

“I am looking for someone to share in an adventure that I am arranging, and it’s very difficult to find anyone.”
— Gandalf (J.R.R. Tolkein’s *The Hobbit*)

English 374: Editing Essentials

Orlando 105
6:45 – 9:15 PM (W)

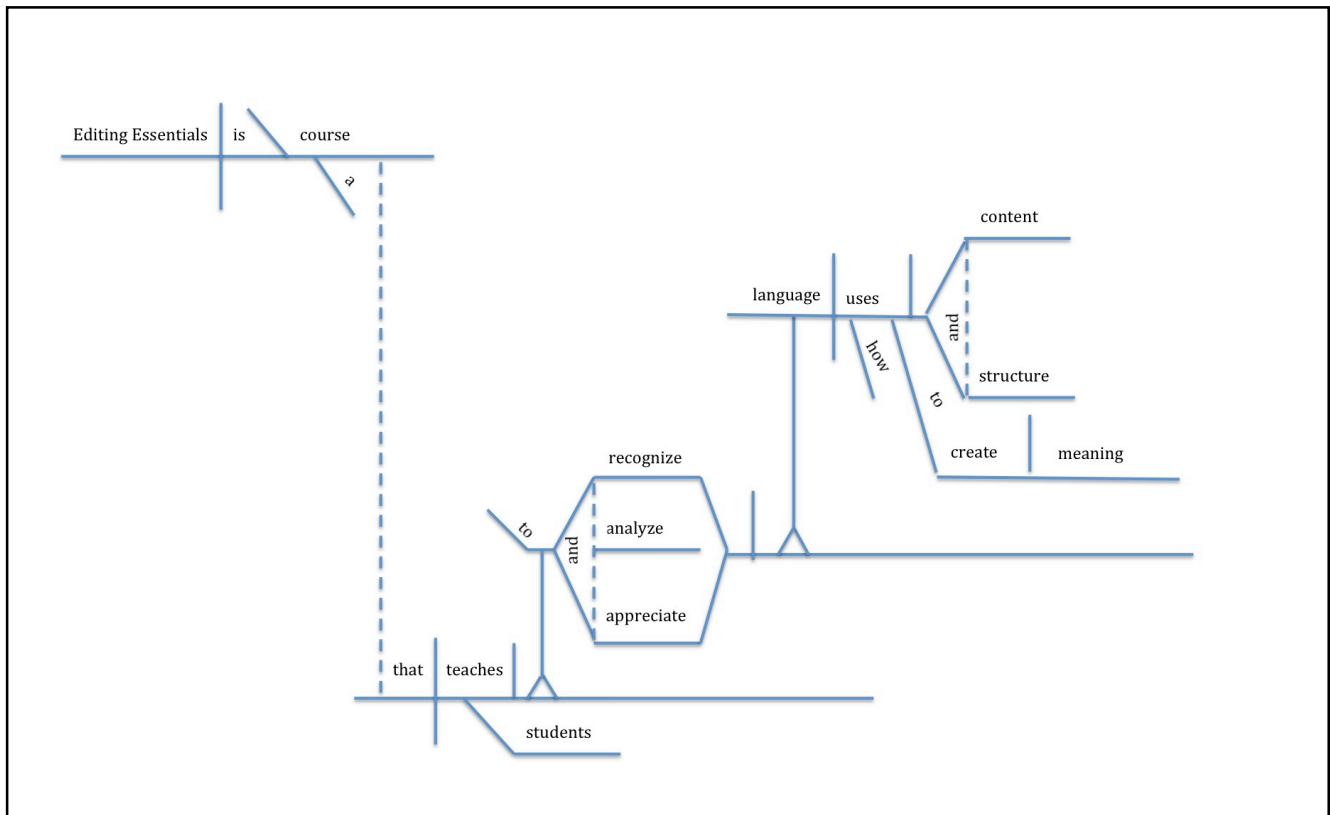
Dr. Matthew Forsythe
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(407) 691-1341

Conference Hours, Fall 2016: Monday (1-2), Wednesday (1-2, 5:30-6:30)
Additional times available by appointment

“I really do not know that anything has ever been more exciting than diagramming sentences.”
— Gertrude Stein

Course Description

Editing Essentials is a course that teaches students to recognize, analyze, and appreciate how language uses content and structure to create meaning.



