GENERAL 1101 DESCRIPTION

The goal of English 1101 at Georgia Tech is to improve students' written and oral communication skills through a rhetorical focus on argument. In this course students explore a variety of non-fiction arguments within the discipline of science, technology and culture studies. Students learn how to read critically and write effectively as they examine how arguments develop within social, political, and historical contexts. To enhance their understanding of a variety of communication modes, students learn how to expand and support their written work with oral presentations, and they explore visual as well as textual arguments. Additionally, students learn how to improve their writing through their engagement with a variety of educational technologies. Working independently and collaboratively, students improve their composition skills while gaining a deeper understanding of audience and the contexts that inform effective communication.

SECTION DESCRIPTION

With a consistent focus on the argumentative strategies used in our readings, this specific section will work toward the goals of 1101 by examining news coverage of the 2004 presidential elections. Rhetoric and argument rarely have so much impact on our lives, and are rarely manipulated to such extremes, as in a presidential campaign. Accordingly, this election provides ideal material with which to exercise critical reading and writing abilities. As a composition class, our focus will be on the language in which the presidential election is discussed, by the candidates and by the press. Rather than debating the issues ourselves, we will use the public arguments about those issues to work on rhetoric, logic, and the construction of arguments in your own writing.

All of our regular readings will come from publications available online, across a broad range of the political spectrum including The New York Times, The Nation, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, Salon, Slate, and The Weekly Standard. We will also watch some television coverage (including at least one of the televised debates, which we will meet to watch live) and have a class on political satire (including The Daily Show and The Onion). In addition, we will have several guest speakers. Throughout the semester, you will also be required to bring in material from other sources.

In addition to fulfilling the basic expectations of all 1101 courses, you must be willing to do the following in order to do well in this particular class: 1) keep up with changes in the reading assignments, which I will post on WebX and send out by e-mail; 2) print out and bring to class substantial amounts of assigned reading material, including some of the papers you will peer review; 3) participate effectively and politely in discussions of potentially divisive materials.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1) Faigley and Selzer, Good Reasons (Longman, ISBN 0321105311)
3) To provide further context for the election, I have placed a collection of articles from various sources on the Library's electronic course reserves for our class. These are the core of our first reading assignment, and I expect you to use them to familiarize yourself with the campaign thus far.

4) Register with at least 2 different online publications, such as *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*, both of which are available free, or your hometown newspaper (though many local papers tend to carry large amounts of Associated Press and *New York Times* articles).

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS**

In addition to browsing free online publications (*The Weekly Standard* or *The Nation*, for example), I strongly recommend that you pay for an online student subscription to at least 1 publication of your own choice. Most online publications have special prices and shorter, semester-length subscriptions for college students. At opposite ends of the political spectrum, for example, *Salon* and *The Wall Street Journal* are both relatively affordable (though you can access *The WSJ* through the GT Library's databases too, as I'll show you). Doing so will give you access to a much broader range of sources, which will be helpful when you post articles on WebX and when you write your papers. Let me know if you're unsure whether a publication would meet course criteria.

Along with the writing handbook for the semester, we will use different resources on the web, including the website associated with the handbook (http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/smhandbook) and sites like Emory University’s Writing Center (www.emory.edu/ENGLISH/WC/).

**E-RESERVES**

In addition to the articles already on e-reserves, over the course of the semester I will post articles on the library system. If you have problems using this system, let me know right away.

**COURSEWORK**

Your work for the course will consist of the following:

- **Group Presentation:** 10% (due 9/14 and 9/16)
- **Group Website:** 10% (due 12/5)
- **Paper #1:** 15% (rough draft due 9/2, final draft due 9/9)
- **Paper #2:** 25% (rough draft due 10/26, final draft due 11/4)
- **WebX portfolio:** 20% (due 12/2)
- **Participation:** 20%
  
  (includes assessment essays, discussion, peer reviews, and other group work)

**GROUP PRESENTATION**

During Week 5, each group will give a 20-minute oral presentation on the different argumentative strategies discussed in Ch. 5-9 of *Good Reasons*. You will, of course, offer some summary of the book’s views. Much more importantly, however, you will also provide your own critical analysis and draw on your own examples from the election. Finally, you will use some form of visual aid to help you lead your classmates through your material. This is not an assignment to lecture the class, but rather to lead a short class discussion.

