

# ENGLISH 101-016, COMPOSITION

- Fall 2012, MWF - 10:30-11:30 - Prof. Danielle Harms - Robinson Hall A107 -

Welcome to Composition 101! No matter what career, major, or hobbies you pursue, writing will play a role in your life. This semester we will investigate the question, Why write? More specifically, Why does writing matter? What impact will it have on you? What skills do you need to excel as a writer?

Writer Anne Lamott has one theory:

We are a species that needs and wants to understand who we are. Sheep lice do not seem to share this longing, which is one reason why they write so little. But we do. We have so much we want to say and figure out.

Writing matters in all sorts of ways. In the future, you will write in a range of genres and for many purposes as part of your social, professional, and academic life. In this class, we will delve into a few of them, while helping you develop the tools to be a successful writer, reader, and critical thinker at the collegiate level.

## Contact Information for Two Classmates

As a student in this course, you've all become members of a community and will benefit from working together in and out of class. If you are absent, make sure to contact another student to find out what you missed.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## How to Find Me

**Office:** The HUB (SUB II) Suite 1201

**Office Hours:** 1:30-2:30 MW, and by appointment

**Email:** [dharms@gmu.edu](mailto:dharms@gmu.edu)

**Laptop Day:** Every Friday

**Course Wiki:** <https://engh101016f2012.pbworks.com>

## Texts and Materials You Will Need

- *Writing Today* by Richard Johnson-Sheehan and Charles Paine (Brief Second Edition): Available in the campus bookstore, ISBN: 9780205210084, new copies are \$79.80.
- GMU E-mail account: Activate your Mason email account and check it regularly. For privacy reasons, all class-related emails will be sent to your official GMU email address.

## Course Goals

This course is designed to help you improve your abilities to read, write, and think at a college level. Finally, this class emphasizes writing strategies that can have an impact beyond the classroom setting.

By the end of this class, you should have demonstrated the ability to:

1. View writing as a rhetorical process, using strategies, including invention, drafting, revision, and editing.
2. Give and receive useful criticism of written work in order to promote effective revision.
3. Revise and edit your own writing.
4. Recognize and write for a variety of purposes and audiences.
5. Read critically while recognizing rhetorical strategies authors use to persuade their readers.
6. Adapt your writing to the needs of an audience or a situation.
7. Identify, assess, and use research sources, including traditional print sources, online databases and web sites.

## Major Projects and Grading Percentages

10%	Project 1: <i>This I Believe</i> Personal Essay	9/17
20%	Project 2: Rhetorical Analysis Essay	10/19
35%	Project 3: Argumentative Research Essay	11/26
10%	Project 4: <i>Write for Real</i> Product and Presentation	12/7
15%	Daily Writing: Including reading reflections, in-class writing assignments, and class blog contributions.	Ongoing
10%	Participation: Attendance, daily preparation, and in-class work.	Ongoing

### Project 1: *This I Believe* Personal Essay (500-750 words)

This personal essay combines narrative storytelling with reflection. The *This I Believe* essay is a decades old tradition. It originated as a radio series airing people reading their work aloud. After revising to a final draft, you will publish two final products on the class website: your written essay and an audio recording of you reading your work. Only your classmates will be able to access your work, unless you choose to share it with others. This essay emphasizes how to accommodate for an audience, the importance of clarity, and the experience of writing as a form of discovery.

### Project 2: Rhetorical Analysis Essay (1,000-1,250 words)

In this project, you use your knowledge of rhetoric and argumentation as a lens for analyzing a nonfiction text. You will identify rhetorical moves and argumentation strategies. Then, you will assess how effectively the author employs these strategies to persuade their audience. You will help your reader to better understand a text and consider it from new angles. This essay emphasizes close textual analysis, identifying how authors persuade readers, and using textual evidence to support claims in a formal academic essay.

### Project 3: Researched Argument Essay (1,250-1,500)

For this paper, you will choose a topic, find a unique angle, propose a question, and investigate your question with research. You will make an argument with a strong thesis, and use your research to support your side while disputing opposing views. You will support this thesis with at

least five scholarly sources. You will also write an annotated bibliography, which summarizes and evaluates the sources you collect, and work in groups to publish a Frequently Asked Questions page on the class website. This project emphasizes the research process, source citations, consistently supporting a thesis with evidence and supporting arguments.

