

English 101.054
Jay Ivey
Fall 2012, TR 7:30-8:45 AM, Robinson A105

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Course Description

This course is designed to help you improve your abilities to read, write, and think at a college level. In English 101, you will develop strategies to help you use writing as a tool for exploring and reflecting on your own ideas, as well as for informing and persuading your readers. You will need to develop critical reading and research techniques to support your writing. English 101 emphasizes writing as a rhetorical process: you will explore beneficial ways to break a writing task into smaller steps such as generating and organizing ideas, investigating your topic, creating early drafts, seeking feedback, and revising. You will also improve your ability to adapt your writing to the needs of an audience or a situation, and your ability to revise and edit your own writing.

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/>

Textbooks and Materials:

Writing Today: Brief Edition (2nd Edition) by Richard Johnson-Sheehan

Textbooks are available at the Campus Bookstore as well as online vendors like Amazon.

Methods of Instruction

Most class meetings of English 101 will be interactive and will involve a significant amount of student discussion and writing. Students may be asked to work individually as well as collaboratively as they investigate issues, practice writing strategies and techniques, learn research and critical reading approaches, and review their own and their peers' writing. In addition, students will be using Blackboard to access class materials and publish discussion posts. 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. NOTE: The contents of this syllabus—especially the weekly schedule—are subject to change and may be updated periodically on the class wiki. If I am unexpectedly unable to attend class due to blizzards/plagues/zombie invasions/etc, I may instead opt to conduct an online class via Blackboard. These will count toward your participation grade just like any other class.

Course Grading Overview

15%	This I Believe Essay	Due Date: 9/18
20%	Book/Film Review	Due Date: 10/23
10 %	Exploratory Essay & Annotated Bibliography	Due Dates: 11/6 & 11/13
30%	Analytical Research Paper	Due Date: 12/18
15%	In-Class Essays/Blackboard Posts/Homework	
10%	Participation	

English 101 Grading Policy:

Students in English 101 **must earn a grade of C or higher to complete the 101 requirement**; students whose grades are lower than a C will earn an 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.

Midterm Grades:

In English 101, students receive a midterm letter grade based on the work of the first seven weeks of the course. The purpose of this grade is to help students find out how well they are doing in the first half of the course in order to make any adjustments necessary for success in the course as a whole. The work in the second half of the semester is weighted more heavily, so the midterm grade is not meant to predict the final course grade. Students may view their grade online as soon as it is recorded.

Course Grading Policy:

In grading major essays, I use the following general criteria:

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 made a serious effort to communicate his/her ideas to his/her targeted audience. It has a thesis, presents some support, and moves from point to point in a more-or-less orderly fashion; sentence-level errors do not significantly hinder 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 supporting details and analysis that are tightly woven into the overall argument, reads smoothly at both the sentence and paragraph levels, exhibits a consistently effective organization, and/or reflects a compelling personal "voice" or style. It has few sentence-level errors.

An "A" level grade (90-100%) marks an essay that engages the reader in a provocative conversation. Even more than in a "B" essay, its author anticipates and responds to possible reader questions, uses a wide range of well-chosen supporting evidence, balances this evidence with surprising, insightful, and/or compelling analysis to create a fluid reading experience, 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.

NOTE: Students who earn less than a C for their final grade will earn a grade of NC (no credit) and be required to re-take the course in order to graduate.

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meet the course requirements in ENGH101. Because of this policy, grades of Incomplete are not given in ENGH101.

Submitting Class Work

Major assignments should be submitted on the due date, either at the beginning of class (for physical copies) OR by 11:59 PM that night (for digital copies). Unless otherwise noted, all formal assignments should be typed using a standard font and size and double-spaced. You should keep all of your assignments as they are handed back to you.

Late Work Policy

Late assignments are those arriving in my inbox or in my hand any time after 11:59 PM on the due date. You may place an assignment in my mailbox in Robinson A487; please do not ask the office staff to validate that you have turned it in; do not put work on or under my office desk if I am not there.

Late assignments will lose 10% of their points for each calendar day that they are late. Late-work penalties cannot be changed through revision.

