English 102 Policies and Procedures for Instructors

A. Attendance

Excessive absences may jeopardize students' grades or even their ability to continue in their courses. According to University guidelines, instructors have the right to establish specific attendance policies that are appropriate to the goals of their courses, and attendance records can be used in determining a final course grade. All attendance policies that may affect students' grades must, however, be announced in writing during the first week of class, and instructors are responsible for keeping accurate records. (For the University's full statement on attendance, see page 42 of the West Virginia University Undergraduate Catalog, 2001-2003).

For English 102, the general rule is that students can miss three class sessions for a MWF course and two in a TTH course without their grades being affected. Six or more absences from a MWF class and four or more absences from a TTH class normally results in a failing grade.

Because WVU allows students to adjust their schedules throughout the first week of classes, it may be the beginning of the second week before you have a stable class list. As a result, it is important to keep attendance during the first week, but please wait until Week 2 before counting the absences that can affect a final grade.

B. Cancellation of Classes

If a serious personal emergency prevents you from meeting your class, please arrange for another instructor to cover for you. In the event that you cannot find a substitute, please do the following:
1. Call Erica Soltesz (leave a voice mail or speak to Erica personally) 293-3107 x 410
2. If you do not speak personally to Erica, call Karen (293-3107 x 400) or Michele (293-3107 x 407)

It is crucial that you speak to someone so that a sign can be put on your classroom door to cancel the class officially. Also, please be aware that it is departmental policy that staff members log class cancellations.

Canceling class a few times during the course of the semester for conferences is an appropriate strategy for scheduling individual and/or group conferences with students, but please do not go more than a week without a regular class meeting. If a class does not meet for more than a week, it is easy for students to lose their momentum and it can also be hard work for you as an instructor to reestablish continuity. If you teach on a Monday – Wednesday - Friday schedule, for instance, you might want to meet with your class on Monday during a conference week, and then cancel Wednesday and Friday for conferences. On a Tuesday- Thursday schedule, you might meet Tuesday, and cancel Thursday. If you need to cancel an entire week, then you simply may want to think about ways to keep your students focused on their writing (perhaps with a short reflection on the conference and their revision plans?)
C. Office Hours

English 102 instructors must hold at least 1 office hour per class taught. Post your office hours as soon as you have consulted with your office mates and organized your schedule. You should put your office hours on your syllabus and encourage students to visit you during these hours. You must also turn in your office hours and contact information to Karen in the main office.

You might put something like this on your syllabus:

Office hours: Location:

Office hours provide an opportunity for students to meet one on one with their instructors. You may drop in during these times or make an appointment with me to talk about any questions or comments you have about your progress in the course.

D. Intellectual Property and Academic Honesty

Much of the work in English 102 concerns issues of intellectual property, particularly in the use and documentation of sources. Learning to use source material appropriately is an important part of the research and writing process.

The CWE supports the educational concerns, strategies, and recommendations described in Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices. Please refer to your copy of this document to help you think of ways you and your students can effectively negotiate concerns related to the use and documentation of sources.

Appropriate use of source material is something we must teach our students, but students do commit acts of academic dishonesty for which they must be held accountable according to university guidelines. To make formal charges of plagiarism, please see pages 47-52 in the West Virginia University Undergraduate Catalog, 2001-2003. Erica has models of the plagiarism allegation and imposition letters that show content you must include and offer some instructions on ways to proceed. Please see the Undergraduate Writing Coordinator or another CWE faculty for additional assistance.

E. Peer Support Groups

The peer support groups will provide a primary avenue of contact and support for English 102 faculty. During each semester they are teaching 102, instructors will become a part of an informal network created for exchange about English 102 pedagogy. Group membership will provide a cross section of teaching experience within the department. One member of each group will serve as peer support coordinator in order to initiate group meetings and discussion. The intention is that group membership and activities will provide each 102 instructor an opportunity to meet with peers to brainstorm and discuss teaching strategies, to improve teaching methods through peer observations and feedback, and to create an open environment for questions and answers. A group mentoring supervisor will establish a framework within which the peer support groups are created and function each year.

F. English 102 Faculty Development Workshop
This workshop, conducted each spring, helps instructors meet program requirements, learn information about new practices and methods of the discipline, and share advice on a variety of topics.

G. The Writing Discussion Series

The Writing Discussion Series serves as a space for all instructors in the English department to talk about writing and teaching. These discussions, scheduled throughout the academic year, will often be of interest to those who teach English 102.

H. Saving Student Work

Some of the best resources for teaching (and teaching portfolios) are students’ drafts and papers. Keeping a file of student papers can give you resources for future students and help you reflect on your teaching and assignment design. If you plan to keep a student’s paper, please ask them to sign a permission form. For more information, see the NCTE Guidelines for the Ethical Treatment of Students and Student Writing in Composition Studies, available online at http://www.ncte.org/ccce/positions/ethics.shtml Also, Paul Anderson’s essay in the February 1998 volume of CCC, "Ethical Issues in Composition Research" includes several sample NCTE permission forms.

I. Mid-term Evaluation

Asking students to write a mid-term letter or respond to a series of questions that allow them to evaluate the class at mid-term gives teachers and students a chance to take stock of the course. Doing so provides students with an avenue for reflecting on the work they are doing and for making suggestions about the course. Mid-term evaluations give teachers an opportunity to gather feedback from students and to respond to that feedback by talking with students and/or making some changes to the course.

J. End of Semester Evaluation

Beginning Fall 2003, Erica Soltesz will order all GTA and part-time instructor SEI course evaluations for English 102. All English 102 instructors need to turn in English 102 course evaluations (for each course taught) and the Summary Response Sheets to the CWE Administrative Secretary, Erica Soltesz, each semester. You’re welcome to read these evaluations at any time; your file is available for you to look at in the office (See Erica). These evaluations help the CWE and Undergraduate Writing Coordinator maintain detailed records and gauge the success of individual courses as well as the success of the overall curriculum and program.

K. Complaints

All of us get a few complaints from time to time. Here is the procedure for handling a complaint. First, the student should talk with the instructor. Almost all issues can be handled
informally by talking with a student to clear up matters of concern. Most complaints are
matters of miscommunication.

If the student wants to register a course complaint with the Undergraduate Writing
Coordinator, the student may fill out a Request to Register a Writing Course Complaint
form. These forms, available to students through Erica, ask students to identify the nature
of their complaint and the resolution they hope for in written form to provide the
Undergraduate Writing Coordinator with an organized means to research and respond to
student concerns.
As in the past, if the student has not spoken to the instructor prior to registering a course
complaint, the student will be asked to talk to his or her instructor first.

**L. Contact Information**

At the beginning of each semester, please submit your contact information to Karen in
the English Department. This information, which includes your office hours, phone
number and email offers avenues for students and staff to contact you. It is your
responsibility to keep this information up to date.