**ENG 125: Sample Online Activities for the First Six Weeks**

(With notes on Paper #1 and integrating Annotated Bibliography work)

This is a model sequence of activities for the first six weeks designed with two weekly deadlines (Thursdays and Tuesdays here, but they can be any days of your choice). This model assumes you are teaching the bulk of the course asynchronously, but it is intended to be highly adaptable; these are suggestions meant to spark your ideas about how you would like to structure your course. If you plan to have a synchronous part of the course, for example, you could replace the videos with live sessions.

**Week One: Getting Started**

This week, the goals are to get students familiar with the course site, the expectations for the course, and to have them begin to engage with texts for the course.

**Due by Thursday Deadline:**

* Reading: The Course Syllabus
* Quiz1: Course Syllabus
* Watch: Video introduction to the course; overview of course site and syllabus.
* Blog or Discussion Board Introduction

Recommended Week One activities:

On the **first day of classes** (or even before) send out an Announcement welcoming students to the class and outlining the first week’s procedures. This Announcement may be written, but consider adding a video component. Attach the syllabus to the email.

During this week, assign a series of activities that will **orient the students to the course and its expectations.**

* Make **reading and reviewing the Course Syllabus** the first item on the list. Then ask students to do something that will reinforce the concepts of the syllabus and/or demonstrate that they have read it. You might try one of the following:
  + Quiz on key points from the Syllabus;
  + Easter Egg (putting a request at the end of the Syllabus for the students to email you—often I ask students to email me a picture of their favorite animal to show they’ve read all the way to the end.)
  + Linking part of the first Blog/Discussion Board prompt to the Syllabus. (Asking, for example: which of the activities that you see outlined on the syllabus do you have the most concerns/questions about?)
* **Blog** introduction (or Discussion Board): Get the students comfortable with the tools you plan to use throughout the course. Students do seem to be more familiar with Discussion Boards and Blogs, so those are good tools to start with the first week. Suitable activities might include an ice-breaker prompt that asks students to introduce themselves either in the Discussion Board or Blog. The prompt could ask them to articulate some of their previous experiences with writing and well as something of what they bring to the course and expect from it. Good ice-breaker questions might include:
  + Discuss a book you read in the last year or two that was meaningful and explain why.
  + Tell us about one thing you really want to learn in this course this semester.
  + What is something on the Syllabus that you are concerned/have questions about?

Remember to sequence posting and responses to those postings; if you’d like students to reply to each other by greeting each other, set two deadlines—one for the initial posting and one a few days later for replies**.**

* Assign the first round of readings

**Week Two: Critical Reading**

**Due by Tuesday deadline:**

* **Readings: Text A and Text B** with annotations
* **Watch:** Instructor Video on Reading techniques and ways to annotate
* **Blog: Students respond** to each other’s introductions; greet their classmates.
* **Discussion Board 1 Initial Posts** re: Texts A and B
  + Aim to keep the questions open-ended rather than re-statements of content. Good questions might ask: What did you find most relevant about this text? What did you find most confusing? What part of the writer’s argument seems the strongest? Which part seems the weakest?
  + Indicate how long the students initial posting should be using a word count (150? 200?) or set a minimum number of sentences.
  + Describe/model how you want students to approach their posting and whether you would like them to include direct quotations.
  + Don’t be surprised if you have to clarify your expectations for this first round of Discussion Board postings. For example, if students are writing less formally than you would like, lay that requirement out clearly.

**Due by Thursday deadline:**

* **Readings: Text C** (assume too that some students will be catching up on A and B).
* **Quiz2: Texts A-C**
* **Discussion Board 1 Replies**: Ask students to respond to previous DB postings. Possibilities might include:
  + What do they understand about the texts that confused their classmates? How would they answer the questions their classmates raised? (If using this option, consider assigning the students who did the first round on Text A to answer the questions re: Text B and those who did Text A to answer questions on Text B.
  + Or: Focus the reply question on pushing the students to draw connections between the texts—what might Text C say about issues you raised with Text A or Text B?
  + As with the initial posting, set clear guidelines for the length, content, and approach of the reply.

**Week Three: Brainstorming the First Paper**

**Due by Tuesday deadline:**

* **Reading:** Paper #1 Assignment
* **Watch:** Instructor Video explaining Paper #1 Assignment
* **Blog posting:** drafting/brainstorming for Paper #1. (Could be: possible thesis and/or 2 pieces of evidence with analysis.)
* **Reading:** Thesis criteria
* **Quiz3:** Thesis criteria

**Note on Paper #1:**

At York, we see ENG 125 as a course in which the formal papers are expository essays: thesis-based arguments in which students will draw on sources to support their larger argument. We do not, in other words, see this as a course in which students write in an array of genres; rather, we see the course as a place to develop their abilities to formulate their arguments and support them across a series of essays similar in genre. While students might use comparison or narrative as a rhetorical technique within an essay, we discourage the framing of essays as “narrative” or “comparison/contrast,” etc., in ENG 125.

