

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title: ENGL 1011—English Composition I

Environmental Writing & Ecological Futures

Sections K3 | M3 | P3

Credits: 3 Credits

Semester & Academic Year: Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Denis Waswa

Email: dwaswa3@gatech.edu

CORE IMPACTS STATEMENT

ENGL 1101: ENGLISH COMPOSITION I

This is a Core IMPACTS course in the [Writing](#) area.

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

This course should guide 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 and 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 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 THEME

In this class, we will focus on writing about the environment. Students will examine the rhetoric, language, and ideas that artists create about the environment and develop written, oral, and visual artifacts that reflect on their interactions with the environment. The goal is to develop students' writing and multimodal communication skills in ways that foster environmental awareness and sensitivity.

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR ENGL 1101

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 Develop an understanding of the ways in which rhetorical concepts can be transferred to multimodal artifacts 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, 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

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 MATERIAL

1. Lunsford, *The Everyday Writer*, 8th ed, included with The Bedford Bookshelf. Access codes for The Bedford Bookshelf are available at the GT Barnes & Noble bookstore. You can also purchase and access the textbook directly through Macmillan Publishing.
2. *The WOVENText* Open Educational Resource; freely available at woventext.lmc.gatech.edu.
3. All other required materials will be provided in class.

GRADING POLICY

In this course, your grade will be determined by a combination of student self-grading and my assessment of the submitted work. I practice this approach to include your input in the learning experience; that is, to reflect on your own written work, assignment goals, and progress in the course. While I will provide you with detailed feedback on class projects, you will submit a one-page self-assessment based on the assignment rubric provided.

Georgia Tech uses the following percentage-to-letter grading scale:

- A: 90-100%
- B: 80-89%
- C: 70-79%
- D: 60-69%
- F: 0-59%

In 300 words, you will score yourself out of 100, summarize your project execution process, what you have done well, and what you could improve upon. The self-assessment documents will help me assess how you are engaging with the assignment

goals. This self-grade document must be uploaded to Canvas within 24 hours after your project submission.

However, I may intervene and change a student's self-assigned grade if it deviates significantly from the rubric or assignment instructions provided.

DESCRIPTION OF GRADED COMPONENTS

Project 0: "Dear Dr. Waswa" Letter (5%, Individual)

In this first-week common assignment, you will compose a 500-word letter that introduces yourself to me, narrates a story about a writing experience, and reflects on how that experience taught you about effective communication.

Components/Process Documents

Work Plan

Reflection

Project 1: Tiny Ecology Journal (20%, Individual)

During the first week of class, you will select a hyper-local site on or near campus (or your home) for intense, sustained ecological attentiveness. You will visit this space AT LEAST FOUR times to observe and document its shifting dynamics.

You will use this one-month-long field study to develop FOUR ENTRIES documenting how human influence, nonhuman forces (weather, microclimates, decay, gentrification, etc.), and local histories intersect in this tiny ecology. Think of these entries as personal narratives about your interaction with this ecology.

Components/Process Documents

Work Plan

Rough Draft

Peer Review

Reflection

Project 2: Tiny Ecology Photo Essay (20%, Individual)

Students will write a 1300-word photo essay that makes an argument about an ongoing environmental issue in the selected Tiny Ecology. You will pitch a persuasive case that uses photo evidence to introduce us to the ecological situation at this microsite. Review your field observations and pinpoint the primary tension: For instance, is the space

being choked by invasive species? Ignored by campus infrastructure? Affected by urban run-off or light pollution?

Components/Process Documents

Work Plan

Annotated Bibliography

Rough Draft

Peer Review

Reflection

Project 3: Tiny Ecology Manifesto (20%, Collaborative)

Earlier in the semester, your **Tiny Ecology Journal** required you to adopt a stance of intense, sustained observation toward a single micro-site on or around campus. You documented the slow shifts of nonhuman forces, human interventions, and ecological patterns over time.

