



ENGL 1101

Sections: 145, 155

English Composition, Fall 2019

Instructor Information

Instructor: Pam Murphy

Class Meeting, Time, Location: 1101-145, 155: T/TH 5:30-6:45 in Hum 209

Office Location: TLC 1114B

Telephone (direct): 678-839-4885

Telephone (department): 678-839-6512

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Office Hours: Wednesdays: 12-4

Fridays online only: 10 am-12 pm

Also available by appointment.

Writing Center Hours this Semester: N/A

Teaching Assistant Information

Teaching Assistant: Cecilia Greubel

Email: cgreubel@my.westga.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays: 1-3 in TLC 1114B

Course Information

Course Description

This composition course focuses on skills important for critical thinking and effective writing in a variety of contexts, with emphasis on close reading strategies, understanding and building argument, and practicing analysis.

Section Description

This section takes as its theme the ethics and presentation of true crime and justice in media. Our class will perform a critical exploration of the contemporary fascination with crime-focused documentaries, as well as with podcasts and traditional texts that allow mainstream audiences a window into the workings of the criminal justice system and related institutions.

In addition to the primary texts listed below, we will read and discuss brief essays/articles (available as hyperlinks on my website), as well as other texts/media suggested by either myself or students during class discussions.

Texts, Readings, Instructional Resources, and References

Required Text(s)

- 1) *Helter Skelter: The True Story of the Manson Murders*, available for purchase at the university bookstore or Amazon, etc. (ISBN 9780393322231)
- 2) *Manhunt: Unabomber*, episodes three and six, available on *Netflix*
- 3) *Missing and Murdered: Finding Cleo*, a podcast available via Apple Podcasts or Google Podcasts. Here's a link: <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/podcasts/missing-murderedwho-killed-alberta-williams/>
- 4) A selection of other podcasts and TED talks, TBA

Additional Supplies:

- A flash drive for saving essays
- reliable access to a printer, internet, and email
- access to *Netflix*

Additional Text(s) *See links available on my website.*

*Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

As a result of close readings and of critical engagement with various texts, students will be able . . .

- To identify and employ a variety of rhetorical modes and techniques of persuasion, and will acquire reasonable mastery of conventions of college-level prose writing.
- To develop and apply critical thinking skills in effective expository, analytical, and argumentative writing, and to gain facility with the entire writing process from invention through revision.
- To develop organizational strategies, and to incorporate and document additional textual materials to strengthen and support argument.

Assignments

Assignment Name	Description	Weight
<p>Class Participation/Investment in Your Own Writing:</p> <p>You'll do a lot of writing, sometimes to get ideas out, sometimes to frame up more organized assignments . . . and it counts.</p>	<p>Reading Responses: Students respond individually in writing to daily reading assignments/discussions.</p> <p>Online Postings: You will be expected to submit portions of your out-of-class essays on CourseDen before final drafts of those essays are due. I will announce these assignments in class. These submissions will be used in writing workshops the following class day.</p>	<p>Must complete 90% of this work (in conjunction with other expectations listed in the grading contract) to qualify for an A, 80% for a B, 70% for a C, 60% for a D.</p>
<p>Regular and Mindful Attendance:</p> <p>Attendance alone doesn't earn the grade but IS included in the class contract. You must fulfill all of the expectations identified in the grading contract in order to earn the corresponding grade.</p>	<p><u>Daily Engagement in Classroom Activities:</u></p> <p>Your attention and investment in the classroom directly impact your performance on essays and other assignments. We, as students and teachers, know this. Aside from missing opportunities to maximize your performance as a writer, distractions such as phones, browsing on personal devices, working on assignments for other classes, sleeping in class, or simply not participating will have more concrete consequences: I will mark you as nonattending –because you may be physically present but otherwise absent--and the policy listed above in the Regular Attendance section will apply.</p>	<p>Per the contract, you <i>can</i> miss three or fewer classes and earn an A, four or fewer classes and earn a B, five or fewer classes and earn a C or D. More than five missed classes will result in an F for the course. Note, of course, that attendance alone will not earn these grades – all of the criteria for each grade bracket on the contract must be fulfilled.</p>
<p>Out-of-Class Essays (x3)</p>	<p>Essay One: Engaging the Text 2-3 pages minimum (750-1000 words)</p> <p>Essay Two: Analyzing Rhetoric 3 pages minimum (1000-1200 words)</p> <p>Essay Three: Synthesizing Arguments</p>	<p>Each student must complete and properly submit all three out-of-class essays to qualify to pass this class with an A, B, or C;</p>

	3 pages minimum (1000-1200 words)	Completion and proper submission of only two out-of-class essays will result in a D for the course.
		Completion and proper submission of one or fewer out-of-class essays will result in an F for the entire course. No exceptions.
Revision	<u>Substantially Revise One or More of the Out-of-Class Essays, in consultation with me.</u>	To earn an A or B in this course, you must revise and properly submit at least one of the out-of-class essays. For the revision to count, you have to meet with me during your revision process, and you must submit the revision correctly and by the due date. *Per the contract, if you choose not to revise any of your out-of-class essays, the highest grade you can earn in this course is a C.*
Final Portfolio	<u>Compile a Portfolio of Your Writing and meet with me to discuss it near the end of the semester (conference days TBA).</u>	The final portfolio is required to earn an A, B, C, or D. Failure to submit (and meet with me regarding) your final portfolio will result in an F for the course.

