



English 104-530: "Composition and Rhetoric"

Fall 2011

TR 1555-1710, Blocker 106

Instructor Information

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Course Description and Prerequisites

English 104, Composition and Rhetoric, is a 3 credit-hour class that introduces you to strategies for academic inquiry, to analyzing and developing arguments, and to writing for a variety of audiences, including—but not limited to—the academic community. During the semester, you will practice critical thinking, reading, and writing skills, and you will develop research skills that will aid you in identifying, finding, and evaluating primary and secondary sources that you can then use to support your own point of view, demonstrating a rhetorical awareness of such matters as audience, purpose, style, and grammar. With emphasis on writing as process, English 104 recognizes writing as an activity for investigation, reflection, thinking, and learning. The sequence of assignments gives you the opportunity to examine and analyze how writers support claims and use persuasive appeals, and the sequence also offers practice in drafting, revising, and editing papers that support a thesis with evidence you have assembled through research.

This section of English 104 will be concerned with how we relate to our surroundings, especially the university and the state of Texas. Why write about Texas? Because it is where we live. Whether you are a Texas native, a long-time resident, or just moved here for college—you are *here*, in Texas, now, at Texas A&M. This class will encourage you to think about yourself in relation to the state, region, location you live in. We will discuss Texas writers, we will listen to Texas voices, we will learn about Texas cultures. The topics of your essays will be Texas topics, ranging from your personal experiences at this university to the state as a whole.

Learning Outcomes or Course Objectives

During the semester, you will learn:

- how writers consider purpose, audience analysis, voice and tone in various genres and rhetorical situations
- how the conventions of written discourse govern format, usage, and style in various rhetorical situations and genres
- how audience and culture shape discourse

You will also learn:

- to write papers that address specific rhetorical situations;
- to formulate questions and identify problems and open-ended issues that can be investigated through research, collaboration, and writing;
- to write papers that grow out of a question you want to research and investigate, or a problem or

issue you have identified that calls for research and investigation;

- to develop a thesis that articulates your point of view;
- to support a thesis using evidence you have collected, recorded, critiqued, and analyzed;
- to find, evaluate, analyze and synthesize primary and secondary sources;
- to draw conclusions based on evidence or inference;
- to paraphrase and summarize accurately the ideas of others;
- to use electronic resources to support library research;
- to integrate sources in a documented paper in a manner that shows control over the sources;
- to analyze, critique, and revise your own writing, and evaluate the writing of others; and
- to practice scholastic honesty, academic integrity, and the ethics of communication.

Teaching. I tend to smile at students who try to dodge responsibility for their writing by claiming that they are not good at English, or that they are not talented writers, for I do not believe that reading and writing are based on “talent,” on mysterious accidents of nature, or on gifts of generous muses. Rather I see reading and writing as skills that can be taught and learned. All my teaching is based on this perspective, a perspective that places the responsibility for success or failure on the individual student. But it is also an extraordinarily liberating perspective, I think, for in a talent-free classroom students can shake off their inhibitions and face what I see as an important truth: that with desire and hard work, anyone can write a competent essay or short story or poem. The skills of reading and writing are there for anybody to use and to learn. Once they are learned—owned, as it were—they become the personal possessions of the learner. I have many times in my life experienced the transformative power of literature. Though this power is not directly transferable from me to the students, I think it is my responsibility as a teacher to help my students achieve transformation, if they want it, to give them the opportunity to learn these skills, to use these tools, to open their lives to literature and to change. Words have power. Words change lives. And I am in the word business.

Writing. Major writing assignments (Writing Projects) include four documented papers, each a minimum of 800 words in length.

Writing is a process that includes thinking, reading, writing, rewriting, and revision. In this class we will discover learned and intuited methods that writers use in their works. You will support major writing assignments with a series of short writing assignments—response papers—that comment on the readings and help develop your own ideas, and we will practice writing in class with informal assignments.

You will submit electronic and paper copies of major writing assignments and drafts, as required. All major assignments and supporting assignments are due on dates specified on this syllabus. You must complete all required work in English 104 in the sequence outlined on this syllabus to receive a passing grade. Papers submitted without required supporting documents and assignments will not receive a passing grade.

Reading. The reading and peer review assignments require critical reading on your part, require you to read with attention to audience, purpose, tone, style, and other elements of rhetorical context. You’ll also need to read your own work with a critical eye, which can be a difficult task, and one that we will spend a great deal of time on.

Homework. As specified during the semester, homework may include exercises, short writing assignments, and other work that develops writing skills and helps you plan, draft, and revise major writing assignments.

Most homework assignments will be take the form of a short response of @150 words to the assigned readings, which you will post on the class’s turnitin page.

