

ENGL 4013: Intro to Composition Studies

Fall 2023 | Midwestern State University | Dr. Coenen

Days	Time	Where
MW	2:30-3:50 PM	PY 201

Contact

Professor: Dr. Hillary Coenen | **Email:** hillary.coenen@msutexas.edu

Phone: 940-397-4058 | **Office:** BW 203

Office Hours: Mon-Thurs: 11 AM-Noon | Mon 1:30-2:30 PM | Appointments Available

Email is the best way to contact me.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

- [NWWK](#) - *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*, Eds. Linda Adler-Kassner & Elizabeth Wardle. Utah State UP, 2015 (or 2016).
- [AWAE](#) - *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies*, Asao Inoue. UP Colorado/WAC Clearinghouse, 2015.

Other Resources:

- Access to D2L/Brightspace to receive info and submit assignments
 - A Gmail account (like MSUTexas account) to collaborate & access digital materials
 - Regular computer and internet access
 - Microsoft Office or Google Suite
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Course Goals

In ENGL 4013 students will achieve the following:

- 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

Additional information about course objectives can be found on the department webpage,

<https://msutexas.edu/academics/libarts/english/index.php>.

Course Overview

English 4013 introduces the field of composition, which covers writing pedagogies, theories of writing, and research on writing processes. This course is designed to build skills related to composing, collaboration, participation, and critical reading. You'll have opportunities to design your own research project with a series of assignments called the CHOICE Project, share and discuss resources of interest to you, and earn course credit for investment tasks by recording them in a log.

You cannot afford to think of being here to receive an education: you will do much better to think of being here to claim one. One of the dictionary definitions of the verb 'to claim' is: to take as the rightful owner; to assert in the face of possible contradiction. 'To receive' is to come into possession of; to act as receptacle or container for; to accept as authoritative or true. The difference is that between acting and being acted-upon."

--Adrienne Rich

Grades & Policies

Major (Required) Tasks	Points	Description
Resource Recommendation (RR) 2 x 100 pts	200	Discussion board posts recommending relevant resources
Discussion Leader	200	Lead a discussion on a selected reading that you sign up for
CHOICE Proposal	100	A proposal for the CHOICE Project you plan to complete
CHOICE Project	200	The culmination of your research on a composition studies topic in the genre you choose (unit plan, research essay, podcast, website, etc.)
Final - CHOICE Presentation	150	A presentation on your CHOICE Project for the class
Investment Tasks & Reflection	150	A record of your ungraded labor for the class with records and reflections for extra credit
Total	X/1000	

Grade Policy

Through contract grading in this course, the default grade is a B. If you do all that is asked of you in the manner and spirit it is asked, you'll earn a B in the course. It will not matter what I or your colleagues think of your writing, only that you are responding to the assignment and feedback. If you miss class, do not participate fully, don't complete assignments, or don't follow the instructions, you will get a lower course grade. You can earn an A by showing in your IT Log that you have gone above and beyond to contribute to the class community and to your learning.

Grade Scheme

Letter	Numerical
A	895-100
B	795-894
C	695-794
D	595-694
F	0-594

Submission Format and Policy

All formal assignments are to be typed and formatted, with outside sources documented, according to MLA style. Some minor assignments may be submitted on the IT Log or as a hard copy in class. All formal papers must be uploaded into the D2L Dropbox folder. *Note:* You 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 you obtain the explicit written permission of me and the other instructor involved in advance.

Use of AI or Writing Technologies

The use of AI is highly discouraged in this class. Turnitin does have an AI detector, but it is not 100% accurate, and thus leaves room for "reasonable doubt." Therefore, if you do use AI at any stage in the writing process, you must state in the comments section of your submission how you used it (in detail). If an originality checker indicates that your response is more than 30% AI-generated, I will investigate further, and if your response and other evidence indicates that the work you submitted is not more than 70% original, you will not receive full credit for the assignment.

Note that there is no uniform policy on AI use at MSU. Make efforts to understand the policy for each course you are taking.

Attendance Policy

Punctual, engaged attendance is crucial to your success in this class and in college. More than two weeks' worth of absences, excused or not (MW/TR: 4 classes), will affect your performance and grade. Absences are not directly penalized in this course, but missing class means lost opportunities to learn and earn points for activities. Email in advance if you will not be able to make class. It is your responsibility to be present and prepared for class to maximize your learning. If you must miss multiple sessions for personal/health reasons, alert the Dean of Students office and provide information so they can verify the situation for your instructors.

On Zoom

This course is designated as a face-to-face class, and it will be held in that format unless the University changes course modalities. Students are not able to attend class via Zoom as a regular alternative. If you will miss an extended amount of time because of illness, contact me to discuss options.