**GROUP WEBSITE**

Over the course of the semester, we will spend several days discussing the feedback your essays have received (from your peers and from me). After you get your first paper back, you will begin to draw up specific examples of the issues you have encountered and offer solutions to those problems. Each group will condense these examples into a set of 15 that the group members have encountered. You will then develop this material into a website that would be useful for students like yourself. We will discuss this project in more detail later in the semester.
PAPERS
The writing component of this course will take several forms, all emphasizing revision as a necessary habit. 2 formal papers (each 4-5 pages/1200-1500 words) make up the largest component of the required writing for this course. Your rough draft for the first paper will be due on September 2, and your final draft on September 9. Your rough draft for the second paper will be due on October 26, and your final draft on November 4. As detailed on the schedule below, the process for each paper assignment will begin when you e-mail me your draft thesis statement. We will then discuss these as a group, asking how the thesis is effective and how it needs to improve. Next, you will exchange a full draft of the paper with the students in your group and participate in peer reviews during class. You will then revise your draft before turning it in. Anyone who fails to complete all reviews for their group members before we meet in class on review days will receive a failing grade on their own paper.

When you turn in your paper, you will include the original draft with a reviewer's marks as well as a 1-page typed summary of the reviews it received and of how you chose to address those comments. This summary requires that you analyze your revisions, and allows me to see exactly what you did. Your second paper will go through two peer reviews, each with a different group. The first paper has a broad topic, described below on the schedule, and we will discuss topics for the second paper as the date approaches. All essays must be computer printed and double-spaced in a reasonable 12-point font (such as Times or Palatino). I do not accept late papers – any assignments turned in late will receive 0%.

WEBX
The questions and responses that you post on WebX will serve a number of purposes:

1) They will give you a concrete basis from which you can begin your essays. In this sense, these journals are a key part of the process of writing, one that emphasizes both the ability to read critically and the function of revision. Instead of posting a comment and moving on, you will build your papers from your postings.

2) Because you are required to use the second, longer posting to respond to your classmates, these postings will not be a series of isolated posts. Instead, they will take the form of a threaded discussion community that will at once enrich our in-class discussions and extend them beyond our limited class time.

3) They will keep you writing on a regular basis and they will help everyone focus on the discussion for the day.

4) They will help ensure that our readings come from sources across a broad range of the political spectrum.

With some exceptions, noted on the schedule below, your responses will have two stages, both of which must be clear, concise, on topic, and on time:

1) Questions. By 10 p.m. on the assigned dates (see the schedule below), you will find an election article that you think our class would benefit from discussing, and you will post the following: the title, source, and author, including a URL; a brief description; and 2 specific, detailed questions for discussion. These should help you start to think about the reading before we begin discussing it in class, and they should be substantial questions that you think our discussion should address. The articles must come from a published source, not just from anything that has been posted online. They cannot, for example, be from personal websites and they cannot be newsgroup or blog postings. Examples of acceptable sources do include publications that only appear online, such as Salon and Slate, as well as the online versions of print publications. However, blogs can often help you find useful articles, and if you see a blog post that is responding to a published journal and that you want to use for WebX, you can do so as long as you include the article to which the blog is responding.
2) Journals. By 10 p.m. on the assigned dates, you will make a short post (300 words). These posts must respond directly to class discussion or to your classmates' WebX posts, and they must clearly identify the specific comments or posts to which they are responding. Like the questions, these posts will help you prepare for discussion, but they will also extend our discussion beyond the class time. You should see them as an opportunity to try out some ideas that you can later develop for your essay.

These postings will have a direct effect on the time we spend in class. On days after you post an article to WebX, we will start with two students at each laptop. Each of these groups will take 5-10 minutes to decide which of their articles would best suit class discussion. We will repeat this process in groups of 6 and then groups of 12, so that by halfway through the class we have 2 groups, each of which has settled on an article for discussion and has analyzed that article's argument in some detail. We will spend the remainder of the class discussing the two articles and the groups' reasons for choosing them.

