

FIRST-YEAR WRITING 2: THE AMERICAN DREAM

English 1320.008

Professor Deb Armintor

MWF, 9:00 - 9:50

MATT 114

UNT Spring 2026



YOUR PROFESSOR

Dr. Deb Armintor (they/she), a.k.a. "Dr. A"

Email me 24/7 at dna@unt.edu or deborah.armintor@unt.edu (response within 48 hours)

Text my cell 24/7: 940-300-9857 (response within 24 hours)

In-Person Office Hours: LANG 409B, By Appointment

Phone Office Hours: 940-300-9857, By Appointment

Zoom Office Hours: By Appointment:

<https://unt.zoom.us/my/dr.a.zoom.meeting>

How to contact me with a question or to schedule an Office Hours appointment:

Email or Text me with your question or Office Hours appointment request at the email address or cell phone number listed above. Please do not attempt to reach me via Canvas chat, messenger, or any other Canvas interface. Be sure to state the following in the subject heading of every email and the body of each text: your full name, the name or number of the course, and your course section number.

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

We will learn and practice reading and writing strategies to help you thrive as writers in a university setting and beyond, while exploring our course theme of "The American Dream." As we read and discuss essays and documentary films around that theme, students will develop a related research question and topic to explore and write about for the remainder of the class. With an emphasis on brainstorming, analysis, source selection, synthesis, argument formation, intervention, and revision, you will become comfortable with strategies for making your college writing on any topic as compelling, well-researched, original, mature, and effective as it can be.

REQUIRED COURSE READINGS

All required course readings are linked directly to our electronic Canvas syllabus beneath the course date by which you are to have read them.

There are no books that you are required to buy for this class. If, however, you would like to read more about college writing, you can purchase an electronic copy of [STEPS TO WRITING WELL \(Cengage, 11th Ed\)](#). If you wish, you can also access and download the electronic textbook WRITE & COMMUNICATE LIKE A PROFESSIONAL (pdf) for free by clicking on the pdf link. Both of these textbooks are optional for this class. The linked online readings, however, are required.

YOUR 5 COURSE GRADES:

Your final grade for this course is derived from the 5 assignments listed below, each of which is worth 20% of your final grade. There are no additional assignments, no tests, no quizzes, and no final exam. **Any other assignments you might see listed in your Canvas Modules, Canvas Calendar, or Canvas Grades are from the UNT 1320 course template from which this class is derived, and do not apply to this particular section of 1320.** Please **consult only our Canvas syllabus** for assignments and due dates, and only consider the grades you've received on these 5 components below when determining your final grade:

- 1. American Dream Research Question Proposal & Presentation: 20% of final course grade, due via Canvas before class on 2/9 (Proposal) and in class WEEK FIVE Presentation)**
- 2. Annotated Bibliography with Topic Overview: 20% of final course grade, due via Canvas by 11:59pm, 2/27**
- 3. American Dream Research Essay: 20% of final course grade, due via Canvas by 11:59pm, 4/11**
- 4. Virtual Writer's Notebook: 20% of final course grade (total), due before class on the first day of each new course reading: Your virtual writer's notebook will consist of required Canvas Discussion posts about**

each new course reading, completed *prior* to the class meeting specified, and following the written instructions provided in the discussion prompt. Any *excused* missed virtual writer's notebook activities must be completed as soon as possible. Any *unexcused* missed virtual notebook activities will receive a zero. Students must complete all excused missing Virtual Writer's Notebook activities before our last class meeting on **Wednesday April 29** (or receive a zero for each missing activity).

5. Revised American Dream Research Essay (Based on Instructor Feedback & In-Class Peer Review Feedback): 20% of final course grade, due via Canvas by 11:59pm, 5/8

RESEARCH RESOURCES

- Contact info for our Reference Librarian, Carol Hargis:
<https://library.unt.edu/people/carol-hargis>
- Carol Hargis's library resources for ENGL 1310:
https://guides.library.unt.edu/ENGL1310?utm_source=www&utm_medium=staff_profile
- Sample MLA-Style Works Cited List & Formatting Guide:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_sample_works_cited_page.html
- How to find electronic resources online:
 1. Go to UNT LIBRARY WEBSITE
 2. Click on DATABASES
 3. Click on EBSCOhost
 4. Click “Select All” & “Continue”
 5. Click ADVANCED SEARCH
 6. Under “LIMIT YOUR RESULTS,” check the boxes for FULL TEXT and PEER REVIEWED
 7. Go to “ALL FILTERS” and experiment with refining your results in various ways to help narrow down your choices.

