

ENGLISH 101—COMPOSITION

Instructor: Brittney Knight

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Office Hours: Available by Appointment

Sections: 101.104: MWF 2:30-3:20 p.m. East 134 | 101.048: TR 7:30-8:45 a.m. Innov. Hall 330

Course Materials

Required Text: *From Inquiry to Academic Writing: A Practical Guide* (4th Edition) ISBN 9781319071240

Required Tech:

- a laptop or tablet. Bring daily. If you don't have one, see me about signing one out.
- a USB/flash drive or cloud account to transport and back up files.
- a GMU email account. Per university policy, I can only send or reply to your Mason e-mail.

WELCOME TO ENGLISH 101!

Everyone is a writer, whether you believe it or not. In this course, we will hone and develop our skills as writers. To succeed in both your academic careers and beyond, it's important to be able to convey and express your ideas to those around you. **What you have to say matters!** My goal is to equip you with skills that you can use to overcome writing problems. I hope you come to understand that your writing skills aren't just for writing essays, but for using your voice to engage in future conversations, both in and out of the classroom.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION AND COURSE GOALS

What to Expect from this Course: This isn't a lecture class—most sessions will be *interactive* and involve significant amounts of reading, discussion, and writing. This is a class about improving the way we voice and communicate our thoughts, ideas, and passions through writing. I don't want you to write about things that don't interest you, and I encourage you to find ways to link class projects with your other interests. Together, we will work to bring these interests into our classroom to make sure that the things we are writing, reading, and discussing are relevant and pertinent to you and the academic paths you have chosen.

What I Expect from You: Good writing is a result of *time and dedication and multiple drafts*. Therefore, I expect you to dedicate the time and effort necessary to improve your writing, and to help your peers improve their writing. Students who attend regularly, keep up with the small assignments, and block off extra time each week for careful reading, thoughtful drafting, and focused revising usually succeed in this class. <http://composition.gmu.edu/course-information/english-101>

MASON CORE

This course is part of the GMU Core, which is designed to help students prepare for advanced work in their major field and for a lifetime of learning. For more information on the mission of the GMU Core for general education, consult the University Catalog or visit <https://provost.gmu.edu/academics-and-research/undergraduate-education/mason-core>

MASON IMPACT COURSE



As a Mason Impact course, ENGH 101 teaches students to understand knowledge creation and to investigate a meaningful question through the development of an inquiry-based research project that evaluates, synthesizes, and incorporates multiple perspectives.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

MAJOR PROJECTS (70%)

Project 1: Narrative Argument 700-1,000 w. | Due 09/27 (Friday)

You will use your personal experience, as well as perspectives different from your own, to support a narrative argument that is relevant—or that you make relevant—to your fellow Mason students. This assignment will ask you to support your argument with evidence, write to a specific audience, and respond to their specific counter-arguments and concerns. It is designed to help develop your ability to produce rhetorically aware persuasive/argumentative writing and your understanding of argument and rhetoric while honing your existing writing skills.

Project 2: The Researched Argument for Change & Annotated Bibliography

You will pick a problem or issue that you can address while writing for a national publication. This should be something that matters to you. It should also be specific and narrow: perhaps some aspect of the problem that's been over-looked or a solution that others should consider. You will develop a research question, conduct research, and write an annotated bibliography to help you explore the complexities of the issue and develop a change-based answer to your research question. You'll then develop your argument in an article for a specific publication and their specific readers.

Annotated Bibliography 1,000-1,400 w. | Due 11/01 (Friday)

Your bibliography will include eight high quality sources that are appropriate for and relevant to your research question. These sources should paint a complicated picture of your topic in terms of varying perspectives, emphases, and conclusions. Each annotation will identify, evaluate, and summarize the source and its potential use. The research evaluation section will explain how this work has complicated or clarified your initial understanding of the issue (with discussion of your research gaps), illustrate the complex connection between your sources, and discuss how genre/audience shaped your research and source-selection process.

Researched Argument for Change Paper 1,300-1,750 w. | Due 11/22 (Friday)

You will use your annotated bibliography work (and possibly continued research), to support an argument that stems from the answer to your research question. You will write your argument as an article for a specific magazine, and you'll support your argument with research from at least five sources that the magazine's specific readers would find credible and compelling. This assignment will incorporate the argument writing skills we practiced in the previous project and help you continue to hone your research and synthesis skills, your ability to select and evaluate sources based on the rhetorical situation, and your genre- and audience-aware writing. **Note:** Generalized topics—particularly topics about which people hold unshakable opinions, such as the death penalty, abortion, freedom of speech, etc.—are not appropriate for Projects 2 & 3 unless you can conclusively demonstrate that you have a new angle. (In which case, you must get approval from me first.)