#### Project 4: Write for Real (length varies, 500 word reflective essay)

In this assignment, you will use writing to participate in a public conversation, for the purpose of informing, educating, or inspiring action. The final product may take nearly any form, perhaps an essay, letter, poem, webpage, screenplay, advertisement, proposal, resume, scholarship application, short story, song, video, alternate history, pamphlet, script, review, memoir, or photo essay. This project emphasizes the use of multimedia, finding the appropriate form for a text to take, and tailoring writing to your personal interests or needs.

### Additional Class Work

#### Daily Writing

In addition to the four large writing projects already mentioned, I will frequently ask you to write brief assignments. Every daily writing assignment will be graded on a five-point scale by the criteria listed below:

**Score of 5:** Meets or exceeds required length (or time on task); strongly engaged, high quality attention to detail and exploration.

**Score of 4:** Meets or exceeds required length; meets expectations for engagement.

**Score of 3:** High quality exploration, but too short or meets required length or time on task but is superficial.

**Score of 2 or 1:** Too short and superficial.

#### Class Blog Contributions (200-400 words)

As part of your daily writing assignments you will contribute to the class blog. We will assess the range of genres that are published in blogs and explore the rhetorical context bloggers consider when writing. After we work together to compile a list of blog genres, you will propose and write at least one blog post. In class, you will sign up to write a blog post, to review a peer's blog post draft, and to comment on a peer's blog.

#### Participation

*Participation is worth 10% of the final grade, and scored out of 50 points.*

- Each class day is worth 1 point, which you can earn if you are present in class and actively participating. Missing two classes won't lower your participation grade (but you're still responsible for any homework due).
- For the final 10 points, you can earn an 8 if you're doing the basics of engaging with class; you can earn a 10 if I see you regularly leaping in and making strong contributions; you'll earn a 6 or lower if you are frequently late, unprepared, inattentive, disruptive, or disrespectful.
- If you miss class or are significantly unprepared, you will earn a zero for the day.

*You should also be actively present.*

- Students who are not actively present, whether because they are sleeping in class, reading a newspaper, or otherwise distracted, may lose class participation points for that day.
- Students who are seriously unprepared for class or group work—bringing absolutely no draft due for a peer revision workshop, for example—**will lose class participation points.**
- Any other serious breach of good classroom conduct may cause you to lose all participation points.

### Technology: Cell phones, laptops, tablets, e-readers, and printing texts

*We will utilize many forms of technology often in this class.*

- At least once a week, every student will need a laptop; if you don't have a laptop, you can check one out from the university. You are welcome to take notes in class and read texts on an electronic device.

*However, I will regulate the use of technology in the classroom, and I need you to be flexible.*

- Please use laptops and classroom computers only for course-related work. There will be times when I ask you to close your computers or take hands off keyboards. You will sometimes be required to write by hand or print a reading.

*Please put your cell phone away (out of sight) during class, and turn off the ringer.*

- For example, your cell phone should not be on your lap or on top of your desk. You should not be texting or checking for calls. If you think you have a good reason to use your cell phone, like you are using it for genuine learning purposes or have special circumstances, feel free to discuss it with me.
- Once class starts, I will deduct a participation point for any cell phone that rings or is visible. If I happen to break my own rules, then everyone in class will earn an extra participation point.

*I know following these rules could be a struggle that will require some restraint.*

- Technology can be an asset to learning. It can also become a distraction. Having your Facebook profile open during class or sneaking a peek at your phone not only distracts you, it impacts your peers and instructors. It's disrespectful and demonstrates a lack of interest and effort.

*Failing to abide by these instructions will negatively affect your course participation grade.*

### Arriving late

Please plan to be here on time. If you are frequently late, you will lose participation credit. However, in an emergency I would rather have you come late than not at all.

