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English 101.3980

Fall 2013

College Reading and Composition (UC:CSU) – 3 units

**Digital Literacies: Writing, Reading, Thinking, and Socializing in the Age of Digital Media**

TTh 5:10 pm - 6:35 pm

GC160

Website: <http://citedatthecrossroads.net/eng101f13/>

Course Description:

From the course catalog:

This course teaches students to write college-level essays in response to reading and analyzing college-level texts. Students will be required to write analytically and read critically texts that reflect cultural diversity and texts focusing on leadership as it relates to both historical and contemporary issues. Full-length works and essays may be included. Students will be required to write a number of research-based essays in which they accurately, clearly and coherently synthesize and analyze ideas and information from a variety of sources and points of view.

Prerequisite: Passing English 28 or an equivalent class with a grade of C or better OR qualifying for this class through the appropriate assessment test results.

You are beginning your college career in the middle of some of the most rapid technological change the world has ever known. Because of changing communication technologies (the internet, smartphones, social media like Facebook) your everyday experiences of reading and writing are different not only from your parents' and professors, but even from those of the students who were taking English 101 four years ago. The skills that college English teaches—understanding and critically engaging with what we read, see, and hear, crafting arguments to get our point across—are still vital for academic, workplace, and personal success. But new kinds of media mean there are many new ways to practice these literacies.

In this composition class we'll practice a range of writing genres, from personal essays and thesis-driven arguments to newer kinds of online writing (such as blogs and Twitter) that have a huge influence in public life. Through classroom discussion, writing assignments, and online participatory learning, you will critically explore your personal experiences with digital media, while reading about its history, power structures, and possible futures. Together, we will work through the writing process to develop your ideas on these subjects from fleeting thoughts and opinions into persuasive, thoughtful arguments and analyses. The course doesn't require or expect any technological know-how beyond the ability to send an email and create a Word document. But if that's as far as you go at the moment, you'll probably end up with a few extra skills.

Instructional Method

The lecture format will be used sparingly, to introduce and unpack key concepts. We will engage in small group and class discussions as well as methods and tools that promote active and engaged learners are the core of this class, regardless of the size. Small group work encourages collaboration and noncompetitive learning, as well as an additional space for active in-class participation. Because this is a writing intensive course, some class time will be dedicated to writing instruction, workshops, and individual conferences. Students will complete some of the required work online.

Required Texts: Readings and exercises as assigned, which will be available through the course website. You are not required to purchase any books. However, you are required to bring printed copies of readings to class.

NOTE: To save you money, we will be using the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) for instructions on writing essays, using research in your papers and for writing-related exercises. The website is: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>  
Please make sure that you can access this website.

NEW! Student email: Please go to: <http://www.wlac.edu/studentemail.pdf> and learn how to sign up for college email. Doing so gives you access to Microsoft applications like Word documents, EXCEL spreadsheets, presentations and photos. It also helps keep you in the loop on communications from your instructors.

**Course Level SLO: At the end of the course, the successful student will be able to argue and support a point (in writing) using extensive evidence from outside sources.**

What we will practice and strive to learn in this class – Outcomes of Student Learning

1. Read effectively and critically for gathering information, for meaning, for cultural understanding and enjoyment
2. Write effectively for a variety of audiences, and mediums, using the conventions of standard English, a clear focus, appropriate support/evidence and logical organization with few errors (grammar, punctuation, spelling, sentences)
3. Collect and organize research data, using credible sources to write a convincing/persuasive document
4. Use appropriate MLA citations/works cited
5. Analyze, synthesize and evaluate information to assess the validity and usefulness of an argument
6. Distinguish factual statements from judgmental statements and distinguish knowledge from opinion.
7. Listen and speak (actively and effectively) by questioning, clarifying and supporting one's ideas and the ideas of others
8. use writing processes to generate, develop, share, revise, proofread, and edit writing projects

### Grading and Course Expectations

Your grade for the course will be calculated from a total of 200 points, awarded as follows:

