

Academic Writing
English 101: Section#2004
Fall 2015

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Class time: 10-10:50 a.m.
MWF
Class location: ARC 1123
Office Hours: 1-2 p.m.

Course Description

Welcome to English 101 at the University of Maryland. “Academic writing” may sound like a course that introduces you to the kinds of writing expected of you throughout college, and in many ways, it is. However, as this course prepares you for the scholarly work necessary for your history, psychology, and biology courses, it also introduces you to a kind of writing and thinking that will enable you to become a reflective and critical thinker able to enter intellectual conversations inside and outside the academy.

To achieve these ends, this course is grounded in inquiry and rhetoric. Our goal is first to inquire, to determine what is known—and credible—about a topic or issue. Then, we ask questions about what is known: How do we understand and define this issue? How might we evaluate it? What can we do about it? Engaging in this inquiry and responding to these questions leads to rhetorical practice. We use rhetorical skills to construct knowledge by creating arguments that are built on the foundations of what has already been thought and said. Thus inquiry and rhetoric rely on investigating and reflecting upon the thoughts and ideas of others. In other words, through questioning and research we gain the knowledge to join conversations ethically and critically. Also, because academic writing is part of a larger conversation within and often across disciplines, one of its conventions is rigorous review by peers.

In English 101, you will hone the skills of clarifying issues, asking questions, leveraging rhetorical strategies, entering into scholarly conversations, researching topics, using evidence, and engaging in peer review. Your work in English 101 will be oriented by several concepts, some of which are discussed above:

Inquiry. Inquiry is understood as learning through questioning. One tool you will use to inquire is *stasis theory*, a rhetorical concept with its roots in ancient legal practice. Stasis theory offers a way of inventing, categorizing, and analyzing what is at issue in a situation with a series of questions: whether something exists, how it is defined, what its causes are, what its effects or consequences are, how we value it, what we should do about it, and who has the right to act on these questions.

Rhetoric. Defined by Aristotle as “the art of observing the available means of persuasion,” rhetoric is the study of effective language use. Rhetoric provides a method

for successful and persuasive academic argumentation. Through rhetoric, we are attentive to issues of the rhetorical situation of any writing (its audience, purpose, writer, context, and genre) as well as the role of rhetorical appeals in any persuasive discourse.

Writing Process and Reflection. Writing is a process, and while that process varies for each writer, drafts, feedback, and revision are essential elements for any effective composition. In addition, by stepping back to reflect on your writing and your writing process, you learn more about who you are as a writer and what academic writing is. In reflection, you gain the insights that enable you to assess your work and make productive changes towards improvement.

Research and Critical Reading. The work of researching and reading of academic sources critically allows you to enter the conversations of various disciplines. You will also learn the types of sources that are acceptable for academic papers and the methods appropriate for integrating them into your writing and documenting them.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of an Academic Writing course, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of writing as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate sources, and as a process that involves composing, editing, and revising.
- Demonstrate critical reading and analytical skills, including understanding an argument's major assertions and assumptions, and how to evaluate its supporting evidence.
- Demonstrate facility with the fundamentals of persuasion, especially as they are adapted to a variety of special situations and audiences in academic writing.
- Demonstrate research skills, integrate your own ideas with those of others, and apply the conventions of attribution and citation correctly.
- Use Standard Written English and revise and edit your own writing for appropriateness. You will take responsibility for such features as format, syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the connection between writing and thinking and use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating in an academic setting.

Sustainability Discussion in ENGL 101

Earlier this year I had the great opportunity to participate as a fellow in the University of Maryland' Chesapeake Project. This three-day workshop was an enlightening experience regarding the topic of sustainability and various related questions and concerns connected to this ever-important issue in our society. Our classroom discussions will be sharing some of the most important information learned using parts of **Powerpoints** from the actual Chesapeake Project workshop regarding what sustainability means, how communities become sustainable, what the benefits are, and why to bother essentially.

Three of your **Discussion** posts in Canvas will ask you to respond to sustainability related readings while practicing skills needed in upcoming writing assignments like summarizing, rhetorical analysis, and assessing solutions in an argument as necessary in the position paper. The **Academic Summary** assignment will incorporate sustainability into it by asking you to summarize in 300 words Paul Gilder's "The Earth Is Full." This assignment will ask you to focus in your summary on Gilding's argument, his support, and a sense of how he constructs that argument.