8. Remember to SAVE or EMAIL YOURSELF any results you found that you might want to use in your annotated bibliography and essay

GRAMMAR RESOURCES:

Book: Elements of Style by Strunk & White, free pdf:

https://ia804502.us.archive.org/5/items/pdfy-2_qp8jQ61OI6NHwa/Strunk%20%26%20White%20-%20The%20Elements%20of%20Style%2C%204th%20Edition.pdf

Website: Grammar Monster <https://www.grammar-monster.com/index.html>

WRITING HELP:

Using the UNT Writing Center:

At any time in this course or throughout your UNT career, you may schedule an appointment with the UNT Writing Center to request extra help with any writing assignment. All writers can benefit from sharing and discussing their work with a trained peer tutor, early and often. A writing tutor can help you get started on a paper or help you decide what to revise on an existing draft. You can make an appointment with a writing tutor via the QR code in the Writing Center flyer attached below. The Writing Center also offers online tutoring through UNT's Zoom portal.



CLASS POLICIES

ATTENDANCE AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:

Attendance will be taken daily and is expected daily of all enrolled students. **You are allowed 3 “free” unexcused absences in this course, i.e. an absence about which you have not notified the instructor in writing.** You are responsible for keeping track of your own absences. After a fourth unexcused absence, you might be dropped from the course. If you reach a fourth unexcused absence, please contact the instructor immediately to discuss your options.

EXCUSED ABSENCES DUE TO ILLNESS:

It is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our classroom community. If you are experiencing any symptoms of illness please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center or your health care provider PRIOR to attending class, and do not attend class if you are or might be contagious. If you choose to do so, you may email your professor to inform them of your absence due to illness or other medical issues. **Any and all absences due to illness count as excused absences, as long as you notify the instructor in writing before or after the class missed. Please do NOT email any medical records directly to your instructor.**

EXCUSED ABSENCES FOR NON-ILLNESS REASONS:

An absence for non-illness reasons counts as excused if you have notified the instructor in writing, before or shortly after your absence, whenever you are reasonably and safely able to do so. You need not provide detail or documentation to justify your absence. Just the briefest and most general two or three-word explanation will suffice: family emergency, traffic/parking issue, pet issue, mental health day, medical appointment, religious holiday/observance, etc. **All absences due to religious observance automatically count as excused.**

LATENESS TO CLASS:

Most students, at some point or another, meet with unforeseen circumstances that make them late for class. Although you should ideally arrive to class on time so as not to miss any important material, you are always better off showing up to class, even if you are late. You will not be marked absent simply for arriving to class late.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES:

No phone or headphone use during class, unless needed for ADA accessibility reasons or otherwise specified by the instructor. While some computer use is permitted, you are expected to be accessing course materials only during class. This policy is important for participation in the course and as a general exercise in focusing our attention and showing respect for the classroom space. If I see you using your phone during class, I can mark you as absent. If you have an issue that requires you to have your phone out during class, please inform me beforehand.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

All writing assignments must be submitted in the order listed in the syllabus, on or before the due date listed in the syllabus, unless you require additional time for ADA accommodation purposes. Outside of ADA accommodations, if you require additional time to work on an assignment for any reason, please contact the instructor to receive permission for an excused late submission without penalty. Special permission to submit late will be granted by the instructor on a case by case basis, erring on the side of trust and generosity. Even in the case of excused late submissions without penalty, written work submitted after the last day of final exam week will result in a zero for the assignment, or --if, and only if, requested of the instructor by the student in writing and granted by the instructor in writing-- a final course grade of "Incomplete," which will revert in your transcript to a regular course grade without penalty once you have emailed the instructor your remaining missing work as specified by the instructor when granting your requested incomplete.

AI POLICY

This course requires that all written work submitted by each student will be the original work and writing of that student alone. That means the use of any content-producing AI tools such as ChatGPT is strictly prohibited. Any

student in this course who uses ChatGPT or any other content-producing AI tool will receive the same consequence that they would for plagiarizing the work of others or for having another person(s) or company write their assignment for them: an automatic zero (F) on the assignment, and a report filed with the Office of Academic Integrity.

PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

The UNT Policy Manual defines plagiarism as: “(a) the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement and (b) the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.” (18.1.11). Students in all Freshman Writing courses need to be aware of the strict policies against plagiarism and academic honesty enforced by UNT and by instructors in the Department of English. All writing in freshman English courses must be original, and all uses of other writer’s material (i.e., for the purposes of research based argumentation) must be acknowledged and clearly cited in any writing submitted for a grade. If your instructor suspects plagiarism, you will automatically receive a zero on the paper or assignment, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Your instructor may also require you to meet with them to discuss the suspected plagiarism.

ADA Policy:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations 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 reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access> .You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

REQUIRED COURSE READINGS (LINKED) & DOCUMENTARY FILMS:

- *Bootstrapped: Liberating Ourselves from the American Dream* by Alissa Quart
- [Common Sense](#) by Thomas Paine
- "The Great Reverse Migration" by Paola Ramos
- "Ending the Cycles of Voter Suppression" by Gilda R. Daniels
- "Billionaires: Not Like Us" by Alex Morris
- ["Shitty First Drafts"](#) by Anne Lamott
- "The Case for Reparations" by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- [Place and Belonging: Denton, Texas,"](#) from *Something Between Us: The Everyday Walls of American Life and How to Take Them Down* by Anand Pandian
- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander
- "Chapter 1: The View from Eviction Court" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley
- "Chapter 2: How We Abandoned Affordable Housing" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley

- "Chapter 3: We Have to Address the Racism" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley
- "Chapter 4: "Housing Socialism for the Rich" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley.
- "Chapter 5: How We Fix This: Pump the Brakes on Our Eviction Machine" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley.
- "Chapter 6: How We Fix This: Housing First and Beyond" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley.
- "Chapter 7: How We Fix This: Rent Control" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley
- "Chapter 8: How We Fix This: Public and Social Housing" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley
- "Chapter 9: Lessons from Other Countries and Our Own History" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley

Documentary Films:

- [The American Revolution](#)
- [The Infiltrators](#)
- [The Story of the Contract Buyers League](#)

COURSE SCHEDULE & ASSIGNED READINGS AND WRITING

Students will be notified in advance of any unanticipated schedule changes or syllabus adjustments via Canvas announcements and in our Canvas syllabus. It is each student's responsibility to keep up with the scheduled readings and assignments, and any unanticipated announced scheduling

changes and syllabus adjustments that might occur. Reading and writing assignments listed under each course meeting date are **due on that date**.

WEEK 1

Mon (1.12):

- In class: Discussion/Q&A, Intro to the Class, Day 1

Weds (1.14):

- In class: Discussion on what the American Dream means to you
- In class: Discussion/Q&A on American Dream Research Question Proposal & Presentation Assignment
- In class Activity: Choose your seat mindfully. **The seat you choose today will be your seat for the rest of the semester** unless you have a good reason to change seats, in which case, please let me know privately. Following Dr. A's instructions, letter and number the index card at your seat. Write your preferred first name, your last name, your pronouns, and (on the other side) something you like about your name, a sentence describing your feelings about writing or your relationship with writing, and **two words that you associate with the American Dream**.

Fri (1.16):

- Read for today: *Bootstrapped: Liberating Ourselves from the American Dream* by Alissa Quart
- Due before class: Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity on *Bootstrapped: Liberating Ourselves from the American Dream* by Alissa Quart
- In class: Discussion on today's reading

WEEK 2

Mon (1.19): **MLK DAY, NO CLASS**

Weds (1.21):

- Read for today: Common Sense by Thomas Paine
- Due before class: Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity on Common Sense by Thomas Paine
- In class: Discussion on today's reading

Fri (1.23)

- Read for today: "Ending the Cycles of Voter Suppression" by Gilda R. Daniels
- Due before class: Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity on "Ending the Cycles of Voter Suppression" by Gilda R. Daniels
- In class: Discussion on today's reading

WEEK 3

Mon (1.26): **UNT CANCELLED (FREEZE)**

Weds (1.28): **UNT CANCELLED (FREEZE)**

- Read for Friday: "Billionaires: Not Like Us" by Alex Morris
- Due before class Friday: Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity on "Billionaires: Not Like Us" by Alex Morris