- Participation, including in-class writing: 20 points
- Regular and thoughtful Twitter posts: 20 points
- Blog entries: 30 points (up to 5 per entry and 2 per comment)
- Assignment 1: 30 points
- Assignment 2: 35 points
- Assignment 3: 40 points
- Assignment 4: 25 points plus revision score

Here's what you'll be required to do:

1. Show up and keep up (10% of your grade, and a prerequisite for the rest)
  - Do the reading. Really. Whether you skim along and aim just to keep up, or look up full texts and go online to search out commentary and examples and share your new knowledge with your internet friends, is up to you. But if you don't read, you won't be able to participate meaningfully in class or to understand the writing assignments. This includes checking the course blog, where I will post announcements and you will post assignments, several times a week. I will check whether you're keeping up by occasionally assigning surprise in-class writing activities.
  - Participate. This doesn't mean talking all the time in class. It means pulling your weight: engaging in active listening, speaking when you have something to say, and putting in the necessary work both in full-class sessions and in small-group workshops. If you are present, pull your weight in group work, and show me that you are keeping up with and thinking about the reading, you will get full points for in-class participation.
2. Write online: Twitter and WordPress (25%)
  - Much of the writing many of you are likely to do in your college and professional lives will be online. Twitter's social network and WordPress's blogging platform are popular ways for individuals and businesses to maintain a web presence. Some of you will certainly have used them before. We will spend a full class session early in the semester going over Twitter and blogging, and how their use in a professional or educational setting might differ from what you're familiar with.
  - A blog and Twitter rubric is linked at the course WordPress site. Follow its instructions and you will get full points for online participation.

You will be expected to:

- Tweet at least twice a week, hashtag #eng101f13. You may also choose to offer a question or comment about the reading, a retweet of a relevant link, or make a

reply to someone else. We'll crowdsource questions and interpretations, creating a stream of content that will help you to come up with ideas for your assignments (as well as letting me plan classes that cover the things you really want to know.) Insults or hateful language on the Twitter stream will be treated the same way as if you had yelled them out in class: as serious verbal abuse.

- Blog three times, once for every course unit, in response either to discussion questions I will provide or to explore a question or idea of your own related to our reading and writing. You must also comment thoughtfully on a classmate's post five times over the course of the semester.

### 3. Write formally: major assignments (65%)

You will turn in four formal assignments in the class, each in a different writing genre.

- Assignment 1: personal writing: an exploration of your digital media practices
- Assignment 2: analytical response: summarizing and analyzing a course reading of your choice
- Assignment 3: persuasive essay: developing a thesis-driven argument about course topics
- Assignment 4: reflective writing: a letter introducing a portfolio of your two best papers

Your grade for each assignment will account not only for the quality of what you have produced, but for your level of commitment to the process involved in producing it. This means that revising diligently, responding thoughtfully in workshops, and demonstrating improvement over the course of the semester can result in a better grade than turning in perfect work at the final due date. It also means that you would derive little benefit from turning in work that was not your own even if you were able to do so without my realizing it. A detailed grading rubric will be handed out with the first paper assignment.

#### Class Format:

Students are expected to arrive to class on time with the necessary materials (this means annotated print or digital copies of the reading) and having completed the assigned reading and/or writing in advance of class. Classroom activities will include discussion of assigned readings, in-class writing and peer-editing of student drafts. A considerable portion of a student's grade will depend on class attendance and performance.

#### Group Work:

We will be doing lots of small group work in this course. Participating actively in the small groups as well as in larger classroom discussion is essential. To do so well, please read, study and think about the assigned material before coming to class. Participation in these activities counts towards the participation/attendance portion of your grade.

#### Policies:

These policies assume that students think about academic performance in a professional manner, that academic training should be treated as a job for which one will be evaluated in accordance with stated criteria. Further, as academic training prepares students for

careers and professions, the following policies assume that student demonstrate in their college course work the same responsible maturity that is demanded in the workplace.

1. Attendance. Class attendance and participation are essential since we do many in-class writings and much group work, which are part of a student's grade in the course. If you must miss class and know this in advance, please contact me so that we can discuss work and assignments that you will miss. For excused absences – student illness, an accident, religious holidays – you must contact me, and arrange to make up work missed, and that work must be submitted within a week. Please email the instructor or a classmate to find out the assignment for the next class.

