

PROSPECTIVE COVER LETTER WORKSHOP

ENGL 108 / SEC. H & I / SUMMER LEAP 2009 / OLDHAM & RUBASKY / CHANG & LEE



Today's three-part workshop is designed to help you understand the expectations of the Prospective Essay, to further generate and hone ideas for what your cover letter will include, and to create a writing plan to give you the steps and strategies needed to complete the assignment with grace and flair.

Part I: The Assignment Sheet

Hopefully, by now, you are adept close readers of assignment sheets—you have gotten at least two or three a week! As you know, an assignment sheet is more than just a simple list of directions, dos and don'ts, and questions and warnings. Though assignment sheets will vary among classes and instructors, all reveal the terms, ideas, questions, issues, theories, and interests important to a course. In other words, the assignment sheet can be the occasion for brainstorming, for claim development, and for outlining your writing.

Look at the Prospective Essay assignment sheet. Underline any important parts, circle important words or terms, and annotate your text. Look for headings—these are often the crucial parts of an assignment. Write any questions you have in the margins. Summarize the most important things the assignment is saying or asking for.

What are the specific goals of the assignment? Why is the assignment important?

What is the structure of the assignment?

What does the assignment require you to include? What kinds of support or evidence or details?

By what criteria will you be evaluated?

Part II: Prospective Cover Letter Brainstorming

Now that you understand the assignment, one of the first steps in the writing process is brainstorming. You should have completed the Prospective Brainstorming Worksheet over the weekend. In your small groups, go over each section of the worksheet sharing what you think is the most pertinent information, experience, anecdote, or evidence. Discuss how you might incorporate that piece of evidence in your overall cover letter. Consider and talk about the following:

1) What is your writing process? What are the recurring themes, issues, or concerns in your process? How might this be a way to frame your cover letter, to serve as an introduction?

2) What are your top Strengths? What are your top Difficulties? How would you incorporate these things into your cover letter? How do they show metacognition, self-reflection, and self-assessment?

3) How do you want to organize your letter? By course outcome? By assignment? By chronology? Why?

4) What have you learned all quarter? What are the most important take-away skills, lessons, experiences you've had? How might this be a way to close your cover letter, to serve as a conclusion?