Course Description, continued

“When you write,” Annie Dillard observes in *The Writing Life*, “you lay out a line of words.” But which words? In what order? How can a string of symbols narrate the vision that’s pulsing in the author’s head, demanding to spring from the imagination to the page, then—in a second, even more astounding leap—into the mind of the reader as well?

This semester, we are not concerned with that initial moment of inspiration, the burst of energy that leads to the early drafts of a work. Instead, our focus will be the revisions that transform content and structure, especially the process that refines and shapes the finished product. In particular, we will discuss three levels of editing: for **precision** (unity, order, coherence, emphasis, language); for **style** (syntax, levels of detail, tone, diction, voice); and for **correctness** (grammar and punctuation). Students will perform close analysis of their own writing as well as the writing of published authors, and they will complete exercises to strengthen their ability to edit writing at all three levels. This process will require a comprehensive study of English grammar and mechanics, allowing them to understand and articulate the choices in their prose.

This challenging course is designed for English majors/minors and Writing minors, especially students preparing to be teachers or engage in any profession that requires writing; it should appeal to anyone who desires a thorough understanding of grammar & prose style and who is eager to improve their writing skills.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Discuss aspects of *grammar*, *syntax*, and *style* as they relate to Edited American English. Identify the grammatical components of sentences and determine the rhetorical effect of sentence syntax.
2. Correctly identify and use the rules of punctuation.
3. Practice three basic levels of editing (for precision, style, and correctness) by analyzing their own writing, especially their sentence-level techniques.
4. Characterize the sentence-level style of published texts, using the appropriate vocabulary in their analysis, and correlate the style to the meaning and rhetorical effect of the passage.

Texts & Materials

Grammar By Diagram: Understanding English Grammar Through Traditional Sentence Diagramming (2nd Edition)
Cindy L. Vitto, ISBN: 9781551117782 (\$54.95)

* Be sure to obtain the correct text by Vitto, using the ISBN as a guide, because she has also published a workbook of exercises with the same title (the *Grammar By Diagram Workbook*).

Getting the Words Right: 39 Ways to Improve Your Writing
Theodore Cheney, ISBN: 9781582973586 (\$16.99)

A variety of material will also be archived on the course Blackboard site, including excerpts from grammar handbooks, essays about style, short pieces of published nonfiction (which we will analyze for their sentence-level style), and student writing samples that we will use for editing practice.

Course Requirements

Exams:

On three occasions, you will complete exams that test your understanding of the grammatical principles we have studied. These exams will emphasize technical problems, questions, and diagrams that cover the material and exercises in *Grammar by Diagram*. They will also include written responses to topics in *Getting the Words Right* and the essays that we have discussed as a class. Each exam may include a sample passage to edit as a take-home prompt, and the final exam will include additional take-home responses that encompass the course as a whole. Due to the nature of the class, each test will be cumulative in nature: while it will emphasize the most recent material, these topics will build on lessons from earlier in the semester.

**Practice tests will be provided before each exam to acquaint students with the range of topics and style of questions, but they will not contain the exact problems or the specific sentences to be diagrammed.*

Style Analyses:

On three occasions, you will conduct a self-analysis of your writing, applying the concepts of the course to your own work.* Each analysis will address the topics that the course has examined to-date; it will consist of a **commentary** (1-2 pages) that analyzes larger trends in the prose style and **descriptive annotations** (5+ annotations) that examine specific moments within the text. The assignment for the third analysis will include several creative options in addition to the regular approach.

** These pieces of writing that you analyze are not original compositions for English 374. Most students use essays that they have submitted in previous classes, reflecting on the writing and passages they would now change, given their improved editing skills. I will be evaluating your comments and insights about the prose, not the original paper itself.*

Reading Worksheets:

To prepare for most class periods, you will complete a **Reading Worksheet** that requires you to practice the skills from the assigned readings and respond to significant moments in the prose. The exact layout will vary, depending on the material assigned for that session, but they will typically include the following elements:

- 1) exercises from Vitto's text (especially sentence diagramming);
- 2) sentence imitations;
- 3) application of Cheney's lessons to your own writing; and
- 4) analysis of the sentence-level prose in the assigned essays & excerpts from student work.

Class Participation:

Your contributions to our class sessions will factor into my evaluation of your performance in the course. Each class session will involve a significant number of sample problems, board work, editing exercises, and discussion of the readings. In addition, each student will give two informal teaching presentations: in the first, you will discuss a passage that you admire by a favorite author, applying the principles of the course in your analysis; in the second, you will lead a review session on one of the topics covered during the semester.

