

## ENGL 1302—Composition II

0652, 0653, 0662 / Asynchronous / Online

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### Welcome to 1302!

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.

Let's get started.

## **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're likely familiar with syllabi by now, but here's a bit more about them in case you're not: 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?*

ENGL 1302 is the second of two courses you'll take in the First-Year Composition (FYC) program (the first was ENGL 1301). This class is intended to help you develop your abilities to make effective rhetorical/linguistic choices when you write and communicate. Please see the course description below for more information.

*Why do I have to take this class?*

In short: it's a requirement, just like ENGL 1301. 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 and communication are messy, complex, and individual, which means that what you learn will depend on where you are as a writer/communicator 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 make strategic and ethical choices when writing and communicating.

### *What work will I have to do? 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:

- Written Assignment #1
- Written Assignment #2
- Written Assignment #3
- Presentation
- 4 writing labor journals
- Reading Responses
- Digital Writer's Portfolio (e-digication)

In addition to writing a lot, we're also going to read a lot. Being an effective writer, what people tend to think of as a "good writer" requires a great deal of engaged reading. Each week I'll ask you to "read" one or two, pieces. These pieces may be academic articles, they may be video clips, personal essays, 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 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?*

You will be graded using the letter grading mode. Your grade will depend on the work that you do in the course. Missed assignments, late assignments (which are not accepted), incomplete assignments that do not meet the assignment criteria, all adversely impact your grade. On-time assignments that meet the assignment requirements and diligent participation on discussion boards will positively impact your grade. What you put into the course is what you will get out of it.

If you are having any difficulty understanding course or assignment requirements it is your responsibility to communicate that with me in a timely manner so that I can help you. Timely, in this sense, typically means well before grades for assignments, midterm, or finals are due. Unless in the case of an emergency, once you've missed a deadline, you will no longer have the opportunity to go back and submit the assignment.

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.

## **Course Description**

I provided a brief description of our course in the FAQs section above. But here's a more formal description of the class:

ENGL 1302 supports students in their development as critical language users. Building on and extending the examination of students' languaging started in ENGL 1301, the course examines the contexts and ideologies that produce judgments about students' language use. Students research topics such as standard language ideology; analyze and debate argumentative texts; and develop their abilities to make conscious, strategic, and ethical linguistic choices when writing and communicating. Students also produce the final version of their digital writing portfolios.

In this section of ENGL 1302, we will focus on how language functions to facilitate effective communication. To do this, we will analyze a variety of texts, which may include written articles, videos, visuals, essays, poems, presentations, and more. You will be expected to engage these texts seriously, thoughtfully, and critically. The writing that we do in the course will support this goal.

## **Course Outcomes**

All First-Year Composition (FYC) courses are part of the Texas Core Curriculum. They are specifically designated as "Core 10" courses, which focus on communication. According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, "Core 10" courses "involve the command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills that enable

people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience." These courses are expected to achieve the following Core Curriculum outcomes:

- **Communication** – The effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
- **Critical Thinking** – Creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
- **Personal Responsibility** – The ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making
- **Teamwork** – The ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal

Here are some of the ways your FYC course might help you to achieve these outcomes:

- **Communication** – Your instructor will likely teach you "rhetorical agency," which is the ability to make intentional choices when composing texts for different audiences and contexts
- **Critical Thinking** – Your instructor will likely ask you to analyze a variety of texts, with particular attention both to the choices the authors/artists made and to the way language functions in society. This is called Critical Language Awareness
- **Personal Responsibility** – You'll fulfill this outcome mostly through reflection on your writing practices and processes. This could take the form of "labor logs" and "labor journals."
- **Teamwork** – You'll do a lot of group-based work this semester. This could look like the formation of "Writing Communities," but it could also look like small-group discussions and collaborative activities.

Not all FYC courses will help you to achieve the Core Curriculum outcomes the same way, but they are all designed to help you achieve the outcomes.

## FYC Program Commitments, Goals, and Key Terms

Faculty in the FYC program help you to achieve the Core Curriculum outcomes through a specific set of commitments and goals. Our commitments guide what we teach, how we teach, and how we interact with you, and our goals 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 you're doing for this course, you can always refer to this part of the syllabus for context.

Here are the things FYC faculty are committed to in our 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 we're 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

FYC faculty promise to work toward each of those goals in everything we do with and for you this semester.

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

- 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 Agency: 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

## 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.

### *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.

### *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.

### Attendance

Your success and development as a writer depend upon your active participation within a community of writers. Consistent attendance in your FYC classes is, therefore, crucial. If you are struggling to attend class this semester, we urge you to communicate with your FYC instructor, who will work with you to negotiate a plan for attending, participating in, and completing the class.

