

Instructor: Mr. Marc Diefenderfer
Office Hours: Fridays 12:00-1:30, or by appointment (Email or Zoom)
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Course Description

Welcome to English 1301: Composition & Rhetoric I. This class is designed to provide you with opportunities not only to discover more about the social and cultural contexts that surround you, but also to view writing as a means to discover more about yourself as an individual. You should leave this class with the confidence to create, interpret, and evaluate a variety of texts across a range of forms and genres.

English 1301 stresses the rhetorical nature of all situations, your ability to identify and work in a variety of rhetorical situations, the ways in which the writer's work shapes its audience, and the ways in which rhetoric involves thought, the spoken word, the written word, and performance.

About English 1301

English 1301 provides students with the opportunity to interpret and compose in both digital and print media across a variety of textual genres. Students engage in active learning, which includes class discussion, problem solving, peer review, and digital interaction. English 1301 is grounded in the idea that writing provides an outlet for sharing and developing ideas; facilitates understanding across different conventions, genres, groups, societies, and cultures; and allows for expression in multiple academic, civic, and non-academic situations. In short, writing is a way of learning that spans all fields and disciplines.

By the end of the course, students will:

- Demonstrate rhetorical awareness of diverse audiences, situations, and contexts.
- Compose a variety of texts in a range of genres.
- Critically think about writing and rhetoric through reading, analysis, and reflection.
- Provide constructive feedback to others and incorporate feedback into their own writing.
- Perform research and evaluate sources to support claims.
- Engage multiple digital technologies to compose for different purposes.

Course Texts

Required course materials are available at the Brazosport College bookstore, on campus, or online at <http://www.brazosport.edu/bookstore>. A student of this institution is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from the college bookstore. The same textbook is/may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

- Richard Bullock, Michal Brody, and Francine Weinberg, *The Little Seagull Handbook with Exercises*. Third edition. ISBN: 978-0393602647

Course Website and Email Policy

Our course website can be found on **D2L** (<https://online.brazosport.edu/d2l/home>). Because this is an online class, all of our course materials will be housed on this website. You will be

expected to access and submit all assignments digitally, so it is essential that you have a strong working knowledge of the D2L virtual campus, word processing software, and basic online tasks like downloading files, emailing, and using Dropbox. Course announcements and information will appear on D2L and may also be sent to you via your Brazosport College email account. You are expected to check your email and D2L on a regular basis.

Course Assignments

Final grades in English 1301 are assessed according to the following categories:

Personal Literacy Narrative	5%
Unit 1 (Rhetorical Analysis)	15%
Unit 2 (Academic Exposition)	20%
Unit 3 (Academic Argument)	20%
Short Writes (SWs)	15%
Discussion Posts	20%
Peer Review	5%

In Unit 1, students will compose an essay in which they identify, analyze, and respond to an argument made in a short essay or editorial; several options will be provided.

In Unit 2, students will compose an informative (and surprising) academic essay based on independent research about an aspect of global popular culture of their choosing. The essay should explain something to readers (the members of the class, including the teacher, and other students of global popular culture) that will strike the audience as interesting, in part because it is new and thus in some way surprising.

In Unit 3, students will compose an annotated bibliography that outlines a well-researched position aimed at either (a) gaining the reader's agreement on a certain environmental concern, or (b) delineating a course of action and establishing its preeminent importance among competing environmental goals. This essay will build upon the skills of research, exposition, summary, analysis, and synthesis learned in previous units, but adds the task of developing a classical argument based on research.

At the end of the semester, students may revise either their Unit 1 paper or their Unit 2 paper, reflecting on the choices made for revision and on the student's experiences in the course. The grade for the revision replaces the grade for the original assignment. The replacement grade takes into account any grade penalties for late or missing work applied to the original assignment.

Shorter writing assignments (Short Writes, or SWs) are also incorporated throughout the course, and are designed as building blocks toward completion of the major unit assignments. More specific information on each assignment will be made available in the Course Calendar. A student cannot pass the class unless all unit papers have been submitted.

Weekly Topics

Week 1: Introduction to the course
Week 2: Rhetorical thinking strategies
Week 3: Rhetorical reading
Week 4: Thesis formation and support
Week 5: Finding reliable sources
Week 6: Establishing a research question
Week 7: Writing a rhetorical précis
Week 8: Writing for a global audience
Week 9: Explaining and refuting claims

Week 10: Outlining an argument
Week 11: Argument justification
Week 12: Writing an academic argument
Week 13: Identifying textual elements of narrative
Week 14: Identifying cultural and ethical elements of narrative
Week 15: Academic Revision
Week 16: Academic Revision, continued

Grading Standards

A 90-100%
B 80-89
C 70-79

D 60-69
F 59 or less

- A* You completed the assignment at a high level of quality, *and your work shows originality and creativity*. Work in this range shows all the qualities listed below for a B, but it also demonstrates that you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a style.
- B* You completed the assignment at a high level of quality. Work in this range needs little revision, is complete in content, is organized well, and shows special attention to style.
- C* You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range tends to need some revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style is straightforward but unremarkable.
- D* You did what the assignment asked at a low level of quality, OR you did not do what the assignment asked. Work in this range tends to need significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern. Style is often chaotic.
- F* This grade is reserved for those who do not complete the assignment. If you follow the assignment's instructions and give it an honest try, you are unlikely to receive an F.