While these assignments do not carry the weight of Writing Projects, they are to be completed in a timely manner, and they should illustrate your best effort and serious consideration of the assignment. Due dates will generally be Noon on the specified class day. Late submissions will be awarded ½ credit.

In-Class Work. One most class days we will write short papers in class and we will read our writing out loud. You are expected to participate in these activities and in other class discussions and collaborative activities. ***ALWAYS BRING PENS (OR PENCILS) AND PAPER TO CLASS.***

Textbook and/or Resource Material

By enrolling in this course, you accept responsibility for purchasing all required textbooks and materials. Failure to purchase them will not be accepted as an excuse for late, missing, or incomplete assignments.

- Modern Language Association. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. New York: Modern Language Association, 2009.
- Nathan, Rebekah. *My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student*. New York: Penguin, 2006.
- Miller, Char. *Fifty Years of the Texas Observer*. San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2004.
- Five standard-sized file folders with pockets (plain manila folders are not acceptable)
- Photocopies of essay drafts and sources used in essays, as specified throughout the semester
- TAMU E-mail account
- a Facebook account
- a Twitter account
- a stapler

Grading Policy and Grade Determination

Grade Determination

Homework and In-Class Assignments	10%
Group Presentation One	15%
Writing Project One	15%
Writing Project Two	15%
Writing Project Three	15%
Group Presentation Two	15%
Writing Project Four	15%

This course will use the standard letter grading scale:

A = 90-100, B = 80-89, C = 70-79, D = 60-69, F = <60

Unless otherwise noted on an assignment, the following letter grades will have these numbers recorded in the grade book: A+=98, A=95, A-=92; B+=88, B=85, B-=82; C+=78, C=75, C-=72; D+ =68, D=65, D-=62; F=55

Grades are not negotiable. Your final course grade will be based on your work in the course. If you are concerned about a grade, see me during office hours.

Each of the four major writing projects will begin as homework assignments of approximately 400 words—about half of the paper's **minimum** length. We will discuss—and workshop—these short assignments in class and you will make revisions based upon the feedback you receive.

You will submit the final, revised version of each Writing Project in one of the required file folders. In addition to the essay you submit for grading, each Writing Project requires supporting materials, short assignments that illustrate the process you followed to develop a topic, draft your paper, revise drafts, reflect on your writing, research your topic, and critique your own work. Supporting materials may also count as homework or in-class assignments. After I have graded your paper, I will deduct points for any missing

supporting materials. For example, the supporting materials for Writing Project One will include:

- Final, Revised Draft
- Topic Proposal Memorandum
- 22-Minute Draft
- Copies of sources used in the paper with your annotations
- Workshop drafts with comments
- Cover memo with self-critique

For supporting materials that are not done to specifications or submitted without required labels (name, date, and title of the assignment), a minimum of 10% of the final grade will be deducted for each missing or unsatisfactory item.

After I grade and return a paper, I'll be happy to discuss it with you, but only after you've had some time to read and reflect on my comments—maybe 24 hours or so. E-mail is not a good or secure way to discuss grades. Plan on making an appointment for a conference or drop by during regular office hours

Writing Project Format. Unless otherwise specified, essays should be typed or letter-quality printed on good paper. Use double-spacing. For fonts I prefer 12-point Times New Roman. Papers should be numbered; page numbers are acceptable in either the upper right or lower right corners. Your name, the date, and the designation of the assignment should be in the upper left corner. **PLEASE, PLEASE STAPLE YOUR PAPERS! Incorrectly formatted projects will be returned ungraded.**

Citations. Use MLA referencing guidelines. A brief discussion of MLA guidelines for paper formatting can be found online at the Writing Programs Office website. A more complete guide to MLA formatting style is available our textbook.

Late Papers. You are required to submit assignments to me in class and electronically on due dates listed on this syllabus. Late submission of Writing Projects (paper and/or required supporting materials) will result in a deduction of 10% per day. Papers submitted outside of class (for example, left under the door or left in the wrong office) will receive a grade of zero ("0") if they are lost, and will have points deducted for late submission if they are late.

You are responsible for presenting appropriate documentation to excuse late work. If you do not submit appropriate written documentation, you will have points deducted for late submission (10 points per day).

Peer Review Makeup. Writing classes function on the basis of community; therefore, the experience of the entire class as a whole depends upon the participation of each individual. If you come to class on peer workshop days without a completed draft, you will not be prepared to participate in peer review and will not receive the benefit of peer editing, which is mandatory and difficult to make up outside of class. For your drafts to be eligible for Writing Projects, arrange for peer feedback with your group members outside of class time. It is unacceptable to submit peer workshop feedback sheets that have been filled out by anyone not enrolled in your section of English 104.