Grade Distribution

Exam #1: 15%

Exam #2: 15%

Final Exam: 25%

Style Analyses #1-3: 15%

5% each

Reading Worksheets: 20%

Class Activities & Presentations: 10%

Grading Scale

At the end of the semester, the following scale will be used to assign marks:

A	94+
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
F	Below 60



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Attendance Policy: The success of our course depends on the community that we establish, so regular attendance is essential. It is impossible to earn strong marks for Class Participation if you are not present to participate, and students who miss the extensive practice and instruction in each session will find themselves underprepared for the exams. Furthermore, **if you are absent for more than two of our class sessions, your final average in the course will be penalized by two points for every additional class that you miss.** All absences count: they are neither excused nor unexcused. The only exceptions are students who are travelling on official, documented Rollins business or students who must be absent for a religious holiday. These students are required to notify the instructor in advance and provide appropriate documentation.

Classroom Etiquette: Maintain a professional standard of conduct: arrive on time, prepare for class, bury your cell phones (unless we're using them for an in-class exercise), and respect the contributions of your peers. Excessive tardiness will be counted as an absence, and students whose behavior disrupts or disrespects the learning experience of the class can expect to receive poor marks for class participation.

Consider yourself a participant rather than a spectator, and check your ego at the door. Ask questions about the homework problems that confuse you, and remember that diagramming is often a process of trial and error. If you embrace that process, rather than fretting about giving a wrong answer or making a mistake in class, you'll find our sessions much more enjoyable. Approach each class session as an athlete musician might approach a day of practice — a chance to develop and refine your skills, honing them in advance of the exams and style analyses (the games and performances) that demonstrate what you've learned.

The Fine Print

Laptop Policy:

You may utilize laptops or tablets for activities **directly related** to our course, but only if you refrain from multitasking — rude behavior that damages your credibility as a dedicated student. I will not always interrupt class to correct unprofessional conduct, such as texting, sleeping, or surfing the web, but these actions will be noted as a clear sign of your disinterest in the course and affect your mark for Class Participation.

Late Work:

Unless prior arrangements have been made, I'll apply a penalty for late assignments. However, it is better to submit a late Reading Worksheet for partial credit than to leave it incomplete. Make-up exams will only be given in extreme circumstances, and students will complete a different set of questions than their peers.

Conferences:

I encourage you to meet with me throughout the semester to discuss your work or ask questions about lessons that confuse you. I will not predict a grade that a project might receive, but I'll be eager to offer advice. Make an appointment if you have questions about specific topic or the course as a whole.

The **Writing Center** is a resource that I encourage you to utilize this term. Many of the tutors can help you with our course, but I would recommend Michele Toney in particular. She is extremely knowledgeable about grammar and familiar with our textbooks and assignments. Tutoring can be arranged with Michele at the following times under her Writing Center schedule: Monday (4–6 pm) and Thursday (4:30–6:30 pm, 7–9 pm). Additional hours may be possible by appointment. Jeannine Ortega is another tutor with expertise in our subject.

Grammar Bootcamp:

If you haven't studied grammar in years and feel that you are underprepared for the challenge of a 300-level class on grammar and style, you might wish to postpone taking English 374 and start with English 206, Grammar Bootcamp, which previous students have used as a foundation for success in Editing Essentials.

Grammar By Diagram Workbook:

If you're interested in additional practice, some students have found Vitto's *Grammar By Diagram Workbook* to be a useful resource, and I will often utilize its questions during in-class exercises and on sample exams (but not on the actual exams themselves).

Communication:

I will use Blackboard and your Rollins email address to provide announcements throughout the semester. Students are responsible for checking their Rollins email account for class information on a regular basis.

Sample Passages & Pedagogical Research:

Throughout the semester, I will be utilizing sample passages from your assignments for discussions with the entire class. These examples will be used to teach principles of writing. In my own scholarship and writing, especially about teaching pedagogy, I include narratives about the classes I teach and the work that my students submit. Thus I reserve the right to describe our semester together in future essays about teaching.

