WRIT 101: College Composition

Instructor Information
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Course Description
In College Writing 101, you will engage in a study of your place in Montana. This course 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.

So…. What does that all mean? What’s the point of WRIT 101? Confidence. You will be supported the entire way throughout this process. We will explore what it means for you to be a writer. This course will test some of our previous assumptions about writing: that it’s boring, that proper grammar is always necessary, and that only the “chosen” are good at it. I will encourage you to become comfortable with crappy first drafts and long-term revision. At the end of the course, you will have new skills, habits and techniques in your arsenal to become successful students at the collegiate level.

Course Texts
• Andrea Lunsford, et al, Everyone’s An Author
• 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 introduction 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.

- Listen, Then Tell Us What You Heard: Writing the Personal Academic Essay
- Putting in Your Oar: Writing the Op-Ed
- Where You Live and What You Live For: Writing the Lifeplace Essay
- Portfolio and Portfolio Introduction

Your three 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 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.

Key Due Dates:

**Personal Academic Essay:**

- 9/28: Sketch Draft
- 9/30: Workshop Draft
- 10/2: Final Draft (to be revised for the portfolio)

**Op-Ed:**

- 10/19: Sketch Draft
- 10/21: Workshop Draft
- 10/23: Final Draft (to be revised for the portfolio)
Lifeplace Essay:
11/16: Sketch Draft
11/18: Workshop Draft
11/20: Final Draft (to be revised for the portfolio)

Final Portfolio:
12/7: Revision Workshop
12/9: Introduction Workshop
12/11: Final Portfolio Due

Grade portfolios will be returned during the scheduled exam period during the week of December 12.

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: stapled double-sided pages (save some trees!), 12-point Times New Roman with 1-inch margins. Papers that do not fit these guidelines will not be accepted.
• Attend class.
• Actively, vocally, and appropriately participate in class discussions.
• Any individual assignments will be completed by the assigned date
• All required and requested conferences will be completed by 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. I love to conference and talk about your writing!

• Participation 35%
• Final Portfolio 65%

**you must earn a C- in this class to be awarded credit
Business majors note: you must earn a C to be admitted into the Business School

**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. However, it must be noted that students must receive a C- to graduate in the future.

**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. This includes school-sanctioned exceptions (conferences, athletics, etc.).
➢ You get **THREE** absences without your grade dropping.

**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.

**Cell Phone/Technology Policy**
This is your time. If you would like to spend it texting, snapping or Facebooking, that is your prerogative. However, as stated, participation is 35% of your grade. Students distracted by cell phones, laptops or other technology will not be engaged in class and thus lose participation points (see participation rubric attached). I reserve the right to ask a student to put away technology if it becomes distracting to me or other students.

Please note: I do encourage students to use technology for educational purposes. Feel free to record lectures, take notes on a laptop, tablet or phone, take pictures of the board, etc.

**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.
**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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**Daily Short Assignments**

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

**Major Inquiry Projects**

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.

Composition Program Plagiarism Policy for WRIT 101/201

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)*
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 your peers and me. I’ve found that students who take these risks not only deepen their intellectual engagement in Writ 101, but contribute more thoughtful discussion comments and write more insightful essays, thus receiving better final grades.

To that end, I take the Writ 101 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.) Obviously, respect and open-mindedness are required from all of us.

Hopefully it goes without saying that discrimination or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in our classroom community. Excerpts from UM’s policies are attached (see definitions in the resources section), and serve as our guidelines for community-building.

Rather than calling someone out when they’ve expressed intolerance or bias, I’m interested in the idea of calling them in to discuss where we might make space for other experiences and identities. In their piece, “Calling IN: A Less Disposable Way of Holding Each Other Accountable” the writer and activist Ngoc Loan Tran explains:

I start “call in” conversations by identifying the behavior and defining why I am choosing to engage with them. I prioritize my values and invite them to think about theirs and where we share them. And then we talk about it. We talk about it together, like people who genuinely care about each other. We offer patience and compassion to each other and also keep it real, ending the conversation when we need to and know that it wasn’t a loss to give it a try…

I picture “calling in” as a practice of pulling folks back in who have strayed from us. It means extending to ourselves the reality that we will and do fuck up, we stray and there will always be a chance for us to return. Calling in as a practice of loving each other enough to allow each other to make mistakes; a practice of loving ourselves enough to know that what we’re trying to do here is a radical unlearning of everything we have been configured to believe is normal.

While it may sound touchy/feely, this practice is strongly tied to the work we are doing in this class—examining the relationships between what we think, what we say, and how we are received by our audience. In the same vein, as you edit each of your major inquiry

* A. Mountain 2013
papers, you will be asked to identify which voices and perspectives have been left out of your research and argument development. Just to reiterate: a more broad consideration of identity and experience often yields deeper, more interesting work, which benefits us all.