

# ENGL 1301

Composition I

**ENGL 1301\_016**

**Class Time: 11:00-12:15pm MW**

**Room: STEM 125**

**Instructor:** Nicolas Palumbo

**Office:** TBD

**Office Hours:** TBD

**Email:** [npalumbo@tamusa.edu](mailto:npalumbo@tamusa.edu)

## **Important Dates**

September 2<sup>nd</sup>: Labor Day, No Classes

November 27<sup>th</sup>: Study Day, No Classes

November 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>: Thanksgiving Holiday, No Classes

December 5<sup>th</sup>: Last day of scheduled classes

December 6<sup>th</sup>: Study Day, No Classes

December 7<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>: Final Exams

## **Welcome to 1301!**

Hi, everyone! Welcome to our class. Before we get started, I want to share with you the College of Arts and Science's land acknowledgment. If you aren't familiar with them, land acknowledgements are formal statements that both recognize and show respect for the Indigenous Peoples who are the traditional stewards of the land you are on. The statements are a small step toward reconciliation with Indigenous communities for the injustices those communities have experienced.

Here's the statement. Please read it with compassion, open-mindedness, and respect:

We acknowledge the land we are on, the Yanaguana, named for the life-giving waters of the San Antonio River. Indigenous peoples have lived in this area for approximately ten thousand years, and this long, rich history deserves telling. We pay respect to the elders past and present and future, and the many Indigenous people here today, including the Tap Pilam Coahuiltecan Nation and the Esto'k Gna/Carrizo-Comecrudo Nation. We recognize this region as home to the Payaya, Coahuilteca, Lipan Apache, and Comanche, as well as other diasporic peoples from Mexico, the Southern Plains, and the Eastern United States. A growing number of American Indians from a range of nations live here now, as Texas has the fourth largest population of American Indians in the United States. We thank the protectors of this land we all share.

Founded to serve the city's historically under-resourced and predominantly Mexican American Southside, Texas A&M University-San Antonio is situated on or near the ranchlands of the Mission San Francisco de la Espada and Mission San Antonio de Valero. We acknowledge the physical and cultural violence of colonialism as well as the vast contributions of Indigenous people to San Antonio. Indigenous peoples built and sustained the San Antonio area mission communities, and many of their descendants

continue to maintain the vibrancy of these communities. We acknowledge the complex history of the U.S. university system, which has expanded access to education but which has also profited from the dispossession of Indigenous land and from the labor of enslaved people. In the face of this history, we commit to decolonial work and to accountability, dialogue, and collaboration that honors the Indigenous ancestry of this land and its inhabitants. We pledge to learn about and act in solidarity with Indigenous struggles for social justice.

Thank you all for taking the time read the land acknowledgement. I appreciate it.

So let's get started. My name is Nicolas Palumbo – you can call me Professor Palumbo – and I'm thrilled to be working with you this semester. I truly believe writing and communicating are some of the most powerful things we do as people, and helping students grow and learn as writers is thus a practice I take pride in. I promise to do my best to help you this semester.

## **Course FAQ**

There are a lot of questions you probably have about our course right now, so let me do my best to answer them. If I don't answer a question you have, and/or if I don't answer a question in a way that's helpful, please let me know.

*What am I reading here?*

This is called a syllabus, or a course policy sheet. You'll get one of these for every college course you take. Basically, a syllabus describes the course you're about to take and outlines what you can expect from the course and your professor. (It also outlines what your professor will expect from you.) One way of thinking about a syllabus: it's an agreement between you and your professor. Another way of thinking about it: it's a guide to the course. If you ever have questions about a class you're taking, you can always ask your professor. You can also check the syllabus.

*What is this class?*

Good question. ENGL 1301 is the first of two courses you'll take in the First-Year Composition (FYC) program. This class is intended to help you transition as a writer from high school to college. It does so in a particular way: it validates and celebrates your language practices, it asks you to identify the strengths your languages give you, and it explores how you can use those strengths to belong as a writer at TAMU-SA.

*Why do I have to take this class?*

Another good question. In short: it's a requirement. But why is it a requirement? Writing and communicating are fundamental to who you are: you're always doing it, both with words and with other forms of communication. (This, by the way, means you are a writer.) Because you're always communicating, it's important that you do it well, especially as a college student (you're going to do a lot of writing in college). This class helps you to be a better writer.