### Method of Instruction

Most class meetings will be interactive and will involve a significant amount of student discussion and writing. Students will work individually as well as collaboratively. Students who attend regularly and stay engaged in class activities, who keep up with all of the assignments, and who block off sufficient time each week for thoughtful drafting and revising usually succeed in this class.

## Course Grading Policy

### Final Grades

Students in English 101 receive a final grade of A (93-100), A- (90-92), B+ (86-89), B (83-85), B- (80-82), C+ (76-79), C (73-75), C- (70-72), D (60-69), and F (0-59). **You must earn a grade of "C" or higher to complete George Mason's 101 requirement; students whose grades are lower than a C will earn a grade of "NC."**

A grade of "NC" reflects the philosophy that learning to write in an academic setting is a developmental process and that some students may require more time in this development. Since this grade does not affect students' Grade Point Averages (GPA), students are not penalized for requiring additional time to meet the course requirements in ENGH101. Because of this policy, grades of Incomplete are not given in ENGH101.

### Important note:

You must hand in all main essay assignments to earn a "C" or higher in this course. That said, merely completing all of the assignments does not guarantee this grade.

**A "C" level grade (70-79%)** denotes average college-level writing and achievement. The essay is a competent response to the assignment: it meets, to some degree, all the assignment requirements, and demonstrates that the author has put significant time and effort into communicating his/her ideas to his/her targeted audience. It has a thesis, presents some support, and moves from point to point in an orderly fashion; sentence-level errors do not significantly prevent comprehension. Essays that do not meet these criteria will not earn a "C."

**A "B" level grade (80-89%)** highlights a strong example of college writing and thinking. In addition to meeting the "C" level requirements, such an essay goes further in some way(s): it demonstrates some insight into the "gray areas" of the topic, provides original or very thorough support that is tightly woven into the overall argument, reads smoothly at both the sentence and paragraph levels, and/or exhibits a personal "voice" or style. It has few sentence-level errors.

**An "A" level grade (90-100%)** marks an essay that is a delight for the reader. Even more than in a "B" essay, its author anticipates and responds to possible reader questions, uses a wide range of supporting evidence, engages the reader in a provocative conversation, provides unexpected insights, and/or uses language with care and facility.

**"D" and "F" level** essays do not meet the basic expectations of the assignment.

### Midterm Grades

In English 101, you will receive a midterm letter grade based on the work of the first seven weeks of the course. You'll be able to view your grade online. This is simply a progress report on course work so far, and is not necessarily an indicator of your final grade.

## Other Policies

### Submitting Class Work by E-mail

Depending on the homework assignment, you will either hand in daily writing as a hard copy, on the course Wiki, or by e-mail, so make sure to read the assignment description closely. You'll hand in most of your papers via e-mail, rather than in paper.

### *Subject Lines*

Use the following basic pattern for the "subject" line of any message containing a course assignment:

ENG101-[section number], [Your last name], [Brief description of assignment]

Example: ENGL101-16, Harms, This I Believe Essay draft #1

### *File Names and File Formats*

Please begin your file name with your last name and the name of the text as a Microsoft Word (**.doc format, not .docx**), Pages, or Google Docs file.

Example: Harmsrhetoricalanalysisdraft1.doc

### Late Work

- Homework assignments will lose 1 score level each class day that they are late. These assignments are time-sensitive: completing them helps you write your essay.
- Late Essays will lose 5% of their points each calendar day that they are late.

### *The Three-Day-Pass Policy*

For any one assignment you may be up to three calendar days late without penalty. (Here and only here, a weekend counts as one day.) To qualify, you must state in writing at the top of the first page of any late assignment that you are using your Three-Day Pass. I won't automatically give late work a pass.

### Optional Revision Policy

*Projects 1-3 may be re-revised for a possible new grade, but late-work penalties cannot be changed through revision.*

1. Before completing an optional revision, you must schedule a revision conversation with me, in person or via email.
2. You must substantially change your essay for optional revisions in addition to correcting errors, or they will be returned with no grade change. Substantial change means a revision that changes at least **15-20%** of the essay's text; you must address widespread problems as well as fix sentence-level errors.
3. Complete optional revisions within two weeks of the essay's return to you.
4. Include a paragraph that describes the key changes you made, what issues these changes address, and what you learned from completing the revision.

