Pre-Composition (Online-friendly)

**Course code:** COM 099

**Semester and year:** Fall 2020

**Day and time:** Mondays, 14:45 – 17:30 (r.307-L1)

**Instructor:** Robert Warren, M.A.

**Instructor contact:** [robert.warren@aauni.edu](mailto:robert.warren@aauni.edu)

**Consultation hours:** Mondays, 17:30 – 18:00 (r.307-L1)

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| **Credits US/ECTS** | 3/6 | **Level** | Introductory |
| **Length** | 12 weeks | **Pre-requisite** | Assessment Test |
| **Contact hours** | 42 hours | **Course type** | Bachelor General Education Course |

# Course Description

COM 099 is designed to improve students’ writing ability in preparation for university studies. It is a non-credit prerequisite for COM 101. COM 099 reviews and reinforces English spelling, grammar, punctuation and usage, as well as academic writing conventions. It engages students in the writing process (including drafting, revision and editing); makes them aware of audience, purpose and style; and builds an understanding of structure, cohesion and coherence across a variety of genres of academic writing.

**Coronavirus Notice:**

*Classes will be divided into one live session using Microsoft Teams (MT), and one online session (conducted alone); or one synchronous and one asynchronous. Each session will last 75 minutes, so 2 hours 45 minutes total (usual class length). This is designed to create a more productive balance between lecture time and out-of-class work during this period of remote learning. Mini lectures will be pre-recorded (as part of the online learning) and in-class sessions will center primarily on class discussion and analysis of online readings, lecturers and other media.*

# Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

* display a firm grasp of English grammar, usage and mechanics.
* engage in the writing process including: generating and developing ideas, drafting, revising and editing;
* understand that audience and purpose require specific lexical, syntactic and stylistic (formal vs. informal) choices;
* write in a variety of genres; for example, personal and professional analytical, critiquing and descriptive, etc.;
* develop vocabulary and knowledge of conventions appropriate to academic writing;
* compose well-structured paragraphs with topic sentences, supports, conclusions;
* compose and combine clear, accurate sentences via coordination and subordination and transition;
* understand methods of persuasion in the development of objective argumentation, both in written and spoken forms
* to contribute to and help generate timely and constructive discussions.

# Course Material

Murphy, Raymond. *English Grammar in Use.* Cambridge University Press, 2004. eBook available on NEO (copies available in library)

Bailey, Stephen. *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students* (3rd Ed.).Routledge, 2003. eBook available on NEO

## Course materials and readings will be provided in class and available on NEO

# Teaching methodology

The course will be taught in a combination of online video content and readings, mini-lectures, seminars, and student-centered interaction and exercises.

