ENGL 1301: Composition 1

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Office Hours: Schedule a virtual meeting or drop by for an in-person meeting Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30 pm-1:45 pm

Term

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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.

Meet Your Instructor

Hi! I'm Christen Barron, but most students call me Professor B. I'm a writer, editor, and lover of all things creative. Originally from Savannah, Georgia, I hold an M.F.A. in Writing and a B.F.A. in Dramatic Writing from Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD). I've taught writing classes at Texas A&M-University San Antonio for eight years. For nearly a decade, I've taught community creative writing classes for The Deep Center's Young Author Project and San Antonio's Gemini Ink. Most recently, I serve as the faculty supervising editor for *Mosaic*, a student-led literary magazine at Texas A&M-University San Antonio. Outside of work, I love doing arts and crafts, hiking with my husband, Nick (he's an army flight paramedic), and rewatching nostalgic

movies from the 90s and early 2000s. *Zenon: Girl of the 21st Century* is my favorite Disney Channel Original Movie 💜

What to Expect this Semester

English 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 explores your language practices to help you find belonging as a writer at TAMU-SA.

This face-to-face English 1301 (Professor B.'s Version) course is hands-on. Active small-group participation and creativity is highly encouraged. Please know that you probably won't complete this class without drawing something at least once. I hope you like markers and sticky notes!

Required Texts and Materials

- Equipment: A desktop computer, laptop, or tablet with a reliable internet connection
- Software: A word processor, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs
- Software: Canva subscription (subscribe to the free version)
- Textbook: Free course readings linked on Blackboard
- School Supplies: pens, pencils, and paper for notes/in-class work

Course Communication

Important course updates and announcements will be posted regularly on the Blackboard announcements page each week. You'll also receive copies of Blackboard announcements and assignment reminders through your campus email account. If you need to contact me directly, please email christen.barron@tamusa.edu through your campus email account. You can expect a response in 1-24 hours during campus business hours.

Grading Agreement

This class uses labor-based grading. Please read through the FAQs below for a detailed explanation.

How will I be graded in this class?

By remaining in this course, you agree to be graded on your labor instead of the quality of your writing. This means you'll be graded on the overall work you put towards strengthening your writing skills instead of the quality of a specific piece of your writing. Each assignment and class session in this course is an invitation to practice and strengthen your writing skills. Thus, the more times you practice writing by completing an assignment and attending class, the higher your final grade. You'll still receive constructive feedback on your writing from both myself and your peers, but that feedback won't impact your final course grade.

How is my labor measured and tracked?

It can be difficult to "measure" labor, so I keep track of your writing practice/labor in the class by awarding you one point for each complete assignment you submit and every full week of class you attend.

Does labor-based grading mean I can submit incomplete or unfinished work and still get the same grade as everyone else?

No. You only earn one point for every assignment you submit that is "complete." Every assignment sheet that I share with you will describe in detail what makes that assignment "complete," "partially complete," or "incomplete."

In general, your assignment will be "partially complete" if it fulfills 50%-99% of the criteria required for the assignment to be "complete." You'll earn 0.5 points if your work is "partially complete." Your assignment will be "incomplete" if it fulfills less than 50% of the criteria required for the assignment to be "complete" or if you don't submit the assignment. If your assignment is "incomplete," you'll earn 0 points.

Keep in mind that you can make "incomplete" and "partially complete" assignments "complete" if you revise the assignment so that it meets the criteria for being

"complete." You can revise and resubmit assignments as many times as you need in order to make them "complete," and you may do so until Week 15.

Will I be penalized for submitting late work?

I'm not a fan of rigid due dates, but they help to keep coursework manageable. Plan to submit assigned coursework each Sunday to avoid falling behind in the course. I also recognize that everyone in this class is human. We get sick, we have emergencies, and "off" weeks. As a result, I accept late work until week 15 of the semester without penalty.

However, I don't respond in writing to late work. I only check for completion. To ensure your success and overall growth as a writer, try your best to observe all stated course deadlines. If you find yourself consistently struggling to submit work by stated deadlines please let me know so we can work together to find a solution that's equitable for the entire class.

Does attending class count as labor? What if I have to miss class? Can I make up the points?

Yes, preparing for and attending class counts as valuable labor that supports your success in the course. Therefore, I'll award you one point for every full week of class you attend. If you miss one class session, you earn 0.5 points for the week. If you miss all sessions for the week, you earn "0" points.

You can make up for an absence by attending an appointment in the Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center (WLDCC). For every appointment you attend, I'll give you 0.5 points back to your attendance grade for that given week. You'll need to have your tutor send me a session report in order for you to receive the 0.5 points.