Late Assignments

Deadlines are staggered in this class so that assignments build upon one another, which means that assignments should be completed according to the schedule to ensure your success. If you anticipate you may have difficulty meeting a deadline, request an extension at least 24 hours in advance. Late assignments, defined as work not submitted to the designated site within 6 hours of the deadline, may be accepted for credit if the student consults with the instructor within two business days of the deadline, at the discretion of the instructor. If you have difficulty submitting or are unsure if your submission was successful, email me with your work attached.

Academic Dishonesty

The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. At the very least, plagiarism will result in an F on the assignment; at worst, the consequence will be an F in the course. Offenses will be reported to the Chair of the Department of English, Humanities, and Philosophy. Students have the right to appeal an alleged incident of Academic Dishonesty. More information about this policy and appeal procedure can be found on page 55 of the *Student Handbook* https://msutexas.edu/student-life/_assets/files/handbook.pdf

Accessibility & Technology

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Support Services in Room 168 of the Clark Student Center, 940-397-4140.

I want to ensure that this course is accessible as possible to all students. If you have problems accessing campus sites or learning materials, please communicate with me about how we might improve that.

On Language Assessment

You might expect to learn “proper grammar” in this class, but linguists argue that every language and dialect has a distinctive grammar and that no one grammar is inherently better or more correct. American universities rely on “Standard (American) Academic English” (SAE) to determine “college readiness,” but this [“standard” is a false one rooted in intentional gatekeeping and discrimination](#) based on race, class, and citizenship status. In this class, your professor will assume that SAE is a false and flawed standard. Your language practices are relevant. You will not be chastised for using grammars other than SAE. If you would like to learn to use SAE more persuasively, we can work on that through independent exercises for which you may earn extra credit, but you are also welcome to use your language experience in ways that you and your peers and community members would find persuasive and trustworthy; these goals are more practical and more inclusive than striving for an arbitrary and false notion of correctness. Grammar police be warned. (See also [CCCC’s 2020 Demand for Black Linguistic Justice](#).)

Resources & Access

Access to Microsoft 365

All students are able to download Microsoft Office 365 free of charge using their MSU Texas student email address. To acquire Office 365, please visit

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/education/products/office?ms.officeurl=getoffice365?ms.officeurl=getoffice365> and create an account.

Writing Center & Tutoring

Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP) provides free drop-in tutoring for MSU students. Located on the first floor of Moffett Library, Writing tutors are available most weekdays. You don't need an appointment to use these services. Writing tutors will not edit your papers for you, but they will provide support and feedback at every stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to drafting, revising to proofreading. See <https://msutexas.edu/academics/tasp/on-campus.php> for more info.

University Computer Labs

The University provides four open computer labs throughout the week. These four labs feature access to Microsoft Office Suite for writing and internet access for research.

Location	Hours
Clark Student Center	24 hours (Mon-Sun)
Dillard 146	Mon-Thurs 6 AM – 7 PM
Moffett Library	Mon-Thurs 8AM – 10PM; Fri. 8AM-5PM; Sat 10AM-6PM; Sun 2PM-10PM
Legacy Hall	24 hours (Mon-Sun)

Assessment and Revision

I will provide written or oral feedback on drafts prior to submission as needed, and I will inquire about your writing progress regularly. If you request the opportunity to revise, you should meet with me to make a revision plan. You may revise and resubmit any coursework within 3 weeks of receiving a grade and prior to finals week for additional feedback. Grade revisions will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

Conferences

You should participate in at least two writing conferences with me or a writing center tutor this semester prior to the last week of class. You may use these meetings for any course-related work, but your CHOICE Project and Presentations will especially benefit from those conferences.

Contacting Me & GroupMe

Email is the best way to contact me. In the body of your email, indicate the course and section number you're in. Please allow at least 24 hours for a response during the week and 48 hours over the weekend. We will also have a class GroupMe which you can use to ask questions and share resources among classmates. Access it here: https://groupme.com/join_group/84200285/0dJLOW0N

D2L & Google Drive

We will use D2L to access most course materials including the syllabus, announcements, schedule updates, assignment sheets, PowerPoints, your feedback and grades, and other materials. You will also submit formal assignments and discussion board posts on D2L, so please check it daily, especially before our class meets. Google Drive will also be used as a collaborative space and to store class resources.

Writing Proficiency Requirement

All students seeking a Bachelor's degree from Midwestern State University must satisfy a writing proficiency requirement once they have 1) completed 6 hours of Communication Core and 2) earned 60 hours. Students may meet this requirement by passing the Writing Proficiency Exam, passing two Writing Intensive courses, or passing English 2113. If you have any questions about the exam, visit the [Writing Proficiency Office website](#) or call 397-4131.

Safety & Our Class

COVID, Safety, & Care

We are still dealing with a public health emergency. We're deeply affected by the actions others take (or don't) to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Many faculty, staff, and students are (or care for someone who is) immunocompromised or at risk. As such, I ask that you make efforts to protect yourselves, our campus, your families, and mine as well as our broader community from the spread of COVID-19.

