

ENGL 1301: Composition I

Course Workbook

Spring 2026 • Tuesday/Thursday

CRNs 21206 & 21207

El Paso Community College – Transmountain Campus



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Important Links

Keep these links handy throughout the semester:

- Course Website: kelli.ninja
- Blackboard: online.epcc.edu
- Class Recordings: [YouTube Channel](#)
- Writing Center Info: [How to Visit the Online Writing Center](#)



YouTube Channel



Writing Center Info

How to Use This Workbook

Welcome to ENGL 1301! This workbook is your home base for the semester—everything you need is right here in one place.

What's Inside

This workbook contains your schedule, readings, pre-reading questions, assignment sheets, and reference materials. Whether you're using it online or in print, it's designed to be your go-to resource. You won't have to hunt through emails or Blackboard to find what we're working on—it's all here.

The workbook follows our semester week by week. Each section includes what you'll read or watch before class, questions to get you thinking, and the work we'll do together. Think of it as your training manual for the semester.

A Note About Videos

Throughout the workbook, you'll see links and QR codes for videos. These are marked with **[video]** so you know sound will play. If you're in a library, coffee shop, or anywhere others might be around, grab your headphones first. It's just courteous—and you'll focus better anyway.

Links and QR Codes

You'll find two ways to access online content:

- **QR codes** work great if you're reading a print copy or want to pull something up quickly on your phone. Just open your camera app and point it at the code.
- **Typed links** are there for when you're already on a computer or prefer to click/type/copy.

Both take you to the same place—use whichever works best for you in the moment.

Why Everything Is Here

I've designed this workbook so that whether you print it out and write in the margins or use it on your tablet, you have what you need. The readings are included (not just linked), and the questions are on the page when you need them.

This means you're not toggling between five different tabs or wondering where that one handout went. One place. One resource. Less stress.

How This Semester Works

Think of this course like training for a marathon. You can't skip weeks of training and then expect to run 26 miles—your body isn't ready, and honestly, it would hurt. Writing works the same way. We build skills incrementally: prewriting, drafting, feedback, revision. Each step prepares you for the next.

The schedule might feel like a lot at first glance, but it's paced intentionally. If you keep up with the reading and show up ready to work, you'll be in good shape. Fall behind, and catching up gets harder—not because I'm being strict, but because writing skills build on each other.

So stay with it. Do the homework before class. Come ready to think and discuss. The work you put in throughout the semester is what makes the final essays possible.

One More Thing

This workbook is yours. Write in it. Highlight things. Dog-ear pages. Make it messy with your thinking. That's what it's for.

Let's get to work.

--Kelli

Course Schedule and READ|WATCH

Th 1/22 – Note-Taking Introduction

READ | WATCH

- Pre-Reading: Note-Taking (below)
- Class Notes Assignment (below)

You only need to watch the video you were assigned in class. If you missed class, check your email—I let you know which one to watch.

- [How I Take Notes: Jim Kwik](#) [video]
- [Your Perfect Notes Are Making You Fail](#) [video]
- [Handwriting Literally Rewires Your Brain](#) [video]
- [5 Active Reading Strategies for Textbook Assignments](#) [video]
- [Lecture #11: Taking Notes Effectively](#) [video]

DUE

- Syllabus Quiz [\[Blackboard\]](#) The Syllabus is at the end of this Workbook [here](#). Use it as you take the quiz to get a cool 100!
- Optional: Contact Information Form [\[Blackboard\]](#)



Jim Kwik Notes



Perfect Notes



Handwriting & Brain



Active Reading



Taking Notes

Pre-Reading: Note-Taking

Before our first full class meeting, you'll read about note-taking and watch one video about it. These questions will help you engage with the material.

Before you watch, consider:

1. How do you currently take notes in class? Be honest—describe what you actually do, not what you think you should do.
 2. Have you ever looked back at old notes and had no idea what you meant? What made them useless?
 3. What do you think is the main purpose of taking notes—to have a record, to help you pay attention, to process information, or something else?
 4. Based on the title of your assigned video, what do you think it will be about?
 5. What's one thing about note-taking that you wish worked better for you?
-

In-Class Notes Assignment

You will take handwritten notes for each day of class lecture/discussion and for the READ|WATCH items assigned as homework.

How To Take Notes In A Skills Class

Any writing class, much like math or reading, is a skills class. Instead of learning facts and dates, you are learning how to do something. As such, taking notes in a skills class requires you to focus on what to do and how to do it. As we go through the course, this is at the heart of our study. I expect your notes to become more thorough and thoughtful as the semester progresses and I will grade more strictly as we move toward the end.

What and How

As you take notes, focus on what and how. Here are some examples and tips:

Discussion of assignments & writing skills:

- What is required
- What key things make it stand out
- What things are not allowed
- Due dates
- Processes and steps

Sample Essays:

- Format
- Key parts/sections
- Successful techniques
- Specific wording or elements required
- Examples that stand out

Grammar & Mechanics:

- Basic rules in your own words
- Tests or rules for checking grammar
- Examples that stand out

Miscellaneous:

- Questions you have for me
- Ideas that come to you for assignments you're working on

- Things to worry about later so that you can focus

Integrate your own style. If drawing lines, arrows, sketches, or other things help you, then do that.

You may find it useful to use the list under "In-Class" column on the schedule as a starting outline for your daily notes, though you should include any other things discussed as well.

Homework READ|WATCH Notes Requirements

For Instructional Readings (Writing Guides, Textbook Sections, etc.), include at least one quote from each reading about writing. Here are some possibilities:

- Something you liked or found helpful
- Something you didn't know before
- Something you're not sure about or have a question about

Label each quote clearly with the source and explain briefly why you chose it.

For Student Sample Essays include a brief response noting:

- Something you liked about the essay
- Something you didn't like or that didn't work for you
- Something that stood out to you as it relates to the assignment or the topic you're working on

Grading & Attendance

Daily Stamp/Initial System

At the end of each class period, I will stamp or initial your notes. This serves as both your participation record and verification for the timeliness of your notes.

If you are in class but do not have notes to stamp, you will lose attendance and participation points.

When You Miss Class

- Watch the class recording from the class YouTube playlist
- Take notes on the recording
- Bring those notes to the next class for stamp/initials
- Late points will apply, but you still get credit. Refer to the syllabus policies for how long I take late work and how many points are deducted.
- Clearly mark notes as "makeup notes" so I can apply appropriate grading

Notebook Collection

- At the end of each unit or essay sequence, notebooks will be collected and graded
- I will review all stamped notes plus reading notes for that unit
- This will count toward both your coursework and participation grades
- Your notebook will also have your prewriting assignments in it and I will take those grades from there.
- MAKE SURE EVERYTHING IS CLEARLY LABELED AND DATED.

Grading Standards

Your notes will be graded on:

- Capturing major points and details for each day
- Including required quotes from instructional readings
- Including thoughtful responses to sample essays
- Asking questions and showing intellectual engagement with the material
- Consistent completion and organization throughout each unit

CSD Note Taking

If you qualify for a note-taker through CSD, you need to:

- Take notes as best you can during class/class videos and as you read.
- Highlight or annotate the notes from the CSD notetaker.
- Your annotations should show you've thought about the significant points and added your own thoughts, ideas, or observations.

Discuss this accommodation with me. If you don't take time to talk with me about this, I can't make modifications to fit your needs. It's your responsibility to communicate with me.

Extra Credit Opportunity

You can earn up to 10 extra credit points for exceptional note-taking that goes beyond the minimum requirements.

Important

ORGANIZED, CLEARLY LABELED NOTES ARE REQUIRED.
I WILL NOT GRADE UNORGANIZED AND/OR UNLABELED NOTES.

T 1/27 – Building a Writer

READ | WATCH

- Building a Writer (below)
- [The Science of Thinking](#) [video]
- [The Myth of the Good Writer](#)



Science of Thinking



Myth of Good Writer

Building a Writer

Writing is a skill that develops over time through practice, feedback, and revision. Many students come to college believing that good writers simply sit down and produce polished prose in one draft. This myth can be paralyzing—if writing doesn't flow easily, students assume they "can't write."

The truth is that all writers struggle. Professional authors revise extensively. Academic writers draft and redraft. The difference between skilled writers and struggling writers isn't talent—it's process.

What Makes a Writer?

Writers are made, not born. The skills you need for college writing can be learned:

- Reading actively and critically
- Generating and organizing ideas
- Drafting without perfectionism
- Revising based on feedback
- Editing for clarity and correctness

Each of these skills improves with practice. You don't have to be "good at writing" to become a good writer. You just have to be willing to work at it.

The Writing Process

Effective writers follow a process, though it looks different for everyone:

1. Prewriting: Generating ideas through brainstorming, freewriting, or research
2. Drafting: Getting ideas on paper without worrying about perfection
3. Revising: Rethinking and reorganizing for clarity and effectiveness
4. Editing: Polishing sentences and fixing errors
5. Proofreading: Final check before submission

Most struggling writers skip steps 1-3 and try to write a perfect final draft immediately. This almost never works.

Your Voice Matters

Academic writing doesn't mean erasing your personality. Your voice—the way you see the world and express ideas—is what makes your writing worth reading. The goal isn't to sound like a textbook. It's to communicate your ideas clearly while sounding like yourself.

This semester, we'll work on developing your voice while also learning the conventions of academic writing. These aren't opposites—they work together.

Th 1/29 – MLA Format Assignment

READ | WATCH

- MLA Format Assignment (below)

Choose the video that matches what you'll use:

- [MLA Format: MS Word](#) [video]
- [MLA Format: Apple Pages](#) [video]

DUE

- MLA Format Assignment [\[Blackboard\]](#)
- MLA Format Assignment - BRING PRINTED COPY [In Class]



MLA in Word



MLA in Pages

MLA Format Assignment

For this assignment you will be formatting a paper in MLA style and simply writing a few paragraphs. I am NOT grading your writing here; this is practice at MLA format, and a chance for me to point you toward some things to focus on as we start to improve our writing. However, you do need to follow instructions and stay on task with it.

1. Write 2 paragraphs about this topic: What is one of your favorite places or events to go to in El Paso or the surrounding area?

- To extend this to 2 paragraphs, think about describing in detail or telling a story of one of your favorite memories going there.
- Make sure you explain why it's one of your favorite places to go.

2. Format your paper in MLA style using the instructions in the workbook and one of the videos you watched for the word processor/computer you're using as given on the schedule.

You DO NOT need a Work Cited page with this assignment.

3. Proofread carefully. I suggest you go to the Writing Center. As this is your first writing assignment, if you do, you can earn not just 5 extra credit points, but 10!

4. Bring a PRINT version to class on the due date. -30 points if you don't bring in a printed copy. You will have to turn in the printed copy after class and late points apply. Please make use of the computer lab to print things out. However, make sure you do that BEFORE CLASS BEGINS.

General Tips

- Remember, MLA is not picky about font as long as it's a standard one like Times New Roman, Calibri, or Arial.
- Make sure to use the same font in both the paper itself and the header.
- If you use a template, make sure to check all the aspects of format—many templates have errors.

Grading

This is graded based on these considerations:

- Turning the assignment in on time in class and/or on Blackboard as required on the schedule.
- MLA Format
- Completing the writing assignment fully and thoughtfully

T 2/3 – Emblem Essay Assignment

READ | WATCH

- Emblem Essay Assignment (below)
- Pre-Reading: Student Samples (below)
- Student Sample: The Hand-Me-Downs (below)

DUE

- [Emblem Essay: Prewriting 1](#) [In Notebook]



Emblem Prewriting 1

Emblematic Object Essay Assignment

Description can tell us much more about something than just what it looks like. It can support an idea, a feeling, a situation, a place, a time, or develop feelings of empathy for the character or situation. It is a strong type of support that can be used in both persuasive and analytical essays. In this personal essay, you will write about an object that is emblematic to you, describing it and discussing its importance and value.

We own many things that we prize highly for more than just their monetary value. It may be an elaborate thing, or something as simple as a piece of paper with a special note on it. How does that item carry its meaning? How can you look at this one thing and see it for more than what it physically represents? How does it represent the person who owns it, or what does it say about him or her, or his or her past? In short, how is it emblematic?

Emblem is a word not quite meaning symbol. A thing that is emblematic (e.g., a scar on your knee) represents something more than what it is: more than just an injury, the scar represents a championship skater who worked very hard in a winning season. However, it does not represent that to all people at all times. On the other hand, a symbol does represent the same thing to all people of the same culture at all times. April symbolizes rebirth and love. A skeleton symbolizes death. See how a symbol is different from an emblem?

The item you choose to write about should be emblematic to you. It can be something that belongs to you or to someone else; it can be something you or someone else still has, or something that no longer exists. However, it must be something that has meaning for you.

Beginning considerations:

Style: A personal or familiar essay should be written in your voice and from your perspective. While you are watching your grammar more carefully than you might in everyday writing, you are still writing as yourself.

- Do not use words that are not natural to you.
- Do not use the personal pronoun you. Instead, use I/me/my when referring to your own experience, or we/us/our when extending that to society as a whole.

Purpose: The purpose of this essay is simply to describe your object and both show and explain its importance to you.

- Do not try to convince or preach to your readers. Simply explain what it is you believe and why you believe it's important.

Audience: The audience for this essay is a general audience. Think of this as simply talking to your friends, family, or peers.

Limitations: You must write about a physical object, and it cannot be bigger than a pickup truck.

Finally, remember we begin with the prewriting assignments, so take it one step at a time.

Prewriting Assignment 1

Write down as many words, phrases, and sentences as you can to describe your object. Use all the senses you can: sight, touch, smell, taste, and sound. Describe size and color, shape and texture. Think about its weight and feel. Consider its emotional tone or vibe (the dominant impression). List every detail you can think of. You should have a list that is at least 1/2 - 1 page long.

Prewriting Assignment 2

Now that you've gotten a lot of descriptive phrases or words down about your object, it's time to describe it. However, you will set your description in the context of a narrative. So, in your Prewriting 2, write the story or a couple of stories of a time you remember the object. As you tell the story, describe the object. You should have 2-3 paragraphs.

Prewriting Assignment 3

Finally, it's time to discuss why the object you chose is important. What does the story you wrote in your last Prewriting Assignment show about not just the object, but also the person who owns it, or the time in your life that it represents? How is this person or time important to you and how does that show through that object? You should have at least 2 paragraphs.

General Requirements

The essay should:

- Be correctly formatted: typed in a standard 12-point font, double spaced, correct heading and running header
- Be at least 3 pages long, though it can be longer
- Clearly identify your object in the essay

Grading Criteria

Your essay will be evaluated based on: Format and Professionalism, Focus, Content, Development, Style, and Clarity.