# Course Schedule

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| **Date** | **Class Agenda** |
| Class One:  September 21st | **Topic:** Course Introduction & Syllabus Overview  **Description:** *This class will open the topic of composition and language uses in an academic context. Students will have the chance to get to know each other and address any queries they may have about the course and its outline.*  **Live session (MT) (75 mins):**   * Introductions * Syllabus overview: Description of course aims, structure, assessment, expectations, and FAQs   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Complete Assessment Test: Grammar & Common Mistakes (test available on NEO assignments) (45 minutes) * Prepare questions relating to assessment test on grammar and common mistakes * Review week two online content (NEO) * Grammar overview (Murphy) |
| Class Two:  September 25th (Friday make-up class) | **Topic:** Test Overview & Grammar Review:  **Description:** *Using last week’s assessment test and a series of other materials, students will recap the fundamentals of tense usage.*  **Online session (75 mins):**   * Watch grammar summary video   **Readings & exercises:**   * Murphy (Selected exercises: Units…) |
| **Live session (MT) (75 mins):**   * Test overview & discussion (areas of improvement) * Review of exercises + student questions (35 mins) * Group role plays and grammar application (40 mins)   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Review week three online content (NEO) |
| Class Three:  October 5th | **Topic:** Academic Essay Writing: What? Why? How?  **Description:** *This class will examine the core principles and methods used in producing academic essays; from structuring paragraphs to developing objective argumentation.*  **Online session (75 mins):**   * Watch introduction to academic writing videos (NEO) * Prepare answers for academic writing questions (NEO)   **Readings:**   * Bailey, Part 1.1 *Background to Writing* (NEO) |
| **Live session (MT) (75 mins):**   * Review of academic writing answers + class discussion   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Persuasive essay: *Do you think a University Education is Necessary to be Successful in Life?* (500-700 words) (Due next class) |
| Class Four:  October 12th | **Topic:** The Art of Public Speaking: Ethos, Pathos, Logos  **Description:** *Here the course takes a momentary pause from systems of writing and examines the skill of building argumentation and holding an audience by using the practice of public speaking.*  **Online session (75 mins):**   * Watch introduction to public speaking videos (NEO) * Prepare answers for public speaking questions (NEO)   **Readings (selected chapters):**   * Carnegie, Dale. *How to Develop Self-confidence & Influence People by Public Speaking.* Simon & Schuster, 1956. * Gallo, Carmine. *How to Talk Like TED.* St. Martin’s Press, 2016 |
| **Live session (MT) (105 mins (extended)):**   * Review of public speaking answers + class discussion * Receive presentation topics + brief class discussion   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Prepare 5-minute persuasive presentation (Due next class) * Added session minutes must be used for practicing presentation (timing/structure) |
| Class Five:  October 19th | **Topic:** Student Presentations (over MT)  **Description:** *In this session the students will get the chance to show their persuasive presentations and face questions from their peers. Due to the time it will take to watch and review each presentation, there will be no online session this week, while the live session will be extended by 45 minutes.* |
| **Live session (MT) (120 mins):**   * Student presentations, followed by a Q&A session from fellow students. * Each presentation will be openly assessed using information from previous public speaking readings and discussions.   **Assignments/deadlines:** N/A |
| Class Six:  October 26th | **Topic:** Conditional Tenses (*If* clauses)  **Description:** *This class is dedicated to understanding the multiple uses of conditional tenses and clause structure.*  **Online session (75 mins):**   * Watch guide to conditional tenses video (NEO) * Prepare answers for conditional tense questions (NEO)   **Readings:**   * Murphy (Selected exercises: Units…) |
| **Live session (MT) (75 mins):**   * Review of answers + class discussion (queries) * Further examples + methods of application   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Review week seven online content (NEO) |
| Class Seven:  October 30th (Friday make-up class) | **Topic:** Essay Writing: Comparative Analysis  **Description:** *This class focuses on building a comparative analysis of two fictional short stories; both share common underlying themes but differ in many other respects.*  **Online session (75 mins):**   * Read two Roald Dahl short-stories, *Skin* and *They Shall Not Grow Old* (on NEO) * Watch short-story analyses videos (NEO) * Prepare answers for short-story questions (NEO) * Prepare additional questions on any queries you may have regarding the stories   **Readings:**   * Dahl, Roald, *They Shall Not Grow Old,* Ladies Home Journal, 1945. * Dahl, Roald, *Skin,* The New Yorker, 1952. * Bailey, Part 2.4 *Comparisons* |
| **Live session (MT) (75 mins):**   * Review of short-story answers + class discussion   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Comparative essay: Write comparative analysis of Dahl short stories (700-800 words) (Due next class) (submit via NEO) |
| Class Eight:  November 2nd | **Topic:** Photo Class: Understanding Subjectivity & Objectivity  **Description:** *This class asks the question: What is the difference between subjective and objective perception? Using a series of powerful images from the 20th century, students will delve deep into the world of opinion, and the challenges of presenting an objective perspective.*  **Online session (75 mins):**   * Students become art critics for the day * The classroom is turned into a gallery featuring 15 iconic images of the 20th century. Students browse the gallery and then choose one image that most moves them. (images found on NEO) * Watch videos outlining concepts of subjectivity and objectivity, as well as the following tasks. * Students analyze the image they have chosen from both a subjective and literal perspective – questions to answer found on NEO * Students produce a short write-up of their interpretation   **Readings/materials:**   * TIME Magazine. *100 Photos: The Most Influential Images of All Time (20th Century)* <http://100photos.time.com/> * Bailey, Part 1.2B *Developing Critical Approaches* (NEO)   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * To produce a 5-minute presentation on the image you have selected (specifics on NEO) (Due next live session) |
| **Live session (MT) (75 mins):**   * Students reveal their respective perceptions of the images (along with the official write-ups) to the whole class in short presentations * Students will discuss each other’s analyses, sharing alternate opinions, gaining a more wholistic perception of the image and its historical impact.   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Review week nine online content (NEO) |
| Class Nine:  November 9th | **Topic:** Grammar Review: Article & Noun Usage  **Description:** *Through grammatical theory and grammar exercises students will gain an understanding of the importance of correct article and corresponding noun usage.*  **Online session (75 mins):**   * Watch videos on article usage (NEO) * Prepare answers for article questions (NEO)   **Readings:**   * Murphy (pp. 68-77, 120-126) * Bailey, Part 3.3 *Articles*   **Assignments:**   * Complete readings & video exercises |
| **Live session (MT) (75 mins):**   * Review of answers + class discussion (queries) * Further examples + methods of application   **Assignments:**   * Review week ten online content |
| Class Ten:  November 16th | **Topic:** Critique Writing: Influential Art  **Description:** *Students will learn how to write a subjective critique on a piece of creative work (music, art or film).*  **Online session (75 mins):**   * Watch introductory video on “How to write a critique.” (NEO) * Read example critiques (NEO) * Choose creative work to review (TBD)   **Readings:**   * Sample critique: *Radiohead: Amnesiac.* (2009) By Michael Jones |
| **Live session (MT) (75 mins):**   * Review of critiquing methods and styles * Class discussion: What did you choose and why? * Suggested methods of approach   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Write critique for next class (700-900 words) (Due next class) |
| Class Eleven:  November 23rd | **Topic:** Grammar Review: Subordinate & Relative Clauses  **Description:**  Through grammatical theory and exercises students will gain an understanding of clause structure, conditional tenses, and corresponding punctuation usage.  **Online session (75 mins):**   * Watch videos on clause usage (NEO) * Prepare answers for clause questions (NEO)   **Readings:**   * Murphy (pp. 91-96, pp. 37-40)   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Murphy exercises |
| **Live session (MT) (75 mins):**   * Review of answers + class discussion (queries) * Further examples + methods of application   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Review week twelve online content |
| Class Twelve:  November 30th | **Topic:** Short Story Analysis: Tradition, Ethics and Peer Pressure  **Description:** *This class centers on societal ideas of tradition and taboo; what is and is not acceptable in your own culture(s)? The topic will be further developed by using the once-controversial short-story ‘The Lottery’ by Shirley Jackson.*  **Online session (75 mins):**   * Complete short-story reading * Answer series of short-story questions in preparation for class discussion.   **Readings:**   * Jackson, Shirley. *The Lottery*. The New Yorker, 1948 |
| **Live session (MT) (75 mins):**   * Review of answers to short-story questions + discussion * Students discuss what makes up their respective culture’s values, taboos, and social norms etc.   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Complete short story critique (700-900 words) (Due next class) |
| Class Thirteen:  December 7th | **Topic:** Academic Writing Review: Sample essay analysis  **Description:** *This class is aimed at building on student’s current understanding of writing methods; reinforcing concepts taught earlier in the semester, as well as introducing more advanced techniques.*  **Online session (75 mins):**   * Read, edit and assess sample academic paper (NEO); highlight ways writer succeeded/failed. * Answer sample paper questions   **Readings:**   * Sample essay: *Japanese Pop Culture: Cute or Scary?* 2007 |
| **Live session (MT) (75 mins):**   * Class discussion on pros and cons of sample paper   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Review completed assignments in preparation for final class |
| Class Fourteen:  December 14th | **Topic:** Course feedback & Film Screening  **Description:** *The final class will not require an online portion, focusing instead on a complete overview of the semester’s main topics and assessments; providing additional feedback and fielding student questions. The class will finish with a topical film screening and discussion.*  **Viewing:**   * *Entre Les Murs (The Class),* 2008, Laurent Cantet |

# Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Workload (average)** | **Weight in Final Grade** | **Evaluated Student Learning Outcomes** | **Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes** |
| Attendance and participation in class discussions and activities | 42 | 10% | 1) to contribute to and help generate timely and constructive discussions. | 2, 3 |
| Grammar Homework:   * Activities & exercises | 23 | 25% | 1) display a firm grasp of English grammar, usage and mechanics. | 2, 3 |
| Presentations:   * Persuasive * Perceptive | 25 | 25% | 1) understand methods of persuasion in the development of objective argumentation, both in written and spoken forms | 2, 3 |
| Writing assignments:   * Persuasive essay * Comparative analysis * Subjective critique * Short-story analysis | 60 | 40% | 1) display a firm grasp of English grammar, usage and mechanics.  2) engage in the writing process including: generating and developing ideas, drafting, revising and editing;  3) understand that audience and purpose require specific lexical, syntactic and stylistic (formal vs. informal) choices;  4) write in a variety of genres; for example, personal and professional analytical, critiquing and descriptive, etc.;  5) develop vocabulary and knowledge of conventions appropriate to academic writing;  6) compose well-structured paragraphs with topic sentences, supports, conclusions;  7) compose and combine clear, accurate sentences via coordination and subordination and transition;  8) understand methods of persuasion in the development of objective argumentation, both in written and spoken forms | 1, 2 |
| TOTAL | 150 hours | 100% |  |  |

# Detailed description of assignments

**Assignment 1: Attendance, participation, discussions & activities**

**Assessment breakdown**

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| --- | --- |
| **Assessed area** | **Percentage** |
| Presence, timeliness, and preparedness  Active engagement in discussion | 50% |
| Positive, constructive contribution to discussions and presentations, and the application of relevant course concepts | 50% |

**Assignment 2: Grammar homework**

**Assessment breakdown**

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| --- | --- |
| **Assessed area** | **Percentage** |
| Completion and comprehension of assignments and exercises | 50% |
| Application of grammatical principles | 50% |

**Assignment 3: Presentations**

**Assessment breakdown**

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| --- | --- |
| **Assessed area** | **Percentage** |
| Organization: clarity and logical development | 30% |
| Content: relevance, interest with evidence of reflection and critical thinking | 30% |
| Delivery: language quality and stylistic appropriateness | 20% |
| Positive interaction with peers and response to feedback | 20% |