Revision Policy

All major essay assignments may be revised for a new grade up to two full letter grades higher. Revisions must demonstrate substantial change to the focus, argument, support, and/or organization of the essay in addition to comprehensive error correction—depending on the weaknesses of the draft—or they will be returned with no grade change. *Revisions must be submitted with all previous drafts and completed within two weeks of the essay's return to you.*

In-class Essays and Blackboard posts

Throughout the semester, we will explore a wide variety of smaller writing problems through timed-writings and mini-essay discussion posts. These will be marked as **U** (65%), **S** (85%), or **H** (100%). A score of “S” marks an assignment that presents a clear main-idea supported by some competent arguments/examples and that progresses from point to point in an orderly fashion. “H” work will demonstrate more critical thinking: more effective subtopics, more insightful arguments, more developed examples, stronger conclusions, etc.

As with most complex skills, the best way to improve one’s writing is by practicing regularly, scrutinizing yourself, and constantly readjusting your approach based on criticism. Therefore, if your In-class Essays and discussion posts adapt to feedback and show consistent improvement over the course of the semester, you may be eligible for extra credit in this category.

Class Participation

Participation is 10%. If you miss fewer than three classes, are usually on time and prepared for class, and are generally engaged in the discussions and class work, you'll earn 8.5 out of 10 percent. To earn a higher participation grade, you need to regularly volunteer contributions during full-class discussions, provide leadership or encouragement during group work, go the extra mile in giving specific feedback on your peers' writing, and/or otherwise demonstrate very strong preparation for and engagement in the class work. Absences beyond three, regular tardiness, not doing the required reading, frequent lack of engagement, and/or disruptiveness in class will lower your participation grade.

If you are frequently late, you may lose class-participation points. However, in an emergency I would rather have you come late than not at all; if you get stuck in traffic but you can get here 20 minutes late, please try to come.

You should also be actively present. Students who are sleeping, browsing Facebook, carrying on private conversations, answering or texting on cell phones, or working on assignments for other classes (etc.) are not wholly, actively present and thus may lose class participation points for that day. If you are seriously unprepared for class or group work—having absolutely no draft for a draft workshop, for example—you may lose class participation points for that day. Any serious breach of good classroom conduct may cause you to lose all participation points.

Assignments

(NOTE: Handouts with in-depth details about each of these assignments will be made available as the semester progresses.)

- *This I Believe Essay*: In this relatively brief exploratory essay (2-3 pages), students will choose something in their lives that they strongly believe in (an activity, a social ideal, an interpretation of the way things are) and communicate it to an interested, encouraging reader. A successful essay must be supported by specific instances from the writer's experience and use those details to explain *why* he/she is passionate about the issue in particular. Students are encouraged to write in a natural, personal voice.
- *Book/Film Review*: Students will write a 4-5 page review on a book or film of their choice (subject to my approval). The review should draw on specific details, elements, and scenes from the book/film to characterize the piece, as well as to convince the reader whether or not it is worth their time and why. Successful reviews must balance summary with analysis while considering both its rhetorical purpose and its likely audience.
- *Exploratory Essay/Annotated Bibliography*: In preparation for the major research paper, students will write a 1-2 page exploratory essay (similar to some in-class writing assignments) where they grapple with their prospective research topic, consider how/why various aspects may have changed, and speculate about what kind of sources might back up their ideas. While the student may not come to a definitive "answer," the exploratory essay should demonstrate a complex, thoughtful consideration of the issue at hand.

The annotated bibliography will ask students to format a list of sources for future use in their analytical research paper, to assess the biases and reliability of these sources, and to justify how they might use these sources to enrich their research paper.

- *"The More Things Change" Research Paper*: Students will develop a research question that examines how a place/organization/product/medium has changed over the past decade or so; they will then compose a 6-7 page paper that describes these changes in detail and assesses what factors led to them. This analysis must be supported by evidence from a variety of relevant outside sources (books, web sources, scholarly journals, etc).

