FORMAL WRITTEN CRITIQUE WRITING REQUIREMENTS

1. Submit only a finished-product; do not submit essays that are still in the early draft stages. Only your best work should be submitted.

2. Follow all rules and guidelines of conventional essay writing. Check for spelling, grammar, typographical errors, fragmented or run-on sentences. In short, proofread your work.

3. Avoid ending sentences improperly, such as “is, are, with, etc.”

4. Do not use colloquial terms or slang. This is a formal essay that requires professional writing.

5. Provide an introductory paragraph that brings the reader into the essay. The introduction should “hook” the reader. A thesis statement summarizing what your essay is about should be included in your introduction. At the end of your introduction, provide a brief overview of what your essay will cover.

6. Avoid page-long paragraphs. Overly long paragraphs tend to have more than one idea in them. Stay focused on one idea throughout each paragraph.

7. The first sentence in each paragraph should be the thesis statement of that paragraph. All other sentences in that paragraph should support the first sentence.

8. Write out numbers under 100 (e.g., 23 should be written as twenty-three).

9. Use words correctly. Many students make mistakes using “affect” (which is a verb) and “effect” (which is a noun). For example, “The constant use of vocalized pauses affected the speaker’s ability to maintain the audience’s attention” versus “The overuse of vocalized pauses created a negative effect on the speech.”

10. Use only real words. Many students say “supposibly” when, in fact, there is no such word. The word is “supposedly.”

11. Avoid many little words (MLW). Writing with many little words results in passive writing. To accomplish this, count the number of one-syllable words in each sentence. Any sentence having more than four one-syllable words in a row should be rewritten. For example, “The speaker took too long to make his point” uses seven one-syllable words in a row. Instead, this sentence could be restated as, “The speaker lacked economical word choice in his speech.”

12. Do not use contractions. Say “should not” instead of “shouldn’t.” Quotation marks go on the outside of punctuation. (See the example for “shouldn’t” above).