

**English Composition 101:**

MW – 2:00 – 3:15 pm D222  
 TTR – 9:30 – 10:45 am D224  
 TTR – 1:00 – 2:15 pm D228  
 TTR – 2:30 – 3:45 pm D228

Joseph J. Selvaggio

**Office:** C268**Office Hours:**

MW 1 – 1:45 pm

TR 11 – 12:45pm

or by appointment

**Email:**

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**"When something can be read without effort, great effort has gone into its writing."**

*-Enrique Jardiel Poncela*

**Course Overview:**

In English Composition 101, you will be introduced to some of the skills necessary to communicate effectively through your writing by reading texts closely, critically interpreting the texts that you encounter, and conveying your perspective to an audience of readers. The focus of the course is recognizing and forming connections among ideas, as well as, integrating sources using outside research.

Please review the description of the goals of course and the expected learning outcomes listed on the sheet at the end of the syllabus.

I hope that you will become critical consumers of the texts that you encounter whether the source of the text is within an academic context or presumed to be outside the discourse of academia. In addition to our readings, we will examine the ways that our view of the world is influenced by other “texts” that contain meaning including photos, films, television and audio material.

**Required Course Materials:**

- [MHR] - Muller, Gilbert H. *The McGraw-Hill Reader: Issues Across the Disciplines*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011.
- Access to a computer with internet capabilities
- A valid email account.
- A folder with pockets to hold your work
- Some method to electronically store your work (cd, flash, etc.)

**“It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union... Men, their rights and nothing more; women, their rights and nothing less.” – Susan B. Anthony quotes**

**Class Participation:**

Physical presence is not enough; you must come to participate. Participation means openness to the idea of discussing your own writing and the writing of your classmates. Your participation in group discussions, large and small, is vital to the success of the class and will be reflected in your final grade. Peer review workshop participation counts toward the grade assigned to each of your essays. If you have an unexcused absence on a workshop day, your grade on a particular assignment may be affected.

**Assignments:****Mini-Lectures (ML)**

Throughout this semester, you will be called upon to give a “mini-lecture” about an assigned reading. Attached is a **Mini-Lecture Worksheet** to help stimulate ideas for writing in your journal which we will discuss in more detail. This worksheet may be adapted and used for analyzing various texts during this semester.

At times, I may direct you to focus on specific areas in the ML’s. You may choose to focus on the main idea of a reading or go into an in-depth analysis based on a provocative quote or passage. You may also discuss the tone that the author uses in the piece or you may choose to discuss the work in response to another reading from either in or out of the classroom.

I will ask students to read responses out loud to help foster class discussions and to provide an opportunity to gain insight into how your fellow students are thinking about a particular reading. So **BE PREPARED** to read your responses.

**Formal Essays:**

You will complete several essays and provide proper documentation of sources. The due dates are highlighted in the course calendar and all writing must follow the format outlined below. **Essays that are not properly formatted may be returned without a grade and/or will have a grade reduction.**

**In-Class Group or Individual Projects and Essay Workshops:**

The group projects are an opportunity to collaboratively explore and present to the class an issue or event related to the work we are discussing in class. Individual projects are designed to enhance your organization and presentation skills. I will provide more details and handouts as the class proceeds.

**Individual Conferences:** You will be required to have **TWO** individual conferences with me during the semester – one before mid-term and one before the end of the semester. The conferences will involve discussion of your papers and your progress in the class. I will remind you of the meetings as we get closer. Though only two conferences are required, I encourage you to drop by to see me during my office hours, or whenever you can find me in, or you can schedule an appointment. I’ll be happy to discuss your writing with you and to answer those questions you may not have thought of in class.

**“The best principles of our republic secure to all its citizens a perfect equality of rights.”**  
-- Thomas Jefferson

**Writing Center Conferences:** You will be required to attend conferences at the writing center for each formal writing assignment. The Writing Center provides me with documentation that you attended a conference. You will also be asked to write a one-page reflection of what you covered during the conference process to be attached to the final version of each essay.

**Small Group Conferences:** There may be several writing workshop conferences which will be held in our classroom or at the student center. These 20 minute workshops, of two or three students, are designed allow us to address any issues that you are confronting in your writing or to gain more intimate feedback on your work from your fellow classmates and myself. Come prepared with your questions, dilemmas, challenges, or insights.

### **Research Committees:**

**Portfolios:** The portfolio is a gathering of your work. You will turn in your portfolio at the end of the semester. The portfolio will include your final essays and all the revisions that led up to those final essays. More specific details about the contents of the portfolio will be given before it is turned in.

### **Grading Scale:**

Attendance and participation:	20%
Mini Lectures:	10%
Assignments/ Projects:	15%
Essays	40%
Final Portfolio w/revisions	15%

All assignments are due at the beginning of class. I do not accept emailed assignments. Presentations and Oral report dates are final. Missed presentations must be made up in order to pass the course. If you know that you will not be able to attend class when an essay is due, please make arrangements to turn in the essay before class on the due date. **A third of a grade (i.e. an A+ paper will become an A, a C- paper will become a D) will be deducted for each day an assignment is late.**

## General Grading Overview for Writing Assignments:

A = These essays exceed expectations and provide new insights on material covered. They are essentially error free, and their structure stands out for being particularly clear and interesting. The writer's argument is substantive, effectively and efficiently made, subtle, and original. The writing is clear, engaging, and direct. Research materials are integrated smoothly into the paper and support the thesis. The paper is organized logically and paragraphs flow seamlessly. There is a thesis statement clearly defined. The paper follows correct MLA format and all sources are properly cited.