Academic Honor Code Reaffirmation:

Membership in the student body of Rollins College carries with it an obligation, and requires a commitment, to act with honor in all things. The student commitment to uphold the values of honor—honesty, trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility—particularly manifests itself in two public aspects of student life. First, as part of the admission process to the College, students agree to commit themselves to the Honor Code. Then, as part of the matriculation process during Orientation, students sign a more detailed pledge to uphold the Honor Code and to conduct themselves honorably in all their activities, both academic and social, as a Rollins student. A student signature on the following pledge is a binding commitment by the student that lasts for his or her entire tenure at Rollins College: “The development of the virtues of Honor and Integrity are integral to a Rollins College education and to membership in the Rollins College community. Therefore, I, a student of Rollins College, pledge to show my commitment to these virtues by abstaining from any lying, cheating, or plagiarism in my academic endeavors and by behaving responsibly, respectfully and honorably in my social life and in my relationships with others. This pledge is reinforced every time a student submits work for academic credit as his/her own. Students shall add to the paper, quiz, test, lab report, etc., the handwritten signed statement: ‘**On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance on this work.**’” Material submitted electronically should contain the pledge; submission implies signing the pledge.

Credit Hour Statement for Rollins Courses Meeting 150 Minutes Weekly for Four Credit Hours during 15-Week Semesters:

This course is a four credit-hour course. The value of four credit hours results from work expected of enrolled students both inside and outside of the classroom. Rollins' faculty require that students average at least 2½ hours of outside work for every hour of scheduled class time. In this course, the additional outside of class expectations include the Reading Worksheets, the Style Analyses, and the extensive practice and study that a course in editing will require.

Title IX Statement:

Rollins College is committed to making its campus a safe place for students. If you tell any of your faculty about sexual misconduct involving members of the campus community, your professors are required to report this information to the Title IX Coordinator. Your faculty member can help connect you with the Coordinator, Oriana Jiménez (TitleIX@rollins.edu or 407-691-1773). She will provide you with information, resources and support. If you would prefer to speak to someone on campus confidentially, please call the Wellness Center at 407-628-6340. They are not required to report any information you share with the Office of Title IX.

Sexual misconduct includes sexual harassment, stalking, intimate partner violence (such as dating or domestic abuse), sexual assault, and any discrimination based on your sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation that creates a hostile environment. For information, visit <http://www.rollins.edu/titleix/>.

Disability Services:

Rollins College is committed to equal access and inclusion for all students, faculty and staff. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 create a foundation of legal obligations to provide an accessible educational environment that does not discriminate against persons with disabilities. It is the spirit of these laws which guides the college toward expanding access in all courses and programs, utilizing innovative instructional design, and identifying and removing barriers whenever possible.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of academic accommodations in order to fully participate in your classes, please contact the Disability Services Office, located in the Mills Memorial Building, Room 217, as soon as possible. You are encouraged to schedule a Welcome Meeting by filling out the "First Time Users" form on the website: <http://www.rollins.edu/disability-services/> and/or reach out by phone or email: 407-975-6463 or Access@Rollins.edu.

All test-taking accommodations requested for this course must first be approved through the Disability Services Office (DSO) and scheduled online through *Accommodate* at least 72 hours before the exam. Official accommodation letters must be received by and discussed with the faculty in advance. There will no exceptions given unless previously approved by the DSO with documentation of the emergency situation. We highly recommend making all testing accommodations at the beginning of the semester. DSO staff are available to assist with this process.

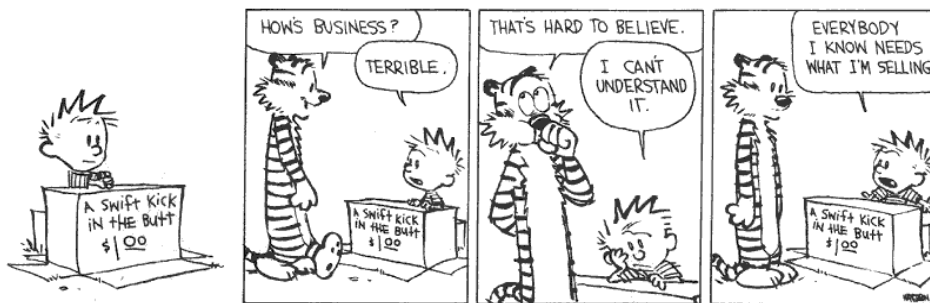
Course and Instructor Evaluation:

At the end of each semester, students are asked to evaluate the course and instructor. These evaluations are extremely valuable in the teaching and learning process on our campus. Student evaluations help assess student perceptions of classroom learning and often lead to improved teaching. Your feedback is important, and Rollins students are encouraged to be honest, fair, and reflective in the evaluation process.