*For our online course, participation in the weekly discussion boards constitutes participation. For your discussion to be considered engaged and to receive full credit, it must do the following: thoughtfully respond to the discussion prompt, respond to at least two of your peers (for every discussion board except the introductory post), and be on time. Our course runs from Monday through Friday. This means we start on Monday and your discussion post is due by Friday.*

*Please let me know if you have any personal issues that may make this requirement difficult for you. You'll find that I am empathetic and fair if you are honest with me.*

### Assignment Submission

*All assignments are to be submitted through Blackboard to the appropriate assignment link. Do not email your assignments to me even if you are having issues with Blackboard. The best possible way to prevent last minute issues is to not submit your work at the last minute.*

*If you are having any technical issues with Blackboard, contact the TAMUSA IT helpdesk (210-784-4357 or [helpdesk@tamusa.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamusa.edu)) to resolve any problems you are having.*

### Late Assignments

*Late work is not accepted in this course. Assignments are due in Blackboard on the date posted, by 11:59pm. If you submit or attempt to submit late work, you will not receive credit for that assignment.*

## *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:

- 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, 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 any classroom 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 audience, purpose, and genre.

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

## **Instructor Email Communication Policy**

Please note that all communication with the instructor outside of the classroom must be conducted via email, using your student email, not through Blackboard messages, which I do not use or check. Although I usually respond to emails promptly, it could take up to 48 business hours for me to respond to your email. This does not include weekends or holidays, as I do not check email during either.

For the most timely response, be sure to include the following information in your message:

- A subject line that includes your course information (ie. ENGL 1302\_900) and the reason for your message (i.e. Question Regarding Journal Assignment)
- An appropriate greeting (Dear Professor Thomas, etc)
- A professional and respectful tone throughout your message--Do not expect a response otherwise.
- Remember that while a message may be urgent for you, this does not necessarily mean it is urgent to me. While I will always do my best to respond in a timely manner (48 business hours or less)
- If for some reason, I have not responded to you within the timeframe specified, email me again and use (2<sup>nd</sup> Request, course number, and subject) in your message. This will alert me that I've missed a previous message and will make your email more urgent for me.
- You may email me for clarification, questions about the course, personal issues (if you feel comfortable doing so, research questions, and to set up an office visit.
  - o Do not email me to ask that I do labor that you, as the student, should do. This includes asking me to tell you what assignments you are missing (this information is available to you in Blackboard), asking what you missed when you didn't attend class (this is what office hours are for), or asking me to summarize your readings or assignment sheets for you. If you are having difficulty understanding anything, I am happy to meet with you one-on-one to discuss and clarify.
- With that being said, you may email me as frequently as you need to. I have always been of the mindset that the more questions one asks, the better they understand. I am here to support you! This is my primary mission as your instructor.

## **University Policies**

### **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.

## **Jaguar Writing Center**

The Jaguar Writing Center 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 make individual or group appointments with a writing tutor. The Writing Center is located in Central Academic Building, Suite 208. The Writing Center can be reached by emailing [writingcenter@tamusa.edu](mailto:writingcenter@tamusa.edu) or calling 210-784-1222. Students can also make appointments with the Writing Center under the Student Services tab in JagWire.

## **Students with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disability. If you believe you have a disability that may require accommodations, please contact Disability Support Services (DSS) for the coordination of services. DSS is located at the Main Campus on the 2nd floor of the Central Academic Building in suite 210. The phone number for DSS is 210-784-1335 and email is [dss@tamusa.edu](mailto:dss@tamusa.edu).

## **Active Military & Veterans**

The Office of Military Affairs is located in the Patriots' Casa, suite 202. The mission of the Patriots' Casa is to provide academic, life, and career skills support for student veterans, military personnel and their military families enrolled at our university. The Casa's dual purpose is to help ensure our students in the military community and their families achieve their academic objectives and are equipped for post-graduation success.

## **Student Counseling and Wellness Services**

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 Office of Student Counseling & Wellness Services (SC&WS) located in Modular C, Room 166 (Rear entrance) or call 210-784-1331 between the hours of 8:00AM and 5:00PM. All mental health services provided by SC&WS are free, confidential (as the law allows), and are not part of a student's academic or university record.

SC&WS provides brief individual, couples, 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)

In a crisis situation, please walk-in to the Student Counseling & Wellness Services (SC&WS) office any time between the hours of 8:00AM and 5:00PM to be seen by a licensed clinician. After hours, please contact UPD at 911 or text "HOME" to 741-741 24/7/365 to connect with a trained crisis counselor. The National Suicide Prevention hotline also offers a 24/7/365 hotline at 1-800-273-8255.

### **General's Store**

General's Store is an on-campus food pantry to serve members of the campus community who need food assistance. Located in Patriot's Casa room 110, this service is available Wednesdays (2-6 p.m.), Thursdays (9 a.m. – 1 p.m.) and by appointment. For more information email [foodpantry@tamusa.edu](mailto:foodpantry@tamusa.edu) or visit <http://www.tamusa.edu/mays/general-store/>

### **Final Note**

I 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.