Three sustainability learning objectives in the course are:

- Articulate sustainability while analyzing several specific contexts to explore our discipline's link with it.
- Learn what collective action is regarding sustainability and what strategies we can use for creative problem solving and adaptability.
- Understand what's at issue in sustainability according to various audiences, in various situations, at various times; hence how sustainability lends itself to a cross-disciplinary approach.

Required Books

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. 3rd ed. New York: Norton, 2014.

Inventing Arguments: A Rhetoric and Reader for the University of Maryland's Academic Writing Program. Boston: Pearson, 2014.

Wysocki, Anne Frances and Dennis Lynch, *The DK Handbook*. 3rd ed. Boston: Pearson, 2014.

Course Policies and Procedures

1. Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance. The writing you do in English 101 will be based on skills you will develop and hone *in class*; for that reason, your attendance and participation will have a direct effect on your work and, ultimately, your grades. If you miss class for any reason, it will be your responsibility to find out what you missed and how you can make up the work. Your participation grade and the quality of your work will suffer if you miss class. You are also expected to arrive on time. If you are late, you will disrupt class, and your participation grade will again suffer the consequences. PLEASE SEE THE UNIVERSITY MANDATED ATTENDANCE POLICY AT THE END OF THIS SYLLABUS.

2. Participation

You are expected to be prepared for class and to participate in class discussions, to be able to respond to questions posed to you, to have drafts when they are due, and to complete in-class writing activities. Your active participation will contribute to your final grade. We will discuss the definition of active participation in the first few class meetings.

3. Late Papers

Papers are due on the date and time designated on the course syllabus. That deadline holds true whether you can make it to class or not and whether your absence is excused or not. Late papers will be marked down one letter grade per day late, including weekends. If you must submit a late paper, you should contact me the day the paper is due, so that I know when to expect your paper and how you will submit it.

4. Draft Workshops

Draft workshops enable you to develop two major writing skills that are integral to this course: 1) learning to be a critic of your own writing and the writing of others, and 2) learning how to revise your work given comments and questions from your peers. Your writing will improve by having others read and respond to it.

We will have a draft workshop before each paper is due. During these sessions, you will exchange your paper with a peer (or peers) and offer revision suggestions. Your participation in the workshop will be part of your grade.

On the day of a draft workshop, you will be required to have a complete draft of your paper. *If you do not have a draft in class that day (this includes not having it in class because you are absent), your final grade for that paper will be reduced by a letter grade – that is, an A paper will be a B paper if you did not have your draft.*

5. Paper Format

The format for papers will vary, but unless otherwise indicated, the standard format is as follows:

- double-spaced throughout (with no extra spaces between paragraphs)
- readable font (12 point, no italics except for titles or emphasis)
- one-inch margins on all sides, left justified
- your name, my name, the section number for the course, and an indication of the draft number (first, second, final) in upper left corner
- title of the paper center justified
- numbered pages

When you cite information, you should follow the MLA style guidelines appropriate for the topic or situation.

6. Office Hours

Think of my office as an extension of the classroom and use my office hours to discuss any aspect of your writing and reading, as well as any questions you may have about class procedures or requirements. Come to office hours with questions about class discussions, writing techniques or strategies, writing projects you're working on, ideas you wish to develop, and so on. During my open office hours, you may stop in my office whenever you like. I am also happy to schedule another time to meet if my office hours conflict with your schedule.

We will have two scheduled one-on-one conferences in my office (see the course schedule for conference days). These meetings are *mandatory*. If you cannot attend our scheduled conference, please email me at least 2 hours before our planned time. If you miss our conference without emailing, I will count it as a class absence.

7. Writing Center

All students should consider visiting the tutors at UMD's Writing Center as a way to improve the overall quality of their writing. The Writing Center is for *all* student writers—including those who see themselves as strong writers. It is an excellent resource for you; please take advantage of it.

The Writing Center offers both daytime and evening hours. Online tutoring is also available. You can make an appointment through the website below.

Website: <<http://english.umd.edu/academics/writingcenter>>
Address: 1205 Tawes Hall
(301) 405-3785
writadmin@umd.edu

8. Cell Phone and Laptop Policy

Please turn off your cell phone during class and put it in below your desktop. Texting during class will not be tolerated. You are welcome to use your laptop or tablet for class-related writing and activities. Checking Facebook or email during class will not be tolerated.

