

ENGL 102: Rhetoric and Composition

Course Policy, Spring 2011



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ENGL 102-002 MWF 9:00AM - 9:50AM, HUBB 222
Office Hours: MW 10:00AM - 11:30AM & by appointment

I. Course Description

English 102, Rhetoric and Composition, is a course offering structured, sustained practice in researching, analyzing, and composing arguments. Students will read about a range of academic and public issues and write researched argumentative and persuasive essays. This course is required for all university students, and students must earn a grade of C or better to receive credit.

II. Goals & Learning Outcomes

Students will develop composition skills through extensive argumentative and persuasive writing, with the result that you should be able to synthesize information and present it in a coherent and unified written form.

At the end of the course, students will be able to

- analyze a rhetorical situation, understanding the interaction between audience, speaker, and subject.
- demonstrate an understanding of the writing process by generating, revising, editing, and proofreading drafts of each paper.
- write coherent, cohesive, grammatically competent argumentative and persuasive essays with a clear academic argument.
- locate secondary sources and integrate them into a paper using appropriate academic documentation techniques.
- produce a carefully proofread document that demonstrates an understanding of the conventions of formal writing, including thesis, structure, evidence, and appropriate diction.
- use various technologies (Blackboard, email, word processing programs) to produce, edit, and submit writing electronically.

III. Required Texts & Materials

- *They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein (Norton, 2010, 2nd edition) ISBN: 978-0-393-93361-1
- *A Pocket Style Manual*, by Diana Hacker, (Bedford St. Martin's, 2011, 5th edition) ISBN: 978-0-312-66480-0
- a flash drive for electronic file management

- four letter-size file folders
- some photocopying of articles at the library or of class papers
- a good college dictionary {recommended}

IV. Overall Structure of the Course

This course will provide students a skills-based, hands-on learning environment. We will rarely have lengthy periods of lecture, instead working both individually and in small groups with specific writing and reading comprehension exercises. Because most writing now takes place using computers, we will meet each class period in a computer lab, though students need not have prior computer experience to succeed in the course.

V. Course Requirements & Assessment

Students will write four major papers this semester, taking each through various stages of drafting, beginning with brainstorming ideas, analyzing and appropriately addressing an audience, making an argument, writing and supporting a thesis, and revising. We will discuss in class at length how papers will be evaluated, and students will receive a rubric detailing the expectations for each paper assignments.

Your final grade breaks down into the following distribution:

20%	Paper 1
20%	Paper 2
20%	Paper 3
20%	Paper 4
10%	Final Exam
10%	Participation

Final course grades when averaged will fall into the following scale:

A	100-90	C	75-70
B+	89-86	D+	69-66
B	85-80	D	65-60
C+	79-76	F	59-0

Papers and Final Essay Exam: Full descriptions of each formal writing assignment will be posted online. Papers will range in length from approximately 500-2000 words, or about two to eight typewritten pages. The final exam will be written in class during the exam period. Please note that in order to receive credit for this class you must pass at least three formal paper assignments with a C or better.

Participation: The participation grade is comprised of numerous short assignments designed to help you make progress on your papers, including but not limited to in-class discussion, short informal writing assignments, library exercises, and rough draft workshop, whether those activities take place in the face-to-face classroom or online. Each exercise is assigned point value based on the scope of the activity. Most of these assignments will only be checked or collected, not commented on or graded in a traditional sense. I will distribute a participation grade printout at times during the semester, but you may request at any time to see your average.

Disruptions to the classroom environment will not be tolerated. Any behavior inappropriate to the classroom (talking or texting in class, video games or music on computers, ringing cell phones, etc.) will result in a zero for class participation for that day; additionally, students may be asked to leave and marked absent for the class period.

VI. Late & Missed Assignments

I do not accept late papers. If you must miss a class, you may email me any assignment or paper *in advance* of our class time and receive credit for it. In extraordinary circumstances, you may also request an extension to a major paper deadline, but this request must be made at least three days in advance of the due date.