Project 3: Radical Revision 750-850 w. | Due 12/13 (Friday)

You will radically revise your researched argument into a nonfiction genre that can make a real difference in the world. Your radical revision can take many forms, so long as there is a written component—a letter to your local representative, a blog targeted at a particular demographic, a YouTube video for specific stakeholders, a pamphlet to distribute on campus, etc. The key is to create something targeted to a specific audience that achieves the purpose appropriate for them. This assignment is the culmination of all the skills we've discussed and practiced throughout the semester: it allows you to continue to hone your research writing skills and demonstrate your awareness of genre, audience, and purpose in your writing.

Rhetorical Addendum 750-850 w. | Due 12/13 (Friday)

You'll also include a rhetorical addendum with this assignment that explains some of the specific choices you made based on the rhetorical situation: what you know about your audience and genre; how you applied what you learned as you investigated each and reevaluated your purpose; and how what you created represents rhetorically and intellectually savvy work.

Post Scripts | Due with assignments

I'll also ask you to submit reflective writing with each formal assignment. I'll give you specific instructions for each assignment, but I generally want to know about your process—how you wrote and revised your work; what skills you developed or practiced along the way; how you envision using these skills again in the

future; and how the rhetorical situation shaped your writing. Some of these questions will have grade weight on the assignment, and I won't grade a project until the post script has been submitted.

HOMEWORK & MINOR ASSIGNMENTS (30%)

Journals & Homework (15%)

Grading: All Homework Assignments or Journals are worth 1-5 pts (depending on length, formality, and complexity) and are graded Incomplete (0%), Partial Credit (75%) or Complete (100%). ***I do not accept homework after 24 hrs.*** You will receive:

- **Incomplete:** if you do not complete the assignment; turn it in more than 24 hrs. late; or do not follow all the directions of the assignment.
- **Partial Credit:** if you turn in the assignment late (but within 24 hours of the due date); complete most of the assignment requirements.
- **Complete:** if you carefully answer the assignment and complete all the requirements.

Journals: Journals are private on Blackboard and can only be seen by you and I. They will be used to hone two crucial skills in writing: ***practice*** and ***reflection***. To become a better writer, you should practice often. Additionally, you should be able to write about your writing, and reflect on how you are growing and changing as a writer.

Free Writes: occur 1-3 times a week at the beginning or end of class. Free writes are exactly how they sound: time dedicated to freely writing. We might skip a free write if we are having a particularly busy class, but bring your computer/tablet daily. Free writes count as 1 pt. each, are graded on participation, cannot receive partial credit, and are only available for completion during class time.

Reflections: are in-depth, specific writing responses (often 250-350 words) about what we plan to write and why, how we've been solving our writing problems, and/or how we plan to improve or move forward in our writing. I will provide a list of journal prompts that you must follow.

Homework/Quizzes: Homework assignments will include various reading and writing exercises, some of which will help you build towards the major assignments. We'll also have reading quizzes (either in at the start of class or through Blackboard as preparation for class). The goal here is to make sure you are doing the reading—because class will be pretty boring (and ineffectual) if you haven't.

Peer Reviews & Conferences (10%)

Conferences (5%): Conferences are an opportunity to meet with me one-on-one to discuss your progress and get feedback on your work. There will be **one conference** this semester before your research paper is due (week 9.) **This conference is worth 20 points** and will be graded on your preparedness in the conference, your thoughtful reflection on your progress thus far, your plans for moving forward, etc.

Peer Reviews (5%): We will have **three peer reviews** this semester worth 15 pts. each. We'll have one peer review for each major project. Peer Reviews occur in-class during the rough draft process and are opportunities to hear how our peers respond to and interpret our writing. We'll walk away with feedback on what's working and what's not, and with an idea of how to continue our drafts.

If you miss a peer review, you earn a zero. However, you may schedule (on your own) a make-up peer review with a classmate for partial credit. You must complete this and e-mail me proof of the Peer Review within one week. Please e-mail me if you think you will miss a Peer Review.

