

ENGL 1301-034

Composition I

TR 12:30-1:45pm

Classroom Hall 305

Hello and welcome to 1301!

I'm looking forward to our time together this semester! Before we get into the meat and potatoes of the course, I'd like to take a moment to share the College of Arts and Science's land acknowledgement – this is just a formal statement that recognizes and shows respect for the Indigenous communities for the injustices those communities have experienced. Please take a moment to read the statement with compassion, respect, and open-mindedness:

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.

Thanks! Let's get started...

Let Me Be Real

My name is Samantha Bravo, but you can call me Professor Bravo or Ms. Bravo, if you prefer. I teach colorguard at Edison HS, and my HS kiddos call me Ms. Bravo, so I'm used to it! I'm excited to work with you all this semester! I think it's important to really see students as they are – human. I believe learning is an ongoing process, and the best way to learn is to try. Too often, I hear students dreading English classes because they either dislike reading or writing or simply don't have confidence as readers or writers. Since this is a Composition class, my goal is to help you all grow as writers. I will do my best to help you within my means this semester.

Anyway, here's some more background for you: I was raised on the South Side of San Antonio. I graduated from McCollum High School in 2017. I went to Texas State University for about a year and a half before I transferred home to attend TAMUSA. I got my Bachelor's from here in Fall of 2022, and Masters in 2025.

Enough About Me -- What Is This?

Alright, usually there is a lot of confusion when looking at all this text, so let's clear some of that up! If you have any other questions that I don't cover or if I need to answer a question differently, please let me know.

What am I reading?

This is a syllabus, aka course policy sheet. You'll get one (or have access to one) for every college course you take. This will describe the course you're about to take and outlines what you can expect from both the course and the professor. (It also outlines what the professor will expect from you!) You can think of it as a sort of agreement between student and professor, or you can think of it as a sort of guide for the course. If you ever have any questions about a class, you can always refer to the syllabus, if that doesn't help, then you can reach out to your professor.

What is this class?

Awesome question. ENGL 1301 is the first of two courses in our First-Year Composition (FYC) program. This class is meant to help you transition as a writer from high school to college. It does so in a particular way: it celebrates YOU and validates your own language practices, it asks you to identify the strengths your language gives you, and it explores how you can use those strengths to belong as a writer at TAMUSA.

I'm not studying English, do I have to take this class?

Another awesome question. Short answer: yes. *But, why?* Writing and communicating are fundamental to the human experience: you are always doing it whether it's with words or other forms of communication. (Yes, that means you are a writer!) Since we're always communicating, it's important that you do it well, especially in college (you'll be doing a lot of writing in college...) This class is meant to help you become a better writer.

Okay, so what will I learn?

This is one of those tough questions educators get. Writing is messy, complex, and individual – basically what you learn will depend on where you are as a writer now and what you and I think you need to learn to take the next step in your journey. So, while the learning you do is going to be unique to you as an individual, there's one thing I hope everyone will learn: how to use the strengths you already have to succeed and belong.

OK, what work will I have to do?

To absolutely nobody's surprise, we're going to do some writing this semester. However, the writing we will do asks you to reflect and look within to inspire and strengthen your identities as writers. We will have a total of about 50 assignments this semester including in-class writing and major assignments. The breakdown is as follows:

- 14 Working Journals
- 4 Unit Reflections
- 14 Sets of Reading Summaries/Notes
- In-class Writings
- 2 Major Unit Assignments
- A complete, accessible digital portfolio

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

So, is there a textbook?

NO. **cue applause** There is no textbook for this class. I will provide all of the readings through Blackboard. Since we're using Blackboard and because you're creating a digital portfolio, you'll need reliable Internet access. If this is going to be an issue let me know (if you feel comfortable), and we can figure out some solutions.