*What will I learn?*

This one's a little hard to answer. Writing is messy, complex, and individual, which means that what you learn will depend on where you are as a writer right now and what you and I think you need to learn to take the next step in your journey. While your learning this semester may be a bit individual to you, there's one thing I hope you and your classmates will learn: how to use the strengths you already have as writers to succeed and to belong here as writers at TAMU-SA.

*What work will I have to do?*

We're going to do a lot of writing this semester. Mostly what's called "low stakes" writing. But there is one "high stakes" project you'll need to complete: a digital writing portfolio. We'll talk more about that in class. For now, you should know that's the one big project you'll work on all semester. You should also know you'll complete a lot of smaller writing assignments to build your portfolio. Specifically, I'll ask you to write the following:

- 1 unit assignment (draft and revision)
- 5 labor journals
- in-class writing exercises as assigned

I'll also ask you to complete weekly Reading Notes and Labor Logs. I'll give you all more information about these assignments later.

In addition to writing a lot, we're also going to read a lot. Each week I'll ask you to "read" one, sometimes two, pieces. These pieces may be academic articles, they may be spoken word performances, they may be visual images, etc. The readings will inform and support the work we do as writers.

*Is there a textbook?*

No, there's no textbook for this class. I'll provide all of the readings through Blackboard.

Because we're using Blackboard, and because you're creating a digital portfolio, you'll need to make sure you have reliable Internet access. If that's a problem for you, let me know (if you feel comfortable letting me know), and we can figure out some solutions.

*How will I be graded?*

I have a lot of concerns about the "conventional" ways writing gets graded. I won't get into all of that now (but I will soon). In the meantime, you should know that I use what's called labor-based grading. I'll describe this form of grading when we review our grading contract. For now, it's enough to know that labor-based grading grades you on how hard you work.

*What is a "Writing Community," and why do I need to join one?*

This semester I'm asking you and your classmates to work together in groups I'm calling "Writing Communities." Sure, you may write on your own. For example, you might sit down and put words on the page or screen on your own. But you don't succeed as a writer on your own. For that to happen, you need an audience who cares about you and your work to read and to respond to your work. That's how you learn as a writer. That's how you make improvements as a writer. And that's how you make something you're writing the best it can be. Your Writing Community will be that audience. They'll

read your work, give you helpful feedback, and support you along the way. They'll also work with you to understand our readings and to complete in-class exercises.

To succeed as writers—and, honestly, to succeed as students—we need a group of supportive people behind us. Your Writing Community is one of those groups.

Again, if there are any questions you have that I didn't answer, and/or if any of my answers don't make sense, please let me know as soon as you can. Thanks, y'all!

## **FYC Program Goals**

What's a goal? It's something specific that gives you focus and direction that you're working hard to achieve. You likely have individual goals you're trying to achieve this semester both as a student and as a writer (if you don't have goals right now, we'll work together to develop them). I also have goals I'm trying to achieve as an individual teacher, and those goals are different with every semester and every class. I'll share my goals with you all in class.

In addition to the individual goals I have, I'm also working to achieve the goals of the FYC program. This means that all of the work I do with you this semester is geared toward achieving the program's goals. Those goals are as follows:

- 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

I promise to work toward each of those goals in everything I do with and for you all this semester.

## **Course Policies**

As I wrote above, this course is part of the FYC program. This program has a few policies that I'll follow this semester, so I want to make sure you're aware of them. One of the policies involves plagiarism, one involves attendance, one involves diversity, and one involves AI programs such as ChatGPT.

### *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 depends upon your active participation within a community of writers. Consistent attendance in your FYC classes is, therefore, 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.

### *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.**

In addition to the FYC policies, I have a few additional policies you need to know about.

### *Open Communication Policy*

I operate my classes under what I like to call an Open Communication Policy, which means that I am open and available for communication regarding all coursework and course related questions you might have, whether that be one-to-one communication or group communication. What that means specifically for you as a student, is that anything and everything that might occur in your life as a person might force you into conflict with the policies and guidelines laid out in this document. If and when that happens, I implore you to communicate with me, in as much or as little detail as you are comfortable or able to share, what alterations can be expected, and if you can predict them ahead of time informing me about them ahead of time, or otherwise as soon as you are able. That way we can work together and construct a new pathway for you to succeed. For example, if you have some sort of family emergency that requires your attention, and that makes it so you are unable to come to class or turn something in on time, take care of yourself first, and let me know as soon as you are able so that I can accommodate you and your needs. I don't need a death certificate or a doctor's note,

we are all in a professional setting and so I will give and take you at your word. My job as an instructor is to make sure you have the best chance at succeeding as a student, so if your life as a student in my class is impacted by your life outside of it, communication is how we make sure we are all able to succeed in spite of those outside forces, rather than trying to ignore them.