Online Course Environment

This class does not meet at a specific time; it is available to you 24/7. That said, there are concrete deadlines for all assignments. As a result, and because feedback from and interaction with me and with your classmates are necessary to your learning in this class, you will not be able to simply rush through the class in a few days at the beginning or end of the semester. This course will require strong time-management skills and a commitment to independently working on the assigned materials every week. Most experts recommend that college students spend two hours studying (i.e. reading, writing, and reviewing materials) for every hour they spend in class; in a self-guided online course without class meeting times, the student's time commitment necessarily increases. Please reach out with questions or concerns as soon as they come up; this will prevent you from falling behind and ensure that you get the most out of the course.

Class Participation and Attendance

You must engage with and complete each activity (for example, posting and replying in discussion forums, watching video lectures, reading texts, etc.) by the deadline on the course calendar in order to be marked “present.” Each activity you fail to engage with will count as one absence and any activity you make substantial progress through without completing will count as half an absence. After three absences, each subsequent absence will bring your overall grade down by one step (in other words, 10 percentage points). Each activity has a specific deadline, so you will not be able to take “time off” or make up work at the end of the semester. Keep in mind that I can see who has engaged with a reading, video lecture, or other activity *and* for how long you’ve engaged with that activity; so, be advised not to try to cheat the system by simply clicking on links but not engaging with the content.

Discussion Posts

Because dialogue and argument are essential to facilitate critical thinking, reading, and writing, each unit will contain several discussion post activities. Unlike the unit papers for this course, discussion posts do not need to contain an introduction or a conclusion. They should be 150 to 200 words in length, and should be written in the in-browser text field on D2L rather than attached as a separate file. You can think of a discussion post as being similar to a thoughtful, well-developed comment of about two or three minutes in a face-to-face class. Typically you will compose your discussion post in response to a specific prompt that I provide. In general, though, be sure to cite evidence from our course materials that helps to illustrate whatever point you are making.

In addition to crafting your own posts, you are required to reply to the discussion post of at least one classmate during the course of each discussion activity. Your response should be 50 to 100 words in length, and should reflect thoughtfully, substantively, and respectfully on the ideas expressed by your peers. By “substantive,” I mean that your response must engage meaningfully with the content of your peer’s post; you should not merely agree or disagree with the initial post, for example.

If you experience difficulty meeting the word count, try asking yourself *why* questions. Here are a few examples of what you might write about in reply to a classmate’s discussion post: Can you identify additional textual evidence that supports a claim about the text made by your classmate? Does your classmate cite textual evidence in a way that calls for clarification/context, or that you would interpret differently? Might your classmate’s ideas be worth their exploring in a longer paper, and if so, what additional research/evidence would they need to develop a convincing argument? Does your classmate’s interpretation of a particular reading open new pathways in your own understanding of that reading (or its author), or in a previously assigned reading?

Peer Review

Peer review enhances your critical thinking, reading, and editing abilities and provides you with feedback on your essay before it is graded. For each peer review session, you should prepare a full draft of your unit paper; more detailed instructions will be provided. Final decisions about what to revise (and what not to revise) in your draft are yours alone. **NOTE:** If you do not submit a draft of your unit paper by the Peer Review deadline for that unit (or if you submit an

incomplete draft), your paper grade will be lowered one step (10 percentage points), and you will not be able to participate in the peer review process.

Grammar and Spelling

Proper mechanics—that is, grammar and spelling—are an important part of composition and revision, and thus an important component of your paper grades. At this point in your academic career, you are expected to have a fairly strong grasp on the mechanics of writing. This being said, proper mechanics alone are not enough to guarantee a high paper grade. If you experience difficulties in these areas, I encourage you to schedule an appointment with a writing tutor in the Student Success Center. The tutors are highly skilled and can help you whether you are a novice or more advanced writer. For more information, please visit the following Web address:

<https://brazosport.edu/students/for-students/student-success-center/writing-center/schedule-an-appointment/index>

Late Work

All writings are due when specified by the instructor or by the assignment description on D2L. Anything turned in later is considered late. Late SWs (Short Writes) will have their grades lowered by half. Late unit papers will have their grades lowered by 10% for each day they are late. Papers submitted more than two weeks late, in the absence of prior arrangement with the instructor, will not be accepted. No late work will be accepted after the Sunday of finals week.

