

Ohm
 English 101: Section 115
 MWF 1:00-1:50 PM, ILC 135
 Spring 2005

ENGLISH 102: FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION

Instructor:	Sung Ohm	Home Page:	www.u.arizona.edu/~sung/english102/
Office:	CCIT 236 Q	E-mail:	sung@email.arizona.edu
Office Hours:	MWF 2:00 – 2:30 PM (& by appointment)	Class Listserv:	compositionclass@listserv.arizona.edu
Office Phone:	626-4835 (leave no messages)	English Dept:	621-1836 (leave messages here)

COURSE OVERVIEW:

The main purpose of English 102 is to continue your education in 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 a way of coming to know (what scholars call epistemological). 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.

COURSE FOCUS: A RHETORIC OF POSSIBILITIES

The Greeks felt that persuasion could color our experiences and even beguile us, as if by magic, to sway us toward particular ends. The Ancient Greeks began a systematic study of this phenomenon in order to understand its influence, and to tame it and control it. In so doing, they stripped it of its magic, and turned it into an art. More specifically, they developed a vocabulary by which they could meaningfully interpret their social world. This vocabulary, like any vocabulary, reified the concept and gave it a substance that could be studied and understood. From Omar Swartz's [The Rise of Rhetoric and its Intersections with Contemporary Critical Thought](#).

In many respects, the rise of democracy created the need for *rhetoric*—the art of persuasive language use—for the Ancient Greeks. They understood well that those who had knowledge and control of language also had cultural power (or cultural capital). While democracy promised equitable conditions for the Ancient Greeks, most people didn't have access to persuasive language skills or education so their ability to participate in the democracy was limited; therefore, rhetoric ultimately functioned to keep the elite in power. Furthermore, rhetoric functioned as a way to shape the people's consciousness, the way they thought about the world (the twentieth century Italian philosopher, Antonio Gramsci, called this control *hegemony*—ideological domination by consent). Hence, despite the promises of democracy, the Greeks continued to have vast inequalities: the elite were accumulating a vast amount of wealth from the exploitation of the masses, slavery was seen as a natural condition (of course, reserved for only certain people), and women, non-Athenians, & non-Greeks were relegated as second class citizens, which denied them any political voice.

Why is understanding rhetoric so important to us today? Why study it here? If we can learn something from the Ancient Greeks, we might begin to recognize how people were controlled through language. Those who had the power to determine and define concepts through language had the power to control the masses. As we think about what the implications are for us, consider that for the Greeks rhetoric functioned as way to *limit* democracy. It limited it because a rhetorical education wasn't available for everyone; it was tightly controlled. As long as a select group of people have access to rhetorical training, and others are excluded from such learning, democracy is extremely limited, and it serves self-interested members who want to maintain their hegemony over others. And in extremely limited democracies, as history has show, people tend to face extreme amounts of tension and contradictions—consider the racial strife of the civil rights era and how it continues to manifest itself today.

Having a greater grasp of rhetoric means that one must think critically of how language functions. A critical understanding of language also means understanding possibilities, and not being confined by ideas and concepts that have been defined for us. We can work at seeing the constructed nature of language and seek to actively engage with it. So this class will be about a language of possibilities. What I'm asking you to do and training you to do is to think critically, to think rhetorically—in other words, to think for yourself. As the historian Howard Zinn observes, we often think we have choices when in fact, our choices are limited. He states, “We have the kinds of choices that are given in multiple-choice tests, where you can choose *a, b, c, or d*. But *e, f, g, and h* are not even listed [...]. In debates on

the military budget there are heated arguments about whether to spend \$300 billion or \$290 billion. A proposal to spend \$100 billion (thus making \$200 billion available for human needs) is like the *e* or *f* in a multiple-choice test—it is missing. To propose zero billion makes you a candidate for a mental institution.” This class will be about not only understanding language (*vis-à-vis*, writing), but also about exploring viable possibilities which are not often discussed. Ultimately, this class will focus on thinking critically about possibilities, and engaging critically to make those possibilities viable.

Lastly, I assume you already think critically (you would not have made it to college otherwise). 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 and of the world we inhabit. With that said, I wish you the best.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Colombo, Gary, Robert Cullen, and Bonnie Lisle. *Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing*. 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004.
- 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.
- Selected readings in PDF [portable digital format] files on the course website and/or electronic reserve. (It is your responsibility to *download, print, and read* all reading assignments before class. You must bring all assigned readings to class).

