WRIT 101-07: College Composition
MWF 10:10 – 11:00, LA 102

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Course Description

This course is designed to challenge you to learn the skills you will need to excel as a student at the University of Montana. Throughout the semester you will learn to engage rhetorical habits of mind in order to write confident, research-based academic essays that explore topics relevant to your life.

The purpose of this course is to help you develop your abilities as a writer and reader of texts to encourage you to think critically and communicate effectively in the world. I’ll ask you to inquire into different personal, academic, and civic contexts as well as compose and read different genres. You will develop flexible reading, writing, and research processes that will help you develop as a college writer. Much of your work will involve different kinds of collaboration, including small group workshops. Because writing development is an important process that takes place over time and across different writing situations, all WRIT 101 classes use portfolio evaluation as the primary means to assess your work in class.

Expenses
There is one text required for this course: Andrea Lunsford, et al, Everyone’s An Author. I will print out copies of all other outside readings, of which there will be a bounty. You need to get a folder where you will keep all of your work throughout the semester and a notebook for in-class writing. The only other expenses for this course will involve printing out copies of your major projects and some smaller writing assignments.

Course Website
Whyright.wordpress.com

Major Inquiry Projects
You will write and revise three different major projects and one reflective introduction over the course of this class, in addition to other informal writing that will be done both in and out of class. I will give you a detailed assignment sheet as we begin each of the following projects.

1. The Walk
2. For Argument’s Sake
3. Proof
4. Final Portfolio & Introduction

Working on the three major inquiry projects will give you the opportunity to compose in diverse genres for a range of academic and civic situations. You will use observations and experience as evidence, as well as learn strategies for composing effective arguments and conducting academic research.
All three major projects will be developed through a process of inquiry and drafting. You will compose papers in and out of class, alone and within small groups. For some of your writings, I’ll ask you to bring enough draft copies to share with a small group or ask you to email your papers to group members for an online workshop. All inquiry projects must be completed for you to pass the course. I will respond to these projects with written comments focused on suggestions for revision, and I will mark them using a check system to help you understand where you stand throughout the process of writing each major paper.

**Common Policies and Procedures**

**General Class Expectations**
- Come to class. Do your work. Participate.

**Grading Policy**
Students enrolled in WRIT 101 are graded by the traditional letter system: A, B, C, D, F or NC (no credit). The NC grade does not affect grade point average. It is reserved for students who have worked unusually hard, attended class regularly and completed all assignments but whose skills are not at a passing level at the end of the semester.

- Participation 35%
- Final Portfolio 65%

* You must earn at least a C- in this class in order to receive credit.
* You must turn in your portfolio and complete all major papers by their deadlines in order to receive credit for this course.

Come speak with me during office hours in order to better understand my comments on your work or to discuss your overall progress in the class.

**Attendance**
If you miss the first two classes, you need to drop the course on Cyberbear and enroll for another semester. This is university policy, the reason being that important groundwork for the semester is put in place during the first few class meetings.

**Absence Policy**
More than three absences from class will compromise your grade. Six or more absences from class will result in a failing grade.

- 4th absence: final grade drops one letter grade.
- 5th absence: final grade drops one letter grade.
- 6th absence: final grade is an F.

The attendance policy is strict because you cannot perform your role as a student involved in learning, planning, inventing, drafting; discussing reading and writing; learning and practicing rhetorical moves and concepts; or collaborating with your instructor and classmates. The rare occasion may make it impossible for you to be in class. This is why a few absences are allowed; please reserve those for emergencies.

I reserve the right to adjust the policy in cases of significant, documented illness or emergency. Please note that instances of poor time management on your part do not constitute extenuating circumstances. If you must miss class,
*it is your responsibility* to obtain notes from class, any handouts, and details concerning assignments. Talk to me in advance if you know you are going to be absent.

**Participation**
Participation includes coming to class prepared and on time, taking part in class discussions, asking questions, contributing your knowledge and insights in whatever form is appropriate, and striving to make all of your contributions excellent. Coming to class prepared means doing the required reading and writing. Come to class on time. Lateness will hurt your grade because it is an unnecessary interruption and because latecomers are likely to miss valuable information. *No cell phones. No Laptops* (Exceptions-come see me). Please see Participation Grade Descriptors on p. 4 of the syllabus for more information.

**Late Work**
Your work needs to be in class with you to be considered "on time."
- Late work not accepted.
- Emailed assignments are considered late.
- Late formal essays are unacceptable and will receive no revision comments from me.
- If you miss class, the homework due that day is due the next class period.

**Academic Conduct**
You must abide by the rules for academic conduct described in the Student Conduct Code. If you have any questions about how to avoid academic dishonesty, particularly plagiarism, come talk to me. See the *Composition Program Plagiarism Policy* on p. 5 of the syllabus for more information.

**Students with Disabilities**
*Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please come speak with me privately after class or during my office hours and be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator.*

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**Daily Short Assignments**
You will receive comments but no grade on informal writing submissions. Short assignments play a very important part in your overall participation grade.

**Major Inquiry Projects**
The following will give you a sense of the check system that I will be using throughout the semester:

- **Check:** A project with a check generally meets its rhetorical goals in terms of purpose, genre, and writing situation without need for extensive revision. Written comments will elaborate on strengths, weaknesses, and strategies for focused revision.
- **Check minus:** A project with a check minus meets the basic requirements, but would benefit from significant revision and a stronger understanding of rhetorical decision-making. Written comments will elaborate on strengths, weaknesses, and strategies for revision.
- **Unsatisfactory:** A project with a “U” does not meet basic standards, and requires intensive development and attention. An unsatisfactory submission may be incomplete or inappropriate to the assignment. I may request that such a submission be rewritten within a week in order to receive comments.