Pre-Reading: Student Samples

Throughout the Emblem Essay unit, you'll read several student samples. These aren't perfect essays—they're real work from real students like you. Reading them will help you see what's possible and give you ideas for your own writing.

Before you read, consider:

1. What object, person, or time period are you considering for your own Emblem Essay?
 2. As you read, note something you liked about the essay. What worked? What caught your attention?
 3. Note something you didn't like or that didn't work for you.
 4. Note something that stood out to you as it relates to the assignment or topic you're working on.
 5. What ideas did reading this essay give you for your own writing?
-

Student Sample: The Hand-Me-Downs

Pace-England 1

Miranda Pace-England

Professor Wood

English 1301

October 8, 2012

The Hand-Me-Downs

It was my junior year of high school. The Missouri wrestling season had just ended, but I was not yet finished with my season. I had my National Title to win, and my shoes and I had just arrived. I walked through the sliding glass doors to the Oklahoma City University gym, and my shoes were hanging anxiously from my bag. I could feel the heat of a bunch of eyes staring down at me from up in the stadium. I was definitely a threat to most of the girls wrestling today. I had already weighed in at 114 pounds, which would put me in the hardest weight class for 2010.

As the tournament started, I breezed through my first three opponents with no problem. Next up was my semi-finals match, and it wasn't going as planned. I was destroying the girl from Texas when I landed wrong on my foot. I could feel that something was not only wrong with me, but also my shoes. I was lying on the mat in pain waiting for my coach to come see what was wrong when my mind soared back to the particular moment when my dad gave me the shoes I was wearing.

My medium-sized dad with his unforgettable red mustache and grey hair, pulled out some wrinkled black wrestling shoes from the very back of his closet. As he pulled them out, I remember thinking to myself I'm not sure about these. I peeked into them, and there was an ugly olive green on the inside. I turned them over and on the bottom there were straight non-slick lines which would be smoothed out as time went on. They also were marked with some very familiar stitching that spelt out a well-known sports gear company, Asics. It was sown into the

back of the shoes but was now coming unraveled. I was about to tell my dad these would work for now when he started up with the history behind the shoes.

He told me that these ugly worn-in shoes were once the shoes that he coached and taught me how to wrestle in. For good luck when I was little he would wear the shoes to my match while I was wrestling. He also wore these shoes when he taught me how to do my early favorite moves: cement-mixer and Japanese whizzer. He shared with me that my older sister had also worn these shoes, and she ended up becoming the first female wrestler in the state of Missouri to make it to a boys wrestling state tournament. Since these shoes had so much history in our family, he decided to call them "The Lucky Ones." As my dad talked about these shoes, my mind changed. The shoes had so much meaning to them, and I wanted to be a part of that. This wasn't just a pair of shoes: this was history in the making.

I never knew that all the things my dad taught me would be so important in my life. He always told me that no matter what, if I kept working toward my goals that I would reach them. "It might not be this month or even this year, but you can succeed if you really want to," he exclaimed. I knew one day I would be in a situation where I would be close enough to succeed in my goals, but all I would need is a push in that direction. Hearing my dad's voice in my head was all that I would need.

The whistle blew and my mind jolted back to reality. The match was finally over, and without a doubt I had won. As I limped over to the coach in my corner, I realized there was an unwanted hole where I could now see my toes. I pulled off my shoes and knew that my foot being black and blue from my ankle to my toes most likely meant I had broken it. I told him I was hurt and in a lot of pain, and he calmly looked me straight in the eyes and said, "You made it to the finals at a National Tournament. This is what you've always dreamed of." Then he quietly

Pace-England 3

walked away, and left me there to soak it in. At that moment, I knew I couldn't give up. Everything I'd ever worked for was right in front of me. The two-a-day workouts five days a week lead me to this moment. The last eleven years of wrestling wasn't for nothing. We decided it was time to do something with my foot. My dad sat me down and we taped it up for support, and now it was all up to me and my lucky ones.

The match started, and not one soul could tell I was injured. I had to believe in myself and my shoes. They made me fast and light on my feet, and I couldn't even tell that there was a hole in them. Time flew by, and the two minute periods seemed to only last a few seconds. I was up three to nothing and it was already the last period. All I had to do was keep my lead, and I would win my very first National Title. I could hear my dad's voice in my head, "You can do this. How bad do you really want to win?" As I was listening, I could feel the soft mat beneath my toes, and it sent cold chills up my spine. I really wanted this. Finally, the sound of the clock rang, and I knew I had won.

I got up from the mat, and shook the other girl's hand. As I sprinted toward my coach I yelled to him, "We did it! They really are lucky." I got to my corner, and jumped as high as I could, and wrapped my arms around his neck. As a tear dropped onto my shoulder, I could tell that he was proud of me. After all, he wasn't just my coach; he was my dad.

Th 2/5 – Student Sample: The Grand Old Piano

READ | WATCH

- Student Sample: The Grand Old Piano (below)

DUE

- [Emblem Essay: Prewriting 2](#) [In Notebook]
-



Emblem Prewriting 2

Maratta 1

Daniel Maratta

Professor Wood

English 1301

February 28, 2013

The Grand, Old Piano

I remember the day when my grandmother brought it home. I was not yet ten years of age. "What is it?" I asked. It was an electric piano that was made of dark mahogany wood, almost black, but not quite. The foot pedals were golden, and it smelled like freshly cut wood. I was so excited to have a piano of my own! I had no idea how to play one, but my mind raced as I imagined playing any song I wished.

When my father set it up, I curiously opened the dark lid to peek inside. Its creamy white keys had a satisfying contrast against the ebony black keys that accented almost every other white key. "Can I turn it on?" I asked my mother. "Sure," she replied, "Just be careful." I turned the piano on in anticipation. Though I had no idea how to play it, I listened to the brilliant high notes and full bass notes that came out when I pressed the keys. This was all a wonderful new adventure to me; it was something that made me want to go beyond myself and my current limitations and be able to do more.

When I first started practicing, I was nervous. My piano teacher was nice, but I have always been a perfectionist, always trying to get things exactly right. I remember practicing the scales up and down the piano. I learned which notes went where and what chords to play when in a certain key. I would also have to do finger exercises which helped me to develop finger independence—being able to play different notes using different fingers at the same

time. I remember the first songs that I played. They were simple, fun songs that were less than a page in length and without many notes, but I was happy knowing that I was able to play at least one song on the piano.

One occasion that was momentous for me was when I started learning how to play by ear. My piano teacher did not teach us how to play the piano by ear since she did not do it much herself, but I became inspired to learn on my own when I would hear songs playing on the radio. I would go to the piano and try to figure out which key each song was in; however, I would always struggle with finding the correct one. Then one day, I did it. My mother was on her guitar trying to figure out the same song, so I figured that I would try as well. When I went to the piano and sat down, I figured that I would just start hitting random keys like I usually did in search of the correct note. I pressed the first key. To my amazement, it sounded exactly right! I tried it again just to make sure, and again, it sounded like the right key. After that day, I continued trying to figure out songs on the radio and became better at it as time went on.

Then, later on, there came times that I needed the piano. Where at first it had just been a hobby, it then became a passion. It helped me through some rough times in my life. It was a way to express my emotions: when I would get angry, upset, or frustrated, I would start playing whatever my heart told my fingers to play. Playing the piano became a way to vent my frustrations when things were heading downhill, like when a dear friend I thought I could trust betrayed me. I remember times when I was so mad and when I had no one to talk to, I would sit down late at night and just play quietly for half an hour or more. At times like that the notes would be soft, quiet, and sad. At other times, when I was so angry that I just wanted to scream, the music would come out choppy and vicious. This old piano that now sits in my room

Maratta 3

collecting dust has served as a faithful friend. When I needed someone to express my anger to, I knew that it would not tell.

As I grew a little older, the keys on the piano that I would play to express my emotions turned into something more than chord progressions and notes. They started finding words. The once random flow of music started taking on a consistency that was part intentional, part mysterious. Songs found themselves trying to find their way out of their jail cells and into the open. At certain times, the words would flow easily. At other times, they struggled to find their proper place in a song. I would write them down quickly because a newborn song is a fleeting thing, then return later and perfect them. One day I hope to be able to put those songs into recordings. In fact, I have already started.

These days, I do not turn to the piano much to vent my emotions. Instead I am proud to have someone close to me whom I can actually trust, someone who does not get mad and lets me vent my emotions. I don't take out my bad mood on her and get mad at her for other things in my life, rather when we talk I am at ease knowing that I am able to confide in her and know that I can trust her with anything. She has replaced the piano in every way as my special friend, but that is perfectly all right with me since I have learned that people are much more important than inanimate objects and that some friends are more special than others. However, true friends stand the test of time.

Though the old piano in my room is not everything it has been to me in the past, it still has a special place in my heart. The corners of the veneer are peeling off the top and the bench has a splintered section on the inside, but it is still a dear friend of mine. Ever since I was first learning to play up to now, it has always been an exciting experience to me. At one time,

playing it felt like a stormy sea with choppy waters and had no rhyme or rhythm. Today, its shiny white and black keys feel like smooth waves gently flowing under my fingers. Like true friends, it too has stood the test of time. It was, and still is, a grand, old piano.

T 2/10 – Student Sample: Seasoning a Bond

READ | WATCH

- Student Sample: Seasoning a Bond (below)

DUE

- [Emblem Essay: Prewriting 3](#) [In Notebook]
-



Emblem Prewriting 3

Debra Carroll

Professor Wood

English 1301

Sept. 20, 2007

Seasoning a Bond

It is the end of the workday and I sit at my desk, knowing that in a few minutes, I will be leaving. I shut my computer down for the day. What a relief. I just want to go home and relax, as it has been a long day. I put the desk key in the keyhole and lock it up. I gather my purse and other belongings and head out into what is left of the rest of the day. I figure I have no school today, no homework, and how nice it would be to go home, kick back, watch some television, and relax for the night. As I walk to my car, my cell phone rings. "Hello," I say. "What's for dinner, Mom? I am starving," proclaims my son, Justin. The few moments of peaceful bliss I had walking from my desk to my car was gone. I was thinking, oh great, what am I going to make for dinner? I answer back, "I will just stick a frozen pizza in the oven, I am tired and don't feel like cooking today. Is that okay?" "Yes," he says, and then hangs up. I get in my car and start to drive. I drive slowly, listening to the music, looking around at the scenery, and enjoying this time of solitude I have. I know this will be the only time for the rest of the evening that I will have to myself to think.

As I drive up, I am wondering what I am going to make for dinner. I didn't want to make my son a frozen pizza. I did dread cooking, as I did not feel like it today. My brain was still fried from work, and I had had a long, busy weekend. I figure I will just make something simple. Keep it simple. I walk into my kitchen and wash my hands. There, hanging over the stove on

Carroll 2

my pot rack, is a big, black cast-iron skillet that my mom gave me when I was about twenty. It stands out from all the other pots and pans. I just stand there and look at it. I grab it and take it off the rack. Holding it with both hands, I gently lay it on the stove. The cast-iron skillet itself is not much to describe. It is very heavy and hard to lift with one hand. It is thick and black and about three to four inches deep. The work I have to do to maintain this pot and keep it well cured is what I remember most about this pot.

As I am stirring the ground meat in this cast-iron skillet, my mind wanders back to when I was a young girl. My mom would put a stool by the stove when I came home from school and told me to put my apron on. "Now wash your hands and put your hair in a ponytail," she would say. I would stand on the stool, stirring the hot food as my mom and I would talk and reminisce. I remember feeling as if I was a part of making dinner and that when our family would sit down to eat dinner, how good I would feel that everyone was enjoying the dinner my mom and I had made.

My daydreaming is abruptly interrupted by the sound of my doorbell. I finish stirring the meat in the pot and lay the spoon down. I see that it is the mailman at the door. He needs my signature for a letter. I sign the letter and go back to the kitchen to finish dinner. As I pick up the spoon to start stirring again, I find myself daydreaming again about this cast-iron skillet. While standing on the stool helping my mom cook, she would tell me that these cast-iron skillets are very special and unique in their own way and that she is going to give me this particular skillet when I am older. "You have to take special care of these, Debra," she would say. "You have to season them." She explained to me that when first bought, they are silver and that by rubbing them with oil all over and sticking them in the oven upside down for thirty

to sixty minutes, they change color from silver to black. My mom told me to repeat this several times. She told me to make sure that after cooking in this kind of skillet not to leave the food in it, that any food has to be removed promptly, as it could take on the iron taste. When I wash it, soap is not used. It must be run under water and cleaned or scrubbed. Drying this skillet has to be thorough or it can rust. I remember my Mom telling me that her grandmother gave her this particular cast-iron skillet and some other ones, too. She told me to make sure I never put cold water on the hot skillet. She made that mistake once, and it split right in half.

I could smell my mom's kitchen at this point, and realized that I was in my kitchen, making Justin dinner and it was my food that smelled so good. How nice it was to remember this about my childhood, I thought. Making dinner wasn't so bad after all; I had actually enjoyed being in the kitchen. I thought it was going to be a burden, as I wanted to rest, but instead, by the time I was done, I didn't even realize it because the whole time I was preparing it, I was daydreaming about the black cast-iron skillet, and what it meant to me. I took the food out of the skillet and set the table. I told Justin about how my mom gave me this skillet and that her mother gave it to her. That night, I enjoyed a nice, peaceful dinner with my son. This was better than any television show I could have watched that night. When we were done, he helped me wash the dishes and put them away. I am so glad that when I came home, I saw that cast-iron skillet. Instead of sticking a pizza in the oven and spending the night relaxing and watching a good movie, I had memories of a time in my childhood that meant a great deal to me. I had spent a nice, but important dinner with my son, and I had actually been more relaxed than I've been in a long time. Remembering my childhood with my Mom in the kitchen made cooking a fun thing to do that day and not a chore.

Carroll 4

As time went on, I would come home and make dinner every night, sometimes with the cast-iron skillet. I no longer dreaded making dinner; I actually found pleasure in it. One day, my sister called me and invited us to dinner. When we arrived at her house, I started helping my her make dinner. As I started to wash my hands, low and behold, there above her stove, hanging on a pot rack, was one of my mom's cast-iron skillets. I couldn't help but smile as the memories came flooding back.

Th 2/12 – Drafting Your Essay

READ | WATCH

- [Drafting Your Essay](#) [video]

DUE

- Bring a PRINTED/WRITTEN copy of your essay draft [In Class]

This is an in-class activity and cannot be made up. Be ready to share with a partner or two.