Some of the texts for this class include *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels, *The Declaration of Independence*, and the *U.S. Constitution*. You are expected to engage with these texts in a critically thoughtful manner. Rather than being limited by polemic arguments about Communism, Democracy, Marxism, and Capitalism, I hope you'll find new ways to understand the complexity of our society as well as the readings. In other words, I hope that we can enter into a dialectical relationship with the texts, opening up new ways to think about our world. Our goal is not to become persuaded by any *specific* political cause, but rather to appreciate the historical texts' connections to many ideas that were present before our time and which continue to be present today. These connections will hopefully encourage you to develop more sophisticated thinking skills that will help you to become better writers.¹

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).
- Three highlighters (preferably light colors).
- Access to a computer with word processing capabilities (save all your work including different draft versions).
- A working email account and internet access. (You are required to join the class listserv. Directions to add are available on the course website under “Class Related Materials”).

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.

ASSIGNMENT	VALUE
UNIT 1: Rhetorical Analysis	
In-class Introductory Assignment	Required
Rhetorical analysis essay	20%
UNIT 2: Persuasive Documented Research	
Research proposal & annotated bibliography	10%
Documented persuasive essay	20%
UNIT 3: Revision & Self-Reflection	
Self-assessment memo	Required
Portfolio, cover letter, and revisions	25%
Self-reflective essay	15%
INFORMAL WRITINGS :	
In-class writing assignments & Journals	5%
Peer critique comments	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

¹ Not all students are ready to enter into a dialectical relationship with some of these texts. If you believe you may have trouble with the content of the course (including the subject matter, readings, or approach), I encourage you to discuss this issue with me within the first week of class.

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. All formal writing assignments must be typed (see format below).

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 summary and 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 every day 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 9: 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). *Students who miss more than three classes may be dropped within the first 8 weeks with a W. Thereafter, you may receive an E (a failing grade) so please plan accordingly.*²

Conferences. I will schedule individual or small-group conferences during the semester. You should come to your conference prepared to discuss your current work as well as your peers. A missed conference will count as an absence and you will miss feedback from me and/or your peers. Furthermore, there is no making up missed conferences.³

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 drafts for workshops) or incomplete papers will 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,

² See "Attendance and Course Withdrawal" on p. 339 in the *Student's Guide* for the official department policy on attendance.

³ For more on conferences, see "Conferences and Office Hours" on p. 340 in the *Student's Guide*.

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).⁴

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.⁵

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.

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 minute to try to schedule a conference with me.

A Caveat. One of the areas I research involves the study of the effects of electronic technology on labor practices, one of which is the elimination of the boundaries between work time and non-work time. I do not consider this to be ethical. Many employers now have 24-hour-a-day access to their employees, and in fact, in a number of jobs, including mine, workers are expected to set aside a part of the non-working day to receive work-related electronic messages. This practice has become so routine that most of us no longer notice that we are spending more and more of our non-working time keeping in touch with work. I find these practices abhorrent because they get us used to the idea that our entire lives should be in the service of employment; they are also resulting in a lot of unpaid labor. We are all learning new ways to survive in this increasingly wired society; one way I choose to survive is by not becoming a slave to availability. I hope the same for my students in their work lives. I am more than happy to hear from you, but please expect at least a day turn-around time for e-mail responses.

ACADEMIC CODE OF INTEGRITY AND 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://dos.web.arizona.edu/uapolicies/>.

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. Plagiarism may result in receiving a zero for the assignment (thus failing you from the course). In addition, I will file a code of conduct violation with the Dean of Students. 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.⁶

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.

RESOURCES AND SPECIFIC ACCOMMODATIONS:

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. Please notify me during the first week of class of any accommodations needed for the course. If you need more information, please contact the Disabilities Resource Center at (520) 621-3268.

The University of Arizona provides a wealth of services including writing tutors and computer access. For more information on computers, the Writing Center, the Writing Skills Improvement Program, and other services, please refer to the course website as well as the Student’s Guide (see *Appendixes B, C, D, and E*).

⁴ A note on grades: An “E” grade on a formal paper represents 55% points while a “Ø” (zero) means the *student has not fulfilled the assignment*, thereby failing her or him from the class.

⁵ For more on grading, teacher’s comments, and departmental standards, see “Assessment: Interpreting Instructor Comments and Grades” on pp. 69-75 in the *Student’s Guide*. Also see pp. 344-346 for information on incompletes, withdrawals, and grade appeals.

⁶ Also see pp. 341-3343 in the *Student’s Guide* regarding academic integrity, class conduct, and plagiarism.