The online evaluative survey is anonymous. Students are never identified as the respondent. Instead, each student's comments are assigned a random number. You will be asked to rate your course and instructor on a numerical scale and through narrative comments.

The online Course and Instructor Evaluation (CIE) process opens at 8:00 a.m. on the first scheduled date. It remains open for a period of 14 days (2 weeks) until 12:00 a.m. (midnight) on the final scheduled date. The evaluation period ends prior to the start of final examinations, and faculty cannot access completed evaluations until 10 days after the end of final exams. Students will receive one email at the start of the CIE period and a final reminder the day before the CIE period ends. Students who complete evaluations for all classes will be able to view grades ten days before students who do not complete an evaluation form.

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations announced by the instructor will be necessary and inevitable.



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A Challenge: I expect you to work hard, both individually and as a community. Students should be committed to the enterprise, eager to talk about reading and writing, and willing to revise their work. In addition, given our focus on editing prose for precision, style, and correctness, I assume that the topic interests you, whether it's a field you've previously explored or you're considering it for the first time. Approach your work seriously, but not so seriously that you won't take risks or engage your imagination. Demand excellence, both of the course and your own contributions to the endeavor. Work hard, pay attention, and balance your industry with a sense of humor. I'll do my best to make this an interesting, challenging, and memorable semester.

"When you wake up in the morning, Pooh," said Piglet at last, "what's the first thing you say to yourself?"
"What's for breakfast?" said Pooh. "What do you say, Piglet?"
"I say, I wonder what's going to happen exciting today?" said Piglet.
Pooh nodded thoughtfully.
"It's the same thing," he said.

A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh*

English 374 – Course Overview

Consult the Course Calendar for each unit to determine the specific reading and writing assignments for each class session.

English 374, Part I: “Do you like sentences?” (August 24 – September 21)

Throughout the semester, our study of editing will involve two parallel tracks: Cheney’s *Getting the Words Right* will guide our discussions of editing for precision and style, and Vitto’s *Grammar by Diagram* will provide the vocabulary for discussing these choices and describe the grammatical principles behind editing for correctness. In the opening weeks, we’ll focus on Section I (Reduce) in *Getting the Words Right*, and you’ll learn the ten basic sentence patterns from *Grammar by Design*. We’ll also sample texts by a wide range of authors, hoping to learn from their prose style.

In preparation for each class period, you’ll complete a Reading Worksheet that practices many of these skills, and our sessions will often review and expand on the exercises that you completed as homework.

August 24	Introduction to the Course
August 31	The Eight Parts of Speech (<i>Grammar by Diagram</i>) Step One: Reduce (<i>Getting the Words Right</i>)
September 7	Basic Sentence Patterns for <i>Be</i> and Linking Verbs (<i>Grammar by Diagram</i>) Step One: Reduce (<i>Getting the Words Right</i>)
September 14	Basic Sentence Patterns for Intransitive and Transitive Verbs (<i>Grammar by Diagram</i>)
September 21	Exam #1

Style Analysis #1 must be submitted to Dr. Forsythe by the last week of September.

* On two occasions this semester, students will be responsible for teaching a portion of the class: once to discuss the style of a prose passage that they admire, and once to lead a short review session on a topic we’ve covered. These presentations will occur throughout the term. Sign-ups for your presentation dates will occur in the opening weeks of the course.

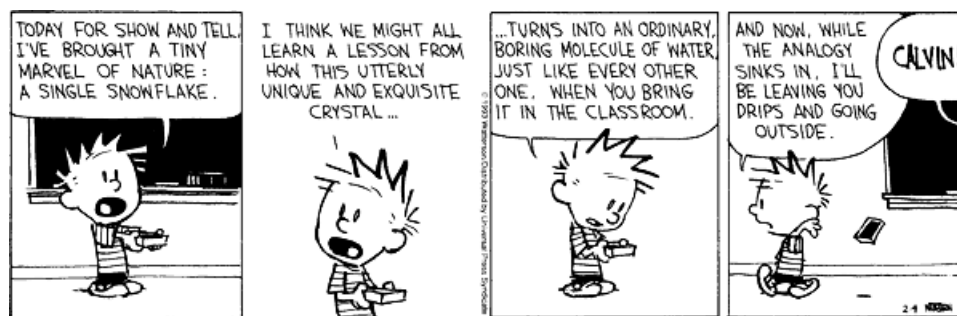
English 374, Part II: “Conjunction Junction, What’s Your Function?” (September 28 – October 26)

As the semester progresses, we’ll move from descriptive grammar (identifying the parts) to prescriptive grammar (discussing how they are used). We’ll focus on Section II (Rearrange) in *Getting the Words Right*, and you’ll observe the increasing complexity as clauses are added to the basic sentence patterns in *Grammar by Diagram*. We’ll continue to sample texts by a wide range of authors, hoping to learn from their prose style, and complete Reading Worksheets to prepare for each class.

