

# English 108: Accelerated First-Year Composition

## Instructor Information

Office: HEAV 210  
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 Office Hours: Mon. 2-3 pm  
 Tues. 10:30-11:30 am

## Course Information

Fall 2011  
 Tues/Thurs 9-10:15 am  
 Elec Eng. 234  
<http://108.rhetorike.org/donunger2/>

## text & technology

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text: Wysocki and Lynch, *Compose Design Advocate*  
 technology: USB key/thumb drive to save your work in the computer lab

## getting started

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Welcome to English 108, the Accelerated First-Year Composition course at Purdue. For the first half of the semester we'll explore the following question: *what is literacy and how do our literacy skills enable and constrain participation in particular communities?* In addressing this question we'll focus on higher education: what it's for, who it's for, and why it's important. For the second half of the semester we'll work with a community partner and explore this question more concretely. Assignments for the second half of the semester demand that you engage with this partner, get to learn how they work, what they do, and the importance of their role in the Lafayette/West Lafayette community. Furthermore, these assignments ask you to draw on your own literacy skills in order to enhance our partner's work. Before we get into the nitty-gritty of the assignments, let's begin to address why this course focuses on questions of literacy, particularly digital literacy.

**NOTE:** Be forewarned that the project comprising the second half of the semester demands that we spend a lot of time outside the classroom conducting research and constructing our projects. If you've signed up for ENGL 108 instead of ENGL 106 because you thought the course would be "easier" as it demands less class time, you may find that you are mistaken. That having been said, there are advantages to participating in ENGL 108 that you will not get from ENGL 106. For example, our partnership with a community organization offers experiential learning, providing the opportunity to build real-world knowledge. Also, ENGL 108 allows you to have a positive impact on the lives of folks in the community outside Purdue.

## objectives

In ancient Greece people wrote on wax-coated tablets with a stylus made of bone. They delivered speeches in the Assembly, and these speeches addressed legal, political, and ceremonial questions. They helped shape communities' political lives. Today, with the proliferation of digital media, new forms of communication have reorganized our world and caused us to rethink how we participate in civic and social life.

Today, communicating in the university, the workplace, and our various communities does not rely on pen and paper, the word processor, or sometimes even words. Generally, we don't gather for speeches. Often times we don't even watch them while they're beamed live via satellite onto our flat screen TVs. Instead, we watch them on Youtube. We distribute them in status updates on Facebook. New mediums for composing, such as email, blogs, vlogs, social networking sites, etc., and new delivery systems for these compositions have become commonplace (PCs, video game consoles, smartphones, handheld computers, ebook readers, etc.). Furthermore, many of these communications rely on visual and interactive design elements such as photos, charts, videos, etc. For the modern citizen as for the modern college graduate, being literate can no longer be defined as reading and writing alphabetic text, i.e., books. Therefore, one of our major goals for this

course is to become more critically and culturally literate by further developing alphabetic *and* digital literacy skills.

In this approach to composition, we work on skills that are transferable from one medium to another. Because composing effectively goes hand in hand with critical reading, we also emphasize reading comprehension. However, course readings are not limited to alphabetic texts, e.g., our textbook. These readings include websites, blogs, websites, films, videos, vidcasts, etc.

With a focus on group work and peer review, we approach composition as a collaborative and evolutionary process: it is influenced by our interactions with one another and it develops over time. This approach expands what "writing" means to include digital forms because writing is not a solitary act. Whether in the form of a blog, a video clip posted to YouTube, conveying information via an online video game, or in an essay written for a college course, writing plays a social function. Sometimes it helps us work through ideas about the world or think about someone else's arguments in order to understand how their ideas and opinions affect our own. Conversely, composing allows us to achieve real world goals in collaboration with other people in our communities. Composition is a means through which we may design our social futures. Our writing connects to various communities and helps form, inform, and challenge these communities. Assignments for this class relate to local communities, and success in this course demands that you engage with various communities in dynamic ways.

Such engagement relies on sophisticated literacy skills that we have already begun to develop and will continue to develop through engagement with others inside and outside the classroom. These skills help us compose effectively in a variety of media, for many different purposes, and for a variety of audiences. These skills are obviously an asset in all arenas of life, whether in school, at work, or in public realms outside the university. The overarching goal of this class is the sustained development of such skills.

## **troubleshooting**

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### **attendance**

Students are expected to be present for every meeting of the classes in which they are enrolled. This includes conference days. Only the instructor can excuse a student from a course requirement or responsibility. When conflicts or absences can be anticipated, such as for many University sponsored activities and religious observations, the student should inform the instructor of the situation as far in advance as possible. For unanticipated or emergency absences when advance notification to an instructor is not possible, the student should contact the instructor as soon as possible by email. When the student is unable to make direct contact with the instructor and is unable to leave word with the instructor's department because of circumstances beyond the student's control, and in cases of bereavement, the student or the student's representative should contact the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS).

