



Course Syllabus:
Introduction to Composition Studies
Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences

ENGL 4013 Section 101
Fall 2025

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Melissa Nivens

Office: BeaWood 220

Student Office hours: MW 1:00 – 2:00pm ; TR 9:30 – 11:00pm; by appointment

Office Phone: (940) 397-4145

E-mail: melissa.nivens@msutexas.edu

Course Description

This course provides students with an introduction to the multiple theories of writing and familiarizes them with a rich range of composition pedagogies.

Course Goals

- Acquire a more sophisticated understanding of different theories of writing
- Demonstrate the ability to apply different theories of composing in order to make sound pedagogical decisions
- Reflect on the relationship between theory and practice
- Gain knowledge of writing as a skill across content areas
- Acquire a familiarity with the various discourses, professional journals, and online resources of the composition community

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Wardle, Elizabeth and Doug Downs. *Writing about Writing 5th ed.* Macmillan, 2023. eBook with Achieve.

Study Hours and Tutoring Assistance

Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP) provides free drop-in tutoring and homework help for MSU students. Located on the first floor of Moffett Library, TASP's Learning Center provides tutoring support in a number of core courses and subject areas. Remember that you don't need an appointment to utilize these services. Check the [TASP webpage](#) for times.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work, not the individual to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the goals and objectives of this course, all writing assignments should be prepared by the student. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare students for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism.

All formal papers will run through Turnitin for an Originality Report and an AI Report. At the very least, plagiarism will result in an F on the assignment; at worst, the consequence will be an F in the course. Offenders may be reported to the Chair of the Department of English, Humanities, and Philosophy and/or the Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

For final grades, this class will not use the plus/minus grading system. The following numerical equivalents for final grades are used: A = 100-90%; B = 89-80%; C = 79-70%; D = 69-60%; F = 59-0. For individual assignment grades, an A+ = 98, A = 95, A- = 92; B+ = 88, B = 85, and so on.

Table 1: Percentages allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Description	Percentage
Class Discussion Presentation	Student writes a summary and analysis of a course reading and leads class discussion.	10%
Writing Project 1: Conceptions about Writing Essay	Student explores (mis)conceptions about writing in a short essay.	10%
Writing Project 2: Literacy Narrative	Student explores personal literacy experiences and writes a personal narrative.	10%
Writing Project 3: Rhetorical Analysis	Student explores rhetorical situation and choices for a series of rhetorical artifacts.	15%
Writing Project 4: Book Review	Student will review an academic or popular book on writing.	15%
Annotated Bibliography	Student writes a summary and evaluation of each source for WP5.	10%

Assignments	Description	Percentage
Writing Project 5: Solutions to Writing Challenges Research Paper	Student researches a writing challenge and possible solutions to write a synthesis paper.	20%
Presentation	Student will present findings from WP5 to the class.	10%
Total	*****	100%

Mid-Term Grades

In order to help students keep track of their progress toward course objectives, I will provide a Midterm Progress Report through Navigate. I will submit a grade for all students, not just those in danger of failing the course. Midterm grades will not be reported on your transcript; nor will they be calculated in the cumulative GPA. They simply give students an idea of where they stand at the midpoint of the semester. Students earning below a C at the midway point should make an appointment with me and consider visiting the Learning Center for tutoring services.

Final Exam

The Presentation replaces the final exam for this course.

Extra Credit

Extra credit offerings are announced at the discretion of the instructor.

Late Work

Late assignments (defined as work not submitted by the date and time posted in D2L) will be accepted, but they will lose 10% of the final grade. Additionally, no late work will be accepted more than 48 hours after the original deadline without making arrangements with me. If students are unable to come to class on the day an assignment is due, they should still upload their work into the D2L Dropbox folder on time to avoid late paper deductions.

Submission Format and Policy

All formal assignments are to be typed, formatted, and outside sources documented according to MLA style. All formal papers will be uploaded into the appropriate D2L Dropbox folder.

By enrolling in this class, students expressly grant MSU a “limited right” in all intellectual property created by students for the purpose of this course. The “limited right” shall include but shall not be limited to the right to reproduce the student’s work product in order to verify originality and authenticity, and for educational purposes. Please note that the D2L Dropbox folder will automatically run papers through Turnitin.com. Turnitin provides both an Originality Report and an AI Report.

Note: Students may not submit a paper for a grade in this class that already has been (or will be) submitted for a grade in another course, unless they obtain the explicit written permission of me and the other instructor involved in advance.

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes/late registration: **August 28**

Deadline to file for graduation: **September 22**

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" **November 24**. Check the date on the [Academic Calendar](#).

For more information, refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Students are expected to be familiar with this platform as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. Students can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU homepage or the portal. For assistance, submit a help ticket [at MSU Texas Distance Education](#).

Attendance

It is important that students attend class and arrive on time. I will take daily attendance via an "attendance question" at the start of class. If a student accumulates more than three weeks' worth (TR 6 classes) of absences (excused or not) the missed instruction will make it difficult to excel in the class. Students who miss class will not be directly penalized, but they will miss out on opportunities for participation and explanations of assignments that could impact the final grade. Students who need to miss several classes because of personal reasons or illness should alert the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities and provide them with the necessary documentation so that they can verify the situation and notify instructors.