Something else I'm going to try out is a technology free classroom. I'm personally of the belief that physically writing out your thoughts is more fulfilling and memorable. You're more likely to remember something if you took the time to write it yourself. That's why handwriting your notes or other activities is something I want to heavily push. That being said, I am asking that you keep what I'm calling a "junk journal." The junk journal does not have to be a brand new clean journal, by all means please use a journal that you didn't finish in the past if you would like to save on materials. You still need access to a computer to type up your official assignment submissions as well as completing your digital portfolio.

What about my grade?

I have a strong opinion about the "conventional" ways that writing gets graded. I won't get too into it... yet. Just know I use labor-based grading. I'll describe it when we go over our grading contract. For now, know that labor-based grading depends on how much work you are willing to put in.

What about group work?

This semester, I'm asking you and your classmates to work together in groups that I'm calling "Writing Communities." Sure, you can write on your own. You can sit down and put words on paper 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 and make improvements as a writer. That's how you make sure something you write is the best it can be. Your writing community will be the audience you need to respond and support you along the way. I'm not asking you to be besties, just trustworthy peers.

FYC Program Goals

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.

FYC Key Terms

You're going to hear me use a set of terms repeatedly this semester. These terms inform how we teach and talk about reading and writing in the FYC program. The terms are important because they provide a way of thinking about reading and writing that will help you succeed as writers both in our class and in future situations in which you'll have to write, whether in school or outside of school. Please familiarize yourself with these terms so that you understand what they mean when I use them:

- *Languaging*: the ongoing process of developing and communicating meaning and ideas
- *Translanguaging*: the ability to fluidly access and use one's full linguistic repertoire
- *Standard Language Ideology*: the belief that a language has an ideal, consistent, and "correct" form that should be privileged

- *Critical Language Awareness*: the ability to examine and understand the social, political, and ideological aspects of language and communication
- *Portfolio*: a collection of writing samples that demonstrate a student's languaging
- *Reflection*: the act of examining and learning from one's actions, experiences, and writing
- *Audience*: the person or people students wish to affect through their languaging
- *Purpose*: the intended effect students wish to have on their audience
- *Genre*: a specific type or form of writing/communication that is shaped by social convention and audience expectation
- *Context*: the social, historical, and cultural circumstances in which students read and compose texts
- *Dig Deeper*: this isn't anything fancy or technical... it's exactly what it sounds like. I encourage you to look beyond the *what* of things and consider the *how*. Get beneath the surface of your idea.

You don't have to memorize these terms. I'd just like you to be familiar with them.

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.

University Policies

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

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.

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 course 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, equal 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 within their respective units.

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. Please be aware that 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, 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 such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that 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 citizen of this country.

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, gender identity, gender expression, and pregnancy/parenting 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, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with 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 a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

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. Conduct that infringes 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 (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/documents/Student-Handbook-2022-23.pdf>) or visit the resources available in the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-integrity.html>).

Important Dates:

The complete academic calendar can be found online:

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

Student Services and Support

Listen, being in college is tough. You're balancing a bunch of classes that are all asking you to do different kinds of work, and it all happens all at once. It's hard to balance all that work from school on top of other outside responsibilities, like a job (or multiple), family, or other life events. And, you may be doing all of that while also struggling with other personal issues like, mental health, food insecurity, academic success, homelessness, you name it. It is not easy, trust me, I've also been there, I am still there, **I KNOW**. Fortunately, you do not have to go through everything alone. The university provides important services that can help you make it as a student. Please explore the university's resources as you see fit. You don't have to announce your struggles to the whole university, but if you ever need anything **please REACH OUT**. There's nothing wrong with asking for a little help here and there. I can provide all links to the university's resources on our Blackboard page should you need them.

Final Note

I want you all to know that I am committed to supporting you every step of the way. You can reach out to me with any questions or concerns, and I will do everything I can to help you resolve your problem if it is within my means. I find feedback very important and would love to hear from you all throughout the semester. If there is anything I can do to help make the class more enjoyable or exciting, please let me know and I'll do my best to make it happen. I'm looking forward to helping you all grow as writers, and I'm excited to get to know you all as we spend time in the classroom together.