Weekly Schedule

	In-class topics	Readings	Assignments due
Week 1	-Class introduction -Genre -Rhetorical purpose and audience awareness -Plagiarism	WT Chapter 2 & 3	
Week 2	-Constructing thesis statements -Brainstorming/prewriting strategies and invention -Critical reading strategies	“This I Believe” essay examples (online); WT Chapter 14	
Week 3	-Employing specific examples/details to support a thesis -Basic organizational strategies -“This I Believe” rough draft peer review	WT Chapter 21	“This I Believe” draft due for workshop
Week 4	-Ethos, pathos, & logos -Textual analysis	WT Chapter 3	-“This I Believe” Essay due 9/18
Week 5	-Writing summaries -Writing introductions and conclusions -Choosing more effective subtopics	WT Chapter 6 & 19	
Week 6	-Peer review of Review introductions -Balancing examples vs. analysis -More complex organization strategies	Sample Reviews (online)	-Review introduction draft due for workshop
Week 7	-Building strong paragraphs -Transitions -Sentence variety and diction -Employing figurative language and rhetorical devices	WT Chapter 20	
Week 8	-Basic revision strategies -Key grammar concerns -Constructing counterarguments -Peer review of Review rough drafts	WT Chapter 18	-Review rough draft due for workshop
Week 9	-Developing research questions -Narrowing down topics -Using different search/database tools -Writing annotated bibliographies	WT Chapter 24	-Review Assignment Due 10/23 -Topic selection for the Research Paper
Week 10	-Differentiating various sources -Evaluating sources for bias/reliability/etc -Librarian visit -More on plagiarism -Formatting APA/MLA reference pages	WT Chapter 25	
Week 11	-Organizing and planning progressively complex papers -Integrating quotations -Paraphrasing	WT Chapter 26	-Exploratory Essay due 11/6

Week 12	-Organizing research data -Constructing more comprehensive thesis statements -Using researched evidence to support a thesis		-Annotated Bibliography due 11/13
Week 13	-NOTE: Online class Tuesday 11/20 -Peer-review of theses/outlines -Formatting APA/MLA in-text citations -Compiling a Works Cited page -NOTE: No class on 11/22 (Thanksgiving Break)	WT Chapter 27/28	-Research Paper Theses and Outlines Due for Peer Review
Week 14	-Deconstructing a published research paper -Advanced revision strategies -Building effective sentences -Addressing grammar issues		
Week 15	-Peer-review of Research Paper drafts -Research Paper Q&A + troubleshooting -Review of primary course concepts and class wrap-up		-Draft of Research Paper Due for Peer Review -Research Paper Final Draft due 12/18

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.

Cheating and Academic Dishonesty

Cheating will (obviously) not be tolerated in any form, and any instance of academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Honor Council and may result in penalties such as a failing grade on an assignment, an NC grade in the course, or possible suspension/expulsion from GMU.

Forms of cheating may include (but are not limited to): trying to pass off previously written papers as responses to ENGH 101 assignments, having a friend/tutor/professional write your paper or dictate it to you, or using a translation service to put your ideas into English prose. The line between having a tutor help you help yourself and having them write your sentences for you or give you arguments to use can be very fine.

In general, if you cannot explain your own ideas, understand words you used in your own paper, or identify any sources you cited, you have probably engaged in academic dishonesty.

GMU Email

Students must activate their Mason email account and check it regularly in order to receive important information such as class cancelations or changes to the schedule. *For privacy reasons, all class-related emails will be sent only to students' official GMU email addresses.*

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.

Other Important Dates

- Last Day to Add or Drop a Course: *September 4th*
- Selective Withdrawal Period: *October 1st – 26th*

Helpful Services On-Campus

- *Disability Services:* If you are a student with a disability (including learning disabilities like ADD) and you need academic accommodations such as extra time on assignments, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.
- *Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS):* In addition to providing free psychological counseling services and multicultural programs for students, CAPS offers a wide variety of services to enhance student learning, including workshops that focus on study skills, note taking, reading strategies, test taking skills, improving concentration, organizational strategies, and more.
- *The University Writing Center:* Since you will be writing several papers in this course, you may want to visit the University Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>), located in Robinson A114, for assistance. The Writing Center is one of the best resources you will find on campus. They have an outstanding website that offers a wealth of online resources for student writers. You can schedule a 45-minute appointment with a trained tutor to help with any phase of the writing process. You can even obtain assistance with papers by visiting the online writing center at <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/owl/index.html>, but please plan ahead and allow yourself at least 2-3 days to receive a response. Make an appointment via their website.