Credits: This is essentially a three credit course. A few students may take it for four credits if they have written permission from their plan sponsor or class teacher to work on a plan or term paper with my help. Students may add a credit late in the term, but barring family emergency or serious health problems, no credits may be dropped after the first week of classes.

Grades: All papers, stylistic exercises, quizzes and in-class writing assignments are graded on a 1-100 scale. Paper grades are lowered 1 point for each error in spelling, punctuation, and grammar (85-10 = 75). If the errors are corrected with a writing tutor within ten days, the subtracted points are returned (85). In order to qualify for returned points, the corrected paper must be signed by a tutor. A paper which as not been corrected will receive either the grade it merited after the subtraction (75, in this case), or a 60, if the original had many errors (85-50).

Because the course emphasizes the process (as opposed to the product) of writing, students are expected to re-write each paper at least once. If the grade on the second attempt is higher than the grade on the first, the second grade stands. If it is lower, the first grade stands. A re-written paper will not be accepted unless the student has had a conference with Laura on the first draft.

A paper that is going irredeemably wrong should be submitted as is on the day it is due, with a cover page that says HELP! This procedure assures the paper a 68 (D+) and a speedy reading, so the student can meet with Laura and resubmit it without penalty within three or four days.

Stylistic exercises may be corrected once for a higher grade, but the two grades will be averaged: i.e., 60 + 90 = 150/2 = 75. Grammar exams and quizzes cannot be revised for a higher grade.

Work submitted late: each student gets a free, previously-arranged extension on one paper or one stylistic exercise per semester. Unexcused late papers lose 2 points per day; if they are submitted over twelve days late, they receive an automatic 60. Unexcused late stylistic exercises lose 3 points per day. All papers are due at noon; a paper is not counted "late" if it reaches Laura before she leaves campus (usually about 4). Students who turn in all papers and exercises on time will have 1.5 points added to their final grade.

Attendance involves preparation as well as physical presence. Both are necessary to the success of the class. Perfect, prepared attendance raises the final grade 1.5 points. Two (excused) absences are forgiven; a third excused absence lowers the final grade 1 point out of 100. Each absence after that lowers the final grade by 2 points out of 100. In general, I ask students who are chronically unprepared, or who miss more than five classes, to withdraw from the course. The only acceptable excuse for cutting a workshop or coming to one without a paper is a doctor-signed certification of bubonic plague.

Texts:
Laura Stevenson, Grammar, Style, and Structure (GSS)
Xeroxed exercises from Classical Rhetoric and the Modern Student
Course Plan

January 29-31. Elements of Style
    T. Introductory: spelling test, discussion of GSS, Chapter 1
    Th. Basic sentences: GSS, Chapters 2-3. Come to class with the exercises done.

February 5-7. Syntax: baptism by fire
    T. GSS, Chapter 4. Bring completed exercises to class. (Receive Churchill paragraph)
    Th. Stylistic analysis: Churchill paragraph.

February 12-14. Nouns, Pronouns
    T. Nouns: GSS, Chapter 5. [SE8]
    Stylistic exercises 2-7 due Wednesday, February 13 at noon, D29A
    Th. Pronouns: GSS, Chapter 7. [SE12]

February 19-21. Paragraph Development and Verbs
    T. Paragraph Development discussion (Review GSS, Chapter I, especially 9-10).
    Th. Verbs: GSS, Chapters 6 (Indicative) and Chapter 10 (Modes). [SE 9-11].

    T. Workshop on paragraph exercise: bring 2 copies of your efforts
    Paragraph essays due Wednesday, February 27 at noon, D29A
    Th. Verbs: GSS, Chapter 10 (continued), and Chapter 11 (Passive Voice). [SE 13]

March 4-6 Compound sentences, comma splices, and other oddities.
    T. Vermont Town Meeting Day: No Class.
    Th. Compound sentences: GSS, Chapter 8. [SE 14]

March 11-13. Complex sentences
    T. Complex sentences: GSS, Chapter 9. [SE 15-17]
    Th. Adjectives and adverbs: GSS, Chapter 12.

March 17-28 Spring Break

April 1-3. Phrases, clauses, style
    T. Phrases and parallel structure: GSS, Chapter 13. [SE 18-25]
    Stylistic Exercises 8-17 due Wednesday, April 2 at noon, D29A
    Th. Clauses and other corporations: GSS, Chapter 14. [SE 26-30]

April 8-10. Review and grammar test
    Th. Grammar exam in class

April 15-17. Stylistic analysis
    T. Workshop on Stylistic Exercises 18-30: bring 2 copies of your efforts
    Stylistic Exercises 18-31 due Wednesday, April 16 at noon, D29A
    Th. Elements of stylistic analysis: rhetorical tropes and schemes

April 22-24 Stylistic analysis beginnings
    T. Stylistic analysis walk-through.
    Th. Stylistic Analysis conferences

April 29 -May 1 Stylistic Analysis marathon
    T. Stylistic Analysis Workshop. Bring two copies of your completed paper.
    Stylistic Analysis due Wednesday, April 30, at noon, D29A.
    Th. Punctuation special: dialogue and other problems.

May 6. Last class: teaching evaluations, paper hand-back.
Elements of Style Paper Topics

Paper 1. Paragraph development strategies. 5-8 pages. Due February 27 at noon.

Choose a concrete noun (cat, shoe, sword -- any noun you think will survive the treatment. Marvelous and entertaining exercises of this type have been written on bourbon, beer, cigarettes), and run it though the rhetorical sequence described in GSS, page 10. This process will involve writing 8 paragraphs, each one of which develops ideas about the noun in a different way, then two 3-4 paragraph essays at the end, one for persuasion and one for refutation.

The paragraphs must be labeled (Definition, Description, etc.) and they must not be linked; that is, don't try to make the ten paragraphs into a cohesive essay with an introduction, body and conclusion. If you are clever, however, you can use your definition paragraph to set up the tone and style of the exercise and develop the ideas it suggests in the ensuing paragraphs.

Paper 2. Stylistic Analysis. 5-10 pages. Due April 30 at noon.

Using the format from the xerox of Classical Rhetoric and the Modern Student, 374-77, analyze the style of three paragraphs: choose between those by Churchill (414), Gibbon (428), Lincoln (432), Wollenstonecraft (429), Baldwin (436), Hemingway (434). Then take a passage of roughly equal length from your own writing and subject it to the same analysis. Having done that, discuss the way the style in all four passages affects the reader's apprehension of their content. If you find a major difference between your style and that of the other writers, comment on it.