Drafting Your Essay

T 2/17 – T 2/24: Conference Weeks

During conference time, you and I will meet once during your scheduled conference time in my office. Otherwise, you will be working online. Work through the things listed for homework over the course of the weeks. Please do not leave these until the end of conferences; you won't like yourself as much if you do. You have free class time, so use that time to do the work. Notes and any assignments during this time will be due when we come back from conference.

FOR YOUR CONFERENCE

- What to bring: Bring your notebook and PRINTED essay draft. We'll chat about it. I have snacks and stickers!
- Where we meet: My office, Room 1101. If you can't find it, ask someone—but also, follow the ninjas.
- Attendance at conference time counts as attendance for the other days of class during conference time.
- Your Schedule: Check your scheduled time on Blackboard.
- If you must reschedule: Notify me by email or text. Let me know what other times work for you.

GENERAL TO DO LIST

- Do all READ|WATCH items and take notes on each.
- Work on refining your Emblem Essay before and after our conference. It is due when we return to class.
- Attend one of the TM Library Information Orientations scheduled during our class times. See Blackboard for the schedule. This counts as attendance and participation, so take notes!
- Work on your Summary Response/Library Assignment

READ | WATCH

- Pre-Reading: Research Skills (below)
- Critical Reading Strategies (below)
- [Is My Source Credible?](#)
- Writing Summaries and Synthesizing Sources (below)
- Pre-Reading: A History of Panic (below)
- [A History of Panic Over Entertainment Technology](#)

Continue Working On

- Finalizing your Emblem Essay based on conference feedback
- Summary Response/Library Assignment [Worksheet PDF](#)



Is My Source Credible?



History of Panic



Summary Worksheet

- Make sure your notes are up to date, clearly labeled, your name is on your notebook, and it's ready to turn in next time.
-

Pre-Reading: Building Research Skills

During conference weeks, you'll work through these readings on your own. They teach you skills you'll use for Essay 2 and beyond. Take your time with them—these are foundational.

Before you read, consider:

1. Why do you think writers cite their sources? What's the point?
 2. What do you already know about MLA format from our first essay?
 3. How do you currently approach a reading assignment? Walk through your typical process.
 4. What's the difference between reading for fun and reading for class?
-

Critical Reading Strategies

Critical reading means engaging actively with a text rather than passively absorbing information. It involves questioning, analyzing, and evaluating what you read.

Three Levels of Reading

Scanning: Quick look to get the gist. Look at titles, headings, first sentences of paragraphs. Takes 2-5 minutes.

Skimming: Faster reading to understand main points. Read introductions and conclusions fully, skim body paragraphs. Takes 10-15 minutes.

Close Reading: Careful, detailed reading. Annotate, question, analyze. Takes as long as needed.

The CRAAP Test for Source Evaluation

Currency: When was it published? Is it current enough for your topic?

Relevance: Does it relate to your topic? Who is the intended audience?

Authority: Who wrote it? What are their credentials?

Accuracy: Is the information supported by evidence? Can you verify it?

Purpose: Why does this source exist? Is it trying to sell, persuade, inform, or entertain?

Annotation Strategies

- Underline or highlight key points (but not everything!)
- Write questions in the margins
- Note connections to other sources
- Mark things you agree or disagree with
- Summarize paragraphs in your own words

Active reading takes more time upfront but saves time later when you're writing.

Writing Summaries and Synthesizing Sources

Writing Summaries and Synthesizing Sources

An Adapted Reading for ENGL 1301

****Source Attribution:**** This reading is adapted from Chapter 5 of **A Guide to Rhetoric, Genre, and Success in First-Year Writing** by Melanie Gagich, Yvonne Bruce, and Svetlana Zhuravlova (Cleveland State University), licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0, and **"How to Write a Summary"* from the University of Washington Odegaard Writing & Research Center.

Central Topics

- ****Summary**** = Condensing ONE source accurately and objectively in your own words.
- ****Synthesis**** = Combining ideas from MULTIPLE sources to create new understanding.
- ****Informative Synthesis**** = Synthesis that explains WITHOUT arguing for a particular position.

Part 1: Writing Summaries

What is a Summary?

A summary is a comprehensive and objective restatement of the main ideas of a text. Whether you're summarizing an article, book, video, or event, the goal is the same: to capture the essential points in your own words while remaining faithful to the original meaning.

Mastering the craft of summarizing prepares you for success across your college career—not just in English classes. In science courses, you'll summarize lab results. In social sciences, you'll summarize theories before applying them. In nearly every field, the ability to condense information accurately and briefly is a critical skill.

Qualities of a Good Summary

When writing a summary, keep these three qualities in mind:

- **Neutrality** – Avoid inserting your opinion or interpreting the original text's content. Do not use evaluative language (good, bad, effective, interesting, boring, etc.). Keep "I" out of the summary and write in third person ("the author," "she argues," "they explain").
- **Brevity** – A summary should be significantly shorter than the original—generally no more than 10-15% of the original length. Highlight the most important information while leaving out unnecessary details.
- **Independence** – The summary should make sense to someone who has not read the original source. Your reader should be able to understand the main content and organization of the original from your summary alone.

How to Write a Summary: Step by Step

Preparing to Write:

1. Skim the text, noting the subheadings or natural sections. Consider why you have been assigned this text and what type of text it is.
2. Read the text carefully, highlighting important information and taking notes.
3. In your own words, write down the main points of each section.
4. Write down the key supporting points for the main topic, but do not include minor details.
5. Review and revise as needed.

Writing the Summary:

- The summary should cover the original as a whole.
- Present the material in a neutral fashion.
- Write a condensed version in your own words.
- Do not include anything that does not appear in the original (no personal comments or evaluation).
- **Always identify your source** – introduce the author's name and the title of the work.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

It can be tempting to focus only on ideas that support a point you want to make, or to ignore ideas that don't. This approach has two significant problems:

- **It misrepresents the original text**, misleading your reader about what the source actually says.
- **It undermines your own credibility.** If readers cannot trust you to accurately represent source information, they may not trust your own arguments either.

Part 2: Synthesizing Sources

What is Synthesis?

To **synthesize** is to combine ideas from multiple sources and create a completely *new* understanding. That new understanding becomes the conclusion you have drawn from your reading. This is the true beauty of research: it causes us to weigh ideas, compare, judge, think, and explore—and then arrive at insights we hadn't known before.

Think of synthesis like a conversation you're hosting among your sources. You set the goal for the discussion, organize who speaks and when, guide the conversation, and draw conclusions based on what everyone has contributed.

What Synthesis is NOT

- **Not just summarizing everyone's opinion:** "Author A says this, Author B says that, and Author C disagrees." This is a list, not synthesis.
- **Not critiquing opinions:** "Rick tried to defend his position, but everyone knows he's wrong." This is judgment, not synthesis.
- **Not simply comparing texts:** You are not evaluating which author wrote more effectively. You are connecting their ideas.
- **Not just using sources for quotes:** Sources aren't decorations you stick on your essay. They're voices in a conversation you're leading.

What Synthesis IS

Synthesis demonstrates YOUR full, objective understanding of a topic from multiple perspectives. When you synthesize, you "cook" the ideas of others by thinking, talking, and writing about them. What comes out is a dish full of many blended flavors but uniquely your recipe.

For example, instead of hiding behind limited positions like "You can't change the law!" or "Ban everything!", a synthesis tries to depict hard reality: complex topics involve competing values, and understanding them requires examining multiple viewpoints without simply picking a side.

Part 3: Looking for Patterns Across Sources

This is where synthesis gets real—and where most students struggle at first. When you read multiple sources, you're not just collecting quotes. You're looking for **patterns**.

Why Patterns Matter

Here's a truth that extends far beyond college writing: **one source saying something isn't proof of anything. Multiple credible sources pointing to the same thing? That's significant.**

When researchers, experts, or writers from different backgrounds independently arrive at similar conclusions, that repeatability tells us something important. It suggests we're looking at something real—not just one person's opinion or one flawed study.

This is how knowledge actually works. Scientists don't trust a finding until it's been replicated. Journalists don't run a story based on a single anonymous source. Doctors don't change treatment protocols because of one patient's experience. Looking for confirmation across multiple sources is a fundamental skill for navigating information.

What to Look For

Agreement across sources: When three different researchers point to the same problem, or multiple articles cite the same statistics, that convergence matters. It doesn't mean they're all right—but it means this idea has been tested, examined, and found worth discussing by multiple people.

In your writing: "Multiple researchers have identified screen time as a factor in adolescent sleep disruption. Smith (2022) found that teens who use phones before bed sleep an average of 45 minutes less, a finding consistent with earlier research by Jones (2019) and the CDC's 2021 report on teen health."

Disagreement between sources: When sources contradict each other, ask why. Is one source older? Less credible? Looking at a different population? Sometimes disagreement reveals genuine complexity. Other times, it reveals an outlier.

In your writing: "While most researchers connect social media use with increased anxiety, Chen (2023) argues that the relationship is more complex, noting that teens who use social media primarily for close friendships show no elevated anxiety levels. This suggests the **type** of use matters more than the amount."

Themes that emerge across different examples: Sometimes your sources aren't talking about the exact same thing, but they're circling the same underlying idea. A story about phone addiction, a study about attention spans, and an article about classroom management might all point to the same theme: technology is reshaping how we focus.

In your writing: "Whether discussing attention spans (Brown 2021), workplace productivity (Martinez 2022), or educational outcomes (Williams 2020), researchers consistently return to one theme: constant connectivity comes with cognitive costs."

Why This Matters Beyond This Class

We live in an age of hot takes. Someone posts a scary headline, it goes viral, and suddenly everyone is panicking—without anyone asking: Is this a pattern, or a one-time thing? Is this confirmed by other sources, or is it just one study? One person's experience? One journalist's interpretation?

Learning to look for repeatability protects you from being manipulated by:

- **Single alarming studies** that haven't been replicated
- **Anecdotes presented as trends** ("I knew someone who...")
- **Outliers treated as the norm** (the rare exception becoming "proof")
- **Confirmation bias** (only seeing sources that agree with what you already believe)

When you write a synthesis essay, you're practicing exactly this skill: looking at multiple sources, finding the patterns, and drawing reasonable conclusions based on the weight of evidence—not on whoever shouted loudest.

Practical Tips for Finding Patterns

1. **After reading each source, write one sentence about its main point.** When you line these up, patterns become visible.
2. **Look for repeated statistics, names, or studies.** If three sources all cite the same research, that research is probably foundational to this topic.
3. **Notice when sources use different examples to make the same point.** That's convergence—and it strengthens your synthesis.
4. **Pay attention to what's NOT said.** If most sources focus on teens but ignore adults, that gap is worth noting.
5. **Ask: "What would someone need to believe to accept this?"** If your sources share underlying assumptions, name them.

Part 4: Informative Synthesis

In **informative synthesis**, you explain the discussion points and topics to your readers **without taking a position**. Even if the topic is debatable, instead of promoting your personal opinion, you objectively introduce the ideas of others and show how their information relates.

Key principles:

- Show how information from different sources connects and where it diverges.
- Do not show agreement or disagreement with any author.
- Stay neutral in your comments AND in your conclusions.
- Your conclusion should summarize what the sources show us about the topic, not what you think should happen.

Example neutral conclusion: "The question of whether regulations should change lies in the hands of policymakers and the communities most affected."

Notice how this conclusion doesn't say what **should** happen—it summarizes the situation and identifies who will make the decision.

Steps for Writing Informative Synthesis

1. **Determine your focus.** What aspect of the topic are you exploring? What question are you trying to answer?
2. **Read for patterns.** As you read each source, note: What's the main point? What evidence is used? How does this connect to other sources?
3. **Organize by theme, not by source.** Group ideas that belong together, even if they come from different sources.
4. **Lead the conversation.** Decide which ideas to present first, how sources should "talk" to each other, and what conclusions emerge.
5. **Stay neutral.** Report what the sources say and show. Don't argue for what should happen.
6. **Draw conclusions from patterns.** Your conclusion should reflect what you learned from examining multiple sources—the agreements, the disagreements, the gaps, and the implications.

Works Cited

Gagich, Melanie, et al. "Chapter 5: Writing a Summary and Synthesizing." *A Guide to Rhetoric, Genre, and Success in First-Year Writing*, Cleveland State University, pressbooks.ulib.csuohio.edu/csu-fyw-rhetoric/. Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

"How to Write a Summary." *Odegaard Writing & Research Center*, University of Washington, depts.washington.edu/owrcweb/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/How-to-Write-a-Summary.pdf.

Pre-Reading: A History of Panic Over Entertainment Technology

This article has a title that can trick you if you're not paying attention. A moral panic happens when society gets extremely worried that something—usually something new—is destroying young people or civilization itself. As you read, keep asking yourself: Are Ferguson and Faye saying we SHOULD panic about technology, or are they saying something else?

Before you read, consider:

1. According to the authors, what happened when the Surgeon General studied TV violence in the 1970s?
2. The authors mention that over 230 scholars wrote to the American Psychological Association. What were those scholars asking the APA to do, and why?
3. Ferguson and Faye discuss several technologies that caused panic over the decades. List at least three of them.
4. What do the authors say is the problem with how research findings get turned into news headlines?
5. In your own words, what is the authors' main argument?

Now, it's time to read: [A History of Panic Over Entertainment Technology](#)



History of Panic

Th 2/26 – Reflection & Connected Society

READ | WATCH

- Pre-Viewing: Reflection (below)
- [Reflection: Video Overview](#) [video]
- Pre-Reading: Phone Bans in Schools (below)
- [What One High School Senior Wants You to Know about Phone Bans](#)
- [72% of High School Teachers Say Phone Distraction Is A Big Problem](#)



Reflection Overview



Phone Ban (Student)



Phone Ban (Teacher)

DUE

- Final Emblem Essay [\[Blackboard\]](#)
 - Notebook including all notes and prewritings up to date [In Class]
-

Pre-Viewing: Reflection Video Overview

Reflection isn't just busywork. It's how you actually learn from what you've done. Writers who reflect on their process improve faster than those who just move on to the next thing.

Before you watch, consider:

1. What does 'reflection' mean to you? How is it different from just summarizing what you did?
2. Think about the Emblem Essay you just finished. What was the hardest part of writing it?
3. What's one thing you want to do differently on the next essay?

Now, it's time to watch: [Reflection: Video Overview](#)

Pre-Reading: Phone Bans in Schools

For Essay 2, you'll be exploring how technology shapes our lives and relationships. These two sources look at the same issue from different perspectives.

