

ENGL 1101: Digital Spaces and the Public Sphere

Section D1 - Monday/Wednesday - 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM | 3 Credit Hours - Fall 2026

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ENGL 1101 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 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 Topic:

Over the past few decades, digital spaces have flourished into a myriad of ways for people to communicate with one another. Whether it be online chat rooms, social media, YouTube videos, Twitch Streams, Discord servers, Roblox lobbies, or any other means, so much of our access to the world and to each other is increasingly mediated by new technologies. This course argues that the internet has inherited the public sphere. The internet has become more than just a means to watch silly cat videos and keep in touch with friends from school; it is now the staging ground for ongoing sociopolitical discussions about current events, as well as “free speech” and who has a right to it.

ENGL 1101 Learning Outcomes

CATEGORY	LEARNING OUTCOMES
Rhetorical Knowledge Rhetorical knowledge focuses on the available means of persuasion, considering factors such as context, audience, purpose, genre, medium, and conventions.	Explore and use with purpose key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of written texts. These concepts include: • Rhetorical situation: purpose, audience, context • Genre • Argumentation: controlling purpose, evidence Gain experience reading and composing in several genres to understand how genre conventions shape and are shaped by readers' and writers' practices and purposes 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
Critical Thinking, Writing, and Composing Critical thinking is the ability to analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, sources, situations, and texts.	Use composing and reading for inquiry, learning, critical thinking, and communicating in various rhetorical contexts 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 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
Processes 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.	Understand that writing is a process Develop a writing project through multiple stages Develop flexible strategies for reading, drafting, reviewing, collaborating, revising, rewriting, rereading, and editing Use composing processes and tools as a means to discover and reconsider ideas Experience the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes Learn to give and to act on productive feedback to works in progress Reflect on the development of composing practices and how those practices influence their work
Modes, Media, and Technology 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.	Develop an understanding of the ways in which rhetorical concepts can be transferred to multimodal artifacts

Knowledge of Conventions Conventions are the formal rules and informal guidelines that define genres, and in so doing, shape readers' and writers' perceptions of correctness or appropriateness.	Develop knowledge of linguistic structures, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling, through practice in composing and revising Learn common formats and/or design features for different kinds of written texts Explore the concepts of intellectual property (such as fair use and copyright) that motivate documentation conventions
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Required Readings:

- *The Everyday Writer* 8th Edition, Andrea Lunsford - included with The Bedford Bookshelf. Access codes for The Bedford Bookshelf are available at the GT Barnes and Noble bookstore. You can also purchase and access the textbook directly through [MacMillan Publishing](#).
- The WOVENText Open Educational Resource (OER): freely available at <https://woventext.lmc.gatech.edu>
- Additional Readings will be available on canvas

Grading (% of Final Grade): Traditional Grading

Participation - 20%

Project 0 - 5%

Project 1 - 15%

Project 2 - 20% (Written Proposal - 5%)

Project 3 - 15%

Final Portfolio - 20%

Assignments:

Project 0 - Common First Week Letter (500 words):

- By the end of the first week of class, you will submit a roughly 500-word letter describing your experience with/your identity as a writer.

Project 1 - Rhetorical Analysis Essay (1000 Words):

- For this assignment, students will select a piece of media that makes an argument and perform a rhetorical analysis of it. You need not agree with the argument being made by the piece of media that you choose; you need only be able to identify specifically the rhetorical strategies at play. This could be a movie, a documentary, an episode from a podcast, a YouTube video, a music video, etc. Consider the following as you write:
 - Get specific about exactly how and where an argument is being made. Logos, pathos, ethos?
 - Cite direct evidence from your piece of media.
 - Evaluate whether you find the rhetoric effective (not the same thing as believing the argument to be correct). Why is it/is it not effective?

Written Proposal (Project 2) (500 Words):

- Leading up to Project 2, students will draft a short proposal outlining their topic and argument for their research essay. Students will be expected to complete and submit these to me before conference meeting to discuss their topic.

Project 2 - Research Essay, (2000 Words):

- The largest assignment for this semester is a more traditional, argumentative research essay on a current issue of the student's choice. Taking what you have learned about argument construction, you will take a position on a current day issue of your choice and use scholarly sources to defend your position (4 outside, peer-reviewed sources minimum). As best as you can, make a strong case for a specific position with respect to your issue (note that it is not necessary for you to agree with the position you take, and that you are allowed to try and performatively support an argument that you disagree with if you would like to). In addition to making your own case, you will be required to briefly respond to an objection to your position, one that is either anticipated or even directly cited from another outside source (this source does not count towards the 4 required in support of your argument).

Project 3 - Campaign Ad (1000 Words):

- The final project for this semester is a three-part multi-media group project, in which you and your fellow classmates will work together to construct a performed presidential platform. For this assignment, one member of your group will be running for the office of President of the United States (or some other suitable public office if preferable). Your platform may be serious (argued in good faith) or humorous (and argued in bad faith) as long as the subject matter remains appropriate for the classroom (in a previous version of this class one student ran on banning ice-cream as a way of reducing murders using a hilariously flimsy correlation/causation angle). Your group will work together to create three items in support of your candidate:
 - A campaign ad video (2 to 3 minutes)
 - A speech (5 to 7 minutes)
 - A piece campaign swag or literature (a button, shirt, hat, tote bag, pamphlet, etc.)

Your group will be presenting these media items during the last two weeks of class, and as such you are required to have them ready by your presentation date. Towards the latter half of the semester, presentation days will be assigned to your groups.

Final Portfolio:

- At the end of the semester, you will compile all your work from the course into a single document (the most revised versions of each item), to be submitted with a short reflection on your work this semester. Consider responding to your expectations from Project 0 and commenting on how you feel you may have grown as a writer over the course of the semester.

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

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 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. Therefore, this course allows a specified number of absences without penalty, regardless of reason. After that, penalties accrue. Exceptions are allowed for Institute-approved absences (for example, those documented by the Registrar) and situations such as hospitalization or family emergencies (documented by the Office of the Dean of Students).

I will communicate with you about how to access materials or make up work you may have missed during your absence or suggest ways to participate in class remotely and/or asynchronously. Students may miss a total of four (4) classes over the course of the semester without penalty. Each additional absence after the allotted number deducts 2% from a student's final grade.

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.

AI Policy

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.

As with any technology, generative AI tools need to be used critically and according to academic and professional expectations. Thus, when using generative AI tools in the work of this course, you are expected to adhere to these principles:

- **Responsibility:** You are responsible for the work you submit. In instances in which you are allowed 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. 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 in the course without adhering to these principles may 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.

Late Assignment Policy

Turn in your assignments on time. If you need an extension, please communicate with me in advance of the deadline listed on the syllabus. Five points (5%) will be deducted from your assignment for every day it is late after the deadline. Missing class is not an excuse to not at least email me your assignment, and if you miss a day on which you were intended to present, then you will be required to make it up when you return.

Revisions

Writing is a process, and oftentimes our first drafts are not as developed as we would like. Students may communicate with me about project revisions, up to the end of the semester. It is highly advisable to turn in a less-than-perfect draft on time rather than to request an extension.