

ENGLISH 1101

Department of English, Technical Communication and Media Arts
Fall 2009 • Rebecca Giddens

Section 003 • CRN 8595 • Monday/Wednesday/Friday 10:00-10:50 am • Room J-203
Section 005 • CRN 8597 • Monday/Wednesday/Friday 11:00-11:50 am • Room J-203

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: rgiddens@spsu.edu¹ **Office:** J-318 **Phone:** 678-915-3642

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday • 2-3 pm / Tuesday & Thursday • 10 am-12 pm / & by appointment

Composition Website: <http://www.spsu.edu/htc/home/Composition/index.htm>

Let me know as early as possible if you encounter insurmountable difficulties that interfere with your work & progress in the course.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Copies of your essays to distribute for workshopping (as announced; print before class)
- Raimes, Ann. *The Open Handbook*.
- Kirszner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell, eds. *Patterns for College Writing*. **11th ed.**
- Outside texts (as announced: posted on Vista or as in-class or emailed handouts)
 - *A college dictionary is highly recommended but not required.*

MATERIALS

- Very small picture frame (only 1x1.5" or 2x3")—by August 31
- 3 **paper** folders with brads and pockets
- Some means of data storage: USB flash drive, Z-drive (network storage), etc.
- Pen & paper for every class; access to stapler & hole punch to keep materials organized
- Student email account, Vista account, computer and printer access, plenty of paper for printing

Bring the texts we're using, flash drive, paper, pen, & current folder to all class meetings. We'll be writing as well as discussing both professional and student texts daily. Check your SPSU email & Vista often.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students in all sections of English 1101 will write essays that take into account the rhetorical situation of writer's role, intended audience, and purpose of the essay. To develop ideas students will write expository, analytical, and argumentative essays. However, the approach and the amount of time spent on each essay/approach will vary according to the needs of the students and the instructor's judgment regarding how best to teach effective writing.

COURSE OUTCOMES

Upon completion of ENGL 1101, students will

- Demonstrate effective use of a range of rhetorical strategies in composing for different audiences, purposes, and contexts.
- Draft, revise, and edit at a level of proficiency appropriate for first-year college writers
- Work effectively with source material in support of the main point of an essay
- Produce extemporaneous in-class writing at a level of proficiency appropriate for first year college writers

¹ Email is the best way to contact me. I can't guarantee an email answer during the weekends, late at night (after 8 pm), or early in the morning (before 9 am).

DEPARTMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

To meet course requirements and objectives, students must complete the following:

- Write a diagnostic essay and complete a portfolio sequence.
- Engage in the processes of writing including invention, drafting, revision, and editing throughout the semester.
- Maintain a complete folder of all original work plus revisions.
- Have conferences with the instructor as scheduled.
- Engage in regular exploratory writing that composes the bulk of the portfolio.
- Make a grade of C or better for the semester to exit the course.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the counselor working with disabilities at 678-915-7244 as soon as possible to better insure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

COURSE ORGANIZATION + ASSESSMENT

You will be exploring your thoughts and others' through a variety of in- and out-of-class activities that call on you to read, think, write, and speak. Use this document to understand how the pieces fit together as you focus on your writing goals. *LABEL EVERYTHING*

Preparedness & Participation

Assignments are due at the beginning of class. Come to class prepared daily so that you do not impede the class's or your group's efforts to move forward. Also, I will regularly check, document, and reward (or penalize) you for your preparedness. (May be announced or unannounced.) The percentage of class sessions you're prepared = your grade. So, an absence during a check for preparedness = not prepared. Following the directions in the "submitting work" section can earn you up to ½ credit for that day's preparedness if you *have* to be absent. Keep a calendar. Keep up with where we are in the schedule. Keep your goals for your writing in focus. You won't regret it.

Reading

You'll be assigned reading(s) almost daily. Read actively, taking notes, writing in margins, asking questions, including definitions of newly acquired vocabulary, engaging in a dialogue with the page. We'll use the readings as a jumping-off point for our discussions and writing. Expect **reading quizzes** of both the announced and pop varieties. Any assigned reading has the potential to become quiz material. Reading quizzes cannot be made up. I highly recommend reading on your own as well—whatever at all you're interested in. Writers read.