Before you read, consider:

1. What's your own experience with phones in class—as a student now or in high school?
 2. Do you think phones should be banned in classrooms? What's your initial position?
 3. What is the main argument or finding of each source?
 4. How does the student perspective (CNN) differ from the teacher perspective (Pew)?
 5. Has your position on phone bans changed, shifted, or gotten more complicated?
-

T 3/3 through T 5/12

Spring 2026

T 3/3 – Reflection & Social Connections

READ | WATCH

- Pre-Reading: How ChatGPT Slowly Destroys Your Brain (below)
- Writing Assignment Reflections (below)
- Pre-Reading: Symbols, Values & Norms (below)
- [How ChatGPT Slowly Destroys Your Brain](#) [video]
- [Symbols, Values & Norms: Crash Course Sociology #10](#) [video]

DUE

- Emblem Essay Reflection [[Blackboard](#)]
-



ChatGPT & Brain



Symbols & Norms

Pre-Reading: How ChatGPT Slowly Destroys Your Brain

This video explores how AI tools like ChatGPT might be affecting our thinking and learning. Before you watch, take a moment to reflect on your own experiences.

Before you watch, consider:

1. How do you currently use AI tools like ChatGPT? Be honest—there's no judgment here.
2. What do you think the video will argue based on the title?

While watching, consider:

3. What is the video's main claim about AI and our brains?
4. What evidence or examples does the video use to support this claim?
5. Do you agree with the video's argument? Where do you push back?

After watching, consider:

6. How does this video connect to the phone ban readings? What themes overlap?
7. What does this make you think about your own technology use?

Now, it's time to watch: [How ChatGPT Slowly Destroys Your Brain](#)



ChatGPT & Brain

Writing Assignment Reflections

Overview

After each major writing assignment, you will complete a reflection on your writing experience. This is not busywork—it is how you actually learn from what you have done. Writers who reflect on their process improve faster than those who just move on to the next thing.

You will complete three reflections this semester—one for each major essay: the Emblem Essay, the Informative Synthesis Essay, and the Argument Essay.

Important: These three reflections will be averaged for 35% of your final grade.

What I'm Actually Looking For

I want to hear YOUR voice telling me the real story of writing this essay. Not a formal report. Not a list of generic observations. I want the specific, messy, human truth of what happened.

The difference between a weak reflection and a strong one:

- Weak (too vague): "The Writing Center helped me improve my essay."
- Strong (specific and real): "Joe at the Writing Center raised an eyebrow at my semicolon and asked if I really needed it there. I didn't."
- Weak: "The prewriting was helpful for organizing my ideas."
- Strong: "I had been stuck for two days. Then I hit the question about smell in Prewriting 2, and I wrote 'like my mom's kitchen' without even thinking. That was the whole essay, right there in five words."

Notice how the strong examples include specific people, specific moments, specific details. They sound like a person telling a story, not a robot generating a report.

Format Options

Choose ONE format for each reflection. Both require the same depth of thought—the difference is just how you present it.

Option 1: Slideshow Reflection (PowerPoint)

Create a 6-slide presentation that shows your work and explains your thinking. The key feature is the split-screen layout: one side shows evidence from your actual work, and the other side shows your commentary.

- Slide 1 - Title: Essay title, Your name, "Reflection"
- Slides 2-5 - The Four Core Questions: One slide per question
- Slide 6 - AI Disclosure: Required statement about AI use

Option 2: Video Reflection

Record a 4-6 minute video where you talk directly to the camera about your writing experience. Address all four core questions and include your AI disclosure statement at the end.

The Four Core Questions

1. What Went Well?

Celebrate your successes. Show me a part of your process or final essay that you feel good about.

2. What Was Challenging?

Be honest about the difficulties you faced. Show me where you struggled.

3. What Helped You Work Through Difficulties?

Analyze your problem-solving. What got you unstuck?

4. How will you Improve?

Set concrete, actionable goals for your next essay. Be specific—"try harder" is not a plan.

Tips for Success

- Use your voice. This is not a formal essay. Talk to me like you would in a conference.
 - Be specific. Include names of people who helped you, times and places you were working, what you were thinking and feeling.
 - Show your evidence. Screenshots, quotes, images of your marked-up draft.
 - Be honest. Authentic reflection leads to genuine growth.
 - Connect challenges to solutions. If you struggled with something, your Plans should address it.
-

Pre-Reading: Symbols, Values & Norms

This Crash Course Sociology video introduces key concepts that help explain how societies work—and how technology fits into (and changes) social structures.

Before you watch, consider:

1. What do you think "symbols, values, and norms" means in the context of society?
2. Can you think of a symbol that means something specific to your family, community, or generation?

While watching, consider:

3. How does the video define symbols, values, and norms? Write a brief definition for each.
4. What examples does the video give? Which ones resonate with you?
5. How do these concepts help explain why people react differently to the same things?

After watching, consider:

6. How might symbols, values, and norms help explain debates about technology (like phone bans or AI use)?
7. What's one norm around technology that exists in your generation that older generations might not understand?

Now, it's time to watch: [Symbols, Values & Norms: Crash Course Sociology #10](#)



Symbols & Norms

Th 3/5 – Fiction & Parasocial Relationships

READ | WATCH

- Pre-Reading: The Perfect Match (below)
- Pre-Reading: Friend or Faux: Parasocial Relationships (below)
- [The Perfect Match \(Short Story\)](#)
- [Friend or Faux: Parasocial Relationships](#)



The Perfect Match



Parasocial Relationships

Pre-Reading: The Perfect Match

This is a science fiction story—but it's also about ideas we're exploring in this unit.

Before you read, consider:

1. What do you expect from a story called "The Perfect Match"? What might it be about?
2. Have you ever felt like technology knows you too well? What was that experience like?

While reading, consider:

3. What is Sai's relationship with Tilly (his AI assistant)? How would you describe it?
4. What does the story suggest about convenience vs. privacy?
5. Mark any moments that feel uncomfortably familiar or realistic, even though this is fiction.
6. What's the turning point of the story? When do things shift?

After reading, consider:

7. What is the story really about? What argument or warning is the author making?
8. How does this story connect to the other sources we've read about technology and connection?
9. Could something like this happen? Is it already happening in some ways?

Now, it's time to read: [The Perfect Match](#) (text & audio available)



The Perfect Match

Pre-Reading: Friend or Faux: Parasocial Relationships

This article from the Cleveland Clinic explores what happens when we feel connected to people who don't know we exist.

Before you read, consider:

1. Is there a celebrity, influencer, YouTuber, or streamer you feel like you "know" even though you've never met them?
2. What does "parasocial" mean? Take a guess before you read.

While reading, consider:

3. How does the article define parasocial relationships?
4. Are parasocial relationships always bad? What does the article say?
5. What factors make someone more likely to form parasocial attachments?

After reading, consider:

6. Do you have any parasocial relationships? How do you feel about that after reading this?
7. How does this concept connect to the other sources in this unit—especially "The Perfect Match"?

Now, it's time to read: [Friend or Faux: Parasocial Relationships](#)



Parasocial Relationships

T 3/10 – Source Integration

READ | WATCH

- [Rocket Surgery \(Short Story\)](#)



Rocket Surgery

- Source Integration Techniques (below)
 - Sentence Starters Reference (below)
-

Source Integration Techniques

Consider integrating source material using these methods:

1. Direct Quotation (topic sentence + quote + analysis)

The prevalence of filtered images on social media platforms has intensified adolescents' negative body image. According to Martinez (2023), "The constant exposure to digitally altered images creates an unattainable standard of beauty that 78% of teens report feeling pressured to achieve" (p. 45). This statistic demonstrates how social media's unrealistic representations directly contribute to psychological distress among young users who inevitably fail to meet these manufactured standards.

2. Paraphrasing (topic sentence + paraphrased evidence + analysis)

Remote work arrangements have dramatically altered professional communication patterns. Jackson and Liu (2024) found that companies implementing hybrid schedules experienced a 37% increase in written communication and a 42% decrease in spontaneous in-person interactions compared to fully in-office arrangements. This shift suggests that organizations need to deliberately create opportunities for team building and creative collaboration that were previously facilitated through casual office encounters.

3. Summary (topic sentence + summarized evidence + analysis)

Climate change directly threatens food security in developing nations. A comprehensive five-year study by the Global Agricultural Research Institute examined crop yields across 12 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and found consistent decreases in staple crop production correlated with rising temperatures and increasingly erratic rainfall patterns (Roberts et al., 2023). These findings highlight the urgent need for climate-adaptive farming techniques and international support for vulnerable agricultural communities.

4. Counterargument Integration (acknowledging opposing view + evidence + refutation)

Some proponents of standardized testing argue that these assessments provide objective measures of student achievement across diverse school districts. Henderson (2022) points to data showing that districts using standardized benchmarks identified achievement gaps more consistently than those relying solely on teacher evaluations. However, this perspective fails to account for the documented bias in test construction and the way standardized testing narrows curriculum, particularly in underresourced schools.

Sentence Starters & Signal Phrases

Staring at a blank page is hard. These sentence starters are training wheels—use them to get moving, then revise to make the sentences your own.

Introducing a Source (Signal Phrases)

- According to [Author],
- [Author] argues that
- [Author] suggests that
- [Author] points out that
- As [Author] notes,
- [Author], a researcher at [Institution], found that

Explaining What a Quote Means

- This suggests that
- In other words,
- What this means is
- This matters because
- This supports the idea that

Connecting Sources (Synthesis)

Showing agreement:

- Similarly, [Author 2] found that
- [Author 2] reaches a similar conclusion, noting that
- Multiple sources confirm this pattern.

Showing disagreement:

- However, [Author 2] disagrees, arguing that
- In contrast, [Author 2] suggests that
- Not all researchers agree. [Author 2] argues that

Transitions Between Ideas

Adding information:

- Furthermore, / Additionally, / Moreover,

Showing contrast:

- However, / On the other hand, / Nevertheless,

Showing cause/effect:

- As a result, / Consequently, / Therefore,
-

Th 3/12 – Finding the Patterns

READ | WATCH

- Pre-Reading: Looking Across All Sources (below)
- [Neuromarketing \(DW Planet A\)](#) [video]
- [How Apple and Nike have branded your brain](#) [video]
- [Data Brokers](#)



Neuromarketing



Apple/Nike Brain



Data Brokers

Pre-Reading: Looking Across All Sources

After you've read/watched everything, this is where synthesis begins. You're not just collecting quotes—you're looking for patterns.

Agreement across sources:

1. What findings or concerns show up in multiple sources? When several different writers, researchers, or experts point to the same issue, that repeatability matters. It's not just one person's opinion.
2. Are there statistics, studies, or examples that get referenced by more than one source? That's a sign of foundational research worth paying attention to.

Disagreement and outliers:

3. Where do sources contradict each other? Is one source an outlier, or is there genuine debate?
4. When sources disagree, can you tell why? (Different time periods? Different populations studied? Different assumptions?)

Emerging themes:

5. Even when sources discuss different examples, are they circling the same underlying ideas? What themes keep emerging?
6. What questions remain unanswered? What do the sources suggest we still need to learn?

Your synthesis:

7. Based on the patterns you see, what does this collection of sources reveal about our relationship with technology?

These are the questions that will lead you toward your synthesis essay. You're not looking for the "right answer"—you're mapping out what multiple credible voices are telling us about this topic.

T 3/24 – Informative Synthesis Essay Launch

READ | WATCH

- [E2 Informative Synthesis Overview](#) [video]
- [Informative Synthesis Essay Assignment](#)
- MLA Citation Quick Reference (below)
- Academic Tone: Trust Me, It's Not What AI Gives You (below)

DUE

- [Informative Synthesis Essay: Prewriting 1](#) [In Notebook]



Synthesis Overview



Synthesis Assignment



Prewriting 1

MLA Citation Quick Reference

How In-Text Citations Work

In-text citations work hand-in-hand with your Works Cited page. Think of them like a map with a legend—the marks on the map are shortcuts, and the legend tells you what they mean.

MLA requires you to give the author and location in your citations through signal phrases and parenthetical citations.

Sources WITH Page Numbers

Author named in sentence:

According to Smith, "students who read for pleasure score higher on standardized tests" (42).

Author NOT named in sentence:

Studies show that "students who read for pleasure score higher on standardized tests" (Smith 42).

Sources WITHOUT Page Numbers

Many online sources don't have page numbers. For text-based web sources, use just the author's name.

Social media has changed how young people communicate (Johnson).

For video or audio sources, give the time range:

Brown explains, "connection is why we're here" (00:16:33-00:16:46).

Multiple Authors

Two authors:

Research supports this claim (Smith and Jones 78).

Three or more authors (use "et al."):

One study found surprising results (Martinez et al. 203).

Works Cited Page Basics

- Start on a new page after your essay
- Center the title "Works Cited" (not bold, not underlined)
- Double-space all entries
- Alphabetize by the first word of each entry
- Use hanging indent (first line flush left, subsequent lines indented 0.5")

Quick Reminders

- Nothing in a citation should be bold—ever
- If you mention the author in your sentence, don't repeat it in the parentheses
- Page numbers ONLY go in citations, never in your sentence

For paper formatting, see the MLA Format Guide.

Academic Tone: Trust Me, It's Not What AI Gives You

Let me tell you something that might surprise you: good academic writing doesn't sound like a robot wrote it. It doesn't use ten-dollar words when five-cent ones will do. It doesn't pad every sentence with phrases like "in today's society" or "it is important to note that." Those are filler. Those are what AI gives you when you ask it to write something "academic."

Real academic writing sounds like a thoughtful adult explaining something they've actually thought about. That's it. That's the secret.

What Academic Tone Actually Is

When instructors ask for "academic tone" or "formal writing," they're asking for writing that takes the subject seriously and treats the reader as an intelligent person. They're not asking for:

- Inflated vocabulary that sounds impressive but says nothing
- Sentences so long they lose the reader (and the writer)
- Passive voice everywhere because "it sounds more professional"
- A voice that sounds like it belongs to no one in particular

Academic tone is professional, not stuffy. Think about the difference between how you'd explain something to your instructor in office hours versus how you'd text your friend about it. The office hours version is academic tone.

The AI Problem

Here's what AI does when you ask it to write academically: it produces something that looks like academic writing but isn't. It strings together phrases it has learned are common in essays. It hedges everything. It sounds generic because it is generic.

More importantly, using AI to write your essays robs you twice. First, you lose the learning that comes from figuring out how to say something clearly. Writing is thinking made visible—when you skip the writing, you skip the thinking. Second, you rob your reader of the pleasure of encountering your mind.