Other absences will be considered unexcused. According to WLAC policy, you may be excluded from class if you miss more than 3 classes. Further, arriving late to class or leaving prior to the scheduled ending counts toward your participation grade as well. Arriving 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early will count as a half-absence; arrival or departure of 30 minutes will count as a whole absence.

2. Deadlines: All assignments must be turned in on the deadline BOTH via email and in person. You are allowed one late paper which will be due within one week of the original deadline. After that it will not be accepted. A missing assignment earns an F, severely impacting your final grade in this class and your chances of passing.

### 3. Format

- All papers must be word-processed, double-spaced (no double-double-spacing between paragraphs).
- All papers must be sent both via email and brought to class.
- All papers must include a copy of one working draft, plus peer reviews from in-class writing workshops.
- Documenting sources: Each assignment requires MLA in-text citations and a Works Cited section. Listen carefully for directions and use Purdue's OWL for correct MLA Style. Additional, credible sources are also required.
- If you do not bring your annotated text of the day's reading to class, I will assume you have not done the reading which will negatively impact your grade.
- Courtesy: Be considerate to me and your fellow students by not texting or eating in class, by not going in and out of class or talking out of turn as this disrupts the learning process for everyone.

NOTE: Plagiarism – Plagiarism is passing off someone's else's ideas and information (including writing) as your own. Turning in a paper written by someone else, whether it is from the Internet or written by a friend or family member who gives you permission, even submitting a paper in one class that you wrote for another class, is deliberate plagiarism. Any instance of plagiarism will result in failure on that assignment and will be reported to the Vice President of Student Services. Careful citation of your sources, in the form of an in-text citation and a Works Cited page will prevent problems in this area.

For some assignments, I may require you to furnish photocopies or PDFs of your research. Plagiarism is counterproductive, non-writing behavior that is unacceptable in a course intended to aid your growth as an individual, accomplished writer.

#### Dropping the Course:

According to college policy, you may be excluded for excessive absences or for not following the Standards of Student Conduct (printed in the Schedule of Classes). If you drop the course, be sure to do so officially at the Admissions and Business Offices. Otherwise, the grade drops to a “D” or “F” and cannot be removed. Pay attention to drop dates in the Schedule of Classes.

#### Resources:

##### Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the DSP&S Office, in the Student Services Bldg 320, 310.87.4430 as soon as possible to better ensure such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. <http://www.wlac.edu/dsps/>

##### Writing Lab:

I encourage students to visit the Writing Lab, located on the first floor of the library, to get help in writing their papers or online at <http://library.wlac.edu/writinglab.html>. Writing tutors can help you in sharing your response to the instructor’s assignment. They do not, however, proofread or edit your writing. They also expect you to bring in clear directions for the essay assignment.

In addition, I recommend that you use on-line resources, such as <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>. If you have continuing problems with grammar, verbs, spelling, etc. consider taking the appropriate Learning Skills class.

If you’d like more review and practice of specific grammar and sentence problems, please use

<http://www.chompchomp.com/csfs01/csfs01.01.htm>

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/runons.htm>

#### Evaluation of Assignments

Your instructor does not correct or copyedit essays. This means that students are responsible for proofreading their own papers. The instructor evaluates essays and makes suggestions for improvements in organization, use of evidence, thesis formulation, critical thinking and style. You also have the benefit of peer evaluations for which you need to email your essay draft to the other students in your writing group. You will also have the opportunity to consult with tutors in class and in the Writing Lab.

\*Keep all your graded essays. You'll need them for the final assignment

Grades

“A” range  
100-90  
points

Students who earn grades in the “A” range generally demonstrate rigorous and successful completion of course learning outcomes by attending all except one or two class meetings well-prepared for engaged discussion, carefully completing and studying assigned readings, applying course concepts in sophisticated, complex, and well-written analysis, demonstrating superior writing and analytical skills, and taking intellectual, emotional, and spiritual risks by engaging in deep self-reflection, exhibiting curiosity, and making strong, insightful connections beyond the immediate classroom. Students may achieve this level of proficiency through demonstration of qualitative improvement by the end of the semester or through consistent, superior work.