Grading Information and Policy

See the grading contract addendum for details.

Essay Revision Policy

You will have the option to revise Essay One and/or Essay Two. Your revisions must be substantial and must include: 1) a hardcopy of your revised essay, 2) a stapled copy of the original graded draft, and 3) a metacognitive reflection paragraph that thoughtfully discusses your plan for improving your essay (details for the revision reflection and submission guidelines can be found on my website). See course calendar for revision due dates. **No** late submissions allowed for revisions. Revisions will only count toward fulfillment of the grading contract if you 1) follow all instructions, 2) meet with me during revision, and 3) submit a substantial revision that engages effectively with feedback.

Please see the [Common Language for Course Syllabi](https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-languagecourse-syllabi.php) for official information on UWG's Academic Integrity Policy: <https://www.westga.edu/administration/vpaa/common-languagecourse-syllabi.php>

Late Work Policy

Essays: All final drafts must be submitted in hard copy and in essay drop boxes in Course Den by the designated time on the due dates. Essays have to be completed and correctly submitted in order to count. If you submit your essay in hard copy AND the CourseDen dropbox up to seven days late, I will give you credit for the essay; however, the essay will no longer qualify for revision, unless there are extenuating circumstances that we discuss together. (Important to note: per our contract, you must revise essay one or two in order to receive an A or B in this course.) Essays over 7 days late will NOT be accepted. Students with valid emergencies (hospitalization, family death, etc.) must speak with me (before the due date, if possible) if an extension needs to be discussed, in which case we will amend the contract accordingly. Otherwise, the penalties listed in this section will apply—no exceptions. Remember, to earn a C or higher for this course, you will need to submit all three out-of-class essays. That means that missing the grace period (7 days past the due date) for any out-ofclass essay will result in a final course grade of D or lower. Note: The final assignment and final portfolio **must be** completed by the due date, NO exceptions.

Rare Opportunity—Read Carefully

Class Participation Note: I will drop ONE missed class and missed daily writing/participation mark at the end of the semester IF you do the following:

- **Attend an on-campus or off-campus academic event** (for example, attend a guest lecture, a COAH event, a play, etc). from any discipline and write a 1-2 paragraph, typed response to the event. This response should:
 1. Clearly identify the event you attended and the date and time of the event.
 2. Include a thoughtful response that addresses some or all of the following questions: How does the event connect to themes/ideas discussed in class? What was your reaction to the event? What was discussed at the event you attended? What did you learn? If it was a film or

theatrical performance, what themes were addressed? What do you make of the character performances, staging, etc.?

3. Extra credit work will not be accepted after the last day of regular classes.

NOTE: No additional opportunities will be given to make up missed class or work.

Attendance Policy

Your regular participation in this class is a vital part of your success. Read the grading contract at the end of this document carefully because attendance IS tied to your grade. If you miss more than five class meetings, you will fail the course. To earn an A or B, as per our contract, you can miss no more than three or four class meetings, respectively.

If your absences put you at risk of failing the class, you will have two options: 1) withdraw from the class, which will generate a W if done on or before Wednesday, October 9—or a WF if after that deadline; or 2) remain on the roll (still attending classes, if so desired) and receive the grade that the contract outlines for your level of participation/effort/attendance. If you suspect that outside responsibilities might cause you to miss more than five classes, then you should consider taking the course at another time. Again: Wednesday, October 9, is the last day to withdraw from class with a W (without incurring a WF).

Communication Rules:

Please contact me via westga email (pamm@westga.edu). If you contact me via CourseDen email, there's a likelihood I will not see it. I will do my best to respond to all westga emails within 24 hours during the week and generally within 48 hours over the weekends. If you don't hear back from me within that timeframe, please write to me again.

Expected Response Times

Out-of-class assignments will generally be graded and returned within two weeks of the due date and will contain feedback on what you did well and what you can do to improve. When I offer revision opportunities, expect response times to be a bit longer for the revision grades, as I place priority on original assignments when allocating my grading time.