Additionally, this course requires you to do all homework assignments and participate in in-class discussions and activities. If your homework is incomplete, you will be counted absent for the day. You are allowed **four** unexcused absences for the entire semester. **For each additional absence you lose a letter grade. If you miss 8 or more class sessions, you have failed the course.**

### **grief absence policy**

Purdue University recognizes that a time of bereavement is very difficult for a student. The University therefore provides the following rights to students facing the loss of a family member through the Grief Absence Policy for Students (GAPS). GAPS Policy: Students will be excused for funeral leave and given the opportunity to earn equivalent credit and to demonstrate evidence of meeting the learning outcomes for missed assignments or assessments in the event of the death of a member of the student's family.

A student should contact the ODOS to request that a notice of his or her leave be sent to

instructors. The student will provide documentation of the death or funeral service attended to the ODOS. Given proper documentation, the instructor will excuse the student from class and provide the opportunity to earn equivalent credit and to demonstrate evidence of meeting the learning outcomes for missed assignments or assessments. If the student is not satisfied with the implementation of this policy by a faculty member, he or she is encouraged to contact the Department Head and if necessary, the ODOS, for further review of his or her case. In a case where grades are negatively affected, the student may follow the established grade appeals process.

### **plagiarism**

The English Department's official definition of plagiarism is:

“When writers use material from other sources, they must acknowledge this source. Not doing so is called plagiarism, which means using without credit the ideas or expression of another. You are therefore cautioned (1) against using, word for word, without acknowledgement, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, etc. from the printed or manuscript material of others; (2) against using with only slight changes the materials of another; (3) against using the general plan, the main headings, or a rewritten form of someone else’s material. These cautions apply to the work of other students as well as to the published work of professional writers.

Penalties for plagiarism vary from failure of the plagiarized assignment to expulsion from the university, and may include failure for the course and notification of the Dean of Students’ Office. The Department of English considers the previous explanation to be official notification of the nature and seriousness of plagiarism.”

You should become familiar with the following websites related to Purdue’s rules and regulations.

Purdue University’s Student Conduct Code at

<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/studentconductcode.php>

The Dean of Students’ “Academic Integrity: A Guide for Students” at

<http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academicintegritybrochure.php>

Purdue University’s student regulations at

<http://www.purdue.edu/univregs/index.html>

The section on plagiarism is under Student Conduct, B, 2, a.

### **late work**

I deduct one letter grade for each day your work is late *unless* you make arrangements with me prior to the due date. Problems can arise, but the key to their successful resolution is communication. Keep me informed; avoid simply not showing up.

### **extra lives/rewrites**

You may only rewrite a paper if you received below a **B-**. You must meet with me during my office hours before you turn in rewrites. The first three projects may be rewritten *once* each within the time period before the next project is due. The written component for the final project obviously cannot be rewritten because the work is due during final exam week. The rewrite grade will be averaged with the first attempt. Keep in mind that a rewrite is a *substantial reworking* of the project, not just a correction of my markings. Turn in all rewrites *with the original graded version*.

### **disability**

If you have a disability that requires special academic accommodation, please make an appointment to speak with me within the first three (3) weeks of the semester in order to discuss any adjustments. It is important that we talk about this at the beginning of the semester. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Disability Resource Center (<http://www.purdue.edu/drc>) of an impairment/condition that may require accommodations and/or classroom modifications.

### **emergencies**

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Relevant changes to this course will be posted onto the course website or can be obtained by contacting the instructors or TAs via email or phone. **You are expected to read your @purdue.edu email on a frequent basis.**

### **nondiscrimination**

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life.

Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a veteran. The University will conduct its programs, services and activities consistent with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and orders and in conformance with the procedures and limitations as set forth in [Executive Memorandum No. D-1](#), which provides specific contractual rights and remedies.

### **assignments & calendar**

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You have four major projects or units to complete throughout the semester: a timed-essay exam, a literacy autobiography, a rhetorical analysis of a documentary film, and a group project creating a short film about our community partner. Several of these projects include multiple parts, involve composing in various mediums, and require revisions. The course is organized around these projects. However, class participation contributes to your grade as well.

Overall, course grades break down like this:

- Unit 1: Timed-essay Exam =15%
- Unit 2: Literacy Autobiography =15%
- Unit 3: Rhetorical Analysis =15%
- Unit 4: Short Film =35%
- Participation =20%

I've added brief descriptions of the first two units so you get an idea what to expect. Detailed assignment sheets, calendars, and rubrics will be distributed upon introduction to the unit.

