Required Course Materials:

- Various sources on e-reserve (i.e., content readings relevant to section themes)

Introduction for Instructors

Overview:

*English 120: Honors Composition* is intended to introduce students to strategies for critically reading, thinking, and writing in the context of a “microworld” (Geisler), a community defined by its common interest and knowledge in a given subject matter. Though not as specialized as an academic discourse community, the construct of a microworld can help students “bridge” to academic writing by emulating the general structure of an academic discourse community—particularly as it provides a set of intellectual and rhetorical commonalities and conventions that unite communicators in focused contexts. The unifying factors in an English 120 microworld are a standardized set of research-based assignments (provided later in this document) and a specific section theme to be selected by the instructor from the following possibilities: education, biomedical ethics, “Beautiful Systems,” or disaster (see appendix).

More on the Standardized Syllabus and Section Themes:

While all sections of *English 120* will follow a standardized sequence of major writing assignments, selection, sequencing and pacing of preparatory, informal assignments will be left to the instructor (with the aid of the aforementioned thematic syllabi). Each of the major assignment prompts is accompanied by a list of pertinent chapters from the course’s required rhetoric and handbook to aid instructors in efficiently locating and managing relevant supportive material. More specifically, the rhetoric offers insight relevant to genre, research skills, and rhetorical strategies; the handbook briefly reinforces some of the material in the rhetoric but is most valuable in addressing usage, mechanics, and citation practices.

*English 120’s* standardized sequence of major assignments takes students through six research-based genres that are likely to encounter in the context of their major course work. The sequence of assignments begins by challenging students to locate a research interest within the larger section theme, and it ends with a “Call-to-

¹ The standardized assignment syllabus and the thematic syllabi are geared toward this primary rhetoric. However, the Writing Studies Committee approved an alternate rhetoric for the course: *From Inquiry to Academic Writing: A Text and Reader*, by Stuart Greene and April Lidinsky (Bedford St. Martin’s, 2008). Obviously, instructors who choose this rhetoric will need to reconfigure the reading assignments for each unit to correspond with this alternate textbook.
Action” paper bolstered by research that they’ve been conducting all semester. The assignments in between help them systematically build their knowledge base and rhetorical prowess in the interest of producing an extended argument that reveals their critical participation in the scholarly conversation that has transpired with respect to their particular areas of interest. Although the number, type, and fundamental requirements of the major assignments are mandated, instructors are encouraged to revise the assignment prompts to reflect their own pedagogical and composing styles.

In addition to familiarizing themselves with the standardized assignment sequence, instructors assigned to English 120 will also need to select a theme for their respective sections as noted above. Relevant to a given section theme (see appendix), instructors will be provided with an example syllabus denoting possible thematically based readings and a possible sequence for those readings. Regarding the example thematic syllabi, instructors are encouraged to edit, supplement or re-organize them as they see fit. In other words, the example thematic syllabi are intended as possible models, not mandates. After deciding on a theme and a set of common readings that will support that theme, each instructor will need to create an E-Reserve site through Morris Library to house thematic readings for easy access by the students.

Sequence of Major Assignments

Unit 1: Weeks 1-4

Note: In addition to addressing the first major essay assignment, Unit One is designed to introduce students to various concepts and strategies crucial to participating as critical readers and writers in an academic discourse community, defined by its interest in a specific issue (i.e., one of the section themes as represented in the attached content syllabi). As a result, the reading load for Unit 1—including chapters from the course rhetoric and handbook, as well as the thematic content readings—is fairly substantial. Given the need to broach so much “background information,” the syllabus delays introduction of the first major essay assignment until relatively late in the unit.