At the end of the semester, you will gather a 2-part portfolio of your class postings. 50% of the grade for your journals will come from this portfolio:

1) An explanation (500 words) of what you see as the qualities that make for a good, productive post. In defining and discussing those qualities, you must refer to examples drawn from your classmates' posts. This portion will be graded as a formal piece of writing.

2) 5 postings that you choose to represent your best journal work for the semester. These should also reflect the criteria you define in part 1. Because these are journals rather than essays, they will be graded primarily for content, clarity, and evidence of consistent engagement with the material and with your classmates (i.e., they must do more than paraphrase my comments or those of your classmates).

The remaining 50% of your journal grade will reflect the completion of all of your journals. For every posting that is missing, late, or does not meet the basic criteria for a posting, I will deduct proportionate points from this 50%.

PARTICIPATION

This class runs as a seminar which will require both careful reading and regular participation in the discussion. Throughout the semester you will engage in several peer editing exercises, where you will exchange your work with other students. You will also participate in group presentations and workshops. All of these activities – discussion, peer-reviews, and group work – are part of the collaborative community that this class requires: the more everyone participates, the more everyone learns. In this sense, your consistent participation in these activities is an obligation to the classroom community. The most prominent part of your participation grade will be active, regular participation in class discussions. To do well on this part of your grade you will have to contribute consistently and visibly to our discussions.

Because these discussions are meant to develop everyone's understanding of the material, they rely on your willingness to ask questions, and you should not feel that you have to understand the text completely before you can participate. Participation means asking questions, not just answering them, and it means taking an active role in working out ideas as a class. Participation, though, is not simply talking a lot – it also means listening attentively and politely to the discussion. Consequently, habits such as being late, sleeping, or talking to your neighbors while others are talking will lower your participation grade.

Finally, remember that this is not a debate class. You will be required (as with your first paper) to propose arguments with which you may disagree, and you will be required to participate in the discussion with all due respect for your classmates. Rude or dismissive comments will be taken as signs that you are not interested in participating in a discussion, and will consequently lower your participation grade.
QUIZZES
There will be no quizzes or exams in this class, unless it becomes apparent from the lack of substantive discussion that you have not been doing the reading.

ATTENDANCE
You are expected to attend all classes – participation counts heavily, and you can hardly participate without attending. After two absences you will lose 3% from your final course grade for each further absence. If I do not hear anything from you about an absence, I will assume it is unexcused, so it is in your best interest to contact me as soon as possible if extraordinary circumstances arise.

OFFICE HOURS
My office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 11-1, but I am also available to meet by appointment, and I will make time to meet with you. I strongly encourage you to come by my office or to ask in class if you are unsure about how to address the comments on your papers. If you contact me by e-mail, I will respond as soon as possible.

I will use e-mail as the primary means of contacting you, individually and as a group, about syllabi changes or anything else related to the class. I make every effort to respond to your e-mails promptly, and I expect you to do the same. Not having checked your e-mail will not be an excuse for missing a deadline.

GRADING
The grade descriptions here are not formulas: because every essay is different, every grade reflects the balance of strong and weak elements in a particular essay. One B paper may have a good argument weakened by awkward or unclear writing, while another may have very engaging writing but a weak argument, and a third might have a slightly less challenging argument but fewer formal problems. The argument in a C+ paper may have more potential than that in a B- paper, but the C+ paper may also have other more serious problems. A grammatically flawless but essentially empty essay will not get an A, nor will a brilliant argument obscured by weak grammar. The argument won’t be clear without the correct grammar, and the grammar serves no real purpose if it doesn’t help communicate anything. Finally, isolated mistakes usually won’t detract from your grade as much as the general appearance of carelessness will. You should be able to spell every word you use independently of any machine, but spelling errors in the age of the spell-checker are simply rude.

A: This essay is excellent. The argument is substantive, effectively and efficiently made, subtle, and original. The writing is clear, engaging, and direct. This essay has no significant grammatical, typographical, or spelling errors.

B: This essay has some relatively minor problems, but no major structural weaknesses. The argument is characterized by all of the same things that characterize an A argument, but to a lesser extent, or perhaps with one element weaker than the others. The writing is clear and engaging, with minor exceptions, but may not flow as well or may have passages of summary and description that do not contribute directly to the argument. There are scattered grammatical, typographical, or spelling errors that detract from the argument.

