

**ENG 101**

# Composition as Critical Inquiry

**Room:**

**Times:**

**Instructor:** Meghann Meeusen

Contact Information:

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I prefer email as the method to contact me with inquiries regarding class, and check for messages regularly. Please only use my private phone for dire emergencies and keep in mind I am not always available to answer.

Office Hours:

**Course**

*Text Requirements:*

**Materials:**

1. *The Grassroots Writing Research Journal* (available at bookstore)
2. USB Drive and Headphones
3. Printing will be required for this class—you will need regular access to a printer or money on your Redbird Card to print in class

**COURSE CONTENT:** The semester is broken into three major units as follows.

- **Narrative:** Students will explore the parameters of genre by using juxtaposition to write a creative personal narrative about an important moment in their lives, placing this real life event in the context of a new genre (aka, either fictionalizing it using a specific formula or presenting via unconventional means). This essay will ask students to be reflective about a single event that changed the trajectory of their life experiences, then tell the story of that event using a genre radically different than the traditional memoir style. In an effort to deconstruct the idea of genre, students will maintain some of the elements of personal narrative while placing the story within a new formulaic genre to demonstrate their understanding of a genre's parameters, conventions, context and expectations. The narrative unit also includes a set of genre related margin notes.
- **Research:** Students will thoroughly research a self-selected topic of personal and social significance. They will present their findings using nontraditional written media of their own design to explore a unique multiform genre that connects directly to the topic. This assignment asks students to explore the parameters of either an established genre or one of their own creation, using this format to present information they have collected and documented through sophisticated research techniques.

- **Rhetoric:** Students will analyze a specific genre of oral rhetoric of their choosing and compose a short document which identifies the important elements or characteristics of this form of communication and analyzes a specific example of a text in that genre. Then, students will mimic the genre by creating a new, original text which effectively uses these elements to deliver a message of personal importance, presenting this to the class either in live form or via a technical visual presentation.

## **ATTENDANCE**

As active participants in the process of writing studies, students must attend class every day. Students are allowed a maximum of three absences before penalization begins. For every absence after the third, irrespective of cause, the final grade will be penalized 3% of the final grade for each additional absence. If students miss more than 20% of class, they will fail the course.

If a student must be absent, he/she is responsible for knowledge of all content missed during that class, including turning in assignments on their given due date. Please demonstrate professionalism by arriving to class on time. Any health conditions that prevent students from regular attendance should be discussed with me at the beginning of the semester.

## **LATE WORK**

I do not accept late work. Although I reserve the right to make exceptions to this policy, this is both rare and unlikely, and is only possible after a meeting with me. All assignments must be submitted online unless previous arrangements are made.

## **GRADING SCALE/BREAKDOWN**

93%-100% A  
 83%-92% B  
 73%-82% C  
 63%-72% D  
 0-62% F

## **ASSIGNMENT BREAKDOWN**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Narrative Project, including genre analysis	20%	
Research Project, including genre analysis	20%	
Rhetoric Project, including genre analysis	20%	
Learning Journal, including daily assignment	25%	
Final "Exam" (take-home essay for journal)	15%	

## ASSIGNMENT CONTENT

### **Three Major Projects- each unit constitutes 20% of the final grade**

The semester will be broken into three units: narrative, research and rhetoric. For each unit, although both production of a text and genre analysis are important factors, the primary basis for a student's grade rests on his/her ability to demonstrate a complex and thoughtful understanding of the genre(s) he/she has chosen to engage with. Each major project will be broken down in the following manner:

#### **Textual Production**

Students will produce texts in various genres of their choosing for each major project, which may often involve written, multimodal and/or non-alphabetic elements. Each project must also be annotated with a set of detailed margin notes (we will discuss the forms these notations can take) that comment upon the student's engagement with the genre and connect the text to the genre analysis documents.

Please see project handouts for details. All written portions should be turned in electronically (or by hand in the case of some multimodal projects) on the assigned due date.

