

COMPOSITION I SYLLABUS

ENGL 1301-007 | MW 12:30-1:45 pm | STEM 121

Texas A&M University-San Antonio

Professor Robert J. Cavazos, MFA (he/him)

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Office: HALL 314C | Walk-in Student Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays, 2-4 pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

ENGL 1301 supports students in their belonging as writers. The course validates, celebrates, and explores students' languaging while introducing concepts and practices essential for success in writing. Students examine and explore their language practices and develop a digital writing portfolio.

Course Structure

ENGL 1301 generally features three units, each focused on a specific question. The first unit asks, "How Do I Belong?" This unit orients you to ENGL 1301 and to the FYC program more generally. You will form Writing Communities; negotiate labor contracts; create digital writing portfolios; gain familiarity with the Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center (WLDCC); and start developing definitions to key programmatic terms. You will also explore reading strategies and frameworks for understanding who you are as a writer. The first unit does not require a substantial assignment. Rather, you will participate in exercises related to the readings, engage in reflective writing and discussion, submit Reading Notes and Labor Logs, and complete your first Labor Journal assignment.

In the second unit, you will examine and celebrate your language practices and articulate the strengths those practices afford you as a writer and communicator. Asking "How Do I Language?," the unit invites you to explore your language practices, gain a deeper understanding of those practices, and learn to draw from your languages to succeed as a college-level writer. You will read a variety of texts about languages and languaging, complete exercises related to those texts, and explore your writing processes through extensive in-class writing and reflection. You will compose an assignment that invites you to (1) interview people who have shaped your languaging, (2) tell a story about how you developed your languaging, (3) teach an audience about one of your specific language practices, or (4) write an autoethnography that examines your languaging. You will also continue to submit Reading Notes, Labor Logs, and Labor Journals. Importantly, "language" is not limited to writing or speech and may include other forms of communication such as images, sound, fashion, food, etc.

The final unit asks, "How do I present my languaging?" You will engage with this question primarily by refining your digital writing portfolio. You will work through the collection, selection, and reflection process; compose the final version of your portfolio homepage; publish all final writing samples and materials; and finalize your portfolio's design. The unit culminates in the publication of the first completed version of your Writer's Portfolio project, including the publication of a Final Reflection.

Course Assessment

The assessment of student writing in ENGL 1301 reflects the values and commitments of the FYC program. At minimum, assessments resist Standard Language Ideology, including the imposition of a single standard against which student writing is judged. Specific assessment practices used in ENGL 1301 include, but are not limited to, labor-based grading and gamification.

Course Assignments

You will engage in a lot of low stakes writing this semester. You will also compose one high stakes project: a digital writing portfolio. You will work on this project all semester alongside a lot of smaller writing assignments to build your portfolio. Specifically, you will compose the following:

- 5 labor journals
- In-class writing exercises
- 1 unit assignment (draft & revision)
- Weekly Reading Notes and Labor Logs

In addition to frequent writing, you will also read often. Each week you will be assigned 1-2 texts. All readings will be provided free of charge on Blackboard as Open Educational Resources (OER). These texts may be academic articles, spoken word performances, visual images, etc. These reading assignments will inform and support the work we do as writers. Please purchase a notebook for notes.

Digital Tools

This course uses Blackboard and Digication. While instruction will be provided, it is your responsibility to learn how to attach files and submit work on Blackboard and Digication. If you have problems submitting assignments, try a different browser, contact me, or contact the ITS Help Desk: (210) 784-4357 or helpdesk@tamusa.edu. You also need a laptop to bring to class and reliable internet at home. If you do not have a laptop or reliable internet at home, please contact the ITS Help Desk.

Grades

I use labor-based grading, which assesses you on the quality of your labor. We will discuss and finalize a grading contract in class to identify the expectations for each obtainable course grade.

Writing Communities

This semester, you and your peers will work together in small groups called “Writing Communities.” While you sit down and put words on the page or screen on your own, you cannot succeed as a writer on your own. You need an audience who cares about you and your work to read and to respond to your work. This is how we learn and improve as writers. Your Writing Community will be that audience. They will read your work, give you helpful feedback, and support you along the way. They will also work with you to understand our readings and complete in-class exercises. To succeed as a university-level writer and critical thinker, you need a group of supportive colleagues behind you.

