The main goal of this course is to learn how to analyze the structure, or syntax, of English sentences. The method will be sentence diagramming, a technique for identifying and separating the elements of a sentence—the subject, object, verb, conjunctions and clauses—in a graphic arrangement. We will only occasionally be concerned with English usage (choosing the appropriate word, on the basis of signification or register), and rarely with punctuation and capitalization.

The course is intended to be a writing course as well as a grammar course. To many, the word “grammar” refers to a series of rules that classify a given word or sentence construction as correct or incorrect. English teachers are often portrayed as sticklers or pedants who attempt to enforce grammar rules upon students and the public. Grammar is more accurately understood, however, as a dynamic set of cognitive structures that are shared by all native speakers of a language, and acquired by second-language learners. There are many theories among linguists about how best to explain these cognitive structures, but this is not a linguistics course and we will not explore that topic. Rest assured that diagramming sentences only scratches the surface of grammar’s complexity.

A secondary goal of the course is for students (whether English majors or others) to improve their writing by learning how to construct better sentences. Rather than simply try to respond to the admonitions of writing and literature teachers who complain about awkward or flabby writing and mark up grammar and punctuation errors without explaining the reasons behind their complaints, students need to learn what lies behind their instructors' comments. They need to see how clarity and simplicity can be achieved in a sentence, and then build upon those skills to craft strong paragraphs and arguments.

Textbooks available at the Duck Store:

*Grammar by Diagram Workbook*, by Cindy L. Vitto (Broadview Press, 2009)

You will need to bring the *Grammar by Diagram* textbook to class every day. You can keep the workbook at home and complete suggested homework problems in it. The homework will not be graded. The *Transitive Vampire* book is recommended as an additional resource for students. It offers a slightly different approach to teaching the parts of speech and sentence types, and its entertaining sample sentences will amuse you.

Our class meetings will unfold more like a math course than a literature course. We will tackle problems, review possible solutions, and evaluate why a given answer is correct or incorrect. We will spend much of the time working through exercises in our textbooks, as a class or in small groups. I see five parts to our routine for each class meeting:

Part 1 – I will introduce the key concepts from the chapters of *Grammar by Diagram*. Students are required to read these pages ahead of class meetings, and work through at least some of the exercises in the chapters, so as to be prepared to solve the exercise problems in class.

Part 2 – After we review the concepts, students will work in small groups on the exercises in *Grammar by Diagram*, or on additional exercises. Students may be asked to come up to the blackboards to write the answers or diagrams, and then we will all discuss or review them.

Part 3 – On some days we will take a break from the textbook for activities and applications of the grammatical concepts in literature, spoken language, or stylistics.
Part 4 – Homework is assigned for the next class period, from the Grammar by Diagram Workbook (with the orange photo on the cover, and the lightweight paper). Both the workbook and the textbook include answers to nearly all exercises in the back of the volumes.

Part 5 – You will not be required to turn in this homework, but you will need to do it to prepare for the quizzes, which will consist, for the most part, of exercises copied from or modeled upon those in the homework. Quizzes will come roughly once a week except during week 1.

Assignments and Grades
Seven quizzes: 8 points each
Writing self-analysis: 8 points
Midterm Exam: 12 points
Final Exam: 24 points
The writing self-analysis, due November 27th, is an opportunity to examine your own writing to find repeated patterns and potential problems that you can work to improve on. A week before it is due, we may warm up for this assignment by workshopping a peer’s writing in class.

Attendance and Participation:
Attendance is required and students should be prepared to offer solutions to the exercises by writing them on the black or white-board, and to work with classmates on these exercises. I will take attendance by the method of a sign-in sheet that will circulate during class, although the quiz will on many days take the place of the sign-in sheet. Please sign your full name to verify your presence. Absences should be limited to three classes, of our 19 meetings, and those missing four or more will be penalized on their final grade.

Classroom Electronic Communications Policy:
In this class the use smartphones and laptops is prohibited. All such devices should be stored in your bags or left at home. The writing and diagramming exercises are all on paper, in our textbooks, and there is no need for computers. I encourage note taking on paper, and most quizzes and exams will be written by hand on paper. Please see me if you have a reason to request exception to this policy.

Provisional schedule of assignments and activities:
Sept. 25th Introductory Lecture and Discussion
History of grammar, prescriptive and descriptive grammar, dialects and slang. Introduce parts of speech.
Diagnostic quiz (ungraded)

Sept. 27th Parts of Speech: Noun, Pronoun, Verb
Read before class: G by D pp. 9-13, 17-30, Transitive Vampire pp. 3-29, 77-92
Work on in class: G by D exercises 1.2 – 1.8 on pronouns, adjectives, prepositions.
Homework review: G by D Workbook 1.1 – 1.13 (pp. 9-19).

Oct. 2nd Parts of Speech: Adjective, Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction
Read before class: G by D pp. 31-41, Transitive Vampire pp. 77-92
Work on in class: exercise 1.9 & chapter 1 exercise
Activity: review the types of pronouns listed in Transitive Vampire
Homework review: G by D Workbook 1.10 – 1.17 (pp. 16-23).

Oct. 4th Basic Sentence Patterns: “be” verbs
Substitute Instructor Dr. Marsha Ginsberg
Read before class: G by D pp. 45-54
Work on in class: G by D 2.1 – 2.3
Homework review: G by D workbook 2.1 – 2.3 (pp. 19-29).