Fri (1.30)

- Read for today: "The Great Reverse Migration" by Paola Ramos
- Due before class: Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity on "The Great Reverse Migration" by Paola Ramos
- In class: Discussion on today's reading

WEEK 4

Mon (2.2)

- Bring to class: laptop or other preferred electronic device for writing and internet access

- In class writing lab activity: American Dream Research Question Proposal

Weds (2.4)

- Bring to class: laptop or other preferred electronic device for writing and internet access
- In class writing lab activity: American Dream Research Question Proposal

Fri (2.6)

- In class: Discuss American Dream Research Question Presentation
- In class: Sign up for In-Class Presentations for Week 5: Presentation Sign-up

WEEK 5

Mon (2.9)

- In-class American Dream Research Question Presentations, Day 1

American Dream Research Question Proposal: Due before class today, Monday (2.9)!

Weds (2.11)

- In-class American Dream Research Question Presentations, Day 2

Fri (2.13)

- In-class American Dream Research Question Presentations, Day 3

WEEK 6

Mon (2.16)

- In class: Discuss Annotated Bibliography with Topic Overview

Weds (2.18)

- **LIBRARY RESEARCH 101 TRAINING! Meet in Willis Library, Room 130: When you enter Willis turn right and pass the staircase, turn left and you will see the classroom on the back wall. <https://library.unt.edu/willis/#maps> (Attendance will be taken there)**

Fri (2.20)

- **LIBRARY DAY SCAVENGER HUNT ACTIVITY! FIND 2 ARTICLES RELATED TO YOUR TOPIC. Meet in Willis Library, 130: When you enter Willis turn right and pass the staircase, turn left and you will see the classroom on the back wall. <https://library.unt.edu/willis/#maps> (Attendance will be taken there)**
- Complete in class: **In-Class Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity for Library Article Scavenger Hunt**

WEEK 7

Mon (2.23):

- **LIBRARY DAY SCAVENGER HUNT ACTIVITY! FIND 2 BOOKS RELATED TO YOUR TOPIC. Meet in Willis Library, 130: When you enter Willis turn right and pass the staircase, turn left and you will see the classroom on the back wall. <https://library.unt.edu/willis/#maps> (Attendance will be taken there)**
- Complete in class: **In-Class Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity for Library Book Scavenger Hunt**

Weds (2.25):

- Bring to class: laptop or other preferred electronic device for writing and internet access
- In Class Writing Lab: Annotated Bibliography with Topic Overview

Fri (2.27)

- Bring to class: laptop or other preferred electronic device for writing and internet access
- In Class Writing Lab: Annotated Bibliography with Topic Overview

WEEK 8

Mon (3.2)

- Read for today: "Shitty First Drafts" by Anne Lamott
- Due before class: Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity on "Shitty First Drafts" by Anne Lamott
- In class: Discussion on Reading
- Group activity: Overcoming Writer's Block and Getting Started

Weds (3.4)

- In class: Strategies of Writing Effective Introductions in College
- Group Activity in Class: Discuss what you find most challenging about writing good introductions, and why

Fri (3.6):

- In class: Strategies of Writing Effective Conclusions in College
- Group Activity in Class: Discuss what you find most challenging about writing conclusion paragraphs, and why

Annotated Bibliography with Topic Overview due via Canvas by 9:00am Friday (3.6)!

WEEK 9: SPRING BREAK (3.9-3.15)

WEEK 10:

Mon (3/16):

- Read for today: "The Case for Reparations" by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- Due before class: Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity on "The Case for Reparations" by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- In class: Discussion on today's reading

Weds (3.18)

- Watch & discuss in class: "The Story of the Contract Buyers League," a 10 minute documentary film:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxPX_uJ36bg
- In class: Strategies of incorporating genre into your analysis in college writing

Fri (3.20)

- Read for today: "Place and Belonging: Denton, Texas," from *Something Between Us: The Everyday Walls of American Life and How to Take Them Down* by Anand Pandian
- Due before class: Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity on "Place and Belonging: Denton, Texas," from *Something Between Us: The Everyday Walls of American Life and How to Take Them Down* by Anand Pandian
- In class: Discussion on today's reading
- In class: Strategies of narrative storytelling in college writing

WEEK 11

Mon (3.23):

