

**English 1105: Introduction to College Composition:  
Critical Reading, Writing, and Thinking**

**Instructor Name**  
**Instructor Email**  
**Office Location**  
**Office Phone**  
**Office Hours**

**Texts Needed for This Class**

*Our Custom Textbook:* Full publication information TBA

Virginia Tech Department of English. *Writing at Virginia Tech: Written, Spoken and Visual Composition 2014-2015*. Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2014.

**Course Description**

(Refer also to Chapter One in *Writing at Virginia Tech*)

English 1105 lays the foundation for the full-year composition sequence by helping you understand and practice writing as a process that involves multiple cycles of conceiving and reconceiving ideas and thus shaping and reshaping papers and presentations. The course focuses primarily on intellectually rigorous and complex non-fictional and fictional essays.

After completing English 1105, you should be able to successfully meet the outcomes listed by the Council of Writing Program Administrators in their Outcomes Statement. The WPA Outcomes are discussed in Chapter One of *Writing at Virginia Tech* and are also found on the inside cover of the textbook.

Our class theme is writing through popular culture, meaning we will be examining readings that discuss different aspects of popular culture and exploring what makes these differences important and significant. We will also challenge your concepts of the world around you, encompassing race, gender, class, education, among other topics, by dissecting and analyzing films, advertisements, web postings, and other forms of printed and visual media.

**Your Work in This Class**

**Journals** will be assigned almost every day. Journals can be of two types: in-class writing assignments or take-home writing assignments. We will often begin each class period with a short in-class writing assignment that will mostly reflect ideas about the previous night's reading assignment; often, these in-class writings will be in the form of quizzes of about the assigned readings. Take-home writing assignments may reflect your reading assignments or may take the form of Scholar Forum postings. All drafts of major assignments are also included as journal grades.

All journals will be graded on a "check" scale—you receive a "check" if you do the journal and do it well, a "check minus" if you half-heartedly complete the journal, and a "zero" if no effort at all is present in your journal. These checks translate to a ten-point scale: a check is worth ten points, and a check minus is worth five points.

**Essays** are also a component of this class. You will be assigned three essays (a personal narrative, a rhetorical analysis essay, and a persuasive essay), with each assignment having a length requirement of five typed pages. Essays will be discussed in greater detail as their due dates approach.

Julie Mengert 4/29/14 8:34 PM

**Comment [1]:** Insert a description of your course theme; here is an example from my theme, which is obviously popular culture.

Julie Mengert 4/29/14 8:34 PM

**Comment [2]:** Sara, Steve, and Kathy use a ten-point scale for all informal work; feel free to use the 10-point scale instead.

## Oral Presentations

Oral presentations are a requirement of all English composition classes. You will be doing one group presentation near the end of the semester. We will practice and review oral presentations and how to present effectively. Your presentation grade will count as five percent of your final grade, and it will focus on an aspect of popular culture, for a total of 15-20 minutes in length. More extensive information about oral presentations is in *Writing at Virginia Tech* and will be discussed more in detail as they draw closer.

## Requirements

I firmly believe that the more you write the better writer you become. Therefore, we will be writing daily in this class. I am also a strong believer in revision, so we will be doing a lot of drafting as well, including in-class drafting and peer workshoping. Come to class prepared to write, participate, listen, share, encourage, etc., as I prefer to have our class an open environment, in which we \*all\* do a great deal of conversing.

## Scholar

You will also be required to use Scholar in this course (<http://scholar.vt.edu>). On Scholar, I will post our class syllabus, as well as your major assignments and handouts throughout the semester; your course grades will also be recorded on Scholar throughout the semester. I will always announce, however, any work that will be due and posted on Scholar.

## Documentation

You must also be able to use correct documentation and format that meets the standards of college and professional writing (such as the standards of the Modern Language Association). All submitted pieces of writing should be typed, double-spaced, in Times New Roman font size 12 with margins of one inch, or I will deduct points from your work. You also must staple your essay in the top left corner. Further, if you have any citations in your paper you **must** have a Works Cited page. You must also have in-text citations. It is important to give credit to the sources you are using, and having correct documentation is also helpful in avoiding the issue of plagiarism.