What Good Academic Writing Sounds Like

AI-style writing:

"In today's society, the utilization of social media platforms has become an increasingly prevalent phenomenon among today's youth. It is important to note that there are both positive and negative aspects to this trend that must be carefully considered."

Human thinking:

"Social media has changed how teenagers see themselves. When a sixteen-year-old can watch her post's likes in real time, she's learning something about her value—and that lesson isn't always a good one."

See the difference? The first version says almost nothing while sounding "academic." The second version takes a position, makes it specific, and trusts the reader to follow along.

How to Develop Your Academic Voice

- Read your work aloud. If you wouldn't say it that way in a serious conversation, reconsider the phrasing.

- Cut the filler. Words like "very," "really," "basically" almost never add meaning.
- Own your claims. Instead of "Some might say that exercise is beneficial," just write "Exercise improves mental health."
- Use specific examples. General statements are weak; specific ones are strong.
- Think before you write. The best academic writing comes from genuine curiosity.

Your voice is the point. Don't let a machine take that from you.

—K

Th 3/26 – The Sociology of Gossip

READ | WATCH

- [The Sociology of Gossip](#) [video]

DUE

- [Informative Synthesis Essay: Prewriting 2](#) [In Notebook]
-



Sociology of Gossip



Prewriting 2

Th 4/2 – Drafting Your Synthesis Essay

READ | WATCH

- [Drafting your Informative Essay](#) [video]
- Organizing Your College Essay (below)
- Student Sample: Feeling Close to Strangers: What We Know About Parasocial Relationships (below)

DUE

- [Informative Synthesis Essay: Prewriting 3](#) [In Notebook]



Drafting Informative



Prewriting 3

Organizing Your College Essay

Every essay you write in this class—your Emblem Essay, your Informative Synthesis, your Argument Essay—follows the same basic structure. Learning this structure now means you won't have to relearn it later.

The Big Picture: What Is an Essay?

The word "essay" comes from the French *essai*, meaning "to try" or "to attempt." That's what you're doing every time you write one: attempting to explain your thinking about something.

Think of an essay like a house:

- A front door (introduction) that welcomes readers in and tells them what to expect
- Rooms (body paragraphs) where the actual living happens
- A view from the roof (conclusion) that lets readers see the whole neighborhood

Paragraphs: The Building Blocks

A paragraph is a group of sentences about one idea. That's it. When you shift to a different idea, you start a new paragraph.

Here's the test: Can you summarize what a paragraph is about in one sentence? If you can't—if it's about three different things—you probably need to split it up.

The Topic Sentence

Most paragraphs need a topic sentence—one sentence that tells the reader what the paragraph is about. Usually, it comes first.

The Introduction: Your Front Door

Your introduction does two jobs: gets readers thinking about your topic, and presents your thesis—the main point of your essay.

Here's a secret: many writers draft their body paragraphs first, then come back and write the introduction. You can't introduce a baby that hasn't been born yet.

Body Paragraphs: Where the Work Happens

Your body paragraphs do the heavy lifting. Each one should:

- Focus on one aspect of your main point
- Include evidence or examples
- Explain how that evidence connects to your thesis

The Conclusion: The View from the Roof

Your conclusion is NOT just a summary. Think of it as stepping back and seeing the bigger picture.

The Math Analogy: If each point you make is worth \$1, your conclusion adds them up. \$3 is worth more than any single dollar.

Things you can do in a conclusion:

- Explain what your points add up to—the bigger significance
- Discuss implications: What does this mean going forward?

- End with a memorable image, example, or question (but always follow it with your own

Ramirez 1

Marcus Ramirez

Professor Wood

ENGL 1301

March 18, 2026

Feeling Close to Strangers: What We Know About Parasocial Relationships

Most people have felt a connection to someone they have never actually met. Maybe it is a YouTuber whose videos they watch every day, a podcast host who feels like a friend, or a celebrity who they follow on social media. These one-sided connections are called parasocial relationships, and they are way more common than people might think. Some experts say these relationships can be totally healthy and normal, while others worry that they might be replacing real human connections. By looking at what psychologists, social media researchers, and other experts say about parasocial relationships, it becomes clear that these connections are complicated—they can be both helpful and harmful depending on the situation.

First, it helps to understand what parasocial relationships actually are and why they form. The article "Friend or Faux: Are Parasocial Relationships Healthy?" explains that parasocial relationships are basically one-sided emotional connections where one person invests feelings and attention into someone who does not even know they exist. This might sound weird, but the article points out that parasocial relationships have been around since radio and television—people used to feel close to radio hosts and TV stars long before social media existed. In the video "The Sociology of Gossip," sociologist Eliane Liu talks about how humans are naturally wired to care about other people's lives, which might help explain why we form these attachments so easily. When someone watches the same content creator every day, their brain starts treating that person almost like a real friend because it is getting regular "updates" about

their life. So parasocial relationships are not some new problem caused by social media—they are actually a pretty natural human response that has just gotten more intense because of how much content we consume now.

Interestingly, researchers disagree about whether parasocial relationships are actually good or bad for people. Some experts think they can be really beneficial. In the article "Parasocial Relationships Can Tell Us a Lot about the Social Brain," Daisy Yuhas argues that these connections can provide comfort, reduce loneliness, and even help people practice social skills. According to this view, feeling connected to a YouTuber or influencer is not that different from feeling connected to characters in a book or movie—it is a normal way for humans to engage with stories and personalities. The "Friend or Faux" article backs this up by mentioning that for some people, especially those who struggle with social anxiety or have limited access to in-person friendships, parasocial relationships can be a helpful supplement to their social life. However, other experts are more concerned. In her Pew Research article "What we know about TikTok Content Creators," Regina Widjaya points out that many content creators intentionally build parasocial connections with their followers because that keeps people watching and makes them money. This raises questions about whether these relationships are genuine or if people are being manipulated.

Another pattern that shows up across multiple sources is the idea that parasocial relationships become a problem when they start replacing real relationships instead of just adding to them. The video "Neuromarketing: How Brands Are Getting Your Brain to Buy More Stuff" talks about how companies use psychological techniques to create emotional bonds with consumers, and content creators do similar things to keep viewers engaged. Luxuan Wang et al. in the article "A Closer Look at Americans' Experiences with News on TikTok" show just how

Ramirez 3

much time people spend consuming content from creators they follow—time that could potentially be spent on real-world relationships. The "Friend or Faux" article makes a similar point, noting that parasocial relationships become unhealthy when someone starts preferring the "safety" of a one-sided connection over the messiness of real friendships. Real relationships require compromise and dealing with conflict, while parasocial relationships let people feel connected without any of that hard work. So the issue is not necessarily that parasocial relationships exist, but that they can become a way to avoid the challenges of actual human connection.

Looking at all these sources together reveals some important things about parasocial relationships in our connected society. The main thing is that experts mostly agree these relationships are natural and not automatically unhealthy—humans have always formed emotional connections to people they do not personally know. But the sources also agree that social media and content creation have made parasocial relationships more intense and more common than ever before. Where experts disagree is on whether this is concerning or not. Some think parasocial relationships can be genuinely good for people, while others worry about manipulation by creators and the potential for these connections to replace real ones. What seems most accurate based on the research is that context matters a lot—a parasocial relationship that adds to someone's social life is different from one that replaces it. Understanding this helps explain why this topic is still being debated and why there is no simple answer about whether watching your favorite creator every day is totally fine or something to worry about.

Works Cited

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AI Disclosure

I used ChatGPT to help me brainstorm how to organize my subtopics after I finished my research. I also asked it to explain what "parasocial" meant when I first started reading because I had never heard that word before. All the synthesis and conclusions are my own—I wrote everything and decided what patterns I saw across the sources.

T 4/7 – Peer Review Workshop

DUE

- Bring a written/printed copy of your essay—print or handwritten [In Class]

This is an in-class activity. You must be here to get credit. Be ready to share with your group.

Th 4/9 – Th 4/23: Conference Weeks

During conference time, you and I will meet once during your scheduled conference time in my office. Otherwise, you will be working online. Work through the things listed for homework over the course of the weeks. Please do not leave these until the end of conferences; you won't like yourself as much if you do.

FOR YOUR CONFERENCE

- What to bring: Bring your notebook and PRINTED essay draft. We'll chat about it. I have snacks and stickers!
- Where we meet: My office, Room 1101. If you can't find it, ask someone—but also, follow the ninjas.
- Attendance at conference time counts as attendance for the other days of class during conference time.
- Your Schedule: You can check your scheduled time on Blackboard. I will put the schedule at the top of the page.
- If you must reschedule: Make sure to notify me by email or text. Let me know what other times work for you.

TO DO DURING CONFERENCE TIME

- Work on Essay 2: Informative Synthesis before and after conferencing with me
- READ|WATCH foundational readings for the next essay and take notes
- Do the first prewriting for the final essay
- Do any needed research on counter arguments (see reading)
- Your Reflection will be due when you return at the same time the Informative Synthesis Essay is due

READ | WATCH

- Pre-Reading: From Informing to Arguing (below)
 - Argument Essay Assignment (below)
 - APA Format Guide (below)
 - Argument Essay: Prewriting 1 (below)
 - Counterarguments: Why the Other Side Makes You Stronger (below)
 - Phrases for Introducing Counterarguments (below)
 - Using Personal Experience in Academic Arguments (below)
-

Pre-Reading: From Informing to Arguing

For Essay 3, you're making a shift. In Essay 2, your job was to inform—to gather what multiple sources say about a topic and present that information clearly. Now, in Essay 3, your job is to argue—to take a position and convince your reader that your position makes sense.

The Big Shift

Essay 2 (Informative Synthesis): "Here's what experts say about this topic."

Essay 3 (Argument): "Based on what I've learned, here's what I think we should do about it—and here's why."

Both essays use sources. Both require research. But the purpose is different.

Before You Read the Assignment

Think about your Essay 2 topic. You spent weeks researching and synthesizing sources on a technology-related issue.

1. What was your topic for Essay 2?
2. After all that research, do you have an opinion about what should be done? What did you come to believe?
3. If someone asked you "So what? What's the point?"—what would you say?
4. Is there something you want to convince people of? A change you think should happen?

The Format Shift: MLA to APA

You're also learning a new citation format. APA is common in social sciences, business, nursing, and education.

Things to notice as you work on Prewriting 1:

- Where does the date go in APA citations? How is this different from MLA?
- How do in-text citations look different in APA?
- What's different about the title page?
- Why do you think APA emphasizes the date of publication more than MLA does?

The Counterargument Question

One of the biggest differences between a weak argument and a strong one is how you handle disagreement.

A weak argument pretends the other side doesn't exist.

A strong argument acknowledges the other side, takes it seriously, and explains why your position still makes sense.

Argument Essay Assignment

Overview

Building on your informative synthesis essay, you will now develop an argumentative essay that takes a clear position on your topic. This assignment asks you to move from explaining multiple perspectives to advocating for a specific stance, using evidence to support your claims and addressing counterarguments.

Assignment Details

Length: Minimum 4 full pages of text (excluding title and References pages)

Format: APA 7th edition

Sources: Minimum 4 sources required (you may include up to 6 sources total)

- Required: The 4 sources—these should mostly be the ones used in your informative essay, but you may trade out a few if you've found better sources for your argument since then.
- Optional: 2 additional credible sources of your choosing

Essential Components

1. Introduction

Engage readers with your opening and establish the controversy surrounding your topic. Build context for why this issue matters. End with an argumentative thesis statement that clearly presents your position and previews your main reasons.

2. Body Paragraphs

Each paragraph should develop one main reason supporting your thesis:

- Begin with a claim that supports your thesis (topic sentence)
- Present relevant, credible evidence from your sources
- Explain how the evidence supports your claim (analysis—don't just drop in quotes)
- End with a sentence that reinforces your argument and transitions to the next paragraph

3. Counterargument Section

Acknowledge and respond to at least one significant opposing viewpoint. Present the counterargument fairly and accurately, then explain why your position is more compelling. This demonstrates critical thinking by showing you've considered the complexity of your topic.

4. Conclusion

Synthesize your main points and reinforce your thesis using fresh language. Discuss the broader significance of your argument—why should readers care about this issue? Leave readers with a compelling final thought.

5. References Page

Properly formatted APA citations for all sources used in your essay.

6. Required AI Disclosure

Include a statement about AI use at the end of your essay.

APA Format Guide

Formatting Your Paper in APA Style (7th Edition, Student Papers)

The Basics at a Glance

- Font: 12-point, standard font (Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial)
- Spacing: Double-space everything
- Margins: 1 inch on all sides
- Alignment: Left-align (ragged right edge—do not justify)
- Indentation: Indent first line of each paragraph 0.5 inch (use Tab)
- Page Numbers: Top right corner, starting on title page

Key Differences from MLA

Unlike MLA, an APA paper:

- Requires a title page
- Uses only page numbers in the header (no running head for student papers in 7th edition)
- Calls the final page References (not Works Cited)
- Emphasizes publication date in citations (because sciences change quickly)

Title Page (Page 1)

Space down a few lines and center the following:

- Paper Title — Bold, using APA title case (this is the ONLY thing in bold on this page)
- Blank line
- Your Name
- Department/Discipline and School Name (e.g., Department of English, El Paso Community College)
- Course Number and Title (e.g., ENGL 1301: Composition I)
- Instructor Name (double-check the spelling!)
- Date (Month Day, Year format: January 20, 2026)

First Page of Text (Page 2)

- Center your paper title in bold on the first line
- Do NOT skip a line before the title
- Use regular double-spacing after the title
- Turn bold OFF before starting your text
- Indent the first line of each paragraph

References Page

- Press Ctrl+Enter to start a new page
- Center the word References at the top in bold
- Turn off bold
- List references in alphabetical order
- Use hanging indent
- Double-space with no extra space between entries

Quick Checklist

- Title page with all required elements
- Page numbers on every page (top right, starting with 1)
- Double-spaced throughout (no extra spacing between paragraphs)
- 1-inch margins on all sides
- Paper title repeated (bold, centered) at top of page 2
- Standard 12-point font throughout
- First line of each paragraph indented 0.5 inch
- References page starts on a new page

For citation formatting, see the APA Citation Quick Reference.

Sample APA Format - Title Page:

Title of My Super-Great Paper: The One that's Really Brilliant

Your Name

El Paso Community College

English 1301

Professor Wood

July 19, 2026

Title of My Super-Great Paper: The One that's Really Brilliant

Begin your paper here. Your title page does not count toward the length of your paper, nor do graphics, references pages, or any appendices. Remember, page length is about depth of thought, so think as deeply as your page length requires.

