ENG 121 – Introductory Video

Welcome to Academic Writing. I am Professor Valerie Kasper, and I may or may not be your English instructor for the next eight weeks. Every semester students ask me to justify why English is a required class. Why must they spend at least two semesters learning English? It’s a valid question, and here is the answer.

The ability to write well is not only important, but in many aspects of life it is necessary. From the police officer who writes an accident report to the doctor who writes medical reports. From the disgruntled consumer who writes a complaint letter to the individual who fills out an application for grad school, a job, or the military. Each of these people needs to be able to write well. Because….what if they don’t write well? What is your impression of the candidate who applies for a job with a resume that contains misspelled words? Or, how about the employee whose reports are confusing and sloppily written? Better yet, what do you think of the boss who is unable to write a simple memo without mistakes? Hmmm?

My goal during the next eight weeks is to help each of you gain the confidence and skills you need in your writing to use words, sentences, paragraphs, and punctuation correctly so that you can write effectively and maybe even begin to enjoy writing a little. And for those of you who already have good English skills, this course will sharpen those skills and make you a better writer.

Through the next eight weeks we will examine six different modes or styles of writing: process analysis, narrative, compare and contrast, cause and effect, argument and definition. We will carefully analyze the characteristics and structures of each style. In addition, we will look at the purpose of each style and learn when to use it. We also will focus on the process of writing; specifically, we will learn the four stages of the writing process: pre-writing, drafting, revision and editing. Furthermore, we will concentrate on grammatical elements that will improve your writing, and we will discover the pitfalls of plagiarism.

What I need you to realize and understand is that good writing requires an investment of time. All writers have different methods and styles of writing. Some writers spend a great deal of time in the preplanning stage; whereas, other writers spend the bulk of their time revising. But, no matter where they spend their time, they WILL spend a prodigious amount of time writing in order to craft an effective essay.

So, with that said, take a deep breath, grab a positive attitude, and let’s get started….