English 1101: English Composition

Issues in Contemporary Media Studies, Fall 2003

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Course 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.

In this class, you will improve your reading and writing skills as you immerse yourself in the discourse surrounding media and technology. By first reviewing the traditional strategies of effective argumentation and by then identifying those strategies in published essays, you will become a skilled rhetorician and a knowledgeable participant in an on-going exchange about contemporary media. You will also review some fundamental writing and speaking skills to guarantee that all your arguments, written and oral, are polished and audience-friendly.

Texts
All are available at Georgia Tech Bookstore.
- *Good Reasons: Designing and Writing Effective Arguments*, Lester Faigley and Jack Selzer
- Course packet.

Assignment Descriptions
Assessment Essays: You will be required to complete an entrance and exit essay that will allow me to evaluate your strengths and weaknesses early in the semester and to gauge your improvement over the semester.

Co-Web: To help you think about the differences between traditional literacy (writing papers) and e-literacy (writing hypertexts), you and other students will work together to design a collaborative web site.

Daily Quizzes, Reading Summaries, and Class Participation: You should attend every class with all your homework completed because you can't really learn from this course if you come to class unprepared. Furthermore, daily work such as quizzes, reading summaries, and class participation determine a large part of your grade. Collegial, respectful class participation is required.
Expect a quiz about the assigned reading material everyday at the beginning of class unless I assign a reading summary for that day. The quizzes aim to reward you for doing the daily reading. If you do the reading carefully, you should get an A on each quiz. You may drop three quiz grades.

**Group Discussions/Presentations:** All students will form groups that, on assigned days, will be required to lead the class by creating a presentation that both teaches that topic and offers students the opportunity to engage in a discussion about the topic. These performances are an important part of a well-rounded education because they give you experience speaking in front of a group while challenging you to make your audiences engage your topic (two tasks you will likely have to perfect in your professional life). Beyond these lessons, the presentations promote the class’s learning by presenting the material from students’ point of view. These group discussions/presentations should last ten minutes (but they can go overtime if they are actively engaging the class) and can take any form the group thinks will be the most interesting and educational for the class. Your group must email me at least two days before your presentation a detailed plan of your presentation and strategies for eliciting discussion. Feel free to visit my office hours for guidance.

**Projects:** Completing your major paper and web-design projects will involve a process of discovery where you begin to see how you feel about an issue because you force yourself to think about it, test out various possibilities, and eventually settle on one or two conclusions (at least temporarily). You and I may not agree about your conclusions, but that is to be expected because there is never only one right way to address an issue. But make no mistake; there are wrong ways and superficial responses. So be sure to provide strong evidence to support your points. The key to completing these assignments successfully can be summarized under the following rule of thumb: question your presumptions; take nothing for granted.

At a minimum, all of your papers and web projects should introduce a clear thesis, support the argument with relevant evidence, respond to counter arguments, revise to guarantee logic and cohesion, and edit for flawless presentation. Note: *any assignment with more than two spelling errors will receive a failing grade*; a paper that is riddled with spelling errors demonstrates a lack of respect for your own work. *Keep a copy of your papers* in case either of us loses the first.

**WebX Postings:** In addition to in-class discussion, you will participate on our online bulletin board in Web Crossing (WebX). In your posts, you will reflect on issues raised in assigned readings and offer your own supplementary examples to assist your peers in their critical understanding of course material.

**Grades**
- Quizzes, WebX, CoWeb, Reading Summaries 25%
- Class Participation including Assessment Essays 20%
- Project One: First Paper 15%
- Project Two: Second Paper 15%
- Project Three: Web Site 15%
- Group Discussions/ Presentations 10%

All English 1101 classes must require writing to total about 6250 graded words (twenty-five pages) by the end of the semester. Project One should be 1000 words. Project Two should be around 1000 words. Project Three should be 500 words. You will fulfill the rest of the requirement through quizzes, WebX posts, rough draft editing, summaries, and in-class writing. Grading follows the following scale scale. \( A=90-100, \ B=89-80, \ C=79-70, \ D=69-60, \ F=59 \) and below.

You can earn an \( A \) if you show originality and thought in your work, come to class prepared, and participate respectfully and actively in class discussion. You will absolutely help your grade by asking questions, offering useful comments, and taking an interest in the material and your assignments.
Policies

Attendance: You are allowed three unexcused absences; beginning with the fourth absence your final grade will be dropped half a letter for each day missed. Excuses must be from a medical doctor or a recognized University organization. If you are not present at the beginning of class, it is your responsibility to make sure your attendance is recorded. You are only allowed three tardies; each subsequent tardy will be recorded as an absence. Quizzes cannot be made up. Homework will only be accepted on the day it is due unless you bring in an excuse for an absence.

Students With Disabilities: Any student who needs an accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment to see the instructor 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 visit the following website: http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/.

Academic Honesty: All work you turn in for this class must be your own work, with all outside reference sources properly cited and acknowledged. All written assignments for this course will be turned in through the anti-plagiarism program “Turn It In” (http://www.turnitin.com).

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 at “http://www.honor.gatech.edu/” 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.