9. Academic Integrity

Plagiarism, whether it is submitting someone else's work as your own, submitting your own work completed for another class without my permission, or otherwise violating the University's code of Academic Integrity, will not be tolerated. You are expected to understand the University's policies regarding academic integrity. These policies can be found at the website of the Office of Student Conduct, www.shc.umd.edu. Please visit this website, click on the "students" link, and read the information carefully.

10. Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Your success in the class is important to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course

In order to receive official university accommodations, you will need to register and request accommodations through the Office of Disability Support Services. DSS provides services for students with physical and emotional disabilities and is located in 0106 Shoemaker on the University of Maryland campus. Information about Learning Assistance Services or Disability Support Services can be found at www.counseling.umd.edu/LAS or www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS. You can also reach DSS by phone at 301-314-7682.

Grading and Revision

Grades

The percentages of contribution to your final grade are as follows:

Discussion board posts, class participation, draft workshops, reflective writing assignments	10%
Academic Summary	5%
Annotated Bibliography	5%
Argument of Inquiry	15%
Rhetorical Analysis	15%
Digital Forum	15%
Position Paper	20%
Revision and Reflection Assignment	15%

Revision Policy

Revision Policy for Assignment #1: So that you are able to gain a sense of the rigor of this course, for the first assignment, no essays will fail on the first attempt (except of course for lateness or plagiarism). If the essay *would have received a grade of D or F*, I will give it a W for “grade withheld” and ask you to revise the assignment. If the essay is not revised acceptably within a specified time, it will be recorded as an F. If the essay is revised in an acceptable manner, it will be granted as high as a C, but no higher.

Revision is a major part of this course and a major element of strong writing practice. You will revise each of your papers after the scheduled draft workshop. I am also happy to meet with you before your paper is due to discuss your essay ideas and your drafts. In addition, your final assignment for this course asks you to revise substantially an assignment you’ve submitted and to which I’ve responded. Since I stress revision throughout the course and since there are so many opportunities for you to revise your work, there will not be possibilities for additional revisions to essays after they have been returned. Given this policy, please use me and your classmates as resources for essay revision and improvement before the submission deadlines.

Course Assignments

Academic Summary. Summary is an element of good critical reading, which is, in turn, the cornerstone of academic writing. With this assignment, you take the first step in learning many skills crucial to successful academic writing, including clarity and concision, effective and ethical use of sources, and the interconnection of reading and writing.

Argument of Inquiry: This assignment initiates your semester-long exploration of an issue. Here, you will enter an academic conversation by identifying a topic for research that connects in some way to your academic, extracurricular, personal, or civic interests and/or experiences. You will use the heuristic of stasis theory to investigate your topic and to learn the issues and debates within it. A major part of this project is to explore how scholarly research and listening to the ideas of others can inform, expand, and complicate your understandings of and experiences with the topic. The goal of this essay is three-fold: 1) to argue for the exigence and importance of this issue, 2) to raise important questions about the issue, and 3) to investigate possible responses to these questions. A research session at McKeldin library will introduce you to the skills of finding and evaluating worthy sources. 4-5 pages.

Annotated Bibliography: This assignment will support your work in Argument of Inquiry assignment, as it will enable you to identify sources that will propel your inquiry. In particular, you will identify five sources that will aid in your exploration, and you will annotate them. Each annotation should (1) cite the text of your choice in perfect MLA format; (2) summarize the text; (3) evaluate the validity and fairness of the source (4) discuss how the text will help you gain a deeper sense of the issue and how the source will contribute your investigation. Approx. 150 words per annotation.

Rhetorical Analysis: For this assignment, you will analyze a persuasive text that relates to the issue you have chosen by taking into consideration rhetorical appeals, rhetorical situation, intended audience, exigence, style, and organization. Your goal is to make an argument about the effectiveness of the text for the given audience. 4-5 pages.

Digital Forum: You will shift gears in this assignment, moving from writing to academic audiences in analog form to writing to popular audiences in digital form. More specifically, you will compose a website that offers an audience of your choice a digital forum. This forum will display three distinct arguments leveraged by different stakeholders invested in your issue. Extending the work of your Argument of Inquiry paper, you will identify a *new* conversation within your issue and three different ways stakeholders engage it. You will create three “stakeholder pages” that describe these positions as well as an “About” page and a “Required Reading List.” This list of annotated sources should 1) offer your audience additional information about your issue, and 2) extend your research base by annotating five new sources that take up your issue. Approx. 1800 words.