Major Assignment—Statement of Research Interest/Working Bibliography

Readings and activities during the first few weeks of English 120 are designed to help you determine a specific topic relevant to the broad theme designated for your section of the course. Your topic should represent a special area of interest that will sustain your enthusiasm throughout the semester as you approach it from various analytical lenses and through various writing activities. For this first major writing assignment, then, you will be composing a “Statement of Research Interest” that identifies your specific topic, and you will be compiling a “Working Bibliography” of sources relevant to that topic. The Statement of Research Interest, which should be approximately four pages in length, should address the following issues (not necessarily in this order): the catalyst for your interest in the topic; any personal experience you have relevant to the topic; reasons that you feel the topic represents an important area of inquiry; and methods of inquiry that you anticipate being valuable to your project. The Working
Bibliography accompanying the Statement of Research Interest should contain at least ten sources relevant to your topic. (It is important to note that the Working Bibliography will evolve through the first half of the course and expand into the Annotated Bibliography for Unit 3; given the work involved in developing an annotated bibliography, you may want to begin reading and taking notes on these articles sooner rather than later.) Consider the audience for the Statement of Research Interest and the Working Bibliography to be members of your class.

- Pertinent Readings from Entering the Academic Conversation
  "Introduction"
  Chapter 1: "Seeing the Academic Conversation"
  Chapter 2: "Building a Knowledge Base and Reading for Informative Purposes"
  Chapter 3: "Integrate Academic Reading and Writing"
  Chapter 4: "Develop a Research Question"
  Chapter 7: "Prepare Bibliographies"

- Pertinent Readings from A Writer's Resource
  Chapter 1: "Writing to Learn"
  Chapter 5: "Planning and Shaping"
  Chapter 18: "Understanding Research"
  Chapter 19: "Finding and Managing Print and On-line Sources"
  Chapters 26-30: MLA Style Guidelines
  Chapters 31-34: APA Style Guidelines
  Chapter 35-37: Chicago and CSE Style Guidelines

Unit 2: Weeks 5-6

Major Assignment—Summary and Response

Working with an academic text in your area of interest [either one assigned by your instructor or one that appears on your Working Bibliography], describe, evaluate, and engage with its arguments. More specifically, you should 1) introduce the text—including the author’s name and credentials, title of text and its source, date of publication, etc.—2) summarize the article’s thesis and main points, and 3) respond to its purpose, main argument, and subclaims. Importantly, the response portion of your essay should take into account the rhetorical appeals or strategies (see Goshert 202-208) that the author employs to enhance his or her argument and thereby persuade the target audience. Consider the audience for your essay to be readers of the source (e.g., journal, anthology) in which the focal text originally appeared. Your Summary and Response Essay should be approximately 6 pages in length [Note: Portions of this assignment are taken nearly verbatim from the assignment on page 198 of Entering the Academic Conversation.]

- Pertinent Readings from Entering the Academic Conversation
  Chapter 9: “Summary and Critical Engagement"
• Pertinent Readings from *A Writer's Resource*
  Chapter 4: “Reading, Thinking, Writing: The Critical Connection”

**Unit 3: Weeks 7-8**

**Major Assignment—Annotated Bibliography**

In previous units, you have created a Working Bibliography, and you learned (or reviewed) how to compose an effective summary. In Unit 3, you will combine skills relevant to these genres in creating an “Annotated Bibliography,” which will help extend your knowledge base relevant to your specific research interest and will provide a record of issues covered in various sources that may become integral to your subsequent essay assignments. The finished Annotated Bibliography should present at least ten entries and should reflect the citation style (e.g., MLA, APA, Chicago, CSE) most appropriate to the discipline that you are targeting. Each entry should contain 1) the source identification information dictated by that citation style; 2) a summary of the source's content [about 1/3 of a page]; and 3) a statement of the source's potential value relevant to your own research plan. Consider your audience to be members of your English 120 class.

• Pertinent Readings from *Entering the Academic Conversation*
  Chapter 5: “Locate and Evaluate Sources”
  Chapter 10: “Prepare a Research Proposal and Annotated Bibliography”

• Pertinent Readings from *A Writer’s Resource*
  Chapter 21: “Evaluating Sources”
  Chapter 22: “Doing Research in the Archive, Field, and Lab”
  Chapter 23: “Plagiarism, Copyright, and Intellectual Property”
  Chapter 24: “Working with Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism”