Writing Workshop Groups

In addition to individual activities, the class will break into groups on a regular basis to hold discussion, bounce around ideas, work collaboratively on short-term assignments, and receive and give feedback on drafts in progress. Groups will also be a constructive place for you to take risks and experiment with a small audience. We'll be discussing what we consider valuable in such group sessions during the first week of class.

Throwdowns

Throwdowns are (usually, but not always) in-class writings that are typically instructor-prompted and let you get ideas onto the page (*invention*) in efforts to move towards more extended essay writing or to "try on" something new (*revision*) in your writing. Throwdowns will receive minimal instructor response as they are mostly for your own benefit. Occasionally, Throwdowns will also be useful in groups. Keep even little pieces like these writings in your folder so that you can trace your ideas not just back to the roots, but back to the seeds, when you compose *Metawritings*.

Exploratory Writing

You'll compose a number of (short-ish) writing assignments that we will refer to as **exploratory writings** in effort to do just that—*explore*. These writings serve a variety of purposes (responding to texts, “journaling,” taking risks, logging observations & research, etc.) and will compose the bulk of portfolios. Writing isn't all about creating long essays, but about thinking through the way you see the world (the *how* of things) and *why*. *How* and *why* are perhaps two of the most important questions writers ask themselves. Exploratory writing will be assessed according to **quality**—the commitment to thinking through ideas—and **quantity** (completeness/no “fluff!”). Although you will not receive individual grades on your exploratory writings, you will bring these to class and often receive written and verbal responses from me and your peers. Follow directions in the handout provided on Exploratory Writing for the best (writing and assessment) results. Note: these writings will be composed extemporaneously **and** out-of-class.

Essay Drafts

For each portfolio unit, we'll be working towards completing a portfolio-quality draft that has a clear audience, purpose, and focus. BUT, instead of cranking out one-shot essays, we'll be taking each essay through a series of drafts and experimenting with specific writing concerns for each. You'll get more details when the time is right, but for now, know that you'll be writing multiple drafts of compositions that (1) focus on YOUR experiences (2) explore the way a community (or communities) you belong to understands a particular concept (3) argue toward a better understanding of a cultural issue/discourse (of your choice, with some guidance). You'll work individually and in small groups on various invention, drafting, and revision techniques, allowing you to think through potential topics and strategies so that you have the freedom to breathe fresh life into traditional constructions and to “try on” approaches that you might normally be hesitant to risk. Revisions will be conducted at home and in class, with peers, at the suggestion of the instructor, and at your own discretion.

Metawritings (writing about writing)

Often, you'll be asked to reflect on your writing (/process) in the form of letters, memos, and arguments. There will be at least 1 of these per portfolio. Additionally, after preparing all of your materials, but before turning in your portfolios, you'll need to complete a self-evaluation that's built into the rubric (you'll get this near the end of the portfolio unit). Essentially, these assignments are designed to get you to think about the way you think.

Portfolios

Portfolios contain *Throwdowns*, *Exploratory Writings*, *Metawritings*, multiple levels of revisions, self- & peer-assessments of your group work, and will constitute 85% of your grade. Portfolios for our class will follow your development as a writer as you build a body of work for three separate units to span the 15-week course. For each portfolio, use **one** of your paper folders. You'll receive instructions for individual portfolios at least 1 week before they're due.

Final Examination -- *KEEP EVERYTHING. * You'll need it for your final exam!

The final examination is an in-class, extemporaneous essay to be included in Portfolio 3.

Class Anthology

Towards the end of the semester, we'll select our favorite pieces (of your work!) to assemble in a class anthology (or other project). You will get a say-so in most of the production of this collection. It is not graded. Despite all the hoopla about grades, there *are* non-numerical rewards of written expression, even at its most critical.

Grades

Portfolio 1 : Personal Discourse Tentative due date: September 28	25%
Portfolio 2 : Community Discourse Introduction to Primary Research	30%
Portfolio 3 : Cultural Discourse: Participating in the Debate, Forget “IMHO” Introduction to Secondary Research	30%
Preparedness + Participation & Quizzes	15%

- You can be sure that completing less than 70% of coursework will result in a failing grade for the course, no matter the quality of that work. Likewise, completing all the work, but demonstrating deficiencies not expected in college-level writing, doesn't guarantee a C.

