

ENGLISH 101: FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

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COURSE OVERVIEW:

The main purpose of English 101 is to introduce you to the conventions of academic writing and critical thinking. And while academic writing means different things to different people, there are some common elements. We write to communicate to others—whether they are colleagues, professionals in their fields, or friends. We write to convince others that our position has validity. We write to discover new things about our world as well as ourselves. For that matter, the process of writing is *epistemological*—a way of coming to know. Writing can become a medium for self-reflection, self-expression, and communication, a means of coming to know for both the writer and reader.

Learning to write requires writing. Writing is a craft, and as a craft, writing can be learned and refined. Ultimately, writing takes practice, and as a writer, you will have opportunities to write both in the classroom as well as outside. With that said, the goal I have for this class—one that all writing courses share—is to give you, as students, enough practice writing so that you will become more effective writers by the end of this course than you were at the start. Also, you will develop a greater understanding of what you need to consider to continue to develop as writers.

As we delve into this semester, I hope you will discover also that writing, reading, and learning are intricately intermeshed. Writing is based on experience—experience with a text or personal experience—and that reading is a means to broadening experiences, especially when actively engaged by reading *dialectically* (as opposed to *polemically*). Much of the readings, lectures, and discussions may challenge more commonly accepted assumptions and beliefs. You will be required to critically rethink and reevaluate popular concepts and ideas (this may also challenge your own ideas so please try to keep open perspective). One of the main goals for this class will be to try to understand how language informs and shapes our culture and society as well as our everyday lives and practices.

Lastly, I assume you already think critically (you would not have made it to college otherwise, of course). Now we will try to go beyond critical thinking skills; we will reflect on a range of possibilities and positions. We may find ourselves asking more questions rather than finding easy answers. And together, I hope we can become more critically conscious of the world we inhabit.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- *The United States Constitution* and *The Declaration of Independence*. [PDF files]
- Marx, Karl and Fredrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*. New York: Penguin Classics, 2002. [PDF file]
- Ene, Estelle, Erik Ellis, and Meg Smith. *A Student's Guide to First-Year Composition*. 25th ed. Plymouth, MI: Hayden-McNeil, 2004.
- Hacker, Diana. *Rules for Writers*. 5th ed. Boston: Bedford, 2004.
- I will also have selected readings in PDF (portable digital format) files on the course website. It is your responsibility to download, print, and read all reading assignments ahead of time. You must bring all assigned readings to class.

OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- At least 3 letter-sized manila file folders for turning in papers (drafts and revised papers).
- Photocopies of your work as needed for workshops and discussions (typically, you will need to bring at least 3 copies per workshop).
- White, lined loose-leaf paper for in-class writing assignments.
- Three highlighters (preferably light colors).
- Access to a computer with word processing capabilities (and floppy disks to save your work).
- A working email account and internet access
- Sign up for the class listserv: compositionclass@listserv.arizona.edu (check your email regularly for class postings).

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

The following table lists all assignments and their values. You must complete all the required assignments in order for you to receive full credit for the course.

ASSIGNMENTS	VALUE
UNIT 1: Analysis	
In-Class Introductory Assignment	Required
Textual Analysis Essay	20%
UNIT 2: Context	
Proposal	5%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Text-in-Context Essay	25%
UNIT 3: Culture	
Cultural Analysis Essay	20%
INFORMAL WRITINGS :	
Peer Critique Responses	10%
Journal Entries	5%
In-class Writings	5%
Total	100%

The major essays will be written through a process of at least two drafts and workshops. Revisions should show significant changes in purpose, audience, organization, or evidence according to feedback you receive from the workshop and from your instructor. You must hand in all drafts and revisions. Place the drafts and revisions in a manila folder with the most recently revised copy on top. Keep all writing assignments throughout the entire semester.

Please turn in all major assignments. *You cannot receive a passing grade in this course unless you turn in all the major assignments.*

Informal Writing Assignments. These include entries, in-class writings, reader response journals, and workshop evaluations. The nature of the assignments is keyed to the formal essay you are currently working on.

- **Peer Critique Responses:** During peer critique workshops, your feedback is vital to your colleague. For this reason, you should write down suggestions and comments regarding their drafts on paper so they have something to work with. Make sure your name is on your comments or you will not receive credit for your responses. You are required to write a *minimum* of one page per paper, single-spaced.
- **Reader Response Journals:** While these will be decidedly less formally written than the essays, you will still need to work closely with the reading materials to reveal your understanding and critical engagement with the text(s). You will write a response for select reading material assigned (I will tell you which ones I want you to write on). I will collect these only periodically. Bring them to class everyday so you have something to discuss concerning the reading. I will also provide a handout detailing the expectations for the journals before the first one is due. Journals should be typed and approximately one page long, single-spaced.
- **In-Class Writings:** Throughout the semester, I will ask you to write informally in class. These will consist of mainly freewriting or brainstorming activities. Because they are primarily for your benefit in generating ideas, I will collect only a few of these assignments.

Format. All formal papers need to be double-spaced, one-inch margins on all sides, left-justified, 12-point font, titled, and typed (no title page). Please place your last name on every single page and number the pages. In-class writings will be handwritten and must be legible and on one side of the page only (this helps me read your writings). Out-of-class informal assignments may be either typed or handwritten (it must be and legible). If I cannot read any part of your work, you will not receive credit for it.

Introduction to Research. All first-year composition students are required to learn how to do documented research. For more on research, see chapter nine, "Research," in the *Student's Guide*.