## Composition Statement on Plagiarism

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another source without giving that source credit. Writers give credit through the use of accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or end notes; a simple listing of books, articles, and websites is not sufficient.

This class will include direct instruction in strategies for handling sources as part of our curriculum. However, students in composition classes must also take responsibility for understanding and practicing the basic principles listed below.

To avoid plagiarism, meet the expectations of a US Academic Audience, give their readers a chance to investigate the issue further, and make credible arguments, writers must

- put quotation marks around, and give an in-text citation for, any sentences or distinctive phrases (even very short, 2- or 3-word phrases) that writers copy directly from any outside source: a book, a textbook, an article, a website, a newspaper, a song, a baseball card, an interview, an encyclopedia, a CD, a movie, etc.
- completely rewrite—not just switch out a few words—any information they find in a separate source and wish to summarize or paraphrase for their readers, and also give an in-text citation for that paraphrased information
- give an in-text citation for any facts, statistics, or opinions which the writers learned from outside sources (or which they just happen to know) and which are not considered “common knowledge” in the target audience (this may require new research to locate a credible outside source to cite)
- give a new in-text citation for each element of information—that is, do not rely on a single citation at the end of a paragraph, because that is not usually sufficient to inform a reader clearly of how much of the paragraph comes from an outside source.

Writers must also include a Works Cited or References list at the end of their essay, providing full bibliographic information for every source cited in their essay.

While different disciplines may have slightly different citation styles, and different instructors may emphasize different levels of citation for different assignments, writers should always begin with these conservative practices unless they are expressly told otherwise. Writers who follow these steps carefully will almost certainly avoid plagiarism. If writers ever have questions about a citation practice, they should ask their instructor!

Instructors in the Composition Program support the George Mason Honor Code, which requires them to report any suspected instances of plagiarism to the Honor Council. All judgments about plagiarism are made after careful review by the Honor Council, which may issue penalties ranging from grade-deductions to course failure to expulsion from GMU.

## Nondiscrimination Policy

George Mason University is committed to providing equal opportunity and an educational and work environment free from any discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or age. GMU shall adhere to all applicable state and federal equal opportunity/affirmative action statutes and regulations.

## General Education

This course is part of the GMU General Education Program, which is designed to help students prepare for advanced work in their major field and for a lifetime of learning. For more information on the mission of the General Education Program, consult the University Catalog or visit <http://provost.gmu.edu/gened/>

## Free Campus Services

### Office of Disability Services

*Assists students with disabilities to obtain reasonable accommodations, auxiliary aids, and support services.*

*Student Union Building 1, Room 2500*

*Web: [ods.gmu.edu](http://ods.gmu.edu), Email: [ods@gmu.edu](mailto:ods@gmu.edu), Call: 703-993-2474*

### Learning Services

*Provides study skills workshops, academic skills programs, and academic counseling.*

*Student Union Building 1, Room 3129*

*Web: [caps.gmu.edu/learningservices/](http://caps.gmu.edu/learningservices/), Call: 703-993-2999*

### Counseling and Psychological Services

*Provides individual and group counseling, workshops, and outreach programs. Services are provided by a staff of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors.*

*Student Union Building 1, room 3129*

*Web: [caps.gmu.edu](http://caps.gmu.edu), Call: 703-993-2380*

### The University Writing Center

*The University Writing Center is a free one-on-one tutorial service, available to all GMU students who want to work on writing skills. The Writing Center is not an editing service and will address far more than grammar issues. Be prepared to read and discuss your work in an interactive session.*

*Robinson Hall, room A114*

*Web: [writingcenter.gmu.edu](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu) for information and to make appointments.*

### Career Services

*Provides assistances in academic or career decision-making and goal setting.*

*Student Union Building 1, Room 3400*

*Web: [careers.gmu.edu/index.cfm](http://careers.gmu.edu/index.cfm)*

## Enrollment

You are responsible for verifying your enrollment in the class and should make any necessary schedule adjustments by the deadlines published in the schedule of classes (available through Patriot Web). After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons. Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal—see the Schedule of Classes for procedures.