**Assignment 4: Writing assignments**

**Assignment breakdown**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assessed area** | **Percentage** |
| Structure: organization, unity and cohesion | 25% |
| Content: topic sentence, coherence and development of supports, evidence of reflection and critical thinking. | 25% |
| Style: appropriate register, word choice, syntax, concision and clarity | 25% |
| Accuracy: spelling, grammar, usage and punctuation and citation format and bibliographic technique | 25% |

**NB:** Writing assignments must be typed, paginated and double-spaced, in a font and point size designated by the instructor. Assignments will be submitted electronically on NEO and may be required in hard copy by the instructor. Essays will be evaluated in accordance with the AAU writing rubric, which includes: organization, content, language and style, mechanics and citation. Corrected essays will include substantive and appropriate instructor feedback.

# General Requirements and School Policies

## General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU’s academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules available in the Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

## Electronic communication and submission

The university and instructors shall only use students’ university email address for communication. It is strongly recommended that any email communication between students and instructors take place in NEO LMS.

Each e-mail sent to an instructor that is about a new topic (meaning not a reply to an original email) shall have a new and clearly stated subject and shall have the course code in the subject, for example: “COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question”.

All electronic submissions are carried out through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

## Attendance

Attendance is required. Students who are absent 35 percent of classes will be failed (or administratively withdrawn from the course if most absences are excused). Students might also be marked absent if they miss a significant part of a class (by arriving late or leaving early) as specified in the syllabus.

## Absence excuse and make-up options

Should a student be absent from classes for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), s/he must submit to the Dean of Students an Absence Excuse Request Form supplemented with documents providing reasons for the absence. The form and documents must be submitted within one week of the absence. If possible, it is recommended the instructor be informed of the absence in advance. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if s/he submits an Absence Excuse Request Form along with the finalized add/drop form.

Assignments missed due to unexcused absences cannot be made up which may result in a decreased or failing grade as specified in the syllabus.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean of Students are entitled to make up assignments and exams provided their nature allows for a make-up. Students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week of the date the absence was excused to arrange for make-up options.

## Late work: No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

## Electronic devices

Electronic devices (phones, tablets, laptops…) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information, etc.). Any other use will result in the student being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. No electronic devices may be used during tests or exams.

## Eating is not allowed during classes.

## Cheating and disruptive behavior

If a student engages in disruptive or other conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment of an institution of learning, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the activity or for the day and shall report the behavior to the Dean.

Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating (e.g. whispering or passing notes) will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misbehavior the student will be expelled from the exam and the exam will be marked as failed.

## Plagiarism and Academic Tutoring Center

Plagiarism is “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work.” (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Random House, New York, 1993)

Turnitin’s White Paper ‘The Plagiarism Spectrum’ (available at http://go.turnitin.com/paper/plagiarism-spectrum) identifies 10 types of plagiarism ordered from most to least severe:

1. CLONE: An act of submitting another’s work, word-for-word, as one’s own.

2. CTRL-C: A written piece that contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations.

3. FIND–REPLACE: The act of changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source in a paper.

4. REMIX: An act of paraphrasing from other sources and making the content fit together seamlessly.

5. RECYCLE: The act of borrowing generously from one’s own previous work without citation; To self-plagiarize.

6. HYBRID: The act of combining perfectly cited sources with copied passages—without citation—in one paper.

7. MASHUP: A paper that represents a mix of copied material from several different sources without proper citation.

8. 404 ERROR: A written piece that includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources

9. AGGREGATOR: The “Aggregator” includes proper citation, but the paper contains almost no original work.

10. RE-TWEET: This paper includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text’s original wording and/or structure.

As the minimum policy the types of plagiarism from 1 through 8 results in the failing grade from the assignment and must be reported to the Dean. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Allegations of bought papers and intentional or consistent plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

If unsure about technical aspects of writing, students are encouraged to consult their papers with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at: http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/.

## Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities are asked to contact their instructor as soon as possible to discuss reasonable accommodation.

# Grading Scale

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | **Percentage\*** | **Description** |
| A | 95 – 100 | **Excellent performance**. The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject. |
| A– | 90 – 94 |
| B+ | 87 – 89 | **Good performance**. The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort. |
| B | 83 – 86 |
| B– | 80 – 82 |
| C+ | 77 – 79 | **Fair performance**. The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work. |
| C | 73 – 76 |
| C– | 70 – 72 |
| D+ | 65 – 69 | **Poor**. The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student’s work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives. |
| D | 60 – 64 |
| F | 0 – 59 | **Fail**. The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course. |

\* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by and when: Robert Warren, August 2020

Approved by and when: