

ENGL 1101: Academic Approaches to *Stranger Things*

College Composition I, Section A 3 credits.

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Instructor Information

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General Course Information

Description

A composition course focusing on skills required for effective writing in a variety of contexts, with emphasis on exposition, analysis, and argumentation, and also including introductory use of a variety of research skills. Develops analytical reading and writing skills through the investigation of methods used in cultural and literary studies and the application of those methods to specific texts.

Course Theme

In this section of the course, you'll investigate *Stranger Things* (2016-2025) which was a massive success for Netflix, with more than 1.2 billion views as of December 2025. Along with that came considerable academic attention to the show with topics like nostalgia, technology, use of music, gender, and sexuality all explored in various journals and academic publications. Our section of 1101 will look at the academic writing on *Stranger Things* as well as watch a representative sample of the episodes.

ENGL 1102 ENGL COMPOSITION I

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Writing area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I write effectively in different contexts?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcomes:

- Students will communicate effectively in writing, demonstrating clear organization and structure, using appropriate grammar and writing conventions.
- Students will appropriately acknowledge the use of materials from original sources.
- Students will adapt their written communications to purpose and audience.
- Students will analyze and draw informed inferences from written texts.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Critical Thinking
- Information Literacy
- Persuasion

Course Outcomes

CATEGORY	LEARNING OUTCOMES
<p>Rhetorical Knowledge</p> <p>Rhetorical knowledge focuses on the available means of persuasion, considering factors such as context, audience, purpose, genre, medium, and conventions.</p>	<p>Explore and use with purpose key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of written texts. These concepts include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhetorical situation: purpose, audience, context • Genre • Argumentation: controlling purpose, evidence <p>Gain experience reading and composing in several genres to understand how genre conventions shape and are shaped by readers' and writers' practices and purposes</p> <p>Develop facility in responding to a variety of situations and contexts calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium, and/or structure</p>

<p>Critical Thinking, Writing, and Composing</p> <p>Critical thinking is the ability to analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, sources, situations, and texts.</p>	<p>Use composing and reading for inquiry, learning, critical thinking, and communicating in various rhetorical contexts</p> <p>Read a diverse range of written texts, attending especially to relationships between assertion and evidence, to patterns of organization, to the interplay between verbal and nonverbal elements, and to how these features function for different audiences and situations</p> <p>Use strategies—such as interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design/redesign—to compose texts that integrate the writer's ideas with those from appropriate sources</p>
<p>Processes</p> <p>Writers use multiple strategies, or composing processes, to conceptualize, develop, finalize, and distribute projects. Composing processes are recursive and adaptable in relation to different rhetorical situations.</p>	<p>Understand that writing is a process</p> <p>Develop a writing project through multiple stages</p> <p>Develop flexible strategies for reading, drafting, reviewing, collaborating, revising, rewriting, rereading, and editing</p> <p>Use composing processes and tools as a means to discover and reconsider ideas</p> <p>Experience the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes</p> <p>Learn to give and to act on productive feedback to works in progress</p> <p>Reflect on the development of composing practices and how those practices influence their work</p>

<p>Modes, Media, and Technology</p> <p>Composition occurs in multiple modes: Written, Oral, Visual, Electronic, and Nonverbal (WOVEN). Likewise, composition uses a range of technologies and media to develop and disseminate its messages.</p>	<p>Develop an understanding of the ways in which rhetorical concepts can be transferred to multimodal artifacts</p>
<p>Knowledge of Conventions</p> <p>Conventions are the formal rules and informal guidelines that define genres, and in so doing, shape readers' and writers' perceptions of correctness or appropriateness.</p>	<p>Develop knowledge of linguistic structures, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling, through practice in composing and revising</p> <p>Learn common formats and/or design features for different kinds of written texts</p> <p>Explore the concepts of intellectual property (such as fair use and copyright) that motivate documentation conventions</p>

Required Course Materials

- [A physical notebook](#)/pen for taking notes in class.
 - The bookstore has some on order for this class or you can choose your own.
- The app [Focus Friend](#).
- [The Bedford Bookshelf](#)
 - This is our only online textbook. We will be using *Writer/Designer* within this package of materials.
- Printed copies of articles on *Stranger Things*

Preparation

In order to keep up on reading and be prepared for discussion there are low-stakes quizzes for each reading assignment. They will be posted on Canvas, and may be completed outside of class. These quizzes are one category on our labor grading policy. If you have a 90% or above at the end of the semester you have successfully fulfilled that category. You may take each quiz twice and your lowest grade will be dropped.

Grading Policy:

Summary: This term your grades will be determined based on the labor you put into the class, and that labor is defined in this contract. Your grade is based exclusively on the satisfactory completion of the assigned work this semester. You are evaluated on the sustained effort you put into the **process** of learning rather than **only** your final deliverables.

If you meet the expectations of the labor-based grading contract, you will be assured an A for the semester. If you fail to meet the base expectations your final grade will be reduced. This doesn't mean the class is an "easy A," but instead an expression of your consistent effort and labor.

Assignments: Your final course grade will be determined by seven units of class labor:

- Course material engagement (graded as quizzes on Canvas)
- Course engagement (participation)
- Process documents submitted on Canvas
- Workshop drafts (workshops **cannot be made up** because others rely on your feedback)
- Final artifact submissions
- Artifact revision and explanation for final portfolio

Description of Graded Components

Guaranteed A Grade: To earn the baseline of an A, you must put forth a solid effort in the class and finish assigned coursework on time.

- **Course engagement:** You are expected to attend class regularly. Your engagement is tracked daily in your journal. Your engagement is tracked by Dr. Dean-Ruzicka. In general, I expect students to speak up in full class discussion at least once a week and to avoid using phones or laptop distractions. I keep record of this along with attendance in Canvas.
- **Group engagement:** After your discussion facilitation I will ask you to complete a survey rating your group members, On a scale of 5, 4-5 points is complete, 3-4 points loses you one step, and 1-2 points a full letter grade.
- **Material engagement:** You are expected to complete assigned readings and watch the films. The books & films are an essential part of your success in the class. You need to purchase print copies of our texts and bring them to class. There are also low-stakes quizzes that offer two attempts so you can show the labor you have done with our materials.
- **Process work:** You must complete all the low-stakes activities assigned as part of a course module. These may include reading responses, brainstorms, and analysis documents. You are expected to complete these on time, but may complete late assignments up to the due date of the final module project.
- **Drafts & workshops:** You submit all assigned drafts in order to receive feedback from your peers and professor. From these drafts you also complete revisions on

higher order concerns including structure, argument, evidence, and design. Workshops and drafts cannot be made up.

- **Final Essays:** You submit final drafts assigned for each module, meeting the submission deadline and attending to the specific criteria for success on our assignment sheets.
- **Portfolio Revision:** You must revise an artifact and write a 250 word explanation of how your purpose, audience, and context were impacted in one additional revision for your final portfolio. Drafts of workshop draft, final draft, revised draft, and documentation must be uploaded in your final portfolio.

Grade Reductions:

Missing labor elements will negatively impact your grade.* A “step” here refers to a reduction of a +/- letter grade. Georgia Tech does not do +/- grading for final grades, so it’s possible to lose a step and still receive an A. But getting multiple grade reductions will move you to B or C territory.

- **Attendance:** You may miss up to 4 classes without any penalty. You may make up two additional absences by doing reading responses (see Canvas assignment for more details). Absence 0-4—no penalty. Absences 5-6 with no reading response are –1 step each. More than 7 absences will each accrue a step of a letter grade penalty each.
- **Engagement:** 3-4 weeks with extensive distractions marked or no participation will drop your letter grade by one step. 5+ weeks will drop your score by a full letter grade.
- **Group engagement:** Full credit is receiving all 4-5 star reviews from group members. An average of 3 stars will equal one step reduction, and an average of 1-2 stars will equal a full grade reduction.
- **Materials:** If you fail to complete quizzes, take physical notes, or bring your books to class your grade in this category will be reduced. Failure to bring materials (books and/or notebooks & pens) more than 3x a semester will reduce your grade by one step. Quizzes have a 1 week grace period and you may take 2 tries to complete them. You can drop one missing quiz. A 90%+ (A) in your quizzes is satisfactory. Grades below this will reduce your grade by half a letter grade per B/C/D etc. (So if you have a 70-79% on your final quiz score, your letter grade goes from an A to a B).
- **Process work:** 2 missing documents per module will result in a 1 step reduction (A to A-). 3+ per module will result in a full grade reduction (A to B). Process documents may be submitted late, up to the point of final project submission.
- **Drafts & workshops:** Each draft that is ‘missing’ or fails to meet basic requirements laid out by the assignment on Canvas will result in a reduction of one half step of a letter grade. **No late submissions** of drafts or workshop feedback.
- **Final essays:** You have a one week grace period on essays. If they fail to meet basic guidelines you may revise and resubmit by the new deadline Dr. Ruzicka offers. If you submit an essay that does not meet expectations (as defined on the assignment sheet) you may revise and resubmit by the stated deadline.

- If it still fails to meet expectations your grade will be reduced by a step of a letter grade. If you choose not to revise you will lose a full letter grade. Failing to turn in any of the major projects will cap your grade at a C, failing to turn in 2 final projects will result in an F.
- Revisions often go best if they are also accompanied by a visit to my office or the Comm Lab. The final portfolio does not offer the option for revise and resubmit, because the deadlines for final grades are very strict.
- **Portfolio artifact revision:** To receive an A, you must revise one of your final artifacts and submit it with your final portfolio. You need to upload your first draft, final draft, revised draft, and explanation of final changes (clearly labeled) in order to receive an A. You only need to revise one of the three artifacts.
- **Portfolio:** failing to meet minimum guidelines on your portfolio will result in a full letter grade reduction. Incomplete portfolios will limit your grade to the maximum of a C in the class. Missing portfolios cap your grade at a D. No late submissions or revisions possible on final portfolios.

Course Policies

Attendance and/or Participation

Attendance and participation are essential to success in courses in the Writing and Communication Program. Because of this, you are expected to attend class in person. Not attending a scheduled class session in-person results in an absence. There are no excused absences besides institute approved absences (noted by a letter from the Office of Student Services or Athletics). You can always make up absences beyond the allowed number with reading responses (see labor grading sheet for more info).

There may be times when you cannot or should not attend class, such as if you are not feeling well, have an interview, or have family responsibilities. Attendance is a portion of your course engagement, see more below.

If you are absent for a class session, you are responsible for finding out what you may have missed while absent from class and what policy the instructor has for making up missed work.

Student Use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom

I expect phones to stay out of sight. We will all start our Focus Friend at the beginning of class to keep distractions to a minimum.

Laptops

The course modules will let you know what days you need a laptop. If we aren't actively writing, your laptop should be in your bag.

Late policy

If you are more than 15 minutes late it is considered an absence.

Participation/Engagement

WCP requires participation be part of your grade. In a discussion-based course, engagement with the course materials and other participants in the class is of primary importance. You must speak up in class at least once a week to receive full participation credit. Evaluation and grading will be tracked by Dr. Dean-Ruzicka on Canvas.

Masks

I cannot require masks, but do suggest you wear them if you are feeling ill for any reason. Why pass around that cold if you don't have to? I'll wear a mask if I'm under the weather.

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. [Review Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the [student Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class. Recording of this class or your peers is not permitted.

Use of Generative AI

This course is about growing in your ability to write, communicate, and think critically. Generative AI agents such as ChatGPT, DALL-E 2, and others present great opportunities for learning and for communicating. However, AI cannot learn or communicate for you, and so cannot meet the course requirements for you.

In this course, using generative AI tools in the work of the course (including assignments, discussions, ungraded work, etc.) is allowed only in instances specified by your instructor.

As with any technology, generative AI tools need to be used critically and according to academic and professional expectations. Thus, in instances in which your instructor allows generative AI tool use, you are expected to adhere to these principles:

- **Responsibility:** You are responsible for the work you submit. In instances in which your instructor allows generative AI tool use, this means that any work you submit should be your own, with any AI assistance appropriately disclosed (see “Transparency” below) and any AI-generated content appropriately cited (see “Documentation” below). This also means you must ensure that any factual statements produced by a generative AI tool are true and that any references or citations produced by the AI tool are correct.
- **Transparency:** Any generative AI tools you use in the work of the course should be clearly acknowledged as indicated by the instructor. This work includes not only when you use content directly produced by a generative AI tool but also when you use a generative AI tool in the process of composition (for example, for brainstorming, outlining, or translation purposes).
- **Documentation:** You should cite any content generated by an AI tool as you would when quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing ideas, text, images, or other content made by other people.

Using generative AI tools at times not allowed by the instructor will be considered an infraction of the Georgia Tech Honor Code subject to investigation by the Office of Student Integrity. Likewise, using generative AI tools in the course without adhering to these principles will be considered an infraction of the Georgia Tech Honor Code subject to investigation by the Office of Student Integrity.

Course Completion

Failure to complete any component of the course, including projects, assignments, and stages of projects or assignments, may result in failure of the course, as determined by the instructor of the course in consultation with the Director of the Writing and Communication Program.

Syllabus Modifications

This syllabus may be modified as the semester progresses to meet course outcomes and address the needs of members of the class.

Campus Resources for Students

Student Well-Being:

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A [comprehensive list](#) of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being ([student-resource-guide \(gatech.edu\)](#))

Students with Temporary/Emergency Needs

Sometimes students have needs that affect their performance in class, but have nothing to do with class itself. If you find you need clothing for job interviews, food between paydays, temporary housing, or interest-free emergency loans, GT will help you through [STAR Services \(Students' Temporary Assistance & Resources\)](#), which is part of Student Life. **There is no shame in availing yourself to these services.** Helping our students meet all of their needs (in and out of the classroom) is part of what being the GT community is all about.

Undergraduate Student Academic Success Resources:

Academic Support: Academic Success and Advising (a unit in the Office of Undergraduate Education & Student Success) provides free support for your courses. Students can attend scheduled supplemental review (PLUS) sessions, stop by Drop-In Tutoring, or schedule a one-on-one appointment through Knack. To explore what options work best for you, please visit us online at [success.gatech.edu/tutoring](#), email us at tutoring@gatech.edu, or come see us at Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons, Suite 283.