Thus, if you have an emergency, please contact me in advance to make arrangements for another due date. (If you contact me after the due date has passed, such arrangements will not be possible.) If you need to miss several days' worth of classes, contact the Office of the Dean of Students; they will send letters to all your instructors so that you may make up work.

Computer problems will not be accepted as excuses for late work; please be responsible and complete your work far enough in advance to turn it in on time. Discussion post assignments that have been closed on D2L cannot be made up.

Content Note

This is a college-level class, and we will be dealing with texts that may make you uncomfortable, upset, or offended because of the language or content. You are, however, expected to engage with the texts in a professional manner and to be respectful in discussions.

Inclusive Language

All work in this course should employ inclusive language, which shows that the writer honors the diversity of the human race by not using language that would universalize one element of humanity to the exclusion of others. Examples of areas in which non-inclusivity commonly occurs include racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or otherwise discriminatory language. Disrespectful or threatening speech or behavior will not be tolerated. Students who ignore this policy will be marked as absent for that class activity.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Brazosport College takes academic dishonesty very seriously. It is assumed that students eligible to perform on the college level are familiar with the ordinary rules governing proper conduct,

including academic honesty. Using someone else's work as your own without careful citation is always unethical and, at times, illegal; conversely, letting someone else use your work is also unethical. Academic dishonesty (including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and collusion) is a serious offense and may result in your assignment being marked as incomplete, your receiving a grade of zero for the assignment, your failing the course, and/or a letter being sent to the Dean of Student Services. Please note that I am required to report any instance of academic dishonesty that affects a student's grade. Please refer to the Brazosport College Student Guide for more information. This is available online at <http://brazosport.edu>.

As a writer and student at Brazosport, you are cautioned against:

- submitting someone else's work as your own, even if you have paid for it or obtained the author's permission
- using, without acknowledgment, word-for-word phrases, sentences, or paragraphs from the printed or electronic manuscript material of others
- using the materials of another after making only slight changes
- using a rewritten form of someone else's materials
- submitting work that you have composed for another class.

These guidelines apply to the work of fellow students as well as the published work of professional writers, information found on the Internet, and electronic compositions such as websites and slideshows. If you have questions about this policy, or if you are not sure whether an assignment that you plan to submit is in violation of it, contact me immediately. Work that has not yet been turned in can always be revised without penalty; submitted work cannot.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that requires academic accommodation, please let me know as soon as possible. Brazosport College is committed to providing equal education opportunities to every student. BC offers services for individuals with special needs and capabilities including counseling, tutoring, equipment, and software to assist students with special needs. For a student to receive any accommodation, documentation must be completed in the Office of Disability Services. Please contact Phil Robertson, Special Populations Counselor, at 979-230-3236 for further information.

Title IX Statement

Brazosport College faculty and staff are committed to supporting students and upholding the College District's non-discrimination policy. Under Title IX and Brazosport College's policy FFDA (Local), discrimination based on sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression is prohibited. If you experience an incident of discrimination, we encourage you to report it. While you may talk to a faculty or staff member at BC, please understand that they are "Responsible Employees" and must report what you tell them to college officials. You can also contact the Title IX Coordinators directly by using the contact information below. Additional information is found on the Sexual Misconduct webpage at www.brazosport.edu/sexualmisconduct.

Campus Emergencies

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. To get information about changes in this course, check our D2L website or contact me at marc.diefenderfer@brazosport.edu.

Student Conduct Statement

Students are expected to be aware of and follow the Brazosport College Student Code of Conduct. Students have violated the Code if they “fail to comply with any lawful directions, verbal or written, of any official at BC.” Lawful directions include precautions and requirements taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at Brazosport College. Students who do not follow safety requirements, including the wearing of a mask on campus, may be removed from class by their instructor and referred to the Dean of Student Services.

Campus Closure Statement

Brazosport College is committed to the health and safety of all students, staff, and faculty and adheres to all federal and state guidelines. The College intends to stay open for the duration of the semester, and to provide access to classes and support services on campus in the safest way possible. The College will also comply with lawful orders given by applicable authorities, including the Governor of Texas, up to and including campus closure. It is possible that on-campus activities may be moved online and/or postponed if such orders are given.

Special Circumstances and Personal Emergencies

Everyone at Brazosport College recognizes that this is an extremely difficult time which may be filled with different sorts of uncertainty as we move forward with the academic year. Your safety, health, and well-being are our primary concern and we want to be able to support you in any way that we can.

The College also understands that you may be facing personal obstacles that may make it difficult to meet your typical academic goals. Please refer to the Student Services page (<https://brazosport.edu/students/for-students/student-services/>) and Student Life page (<https://brazosport.edu/students/for-students/student-life/>) on the College website for information and resources. Faculty and staff are also here for you.

If you feel like your performance in this class is being impacted by your situation outside of class, please don't hesitate to talk with me. I want to be a resource for you. You are not alone.