“B” range  
89-80  
points

Students who earn grades in the “B” range generally demonstrate successful completion of course learning outcomes by attending nearly all class meetings prepared for engaged discussion, carefully completing and studying assigned readings, applying course concepts in complex, mature and well-written analysis, demonstrating good, solid writing and analytical skills, and taking intellectual, emotional, and spiritual risks by engaging in self-reflection, exhibiting curiosity, and making insightful, creative connections beyond the immediate classroom. There may be some areas of learning and skills development that reflect a level of competency but not proficiency.

“C” range  
79-70  
points

Students who earn grades in the “C” range generally demonstrate completion of course learning outcomes by attending class regularly but without having consistently completed the reading assignments or reflecting on it, participating in discussion through generalities or superficial engagement with concepts and texts, inconsistently bringing assigned texts to class, applying course concepts in un-nuanced written analysis, and by producing written work that meets the minimum standard for college-level writing and analysis. There may be areas of learning and skills development that need attention or adjustment (time management, note-taking, active reading, for example), or there may be a general inconsistent effort to engage course concepts, readings, and discussion though the skills level is present in the student.

“D” range = 69-60 points – Inadequate

“F” range = 59 points and less - failing  
work and effort

Your final grade is based on instructor evaluation of all written work as well as meaningful participation in class; therefore, it is important not only to attend class as often as possible but to come prepared to discuss the readings and to write in class. Each essay assignment through the semester earns increasingly more points, based on the assumption that, over the semester and with practice, your writing/thinking/research will sharpen and improve. For this required class for transfer, research from credible sources and in-text citations which use correct MLA Style are incorporated into/required of all writing assignments as this is expected and required at 4-year colleges and universities.

Quizzes and other assignments as specified also earn points toward your final grade, and cannot be made up.

### Grade Challenges

Grading is not an exact science. Even with a clear rubric, it involves considerable subjectivity on my part. However, if you want to challenge an essay grade, I have three stipulations. First, that you wait at least 24 hours after you have received your grade to challenge it. Second, that you dispute your grade within a week of receiving your grade. And, third, that you carefully explain in a typed document (no e-mails, please) how your paper meets the rubric's criteria for the grade you think you deserve. I do not accept any verbal challenges of my grading. I will take your submitted challenge very seriously, and I will not in any way punish you for your disagreement.

You are responsible for keeping track of all assignments and their grades/points and can verify your average.

### Syllabus Amendments:

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus, as appropriate and necessary to meet class needs. All such changes will be announced in class, and it is the student's responsibility to be aware of any such changes. It is not the instructor's responsibility to inform absent or late students of changes to the syllabus. Therefore, absent or late students should check with a reliable classmate in order to be aware of any changes in the syllabus.

### **Weekly Schedule of Readings and Assignments:**

Readings and assignment details are subject to change. Updates will be shared in class, on Twitter, and at the course blog; the online schedule will always be the most up to date. Note that readings and online tasks must be completed before the class date listed. Assignments must be turned in via email (in .rtf, .doc, or .docx format) before class AND brought in hard copy to class for workshops, unless I tell you otherwise.

#### **Week 1**

Tues 8/27 - Introducing the class and one another

Thurs 8/29- Introducing the syllabus, the course themes, and the way we will approach the writing process

- Admin: fill out confidential questionnaire; sign up for Twitter (class hashtag #Eng101f)
- Read: "Why Tweet? (and how to do it)" (web)

#### **Week 2**

Tues 8/3 - Twitter, Wordpress and the Internet

- Read: Clay Shirky, Here Comes Everybody Chapter One: It Takes a Village to Find a Phone (Readings)
- Write: Answer to discussion question (blog)

Thurs 8/5 - Writing and the digital generation

- Read: Mark Bauerlein, Introduction to The Digital Divide (Readings)
- Write: Answer to discussion question (blog)
- An introduction to yourself (first blog post, bring 3 copies to class).