- Last day to add classes or drop with no tuition penalty: Sept. 4, 2012

- Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty: September 18
- Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty): September 28

## Semester Schedule

As you can see, the schedule below only includes the topics we will focus on each day and due dates for major projects. It does not include the readings or daily writing homework assignments for which you are responsible. You will find a more detailed schedule on the course Wiki. It is subject to change, so make sure you consistently check in with the schedule on the Wiki to properly prepare for each class.

Unit 1: Why does writing matter? We can use it to discuss and reflect on experiences and beliefs.		
	Date	Writing Due
Week 1	M 8/27 Course expectations, introductions	Email Introduction Letter by 11:59 PM on <b>Tuesday, 8/28</b> <i>(see directions at end of syllabus packet.)</i>
	W 8/29 Review syllabus, understanding genres, reviewing blogs, the writing process (brainstorming techniques)	Annotate syllabus <i>(see directions at end of syllabus packet.)</i>
	F 8/31 Classroom technologies, generating a reader profile, and accommodating for a general audience.	Accept invitation to Wiki and spend some time orienting yourself.
Week 2	M 9/3	<b>No class, Labor Day break</b>
	W 9/5 Understanding rhetorical context (topic, angle, purpose, genre, audience), implicit v. explicit theses, esp. in the TIB essay.	Printed copy of TIB Sketch
	F 9/7 Global revision techniques, breaking the writing process into manageable steps, grading a sample essay.	Post TIB Essay draft to Wiki for in class peer review
Week 3	M 9/10 More revision techniques, directed in-class revision focusing on organization and opening paragraphs.	E-mail TIB Revisions by 11:59 PM, make sure you have your working draft in class.
	W 9/12 Reviewing implicit theses, identifying subtle or unconventional arguments, revising to ensure you've made an implicit argument.	

	F 9/14 Exploring library databases and citations. Revising to strengthen concrete details, transitions, closing paragraphs.	
Unit 2: Why does writing matter? We can use it to understand and analyze the media that surrounds us.		
	Date	Writing Due
Week 4	M 9/17 Intro to argumentation strategies and rhetorical moves, esp. ethos, pathos, and logos. Discuss rhetorical analyses.	TIB Essay Final draft due by 11:59 PM
	W 9/19 More argumentation strategies, analyzing arguments in daily life, esp. advertisements and infographics. Intro to rhetorical analysis essay.	
	F 9/21 Argumentation strategies in propaganda and political speech, close reading techniques.	
Week 5	M 9/24 More argumentation strategies (Swale's Moves) and using rhetorical strategies as a lens for viewing the news.	
	W 9/26 Reading strategies for preparing to write a rhetorical analysis, brainstorming and crafting a thesis for a rhetorical analysis.	
	F 9/28 Supporting arguments and textual evidence in a rhetorical analysis.	
Week 6	M 10/1 Review of argumentation strategies, strengthening a thesis.	Rhetorical analysis intro and main arguments sketch
	W 10/3 Outlining a rhetorical analysis.	
	F 10/5 Drafting the rhetorical analysis	Timed In-class Writing
	<b>Tue. 10/9</b> (No class Monday, Columbus Day) Peer Review	Rhetorical Analysis rough draft for peer review.

Week 7	W 10/10 Comparing rhetorical analyses and student samples.	
	F 10/12 Evaluating sample student essays with the rubric.	Email revised rhetorical analysis by 11:59 PM and bring working drafts to class.
Week 8	M 10/15 Introduce research essay and FAQ project, compare a rhetorical analysis and a research essay	
	W 10/17 Brainstorming topics, difference between topic and angle in a research essay.	
	F 10/19 Starting research, breaking into topic groups, narrowing focus.	E-mail Rhetorical Analysis final draft by 11:59 PM.
Unit 3: Why does writing matter? We can use it to contribute to academic discourse by investigating research questions.		
	Date	Writing Due
Week 9	M 10/22 Defining a research question, making a research plan.	
	W 10/24 Using scholarly and non-scholarly sources	
	F 10/26 Finding scholarly sources, keeping track of research in an outline.	
Week 10	M 10/29 Integrating sources: quoting, paraphrasing, review of in-text citations.	Research question and explanation
	W 10/31 Integrating sources: review of citations and reference lists/bibliographies.	Annotation of 2 sources, at least one scholarly
	F 11/2 Integrating sources: review of citations and reference lists/bibliographies.	Annotation of 2 sources, at least one scholarly
	M 11/5 Crafting a thesis, forming an argument in the introduction	Annotated bibliographies  Working thesis and outline.