PORTFOLIO GRADING²

B Portfolios

You will receive at least a B for your portfolio:

- if you meet the course requirements on attendance and hand in your assignments on time;
 - if you hand in a complete portfolios of all your completed writings along with previous drafts;
 - *if your metawritings demonstrate depth and breadth as you tell the story of your writing, citing specific examples with honesty about successes and difficulties
 - *if your final versions are well proofread and relatively free from almost all mistakes in spelling, grammar, and punctuation;
 - *if you participated actively in the class (it's not the **quantity** of talk but the **quality** of the talk and engagement) and offer thoughtful, supportive, and detailed feedback to others;
 - *if your exploratory writings show that you are using writing to come to terms with your subjects and pushing your thinking;
 - *if the essays you hand in are mature drafts, not early drafts/initial attempts at getting words on the page;
 - *If the revisions you do represent substantial revisions--real changes in the thought and structure of the previous version, not just correcting or touching up or addressing someone's comments one-by-one
 - *If all your assignments show your involvement in the writing, an effort to improve your writing, real thinking, and a sense that you are trying to figure things out and trying to say something that you think is important or valuable to someone else and if most of your assignments show you trying to work with your own words and ideas, your own views and understandings.
- **Your grade will fall rapidly below a B (above average) if you don't do all these things.

A Portfolios

In **A** portfolios, four of the last seven conditions above (in the **B** section) are executed extremely well. Often, the difference between **B** and **A** portfolios is an uncanny grasp and understanding of the language, with very accurate attention to the rhetorical situation. **A** portfolios show extraordinary commitment to development/substantiation.

To receive an A, portfolios must contain all required assignments.

C Portfolios

To receive at least a C, the portfolio must contain intelligible English compositions.

Overall, **C** Portfolios are lacking in the areas ascribed to **B** and **A** portfolios listed above.

- Exploratory writings are complete & may evidence a glimmer of true voice, but are overall missing risk-taking/experimentation or a lack of an effort towards genuine insight. These writings often read as though they were completed just to be *done* rather than trying to really *do* the assignment.
- There may be a couple of missing smaller assignments, but all major drafts are present.
- There are careless errors in the way of spelling, grammar, punctuation, and simple proofreading in final drafts
- There are only superficial changes in the way of revision when it is evident that revisions that have been suggested would improve the overall quality of the original draft.
- Early drafts are shorter than assigned or too "thin" in the way of substance
- There is a minimum amount of late work

D Portfolios and below

- Portfolios below a **D** are missing final products, most exploratory writings, &/or no drafts or other pieces from the writing process, and only a final product
- The work in **D** portfolios is mostly comprised of late compositions, not ready at the original due date, and evidently put together a few minutes ago.
- Are deficient in the way of accessibility/ command of the English language

*IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR PROGRESS, PLEASE MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH ME. I really enjoy meeting one-on-one with students, and I'd like to know if there's anything else you need in the way of writing. As much as I'm here to help with those matters, I cannot predict your future progress or whatever life has to throw your way, so I make no projections about final grades.

² I owe most of the description here about grade criteria to Kim Haines-Korn, director of the composition program at SPSU.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional representation of another person's ideas or writing as one's own, including any materials taken off the Internet. Students should consult the *Catalog* under Academic Regulations for a fuller explanation of this violation of Academic Honesty (53, 66). The penalty for plagiarism may be failure of the course or dismissal from the university. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will earn a 0 with no chance for a re-write (no matter the stage in the writing process) *at the very least*, with institutional action being *highly likely*. Only work unique to this course may be submitted (i.e., don't "re-do" an essay you did for another class, etc). Ignorance of plagiarism doesn't excuse it. If you need help understanding plagiarism, please let me know immediately. Any work having been found plagiarized can be failed, even if it was not detected at the time of evaluation.