The instructor's records will stand as evidence of absences. Please understand that a student with excessive absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor after a verbal or written warning.

Instructor Class Policies & Procedures

Since the textbook is an ebook, please bring your laptop or other electronic device to every class in order to access the course readings during discussion.

All English majors must take a senior capstone (ENGL 4001) their last semester. That course requires students to submit samples of their college writing, so consider keeping copies of your assignments for the capstone portfolio.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees, and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. However, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans, and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. Two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make an application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state, and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License-to-carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by the MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

Course Schedule:

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Week	Before Class	During Class
Week 1 T 8/26 <i>Writing is not just something people do, but something people study.</i>		Review: Syllabus Introduce: Why study writing?
R 8/28	Read: Ch 1 Investigating Writing	Discuss: Writing Studies Threshold Concepts Introduce: (WP1) Conceptions about Writing Assignment
Week 2 T 9/2 <i>Writing is influenced by identities and experiences.</i>	Read: Ch 2 Readers, Writers, & Texts	Discuss: Genres Reading Rhetorically
R 9/4	Read: Ch 5 Literacies "Sponsors of Literacy" Deborah Brandt "Learning to Read" Malcom X Write: WP1	Discuss: CDP#1 Brandt CDP#2 Malcom X Introduce: (WA2) Literacy Narrative Assignment *WP1 DUE
Week 3 T 9/9	Write: WP2 Literacy Narrative Draft Bring 2 copies to class	Peer Review Workshop
R 9/11	Read: "Should Writers Use They Own English?" Vershawn Ashanti Young "Pardon My Acento..." Kelly Medina-Lopez	Discuss: CDP#3 Young CDP#4 Medina-Lopez

Week	Before Class	During Class
Week 4 T 9/16	Read: “Multilingual Writing as Rhetorical Attunement” Rebecca Lorimer Leonard Excerpt from Bootstraps Victor Villanueva Write: WP2 Final Draft	Discuss: CDP#5 Leonard CDP#6 Villanueva *WP2 DUE
R 9/18	“Responding – Really Responding to Other Students Writing” Richard Straub	Discuss: Straub and responding to student writing 6 Traits of Good Writing Giving Feedback activity
Week 5 9/23 Rhetorical choices shape worlds.	Read: “Rhetoric: Making Sense of Human Interaction & Meaning Making” Doug Downs	Discuss: Downs & Rhetoric Intro (Lecture) Introduce: WP3 Rhetorical Analysis Assignment
9/25	Read: “The Rhetorics of Online Autism Advocacy: a Case for Rhetorical Listening” Heilker & King	Discuss: CDP#7 Heikler & King
Week 6 9/30	Find and Read: Articles for analysis	WP3 Planning Workshop
10/2	Write: WA3 Rhetorical Analysis Draft Bring 2 copies to class	Peer Review Workshop
Week 7 10/7 Writing is a process, and all writers have more to learn.	Read: “Shitty First Drafts” Anne Lamott “Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans, and the Stifling of Language” Mike Rose	Discuss: CDP#8 Lamott CDP#9 Rose

Week	Before Class	During Class
10/9	Write: WA3 Final Draft	*WA3 DUE *NO CLASS – OUT OF TOWN
Week 8 10/14	Read: “Teaching the Conventions of Academic Discourse” Teresa Thonney	Discuss: CDP#10 Thonney
10/16	Read: “Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers” Nancy Sommers	Discuss: CDP#11 Sommers Introduce: WP4 Book Review
Week 9 10/21	Read: Ch 3 Research: Participating in Conversational Inquiry About Writing	Discuss: Ch 3 Introduce: W5 Solutions Paper & Ann Bib
10/23	Read: Book Review book	Discuss: TEKS, Common Core, STAAR
Week 10 10/28 People collaborate to get things done with writing.	Read: Ch 7 Communities “Intertextuality and the Discourse Community” James Porter	Discuss: Authorship & Discourse Communities Issues with AI
10/30	Read: “Coaches Can Read Too”	Discuss: Discourse Communities
Week 11 11/4	Write: Book Review Draft Bring 2 Copies to class	Peer Review Workshop – Book Review
11/6	Read: Sources	Synthesis Matrix/Research Map *WP4 BOOK REVIEW DUE
Week 12 11/11	Read: Sources Write: Draft	Individual Writing Conferences

Week	Before Class	During Class
11/13	Write: Ann Bib	Discuss: Developing Writing Prompts and Rubrics *ANN BIB DUE
Week 13 11/18	Write: WP5 Draft Bring 2 copies to class	Peer Review Workshop -WP5
11/20	Write: WP5	Revision Workshop – WP5
Week 14 11/25	Write: WP5	Presentation Workshop *WP5 DUE
11/27	*****	*NO CLASS THANKSGIVING
Week 15 12/2	Complete: Slides	Presentations 1-6
12/4	Complete: Slides	Presentation 7-13
Week 16 FINALS	*****	*NO FINAL EXAM