**Unit 4: Weeks 9-10**

**Major Assignment—Research Proposal**

Now that you have spent considerable time gathering and studying sources relevant to the specific area of interest that you identified for concentrated exploration at the beginning of the semester, it is time to articulate a proposal for a more focused investigation centered on a research question that represents a narrowing of the gaze posited in your Statement of Research Interest. More specifically, this narrowed gaze should reveal a problem relevant to your research topic that begs widespread attention and some form of resolution—a problem that, after additional research and reflection, will point you toward the culminating assignment for this course: a “Call-to-Action Essay.” The research proposal itself, which should be approximately six pages in length, should include the following elements (as listed on page 242 of *Entering the Academic Conversation*: a tentative title for your project; a description of your
research question; a description of your research purpose; a brief overview of the research that you’ve completed so far; a plan for completion of the project; a bibliography (for purposes of this proposal include only those sources off your Annotated Bibliography that are clearly pertinent to your focus). The audience for your research proposal consists of members of your English 120 class.

- Pertinent Readings from *Entering the Academic Conversation*  
  Chapter 10: “Prepare a Research Proposal and Annotated Bibliography”  
  Chapter 8: “Explain Academic Terms and Concepts”

**Unit 5: Weeks 11-12**

**Major Assignment—Exploratory Essay**

According to John Charles Goshert, author of *Entering the Academic Conversation*, “Exploratory Essays” prepare writers to take part in academic conversations as they must focus on “listening to what others have to say” (255), “building [their] own strength as a participant[s] in the discussion,” and projecting answers to questions that sparked initial interest in the topic (256). The Exploratory Essay should be written as a “first-person narrative that tells the story of your research process,” synthesizes the ideas and arguments you’ve encountered through your research (256), and describes how your thinking may have evolved as you expanded your knowledge base about your research topic. Questions that may help you in generating content for this essay include the following: “Why is the issue worth considering? Who is interested in exploring or debating the issue? How did you choose your sources? How do your sources make claims and take positions? Why should readers see you as a credible researcher and participant in the conversation” (257)? Ultimately, the objectives of this Exploratory Essay are to review your processes for further researching the area of interest identified in the first essay for this course and to place the relevant source materials you’ve encountered to date in conversation with one another regarding issues central to your research focus. The Exploratory Essay should be around six pages in length and should be targeted for an audience of your English 120 peers.

- Pertinent Readings from *Entering the Academic Conversation*  
  Chapter 11: “The Exploratory Essay: En Route to a Thesis”  
  Chapter 6: “Incorporate Source Material into Your Writing”

**Unit 6: Weeks 13-15**

**Assignment—Call-to-Action Essay**

Drawing on the research you’ve been immersed in all semester, craft a “Call-to-Action” paper of approximately ten pages. For this paper, you will consider the rhetorical context of your argument by identifying an issue related to the course theme and to your research question. In addition, you will need to identify a specific group of
stakeholders, an occasion and purpose for writing, and a specific role in issuing your call. To be more specific, this assignment requires you to 1) come up with a solution to a problem related to your research focus; 2) identify the individual(s) most capable of acting in response to your call; 3) ask your audience to take some action on behalf of implementing the solution you’ve identified; and 4) show the most effective means by which a given reader or readers might take that action (noting that the solution may be complex or multifaceted). As you are planning this paper, you should think carefully about the best venue or place of publication for your essay, the rhetorical appeals you might make to that particular readership, and the language to which your readers would be most receptive. Your audience can be as large as the American people or as small as one administrative professional. Wherever you decide to place your call to action, you should include internal and end citations for source material appropriate to the target discipline. Structurally speaking, the Call-to-Action paper will consist of three parts:

- An introduction identifying the group of stakeholders you’ve chosen, your role as the writer, and the occasion and purpose of your call to action (The purpose, of course, will be the proposal of a solution to a problem, which you will then go on to discuss.)
- An argument in favor of your particular solution, one that will particularly appeal to your audience
- A proposal for how the solution might be implemented

• Pertinent Readings from *Entering the Academic Conversation*
  Chapter 12: “The Formal Research Essay”
  Chapter 14: “Designing, Organizing, and Editing Your Research Projects”

• Pertinent Readings from *A Writer’s Resource*
  Chapter 11: “Arguments”
  Chapter 4: “Reading, Thinking, Writing: The Critical Connection”

**Final Exam: Week 16 and Finals Week**

• Assignment—Research Presentation

• Pertinent Readings from *A Writer’s Resource*
  Chapter 13: “Oral Presentations”