Grade of I. You should not assume that you may take an incomplete in this course. TAMU Student Rules provide guidelines for assigning a grade of *I*. Requests for Incompletes should be addressed to Dr. Joanna Gibson, Associate Director of Writing Programs. Your college advising office will be contacted to verify your reason for requesting a grade of *I*. Requests will be considered only if you have a grade of C or above and only if you have completed 60% of the work in the course. (See the Writing Programs Office website for more information.)

Mid-Semester Grades. Grades reported at mid-semester will be based on Writing Project #1, homework, quizzes, and in-class assignments. This is not 50% of your final grade.

Appropriate Attribution. ANY ASSIGNMENT THAT INCLUDES SOURCES BUT FAILS TO INCLUDE CLEAR AND APPROPRIATE ATTRIBUTION OF THOSE SOURCES, CAN, AT MY DISCRETION, BE AWARDED A GRADE OF ZERO (“0”).

Acknowledging Assistance. Peer review drafts will include notations from your classmates; otherwise, any handwritten notes on drafts must be in your writing, and all drafts and supporting documents must be your writing—that is, your ideas and your words. If you work with a tutor, plan on discussing your writing, but let the tutor know that all writing must be your own. Cover memos submitted with each writing project will acknowledge the assistance of anyone who contributed to your paper—for example, your peer review group or your roommate. Any paper that shows evidence of assistance and fails to acknowledge that assistance will be considered a violation of the Aggie Honor Code and will be reported as a case of scholastic dishonesty.

Handouts. The handouts used in this course are copyrighted. “Handouts” are all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to exams, quizzes, syllabi, in-class materials, sample papers, and peer critique sheets. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy handouts, unless your instructor expressly grants permission.

Grades. Grades are not negotiable. Your final course grade will be based on your work in the course. If you are concerned about a grade, see me during office hours or make an appointment.

Final Exam. I reserve the option of asking the class meet at the final exam time for a short in-class writing assignment, quiz, or other course-related activity. You should mark the date and time of our “final” on your calendar:

Date: Tuesday, December 13 Time: 0800-1000

E-mail and Fax. As stated previously, I will not discuss grades via email. I will, however, be happy to answer email questions about the readings or assignments. I don’t have access to a fax machine, and the English Department will not accept faxes to instructors.

Authorized Absences. According to *TAMU Student Rules*, students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments. You are responsible for providing evidence to substantiate “authorized absences.” If you know in advance that you will miss a class, you are responsible for informing me. I will take attendance and enter the number of absences on the final roster. See *Writing Traditions* and *TAMU Student Rules* for an explanation of authorized absences. Excessive unexcused absences (more than three) will be reported to your college advising office and will result in the final course grade being lowered one letter grade. For excessive excused absences (three weeks or more), I will recommend that you see your academic advising office about the options outlined in TAMU Student Rule 7.8.

Attendance. You are expected to attend class according to the times published in the schedule of classes. Students who arrive more than ten minutes late will have their attendance mark reduced by one-half.

Course Topics and Calendar of Activities,

Week	Topic	Required Reading
1	Intro	Dugger, “A Letter from Texas,” p. 256.
2	Rhetorical Analyses	King, “Fools 12, Folks 8,” p. 180.
3	Logical Fallacies	Eighner, “You Can’t go Homeless Again,” p. 141
4	Group Presentations	Dugger, “A Negro Boy Murdered in East Texas,” p. 309
5	Library Skills	Helmer, “Blood-Soaked Textbooks,” p 325.
6	Thesis Statements	Gilb, “Books Suck,” p. 290
7	Workshop Writing Project One	D. Nathan, “Power Spelling,” p. 299

8	Historical Narratives	Walker, "Concrete Theology," p. 275.
9	Abstracts	Ivins, "Texas Observed" p. 270
10	Workshop Writing Project Two	McMurtry, "Ever a Bridegroom," p. 277
11	Making an Argument	R. Nathan, My Freshman Year, pp. 1-42.
12	Workshop Writing Project Three	R. Nathan, My Freshman Year, pp. 43-85
13	College-Level Discourse and You	R. Nathan, My Freshman Year, pp. 86-122
14	Workshop Writing Project Four	R. Nathan, My Freshman Year, pp. 122-170
15	Group Presentations	Scholar's Choice