You should not have any extra spaces between your paragraphs. To make sure you don't, highlight all of your writing, select the paragraph call out arrow from the Home tab or right click on the highlighted section and select Paragraph from the pop-up menu. There, look under Spacing Before and After. Make sure that each of those is set to 0.

Do not use bold, italics, underlining, or any other adjustment to your font unless you have a technical reason to do so. The following pages discuss some of those, but when in doubt look it up in a reliable style guide.

Heading Title for Sections

After your introduction, you may begin to use headings when your essay is long enough: generally over 5 pages. There is a difference in how you format first, second, and third level headings, so look that up if you need to. If you're only doing first level heading (major points without sub-points that need headings) they will be centered in bold with major words capitalized as shown above. For most of your academic papers, you will only need first-level headings.

Remember, you must be able to read your work without the headings and still have smooth transitions. Take time to read the paragraphs without the headings and make sure they flow logically and smoothly to check those transitions. If your paper is short, do not use headings unless you've been instructed to.

Sample APA Format - References Page:

3

References

Instead of Works Cited as in MLA, in APA, the sources you use are called References. Notice that the title of this page is also in bold. Like MLA they are organized alphabetically by whatever appears first in the citation. Here are some other things to note.

You need to look specifically at APA instructions as they are different from MLA instructions. Again, don't try to memorize them—no one does—look them up and follow instructions.

If you give AI a list of all the elements you need for the citation, it will format it for you, but don't trust it to do it on its own just yet: 2026 January 18. As of this writing, it hallucinates a lot with them.

The writing center tutors are great help with this,. You can visit them at

www.epcc.edu/Services/WritingCenter

Format all with a hanging indent. If you're working in Word on your computer, you can press Ctrl+T (Cmd+T on a Mac) to format your hanging indent. Otherwise, check out this handout:

tinyurl.com/indent-howto

Argument Essay: Prewriting 1

Converting MLA to APA Format

Purpose

This prewriting exercise will help you transform your informative synthesis essay from MLA format to APA format, which is commonly used in the social sciences and other disciplines.

Instructions

Part A: Document Formatting Changes

- Create a new document using your informative synthesis essay as the starting point. Save as or save a copy.
- Update the font and spacing (it should stay the same)
- Header and Page Numbers: Update to APA style
- Title Page: Create an APA title page

Part B: In-Text Citation Changes

Convert MLA citations to APA format:

- MLA: (Author's Last Name #)
- APA: (Author's Last Name, Year, p. #)

Part C: Works Cited → References Changes

To change your MLA Work Cited page sources to APA format, use:

- The library database for anything you got from the library
 - The Purdue OWL APA section
 - AI, but double check your work—work with the Writing Center tutors
-

Counterarguments: Why the Other Side Makes You Stronger

One of the most common questions students ask about argument essays is some version of this:

"Wait—I have to explain the other side's argument? Won't that hurt my position?"

The short answer: No. The opposite, actually.

Why Counterarguments Matter

Think about the last time you watched a debate or listened to someone try to convince you of something. When the person refused to acknowledge any problems with their position, how did you feel?

Most people feel suspicious. If someone won't admit that the other side has any valid points, it seems like they're either uninformed or hiding something.

Now think about when someone said, "I understand why people believe X—it makes sense because of Y—but here's why I still think Z is the better position."

That person seems more credible (they've actually considered other perspectives), more honest (they're not pretending the issue is simple), and more persuasive (they've anticipated your objections).

Two Ways to Handle Counterarguments

Option 1: Refute It

Sometimes the counterargument is based on faulty logic, outdated information, or a misunderstanding. In that case, you explain why it doesn't hold up.

Option 2: Concede and Pivot

Sometimes the counterargument has a valid point—and acknowledging that makes you more credible. You can agree with part of it while still maintaining your overall position.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

The Straw Man

Presenting a weak, easily defeated version of the counterargument doesn't make you look smart—it makes you look like you're avoiding the real challenge.

The Drive-By

"Some people disagree, but they're wrong. Anyway, back to my point..." If you're going to mention a counterargument, actually engage with it.

The Self-Destruct

If you genuinely can't respond to a counterargument, you might need to rethink your position—or at least narrow your claim.

Phrases for Introducing Counterarguments

Use these to give you ideas. It's okay to use them in your writing but consider changing some wording here or there to fit your voice.

Acknowledging Opposing Views

- Opponents of this idea claim/maintain/argue that...
- Critics argue/assert/contend that...
- Those who disagree with this position point out that...
- Some readers may challenge the view that...
- On the other hand, some believe that...
- A common argument against this position is that...

Recognizing Valid Points

- Admittedly, there is some truth to the argument that...
- It is true that...
- To be fair, critics make a valid point when they suggest that...
- While it is true that...
- There is merit to the argument that...

Transitioning to Rebuttals

- However, this argument overlooks/fails to consider/ignores...
 - Nevertheless, this perspective fails to recognize...
 - Despite these claims, a closer analysis reveals...
 - While this may be true, it is important to consider...
 - Although this point has merit, it is important to understand that...
-

Using Personal Experience in Academic Arguments

Personal experiences and observations can strengthen your academic essays by providing evidence, building credibility, and connecting concepts to real situations. However, in formal academic writing, it's important to present these experiences without overusing personal pronouns (I, me, my, you, your) or sounding too casual.

Effective Techniques

1. Use third-person perspective with attribution

Instead of: "I observed students struggling with online learning during the pandemic."

Better: "Observations of college students during the 2023 academic year revealed significant challenges with online learning platforms."

2. Focus on the observation rather than the observer

Instead of: "When I tutored students, I noticed they often misunderstood thesis statements."

Better: "Tutoring sessions with composition students showed a pattern of misunderstanding regarding thesis construction."

3. Convert personal experiences into examples

Instead of: "In my experience, group work helps students understand diverse perspectives."

Better: "A classroom exercise involving group analysis of texts demonstrated how collaborative work exposes students to diverse perspectives."

4. Appeal to common observation

Instead of: "I see everyone at the coffee shop working on their laptops instead of talking."

Better: "A look around any coffee shop shows how once-social spaces have changed, with customers focused on their screens rather than talking with those around them."

Tips for Success

- Use first-person sparingly: Save "I" for occasional strategic moments.
- Balance personal examples with research: Support personal observations with scholarly sources.
- Focus on the broader significance: Connect your observations to wider patterns.

Remember, personal experiences can make your writing more engaging and persuasive when presented appropriately.

T 4/28 – Transforming Your Thesis

READ | WATCH

- Moving from Informative to Argumentative Theses (below)
- Student Sample: Why Data Brokers Need Federal Regulation (below)

DUE

- Informative Synthesis Reflection [[Blackboard](#)]
 - Notebook including all notes and prewritings up to date [In Class]
 - Argument Essay: Prewriting 1 [In Notebook]
-

Moving from Informative to Argumentative Theses

1

Why Data Brokers Need Federal Regulation

Sofia Hernandez

Department of English, El Paso Community College

ENGL 1301: Composition I

Professor Wood

December 12, 2025

Why Data Brokers Need Federal Regulation

Every time you unlock your phone, click on a website, or scan your loyalty card at the store, you are giving away little pieces of information about yourself. These digital breadcrumbs tell a story about who you are, but you are not the one telling it. Companies you have probably never heard of, called data brokers, are collecting these pieces, putting them together into detailed profiles about you, and selling your life story to whoever will pay for it. Most people have no idea how big or powerful this industry has gotten. While some argue that data collection makes our online experience better through personalized ads, the data broker industry needs serious federal regulation because these companies collect our personal information without really asking us, use that information in ways that can hurt our economic opportunities, and operate with way too much secrecy for a democratic society.

The biggest problem with data brokers is that they collect huge amounts of personal information from places most people do not even know about, and they make profiles on us without getting real permission. According to a report by the Federal Trade Commission (2014), data brokers get their information from "public records, online shopping, loyalty cards at grocery stores, and social media." These companies combine all that information to create detailed profiles that might include someone's income, interests, shopping habits, or even health conditions. Shoshana Zuboff (2019) explains in her book *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* that "even the small things we do online—like scrolling through a page or clicking a button—are tracked and used to make these profiles" (p. 134). This shows that consent is basically meaningless in the current system. While people might technically agree to terms of service, they have no real understanding of how much their data is being collected and shared with companies they have never heard of. The tracking happens automatically and invisibly. Scrolling and

clicking are not conscious decisions to share data, but they get treated that way. When companies collect information in ways we cannot see and make profiles without clearly asking us, they are violating our basic privacy rights, and that is a problem that needs regulation to fix.

This is not just about the idea of privacy—data brokers actually cause real problems in people's everyday lives by helping companies discriminate in pricing, lending, and other important decisions. In an NPR interview, Robert Siegel points out that "with each interaction we have online, companies collect data about us—what car we own, how big our mortgage is. Companies keep files on us, and they use those files to decide what to sell us and at what price" (Angwin, 2016). Julia Angwin adds a troubling example: "every website you visit creates itself the moment you arrive... we have found that there are cases where companies determine the price of the product to you based on where you live" (Angwin, 2016). These are not just things that might happen—these are documented cases where data broker information led to discriminatory pricing. This finding is supported by research from the Electronic Privacy Information Center, which shows how data profiles can lead to unfair outcomes in housing, employment, and credit decisions ("EPIC - Data Brokers," n.d.). When someone pays more for a product or gets rejected for a loan because of data they did not even know existed and cannot fight back against, that is just not fair. These practices can make existing inequalities worse and create new types of discrimination based on what algorithms think about our data.

Perhaps the scariest thing is that data brokers make it possible for political campaigns to manipulate voters with incredible precision. According to an investigation by *The New York Times*, "political groups use this data to send very specific messages to voters based on their personality, fears, or beliefs" (Thompson, 2020). Thompson calls this the "weaponization" of personal data—basically, information that was collected for selling stuff gets used to influence

through invisible collection methods that make true consent impossible, their data gets used to make decisions that hurt people's economic opportunities, and their services allow the manipulation of democratic processes. While the industry says it provides valuable services, those benefits do not justify the current free-for-all with personal information. The push for regulation, like California's Consumer Privacy Act and advocacy from groups like the Electronic Frontier Foundation, shows that more people recognize that privacy is not just a personal preference—it is a basic right in our digital world. As Hayley Tsukayama (2025) warns, "without consequences to back up our rights... many companies will bank on not getting caught, or factor weak slaps on the wrist into the cost of doing business." People always say that data is the new oil, a valuable resource that powers the digital economy. But there is a huge difference: oil does not belong to anyone until it gets pulled out of the ground. Your data already belongs to you. The question is not whether data is valuable, it is who gets to decide how that value gets used, and whether you will have any say in it.

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AI Disclosure: I used Claude to help me find sources and to check my APA formatting. I also asked it to explain some of the more complicated parts of the FTC report in simpler language. I did not use it to write any sections of my essay. The ideas and words in this paper are mine, and I can explain and defend every argument I make.

Th 4/30 – Writing to Persuade**READ | WATCH**

- Writing to Persuade: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos (below)
- Student Sample: Learning to See Through the Screen: Why Schools Need to Teach About Parasocial Relationships (below)
- Argument Essay: Prewriting 2 (below)

DUE

- Argument Essay: Prewriting 2 (If you have it typed up, print a copy to get stamped/initialed) [In Notebook]
-

Writing to Persuade: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos

Overview: From Information to Persuasion

When we write an informative essay, our goal is to explain different perspectives on a topic fairly and objectively. Now, as we transform that essay into an argument, our goal shifts: we need to convince our readers that our position is the most reasonable one.

The ancient Greeks identified three main ways that writers persuade readers:

- Ethos (credibility): Convincing readers that you're trustworthy, knowledgeable, and fair-minded
- Pathos (emotion): Helping readers connect emotionally to your topic and care about the issue
- Logos (logic): Providing solid evidence and reasoning that supports your claims

The key to persuasive writing isn't using just one of these appeals—it's balancing all three.

Ethos: Establishing Your Credibility

How to Build Ethos:

- Use credible sources. When we cite respected experts, we borrow their credibility.
- Acknowledge counterarguments fairly. This shows we've considered multiple perspectives.
- Use appropriate academic language. Professional language shows we take the topic seriously.
- Be accurate and precise. Small errors can damage credibility quickly.

Pathos: Connecting Emotionally with Your Audience

How to Use Pathos Effectively:

- Use concrete examples. Help readers visualize the human impact.
- Choose vivid language carefully. Don't overdo it.
- Connect to shared values. Appeal to fairness, safety, freedom, family, opportunity.
- Make it relatable. Help readers see how the issue could affect them.

Logos: Building Logical Arguments

How to Strengthen Logos:

- Use specific, verifiable evidence. Statistics, research findings, expert testimony.
- Make clear connections. Explain how your evidence supports your claims.
- Avoid logical fallacies. Don't rely on oversimplifications or false dichotomies.
- Address weaknesses honestly. Acknowledge limitations in your evidence.

Warning Signs: When You've Gone Too Far

Red Flag #1: Extreme Language

Words like: always, never, everyone, no one, obviously, clearly, destroy, evil, criminal

Better alternatives: often, rarely, many people, evidence suggests, harmful, problematic

Red Flag #2: Personal Attacks

Focus on explaining why their arguments are less convincing than yours, not attacking people.

Red Flag #3: Emotional Manipulation

Your goal is to help readers understand the emotional stakes, not to terrorize them into agreeing.

Final Tips for Effective Persuasion

- Read your work aloud. If anything sounds preachy or aggressive, revise it.
 - Imagine a skeptical reader. Would they feel you're treating their position fairly?
 - Let evidence do the heavy lifting. The strongest arguments don't need excessive emotional language.
 - Maintain academic tone while being engaging.
 - End strong. Leave readers thinking about the broader significance.
-

**Learning to See Through the Screen:
Why Schools Need to Teach About Parasocial Relationships**

Marcus Ramirez

El Paso Community College

ENGL 1301: Composition I

Professor Wood

April 15, 2026

Learning to See Through the Screen:

Why Schools Need to Teach About Parasocial Relationships

Everyone has a favorite content creator. Maybe it is a gamer who streams every night, a lifestyle vlogger who shares their daily routine, or a TikTok personality whose videos pop up on the For You page constantly. These creators feel like friends, like people who really get us. But here is the thing: they do not know we exist. This one-sided emotional connection is called a parasocial relationship, and while experts say these connections are natural and sometimes beneficial, they also agree that social media has made them more intense and potentially problematic than ever before. The question is not whether parasocial relationships exist—they clearly do, and they are everywhere. The real question is what we do about it. Schools need to incorporate media literacy education specifically focused on parasocial relationships because young people deserve the tools to recognize when their connections to creators are healthy and when they are being manipulated.

