

## WRIT 101: College Composition I

### Instructor Information

- ★ Instructor: Dwight Curtis
- ★ Mailbox: LA 133
- ★ Office: LA 228
- ★ Office Hours: Mon. & Wed. 11am-12:30pm
- ★ Email: [dwight.curtis@umontana.edu](mailto:dwight.curtis@umontana.edu)

### Course Description

WRIT 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, academic essays that explore topics vital to your life. Together we will explore:

- *Ourselves* — How can language help us to know ourselves better and to express our unique self?
- *Our Communities* — Where and with whom are we in community, and how can language bring us into real connection and presence with our communities?
- *Our Contributions* — How do we want to contribute to the people and places that matter to us?

Our aim will be to build bridges between two very important reasons for writing: to foster our intellectual and personal growth; and to carry that consciousness into the world we share with others in a meaningful way. Together, I hope that we will expand our understanding of the possibilities that language, writing, and education offer within and beyond the classroom.

WRIT 101 is designed for you to experience writing as both a learning process and a practice capable of accomplishing multiple outcomes in diverse contexts. With this goal in mind, you will participate in writing for different audiences and purposes and in several genres. This exposure should equip you with the knowledge and tools to write in the many other contexts in which you will likely find yourself in the future. Assignments will involve self-reflection designed to help you develop writing strategies that meet your individual needs and goals. 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, individual writing conferences, and presentations.

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. This means that over the course of the semester you will receive feedback, suggestions for revision, and encouragement to take risks in your writing, but you will not receive any letter grades until you submit your final portfolio at the end of the class. The reasoning behind this pedagogy is that portfolio evaluation shifts the focus of your writing from product- to process-based. To do this you will be asked to reflect and revise your work over the entire semester. You will be invited to think about writing in deep, meaningful ways without getting distracted by traditional letter grades. I understand that this methodology is challenging at first because it asks you to break habitual and fossilized patterns of submitting work and receiving a grade. However, it is important to note that as you develop as a writer, the habits of mind you will learn in WRIT 101 will enable you to transfer your writing processes into other situations such as classes in your major, job materials, etc. and in order for transfer to occur it is critical that you honor process over product.

### Course Texts:

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

**Important Note about Required Course Texts:** Due to the interactive nature of WRIT 101 the required textbooks are designed as workbooks. This means you will be expected to use these texts dynamically—you will need to sign forms, complete checklists, reflect on revisions and conferences, perform invention work, complete journal entries, etc. By the end of the semester your workbook will be well loved with many pages missing as they become part of your final portfolio. For this reason, you must purchase a **new** copy of the texts from the UM bookstore. Since a used copy will be missing critically important material the bookstore will NOT be selling any used copies. Please refrain from selling used copies to your peers who are taking the course in a different semester, as you will not be helping them by selling them an incomplete book that they cannot use.

### **Other Requirements**

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

### **Major Assignments/Portfolio**

Expect to write and revise three different projects/major assignments and one reflective theory of writing (does not get revised) 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.

**The four major assignments listed below make up the contents of your portfolio; in addition, reflective writing assignment from Major Assignment #1: Writing Genre #2, the short assignments/writing genres connected to Major Assignments 2 & 3, and the revision checklists from the “Guide to College Writing” textbook are also part of your portfolio.**

- Major Assignment #1: Funds of Knowledge Narrative: Emboldening Character and Curating Your Heritage
- Major Assignment #2: Inquiry-Based Research Essay
- Major Assignment #3: Cultural Analysis: Understanding the “Other” and Searching for Common Ground
- Major Assignment #4: A Writer’s Recipe (aka Your Theory of Writing)

Your major assignments 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 enough draft copies to share with your group or ask you to email your papers to group members for an online workshop. *All major assignments 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 major assignments must be typed.
- ★ You must attend class.
- ★ You must actively, vocally, and appropriately participate in class discussions.
- ★ Any individual assignments (including requests for conferences) must be completed by the assigned date

#### **Grading**

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%** (Attendance, being on time for class, in-class participation, contributions to peer workshop and small group work, freewriting assignments, 10 journal entries, presentations, timely submission of ALL pre and post-conference worksheets, library research journal from the textbook, etc.)
- ★ **Final Portfolio 65%** (Major Writing Assignments 1-4, Major Assignment #1: Writing Genre #2 & #3, the short assignments/writing genres connected to Major Assignments #2 & #3, and the revision checklists from the “Guide to College Writing” textbook are all part of your portfolio.)

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

\*\*You must turn in your portfolio and complete all major assignments 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.

### ***M-W-F 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 (A drops to B)
- ★ 5th absence: final grade drops two letter grades (A drops to C)
- ★ 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.

### **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, striving to make all your contributions excellent, and completing all 10 journal entries. It also includes doing the required reading and writing for each class. 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”.

- ★ Assignments submitted (via email or hardcopy) after the deadline are considered late.
- ★ Major assignments submitted late will receive no revision comments from me.
- ★ Major assignments submitted late will be impacted in the final portfolio grade; tardiness will cause you to miss out on important feedback regarding revisions.
- ★ If you are excused from a specific class I'll still expect you to complete the homework (reading assignments, journals, etc.) for our next class period. If you are absent the day a major assignment is due you must contact me to discuss the situation—you are not automatically given an extension until 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.

-----

## Short & Informal Writing Assignments

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

## Major Writing Assignments

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.

## 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.