### Week 3

Tues 9/10 – Immigrant or Native?

- Read: by Marc Prensky (web or Digital Divide)
- Read: “Generation Myth” by Siva Vaidhyanathan (on [Readings](#) page)
- Write: Respond to the readings on Twitter and in the comments section of this blog. Which author do you agree with? Do you see a point of view neither of them see? Where do you see yourself in their paradigms?
- Write: Based on peer comments, revise your blog introduction. Add an image.

Thurs 9/12

- Read: Assignment 1 Handout
- Write: Fix your intro if you haven’t already
- DUE: Media diary – 1 hard copy to class, 1 emailed (.doc, docx, or pages)

### Week 4

Tues 9/17 – Does Social Media Separate Us From One Another

- Read: Sherry Turkle [“The Flight From Conversation”](#) (Remember to Tweet)
- Write: Answers to discussion questions on blog (respond to each other)

Thurs 9/19

- DUE: 2 – 3 page draft of Assignment 1 (bring 4 hard copies)

### Week 5

Tues 9/24

- Read: Danah Boyd [“Truth, Lies and ‘Doxxing:’ The Real Moral of the Gawker / Reddit Story”](#)
- Write: Answers to discussion questions on the blog
- DUE: Essay Assignment 1 (Final Draft)

Thurs 9/26

- Read : Clay Shirky, “The Political Power of Social Media”([Readings](#))
- Write: Answer to discussion questions

## Thinking with Technology. Genre: analytical response

### Week 6

Tuesday 10/1

- Read: Nicholas Carr, [“Is Google Making Us Stupid?”](#) (note: it’s long!)
- Write: Answers to discussion questions
- Bring to class: one-page summary and sample analytical claims drawing from Carr, Pariser, Shirky, Turkle, or Boyd.

Thursday 10/3

- Watch: TED Talk – [The Filter Bubble](#) (Eli Pariser)
- Write: Answers to discussion questions

**Week 7**

- No class this week – individual conferences – bring rough draft of Assignment 2 to conference

**Week 8**

Tuesday 10/15

- Read: Siva Vaidhyanathan pp 82 – 114 “The Googlization of Us” from [\*The Googlization of Everything\*](#)
- Write: answers to discussion questions.
- Bring to class: 4 hard copies of Assignment 2 draft

Thursday 10/17

- Read: handout on annotated bibliography
- Write: MLA style citations of ALL sources read or viewed so far

**Week 9**

Tuesday 10/22

- DUE: Final Draft of Assignment 2

Thursday 10/24

- Handout – Assignment 3 & Annotated Bibliography

**Week 10 – Defining digital problems: technological or social?**

Tuesday 10/29

- Read: Peter Maass and Megha Rajagopalan, [“That’s no cell phone, that’s my tracker”](#)
- Write: Answer to discussion questions

Thursday 10/31

- Due: Annotated Bibliography (paper only)

**Week 11**

Tuesday 11/5

- Due: thesis and rough plan for essay 3
- Bring to class to discuss in writing group

Thursday 11/7

- TBD

**Week 12**

Tuesday 11/12

- Bring: Current draft (at least 4 pages, no more than 6) with copies for writing group

Thursday 11/14

- MLA Style Citations

**Week 13**

Tuesday 11/19

- No Class – 1-on-1 Conferences
- Discussion of portfolio / let me know which essay (1 or 2) you're revising

Thursday 11/21

- Writing a good introduction
- (Optional for Extra Credit) Post a 300 – 500 word blog post on your research paper topic. Include relevant links, check over carefully.

**Week 14**

Tuesday 11/26

- **Essay 3 Due**

Thursday 11/28

- Thanksgiving! No class!

**Week 15**

Tuesday 12/3

- Bring: Draft you're revising with plan for revision with copies to workshop with writing group

Thursday 12/5

- Blog: reflections on the class / what you thought was good / what could be improved for next time

**FINALS WEEK**

Tuesday 12/10

- **Portfolio Due by 5:30 PM in GC 280Q**