FYC Program Goals

In addition to the individual goals, you have as a first-year student and I have as your Composition professor this semester, we will also work to achieve the goals of the First-Year Composition program:

- increasing students’ confidence as writers and communicators
- helping students to see themselves as writers
- cultivating students’ sense of belonging as writers
- increasing students’ appreciation of their languaging
- increasing students’ self-determination and resilience as writers
- inspiring creativity, risk-taking, and versatility in student writing
- fostering students’ introspection and self-awareness as writers
- increasing students’ skills and engagement as readers
- strengthening students’ critical language awareness

COURSE POLICIES

Plagiarism

We recognize that what constitutes plagiarism depends upon context. As such, we work with you to learn how different genres, professions, and academic disciplines define plagiarism. In the context of your FYC classes, plagiarism is defined as the intentional use of another's "language, ideas, or original (not common-knowledge) material" without acknowledgement ("Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism"). If you are found to have committed plagiarism as defined here, your instructor may report you for academic dishonesty, and you may be subject to failing the assignment or even failing the class.

Attendance

Your success and development as a writer depend on your active participation within a community of writers. Consistent attendance in your FYC classes is crucial. Barring exceptional circumstances, students who are absent more than two weeks may not earn a passing grade. If you are struggling to attend class, we urge you to communicate both with your Academic Success Coach and with your FYC instructor, who will work with you to negotiate a plan for attending and completing the class.

Diversity

We are committed to fostering inclusive classroom environments where diverse backgrounds and perspectives are not only respected and understood, but are also recognized as powerful resources for building communities of writers both in the classroom and across campus. While working with classmates and instructors, we ask that you: 1) respectfully share your unique experiences and perspectives, 2) demonstrate respect for and openness to the perspectives and experiences of others, and 3) value the opportunity to learn from difference.

Demonstrating respect for those different from you not only prepares you for success in the classroom, but also prepares you for success as citizens and professionals in a global community. Because we value the respectful expression and exchange of ideas, students who use violent, harassing, and/or discriminatory language, including, but not limited to, sexist, racist, homophobic, classist, ableist, and/or anti-ethnic language, will be reported to the university and may be subject to Student Code of Conduct policies, as well as course conduct or civility policies your instructor has established. Lastly, the FYC program is committed to affirming linguistic diversity in student communication. We approach style and grammar as context-specific and do not advocate the use of Edited American English except when appropriate for the writer's genre and audience.

GAI Technology

The FYC program expects you to generate your own content this semester. However, there are situations and contexts within our courses where you may use generative artificial intelligence (GAI) tools to support your work as a writer. For example, GAI technologies such as ChatGPT can work well as a starting point for written assignments, assisting you with brainstorming, outlining, generating ideas, and collecting basic information about a topic/idea. Note that the emphasis here is on "support." GAI programs have been shown to provide biased information, to circulate misinformation, and to generate writing that is, at best, mediocre. For these reasons, FYC discourages you from using GAI technology to generate content **for you**. If you have reason to use GAI to generate content **with you**, then we ask that you consult with your professor before doing so. If your professor approves your use, you should acknowledge the GAI program you have used, and you should identify which portions of the text you submit were produced by GAI. Using GAI content without your professor's permission and/or without proper attribution qualifies as plagiarism.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Student Services and Support

Being a college student can be difficult. You are taking a lot of different classes that are asking you to complete a lot of different work, often at the same time. You are trying to balance that work with other responsibilities you might have like a job (or 2 or 3) and family. And you are doing all of that while you may be struggling with issues involving mental health, food insecurity, and academic success.

I know it is not easy, but you do not have to handle it all on your own. The university provides important services that can help you make it as a student. Please check out the list below, and please reach out to any that you might need. There is no shame in asking for and getting help. You can also reach out to me anytime you have a question or concern. Let me know what is going on as soon as you can, and we can work together to figure out some solutions to ensure your wellbeing and success.

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact Disability Support Services in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210, at (210) 784-1335, at <https://www.tamusa.edu/index.html>, or at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the Tools section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting CAB, room 202.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, call 210-784-1331 or visit Modular C, Room 166 (Rear entrance). All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services.

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2'). For more information and self-help resources, please visit www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling.

Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff, and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>. More information about [Emergency Operations Plan](#) and the [Emergency Action Plan](#) can be found by clicking on the links. Download the SafeZone App for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on “Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center” to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://bit.ly/WLDCCenter>.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students (DOS@tamusa.edu) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable them to provide any resources they may possess.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance if possible, and in special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations). You are also encouraged to visit the Patriots’ Casa in-person room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student’s GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as “F” grades and will impact the student’s GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices. Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. All A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide reasonable accommodations to pregnant students that would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition and are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K). Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a US citizen.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, [Student Code of Conduct](#), on our website, University Catalog and to comply with them, as well as federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide an environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notification.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated. Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Important Dates:

Aug. 26 th	First day of class
Sept. 2 nd	Labor Day Holiday
Sept. 11 th	Census Date
Oct. 7 th -18 th	Midterm
Nov. 11 th	Last day to drop with an automatic "W"
Nov. 27 th -30 th	Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec. 5 th	Last Day of Classes
Dec. 7 th -13 th	Finals Week

The complete academic calendar is available online:

<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>

COURSE CALENDAR

Unit 1: How Do I Belong?