First, the scale of parasocial relationships in today's media landscape demands educational attention. According to Wang et al. (2025) at the Pew Research Center, Americans spend significant amounts of time consuming content from creators they follow on platforms like TikTok, often multiple hours per day. This is not just passive entertainment—it is repeated, daily exposure to personalities who are specifically designed to feel relatable and trustworthy with many of the adults who were interviewed for their survey (10,287 adult internet users in the United States from March 18 to 24, 2024) and they found that many of those adults “regularly get news on TikTok, [and] just as many. . . get news on the site from influencers or celebrities (68%) as from news outlets or journalists (67%)” (para. 8). As the Cleveland Clinic (2023) explains, parasocial relationships form when someone invests feelings and attention into a person

who does not even know they exist, and they quote on authority as saying ““The relationship really stems from repeated exposure to a public figure or a celebrity,” Dr. Borland explains. ‘That exposure creates a sense of intimacy and a perceived connection’” (“How do Parasocial Relationships Form,” para. 3). The brain starts treating these creators like real friends because it is receiving regular "updates" about their lives. Combine that with the sheer volume of content young people consume, and you have a generation forming more parasocial relationships than any generation in history. Schools already teach students how to evaluate sources for research papers and how to recognize bias in news. Teaching them to understand their own emotional connections to media figures is just the next logical step.

More importantly, there is growing evidence that parasocial relationships are being deliberately exploited for profit. Widjaya (2025) reports that content creators intentionally build parasocial connections with their followers because stronger emotional bonds keep people watching longer and make them more likely to buy merchandise, donate money, or subscribe to premium content, and they point out that “Similarly, posts that promote goods and services are much more common among the most-followed accounts” (“Popular Creators Share,” para. 2). The video "Neuromarketing: How Brands Are Getting Your Brain to Buy More Stuff" (DW Planet A, 2021) explains how companies use psychological techniques to create emotional bonds with consumers, and content creators use these exact same strategies. They share personal stories to create intimacy, they address viewers directly to simulate conversation, and they maintain consistent posting schedules to become part of their audience's daily routine. None of this is inherently evil, but it does mean that the "friendship" viewers feel is often the result of calculated marketing strategies rather than genuine connection. Young people deserve to know this. Just like we teach kids to recognize when advertisements are trying to manipulate them, we should

teach them to recognize when creators are using psychological techniques to strengthen parasocial bonds.

To be clear, teaching media literacy about parasocial relationships does not mean telling students that all parasocial connections are bad. Yuhas (2024) argues that these relationships can actually provide comfort, reduce loneliness, and help people practice social skills: a research group [Lotun, Matran-Fernandez & Sandstrom, 2024] published findings that suggest some people feel their parasocial relationships more effectively fulfill emotional needs than in-person acquaintances” (“In April,” para. 1). The Cleveland Clinic (2023) backs this up by noting that for people who struggle with social anxiety or have limited access to in-person friendships, parasocial relationships can be a helpful supplement to their social life. Sociologist Elaine Liu (TED, 2013) points out that humans are naturally wired to care about other people's lives, which is part of why we form these attachments so easily, and she notes that she “studies the celebrity ecosystem to understand social culture, to understand social behavior, to understand humanity, to understand ourselves” (00:03:22). The goal of education should not be to eliminate parasocial relationships—that would be both impossible and unnecessary. Instead, the goal should be helping students understand the difference between a parasocial relationship that adds to their life and one that replaces real human connection. The Cleveland Clinic (2023) specifically notes that parasocial relationships become unhealthy when someone starts preferring the safety of a one-sided connection over the messiness of real friendships. That distinction is exactly what media literacy education can help students recognize.

Some people argue that schools are already overwhelmed with curriculum requirements and that adding another topic would be impractical. They might also argue that parasocial relationships are a personal matter that parents should handle, not something for classroom

instruction. These concerns are understandable, but they miss the bigger picture. Media literacy is already part of many school curricula—we are just talking about expanding what that means to include the emotional dimension of media consumption. As for leaving it to parents, many parents did not grow up with social media and do not fully understand how parasocial relationships work on modern platforms. Even parents who do understand may not know how to talk to their kids about it. Schools are in a unique position to provide systematic, age-appropriate education about these issues in ways that reach all students, not just those whose parents happen to be media-savvy. The time students spend consuming creator content is not decreasing—if anything, it is increasing. Waiting for parents to figure this out on their own means letting another generation navigate these relationships without guidance.

Parasocial relationships are not going away. Social media and content creation have made them a permanent part of how young people experience connection, entertainment, and community. The research is clear: these relationships can be healthy when they supplement real social connections, but they can become harmful when they replace them or when they are deliberately exploited for profit. Schools have a responsibility to prepare students for the world they actually live in, and that world includes thousands of content creators competing for emotional attachment. Teaching media literacy about parasocial relationships is not about making students cynical or telling them their feelings are not real. It is about giving them the knowledge to make informed choices about where they invest their emotional energy. Students who understand how parasocial relationships work can still enjoy their favorite creators—they will just be able to do it with their eyes open.

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AI Disclosure: I used Claude to help me brainstorm how to turn my informative essay into an argument and to check my APA formatting. I also asked it to help me think of counterarguments to my position so I could address them. I did not use it to write any sections of my essay. The ideas and words in this paper are mine, and I can explain and defend every argument I make.

Argument Essay: Prewriting 2

From Informative to Argumentative—Developing Your Position & Planning Your Re-Draft

Purpose

This prewriting exercise will help you transform your informative synthesis essay into an argumentative essay by developing a clear position on your topic and restructuring your content to support that position.

Part A: Analyzing Your Topic

Review your informative synthesis essay and answer these questions:

- What are the main perspectives or positions on your topic?
- Which perspective do you find most compelling and why?
- What specific evidence from your sources supports this perspective?
- What counterarguments exist, and how might you address them?

Complete this statement: After synthesizing multiple perspectives on [your topic], I believe that [position statement] because [reason 1], [reason 2], and [reason 3].

Part B: Developing Your Argumentative Thesis

Example transformation:

Original Informative Thesis: "Various researchers have presented different perspectives on social media's impact on adolescent mental health, including concerns about anxiety and depression, potential benefits for certain populations, and the role of mediating factors."

Argumentative Thesis: "Although social media provides valuable connection opportunities for some adolescents, its overall impact on adolescent mental health is detrimental due to its promotion of unrealistic social comparison, disruption of sleep patterns, and correlation with increased anxiety and depression."

Part C: Restructuring Your Essay Map

Create a new outline that reorganizes your content to support your argument:

- Introduction: Hook, Background, Thesis
 - Body Paragraphs: Topic sentence, Evidence, Analysis, Concluding sentence
 - Counterargument Paragraph: Acknowledgment, Evidence, Refutation, Transition
 - Conclusion: Restatement, Summary, Significance, Final thought
-

T 5/5 – Final Drafting Steps

READ | WATCH

- [Drafting your Argument Essay](#) [video]
- Argument Essay: Prewriting 3 (below)

DUE

- Argument Essay: Prewriting 3 (If you have it typed up, print a copy to get stamped/initialed) [In Notebook]
- Bring a printed copy of your essay [In Class]

This is an in-class activity. You must be here to get credit. Be ready to share with your group.



Drafting Argument

Argument Essay: Prewriting 3

Final Drafting Steps

Use these steps to work on smoothing out a draft for peer review.

Transition Strategy

Create transitions for each major section of your essay:

- Transition into the first body paragraph from the introduction should be your thesis.
- Transition between body paragraphs should bring together the evidence you've provided and lead into the next part.
- Transition into counterargument paragraph(s)—see the list of phrases that can help.
- Transition into conclusion.

Introduction and Conclusion Development

Introduction Strategy:

- How will you hook the reader?
- What context is necessary to understand the controversy?
- How will you build up to your thesis?

Conclusion Strategy:

- How will you restate your thesis without simply repeating it?
- What broader implications does your argument have?
- What call to action or final thought will you leave readers with?

Final Checklist for Drafting

1. Thesis Statement:

- Is it clearly argumentative?
- Does it contain specific, debatable claims?
- Does it use precise, evaluative language?

2. Evidence and Support:

- Have you selected the strongest evidence from each source?
- Is your evidence relevant to your specific claims?
- Do you have a balance of different types of evidence?

3. Organization and Structure:

- Does each paragraph have a clear purpose that advances your argument?
- Have you created logical transitions between sections?
- Does your counterargument strengthen rather than weaken your position?

4. APA Formatting:

- Is your title page correctly formatted?
- Are all in-text citations in proper APA style?
- Is your References page properly formatted?

Remember that strong argumentative writing takes a clear position, supports claims with relevant evidence, acknowledges and addresses opposing viewpoints, and creates a cohesive narrative.

You've trained hard all semester, young ninja; now it's time to show off!

Th 5/7 – Last Regular Class Day

DUE

- Argument Essay [[Blackboard](#)]
 - Notebook including all notes and prewritings up to date [In Class]
-

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T 5/12 – Final Exam Period

I will return notebooks and we will have a final discussion and complete a final survey for one last 100.

DUE

- Argument Essay Reflection [[Blackboard](#)]
-

Syllabus

A Note About This Syllabus

Think of this syllabus like an employee handbook for our class. You don't need to memorize every word, but you *do* need to know what's in it so you can look things up when questions come up. What's the late work policy? How do I contact my professor? What happens if I miss class? The answers are all here.

Take some time at the beginning of the semester to read through it and get the lay of the land. Then, when you need to know something mid-semester, you'll remember, "Oh, that's in the syllabus," and know right where to look.

Bonus: This document is open-resource for your syllabus quiz—so a little familiarity now means an easy 100 later!

English 1301: Composition I

Instructor Policies & Syllabus

Kelli L. Wood

“YOU DON’T HAVE TO BE GREAT TO GET STARTED,
BUT YOU DO HAVE TO GET STARTED TO BE GREAT.”

—LES BROWN

Contact Information

Email
kwood@epcc.edu

Talk/Text
[505-437-1948](tel:505-437-1948),
[What’s App](#), [Teams](#), or [Discord](#)

Web
www.kelli.ninja

In-Office hours: TM Room 1101 | MW: 2-3 • T/Th: 1:00-4:00 • F: 11-1
Drop in and ask some questions, grab a snack, say hi.

Text or call for quick questions during [reasonable hours](#)

Online Conferences: [Schedule an online conference up to two weeks in advance](#)

SPRING 2026

Face-to-Face

CRN	Days	Time	Location
21201	MW	11:00-12:20	Room 1125
21202	MW	11:00-12:20	Room 1125
21206	TTh	10:00-11:20	Room 11203
21207	TTh	10:00-11:20	Room 11203

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TEXT(S) AND MATERIALS

Text Book

1. [The Bedford Bookshelf](#), ISBN: ISBN:9781319530297
 1. \$29.99
 2. Make sure you have purchased this by the **date it appears in our daily schedule** (course workbook—see below)

Supplements

1. My website: www.kelli.ninja
2. [English 1301: Composition I, Spring 2026 Workbook](#): Purchase a print copy at Instructional Service Center—TM Room [1550](#), free here as a pdf file.
 1. Make sure you are using the one for the correct class (TTh)
3. [Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#)

Materials

1. Face-to-face classes: 2 notebooks—small/thin ones so that when I collect everyone's notebook I'm not killing myself. **No 3-ring binders or heavy bulky things!**

Online Components

This course uses online components, and making sure you have the necessary tools and access to our media outlets is key success.

“What’s Going On?” Videos

“What’s Going On” videos orient you to key things going on during the week. *These are important and considered part of our course and lessons.*

1. Online Courses: Posted on Tuesdays unless something crazy happens. The link is on your weekly schedule.
2. Face-to-Face, Hybrid or Blended Courses: Posted as needed when we are having conferences or doing other work where we may not meet as a whole class for a few days. They will appear as links on your daily schedule or announcements in Blackboard.

Online Access & Tools

You will need consistent internet access. While online courses have been successfully completed just using a smartphone, I do not suggest you follow that route and suggest you have at least a tablet if not a laptop or computer.

Computer Labs

The college computer labs not only house computers but are also staffed by people who are knowledgeable and there to help you. Please don't hesitate to give them a call when you need support with college-related computing issues. If they can't help you, they can help find someone who can. The labs also have a limited number of laptops and internet hotspots you can check out. [EPCC computer lab locations and hours](#).

Online Classroom Use

1. For the most part, we will turn in assignments online, and use online spaces and as a central place for access to documents and other online learning tools.
2. There may be some assignments due in person in face-to-face classes.
3. These tools are provided for you by the college and you will need to know your log in information to access them. If you have forgotten your username or password, [this link will help you retrieve those](#).

INSTRUCTOR'S POLICIES

Attendance

(5% of total grade) As the [EPCC Catalog](#) states, "While you are a student at El Paso Community College, it is your responsibility to attend classes and complete the coursework to earn a grade."

1. Your attendance is expected and essential in any learning environment. You need to be mentally present and actively engaged when you are studying and learning.
2. We follow the college schedule. Look ahead to make plans as needed. *When possible*, I'm more than willing to work with you to get things done early to work around life events, but you must give me sufficient notice.
3. It is your responsibility to let me know if your name ever disappears from Banner, Blackboard, or other college online services. Your name not being there indicates a registration problem you need to deal with quickly. I can help direct you to staff who can assist you with those issues.

Drops for Non-Attendance

4. **Online Classes:** If you have not logged in within the first two weeks of the course, I will drop you, and if you do not participate and/or turn in work class for two consecutive weeks without notifying me and discussing your situation, I may drop you.
5. **Face-to-Face, hybrid, or blended classes:** If you do not attend class or submit work during the first two weeks, I will drop you. If you miss more than two-weeks' worth of classes and are not participating or turning in work, I may drop you.

Excused Absences

You have 3 excused absences. Think of these as your sick or personal days.

Additionally, the college recognizes excused absences for active-duty military or reserve personnel, emergency responders, religious holidays, or college-sponsored activities.

In all cases, you are still responsible for keeping up with the work we do in class as well as your homework.

6. Notify me as soon as possible when you know you will not be in class. This includes appointments and other pre-scheduled events. You don't need to give me details, but those things on your schedule are not surprises, and professionals, let their co-workers know in advance. I expect this kind of professionalism.
 1. If you are active-duty military, reserve, or emergency service personnel, I appreciate you letting me know that so that I am aware of that if you are called away with little or no notice. You can include that information in the contact form.
 2. If you will be missing classes to observe religious holidays and want those to be excused beyond your original 3 excused absences, you need to [fill out this form](#) and submit it no later than 15 days after the beginning of the semester. You can hand this in when I check your class notes, or you can fill it out, select print, under printer/destination, choose "save as pdf," save it with your name at the end of the file name, and then email it to me. If you do that, make sure to read the instructions on emailing me later in this syllabus so it doesn't get deleted.