## **University Policies**

The university also has policies we'll all need to follow this semester. Here they are:

### *Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities*

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights protection for individuals with disabilities. Title II of the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require that students with disabilities be guaranteed equal access to the learning environment through the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodations of their disability. If you have a disability that may require an accommodation, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for the coordination of services. The phone number for DSS is (210) 784-1335 and email is [dss@tamusa.edu](mailto:dss@tamusa.edu).

### *Emergency Preparedness*

JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification system. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff, and faculty who are registered in JagE Alert, will have the option to receive a text message, email, and/or phone call with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Preparedness and the Emergency Response Guide can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/upd/index.html>.

### *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.

### *Military Affairs*

Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance if possible, about 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@tamusa.edu](mailto:military@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 A&M System 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.

### *Respect for Diversity*

We understand that our students represent diverse backgrounds and perspectives. When we are equity-minded, we are aware of differences and inequalities and are willing to discuss them so we can act to resolve them. The University is committed to building cultural competencies, or the attitudes, skills, and knowledge that enable individuals and organizations to acknowledge cultural differences and incorporate these differences in working with people from diverse cultures. Respecting and accepting people different than you is vital to your success in the classroom, on campus, and as a future professional in the global community. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- Share their unique experiences, values, and beliefs.
- Be open to the views of others.
- Honor the uniqueness of their colleagues.
- Value each other's opinions and communicate respectfully.
- Use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the A&M-San Antonio community.

### *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, diversity, pluralism, 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, or gender expression. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to helping create 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 has staff members trained to support survivors 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 university. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and other healthcare providers) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about an incident of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331, Modular C.

### *Students' Rights and Responsibilities*

The purpose of the following statement is to enumerate the essential provisions of students' freedoms and responsibilities to learn at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. All students are required to follow all policies and regulations as set forth by The Texas A&M University System, including the A&M-San Antonio Student Code of Conduct.

#### 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 procedure 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, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, 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 staff, and the administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted and compliant with the University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and in the University Catalog.
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 a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their University email for any updates or official University notifications.
6. 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.

## **Student Services and Support**

Being a college student is hard. You're taking a bunch of different classes that are asking you to complete a bunch of different work, often at the same time. You're trying to balance that work with other responsibilities you might have like a job (or two or three), like family. And you're doing all of that while you may be struggling with some real issues involving mental health, food insecurity, academic success, etc. It's not easy, I know. Thankfully, you don't have to handle all of that 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's no shame in getting help.

### *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. In addition, you may notify the instructor if you are comfortable doing so.

### *Counseling 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 or someone you know is experiencing life stressors, emotional difficulties, or mental health concerns at Texas A&M University – San Antonio, please contact the Student Counseling Center (SCC) located in Modular C, Room 166 (Rear entrance) or call 210-784-1331 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Day 1 – Friday. After-hours crisis support is available by calling 210-784-1331. Please contact UPD at 911 if harm to self or harm to others is imminent.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free, confidential (to the extent permitted by law), and are not part of a student's academic or university record. SCC provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information, please visit [www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling](http://www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling)

### *Academic Learning Center*

All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center is an appointment based center where appointments are made through the Navigate

platform. Students access Navigate through Jagwire in the Student Services tab. The Center is active on campus outreaching to students to highlight services offered. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing [tutoring@tamusa.edu](mailto:tutoring@tamusa.edu) or calling (210)-784-1332. Appointments can also be made through JagWire under the services tab.

#### *Writing Language and Digital Composing Center (WLDC)*

The WLDC provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Students can schedule appointments with the WLDC in JagWire under the student services tab. 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://www.tamusa.edu/student-resources/writing-center/index.html>

#### **Final Note**

I really am committed to you and your success, so please know that I'm part of the team rooting for you. This means you can reach out to me any time you have a question or a concern. It also means you can reach out to me if you ever feel like you're falling behind. Let me know if that's happening as soon as you can, and we can work together to figure out how to get you where you want to be. You can also let me know if you're finding any parts of our class exciting or interesting. In other words, you don't just have to reach out if you're having trouble. I want you to succeed as a writer this semester, and I'm going to do what I can to help make that happen.