- Read for today: *The New Jim Crow*, Chapter 1, by Michelle Alexander
- Due before class: Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity on *The New Jim Crow*, Chapter 1
- In class: Discussion on today's reading

- In class: Strategies of using subject headings as a tool to organize paragraphs in college writing

Weds (3.25):

- Read for today: "Chapter 1: The View from Eviction Court" and "Chapter 2: How We Abandoned Affordable Housing" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley
- Due before class: Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity on Chapter 1: The View from Eviction Court" and "Chapter 2: How We Abandoned Affordable Housing" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley
- In class: Discussion on today's reading
- In class: Strategies of framing the problem in a college research paper

Fri (3.27):

- Read for today: "Chapter 3: We Have to Address the Racism" and "Chapter 4: "Housing Socialism for the Rich" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley.
- Due before class: Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity on "Chapter 3: We Have to Address the Racism" and "Chapter 4: "Housing Socialism for the Rich" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley.
- In class: Discussion on today's reading
- In class: Strategies of framing the problem in a college research paper

WEEK 12

Mon (3.30)

- In class: watch and discuss the documentary film *The Infiltrators*:
<https://theinfiltrators.vhx.tv/products>

Weds (4.1)

- In class: watch and discuss the documentary film *The Infiltrators*:
<https://theinfiltrators.vhx.tv/products>

Fri (4.3)

- In class: watch and discuss the documentary film *The Infiltrators*:
<https://theinfiltrators.vhx.tv/products>

WEEK 13

Mon (4.6)

- Bring to class: laptop or other preferred electronic device for writing and internet access
- In class: American Dream Research Paper Writing Lab

Wed (4.8)

- Bring to class: laptop or other preferred electronic device for writing and internet access
- In class: American Dream Research Paper Writing Lab

Fri (4.10)

- Bring to class: laptop or other preferred electronic device for writing and internet access
- In class: American Dream Research Paper Writing Lab

**American Dream Research Essay due via Canvas by 11:59pm
Saturday (4.11)!**

WEEK 14

Mon (4.13):

- Read for today: "Chapter 6: How We Fix This: Housing First and Beyond" and "Chapter 7: How We Fix This: Rent Control" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley
- Due before class today: Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity on Chapter 6: How We Fix This: Housing First and Beyond" and "Chapter 7: How We Fix This: Rent Control" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley
- In class: Discussion on today's reading
- In class: Strategies of framing the solution in a college research paper

Weds (4.15)

- Read for today: "Chapter 8: How We Fix This: Public and Social Housing" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley
- Due before class today: Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity on "Chapter 8: How We Fix This: Public and Social Housing" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley
- In class: Discussion on today's reading
- In class: Strategies of framing the solution in a college research paper

Fri (4.17)

- Read for today: "Chapter 9: Lessons from Other Countries and Our Own History" from *Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis* by Fran Quigley
- Due before class today: Virtual Writer's Notebook Activity on "Chapter 9: Lessons from Other Countries and Our Own History"

from Lessons from Eviction Court: How We Can End Our Housing Crisis by Fran Quigley

- In class: Discussion on today's reading
- In class: Strategies of incorporating external examples in a college research paper

WEEK 15

Mon (4.20)

- Bring to class: laptop or other preferred electronic device for writing and internet access
- In-Class: Peer Review Activity 1: TBA

Weds (4.22)

- Bring to class: laptop or other preferred electronic device for writing and internet access
- In-Class: Peer Review Activity 2: TBA

Fri (4.24)

- Bring to class: laptop or other preferred electronic device for writing and internet access
- In-Class: Peer Review Activity 3: TBA

WEEK 16

Mon (4.27)

- Bring to class: laptop or other preferred electronic device for writing and internet access
- In-Class: Revision Writing Lab

Weds (4.29):

- Last Day of Class!
- In-Class: SPOT evaluations
- In-Class: Revision Writing Lab

All Missing Virtual Writer's Notebook Activities must be completed before class today, 4.29

Fri (4.31)

- **UNT READING DAY - (No Class)**

FINALS WEEK (5.4 - 5.8; There is no final exam for this course)

Revised American Dream Research Essay (Based on Instructor Feedback & In-Class Peer Review Feedback)

due via Canvas by 11:59pm Friday May 8

(i.e. the last day of UNT Finals Week)