Now, you will transform those passive observations into an active, persuasive public declaration: an **Environmental Manifesto**.

Building on your Tiny Ecology observations and working in groups with your peers, you will create a 5-6-minute video manifesto that advocates for a specific ecological issue or environmental justice cause in your selected Tiny Ecologies. Your goal is to persuade a specific target audience (e.g., Georgia Tech campus planners, the Atlanta City Council, local commuter populations, or fellow students) to view and treat this micro-space—and similar urban biomes—with renewed ecological, ethical, and civic responsibility.

You will produce a public-facing manifesto that combines a concise, high-impact persuasive campaign with intentional oral, visual, and digital design.

Components/Process Documents

Work Plan

Draft Script

Peer Review

Reflection

End of Semester Portfolio (20%, Individual)

Instead of a final exam, you will submit a multimedia portfolio that includes excerpts from your work in the semester and a 1000-word reflective essay that considers your overall growth and development as a writer this semester. More instruction about this project will be given.

Participation (15%, individual)

Your course engagement includes coming to class on time and with all required materials, completing assigned readings and reflection exercises, actively taking part in class discussions and activities with your peers, participating in group assignments, keeping phones off/silent and headphones away in class, being respectful to the instructor and your peers, and maintaining a professional relationship with me through office hour conversations on your course work and asking questions in and outside class.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

This class is interactive and focuses on communication, participation, and collaboration; therefore, in-person attendance matters. Coming to class on time is essential for your success. You are allowed 3 absences without penalty, but any additional ones will result in a 2-point deduction from your final grade. Arriving to class 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early will be considered an absence unless discussed with me.

Institutionally approved absences, such as those documented by the Registrar, and emergencies documented by the Dean of Students will be excused. In these cases, you will need to access Canvas to access materials and make up whatever work was missed, with the help of your peers or me. You can also request a one-on-one meeting with me.

Participation

Your success in this course depends on how you engage fully and actively in our class and out-of-class activities. For accountability and to ensure you are involved in the assessment of your participation, each student will submit two 300-word self-assessments of their participation and contributions to our class community, one at mid-semester and another at the end of the semester. See the “Participation” graded component above for a detailed list of expectations.

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 tools 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 to complete the coursework, including assignments, discussions, ungraded work, etc., is allowed only in instances specified by me.

As with any technology, generative AI tools need to be used critically and according to academic and professional expectations. Thus, in instances in which it is appropriate to our course discussion to utilize generative AI tools, you are expected to adhere to these principles:

- **Responsibility:** You are responsible for the work you submit. In instances in which I allow generative AI tool use, 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 above. 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.

OTHER COURSE SPECIFIC POLICIES

Late Work

Assignment deadlines are there to help keep you on track and guide your writing process. If you are unable to submit any work on time and need an extension, you should write to me at least 24 hours before the assignment deadline. However, students are limited to 2 extensions throughout the semester. I reserve the right to deny extension requests if you do not establish a valid reason for it. Late work that is submitted without approval will be deducted 10 points.

Missed Class and Making Up In-Class Work

If you miss any in-class work with a valid reason, I may allow you to make it up. You must email me within 24 hours to request approval to submit make-up work. No makeups will be allowed if you do not request approval within 24 hours.

Missed process work done in class can be completed by visiting the Naugle Writing and Communication Center or making an appointment with me to discuss the assignment.

Assignment Revision

As part of developing your writing process, students will get a chance to revise their major project rough drafts once during the semester. This will be done after peer review activities we do in class. Revision will be based on the feedback you get from Dr. Waswa and your writing peers—but you can also get feedback from the Naugle Writing and Communication Center and from your friends.

You should let me know by November 23rd if you want to revise a submitted final draft of any major project for the portfolio.

Communication

All communication should happen in class, during office hours, or through GT email. Communicate with me regularly and early if you have any concerns or encounter any problems in this course, for instance, class attendance, project completion, or anything that you think I can do to enhance your success in this class.