Expectations of Students

I expect you to:

- Display a working knowledge of the syllabus and contract
- Attend all classes, arriving on time with relevant materials in hand
- Participate fully and respectfully in class discussions
- Remain attentive and engaged throughout the class period
- Respond graciously to constructive criticism
- Improve your writing during each step of the process

- Avoid repeating mistakes addressed in feedback
- Submit quality work, complete and on time
- Communicate promptly with me about any questions or concerns

Ultimately, your success depends on how much time, energy, and effort you are willing to put into the class. I am only in control over one-hundred percent of my own effort, but I promise you will always receive my full effort. I hope and expect to have the same from you.

Course and UWG Policies

Attendance Policy:

In order to distribute Title IV funding (federal student aid), student attendance verification is required. For this class, students are required to be present in class during week one, in order to be considered as attending class. Students who do not attend in the first three days may be dropped from the class for nonattendance.

Americans with Disabilities Act Statement:

If you are a student who is disabled, as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and require assistance or support services, please seek assistance through the [Center for Disability](#). UWG also provides [Accessibility Statements for Technology](#) that you may be required to use for this course.

For more information on the Americans with Disabilities Act, UWG Email, Credit Hour, and UWG Honor Code policies, as well as information on Academic Tutoring, Student Services, and Technical Requirements, Privacy Policy, and Accessibility Statements, please see the [Common Language for Syllabus](#) document.

HB 280 (Campus Carry):

UWG follows University System of Georgia (USG) guidance: http://www.usg.edu/hb280/additional_information You may also visit our website for help with USG Guidance: <https://www.westga.edu/police/campuscarry.php>

Honor Code

At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing.

The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations

across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incident of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion, depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student's conduct record at UWG.

Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student's account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. For more information on the University of West Georgia Honor Code, please see the [Student Handbook](#).

Course Support

*Hyperlinks provided for accessibility throughout.

[CourseDen D2L Home Page](#)

[D2L UWG Online Help](#) (8 AM – 5 PM) Call:

678-839-6248 or 1-855-933-8946 or email:

online@westga.edu [24/7/365 D2L Help Center](#)

Call 1-855-772-0423

[University Bookstore](#)

[Student Services](#)

[Center for Academic Success](#) 678-839-6280

[Distance Learning Library Services](#) [Ingram](#)

[Library Services](#)

[Accessibility Services](#) 678-839-6428; counseling@westga.edu

Introduction to Contract Grading

The contract below outlines the requirements to receive each of the possible final grades in this course. Here's a brief explanation of what that means and what you can expect:

In short, grades often provoke anxiety among students, leading them to strategize about how to keep scholarships or to meet a specific graduation requirement, etc. This dynamic can inhibit authentic engagement with the learning process. In this class, all of your energy and investment can be directed toward exerting your best effort to complete the work at hand. It's still work, and we will write a lot, but if you put forth a good faith effort in this course, you're going to pass, and you can probably even earn an "A" or "B." **In return, though, this expects a good faith**

effort from you, meaning that you won't just be able to make a specific score on a test or essay to get a specific course grade. Instead, you will have to engage in a sustained and rigorous manner with the learning process. (Read that last part again, and internalize it. It's probably the most important passage here.)

By shifting our focus from performance-based grades to intensive effort, this course offers students more meaningful engagement with the learning process, but it also means that you're going to be completing a lot more work than you otherwise might. Here's an explanation for each of the major requirements in the course, followed by a simplified, bare bones contract which breaks down how those requirements translate into final course grades.

Major Assignments

You need to complete all major assignments (there are three, described on the syllabus in brief and on my website in detail), as well as a formal and substantive revision of at least one major assignment, in order to earn a passing grade. Near the end of the semester, we will use your work on these assignments to inform a transparent conversation about the relative “quality” of your writing in meaningful ways that will empower you as a writer going forward.

Hopefully this contract will help dispel “grade anxiety” for you and me alike, given that it largely makes your final grade in the course a function of how much effort is put into the course. However, this doesn't mean that quality doesn't matter at all. As we'll discuss this semester, grammar, for example, is complicated, particularly since “standard grammar” is a cultural construct with political implications. At the same time, many hiring managers, coworkers, clients, etc., tend to value standard English, and therefore privilege language-related conventions in formal contexts. For that reason, some of your feedback and revision will be tied to grammar and mechanics. The same applies to other facets of writing, including organization, evidentiary support, and even stylistic choices.

So, while your final grade isn't entirely based on the quality of the work submitted, know that the class itself, particularly the major assignments, will both expect, assess, and work to improve quality—often in blunter and more rigorous ways than it would if this course made quality the primary factor in your final grade. You can, and might earn a “D” on a major assignment; if you do, though, you should approach it as a chance to more clearly see and work on aspects of your writing that need improvement. The grade you earn on each essay, though, is detached from your final grade, which is based instead on your good faith effort to complete and submit your essays correctly and on time. In short, you must complete all major assignments to pass the course because you must complete all major assignments to receive the kinds of insight and feedback that will empower you as an orator, writer, and communicator.

