

## WRIT 101: College Composition I

### Instructor Information

- ★ Instructor: Zack Rybak
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- ★ Office: LA 214
- ★ Office Hours: MWF 12:45 to 1:45 and by appointment<sup>1</sup>
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### Course Description

College Writing 101 is designed to challenge you to learn the skills you'll need to excel as a scholar at the University of Montana. Throughout the semester you will learn to engage rhetorical habits of mind in order to write confident, graceful, research-based academic essays that explore topics vital to your life.

The purpose of WRIT 101 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 and compose and read different genres. I'll also help you develop flexible reading, writing, and research processes to 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.

### Course Texts

*A Guide to College Writing I*  
*Triple Divide*  
Course website

### Other Requirements

- working folder
- notebook for in-class writing
- binder for final portfolio

### Major Inquiry Projects

Expect to write and revise three different projects and one reflective theory of writing over the course of this class, in addition to other informal writing in and out of class. I will give you a detailed assignment sheet as we begin each of these major assignments.

- Major Assignment #1: Source-Based Article on Genre, Audience, and Rhetorical Situation
- Major Assignment #2: Inquiry-Based Research Essay
- Major Assignment #3: Composition in Three Genres
- Major Assignment #4: Reflection-in-Presentation (Your Theory of Writing)

Your major inquiry projects will give you the opportunity to compose in a range of genres for a range of academic and civic situations. You'll have opportunities to use observations and experience as evidence, as well as learn strategies for composing effective arguments and conducting academic research.

You will have the chance to develop all of your major projects through a process of inquiry and drafting. You'll compose papers in and out of class, alone and with your small group. For some of your writings, I'll ask you to bring

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<sup>1</sup> Notice: I have three hours a week worth of office time to work with anyone who shows up one-on-one; however, there are twenty-four of you which does not allot much time per capita, if you know what I mean. That said, the Writing Center (Lommasson 271) allows up to ninety minutes per week, per student, to come in and work with someone one-on-one. Take advantage of this.

enough draft copies to share with your 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, but I will also mark them using a check system to help you know where you stand on a specific project.

## Common Policies and Procedures

### General Class Expectations

- ★ All reading assignments will be completed by the assigned date.
- ★ All writing assignments must be turned in on time.
- ★ **All homework must be typed.**
- ★ Attend class.
- ★ Actively, vocally, and appropriately participate in class discussions.
- ★ Any individual assignments (including requests for conferences) will be completed by the assigned date

### Course Outcomes

You will engage in daily writing activities, discussions, reflection, and collaboration designed to realize the following outcomes:

- Read and write in multiple genres and across several media
- Explore and analyze, in writing and reading, a variety of genres and rhetorical situations
- Understand that composing is a process that uses different genres, communicating through different media to various audiences
- Recognize and practice key terms when engaged in writing situations in and beyond this course
- Demonstrate ability to define key terms discussed in the course
- Develop a theory of writing

### In-class Writing

Regular, in-class work will focus on writing as a way of making meaning of a text, as a means of understanding our thought process, and a way to expand and organize ideas. In-class writing will also be used as a planning tool for research, incorporating an inquiry-based approach into research and topic development. Reflection, collaborative writing, and other in-class work will help students think through their research process and the rhetorical issues that bear consideration in the development of a research essay. Students will also write responses to selected readings as a way of reflection on the various community contexts we will explore.

### Conferences and Workshops

Student conferences will be used to help develop research topics and methodology and to organize research and determine writing strategies. Students will collaborate in the form of brainstorming topics, addressing issues in research, obtaining feedback to develop rhetorically sound strategies and working on the writing process. Throughout the semester, students will become familiar with collaborating as a rhetorical tool, much as they might experience in different academic disciplines or workplace situations.

### Journals

Exploratory journals written as homework assignments will relate to a reading assignment, key terms, or class discussion topic. All journals must be submitted by their deadline to receive credit. Journals should demonstrate the depth of students' critical thinking process, they might tell stories to illustrate ideas, raise contradictory positions, or explore ideas that are not easily resolved. Journals (or excerpts of them) will be shared in class regularly; in fact, all class writing is considered public writing, so students should be sure to consider topics and content they are comfortable sharing with others.