GRADING PERCENTAGES

Major Projects/Assignments	% of Course Grade	Due
Project 1: The Narrative Argument	15%	September 27, 2019
Project 2: Composing Arguments		
● Annotated Bibliography w/ research evaluation	15%	November 11, 2019
● Researched Argument for Change	20%	November 22, 2019
Project 3: The Radical Revision & Rhetorical Addendum	20%	December 13, 2019
Minor Assignments	% of Course Grade	Due
Reflective Writing	10%	Ongoing
Homework & Quizzes	10%	Ongoing
In-Class Engagement	10%	Ongoing

A 100-97.5% **A 97.4-93%** **A- 92.9-90%** **B+ 89.9-87.5%** **B 87.4-83%** **B- 82.9-80%**
C+ 79-77.5% **C 77.4-73%** **C- 72.9-70%** **D 69.9-60%** **F 59.9% & below**

Note: Although small assignments are worth less than major projects, it is still important to show up to class prepared and ready to participate. Failure to do so can result in a drop in overall grade or course failure.

COMPLETION & COURSE CREDIT

You must earn a C (73%) or higher to fulfill the university's English 101 requirement. Students who do not earn at least a C grade must retake the course. Furthermore, you must complete all major projects, and the required drafts, to earn a C.

MIDTERM GRADES

In English 101, students receive a midterm letter grade based on the work of the first seven weeks of the course, which may be viewed through PatriotWeb as soon as it's recorded. The purpose of this grade is to help students find out how well they are doing in the first half of the course in order to make any adjustments necessary for success in the course. The work in the second half of the semester may be weighted more heavily, and so the midterm grade is not meant to predict the final course grade.

GRADING CRITERIA

Detailed rubrics for major projects, minor assignments, and writing homework will be available on Blackboard and will be handed out and discussed in class. However, the general grading criteria for your major projects is as follows:

A **“C” level grade** (70-79%) denotes competent college-level writing and achievement. The writer responds to the specified rhetorical situation: he or she meets, to some degree, all the assignment requirements, and employs some key strategies for communicating their ideas to the targeted audience. The essay has a central focus, presents some support, and moves from point to point in an orderly fashion; sentence-level errors do not significantly prevent comprehension. Essays that do not meet these criteria will not earn a “C.”

A **“B” level grade** (80-89%) highlights a strong example of college writing and thinking. In addition to meeting the “C” level requirements, the writer goes further in some way(s): he or she demonstrates some insight into the “gray areas” of the topic, provides original or very thorough support that is tightly woven into the overall argument, and/or creates prose that reads smoothly at both the sentence and paragraph levels. The essay has few sentence-level errors and/or may demonstrate a lively voice or style.

An **“A” level grade** (90-100%) marks an essay that engages the reader in a provocative conversation. Even more than in a “B” essay, the writer anticipates and responds to possible reader questions, uses a wide range of supporting evidence, structures arguments and analyses to create a fluid reading experience, provides unexpected insights, and/or uses language with care and facility.

“D” and “F” level essays do not meet the basic expectations of the assignment. The author should plan to revise such an essay (after a conference with me) for a new grade.

POLICIES

PARTICIPATION GRADE (5%)

Writing is not a sidelines event. You have to be here in an engaged, lively way in order to learn—napping, texting, Facebooking, working on assignments for other classes (etc.) are ways of not being here and will lower your participation grade. You have the opportunity to earn up to **50 Participation Points**:

- **You earn 35 points** by being present and prepared. We meet about 35 times this semester, so 1 class = 1 point. If you miss class, are more than 15 minutes late, or are significantly unprepared, you earn a zero for the day.
- **You earn 15 points** by *engaging* in class. These are given at my discretion. For example, you can earn 13-15 points if I see you regularly leaping in and making strong contributions, both out loud and via Blackboard responses. However, you’ll earn **5 points** (or lower) if you are frequently late, unprepared, inattentive, or disruptive. Any serious breach of good conduct may cause the loss of all participation credit.

I will post your Participation Grade on Blackboard every two weeks.

Absences: Your first two absences will be dropped at the end of the semester. All other absences (except those resulting from mandated government or military service) result in a zero for participation.

Tardiness: In an emergency, I would rather you come late than not at all. If you have a bad day/get a flat tire/drop your computer in a puddle, **but** you can make it to class 15 minutes late, please come. It is easier to catch you up on those lost minutes as opposed to an entire class session.

Lateness due to Rare, Uncontrollable Natural Disasters will not usually incur penalties. However, it is your responsibility to provide explanation/documentation of such occurrences. A busy workweek isn’t rare, and computer problems aren’t natural disasters. If you miss a class without reason and without documentation, you lose your daily participation credit. Additionally, chronic tardiness or absence will result in a conference with me and will lower your participation grade. If you know (or even have an inkling) you might be severely late or absent, shoot me an e-mail and we’ll discuss your situation.

