

# Researching the Digital Age: Media, Technology, and Identity

English 1320.404: First-Year Writing II

Spring 2026 | University of North Texas



**Instructor:** Amber Walters-Molina (she/her)

**Class times:** Asynchronous Online

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**Office Hours:** By Appointment Only

**Office Location:** Teams

Excellence, in what is called its higher departments, depends less on natural genius than on acquired expertness in wielding its machinery.

—Thomas Carlyle, “Sign of the Times” 1829

## Course Description

What is research? How does living in a digital age impact research? What roles do media, technology, and identity play in shaping research? Who determines the legitimacy of research in academia—and beyond? And, how can novice researchers establish their ethos and contribute to academic and general public knowledge with their research?

In ENGL 1320, you will be introduced to invention strategies, reading strategies, and writing approaches that will help you thrive as writers in a university setting and beyond. With an emphasis on brainstorming, critical reading, analysis, and revision, you will practice genre conventions, gain rhetorical knowledge, and develop a framework for producing persuasive writing about issues that are important to you. One of the broadest goals of this course is to help you become comfortable with strategies for making your writing compelling to the audiences you want to reach. Defining, explaining, persuading, finding, and evaluating good sources—these are all ways to provide insight into topics that you want to share with other people.

ENGL 1320 will prepare you for a wide range of writing expectations, including those that demand research, evidence, and careful argument. To focus your research, this course will be themed around media, technology, and identity.

## Course Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Identify literary genres, conventions, and devices.
- Identify relationships between primary texts and their adaptations with intertextuality and allusion
- Evaluate ideas in a text, the implications, and the relationship to ideas beyond it.
- Write clear, close-reading essays that analyze literary devices and their effects on a passage.
- Write a research-based argumentative essay that articulates a clear, thoughtful position, deploys supportive evidence, and considers multiple points of view.

- Observe details that make other people, objects, or places unique within specific cultural or social groups.
- Analyze and evaluate specific concepts or texts that have significance within larger cultural conversations.

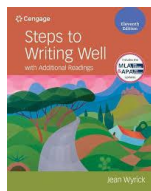
### Core Requirements

**Catalog Description:** 3 hours. Writing as inquiry. Develops habits of critical thinking, research-based inquiry, and argument through written engagement with relevant social and cultural issues.

**Prerequisite(s):** ENGL 1310, ENGL 1311, or equivalent.

**Core Category:** Communication (English Composition and Rhetoric)

### Books & Materials



Custom version of Steps to Writing Well with Additional Readings (w/ MLA9E Updates) (MindTap Course) 11th Edition

\*DO NOT purchase a hard copy of this textbook! There are detailed instructions on how to access your e-book in Canvas.

All other readings will be provided on Canvas.

### Technical Requirements & Skills

You'll need a [computer](#) with a web camera, microphone, and [internet access](#); and know the basic skills necessary to:

- Use [Outlook for UNT email](#)
- Use [UNT Teams Account](#)
- Use [Canvas](#)
- Use [Microsoft Word and PowerPoint](#)

### Grade Distribution

| Assignment  | Weight | Due Date                              |
|---|--------|---------------------------------------|
| Reading Quizzes, Activities, and Virtual Class Discussions  | 20%    | Varies                                |
| Research Proposal (MA1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 300-word proposal including a research question, an explanation of the topic, your interest, and the contribution you hope to make to the conversation.</li></ul> | 10%    | Friday, May 29 <sup>th</sup> at 5 pm  |
| Annotated Bibliography (MA2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You will write a 300-word abstract and 300-word annotations for eight relevant sources with MLA citations.</li></ul>   | 20%    | Friday, June 19 <sup>th</sup> at 5 pm |
| Rough Draft of Research Paper (MA3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A complete draft of the 5–7-page thesis-driven argumentative research paper</li></ul>   | 20%    | Friday, July 3 <sup>rd</sup> at 5 pm  |
| Final Draft of Research Paper (MA 4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A 5–7-page thesis-driven argumentative research paper</li></ul>  | 20%    | Friday, July 17 <sup>th</sup> at 5 pm |
| Final Presentation of Research (MA 5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A <a href="#">3Minutes to Share</a> style video presentation on your research.</li></ul>  | 10%    | Friday, July 24 <sup>th</sup> at 5 pm |