## Drafts, Revisions, and Final Papers

Students are responsible for bringing multiple copies of drafts to class on days a workshop is scheduled. This aspect of class preparedness is part of overall class participation. All drafts and revisions must be typed. Since students have access to a number of computer labs around campus, own computers, technological setbacks/difficulties will not be accepted as an excuse for missed deadlines. Please save all drafts of each major assignment as this is part of your final portfolio and demonstrates your revision process throughout the semester.

## Civility and Decorum

Neither disruptive language nor inappropriate behavior will be tolerated in this class. Disruptive language includes, but is not limited to, violent and/or belligerent and/or insulting remarks, including sexist, racist, homophobic or anti-ethnic slurs, bigotry, and disparaging commentary, either spoken or written (offensive slang included).

Disruptive behavior includes the use of cell phones or any other form of electronic communication during class. Disruptive behavior also includes talking while the instructor or another member of the class is speaking or engaged in relevant conversation (and I care more about this when a student is speaking than when I am; give your classmates the attention and respect they deserve). This classroom functions on the premise of respect, and students will be asked to leave the classroom for any behavior that violates this premise.

## Grading

### Daily Short Assignments

You will receive comments from me, but no grade on informal writing submissions. Short assignments play an important part in your overall participation grade.

### Major Inquiry Projects (Journals)

To give you a sense of the check system I'll be using, please refer to the following descriptors.

- ★ *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 extensive development and attention. An unsatisfactory submission may be incomplete or inappropriate to the assignment. Such a submission may receive a request to rewrite within a week in order to receive teacher comments.

I encourage you to talk with me at any time to better understand my comments or to discuss your overall progress and success in the class.

- ★ Participation 35%
- ★ Final Portfolio 65%

\*\*you must earn a C- in this class to be awarded credit

\*\*You must turn in your portfolio and complete all major papers by their deadlines in order to receive credit for this course.

## Grading Policy

Students enrolled in WRIT 101 are graded by the traditional letter grade A, B, C, D, F or are given NC for 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.

## **Attendance**

If you miss the first two classes, you will need to drop the course on Cyberbear and enroll in another semester. This is university policy and the reasoning behind it is that important groundwork for the semester is put in place in the first few class meetings. Students without that foundational framework are better served by taking the course when they can give it the attention it deserves.

### ***MWF classes***

More than three absences from a M-W-F class will compromise your grade. 6 or more absences from a M-W-F class will result in a failing grade. Here's the breakdown:

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

Here's the reasoning behind the attendance policy. Without attending class, 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. Personal situations and required university events may arise that, on a rare occasion, make it impossible for you to be in class. Remember, however, that's 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, you are responsible for obtaining any handouts or assignments for the class from a classmate. Make sure you talk with me in advance if you are worried about meeting a deadline or missing a class.

If you must miss class, *you are responsible* for obtaining any handouts or assignments for the class. Make sure you talk with me in *advance* if you are worried about meeting a deadline or missing a class.

## **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 your contributions excellent. It also includes doing the required reading and writing for each class. Note: Please 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. Please see *Participation Grade Descriptors* for more information.

## **Late Work**

Your work needs to be typed, printed, and in class with you to be considered "on time".

- ★ Late or handwritten homework does not receive credit.
- ★ Emailed assignments are considered late.
- ★ Late formal essays are unacceptable. They will receive no revision comments from me.
- ★ If you miss class, the homework is due the next class period.
- ★ You are always welcome to complete assignments early if you will be missing class.

## **Academic Conduct**

You must abide by the rules for academic conduct described in the Student Conduct Code. If you have any questions about when and how to avoid academic dishonesty, particularly plagiarism, please review the Conduct Code and talk with your instructor. The Council of Writing Program Administrators describes plagiarism as follows: "plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source." Academic honesty is highly valued in the University community and acts of plagiarism will not be tolerated.

## 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 that plagiarism is 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 will 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 her/his 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](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php)***

### **Students with Disabilities**

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

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## **Portfolio Letter Grade Descriptors for WRIT 101**

### **A**

Superior portfolios will demonstrate initiative and rhetorical sophistication that go beyond the 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 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 and exhibits some style.

### **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 and 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. In workshops or conferences, the student has a pattern of missing, being completely unprepared, or being disruptive.