Technology/Cell Phones

If you’re engaged with your flashy, buzzy gadget in a virtual space not directly related to class issues, **you**

are not here, and you may be distracting your neighbor from being here, too. The technologies we use in class are important tools for our research and writing, but they are a privilege. When you're not using your laptop or tablet for class work, shut the lid or turn it off. The same goes for your cell phone, which should generally be turned on vibrate or in your bag (not on your desk, in your lap, or in your pocket.) If you can't mostly manage this level of mind over machine, you'll lose participation points. If you require technology for learning support needs, please see me after class.

Submitting Your Work

Everything is due no later than (NLT) the due date listed on the syllabus and Blackboard. All writing assignments (major) are always due no later than 11:59 p.m. on the due date. All major projects should be typed using **Times New Roman, 12 pt.**, and **double-spaced** with **1 or 1.25" margins**. These should be submitted on Blackboard via the submission page. E-mail if you have an emergency or question.

Late Work

Late major projects will lose **5% of their points for each calendar day that they are late**. This means that after 3 days, your project would lose 15% off of the grade you earn. For example, if you get a 95 on the paper, you automatically lose 15% for the three days it was late, making the final grade an 80 (B-). In the case of a rare, serious emergency, please contact me to discuss the situation. **Note:** Late-work penalties cannot be changed through revision.

Late minor assignments will receive a zero (0) if they are more than 24 hours late.

Crisis Pass

You get three (3) Crisis Passes this semester, meaning you may submit a major project *one calendar day late* without penalty, without permission, and without offering an explanation. These are non-refundable. Once a pass is used, it cannot be taken back to be used for another assignment. To use, simply write CRISIS PASS on the top of your essay before turning it in on Blackboard. I won't automatically give late work a pass, so you must write it on the top of your project OR email within 24 hours of turning it in (if you forgot to write it on your paper.)

Revision Policy

Projects 1-2 may be revised for a possible new grade. To complete an optional revision:

1. **E-mail me to schedule a Revision Conference within one week of getting your grade.** Come to this conference having read all feedback, and prepared to discuss your revision plan. If you e-mail me after two weeks, you've missed your opportunity and your original grade cannot be revised. Since grades and feedback are delivered via Blackboard, ***this policy is applicable even if you weren't in class/town when projects were returned.***
2. **We will set a new due date for the revision.** This date will be within two weeks of our original conference, and will depend on where we are in the semester, what major projects we are currently working on, and the amount of revision you plan to do, etc.
3. **Turn in your revised essay on Blackboard with a brief, reflective paragraph** describing the changes made and how they better solve the writing problems of the overall project. (This paragraph should be about 200 words.)

Your revisions must show *significant change*—think ***at least 15-20% of the document's text***. Otherwise, they will be returned with no grade change. However, revised essays must still retain the original text's topic and approach.

CLASS CANCELLATIONS & INCLEMENT WEATHER

If the weather is bad, check the GMU website at <https://www2.gmu.edu/> and look for a scrolling banner announcing delays or closings. You can also sign up for [Mason Alert](#) to have university closures and other critical information e-mailed or texted to you.

If the university is closed for weather or other emergencies, check your Mason e-mail and Blackboard for instructions and schedule modifications. **You may be asked to complete an online class or activities that will help us stay on track.**

COMPOSITION STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another source without giving that source credit. Writers give credit through the use of accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or end notes; a simple listing of books, articles, and websites is not sufficient.

This class will include direct instruction in strategies for handling sources as part of our curriculum. However, students in composition classes must also take responsibility for understanding and practicing the basic principles listed below.

To avoid plagiarism, meet the expectations of a US Academic Audience, give their readers a chance to investigate the issue further, and make credible arguments, writers **must**

- put quotation marks around, *and* give an in-text citation for, any sentences or distinctive phrases (even very short, 2- or 3-word phrases) that writers copy directly from any outside source: a book, a textbook, an article, a website, a newspaper, a song, a baseball card, an interview, an encyclopedia, a CD, a movie, etc.
- *completely rewrite*—not just switch out a few words—any information they find in a separate source and wish to summarize or paraphrase for their readers, *and also* give an in-text citation for that paraphrased information
- give an in-text citation for any facts, statistics, or opinions which the writers learned from outside sources (or which they just happen to *know*) and which are not considered “common knowledge” in the target audience (this may require new research to locate a credible outside source to cite)
- give a *new* in-text citation for *each element* of information—that is, do not rely on a single citation at the end of a paragraph, because that is not usually sufficient to inform a reader clearly of how much of the paragraph comes from an outside source.