Week 1: Getting Started

Topics – Introductions, Writing Communities, Labor Contract

Readings – All assignment sheets for the course

Assignments – No assignments due this week

Week 2: Building Portfolio, Building Allies (No class Monday!)

Topics – Digication, portfolio homepages, The WLDCC, FYC key term: “portfolio”

Readings – No readings for this week

Assignments – Labor Log

Week 3: Conferences

Topics – One-on-one check-ins, FYC key term: “reflection”

Readings – No readings for this week

Assignments – Labor Log, Labor Journal 1

Week 4: Reading Like a Writer

Topics – The RLW strategy, FYC key terms: “audience,” “purpose,” “genre,” “context”

Readings – [“How to Read Like a Writer”](#) by Mike Bunn

Assignments – Reading Notes, Labor Log

Week 5: You Are a Language Architect

Topics – Your written voice, Labor Contract, FYC key terms: “linguaging” and “translinguaging”

Readings – [“Workin’ Languages: Who We Are Matters in our Writing”](#) by Alvarez, Wan, and Lee

Assignments – Reading Notes, Labor Log

Unit 2: How Do I Language?

Week 6: Your Language, Your Self

Topics – The relationship between language and identity, language inventories, unit assignment sheet

Readings – [“How to Tame a Wild Tongue”](#) by Gloria Anzaldua, “Words” by Rita Ortiz, and “(Un)furbished History de Mi Lengua” by Michelle R. Garza

Assignments – Reading Notes, Labor Log, Labor Journal 2, How Do I Language? progress

Week 7: The Englishes You Speak

Topics – English as a living language, language mapping

Readings – [“3 Ways to Speak English”](#) by Jamila Lyiscott

Assignments – Reading Notes, Labor Log, How Do I Language? progress

Week 8: You Don’t Just Language with Language

Topics – Non-verbal linguaging reading strategies

Readings – [“San Antonio’s Murals,”](#) KENS 5, [“Reimagining How to Represent Black Lives through Art,”](#) [“Pan Dulce”](#) by Jose Hernandez Diaz, and “Pan Dulce for Breakfast by Priscilla Celina Suarez

Assignments – Reading Notes, Labor Log, How Do I Language? progress

Week 9: Writing Workshop

Topics – The drafting process, peer review and discussion, WLDCC support

Readings – No readings for this week

Assignments – Labor Log, Labor Journal 3, How Do I Language? progress

Week 10: Midterm Conferences

Topics – One-on-one midterm conferences, Labor Contract

Readings – No readings for this week

Assignments – Completed draft of the How Do I Language? assignment

Week 11: Writing Workshop

Topics – The revising and editing process, peer review and discussion, WLDCC support

Readings – No readings for this week

Assignments – Labor Log, How Do I Language? progress

Week 12: On Being Translingual

Topics – Translanguaging strategies, FYC key term: “Standard Language Ideology”

Readings – “English, Español, or Los Dos” by Isabel Baca, “Tex-Mex Code-Switching” by Jacinto Jesus Cardona, and “[Beyond Language Difference in Writing](#)” by Cristina Sánchez-Martin

Assignments – Reading Notes, Labor Log, Labor Journal 4, How Do I Language? progress

Week 13: The Measure of our Lives

Topics – Articulating the meaning and value of your languaging, FYC key term: “reflection”

Readings – [Nobel Lecture](#), Toni Morrison

Assignments – Reading Notes, Labor Log, Revised draft of the How Do I Language? assignment

UNIT 3: How Do I Present My Languaging?

Week 14: Collection, Selection, Reflection (No class Wednesday!)

Topics – Identifying, curating, and publishing portfolio writing samples

Readings – No readings for this week

Assignments – Labor Log, Completed draft of the Final Reflection

Week 15: Visual Design

Topics – Principles of design, developing and enacting a portfolio design

Readings – “[Beyond Black on White: Document Design and Formatting in the Writing Classroom](#)” by Michael J. Klein and Kristi L. Shackelford

Assignments – Labor Log, Labor Journal 5

Week 16: Final Conferences

Topics – One-on-one final conferences, completing the Writer’s Portfolio project

Readings – No assigned readings

Assignment – Completed version of the Writer’s Portfolio project