September 28	Usage Problems Associated with Adjectives and Adverbs (<i>Grammar by Diagram</i>) Combining and Expanding Patterns: Compound Structures (<i>Grammar by Diagram</i>) Step Two: Rearrange for Unity (<i>Getting the Words Right</i>)
October 5	Combining and Expanding Patterns: Complex Sentences with Noun Clauses (<i>Grammar by Diagram</i>) Step Two: Rearrange for Coherence (<i>Getting the Words Right</i>)

- October 12** Combining and Expanding Patterns: Complex Sentences with Adverb Clauses
(*Grammar by Diagram*)
Step Two: Rearrange for Emphasis (*Getting the Words Right*)
- October 19** Combining and Expanding Patterns: Complex Sentences with Relative Clauses
(*Grammar by Diagram*)
Combining and Expanding Patterns: Compound-Complex Sentences (*Grammar by Diagram*)
- October 26** Exam #2

Style Analysis #2 must be submitted to Dr. Forsythe by the first week of November.



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English 374, Part III: “Let’s Eat Grandma” (November 2 – December 7)

The beginning of November will emphasize the topics of verbs and verbals — verb forms (infinitives, gerunds, and participles) that operate as other parts of speech. The course will conclude with an overview of the punctuation and usage rules that stem from the grammar we have studied throughout the semester.

- November 2** Usage Problems of Case, Agreement, and Consistency (*Grammar by Diagram*)
Verbs (*Grammar by Diagram*)
Step Three: Reword (*Getting the Words Right*)
- November 9** Verbals (*Grammar by Diagram*)
Usage Problems Associated with Verbs and Verbals (*Grammar by Diagram*)
- November 16** Punctuation and Capitalization (*Grammar by Diagram*)
Step Three: Reword (*Getting the Words Right*)
- November 23** No Class – Thanksgiving Break
- November 30** Sentence Transformations (*Grammar by Diagram*)

Style Analysis #3 must be submitted to Dr. Forsythe by the last week of November.

- December 7** Final Exam

“I do hope this is an interesting game, otherwise the afternoon will be so terribly dull.”
— Milo (Norton Juster’s *The Phantom Tollbooth*)

English 374: Course Calendar, August 24 – September 21

Do you like sentences?

Assignments due on Wednesday, August 31:

1. Review the Syllabus & other handouts from the opening day, and complete the Course Questionnaire.
2. *Grammar by Diagram* — read the Introduction (9-15) and Chapter One: “The Eight Parts of Speech” (17-44).
3. *Getting the Words Right* — read the Introduction (1-4) and begin Section One (“Reduce” 5-36).
4. Open the handout “**Reading Worksheet – August 31**” (Blackboard), and follow its instructions. Email the completed copy to Dr. Forsythe, and **bring a printed copy to submit in class.**

Assignments due on Wednesday, September 7:

1. *Grammar by Diagram* — read Chapter Two: “Basic Sentence Patterns for *Be* and Linking Verbs” (45-62).
2. *Getting the Words Right* — finish reading Section One (“Reduce” 37-42).
3. Open the handout “**Reading Worksheet – September 7**” (Blackboard), and follow its instructions. Email the completed copy to Dr. Forsythe, and **bring a printed copy to submit in class.**
4. If you have not signed up for the dates for your two presentations, you should select them by September 7.

Assignments due on Wednesday, September 14:

1. *Grammar by Diagram* — read Chapter Three: “Basic Sentence Patterns for Intransitive and Transitive Verbs” (63-99).
2. Open the handout “**Reading Worksheet – September 14**” (Blackboard), and follow its instructions. Email the completed copy to Dr. Forsythe, and **bring a printed copy to submit in class.**

Assignments due on Wednesday, September 21:

1. Study for **Exam #1**, which will occur on September 21. A Study Guide and Practice Exam can be found on Blackboard.

Looking Ahead: Style Analysis #1 must be submitted to Dr. Forsythe by the last week of September.