I can excuse absences at my discretion, but I need you to communicate with me about why you're not attending. IMPORTANT: You don't need to disclose specific details about your situation when talking with me about your attendance.

Per university policy, I'll excuse absences for military service, for any religious holy days you may be observing per your individual faith, and for documented participation in a university-sponsored event.

Schedule of Course Topics

English 1301 is divided into four units that explore a different question about writing, language, and identity:

- Unit 1: "Why Language?"
- Unit 2: "What Are My Languages?"
- Unit 3: "Where Do My Languages Come From?"
- Unit 4: "How Do I Language?"

Please refer to our class Blackboard page and the [provided course calendar](#) for the most accurate weekly breakdown of course topics and assignment due dates.

Course Assignments

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:

- In-class writing tasks (submitted at the end of each week of class)
- Units 2-4 Assignments (submitted at/around the end of each unit)
- Unit 1-4 Reflections and Portfolio Updates (submitted at/around the end of each unit)

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. All these materials will be provided for you on Blackboard. For each reading that is assigned in the course calendar, I ask that you complete reading notes to support our in-class discussions. I'll provide everyone

with instructions and guidance on how to complete these notes during an upcoming class session.

Course Policies

As noted at the beginning of the document, this course is part of the FYC program. The FYC 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 our classroom environment, 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.

Classroom Environment

We are committed to fostering welcoming classroom environments where all students 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:

- respectfully share your unique experiences and perspectives
- demonstrate respect for and openness to the perspectives and experiences of others
- value the opportunity to learn from difference

Demonstrating respect for those different from you not only prepares you for success in the classroom, but it 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 will be reported to the university and may be subject to Student Code of Conduct policies, as well as any classroom conduct or civility policies your instructor has established.

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 one additional policy you need to know about.

Classroom Civility Policy

As mentioned at the beginning of this document, we complete a lot of small-group work in this class. Out of respect for me and your fellow classmates please try your best to be present and actively engaged with assigned small-group tasks. Unless you are receiving relevant accommodations from our campus Disability Support Services (DSS), please plan to arrive at class on time and stay for the entire session. If, due to an extenuating circumstance, you must arrive late or leave early, please let me know and communicate with your group if applicable.

University Policies and Resources

Please review the [University Policies document](#) where you'll find important semester dates and other university-wide policies and resources.

FYC Program Commitments, Goals, and Key Terms

Faculty in the FYC program teach according to a specific set of commitments that guide what we teach, how we teach, and how we interact with you. We also teach in an effort to achieve goals that are designed to support your growth and development as a writer. In short, our commitments and goals give us focus and direction and stand as a representation of what we value and believe in. If you're ever unsure of what I'm doing in the classroom or why I'm doing it, you can always refer to this part of our syllabus to help you understand where I'm coming from.

Here are the things I'm committed to in my teaching:

1. collaborating with you with care and compassion,
2. emphasizing your learning and growth,
3. encouraging you to take risks and embrace failure,
4. honoring variations in your reading and languaging, and
5. centering and sustaining your cultural and linguistic identity.

And here are the goals I'm trying to achieve:

1. cultivating your sense of belonging as a writer,
2. increasing your rhetorical awareness,
3. strengthening your critical language awareness,
4. deepening your introspection and self-awareness as a writer,
5. increasing your skills and engagement as a reader,

6. inspiring creativity, risk-taking, and versatility in your writing,
7. increasing your self-determination and resilience as a writer,
8. helping you to see yourself as a writer,
9. increasing your confidence as a writer, and
10. increasing your appreciation of your languaging

As your instructor, please know that I'm working toward each of those goals in everything I do with and for you this semester.

In addition to the commitments and goals, there's a set of key terms that will inform all that I do in the classroom. These terms will guide the work we do together, and they'll help us all to deepen our understanding of writing specifically and of languaging generally. If you ever need a reminder of what I'm trying to teach you, please refer to the list of terms below.

Here are our key terms and their definitions:

- Belonging: the feeling of being valued, respected, and included as you are
- Languaging: the ongoing process of developing and communicating meaning and ideas
- Translanguaging: the process of using one's full linguistic repertoire to interpret, understand, and communicate meaning and ideas.
- Audience: the person or the group of people languaging is intended to affect
- Purpose: the intended effect or impact of languaging
- Genre: a specific form of languaging that is shaped by social convention and audience expectation
- Context: the situation in which languaging occurs
- Rhetorical Awareness: the ability to assess context and to make intentional choices when languaging
- Critical Language Awareness: the ability to examine and critique how language functions in society
- Standard Language Ideology: the belief that a language has an ideal, consistent, and "correct" form that should be privileged