B = These essays strongly meet expectations. They present a clear argument, clear thesis but may contain a few basic errors, but the errors do not significantly disrupt the essay. The organization of a B essay fully integrates materials in a clear, concise manner yet the transitions in ideas may be slightly awkward. Research materials are used appropriately and there is an acceptable thesis statement. MLA format is generally used correctly.

C = These essays usually meet the expectations of the assignment, but do not fully communicate or integrate materials effectively. Their organization is often mechanical, lacking the smooth and natural transitions between ideas that mark A and B essays. These essays lack new insight or require further interpretation of the material. Errors are more frequent in the C essay and begin to distract the reader or interfere with meaning.

D = These essays often are weak in organization and fall short in developing ideas sufficiently. This paper lacks a clear thesis. Errors are more frequent on this level and begin to make the essay difficult to read. The paper uses support material that is not effective in presenting the paper's argument. The integration of the research material is not appropriately performed. The structure of the paper is flawed leading to confusion for the reader.

F = This essay was written about a different topic from a different class and had nothing to do with the assignment. These essays do not fulfill the assignment and do not communicate ideas in an effective way. The overwhelming lack of structure and errors in this essay causes confusion in the reader. *Or* this paper was bought, copied, and/or stolen – *see section on plagiarism.*

## PARTICIPATION

This class is a discussion class, and it is vital that we share our ideas and talents with each other. Writing and speaking are very closely related forms of communication, and working on one inevitably helps the other. Never be afraid to ask a question, offer a comment, take a stand on an issue, or disagree with us or anyone else. We will refine our views mostly through free and lively exchange. Several guidelines can help govern this exchange:

- Entering this class intending to learn a great deal.
- Remembering the importance of a sense of humor.
- Demonstrating an interest in people of other times and places.
- Being willing to offer your own ideas.
- Commenting respectfully on the ideas of others.

### Daily Preparation and Participation (20%)

*You will earn a grade for your course participation according to the following rubric:*

#### **Excellent (100 percent)--student does all of the following:**

- Contributes regularly and enthusiastically to ALL class discussions; *and*
- sets an agenda for class discussion and moves it forward, while giving others room to speak; *and*
- states ideas clearly; *and*
- supports opinions with specific evidence from the text or elsewhere; *and*
- follows up on others' ideas; *and*
- refines own ideas; *and*
- takes the lead in engaging others in discussion; *and*
- rephrases accurately what others say; *and*
- asks genuine questions; *and*
- pays attention all the time.

#### **Good (85 percent)--student does all of the following:**

- Contributes good -spiritedly to nearly all class discussions without dominating them; *and*
- states ideas clearly; *and*
- supports opinions with general evidence from the text or elsewhere; *and*
- maintains an active presence in the class; *and*
- rephrases accurately what others say; *and*
- engages others in dialogue, *and*
- pays attention all the time.

#### **Average (75 percent)**

- Regularly listens attentively to others, *but*
- contributes sporadically to some class discussions; *or*
- offers relevant ideas and opinions, but sometimes digresses from the point easily; *or*
- does not always support ideas and opinions with evidence from the text; *or*
- gives little follow-up or refinement of ideas; *or*
- engages others in dialogue only to some extent.

#### **Below Average (65 percent)**

- Physically present and actively listens; *but*
- contributes very little to class discussion, or offers unproductive comments; *or*
- does not exhibit control of the material or reading assignment under discussion; *or*
- usually speaks only when called on.

#### **Failing (50 or lower percent)**

- Frequently unprepared or regularly inattentive; *or*
- often either says nothing or offers unproductive comments; *or*
- sometimes either contributes in disrespectful ways or discourages group discussion.

## Essay Revisions:


You will have the opportunity and are encouraged to revise your papers to improve your grade IF you have met all the deadlines for the project. See me to make arrangements if you wish to submit further revisions of your work. **The first essay will be fully revised for the final portfolio.**

**NOTE:** Revision is NOT the same as editing. **Editing** is about small changes, such as grammatical and spelling changes, or small changes to sentences or words. **Revision** is about re-seeing the piece of writing, including changes in content, tone, structure, and argument. This course focuses primarily on developing skills in revision, not editing. While editing is an important skill to learn, revision will be emphasized in the essay writing process, and will be a factor in the final points received for the essay.

## Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is using someone else's words or thoughts without crediting them properly. Plagiarism includes paraphrasing another person without properly identifying that person. Plagiarism includes copying, buying, borrowing, stealing or otherwise obtaining and using another person's work as if it was your own. Plagiarism is not properly documenting the source of information that you use in your work.