**Portfolio Letter Grade Descriptors for WRIT 101**
A
Superior portfolios demonstrate initiative and rhetorical sophistication that go beyond the basic requirements. A portfolio at this level is composed of well-edited texts representing different writing situations and genres that consistently show a clear, connected sense of audience, purpose and development. The writer is able to analyze his or her own writing, reflect on it, and revise accordingly. The portfolio takes risks that work.

B
Strong portfolios meet their rhetorical goals in terms of purpose, genre, and writing situation without need for further major revisions of purpose, evidence, audience, or style/mechanics. The writer is able to reflect on his or her own writing and make some choices about revision. The writer takes risks, although they may not all be successful.

C
Consistent portfolios meet the basic requirements, yet the writing would benefit greatly from further revisions of purpose, evidence, audience, or writing style/mechanics (or some combination) and a stronger understanding of rhetorical decision-making involved in different writing situations and genres. The writer composes across tasks at varying levels of success with some superficial revision. The writer has taken some risks in writing.

D
Weak portfolios do not fully meet the basic evaluative standards. Most texts are brief and underdeveloped. These texts show a composing process that is not yet elaborated or reflective of rhetorical understanding related to composing in different genres and for a range of writing situations. Texts generally require extensive revisions to purpose, development, audience, and/or style/mechanics.

F
Unacceptable portfolios exhibit pervasive problems with purpose, development, audience, or style/mechanics that interfere with meaning and readers’ understanding. Unacceptable portfolios are often incomplete. A portfolio will also earn an F if it does not represent the writer’s original work.

**Participation Letter Grade Descriptors for WRIT 101**

A
Superior participation shows initiative and excellence in written and verbal work. The student helps to create more effective discussions and workshops through his/her verbal, electronic, and written contributions. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful, thorough, specific, and often provide other student writers with a new perspective or insight.

B
Strong participation demonstrates active engagement in written and verbal work. The student plays an active role in the classroom but does not always add new insight to the discussion at hand. Reading and writing assignments are always completed on time and with attention to detail. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful, specific, and helpful.

C
Satisfactory participation demonstrates consistent, satisfactory written and verbal work. Overall, the student is prepared for class, completes assigned readings and writings, and contributes to small group workshops and large
class discussions. Reading and writing assignments are completed on time. In workshop or conferences, suggestions to group members are tactful and prompt, but could benefit from more attentive reading and/or specific detail when giving comments.

D
Weak participation demonstrates inconsistent written and verbal work. The student may be late to class, unprepared for class, and may contribute infrequently or unproductively to classroom discussions or small group workshops. Reading and writing assignments are not turned in or are insufficient. In workshops or conferences, suggestions to group members may be missing, disrespectful, or far too brief and general to be of help.

F
Unacceptable participation shows ineffectual written and verbal work. The student may be excessively late to class, regularly unprepared, and not able to contribute to classroom discussions or small group workshops. This student may be disruptive in class. Reading and writing assignments are regularly not turned in or are insufficient. During workshops or conferences, the student has a pattern of absence, being completely unprepared, or being disruptive.

Composition Program Plagiarism Policy for WRIT 101

According to the University of Montana Student Conduct Code, plagiarism is “representing another person's words, ideas, data, or materials as one's own.” The Composition program recognizes plagiarism as a serious academic offense, but also understands that some misuse of information can occur in the process of learning information literacy skills. Therefore, if student writing appears to have been plagiarized, in full or in part, intentionally or unintentionally, or due to poor citation, the following procedure will take place:

- The student will be made aware of areas in the text that are not properly integrated or cited.
- The student will receive no credit on the paper; it is up to him/her to prove that he/she turned in original work.
- The student will be asked to provide the teacher with copies of the research she/he used in writing the paper.
- The student and teacher will meet to discuss research integration.
- If the student cannot provide documentation of his/her research, further disciplinary action will be taken.

In the case that the student is unable to provide evidence of his/her original work or in the case that the teacher has evidence that the student has repeatedly plagiarized his/her work, the teacher will consult with the Director of Composition for direction with further disciplinary action.

In the case of blatant or egregious offenses, or in the case of repeated plagiarism, the Director of Composition will work with the Dean of Students to determine further disciplinary action.

Students should review the Student Conduct Code so that they understand their rights in academic disciplinary situations. The Student Conduct Code can be found here: http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php

Classroom Community

In many ways, WRIT 101 will be unlike most of your other courses. Our class investigates the ways that text, reading, and composition form links of understanding between author and audience—roles that we each adopt. I urge you to take risks in your research, to explore the range of your own written voice, to question the perspectives
that you find most comfortable, and to share your uncertainties with the class. I’ve found that students who take these risks not only deepen their intellectual engagement in WRIT 101, but contribute thought-provoking discussion comments and write more insightful essays. To that end, I take this classroom community seriously. It’s my aim to create an academic space where risk-taking is a highly valued part of our discourse and students are comfortable expressing vulnerability. (This might involve asking what feels like a silly question, graciously disagreeing with a statement that’s been made, sharing a relevant part of your personal history, or expressing how your background and identity inform your ideas.) Respect and open-mindedness are required from all of us at all times.

In accordance with University policy, discrimination or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in our classroom. I expect each student to respect the opinions, beliefs, and identities of their classmates and for the level of discourse in class to remain civil and academic. A failure to respect your classmates and/or the instructor will have an adverse impact on your participation grade.