As the pandemic continues, I want to share thoughts about our collective experience:

- Some of our lives may be relatively unaffected by the pandemic, but others have experienced profound and life-altering tragedies and hardships. We cannot make assumptions about others' experiences.
- Be compassionate with others and with ourselves. At this time, we all need more grace and care.
- Together, we can make this semester safe, thoughtful, rigorous, and insightful through our intellectual efforts and by carefully following safety protocols.

On Symptoms

If you are sick, particularly with symptoms that resemble COVID-19, DO NOT ATTEND CLASS IN PERSON. I'll work with you to ensure that you have the opportunity to learn any material you miss because of illness.

Course Community

Ensuring a Learning Environment

College classes should be vibrant environments that foster creativity, discussion, and intellectual growth. You have the freedom to create the kind of intellectual community you desire. Included here are some characteristics of a thriving learning environment. Let's discuss what this looks like in practice:

Characteristics	Students will...	Professor will...
<i>Communicative</i>		
<i>Accountable</i>		
<i>Respectful</i>		
<i>Engaged</i>		

Learning with Equity & Generosity

As a class community, we have diverse bodies, experiences, and needs. Our differences are strengths and something we should strive to learn from. In order to learn in a safe environment, we must ardently reject language and behaviors that denigrate others based on identity category. In this learning space, hate speech, harassment, discrimination, & violence are not tolerated.

Committing to access and equity for all requires us to do more than reject discrimination. It begins with acknowledging how our institutions (academic and otherwise) have oppressed, excluded, and marginalized people based on race, religion, sexual orientation, sex and gender expression, immigration status, language background, ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic status, age, body type, and other aspects of identity. The work continues with seeking to understand and resist those failures by educating ourselves about oppression, fostering conversation and learning about those topics, developing practices that respond to the needs of historically marginalized communities, and holding our communities and leaders accountable for becoming more equitable and accessible.

This course encourages discussion and consideration of uncomfortable topics. We can work through discomfort and create a brave space for learning and exploration by showing respect for others and

consideration of different perspectives. There is a lot we don't know about each other, and our word choice in discussing social & political issues matters a great deal. Ignorance is not an excuse for cruelty or dismissiveness, but we all make mistakes as we learn, so we should be willing to forgive & learn from these situations.

This Course as a Contract

This course uses a labor-based grading contract adapted from that of composition scholar Asao Inoue. [Here is his original contract example](#). If you do all that is asked of you in the manner and spirit it is asked, then you'll earn a B in the course. This should foster a collaborative, supportive environment and relieve some writing anxiety. You'll get feedback from me and your colleagues which you can use to improve your work and to take risks, but you won't get traditional grades on major assignments. Instead they will be marked on a Satisfactory(S)/Needs revision (N)/Unsatisfactory(U) basis. If your submission meets the basic expectations for the assignment, you'll earn an S and full credit for the assignment (100%). If you earn an N (75%) or a U (50%), you will earn the corresponding portion of the points available for that task. You may request the opportunity to revise and resubmit ANY assignment so that it meets assignment expectations and earns an S. (See the "Assessment & Revision" section above for more info.)

While the default grade for the course is a B, you can improve upon your grade by doing more than is required. The primary options for doing so are substantive revision and the Investment Tasks shown below. If you don't earn all of the points for a major assignment, you may revise and make up for it in Investment Tasks. If you have missed or incomplete work or work that does not meet the expectations for revision, editing, or originality, and you choose not to make that up with timely revision or additional labor, you will forfeit the default B for a lower grade, depending on the amount and quality of missing or incomplete work.

Investment Tasks

This class works better, is more fun, and generates more learning when everyone participates. Tracking your Investment Tasks allows you to earn credit for the work you do beyond what is required. Record ungraded work related to the class in your log with the type & number, date, time spent, and a brief description. Word & Google Docs versions of the template are on D2L. See the main types below:

Type (Abr.)	Goal	Pts/	Description
Meaningful Contribution (MC)	15	3	MCs represent the everyday ways that you engage in class work, and they can take many forms: comments or questions in class or via email, relevant chat on GroupMe, excellent group work, volunteer to read aloud or report group work, activities on D2L, and others. About one per week will keep you on track.
Homework & Tasks (HT)	10	7	HTs will be indicated when they are assigned and may include homework, brainstorming, work on major writing assignments (including planning, drafting, revision, and editing), and other engagement activities as announced (like attending relevant events). There will be many opportunities to complete homework or tasks; strive to do as many as possible.
Peer Review Feedback (PRF)	3	10	PRFs summarize the feedback you provided a classmate on written drafts during peer review. The note should summarize the 2 or 3 main suggestions for revision that you gave your partner. These notes should also be provided to your peers.
Writing Conference (WC)	2	15	WCs with me or the writing center should be recorded in your log and documented well in your own notes. You can meet with me during designated conference times or office hours, or use the writing center and document your visit (w/ writing & photos).