C: This essay has more serious problems, perhaps even at a structural level. The argument may be inconsistent and, despite some stronger sections, too often vague, unclear, simplistic, or disorganized. The writing may be clear, effective, or engaging in passages, but it is not consistently so. This, in turn, is probably due to an excessive number of errors or other problems.

D: This essay has extensive problems, at both surface and structural levels. The argument is unclear and ineffective to an extent that overwhelms any strong points. The writing is vague and even confusing. There may be enough serious errors that they obscure other elements of the essay, making the argument and the writing hard to evaluate.
**F**: This essay may have potential, but it has too many serious problems to be acceptable. The argument is unclear or weak enough that it may be hard to make out. The writing is unclear and confusing. It has serious and frequent grammatical, typographical, and spelling errors.

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**PLAGIARISM**

All of the work that you submit for this class must be entirely your own, and must not be work that you have submitted or are going to submit for another class. All quotations, references, and sources must be fully and clearly cited according to MLA guidelines (see Chapter 18 in *The St. Martin's Handbook*).

Particularly with regard to using online sources, which are more likely to be plagiarized through simple carelessness, we will discuss plagiarism and citation in detail before you submit any written work for this course. As part of a departmental policy, all written assignments for this course will be turned in through the anti-plagiarism program “Turn It In” (www.turnitin.com).

This course will follow the definition of plagiarism in the Georgia Tech Honor Code (www.honor.gatech.edu). The "Student Conduct Code of the Rules and Regulations" (Georgia Institute of Technology General Catalog, Section XIX) states, “Academic misconduct is an act that does or could improperly distort student grades or other student academic records” and offers the following descriptive list:

- Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired written or verbal information in the preparation of any essay, laboratory report, examination, or other assignment included in an academic course;
- Substitution for, or unauthorized collaboration with, a student in the commission of academic requirements;
- Submission of material that is wholly or substantially identical to that created or published by another person or persons, without adequate credit notations indicating authorship (plagiarism);
- False claims of performance or work that has been submitted by the claimant;
- Alteration or insertion of any academic grade or rating so as to obtain unearned academic credit;
- Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any institute document relating to the academic status of the student.

The Code continues, “While these acts constitute assured instances of academic misconduct, other acts of academic misconduct may be defined by the professor.” Consult the Honor Code online or in the General Catalog to remember your primary commitment to academic honesty. Students who engage in academic dishonesty may receive a 0.0 on the assignment or fail the course. In addition, the instance will be reported to the Dean of Students who may take further action.

**COMPUTING RESOURCES AND REQUIREMENTS**

We will meet regularly in a multimedia computer lab, and we will make use frequent use of Internet applications in the lab and from remote locations (i.e. your home or dorm room). Because this course assumes that all students will meet the technology requirements for incoming freshmen at Georgia Tech, *you must have access to your own computer with Internet capabilities to complete the work in this class*. We will use e-mail applications, Web browsers, and online conferencing applications (including Web Crossing) both in- and out-of-class. For your group websites, we will also use Macromedia Dreamweaver, which is installed on all lab and library computers at Georgia Tech, and we will devote a class to giving
you basic training in the program. Previous experience with Internet research, e-mail, and conferencing software is not a prerequisite for this course, but it will be a significant advantage. If you have doubts about your ability to work with these programs, let me know as soon as possible. As described on the schedule below, during many of our class meetings we will also use the LCC’s laptop carts. If you have your own wireless-equipped laptop, please bring it to class on those days.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability should make an appointment to see me during office hours. Students with disabilities should also contact Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS) to discuss reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor call (404) 894-2564 (voice) / (404) 894-1664 (voice/TDD) or visit Suite 210 in the Smithgall Student Services Building. For more information, see adapts.gatech.edu.

SCHEDULE
We will meet in our classroom, with the exception of days for website workshops, when we may meet in one of the computer labs. I will announce the time and location for Vincent Keenan’s lecture at a later date, and we will meet in a lecture hall on campus to watch the first presidential debate (9/30).