DECORUM

Please commit completely to every single day in the classroom. Also, consider your peers: every student has the right to learn without disturbance. In order to create a harmonious working environment, members of the class should:

- be prepared (yes, this is a matter of etiquette, especially when your group depends upon your participation)
- participate in whole-class and group activities...the more the merrier!
- not use computers (if available) unless they are a part of our work; if they are, please stay on task.
- * turn the sound off of and put away electronic devices. Texting, web-surfing, etc. in class=potential dismissal & incurred absence

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is directly related to the success of students in English. Whenever an absence is unavoidable, turn in work that's due via email by the beginning of the regularly-scheduled class session and find out what you missed from a classmate (or me!). If a personal medical or family emergency³ (directly) prohibits you from attending, submit documentation to receive leniency for deadlines. **I do not distinguish between "excused" or "unexcused" absences.** Missing more than five (5) class sessions is grounds for failure. Also, note that entering the classroom after class has begun or before class is over is both distracting and disrespectful to the rest of the class. For every three tardies/early departures (leaving before class is over), you will be marked absent for one day. Quizzes are likely to happen at the beginnings and ends of class sessions and **cannot** be made up. I reserve the right to withdraw you from the course via instructor-initiated withdrawal process if you don't withdraw yourself and have missed five sessions by the withdrawal date.

SUBMITTING WORK

Any work submitted for instructor or group review must be ready at the beginning of class in the format the assignment explicitly calls for. **Late work will not be accepted toward your preparedness grade:** you'll know well in advance when portfolios, exploratory writings, and drafts are due. You can complete drafts and exploratory writings and document them as "late" in your portfolio, but note in the assessment portion that late work negatively affects your portfolio grade. Keep up with our portfolio-by-portfolio schedule and attend class regularly so incomplete/late work won't be an issue. Only students who are absent may submit drafts by email (as .rtf files) by the beginning of the regularly scheduled class time unless prior arrangement has been made with the instructor. All other instances of work received after the due date are left to the instructor's discretion. For early birds, work may be turned in ahead of schedule as well for several assignments. Just ask.

PAPER FORMAT

ALL assignments should display the date and the assignment for my reference and yours. (Otherwise, it'll be difficult for you to assemble your portfolio.) You'll receive guidelines for the paper format particular to each professional draft in each portfolio.

³ This means directly related to the students, not neighbor's-dogsitter's or roommate's emergency, etc.

All drafts submitted to workshop groups and the instructor, as well as out-of-class exploratory writings, should be typed and double-spaced. Be reasonable about font types (non-scripted) and sizes (no larger than 12-point, please) and margins (1-1.25" only).

CONFERENCE POLICY

I'll meet with each student at least **twice** during the semester to discuss difficulties and successes on an individual level and to discuss personal future goals and strategies in your writing. Come prepared with topics and questions *you* would like to discuss (you get a preparedness "check" for conferences), and with your writings up to that date. An absence at a scheduled conference is the equivalent of a class-session absence. Cancellations must be made at least 8 hours prior to the designated meeting time.

COMPUTER WRITING CLASSROOM INSTRUCTIONS

Saving Your Information

Remember to always bring a means of saving information (USB flash drives are highly recommended) to class as there is no space on the computers in the classroom to save information. **Always save your work in more than one place**—especially if you have luck like mine. DO NOT SAVE YOUR FILES AS .docx (Microsoft 2007). I can't open these and neither can the computers in the classroom. Save them as 1997-2003 .doc or .rtf files! Need help? Just ask!

File Name Extensions

As programs vary from computer to computer, I recommend that you save your files with Rich Text Format (.rtf) extensions. To be on the safe side, it is advisable to save your files in multiple formats until you discover the best method to triangulate between your personal computer, lab computers, and the classroom computers. Additionally, make sure that you title your revisions so that you know what you're looking at when you go through docs for your portfolios. **SAVE REVISIONS AS SEPARATE FILES! Come up with a system of naming files that works for you.**

Printing

Make sure to print out hard copies of assignments due in class BEFORE class begins, even if there is a printer in the room, as **assignments are due at the beginning of class**. You will not receive preparedness credit if you print during class.

IT

IT problems do not constitute an excuse for late/missing work. I am not IT, and don't know enough about it to pretend to be. I can provide instruction and support on aspects of technology that we use within the classroom, but if you have problems with email, Vista, Z-drives, your computer, or printing, please seek the guidance of one of many of SPSU's information technology specialists either by phone (678-915-4357, xHELP) or via their homepage (<http://www.spsu.edu/infotech/>). In anticipation of common problems, they've also created a FAQ page for students:

<http://www.spsu.edu/infotech/student/faq.html> . Don't rule out consulting your peers for smaller technology issues.

Vista

You'll be able to find almost all course documents on Vista; we will also use it from time to time to exchange ideas using the discussion board and/or the chat feature. It's also likely that you will, at some point, need to submit work via Vista.