Week 11	W 11/7 Improving theses and intros, reviewing sample research essays.	Submit a draft of introduction, with thesis, for in class peer review.
	F 11/9 Peer review, revision plan.	Submit a complete draft for in-class peer review
Week 12	M 11/12 Using the rubric to assess student sample essays.	E-mail revised draft by 11:59 PM.
	W 11/14	No class, conferences
	F 11/16	No class, conferences
Week 13	M 11/19 Introduction to Write for Real assignment, presenting your writing to the public.	
	<b>W 11/21- F 11/23</b>	<b>No Class Thanksgiving Break</b>
Unit 4: Why does writing matter? We can use it to participate in a public conversation in many forms.		
	Date	Writing Due
Week 14	M 11/26 FAQs v. Annotated bibliographies, Write for Real brainstorming.	E-mail final draft of research paper by 11:59 PM.
	W 11/28 FAQ project, Presenting work for a specific (perhaps non-academic) purpose	E-mail 250 word Write for Real proposals by 11:59 PM
	F 11/30 Responding to your peers FAQ pages	FAQ, web-ready and annotated versions
Week 15	M 12/3 Write for Real Presentations	
	W 12/5 Write for Real Presentations	
	F 12/7 Write for Real Presentations, end of semester reflection	Submit Write for Real final product with process essay by 11:59 PM

## Introduction letter:

**Due Date: Attach your intro letters to an email to me by 11:59 PM on Tuesday, August 28th.**

Introduce yourself to me in a letter that is at least 500 words, or 1-2 pages long.

**Here is what you must include in your letter:**

- At least two goals you have for this course, and/or for yourself this semester.
- Two facts about yourself that you don't usually share within the first 20 minutes of meeting someone, but wouldn't mind sharing with the class (but keep them to yourself for now, since we'll share later). These facts could be quirky, surprising, fun, or any other adjective you can come up with, but they must be true. For example, I could write that I grew up in a town where each year the largest festival was in honor of sweet corn, and you could buy ears of steamed corn by the dozen and season them with salt shakers hanging from clotheslines. I could also write that the eighties movie star and brat pack darling Molly Ringwald once held me on a plane when I was a baby.

Feel free to include any details that you'd like me to know. If you need ideas, consider telling me about your:

- Hometown, favorite vacation destination, current home.
- Academic interests, major, career aspirations
- Decision to attend GMU
- Elements of the class you are concerned or excited about
- Attitudes towards writing or reading, learning preferences
- Any information about your situation that you'd like me to know.

Don't forget your e-mail subject line should look like this:

ENG101-[section number], [Your last name], [Brief description of assignment]

So for this assignment, mine would say:

ENGL101-section number, Harms, Intro letter

Also don't forget that your file name should follow this format:

Last name and the name of the text as a Microsoft Word (.doc format, not .docx),      Pages,  
or Google Docs file.

So for this assignment, mine would say:

Harmsintroletter.doc

## Annotate Syllabus:

Due in class Wednesday, August 29

On the hard copy of your syllabus, do the following:

1. Read the syllabus from start to finish once more. Underline anything that is even a little confusing, and write down any questions you have.
2. Look at the cell phone technology on page 4. Circle the class cell phone policy.
3. Look at the course policies. Circle how to submit work by email, the late work policies, and optional revision details.
4. Look at the four essay projects.  
Put a star next to the one you are most apprehensive about.  
Put a circle around the one you feel the most interested in or confident about.