Quiz #1 on Canvas due Oct. 8th at 6 pm

Oct. 9th Basic Sentence Patterns: Linking Verbs, Intransitive Verbs
Read before class: G by D pp. 55-64,
Work on in class: G by D chapter 2 exercise.
Activity: conjugating verbs in English and in other languages
Homework review: *G by D Workbook* 2.5–2.6 (pp. 32–40)

Oct. 11th  
**Verbs: Form, Tense, and Aspect**  
Read before class: *G by D* pp. 201–206, *Transitive Vampire* pp. 40–50  
Work on in class: *G by D* exercises 9.1, 9.2  
Activity: Early grammar textbooks in Britain and America, and Noah Webster  
Homework review: *G by D Workbook* 9.1 (pp. 139–142)

Oct. 16th  
**Basic Sentence Patterns: Transitive Verbs**  
Read before class: *G by D* pp. 64–77, Appendix 5 pp. 355–360  
Work on in class: *G by D* exercises 3.1–3.3  
Homework review: *G by D Workbook* 3.1, 3.2 (pp. 40–48)

Oct. 18th  
**Special Sentence Patterns**  
Read before class: *G by D* pp. 77–91  
Work on in class: *G by D* exercises 3.4–3.8  
**Quiz #2** in class (drawn from chapter 3 exercise)  
Homework review: *G by D Workbook* 3.3 (pp. 49–56)

Oct. 23rd  
**Verbs: Subjunctive Mood, Passive and Active Voice**  
Read before class: *G by D* pp. 206–217, 255–258; *Transitive Vampire* pp. 51–57  
Work on in class: *G by D* exercises 9.3, 9.5, 11.1, 13.3 (pp. 209–211, 258, 323–324)  
Activity: When to use passive voice, from Joseph M. Williams’ *Style* pp. 78–86  
Homework Review: *G by D Workbook* 9.10, 9.11, 11.2 (pp. 143–150, xxxx)

Oct. 25th  
**Prepositional and Verbal Phrases**  
Read before class: *G by D* pp. 219–228, *Transitive Vampire* 125–132  
Work on in class: *G by D* exercises 10.1–10.4 (pp. 151–160)  
Homework: *G by D Workbook* 11.2  
**Quiz #3 on Canvas:** due Oct. 26th at 8 pm

Oct. 30th  
**Compound Sentences: Combining and Expanding with Conjunctions**  
Read before class: *G by D* pp. 117–130  
Work on in class: *G by D* exercise 5.2, chapter 5 exercise  
Activity: Watch Grammar Rock videos

Nov. 1st  
**Mid-Term Exam**

Nov. 6th  
**Compound sentences and Noun Clauses**  
Read before class: *G by D* pp. 131–144  
Work on in class: *G by D* exercises 6.1, 6.2, chapter 6 exercise (pp. 131–134)  
Homework Review: chapter 6 exercise; *G by D Workbook* 6.1–6.3 (pp. 81–88)

Nov. 8th  
**Complex Sentences with Adverb and Relative Clauses, pt. 1**  
Read before class: *G by D* pp. 145–155; *Transitive Vampire* pp. 140–154  
Work on in class: *G by D* exercises 7.1–7.2  
Homework Review: *G by D Workbook* chapter 7 part 1 pp. 89–94

Nov. 13th  
**Complex Sentences with Adverb, Adjective and Relative Clauses, pt. 2**  
Read before class: *G by D* pp. 156–169  
Work on in class: *G by D* exercises 7.3–7.6  
**Quiz #4** in class on Compound and Complex sentences and Noun clauses  
Homework review: *G by D Workbook* Chapter 7 parts 2 & 3 pp. 94–109
Nov. 15th  Case, Agreement, and Consistency  
Read before class: *G by D* pp. 179 – 199  
Work on in class: *G by D* exercises 8.1 – 8.4  
Homework Review: *G by D* workbook 8.1 – 8.6 (pp. 125 – 135)  
Read before class: *Transitive Vampire* 99 – 124  
Activity: non-sexist and non-gendered language  

November 20th  Verbals: Infinitives and Gerunds  
Read before class: *G by D* pp. 228 – 237; *Transitive Vampire* 132 – 139  
Work on in class: *G by D* exercises 10.5 – 10.9  
Homework review: *G by D* workbook pp. 161-172  
**Quiz #5** in class  

November 22nd  no class: Thanksgiving Day  

Nov. 27th  Verbals: Participals and Participial Phrases  
Read before class: *G by D* pp. 238-247  
Work on in class: *G by D* exercises 10.10, 10.11  
Homework review: *G by D* workbook pp. 172-181  
Writing Self-Analysis due and workshop in class  

**Quiz #6** on the canvas site by November 28th by 8 pm  

Nov. 29th  Verbals and Usage Problems  
Read before class: *G by D* pp. 259-272  
Work on in class: exercises 11.2 - 11.6  
Homework Review: *G by D* workbook 13.1 - 13.6  
Activity: regional usage in the United States  

**Quiz #7** on the Canvas site due Monday, Dec. 3rd by 8 pm  

Dec. 4th at 8:00 – 10:00  Final Exam