## Grading

|   |          |  |
|---|----------|--|
| A | 90-100   | “A” WORK will constitute a final score of 90-100% of total points and will represent an overall response that is impressively sophisticated and illuminating: inventive, balanced, justified, effective, mature, and expertly situated in time and context.  |
| B | 80-89.99 | “B” WORK will constitute a final score of 80-89.99% of total points and will represent an overall response that is thorough and systematic: skilled, revealing, developed, and perceptive, but not unusually or surprisingly original.   |
| C | 70-79.99 | “C” WORK will constitute a final score of 70-79.99% of total points and will represent an overall response that is acceptable but limited: coherent, significant, and perhaps even insightful in places but ultimately challenged in organization, articulation, perception, and/or effectiveness. |
| D | 60-69.99 | “D” WORK will constitute a final score of 60-69.99% of total points and will represent an overall response that is incomplete and may be severely lacking: incoherent, limited, uncritical, immature, undeveloped, and overall not reflective of the performance expected of UNT undergraduates.   |
| F | 0-59.99  | “F” WORK will constitute a final score of 0-59.99% of total points and will represent an unacceptable overall response.  |

All major assignments must be turned in to be eligible to pass the course.

Any assignment that does not meet the bare minimum requirements stated in the assignment instructions will receive a flat rate 30-point deduction.

I encourage you to monitor your score and review feedback posted on Canvas; However, Canvas’s gradebook is not always accurate. Some grades are not incorporated until *after* the last class day. If you are concerned about your grades, please book a time to meet with me so we can discuss them.

## Attendance and Participation

As this is an Asynchronous online course, you will work each week independently, and attendance and participation are considered part of your weekly assignment completion.

### Late Work

This course requires extensive reading and regular writing. To keep up with the course, you must complete all assignments by the date and time stated on Canvas. I will not accept late submissions of minor assignments (Reading Quizzes, Activities, and Virtual Class Discussions). Late Major assignments will be marked down with one full letter grade (from a B to a C) for every 24 hours that they are late.

### Extensions

Given the tight turnaround we have between assignments, I am unable to offer any extensions beyond those required due to university excused absences.

## Work and Communication Expectations

### Feedback

I strive to return all graded work promptly. For shorter assignments and discussions, I will generally post grades/feedback within seven days of the due date. For larger projects, I aim for 14 days, but with the rise in cheating and plagiarism, it occasionally takes longer to grade a set of papers. If it has been longer than the times mentioned, please feel free to ask me when to expect the grades and feedback, but not before then.

## Student Hours

As this is an asynchronous online class, my student hours are held only as virtual meetings. You will need to make an appointment on my booking page to ensure you have time to meet with me. If those times do not work for you, you'll need to email me so we can find another time to meet. Feel free to use my office hours as often as you'd like to chat with me, review an assignment, or discuss any questions or concerns. It's been my experience that a quick conversation is the most effective way to resolve any confusion.

## Email

I will respond to all correspondence to my UNT email (amberwalters-molina@my.unt.edu) within three business days. All other communication methods—Canvas Messenger, assignment comments, personal emails, physical letters, etc.—*are unreliable* ways to contact me. I cannot guarantee that I will see your message on other platforms within any specific time frame, if ever.

When you write to me, please include the subject of your email in the subject line and write your email with appropriate salutations and grammar. For a sample email, read this article, "[How to Email Your Professor](#)." Or, for a checklist on effective email communication between yourself and instructors, see <https://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>.

*Please* check the syllabus, Canvas cite, and related assignment sheets before emailing me, and in your email, indicate where you looked for the information you are seeking before you emailed me. So that if something is unclear, I can fix it.

## Workload Expectations

Note that for a you should expect to do 2-3 hours of work outside of class for every credit hour of a course; thus, for our course (for which you will earn three credit hours), you should expect to spend at least 6-9 hours per week working outside class.