In addition, assignments that are part of your participation grade will not be accepted late under any circumstances. Because most participation assignments are announced in class, you should contact me or a trusted classmate if you are absent to determine what will be due at the next meeting. At the end of the semester I drop a percentage of the participation grade, so generally a couple of missed participation assignments will not have a significant impact on your grade.

VII. Attendance

The university's attendance policy states that "Absence from more than 10 percent of the scheduled class sessions, whether excused or unexcused, is excessive and the instructor may choose to exact a grade penalty for such absences" (*USCL Bulletin*). Ten percent of our meetings is four classes. Any student missing five or more classes for any reason (excused or unexcused) will have the final course grade lowered one grade level for each absence over four. Three instances of a student arriving more than ten minutes late or departing more than ten minutes early will count as one absence. Students who do not have drafts at rough draft workshop will be asked to leave class and will be marked absent for that class period.

VIII. Exceptions

Exceptions to any of these policies may be made only for University-sponsored professional activities or in extremely well-documented cases of medical hardship, and then only at the discretion of the instructor. To qualify for an exception to these policies, the student must have met all the following requirements:

- Notify me as soon as possible about the absences, preferably beforehand.
- Provide a brief written statement regarding the circumstances of the absences and the requested relief, with documentation when appropriate.
- Have been attending class regularly and keeping up with work before the absences occurred.
- Continue attending class regularly and keeping up with work after the absences.

IX. Student Rights & Responsibilities

Students should familiarize themselves with the Code of Student / Faculty Academic Responsibility, which states that "It should be the responsibility of every member of the USCL community (student, faculty, staff, and administration) to uphold and maintain the academic standards and integrity of USCL." As part of this responsibility, I expect you to be active learners, fully engaged in the course and responsible for your academic success. Students should also familiarize themselves with the [USCL General Education Goals](#).

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with disabilities; students must register with the Office of Disability Services and communicate any requests for such accommodations to the instructor in a timely manner, preferably the first week of class.

X. Academic Integrity

One serious responsibility for all university students is to understand and practice academic integrity; at USC this is defined by the [Carolina Creed](#). We will discuss academic integrity in writing in detail in class.

Briefly, academic dishonesty in this course is typically plagiarism, or using anyone else's work as if it were your own. Plagiarism is present when a writer copies word for word or paraphrases from an author without quotation marks or without documenting the source, or when the writer turns in an assignment which has been written wholly or in part by someone else. Using peer group suggestions on your work is not plagiarism as long as you are the sole author of your work. The improper use of someone else's intellectual property constitutes theft; a student who plagiarizes may receive a failing grade for the assignment or for the course.

XI. Computer Use

One major element of using a computer successfully to write is managing typical computer problems—disk errors, network downtime, lost files. We will discuss taking appropriate precautions with your work, which should eliminate most of the problems that arise when writing with computers. Accordingly, all work must be submitted on time and according to directions; computer failures are not an acceptable excuse.

If you don't have access to a computer at home, you may use any campus computer lab to complete assignments. The Hubbard Hall computer labs are locked after classes end for the evening, but students may present their USCL identification cards to the guard and ask to be admitted after hours.

Finally, since our class will be conducted completely within the lab, you will be expected to show courtesy during our class activities not involving the computer. Screens should be dimmed or turned off during discussion or other work not involving computers. Checking email or chatting during class activities is not permitted.

XII. Rough Drafts and Paper Revisions

Since this course emphasizes both the practice of writing and critical reading skills, drafting, revising, and responding to each other's writing represents a significant component of this class. Each paper will have several smaller deadlines before the final paper is due, and students are encouraged to approach their revisions at each of these stages seriously and to seek the instructor's help on drafts before the final paper is due.

To document your writing and revision process, please keep all your notes and drafts in a file folder, which I may review when I grade your paper. If your folder does not demonstrate substantial revision, I will not accept the paper, so please be sure to document the progress of your writing with printed drafts at regular intervals. You may keep an electronic folder if you choose (paper 1 draft 1.doc, paper 1 draft 2.doc, etc.), but it will be your responsibility to back up these materials regularly; technology failure will not be accepted as an excuse for lost work.