The *American Heritage Dictionary* describes the act of plagiarism in the following manner:

SYLLABICATION:	pla·gia·rize
<a href="#">PRONUNCIATION:</a>	 plā'jə-rīz'
VERB:	Inflected forms: <b>pla·gia·rized, pla·gia·riz·ing, pla·gia·riz·es</b>
TRANSITIVE VERB:	<b>1.</b> To use and pass off (the ideas or writings of another) as one's own. <b>2.</b> To appropriate for use as one's own passages or ideas from (another).
INTRANSITIVE VERB:	To put forth as original to oneself the ideas or words of another.
OTHER FORMS:	<b>pla'gia·riz'er</b> —NOUN

“Plagiarize” *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000. 4 December 2004. <[www.bartleby.com/61/](http://www.bartleby.com/61/)>.

## Special considerations

If you have a disability or some other personal circumstances that require accommodations, please let me know as early as possible in the semester so that I can make appropriate classroom arrangements. Please call (860) 383-5217 for more information or to schedule a confidential meeting with one of our disability service providers.

### Attendance:

This is a writing intensive course that incorporates active class participation, group projects and peer-workshops. Therefore, attendance and participation are important factors in your final grade. **You are permitted 3 undocumented absences. After the third absence, a doctor's note or other documentation will be required as I deem appropriate. After 5 absences, we will conference to determine if you will realistically be able to pass the course.**

I understand that things happen and if you know ahead of time that you will miss class or have an emergency of some kind, please contact me as soon as possible. You are, of course, responsible for the work due on the days you are absent. If an assignment is due on the day of your absence, you are still responsible for getting the work in on time. In addition, **coming into class late is disruptive. Please be on time to class and turn off any electronic devices not associated with the class.**

### Formatting your Papers:

- All papers should be on white paper, printed, spell-checked for typos and other errors.
- Use 12-point Times New Roman font, and left-justified with one-inch margins.
- On the first page of the paper, in the upper left-hand corner, place your name, course title, my name, assignment name, due date (all in single space).
- The body of your essay is double-spaced.
- Your title should then appear two spaces down, centered on the page. Please note that the assignment name is not the title of your essay.
- Number pages beginning on page two in the upper right corner or centered at the bottom of the page.
- Staple the essay pages together in the upper left corner. Unstapled essays will not be accepted.
- Save paper. A cover or title page is not necessary.
- Use MLA citation to document sources.
- *See the last page of Syllabus for an example of the formatting style required.*
- **PAPERS THAT DO NOT FOLLOW FORMAT GUIDELINES MAY RESULT IN NO GRADE or A LOWER GRADE.**

### Save Your Work:

It is always a good idea to *save your work* to disk or to make a copy of any paper that you turn in for a grade. Save a hard copy of your work to avoid missing assignments due to computer disasters. I would also recommend emailing a copy of your work to *yourself* as a precaution.

### Contact Information:

The most effective method to contact me is via email: [jselvaggio@trcc.commnet.edu](mailto:jselvaggio@trcc.commnet.edu). I will communicate regularly via email so be certain to provide a valid email account.





### Text Analysis/Mini-Lecture/Writer Support Sheet

- 1) First, read the text from start to finish.
- 2) Then, go back to the first few pages. Are there any words, phrases or ideas that are repeated? Underline, circle or box words, phrases, and ideas that are similar. What do these words tell you about the points that are important to the author?
- 3) What is the overall issue(s)/subject/idea of the text? In other words, what is the text about? How did you arrive at this conclusion?
- 4) First, in your own words, why might this topic be important to a reader? Does the author state why it is important? Where do they make that argument? Use a quote and include the page number. For example:

Jones claims, "If logging continues, the rainforest will be destroyed in ten years; and such an ecological disaster could speed up the process of global warming" (46).

- 5) What is the author's main claim/argument/thesis or stance on the subject? Where did you find it? What makes you think it is the thesis? What may have motivated the author to write this piece? Do they want the reader to take action? If so, what do they recommend? Do they have a specific goal in mind? What is that goal? Use specific passages in the text that would support your insights.
- 6) What are the counter arguments that the author is responding to? There are probably several examples. Explain in your own words what the counter arguments are to the author's stance. Does he or she answer those counter-arguments effectively? Where are they brought up in the essay? How are they answered?

The counter arguments may not be overtly stated, but instead implied as in the example below. What would be the argument Jones is countering in the example below?

Jones argues that global warming has been scientifically verified. He cites a study by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) which shows that the earth has warmed dramatically over the last ten years (59).

- 7) Who is the author writing for? In other words, who might be his or her audience? List specific words, phrases, or other cues that might hint at the intended audience.
- 8) What is the genre of the piece? Editorial, narrative, business memo, etc?
- 9) If you were going to write an essay that connected this reading to previous work done in this class, what connections can you make between the other texts?
- 10) When considering multiple texts/authors – do they use similar key words, phrases, ideas or themes? Write several connections down - perhaps using a brief quote(s) or passage(s) from the other source(s).

Write down a few quotes of **no more than two or three sentences each** that you found interesting (you may not even fully know why they stand out for you but be prepared to discuss the quotes that you selected). Be sure to note the page number (and the source if it is different from our class text).