Other Assignments

The need to complete a certain percentage of the total work in the course in order to earn the corresponding letter grade is a little simpler. It's like this: you're going to write often and that writing is intended to help you practice and improve as a writer. The repetition you'll experience in this course is intentional. Writing requires practice, which honestly demands a lot more from us intellectually. So, we're going to write, and we're going to write a lot. Sometimes, you'll keep what you produce to include in a major assignment, and other times you'll workshop what you produce with the instructor and/or your peers in order to receive feedback AND to practice offering feedback that helps you think critically about writing. Still other times, you'll never use or even read what you produce again. That's because the point is, on some level, simply to produce. It seems practical to me, then, to use your willingness to produce writing as a measure of your effort to improve as a writer.

Attendance

Attendance is also simple to explain, even if it here encompasses being both physically and mentally present at class meetings. Much of the feedback that you receive on your writing will come from class discussions—both from the instructor and from your peers. Being actively present, in other words participating meaningfully in the work we do, will help you grow as a writer, whether by your gracious reception of that constructive feedback or by graciously giving that constructive feedback to others. In other words, much of the effort that you put into the course will occur in the classroom. Let's work together to ensure that we have an honest, but supportive, space in which we can commit to and benefit from that labor, pledging to attend all of the classes that we reasonably can. I will work to maintain an "Attendance" category under the "Grades" tab on CourseDen to help everyone keep track of where they stand, but make sure you keep track of your own attendance as well. Your participation is ultimately your responsibility, and it is one of the most important things you are learning in college.

Portfolio Meeting

The final requirement, the portfolio meeting, is included not because it will necessarily require much additional effort from you, but because it provides us a capstone for the semester, a chance for you to reflect upon and celebrate your progress (and, if you're putting in the effort, you will make progress) as well as to receive some final recommendations from me on how to grow as a writer going forward. We will talk about your strengths and weaknesses as you finish the course. Plus, you'll leave the meeting knowing just where you stand in relation to our contract.

Grading Contract for English Composition

***To earn a grade of "A" in the course, you agree to do the following:**

- Complete and properly submit all major assignments in the course.
- Revise one or more of the major assignments in the course in consultation with the instructor.
- Complete at least **ninety percent** of all other assignments in the course.
- **Miss no more than three class meetings** during the semester without good reason (including, but not limited to, a hospitalization, a court summons, the death of a close relative, a university-sponsored event, and a life-changing opportunity).
- Compile a portfolio of your writing, and meet with the instructor to discuss it at the end of the semester.

***To earn a grade of “B” in the course, you agree to do the following:**

- Complete and properly submit all major assignments in the course.
- Revise one or more of the major assignments in the course in consultation with the instructor.
- Complete at least **eighty percent** of all other assignments in the course.
- **Miss no more than four class meetings** during the semester without good reason (including, but not limited to, a hospitalization, a court summons, the death of a close relative, a university-sponsored event, and a life-changing opportunity).
- Compile a portfolio of your writing, and meet with the instructor to discuss it at the end of the semester.

***To earn a grade of “C” in the course, you agree to do the following:**

- Complete and properly submit all major assignments in the course.
- Complete at least **seventy percent** of all other assignments in the course.
- **Miss no more than five class meetings** during the semester without good reason (including, but not limited to, a hospitalization, a court summons, the death of a close relative, a university-sponsored event, and a life-changing opportunity).
- Compile a portfolio of your writing, and meet with the instructor to discuss it at the end of the semester.

***To earn a grade of “D” in the course, you agree to do the following:**

- Complete and properly submit all but one of the major assignments in the course.
- Complete at least **sixty percent** of all other assignments in the course.
- **Miss no more than five class meetings** during the semester without good reason (including, but not limited to, a hospitalization, a court summons, the death of a close relative, a university-sponsored event, and a life-changing opportunity).
- Compile a portfolio of your writing, and meet with the instructor to discuss it at the end of the semester.

You will earn a grade of “F” in the course if you 1) fail to complete more than one major assignment, 2) miss more than five class meetings, or 3) otherwise fail to meet the minimum requirements to earn a “D.”

- In conclusion, one fails if one simply makes no effort to complete the work in the course.

NOTE: This contract does allow for occasional, if rare, “gray areas.” Perhaps you’ve completed all major assignments and revisions at a level of high quality, submitted at least ninety percent of the other work in the course, and compiled a stellar portfolio, but still missed four class meetings. I reserve the right to

exercise my judgment as an instructor, subject-matter expert, and professional in those instances, though I will always grant you the chance to “make your case.”