Writers must also include a Works Cited or References list at the end of their essay, providing full bibliographic information for every source cited in their essay.

It is expected that students adhere to the George Mason University Honor Code as it relates to integrity regarding coursework and grades: “To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal and/or lie in matters related to academic work.” More information about the Honor Code, including definitions of cheating, lying, and plagiarism, can be found at the Office of Academic Integrity website at <http://oai.gmu.edu>

Mason’s Composition Program recognizes that appropriately attributing sources is a learning process. This class will include direct instruction in source integration, documentation, and citation strategies in a range of rhetorical situations, and follows the CWPA Best Practices for Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism. Instructors in the Composition Program support the Mason Honor Code, which requires them to report suspected instances of deliberate plagiarism to the Mason Honor Committee.

GETTING HELP

Emailing Me

If you're stuck on something, please ask for assistance! I would rather solve a small problem with you early on than try to work through a big sticky mess later. If you have a question, please **check the Syllabus or Blackboard**, since they both have a lot of information, but then please contact me. You may physically come to my office hours or set up a conference, or you may **e-mail me** with questions about class at bknight2@gmu.edu. Please include:

- Put "ENGH 101" in the subject line
- Be as specific as possible
- Include a greeting and sign your name!
- Allow at least 24-48 hours for response.

Visit the University Writing Center

For additional help at any phase in your writing process, visit the University Writing Center (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>), located in Robinson B 213. The Writing Center is one of the best resources you will find on campus. They have an outstanding website that offers a wealth of online resources for student writers. You can schedule a 45-minute appointment with a trained tutor; you can even obtain assistance with papers by visiting the [online writing center](#), but please plan ahead and allow yourself at least 2-3 days to receive a response. Make an appointment via their website.

Use the Mason Library

Librarians in the Fenwick and Johnson Center libraries (and at the libraries on our Arlington and Prince Williams campuses) are available to help you with your research. Show up with your assignment and specific questions or assistance needs or [contact the library](#) by phone or online. The [library's website](#) offers tutorials and research resources and databases that we'll use throughout the semester. Bookmark the library's website on your computer and take advantage of all the resources and assistance available there!

Resources for Multilingual Writers:

[ESL Writing Support at the Mason Writing Center](#)

Workshops and Tutoring at the Language Resource Center in Mason's Global Center. To register for reading, speaking and writing support: <https://intomason.mywconline.com/>

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION & RESOURCES

Accommodation Policy for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability who needs academic accommodations, I am happy to provide them. Please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS and do not take effect until I receive your ODS accommodations sheet.

GMU Nondiscrimination Policy

George Mason University is committed to providing equal opportunity and an educational and work environment free from any discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or age. GMU shall adhere to all applicable state and federal equal opportunity/affirmative action statutes and regulations.

Important Dates

The full academic calendar and final exam schedule is available through the registrar's website, registrar.gmu.edu, but here are some key deadlines:

- Last Day to Add a Course: September 3, 2019
- Last Day to Drop a Course: September 9, 2019
- Selective Withdrawal Period: September 18 – September 20, 2019

Counseling and Psychological Services: caps.gmu.edu

CAPS offers free counseling and academic workshops. Same day appointments are available. Services are provided by a staff of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors. CAPS individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs are designed to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance.

Office of Diversity, Inclusion & Multicultural Education: odime.gmu.edu

The Office of Diversity Programs and Services supports our diverse student and faculty population. The office is committed to the success of all members of the Mason Community. Throughout the year, it sponsors a variety of programs for students and faculty. It works specifically with African Heritage, Hispanic/Latino, Asian/Pacific American, American Indian, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning populations.

Mandatory Reporting:

As a faculty member, the instructor for this course is designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as the Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-3686, 33686 on campus) or Counseling and Psychological Services (703-993-2380, 32380 on campus). You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 (38730 on campus) or emailing cde@gmu.edu.

NOTES

I will be out of the country for two weeks from October 26 until November 9. We will have class like normal, except assignments will be online and you can work together groups, if you wish. You will still be able to reach me during this period, however, note as I will be 14 hours ahead of you, my response time will be slower.