Software/Computing Resources And Requirements: We will meet regularly this quarter 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). I assume all students enrolled this quarter will meet the technology requirements for incoming freshmen at GT. 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 Web Crossing (WebX) as a means of communicating both in- and out-of-class. These tools will enable you to communicate with your peers and engage in electronic “bulletin board” discussions (email, WebX), and to participate in website critique. You will receive detailed
instructions within the first weeks in class about how to access and use WebX. Previous knowledge of Internet research, e-mail, and conferencing software is not a prerequisite for this course.

**Course Schedule**

*All assignments should be completed by the day listed on this syllabus. Readings not in the text books are in the course packet. This schedule and the syllabus in general is subject to changes and revisions.*

Monday, 8/18: Introduction.

Wednesday, 8/20: In-class assessment essay.

**Introduction to Writing and Arguments**


Monday, 9/1: No class. Labor Day holiday.

**Introduction to Media Studies**


Friday, 9/5: *Introducing Media Studies* second half of selection (on reserve).

Monday, 9/8: *Little Brown* p. 46-55, 63 (bottom)-69, 152-156 (top), 176- 183 (skip exercises). Write a one or two paragraph rhetorical analysis of *Introducing Media Studies*. For help, consult “Steps in Writing a Rhetorical Analysis” on p. 100-102.

Wednesday, 9/10: Grammar and Mechanics: Scan *Little Brown* Bring questions about any concepts you don’t understand.

Friday, 9/12: Wrap up of *Introducing Media Studies* and discussion of Media Studies in general. In class lesson on Turn It In.

Monday, 9/15: No class; meet in my office at scheduled time with a thesis statement and the kind of outline explained in *Good Reasons* on p.55. Read “Revising and Editing” *Little Brown* p. 30-39 before meeting.

Wednesday, 9/17: No class; meet in my office at scheduled time with a thesis statement and the kind of outline explained in *Good Reasons* on p.55. Read “Revising and Editing” *Little Brown* p. 30-39 before meeting.

**Advanced Argument and Writing**

Friday, 9/19: Papers due. In-class lesson in using Web Crossing (WebX) and Co-Web. New assignment explaining WebX media-related posts and Co-Web media magazine project.


Narrative p. 169-173, example on 173-179. Create an argument using one of the rhetorical modes discussed Monday and post it on WebX. All readings from Good Reasons.

Friday, 9/26: Kinds of Argument: Rebuttal p. 183-190, example on 191-193. Post an argument on WebX using one of the rhetorical modes discussed Wednesday. All readings from Good Reasons.

Monday, 9/29: Review argument modes. Select any student’s post from Wednesday or Friday and rebut it on WebX. For extra credit, you may post a rebuttal of a rebuttal.


Wednesday, 10/8: Co-Web project studio.

Friday, 10/10: Co-Web project due.

Monday, 10/13: No class. Mid-term recess.

**Film and TV as Windows to US Culture**

Introduction to new unit and next assignment on WebX. Read by Wednesday.


Friday, 10/17: Blockbusters, Part II: Reading on reserve.

Monday, 10/20: Independent Films: Night on Earth (film on reserve in library).


Friday, 10/24: Television Production and Fandom: “Rewriting Popularity: The Cult Files.”


Wednesday, 10/29: Talk and Reality TV: “Rats for Ratings” and “The Oprah Winfrey Show and the Talk-Show Furor.” Make meeting appointments.

Friday, 10/31: Youth-oriented TV and Movies: Watch Merchants of Cool in class.

Monday, 11/3: Youth-oriented Media: Discuss Merchants of Cool in class. WebX post about Merchants of Cool. Respond on WebX to another student’s post on this subject.

Wednesday, 11/5: No class; meet in my office at scheduled time with a thesis statement and the kind of outline explained on Good Reasons p. 55

Friday, 11/7: No class; meet in my office at scheduled time with a thesis statement and the kind of outline explained on p. 55.

Monday, 11/10: Papers due. Introduction to new unit.

**Technology and Internet Issues**

Wednesday, 11/12: Writing and the Web: “The Computer as a New Writing Space.”

Friday, 11/14: Internet Censorship: “Sex, Fear, and Condescension on Campus” and Good Reasons p. 618-625 (both Cleaver and Barlow).


Wednesday, 11/19: Virtuality: “Utopian Plagiarism, Hypertextuality, and Electronic Cultural Production” and “Hacker’s Manifesto.”
Friday, 11/21: Video Games and Gender: “Retooling Play: Dystopia, Dysphoria, and Difference.”
Wednesday, 11/26: WebX post due: Write about Cyberpunk as you see it (or don’t see it) in today’s world. Respond on WebX to another student’s post on the subject.
Friday, 11/28: No class. Thanksgiving holiday.
Monday, 12/1: Review and studio day. Ask questions about your projects and the issues in this unit.
Wednesday, 12/3: In-class assessment essay.
Friday, 12/5: Peer evaluation of web projects “rough draft”. Bring Good Reasons; see p. 261-2 for design evaluation help. Classes end.

Wednesday, 12/10: Final Projects Due.