online Class:

Understand that this class is an English reading and writing course to begin which means there is a lot of reading and writing. Also understand that due to the nature of the online environment, there will be a lot more reading and writing because anything we might 'say' in a traditional classroom, now requires that it be communicated in written form. The beauty of the increased reading and writing element of the class is that you get the opportunity to constantly work on your writing and critical reading skills!

Make sure that you have easy and reliable internet access. And think about your ‘backup plan’ in the event your computer breaks down or has some malfunction.

Check to make sure that your computer system is adequate, that you have all the needed software and that your settings are correct. Even if you have taken an Etudes class before, please check your settings and make certain you are using only the recommended browsers and browser version.

To learn how to set up your computer browser and learn more about the system requirements, please click on the link below:

http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/etudes_basics/Lesson1_Getting_Started_main.html

Have a back-up computer (know the computer lab locations on campus) in case of problems. Technical difficulties will not be an acceptable excuse for late or missed work. Have a back-up plan in case you computer decides to crash on you. Most public libraries have free computer access. The LAVC campus has several computer labs. And if all else fails, there are 24 hour computer/Internet rental services at places like FedEx Office.

Have a working email address that you check regularly. Announcements containing important information are both posted on our Etudes class homepage and sent to you via email.

Help!

If you have any technical issues, visit the Virtual Valley “Help Desk” page at:

<http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/help.html>

Frequently Asked Questions

To visit the FAQ page on the Virtual Valley site, please click on the link below. Here you will find information and resources about what you need to know for online classes. The FAQ's page includes answers to such questions as:

How do I know an online class is right for me?

What technology skills will I need to take an online course?

Do I have to be online at a certain time to take my class?

<http://www.lavc.edu/virtualvalley/frequentlyAskedQuestions.html>

Syllabus

The syllabus for the course will be available the first day of class on August 29th. Meanwhile, for those who want to get a jumpstart on the class, keep reading below! You can purchase your textbook early and begin reading.

Textbook

Required Textbook: You are required to **purchase the textbook before the class begins**. The book is available at the LAVC Bookstore, online through the LAVC Bookstore, or online through a vendor of your choice (for example, Amazon.com).

Wordsmith: A Guide to Paragraphs and Short Essay (Fourth Edition) by Pamela Arlov

[Pearson/Prentice Hall Publishers, 2010] The ISBN: 0-13-605060

The textbook information can also be found by visiting the LAVC Bookstore site below. Select: Valley College, Fall 2011 term, English Dept., Course 028, and section: Mintz.

<http://www.lavcbookstore.com/>

And finally, roll up your sleeves, watch your posture, set your hands to the keyboard and have a great time in the class. Here's how you begin once the class opens on August 29th:

1. Read the Syllabus
2. Review all Announcements
3. Review the Class Schedule for important due dates
4. Familiarize yourself with the Modules (which contain the online lectures and important information)
5. Review any open Assignments
6. Create your Profile (directions are given to you in the first week's module)
7. Read and participate in Discussion #1
8. Complete the Treasure Hunt Assignment

My hope is that you learn from this course, enjoy the experience, and have fun in the process. See you online!

Professor Jessica Mintz
Email: mintzjl@lavc.edu