Major Assignments and Other Significant Dates

Tuesday, August 30	Syllabus Workshop
Thursday September 1	How to Succeed in this Class (and in College)
Tuesday, September 13	Group Presentations
Thursday, September 15	Honor Code Workshop
Thursday, September 15	Group Presentations
Tuesday, September 20	Group Presentations
Tuesday, September 27	Library Day—Meet in Evans 204
Thursday, September 29	Grading Workshop
Tuesday, October 11	22-Minute Draft, Writing Project One
Thursday, October 13	Workshop Writing Project One
Tuesday, October 18	Writing Project One Due
Tuesday, October 25	22-Minute Draft, Writing Project Two
Thursday, October 27	Workshop Writing Project Two
Tuesday, November 1	Writing Project Two Due
Tuesday, November 15	22-Minute Draft, Writing Project Three
Thursday, November 17	Workshop Writing Project Three
Tuesday, November 22	Writing Project Three Due
Tuesday, November 29	Group Presentations
Thursday, December 1	Group Presentations
Tuesday, December 6	22-Minute Draft, Writing Project Four
Tuesday, December 6	Group Presentations
Tuesday, December 13	Writing Project Four Due

Other Pertinent Course Information

You are responsible for being familiar with the Writing Center's policies and with the Texas A&M Student Rules. The student rules are available online at <http://student-rules.tamu.edu> For more information contact me or go to the Writing Programs Office in Blocker 234.

Group Work. If group work is assigned outside of class, you should meet on University premises. The Sterling C. Evans Library provides areas for group study. To make group work efficient and productive, all members should exhibit professional behavior and remain on task—that is, everyone should work on the project at hand.

Classroom Behavior. Disruptive classroom behavior is defined as anything that would interfere with "an instructor's ability to conduct the class" or "the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program." This can include sleeping, talking, playing with your phone (always remember to turn off your phone when you enter the classroom), reading the newspaper, etc. Please pay attention. **PLEASE RESPECT YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS.** *TAMU Student Rules* explicitly prohibit disruptive behavior, and, as stated above, you are responsible for knowing these rules.

Food: We are meeting in a cramped and poorly-ventilated classroom. Please do not inflict your eating habits on the rest of the class.

turnitin.com: turnitin is an Internet-based service that allows students and instructors to check papers for plagiarism. When you submit a paper to turnitin, the program checks it against online sources and a database that includes books, journals, and online paper-selling services. Then the program sends a report to me, highlighting any passages that appear in other sources. If you've done your own work, I will be the only person with access to your paper. You maintain intellectual property rights to your work.

You'll have the opportunity to submit papers to turnitin before you give them to me to be graded, so you need to think of this program as a safety net. If you know in advance that you have problems with the fair and appropriate attribution of sources, there's no excuse for not addressing the situation and learning how to acknowledge your indebtedness to the words and ideas of other writers.

To register for turnitin, go to <http://turnitin.com> and follow the instructions for creating a user profile. The class ID for **ENGL 104, Section 530** is **4210710**. The password is **texas**.

Additional information about turnitin is available online: <http://itsinfo.tamu.edu/turnitin/>

Social Networking. In order to better develop a community of writers and scholars, this class will experiment with the use of social networking platforms Facebook and Twitter. Students should register for accounts, if they don't already have them, and begin participating as soon as possible.

The Facebook page for this class is:

LMW Classes Fall 2011

This is a private page—no one who is not in our class can see the postings.

The Twitter account for this class is:

@LMWclasses

Once you register for Twitter, search for our class, and choose to follow it. I encourage you to also follow your classmates on Twitter and work toward developing an online conversation.

The University Writing Center: The University Writing Center offers undergraduate students one-on-one help at any stage of the writing process. Located on the second floor of the Sterling C. Evans Library, the UWC also offers online assistance and computer-based lessons. See their Web page <http://uwc.tamu.edu> for details and hours of operation..

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Evans Library: Your English 104 Evans Learning and Outreach Librarian is Lea Susan Engle, Evans Library Annex, Room 418 D.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>

The Aggie Honor Code and Academic Integrity

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

Scholastic Dishonesty.

Upon accepting admission to Texas A&M University, a student immediately assumes a commitment to uphold the Honor Code, to accept responsibility for learning, and to follow the philosophy and rules of the Honor System. Students will be required to state their commitment on examinations, research papers, and other academic work. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the TAMU community from the requirements or the processes of the Honor System.

Information about the Honor Council Rules and Procedures is available online:

aggiehonor.tamu.edu

During the semester, you will be expected to sign the following statement as you hand in papers, quizzes, and exams:

"On my honor, as an Aggie, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work."

Scholastic Dishonesty. It is your responsibility to know the Aggie Honor Code and to understand what constitutes scholastic dishonesty and to avoid it at all costs. Anything (homework, quizzes, daily work, papers, and exams) that appears to be a violation of the Aggie Honor Code will be reported to the Aggie

Honor System Office: aggiehonor.tamu.edu

Final Note

When the person who is grading your papers writes a syllabus, or hands you anything that says, “These are my values—this what I’m looking for,” you can usually believe them.