### **Unit 1—Timed-essay Exam**

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Unit 1 focuses on valuable strategies that help you prepare for and succeed in a timed-essay exam (strategies for critical reading, note taking, decoding essay prompts, etc.). Like exams you may take in other courses at Purdue, this exam tests you on a body of knowledge. In this unit you will critically read articles that attempt to define literacy and address what literacy means in the context of higher education. Also, these readings address how the literacy practices of higher education mean very different things for folks from different racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds. The timed-essay exam asks you to explore, illustrate, interrogate, and explain the content of these readings.

Success in Unit 1 demonstrates that you are able to:

- answer an essay exam question, indicating your ability to follow directions and manage your time effectively.
- structure an argument in a format that reveals your relationship to, familiarity with, and opinions of the readings.
- present a coherent argument in a systematic way.

- compose an essay where mechanical and grammatical errors do not impede a reader's ability to understand your argument.

For the timed-writing exam, you choose one of three sample prompts. You have 30 minutes to plan, write, and edit your essay. Your essay will be crafted in a computer lab and posted to the course website.

We will conduct a practice exam prior to the final exam. The practice exam employs the same structure as the final exam, though the practice exam will be conducted using pen or pencil and paper.

## **Unit 2—Literacy Narrative**

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In Unit 1, we discuss different definitions of literacy. Writers, politicians, activists, and innumerable others have devoted tremendous energy toward to this goal. However, literacy is a complex issue that cannot be easily defined or limited to a particular experience or context.

In Unit 2, you must identify a specific experience in your literacy development, describe how you learned to compose or communicate because of this experience, and address how you developed as a critical thinker in a particular context. To compose this narrative you must develop your own definition of literacy to analyze how this particular experience helped shape you and your relationship with learning, and the ways you communicate in a particular group or to particular people either inside or outside academia. You should not limit yourself to an experience in school or a particular classroom, though you might write about an experience that pertains to academic literacy.

Consider the questions we grapple with in Unit 1: what is literacy? What does it mean to be literate in a particular place and time? Build off these questions. To progress in your literate development, it is important to think critically about how you've gotten where you are today and to locate yourself within a larger conversation about what literacy and learning mean.

Your paper should include the following:

- a working definition of literacy as it pertains to your event
- sustained focus on a single literacy event
- sensory details of the event to enhance a reader's understand of your narrative
- description of the setting (time and place) and people integral to your narrative
- dialogue in order to emphasize important actions/characteristics
- analysis of the literacy event to illustrate its significance in shaping your attitude toward literacy and learning

## **calendar**

(ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE!)

### **Week 1—Aug. 22-26**

#### Course Introduction

- Introductions
- What is first-year composition?
- What role does it play in the university?
- Discuss *Course Manual*
- Collect writing sample

#### Introduction to Unit 1: Timed-essay Exam

- Set up groups for Class Discussion Assignment
- *Gaming the Timed-essay Exam*
- *Key Verbs in Essay Prompts*

### **Week 2—Aug. 29-Sept. 2**

Student-led discussions of

- Knoblauch, C. H. "Literacy and the Politics of Education." *The Right to Literacy*. Eds. Andrea A. Lunsford, Helene Moglen, and James Slevin. NY: MLA, 1990. 74-80. Print.
- Rose, Mike. *Lives on the Boundary: A Moving Account of the Struggles and Achievements of America's Educationally Underprepared*. NY: Penguin, 2005. pp. 181-194. Print.
- Anyon, Jean. "Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work." *Journal of Education* 162.1 (1980), 67-92.
- Gladwell, Malcolm. *Outliers: The Story of Success*. NY: little, Brown & Co., 2008. pp. 15-68. Print.

**Week 3**—Sept. 6-9

Practice Exam

Essay Exam

Introduction to Unit 2: Literacy Autobiography

**Week 4**—Sept. 12-16

Dialogues/Openings

Student-led discussions of

- CDA pp.66-75, 80-85, and 320-323
- Villanueva, Victor. *Bootstraps: From an American Academic of Color*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1993. pp. 1-15. Print.
- Gilyard, Keith. *Voices of the Self: A Study of Language Competence*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997. pp. tbd. Print.

**Week 5**—Sept. 19-23

Detail/Description

Student-led discussions of

- Cushman, Ellen. "The Rhetorician as an Agent of Social Change." *College Composition and Communication* 47.1 (1996), 7-28. Print.
- Cushman, Ellen and Erik Green. "Knowledge Work with the Cherokee Nation." *The Public Work of Rhetoric*. Eds. John M. Ackerman and David J. Coogan. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2010. pp. 175-92.

**Week 6**—Sept. 26-30

Peer Review

Unit 2 writing assignment due

Introduction to Unit 3: Rhetorical Analysis