WEEK 1 (GR = Good Reasons)
Tuesday 8/17 Syllabus, introduction, e-mail
Wednesday 8/18 Read the collection of articles I have posted on course reserve, and choose 2 on which you want to focus. Post WebX #1: identify the two articles you’ve chose, use the methods in St. Martin’s and GR to identify 2 key argumentative points in each of your chosen essays, then give your own 2 questions about the reading.
Thursday 8/19 Assigned reading: articles on electronic reserves. On critical reading: GR Ch. 1 (13-20), St. Martin’s Ch. 1c (37-38) and 11a-c (236-243). Assessment essay.

WEEK 2
Monday 8/23 WebX #2: as described above in the class policies, post 1 article that you have selected and 2 WebX questions for discussion about it.
Tuesday 8/24 On evaluating and strengthening arguments: GR Ch. 2 (32-48), St. Martin’s 11g (245-249), and 16b-c (359-366). On finding topics: St. Martin’s 2b (43-44) and 3a (57-63). Use laptops to work through the articles in groups.
Wednesday 8/25 Webx#3: post WebX response to 8/24 class discussion of articles.
Thursday 8/26 On drafting a thesis statement: St. Martin’s Ch. 3b (63-65) and Ch. 13a-i (269-283). Assigned news readings: check WebX/e-mail. Assign presentation groups for Week 5.

WEEK 3 (Republican National Convention all week: watch keynote speeches)
Monday 8/30 E-mail me your draft thesis statement. By now, you should all be thinking about who you want to see elected. For this first essay, though, you will need to write a serious, credible defense of one of the candidates you do not want to see elected. The purpose of a devil’s advocate assignment like this is to help you think clearly and critically about positions you do not hold yourself, something you have to do if you are going to think clearly and critically about the positions that you do hold. As with the rest of your essays for this course, you will have to narrow your topic, perhaps by focusing on one issue or on one aspect of the candidate in question. We will discuss this assignment, and some of the different ways you can approach it in class. Consider using the GR chapter on which you’re presenting to help you formulate your argument. As a group, the class will go over each thesis statement in detail, and respond to it in our own terms as well as in the terms provided by GR and St. Martin’s.
Tuesday 8/31 Thesis Exercise. On plagiarism and MLA format: GR Ch. 16, St. Martin's Ch. 18, Ch.20. On introductions and conclusions: GR Ch. 4 (89-90, 92-93), St. Martin's Ch. 5f (138-143). On drafting: GR Ch. 2 (54-55), St. Martin's Ch. 1b (32-34), Ch. 3e-f (71-75).

**Wednesday 9/1** WebX #4: post 1 article that you have selected and 2 WebX questions for discussion about it.

**Thursday 9/2** turn in peer review draft of Paper #1. On Peer reviews: St. Martin's Ch. 4c (85-93). On revision and editing: GR Ch. 4 (101-102, #8) and 11 (211-222), St. Martin's Ch. 4d-4i (93-105), common problems handout. Use laptops to work through articles in groups.

**WEEK 4**

**Monday 9/6** WebX#5: post WebX response to 9/2 class discussion of articles.

**Tuesday 9/7** peer reviews in class. St. Martin's Ch. 4i (104). Discuss presentation requirements.

Assigned news readings: check WebX/e-mail.

**Thursday 9/9** Paper #1 Due. On making oral presentations: GR Ch. 14 (267-275), St. Martin's Ch. 10 (218-234). Workshop group presentations. War Room documentary.

**WEEK 5**

**Tuesday 9/14** Group Presentations 1 (GR Ch. 5), 2 (GR Ch. 6), and 3 (GR Ch. 7)

**Thursday 9/16** Group Presentations 4 (GR Ch. 8) and 5 (GR Ch. 9)

**WEEK 6**

**Monday 9/20** WebX #6: post 1 article that you have selected and 2 WebX discussion questions.

**Tuesday 9/21** Use laptops to work through articles in groups.

**Wednesday 9/22** WebX #7: post WebX response to 9/21 discussion.

**Thursday 9/23** Assigned news readings: check WebX/e-mail.

**Friday 9/24** Progress Report Grades Due (S/U)

**WEEK 7**

**Monday 9/27** WebX #8: post 1 article that you have selected and 2 WebX questions for discussion about it.

**Tuesday 9/28** Use laptops to work through articles in groups.

**Wednesday 9/29** Attend Vincent Keenan lecture (www.publius.org) (time/place TBD).

WebX#9: post journal about lecture and associated readings.