## Late Work and Attendance Issues

I do not accept late journals, except with an excuse arranged before the due date; if you do not speak to me before the journal is due about missing class, it will receive a zero. If you choose to submit a formal essay (the personal narrative, rhetorical analysis essay, or persuasive essay) late, you will receive a letter-grade (10-point) deduction for every day that it is late.

If you have a problem completing your work for any reason, please come talk to me before the assignment is due—I am more than willing to work with you if you are having problems for whatever reason, but if I don't know that you're having a problem, I cannot help you. An assignment is considered late if it is not submitted by class meeting time on the day it is due.

Also, while there is no attendance policy in this class, missing class negatively affects your grade; however, I do take attendance each day and make a note if you miss class. Missing class results in missed journals, which lowers your grade. Further, because this is a writing class, if you are not present for workshoping, journals, and our class discussions, your major assignments' grades are negatively affected.

## Courtesy and Professionalism

I also expect courtesy to be used in this classroom. We will be doing a lot of discussion and group work, and we may touch on different subjects from which disagreements may arise, and that is fine; however, I

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Comment [3]: Or your course theme

will not tolerate any student being disrespectful to another student or myself. If we keep comments and discussions scholarly and respectful, we should not have any problems. This also applies to emailing me—email is the easiest way to contact me; however, please only email me for pertinent matters. For example, I will not respond to an email asking for the day's assignment if you had an unexcused absence for that day. If you do not receive a response from me, assume that it is a question to which you should already know the answer or that could be found in the syllabus.

### **Electronics Use**

Another courtesy issue involves laptop and cellphone use; when we are drafting, if you prefer to bring in a laptop to work, that is fine, though I prefer you to have a hard copy for your partners to workshop. That is the only time that having a laptop open in class is acceptable. Once class begins, please put your laptops away...no exceptions. This rule also extends to cellphones—please put your cellphone away as soon as class begins; this means no texting or surfing the web on your phone during class.

### **Disability Accommodation**

Please speak with me if you have any disabilities that may affect your work in this class in any manner so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Information can also be found at the Services for Students with Disabilities website at <http://www.ssd.vt.edu/>.

### **Principles of Community**

This course adheres to Virginia Tech's Principles of Community. If you have any questions, please speak with me or consult the Principles of Community website at <http://www.diversity.vt.edu/principles-of-community/principles.html>. A copy of the Principles can also be found in the inside cover of *Writing at Virginia Tech*.

### **Honor System**

The Virginia Tech Honor System Constitution sets forth the vital principle that "Every student has the right to live in an academic environment that is free from the injustices caused by any form of intellectual dishonesty." Therefore, the Virginia Tech Honor Code will be upheld in this course for all work submitted. All students are responsible for reading and abiding by the concepts, policies, and guidelines in the Honor System website at [www.honorsystem.vt.edu](http://www.honorsystem.vt.edu). Thus, any suspected infringements on the Honor Code will be reported immediately.

### **The Writing Center**

The English Department has a writing center, which is a resource available to students that helps with the writing process. It is located on the second floor of Newman Library, and the phone number is 231-5436. Its services are available by appointment only, and the tutoring is free. The Writing Center is not an editing service, but rather a place to go to help you become a better writer. The Writing Center is helpful for any stage of the writing process—invention, brainstorming, organization, thesis development, or final editing, for example.

### **Grades**

All of the work in this class will be evaluated on a 100-point scale, with an A being 100-94; A- 93-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-84; B- 83-80; C+ 79-77; C 76-74; C- 73-70; D+ 69-67; D 66-64; D- 63-60; and F 59 and below.

Essay One/Personal Narrative: 25%

Essay Two/Rhetorical Analysis Essay: 25%

Essay Three/Persuasive Essay: 25%

Journal Grades (peer workshopping, drafts, in-class writings, take-home journals, Scholar responses, etc.— basically any writing that is not a formal essay): 20%

Group Oral Presentation: 5%

### Course Calendar

**\*\*Please note that this is only a rough outline of the semester's plans, and dates are subject to change.**

Informal writing assignments (and some out of class informal assignments) will always be given in class and not reflected in the calendar. Also, always bring the books that we will use that day to class.

CT=*Custom Text*

WVT=*Writing at Virginia Tech*

Please include your daily calendar here; remember to only have one week (three full class dates) of "alternative instruction"—this would include conferences, showing films, and oral presentations.