

Dear Freshman English students,

Welcome to the Freshman English Program. Our courses in critical reading and writing will help you to develop an active and authoritative relationship to college texts and assignments. They will emphasize your role as an interpreter of what you read and help you to consider where your interpretations come from and how they might be expanded, intensified or challenged. Our goal is to show you ways of making sense of college reading by becoming deeply engaged with it through writing. As a result, the work you do in college can become less of a chore and more of a chance to explore the ideas of others and to create ideas of your own.

While each instructor articulates specific requirements in a course syllabus, all courses in the Freshman English program adhere to the general guidelines outlined below. *We ask that you read this letter carefully, sign it, and return it to your professor.*

What is Freshman English at UMass Boston?

English 101 and 102 are courses designed to deepen your academic reading and writing capabilities in preparation for further study throughout the university. As such, these courses focus on reading essays and writing analytically using source texts. The primary emphasis in these courses is neither literature nor personal writing (unlike many high school English courses). First year literature courses from other colleges and universities are not equivalent to our Freshman English courses (and do not receive transfer credit). Students will do substantial daily homework, including reading and writing of extended prose. Students write 3-5 formal papers, depending on the number of drafts and readings that precede them and revisions that follow. Students are expected to come to class with all necessary materials for participating actively.

What are the attendance policies?

Because Freshman English courses proceed by sequential reading, writing, and discussion activities, your consistent attendance is required. Students with more than 4 absences in Tuesday-Thursday or Monday-Wednesday classes should not expect to pass the course. Students with more than 6 absences in Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes should not expect to pass the course. Students with more than 2 absences in classes that meet once a week should not expect to pass the course. Please note that **EVEN WITH A LETTER FROM A DOCTOR**, any student who misses more than 15% of the class time should not expect to pass the class (because he or she will have missed so much of the learning that goes on in class). If you must be absent for more than one day, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor.

Completion and Timely Submission of Work: Because this course is a planned sequence of writing, you must write all of the assignments to pass the course, and you will need to write them within the schedule of the course. Faculty members may refuse to accept late work and students who frequently pass work in late should not expect to pass the course.

Tardiness: The work that takes place in class is essential to your progress as a writer; hence, if you are repeatedly late for class, the instructor may lower your grade.

Cell phones: Cell phones should be off and headphones put away at all times. Text messaging in class is not permitted.

Student conduct and plagiarism: Students must abide by the University's code on student conduct, including policies on plagiarism and academic honesty. Any student who plagiarizes work should expect to fail the course and may be asked to leave the university. Please read the code of student conduct at:

http://www.umb.edu/student_services/student_rights/code_conduct.html

Meeting with instructors: All faculty members have office hours and are available to address any concerns you may have. If you have questions about coursework, grades, or any other matter, please meet with the instructor. If you would like to discuss your concern further, you may schedule a meeting with the Director of Freshman English. Only the instructor of the course can determine a student's grade for that course.

Course withdrawals: If you have not adhered to the above policies or you are in danger of failing the class, your instructor will ask you to withdraw from the class before the course withdrawal deadline.

For a fuller description of the program goals, please read your syllabus carefully and go to the Freshman English website: <http://www.freshman.umb.edu>

Please return a signed copy of this letter to your instructor to indicate you have read and agreed to these policies:

Name: _____

Date: _____