## Writing Expectations

Since this is your second semester of college-level writing, I expect that you will write multiple drafts for each paper with the final draft free from formatting, grammatical, stylistic, and mechanical errors; all students must submit complete rough drafts to Canvas by the assigned deadline to have the final paper accepted. (Note: your final draft should show noticeable improvement from the rough draft if needed; a final draft turned in without needed improvements will not earn full credit.)

## Submission Expectations

All writing submissions, unless otherwise stated on the assignment sheet, must be submitted to Canvas as a Word document using MLA 9th edition formatting standards (1-in margins, Times New Roman 12pt font, double-spacing throughout the entire paper, with no extra gaps between elements, etc.) for all formatting and citation needs. You can review MLA formatting on [Purdue OWL](#).

Any documents that fail to adhere to formatting, citation, or document-type expectations will receive a half-letter-grade markdown on their final submission score.

## Public Writing

All submissions for this course, including but not limited to pre-writing, drafts, in-class assignments, and final projects, are public, i.e., any writing submitted for this course may be viewed by your classmates. All writing will be submitted through Canvas and Turnitin. Do not submit any information that you are unwilling to share.

## Syllabus Change Policy

I have made every attempt to provide an accurate syllabus for this course. However, if unanticipated circumstances arise that necessitate an amendment to the syllabus, I will provide advance written notice via email of all changes and will provide an updated hard copy with the changes.

## UNT Policies

### Academic Integrity Standards

According to [UNT Policy 06.003](#), Academic Integrity standards are violated when students engage in academic dishonesty behaviors, including, but not limited to, cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty and the instructor's decision on academic sanctions will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Plagiarism can include copying a passage from a source verbatim without citing it, but it can also include improper or misleading citations. Please note that all source material must be acknowledged, even if the material is paraphrased. Be careful always to acknowledge the work of other writers and take the time to work out your thoughts and arguments without copying the work of others.

**The use of generative AI writing tools is prohibited in this class.** Assignments for the course have been designed to help you develop as a thinker, reader, and writer without using these technologies. You will generate ideas, read, revise, and write independently or in consultation with peers, UNT Writing Center tutors, and me. *Any* use of generative AI in your work violates our syllabus and UNT's academic integrity policy.

### Acceptable Student Behavior

According to [UNT policy 07.012](#), student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be notified verbally or in writing and may be directed to leave the classroom. Additionally, the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct.

For additional information, refer to the [Dean of Students](#) website.

### ADA Accommodations

According to [UNT policy 16.001](#), UNT will make reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA). Then, the ODA will provide them with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty members detailing the students' accommodation needs. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours. Students may request reasonable accommodation at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation and meet with all faculty members prior to accommodation implementation every semester.

For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](#) website.

### Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly provide students with critical information in the event of an emergency. In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

For additional information, refer to the [Eagle Alert](#) website.

## Getting Help

### **Technical Assistance:**

[Information Technology Help Desk | University of North Texas](#)

Email: [helpdesk@unt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu)

Phone: 940-565-2324

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

### **Writing Assistance:**

[Writing Center | University of North Texas](#)

Email: [WritingCenter@unt.edu](mailto:WritingCenter@unt.edu)

Phone: 940.565.2563

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 150

## 1320 Summer 2026 Schedule

| Week | Readings  | Assignments |
|------|---|-------------|
| 1    | Syllabus<br>“The More Digital Technology, The Better” by Genesea M. Carter and Aurora Matzke, and “Digital Natives And Digital Immigrants” by Phill Michael Alexander in <i>Bad Ideas About Writing</i> , pages 320-329.<br>Review Chapters 1 and 8 from <i>Steps to Writing Well</i> |             |
| 2    | Activity “active reading” from <i>Steps to Writing Well</i>   | MA1         |
| 3    | Chapter 19 from <i>Steps to Writing Well</i>  |             |
| 4    | Chapter 20-1 from <i>Steps to Writing Well</i>  |             |
| 5    |   | MA2         |
| 6    | Chapter 2 from <i>Steps to Writing Well</i>   |             |
| 7    | Chapter 3 from <i>Steps to Writing Well</i>   | MA3         |
| 8    | Chapter 5 from <i>Steps to Writing Well</i>   |             |
| 9    | Chapter 4 from <i>Steps to Writing Well</i>   | MA4         |
| 10   |   | MA5         |