#### **Genre Analysis Documents**

For each project, students will demonstrate their understanding of the genre they produce via several genre analysis documents. Though thoughtfulness and clarity are important here, work will be graded based on how thoroughly the genre has been explored and explained. The form/genre used to present this information is up to the student, but **cannot** be a traditional essay; instead, tools such as webs, maps, lists, outlines, and other organizational tools are recommended. Genre analysis should include:

- Researched commentary on three or more master texts in the genre
- Detailed description of genre features/characteristics
- Information regarding cultural/historical context of the genre
- Map of genre's movement through time/intertextuality and/or trajectory components

### **Learning Journal (Daily Assignments)- 20%**

Throughout the semester, students will be asked to complete daily assignments and/or homework which will help to establish an understanding of genre as outlined in the course objectives. Students should complete daily assignments, in-class activities, discussion board posts etc as assigned, and this participation will be checked regularly by the instructor. Students should additionally save and collect these assignments, as well as any class notes, in a singular location, either in print or digital form.

One of the primary objectives of this course is to demonstrate an increased knowledge or learning about the nature of genre in the composition of texts. Thus, the purpose of the learning journals is to demonstrate this growing understanding throughout the semester. Students should not only collect their daily work, but comment upon it, reflecting (in whatever form they choose) on how their understanding has grown, what they have done to increase it, etc.

When each major project is due, students will turn in their learning journal, which should include all daily assignments and notes, as well as these annotations. I may also provide questions to guide this annotation, either throughout the term or before the journal is due. I will assess the learning journal based on fullness and thoughtfulness of completion, commenting on this aspect after each of the first two projects, and assigning a letter grade at the end of the semester based upon how much the student has participated and how much learning has been demonstrated in this text.

### **Final “Exam”- textual production for *The Grassroots Writing Research Journal***

The final, cumulative project for the semester will be to create an essay/text for the course textbook, *The Grassroots Writing Research Journal*. We’ll discuss in greater depth the parameters of this genre, and students are welcome to (though not required) to create genre analysis documents to accompany their final project. In addition to serving as a cumulative final “exam” for the course, I will also encourage those students who produce exceptional texts to submit these for possible publication in *The Grassroots Writing Research Journal*. This project should reflect learning developed in the semester learning journal, as well as knowledge gained through the three major projects.

I will grade this essay holistically based on how thoughtfully students express their learning and how expertly they engage with the genre of *The Grassroots Writing Research Journal*. Students who would like additional or more specific feedback in order to submit their paper to *The Grassroots Writing Research Journal* may also request an individual meeting with the instructor during exam week.

### **OTHER PROCEDURAL INFORMATION**

**Student Conduct:** As adults in the academic community, a respectful and appropriate behavior code is expected at all times. However, should this behavior code be broken by a disruptive or disrespectful student, he/she may be asked to remove him/herself from class for the day. Furthermore, if a student is sleeping during class, he/she will be marked absent for the day. For information on specific behavior expectations, please see the ISU Student Conduct Code.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism:** Students are responsible for making themselves aware of and understanding the policies and procedures found in the Student Code of Conduct, including those policies regarding academic dishonesty and plagiarism. Although plagiarism comes in many forms, students are expected above all to produce their own work in an ethical and honest way. Additionally, issues of correct citation and use of resources are crucial to both work as a student and development as a writer, and students are expected to consider carefully these tenets in the

production of all class texts. Students should consult with the instructor if they are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an assignment or test. Instances of purposeful and/or unintentional academic dishonesty will result in a meeting with the instructor and “grade penalties consistent with the nature of the offense.” For more information regarding these policies, see <http://deanofstudents.illinoisstate.edu/students/get-help/crr/academic-dishonesty.shtml>.

**Accommodations:** Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability should contact Disability Concerns at 350 Fell Hall, 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TTY).

**Computers in the Classroom:** Students will be working in a computer lab equipped with the Internet. While students are welcome to check email, Facebook, or browse the Internet before class, once class begins every student should be engaged in class work.