Particularly with the first two formal assignments in ENG 125, we also strongly encourage you to use a focused question in your prompts rather than leaving an assignment more open by calling on students to find a point of connection. Locating strong points of connection requires multiple additional stages of scaffolding and may be more suitable for the last assignment of the course when students are more familiar with the critical reading and the writing process.

For Paper #1, we suggest asking students to respond to a particular question that will allow them to draw on 2 (two) of the texts that have been read and discussed so far in the class.

For a sample assignment prompt see:

https://www.york.cuny.edu/academics/departments/english/faculty-resources/125/125assignmentsequencesample-2013.docx/view

**Due by Thursday deadline:**

* **Blog:** Peer ReviewResponses to classmate’s thesis/evidence according to criteria from Instructor. (Here the group members might respond to other group members, etc.)
* **DB2:** Integrating quotations into paragraphs exercise: assign students in groups to work on a different text or assign them a different interpretative question to answer with evidence from one or more of the texts with the aim of working on quotation integration.

**Week Four: Drafting and Peer Review**

**Due by Tuesday deadline:**

* **Paper #1 Draft** (where you have students submit this should be shaped by how you want to handle the Peer Review process; if you wish to use a low tech Peer Review method such as Blog commenting or Discussion Board thread, have the drafts submitted in that space; if you wish to use one of the Peer Review tools (PeerMark or Self and Peer Assessment, you will need to use Turnitin for the drafts or Assignments, respectively.)

**Due by Thursday deadline:**

* **Peer Reviews** of Paper #1 (Two per student).
* **Watch**: Instructor Video on How to do Peer Review

Throughout this week and next, holding Group (rather than individual) conferences using Collaborate to discuss common concerns with the paper drafts may be particularly useful. Florida State University has a good overview of how to conduct different types of group conferences:

[**https://wr.english.fsu.edu/College-Composition/The-Inkwell/Conferences**](https://wr.english.fsu.edu/College-Composition/The-Inkwell/Conferences)

**Week Five: Revising; Dipping a Toe into Research**

**Tuesday deadline:**

* **Reading**: Model Body Paragraphs
* **DB3:** What is something the model body paragraphs do well that I can use in revising my own?
* **Video**: Revising tactics & how to read and use comments

**Thursday deadline:**

* **Reading**: Text D (a short text related to the common course texts; you might guide students to locating this text in a database—this will be their first exposure to the research process; think of it as a guided treasure hunt.)

**Week Six: Final Draft; Next Round of Readings**

**Due by Tuesday deadline:**

* **Final Draft of Paper #1** with **Reflection letter/statement**
* **Reading**: Reflection statement assignment

**Due by Thursday deadline**:

* **Reading**: Text E
* **Video**: Paraphrasing and plagiarism
* **Quiz4**: Plagiarism
* **DB4**: Paraphrase practice of Text E

From here, the basic structure of the course is in place and students will have a clear sense of how it moves from one-two weeks of discussing sources to drafting, peer reviewing, and revising a paper. One additional wrinkle, in ENG 125, however, is the Annotated Bibliography Assignment and how to fit in the tasks connected to it.

**A few suggestions on the Annotated Bibliography Assignment**

* Remember that the goal of the Annotated Bibliography in ENG 125 is NOT to have students write a paper from the sources they find—they will write a research paper in ENG 126. Instead, the role of the Annotated Bibliography is to foster the development of the following research skills and processes:

1. Practicing search techniques and gaining familiarity with databases (and/or One Search, Google Scholar, etc.);
2. Pre-viewing sources;
3. Evaluating sources both for reliability and relevance.

* Aim to build in exposure to the at least the first part of this process by the mid-point of the semester. For example, the preceding activities have students gaining exposure to one database through a guided treasure hunt (finding Text D in Week 4); you might have students look for and practice locating a source related to the second grouping of texts (Texts E-G) during Week 7 or 8;
* Additional work with the Annotated Bibliography might be done in Weeks 11 and/or 12 as students work on refining key terms and evaluating sources.
* In terms of teaching citation, aim your instruction at helping students to grasp the importance of ethical citation and following the guidelines; acquaint them with the Purdue Owl, if you think it is appropriate, and show them how to think about what kind of sources they have found, but try not to get bogged down in the minutiae of MLA format. Because formats shift over time, drills about where to put a volume number will not, in the long run, be that helpful. Instead, aim to develop familiarity with why to cite and how to think about using guides to prepare those citations.