DIWE

DIWE is a program in composition computer classrooms that allows chat exchanges and a number of writing exercises. It's likely we'll use DIWE. I'll let you know how to keep up with this work when it becomes pertinent.

THE ATTIC (Advising, Tutoring, Testing, International Student Center) + THE REGENTS' TEST

The ATTIC provides opportunities for individualized tutorial assistance to all Southern Polytechnic students. Academic assistants help students through the processes of invention, organization, writing, revising, and editing of essays and research

papers. The ATTIC also offers Regents' Test preparation instruction. The ATTIC maintains student academic enrichment as its primary mission and students should expect to work to improve their grammar and mechanics. **Students should not expect an editorial or proofreading service.** The ATTIC encourages both student "drop-ins" and faculty referrals.

Room J-253 -- Phone: 678-915-7244. **I will recommend visiting the ATTIC to a few students if there are signs of weakness(es) that need immediate attention. I will follow-up on ATTIC referrals.

Regents' Test: Effective fall semester, 2008, **ALL** students who have not satisfied Regents' Writing and Reading Skills Requirements **MUST** take the Regents' Test EVERY semester they enroll in classes until they satisfy the Regents' requirements. Mandatory enrollment in remediation classes and/or workshops will be determined by the number of times a student fails the tests. Students can register now for the Regents' tests in BANNER just like they would register for a course. Students who have not met the Regents' requirements and fail to register for the required test(s) will be assigned a testing date (which they will have the opportunity to change if necessary). **Not taking the test on the assigned day/time will count as a test failure.** Non-native speakers of English must apply in the ATTIC and be approved for testing in order to sign up for the ESL version of the test. Information about the Regents' test, including exemption criteria, may be found in the following locations:

- The Regents' web page: (<http://www.gsu.edu/rtp>)
- The SPSU Registrar's web page: (<http://www.spsu.edu/registrar/registration.html>)
- The ATTIC web page: (<http://www.spsu.edu/home/services/attic.html>)

MISCELLANEOUS

- Your instructor reserves the right to revise the information in this syllabus as necessary so long as it adheres to the department's course objectives and the institution's mission. You will be apprised of changes.
- **Schedules:** Schedules distributed in class are subject to change depending on our class dynamic. Check your SPSU email regularly for updates and be in class so that you're aware of any changes.
- **Subject matter** that we will encounter in reading and discussions in this class will sometimes touch on subjects that are of an adult nature or language or are considered "taboo," but will always be addressed in a mature way for educational purposes. Please look ahead if you think that any material might offend your sensibilities.
- **Grammar:** I don't devote a specific amount of class time to grammar review. I'm assuming that students at a four-year university have a working knowledge of English grammar and mechanics. After reading some work of each student, we'll go over those areas that extend "across the board" to the majority of students. We'll also deal with some grammar here and there when we're discussing editing as a part of the writing process. However, if you need more specific guidance or help with more basic concerns, please use your *Open Handbook* along with other resources: the ATTIC, me (office hours), and the internet (I can recommend a few favorites).
- *Be patient. We'll do a lot of writing. Some of it might seem "pointless." There's always a point: I'd be happy to talk it over with you so you can find some angle of importance in assignments. Do your best to enjoy writing. If you don't, figure out *why* you don't enjoy the activity and *how* you can change this outlook. You'll be writing a lot that doesn't necessarily get taken through to the point of being a "final product." Just writing final products means that you're missing out on writing on crucial writing practices and you're not completing the learning objectives set forth at the beginning of the syllabus.
- **Official, professional correspondence for this course is SPSU email only. I will not answer email from personal email accounts, and I especially will not open documents from personal accounts.**
- Wondering why you *have* to take English 1101? Visit this article ("Writing: A Ticket to Work...or a Ticket Out" 2004) from the National Commission on Writing for more insight:
http://www.writingcommission.org/prod_downloads/writingcom/writing-ticket-to-work.pdf

Aug. 27	Deadline to drop/add
Sept. 7	Labor Day— No Class!
Oct. 8	Midterm grades due
Nov. 25-27	Thanksgiving holidays
Dec. 10	Last day of classes
Dec. 12-16	Final examinations (TBA)
Dec. 21	Grades due
Jan. 11	First day, Spring 2010