**Saving Files:** It is the student’s responsibility to save files in as many locations as possible. A cheap USB drive is a must for transporting files to and from the computer labs. Students are required to save all work to multiple locations (aka, a USB, home computer, and in compclass where it will be submitted for grades). Lost files are **not an excuse** for not handing in a project. Students are also required to name each file according to directions given either in project calendars or in class. All files must be saved as Word files. Additionally, students should keep in mind that student texts in English 101 are considered public writing, which means that other students in the class will be reading and commenting on them. If you do not wish your work to be read by your peers or placed in the ENG 101 archive used by future ENG 101 instructors, please let me know.

## ENG 101 Course Objectives

### **Identifying Genres:**

- Students should be able to identify the features of multiple genres, and articulate (through verbal or written communication) the differences that separate these genres (this ability to include both academic and nonacademic genres).
- Students should be able to document (through verbal or written communication) how the features of a particular genre work to shape the genre's content, style, and structure through visual, conceptual, stylistic constraints, as well as through the expectations of the reader/user.
- Students should be able to demonstrate (through verbal or written communication) how choices in their own writing either conform (or don't) to the established features of the genre in which they are working.
- Students should be able to compare how the features of different genres shape content (and knowledge making) in different ways.

### **Creating Content:**

- Students should be able to create content in multiple genres.
- Students should be able to employ cognitive/conceptual skills related to argument and analysis in their textual productions, and be able to identify the use of these strategies in their own productions.
- Students should be able to employ a range of other skills (rhetorical strategies, mechanics, style, etc.) and defend these choices as thoughtful response to specific writing and genre situations.
- Students should be able to identify the organizational structures that govern different kinds of writing genres.

### **Technology/Media:**

- Students should be able to identify the technologies (print or digital) and tools necessary to produce a text in a given genre.
- Students should be able to decide on and use appropriate digital and print technologies to produce a genre (based on the genre's required features).
- Students should be able to demonstrate (through written or verbal communication) how a given text is affected by the use of different technologies or media (in terms of its conception, production, and distribution, as well as the potential ways the text may be taken up by users).

### **The Trajectories of Literate Activity:**

- Students should be able to trace the trajectories of a text (the path a text takes in its production, distribution, and use) in reference to the context and history that shape a genre or a writing situation in a particular ways. This includes the way a particular instance of text is shaped by interactions with people, materials, and technologies; the social and cultural forces that shape how a genre is understood and identified; and the potential uses (both intended and unintended) that reader/users may devise for the text and its content.

**Flexible Research Skills:**

- Students should be able to demonstrate knowledge of how to find a variety of source materials for research purposes. This should include using digital databases, print material, and archival resources.
- Students should demonstrate an awareness of the various methods which can be used to collect data (e.g., experiment, observation, various kinds of survey, and interview methods)

**Using Citation Formats and Citing Source Material in Multiple Genres:**

- Students should be able to cite sources correctly according to one or more academic citation formats (MLA, APA, CBE, Chicago Manual of Style).<sup>9</sup>
- Students should be able to integrate source material into their written projects in ways appropriate to the projects' genre(s). This includes the ability to cite material correctly, to quote and paraphrase source material, and to effectively integrate source material to support an argument, persuasive goal, or analysis.
- Students should be able to investigate and demonstrate how different methods of citing source material (including academic and non-academic attribution) are shaped by the goals and intentions embedded in the citation style.

**Grammatical Usage and Sentence Structure:**

- Students should be able to identify how specific genres are defined, in part through the use of sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary.
- Students should demonstrate the ability to make informed decisions regarding the appropriate sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary in their own writing (based on an assessment of the various genre features required in a particular writing situation).
- Students should be able to identify the match between an example of a genre that they've produced and a representative example of that genre (in terms of grammar, usage, style).
- Students should be able to identify in their own writing projects the aspects of sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary which require improvement, and demonstrate through multiple revisions the ability to address these problem areas.

**Cultural & Social Contexts:**

- Students should be able to identify cultural, political and social interactions that shape or influence how writing happens in a particular genre or situation. These might be local interactions within a particular group that specifically constrain how a particular text is produced, or interactions that take place at a national or international level and impact texts and genres more generally.
- Students should be able to identify (within their own writing and the writing of others) specific examples of how content/form/genre/style respond to cultural, political and social influences and pressures.