Position Paper: This paper is the culmination of the inquiry and exploration you have conducted throughout the semester. Your goal is to compose an essay that offers the argument you find most persuasive within the issue you’ve been examining. Your job is to take a position within this debate, refute competing positions and alternatives, and organize your ideas effectively and efficiently. This paper is directed to a specific, academic audience, and it should include a bibliography of approximately 20 sources. 8-10 pages.

Revision and Reflection Assignment: Reflection and revision are keys to one's success as a writer. Through reflection and revision you are able to think critically about your identity as a writer, your writing process, and the feedback you've received. You can then leverage these reflections as you continue to write and thus improve upon your work. For the final assignment of the semester, you will revise an assignment of your choice based on your reflections. Here, you have the opportunity to demonstrate what you've learned over the course of the semester and gain a unique picture of who you are as a writer. Your reflective memo will discuss the *substantive* revisions you made to this essay, your understanding of academic writing, and your progress as a writer over the course of the semester. Reflective Memo 2 pages, single-spaced; Revision 4-5 pages.

University Mandated Attendance Policy for English 101 (cont. from p. 2)

Unexcused or “discretionary” absences. Discretionary absences should be viewed not as “free days” but as days you may need to deal with emergencies. You may miss two full weeks of class without substantial penalty—you will, however, lose participation and attendance points for those missed classes. For *each* unexcused absence after two weeks, your final grade will be lowered by one full letter grade. This means that if you have an A average but have one absence more than two weeks of unexcused absences, you will earn a B in the course.

Excused absences. The University excuses absences for certain reasons (illness, representing the UMD at certain events, religious observance, and the death of an immediate family member), provided the cause of absence is appropriately documented (see below).

Religious observances. The University's policy "Assignments and Attendance on Dates of Religious Observance" provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs; students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed because of individual participation in religious observances. Students are responsible for obtaining material missed during their absences. Furthermore, students have the responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances in advance. The student should provide written notification to the professor within the first two weeks of the semester. The notification must identify the religious holiday(s) and the date(s).

Documentation Requirements to Justify an Excused Absence for Illness. The University's policy is to excuse class absences that result from a student's own illness. The procedure and documentation required for an illness to be an excused absence differs depending on the frequency of the absence.

For a single class meeting missed: If you miss only one class meeting for illness, you may submit a self-signed note to the instructor (that is, a note from a health care provider is not required for a single class missed, and the Health Center will not provide written excuses for a single absence). Each note must also contain an acknowledgment by the student that the information provided is true and correct; in this way, it must follow the Code of Student Conduct or may result in disciplinary action. Such documentation will NOT be honored as an excused absence if the absence coincides with a Major Scheduled Grading Event, which for ENGL 101 is a paper due date. If you know you will miss class, make an effort to alert your instructor and make arrangements in advance. Also, your documentation must be presented to the instructor *upon returning to class*.

For Multiple but Non-Consecutive Meetings Missed: If you will miss more than one class meeting for a medical concern, but these will not be consecutive, you should

provide documentation from a health care provider upon returning to class after the first of these absences that details future dates to be missed OR provide a note from a doctor that states specific dates missed (the note must state specific dates, rather than broadly name a time frame; that is, for example, documentation must say the student missed class on 9/12, 9/16 and 9/20 for a medical concern, rather than saying the student may have missed class repeatedly between 9/11-9/21).

For Multiple Consecutive (more than one in a row) Meetings Missed OR an Absence Involving a Major Grading Event: If you will have a prolonged absence (meaning more than one absence for the same illness) or have missed a class involving a major grading event, you are required to provide written documentation of the illness from the Health Center or from an outside health care provider *upon returning to class*. In cases where written verification is provided, the Health Center or outside health care provider shall verify dates of treatment and indicate the time frame that the student was unable to meet academic responsibilities. No diagnostic information need be provided on this note.

Absence due to participation in a University Event: If your absence is not due to an illness but is, rather, due to your participation in an official University event, you must provide documentation for this absence prior to the absence; the documentation should be an official form from the University.