**Thursday 9/30** Guest speaker Vincent Keenan, meet to watch first Presidential debate (9 p.m.).

**WEEK 8**

**Monday 10/4** WebX #10: post 1 article that you have selected and 2 WebX questions for discussion about it. Pick an article focused on the debate and its reception.

**Tuesday 10/5** Vice-Presidential Debate (9 p.m.).

**Wednesday 10/6** WebX #11: post WebX response to 10/4 articles.

**Thursday 10/7** Using laptops, discussion of first 2 debates and coverage of those debates.

**Friday 10/8** Last day to withdraw with a "W," watch 2nd Presidential Debate (9 p.m.).

**WEEK 9**

**Monday 10/11** WebX #12: post samples of 4 different problems from your first paper, each with a reference to St. Martin's and each with a possible correction or improvement.

**Tuesday 10/12** Discuss common problems with first paper; assign Web project groups (possibly the same as your peer review groups).

**Wednesday 10/13** WebX #13: post 1 article that you have selected and 2 WebX questions for discussion about it. Watch 3rd Presidential Debate (9 p.m.).
**Thursday 10/14** Finish common problems discussion. Assigned news reading (check WebX/e-mail). Tentative guest speaker Kevin Walter.

**WEEK 10**

**Tuesday 10/19** NO CLASS: FALL BREAK

**Wednesday 10/20** E-mail me draft thesis statement for Paper #2.

**Thursday 10/21** Thesis Exercise for Paper #2

**WEEK 11**

**Monday 10/25** WebX #14: post 1 article that you have selected and 2 WebX questions for discussion about it.

**Tuesday 10/26** Exchange peer review drafts for paper #2. Because you will be doing 2 different sets of peer reviews this time, each with a different group, tell both sets of your reviewers exactly what you have questions about and what you want to improve, in terms of both this paper and the feedback on your first paper. Include your WebX post on Common Problems.

**Wednesday 10/27** WebX #15: post WebX response to 10/26 discussion.

**Thursday 10/28** Peer reviews (first set), assigned news reading (check WebX/e-mail).

**WEEK 12**

**Sunday 10/31** E-mail your revised draft to your second set of reviewers.

**Monday 11/1** WebX #16: post 1 article that you have selected and 2 WebX questions for discussion about it. Find an article that predicts election outcome and that explains prediction

**Tuesday 11/2** Election Day – watch coverage of the returns. Peer reviews, second set.

**Thursday 11/4** Paper #2 due. Dreamweaver introduction in lab. On Web design: GR Ch. 13 (255-265), St. Martin's Ch.9 (192-217). Begin discussion of post-campaign coverage (we hope).

**WEEK 13**

**Monday 11/8** WebX #17: post 1 article that you have selected and 2 WebX questions for discussion about it. Find an article focused on the outcome of the election itself.

**Tuesday 11/9** Post-election coverage. Use laptops to work through the articles in groups.

**Wednesday 11/10** WebX #18: post WebX response to 11/9 discussion.

**Thursday 11/11** Post-election coverage. Assigned news reading (check WebX/e-mail).

**WEEK 14**

**Monday 11/15** WebX# 19: post article and WebX questions.

**Tuesday 11/16** Dreamweaver follow-up; initial Web group workshops with laptop cart.

**Wednesday 11/17** WebX #20: post 4 different problems from your second paper, each with a reference to LBH and a correction or improvement.

**Thursday 11/18** Discuss common problems with second paper.

**WEEK 15**

**Monday 11/22** E-mail your group your list of sample problems drawn from your papers, each with a reference to St. Martin's and each with a possible correction or improvement.

**Tuesday 11/23** Workshop websites with laptop cart, make final division of group responsibilities.

**Thursday 11/25** NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

**WEEK 16**

**Tuesday 11/30** Exit assessment essay; discuss websites and WebX portfolios.

**Thursday 12/2** Last Day of Classes. evaluations, WebX portfolio due; wrap-up discussion.

**Sunday 12/5** Websites posted by midnight.