COURSE POLICIES:

Attendance. Attendance is mandatory. Your participation in class discussions is important to me as well as your peers. Please attend every class. If for some reason you cannot attend class, you are responsible for finding out about and making up any missed assignments. In-class writing may not be made up. If you are absent on the day a paper is due, you must arrange to get the paper to me on time, or it will be counted late. Please do not miss class because you have not finished an

assignment; attend class anyway (students who are unprepared—missing papers, not having the readings, etc.—may be marked absent).¹ Please refer to the New Start administrative policies for specific details.

Conferences. I will schedule individual or small-group conferences several times during the semester. You should come to your conference prepared to discuss your current work. A missed conference will count as an absence.²

Grading. To complete this course successfully (i.e., with a grade of D or higher), you must attend class and all scheduled conferences, complete all assignments on time, have read all assigned readings, prepare for class, and participate in class activities and discussions. Again, you cannot receive a passing grade in this class unless you have completed all major assignments and the final exam. To receive full credit, you must hand in all written assignments on time, in the proper format, and with the required supporting materials (i.e., all drafts, etc. associated with that particular assignment).

Requirements for Writing Assignments:

- In-class and out-of-class writing will be assigned throughout the course. Students not in class when writing is assigned are still responsible for completion of the assignment when due (in-class writings cannot be made up).
- Late work will not be accepted without penalty unless students make arrangements for an extension before the due date. Late essays will receive a whole letter grade reduction (e.g. A → B, B+ → C+) per day, so please turn in papers on time. Missing draft due dates (including for workshops) or incomplete papers may also reduce your paper by a half-letter grade (e.g. A → A-, B+ → B) per day. Furthermore, peer critique workshops, in-class writings, and other informal writing assignments cannot be made up. Missed workshops and informal writings will result in losing all points for that particular assignment.
- Students are required to keep copies of all drafts and major assignments until after the end of the semester. Also, make sure you save copies of your drafts and revisions (on either disk and/or your computer's hard drive) in case a paper is somehow accidentally misplaced or lost (this is rare but it does occasionally happen). Save drafts and revisions separately. If you cannot provide a second copy, you may not receive credit for the assignment.
- Revisions are absolutely essential for effective writing and therefore, mandatory. Each paper will have multiple drafts. Drafts with your peers' comments must be turned in with all essays. Drafts should show significant changes in purpose, audience, organization, or evidence. Missing a draft will result in a reduction in your letter grade (as specified in my grading policy, above). Missing two drafts will result in a failure for that particular assignment. Furthermore, I will not evaluate a paper without first seeing at least one rough draft and unless that draft accompanies the final draft (in accordance with the Composition Program policy).

I may vary specific requirements of individual assignments, but in all cases my evaluation of your essays will consider content, organization, development, expression, mechanics, and critical engagement. If you have a question about my comments or a grade you have received, please talk to me about it.³

I typically will not give an "Incomplete" grade. However, if extenuating circumstances arise, I may give an "Incomplete" if the student has completed at least 70% of the course work at the end of the semester.

RESOURCES:

Disabilities Resource Center. Reasonable accommodations will be made available for students who have a documented disability. Students with disabilities who require accommodations should contact me as soon as possible. If you need more information, please contact the Disabilities Resource Center at (520) 621-3268.

Computers. Computers are available in the libraries as well as at computer labs across the University (see <http://www.library.arizona.edu/rio/comput4.html> for CCIT lab locations). If you have difficulties using or accessing a computer, please let me know ahead of time so I can try to work with you.⁴

For a more complete list of resources, please see <http://advising.arizona.edu/advisors/resources.html>.

OFFICE HOURS & AVAILABILITY:

I always look forward to talking with you during my office hours. If you cannot make it to my office hours, please feel free to schedule an appointment with me. You may also contact me by e-mail, telephone, or talk with me after class. Your success in this class will depend on how well you plan. If you are uncertain of your progress, do not wait until the last

¹ See "Attendance and Course Withdrawal" on p. 307 in the *Student's Guide* for the official department policy on attendance.

² For more on conferences, see "Conferences and Office Hours" on p. 432 in the *Student's Guide*.

³ For more on grading, teacher's comments, and departmental standards, see "Assessment: Interpreting Instructor Comments and Grades" on pp. 77-82 in the *Student's Guide*. Also see pp. 307-313 for information on incompletes, withdrawals, and grade appeals.

⁴ See "Appendix E: Computing Centers on Campus" on p. 323 for more information.

minute to try to schedule a conference with me. I am more than happy to hear from you, but please expect at least a day turn-around time for responses.

ACADEMIC CONDUCT:

All UA students are responsible for upholding the Code of Academic Integrity, available through the Office of the Dean of Students. See Student Code of Conduct web page <http://w3.arizona.edu/~studpubs/policies/ppmainpg.html>.

Plagiarism. Using sources without proper citation or acknowledgment, copying, or claiming someone else's work as your own will result in a failure of the assignment or the entire course. Should I suspect you of plagiarizing, I will discuss the matter with you. If you are unsure of the meaning of plagiarism, please see me *before* your paper is due.⁵

Discussions. While I expect lively discussions, I will not tolerate any disrespectful remarks (including, but not limited, to racist, sexist, or homophobic comments), especially those aimed at other people in my classroom. I reserve the right to dismiss from the class anybody who participates in derogatory remarks.

⁵ Also see pp. 309-311 in the *Student's Guide* regarding academic integrity, class conduct, and plagiarism.