What to do When You Are Absent

7. If you anticipate being absent or without computer access for a week or more, you must contact me at least a week beforehand so that we can work out a schedule, otherwise I may drop you.
8. *Face-to-Face:* If you should have an unforeseen emergency or if you contract or believe you have come in contact with a communicable illness, please stay home. Do not text me about this.
 1. Email me (kwood@epcc.edu) and let me know why you were not able to be in class (communicable illness or an emergency). I will not respond to that email but will retain it for record keeping.
 2. You are still responsible for the day's coursework and the daily schedule will have the links you need to keep up with that.
 3. When you cannot attend class, watch the video uploaded to the class playlist and take notes. When you return to class, make sure you show me your class notes for missed days. Clearly mark those as days you were absent so I make sure to get your grade in the gradebook.
 1. The link to the class playlist is on the first page of the daily schedule.
 2. Since notes count as both participation and course work points, not turning them in will result in losing points in both of those sections of your overall grade.
 3. You will not be able to make up in-class group work when you are absent.

Prolonged Illness

4. If you should contract a communicable illness during the semester *and experience symptoms that affect your ability to continue working on the class for more than a week*, contact me as soon as possible so that we can discuss options for completion or continuation of the class.
 1. As much as I am able, I will work with you to provide support and the opportunity to succeed in this class; however, understand that passing the course requires more than just completing the writings—you must engage, participate, and complete the supporting work as well.

Other General Attendance Policies—All Students

4. For any of the situations in this section or any other unforeseen situation that keeps you from attending and participating in class consistently, please keep these policies in mind:
 1. I will only work out an alternate schedule for you if you are in good standing—getting your work done and participating in the course, and you contact me as soon as possible.
 2. Prolonged absence from the course to the extent you've missed major lessons and multiple assignments will necessitate retaking the course from the start.
5. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to drop the course if you are not going to be able to complete it.

Participation

(5% of total grade) Part of your grade is based on participation in active learning, class discussions, reading, having discussions about your writing with me, and participating in any collaborative/group work we do.

General Guidelines

If you expect to accomplish passing level writing by the end of the semester, it is important for you to actively participate in class by doing/keeping in mind the following:

1. Be prepared for class.
2. Read/watch all assignments and submit your assignments on time.
3. Ask questions about assignments and work in a timely manner—not leaving things until the last minute.
4. Participate in classroom and/or online discussions at a growing professional, engaged level.
5. When communicating online, remember that you convey tone with word choice and the use of emoticons, bold, all caps, etc. Be polite, proofread your writing, and do not write in all caps.
6. Pay attention to your grammar and spelling.
7. Be respectful of your peers and instructor at all times and follow the guidelines of [netiquette](#).

8. Avoid making prejudicial remarks regarding anyone's race, ethnicity, social class, gender, sexual orientation, physical appearance, age, disability, or any other kinds of differences. Avoid activities that could be perceived as sexual harassment.
 1. That does not mean we do not discuss these issues; it just means we do so respectfully.
9. Discussions cannot be re-created and therefore cannot be made up after the due date. You should participate in a timely manner. The class works best when everyone works together.
 1. *Online Discussions:* If you wait until the last minute, you are not really participating, and your classmates have no obligation to respond to your posts at the last minute.
10. I drop students for disorderly conduct, abusive or disruptive behavior as defined in the student code of conduct, or if their behavior disrupts the learning environment. This includes but is not limited by items on the list above.
11. Most importantly, come to class with a good attitude, a sense of humor, and a willingness to work and learn.

Pursuit of Course Objectives

“In determining course pursuit by the student, the instructor will consider class attendance; the failure of the student to appear for examinations, presentations, or other required class activities identified in the course syllabus; and the failure of the student to submit required papers, projects and/or reports” ([EPCC Catalog](#))

1. If you have not completed at least 50% of the work done at any given time and are not attending and participating, you may be dropped.

Late Work Policy

Each assignment will have a specified due date and will be due on that date. It is important that you attend and meet all deadlines.

1. In general, I will not accept work that is more than one week late. In addition, you will lose five (5) points for each day the work is late.
2. Some assignments have different late-work periods. Make sure to read assignments carefully.
3. Quizzes/Tests/Exams *cannot* be done after the due date, but you can complete them early when they are available on the online learning platform.
4. With work that gets personal feedback from me, you may not receive the feedback you would have gotten had the assignment been submitted on time.
5. The only time I will accept works beyond the late due date is if you meet the following conditions:
 1. Your work is late due to circumstances beyond your control. (Unexpected injury, a serious accident, etc. It must be credibly documented.)

2. You must be in good standing in the class at the time of the incident. (Consistent attendance, work, and participation.)
3. If at all possible, you must notify me as soon as possible and arrange to meet with me to discuss plans for catching up. (In extreme circumstances, have someone notify me on your behalf.)
4. I reserve the right to determine whether or not your circumstance qualifies for this exception and whether or not you meet the conditions listed above.

6. NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED DURING FINALS WEEK.

Cheating, Plagiarism, and Collusion

Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion are both intellectual theft and academic dishonesty. They will not be tolerated in this class.

In addition to the college definition of academic dishonesty, I also include claiming as your own work any portion of academic work that was completed by software, or other technology without proper permission and/or citation. In this course, that includes presenting Large Language Model (AI) writing as your own in whole or in part.

You should bring your own ideas and thoughts to your assignments. We will discuss how and to what extent we can use technology to help us with writing, but usage of these tools to provide your works' content and overall thesis constitutes academic dishonesty in this course. Use of LLM/AI should be acknowledged as will be discussed in class.

1. Any instance of cheating, plagiarism, or collusion may result in failure of the assignment.
2. Continued infraction of regulations will lead to referral to the Vice President of Student and Enrollment Services and may result in failure of the course, probation, suspension or expulsion from the College.
3. For definitions, procedure, and more details, see the Student Code of Conduct in the [College Catalog](#).

Record-Keeping

Keep copies of all the work you do for this class until final grades have been posted. In the event of fire, theft, or loss of my grade book for some other nefarious reason, you may need to produce all work you've done. Additionally, we may have projects that require you to use past course work. Make sure to save your major writing assignments, and as a backup, I suggest you email a copy of them to yourself or use some other method to assure you have an extra copy.

Literary Content

Some of the works we read or watch in this course may contain racial slurs, curse words, nudity, sexual situations, drug use, violence, or adult situations. As adults and students of literature, we need to study these in their context and work to understand the underlying themes or points made by employing these techniques.

Contacting Me

My contact information is listed at the top of this syllabus and at the top of your daily schedule.

The best way to contact me is of course to talk to me in person; however, if that's not possible, there are other options.

Contact me about general questions you have about coursework, the projects we're working on, or other things related to your college experience as well as your grades and progress in the class.

In-Person/Office Hours

Transmountain Campus, Room 1101

See the top of this syllabus or your schedule for the semester's in-office hours. While I will make sure I am there most of the time, I may have meetings or other appointments during those times that keep me from that.

1. If you want to come by for a quick question, please feel free to do so. You do not need to call or text before stopping by my office.
2. If you'd like to schedule time to sit down together and work on something during my in-office hours, please email me a few days in advance so we can double check schedules.
 1. *I will not go over your essays or major writing assignments with you before you turn in the draft.* The point of the draft is for you to turn it in and allow me time to give you thoughtful, helpful feedback during conference. That said, I am happy to answer general questions, chat with you, and help you with some basic brainstorming and direction on specific parts.

Text or Call during Reasonable Hours

You can call or message me using any of these:

1. Phone: 505-437-1948
2. [MS Teams App](#) (Use the chat or calls function)
 1. Here's [a good introduction to the Teams App if you're not familiar with it.](#)
3. What's App; QR code below
4. Discord (I'm barely familiar with it, but here's the link to my [Discord server](#). I do manage basic messaging.)



Discord



What's App



Teams

Text vs Call

1. Text: Have a quick question and just want to text? I'll generally answer those pretty quickly.
2. Call: Do you prefer to talk about things or are there too many words for a text? If I don't answer, please leave a message, or send a quick text and I'll get back to you as soon as I can.

Reasonable Hours?

1. Generally, between 9 am and 6 pm MST. NOT between 10 pm and 8 am. Between 7 and 10 at night? I won't find them horribly offensive, but I might not get back to you until the next day.
2. Also, I don't answer calls/texts during class or other appointments, so while I'll often text right back, sometimes I won't. Texting is NOT instant messaging.
3. Basically, be conscious of the fact I too am human and also deserve to try and maintain a decent work/life balance.

Schedule an Online Conference

[Click here](#) to schedule an online conference to work on your writing together. We can meet via Blackboard Collaborate, Zoom, Teams, Google Meet, Discord, or if you want, just talk on the phone. See the top of this syllabus or your schedule for times. If none of those work for you, talk to me, text, or email and we can find something that will work for both of us.

1. You will be able to sign up for an online conference up to 10 days in advance. If there are not options shown for a conference, nothing is available for that 10-day period. You'll have to check back over the next few days.
2. No ideas for your assignments? That's okay. We can talk about that and come up with some.

3. Want to talk about grades or your general progress in the class? We can do that.
4. Need to discuss a prolonged absence, illness or other unforeseen circumstance so we can consider our options? Sure.
 1. *I will not go over your essays or major writing assignments with you before you turn in the draft.* The point of the draft is for you to turn it in and allow me time to give you thoughtful, helpful feedback.
 2. That said, I am happy to answer general questions, chat with you, and help you with some basic brainstorming and direction on specific parts.

Email: ←Read this section carefully!

Use this email address for the quickest response:

kwood@epcc.edu

Email is the most common mode of business and professional communication for official documents. As such, you are expected to use and check your email on a consistent basis.

1. Any attachment sent without a subject line *and* message will be deleted.

1. Distinguish between the subject line and where you type the message. [Email parts](#). (Video)
2. I expect you to use your EPCC account for all communication related to your course work. I do, however, understand that you may need to use an alternate email if the college email isn't working.
3. When you email me, or any of your teachers for that matter, you need to make sure that you identify who you are and which class you're in.
4. *Always include a subject line and a message.* Use the class and day/time or Online. For example, "1301 MWF 9am," "1302 Online" is fine, as is "ENGL 1302 T/Th 11:30," or simply "MWF 11 am."
 1. Just don't put "Engl 1301" or "Engl 1302." It is very likely I have more than one section of the course you are taking and a MWF schedule is different from a T/Th or an Online Schedule. Help me help you as efficiently as possible.
 1. (Trust me, your teachers will love this! Unless they've given you specific instructions—then follow those! They'll love that even more and think you are the smartest student in the class!)
5. As this class is practice in your professional communication, I expect you to use proper English—no text-speak. You do not need to be overly formal but proofread your writing and state your message clearly.
6. I will always do my best to respond to you in a timely manner but remember that I teach a number of other classes in addition to my other duties at the college.
7. [Read about these 11 best email practices.](#)
8. I generally don't check email after 4 pm, and I'm sporadic on weekends.

You *may* contact me using Blackboard messaging, *but it is the messaging mode I check least*—in other words, not on a daily basis, so if you really want to get in touch with me, email, text, or use the other alternatives I've given you. This is the least reliable method to contact me, so if you use it, you've been told that and it's the answer to one of the quiz questions about this issue.

Assessment and Training

Work done for this class may be stored and used for assessment and training related to college accreditation and state regulations. Work used for these purposes will be kept anonymous and will not be made available for public consumption or used for financial gain. You retain full intellectual rights and copyright to all your work.

Agreement to Instructor Policies

By continuing to be enrolled in this class, you are indicating that you understand and accept the class policies as explained in this syllabus.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Assignments

All work should be typed and formatted according to standard formatting we will study in class unless otherwise stated in the assignment. I may not accept work that does not meet required standards of appearance or format which we will study in class.

Course Work

Coursework may include quizzes, discussions, and other work that is not listed in the Major Writing Assignments section but will appear on the daily schedule and be discussed in class.

Quizzes and Exams

1. These are based on the readings, videos, and assignments listed on the daily schedule. The final due dates for each of those are listed there.
2. Any quizzes and exams on the learning platform are generally open from the beginning of class and will remain open until the closing date for the particular quiz/exam so that you can go in and work on it and return later during that period.
3. It is your responsibility to make sure that you click on submit before the due date.
4. You cannot make up missed quizzes or exams; however, you can generally work ahead.

5. For issues with the content of the quizzes, let me know via email. I do sometimes make mistakes, and technology has messed up more than one quiz over the years. I'm more than happy to fix these things.
6. We may occasionally have pop quizzes.

Class Notes

1. You will take class notes for most days of class and they will be part of both your course work and your participation grades.
2. [The Class Notes assignment](#) explains how to turn these in if you must miss class due to military duty, extended illness, or unforeseen emergency.

Homework

There may be other homework assignments on the schedule or assigned in class. These will be averaged in the Coursework section.

Online Discussions

1. While these will generally be a part of online courses, we may have some of these in face-to-face and hybrid classes.
2. This is a public discussion forum, so the whole class is participating. When asked to reply to posts, make sure to reply thoughtfully; merely saying "I agree" is not enough. Explain your responses and thoughts. Make sure to proofread and answer questions completely.
3. Your grade is based on your addressing the question or prompt specifically and clearly, paying attention to your writing and the concepts we are studying, and developing your response fully.
4. Discussion counts toward Coursework as well as Attendance & Participation

Major Writing Assignments: Essays and Reflections

These assignments should be formatted according to the styles specified in the assignment. We will study that in class.

1. As described in the Official Syllabus, we will have a total of four (4) essays or essay-equivalent projects.

Extra Credit for Essay/Writing Assignments

1. You may earn up to 5 extra credit points on Major Writing Assignments drafts and final versions if you [go to the writing center](#).
2. Access the rules for essay extra credit on my [Extra Credit webpage](#), and carefully read the rules and instructions.
3. If you take your first writing assignment to the writing center, you may earn up to 10 extra credit points on each.

Course Evaluation

To earn a transferable/prerequisite grade of C you must attend class, participate in class activities, and complete assignments at a minimal level of proficiency. Higher grades will require a more noteworthy performance on your part. As we go through the course, we will review the specific criteria for each assignment; however below is a breakdown of points in the class. We will follow a traditional grade scale, dispersed as follows.

Point Distribution		Grade Scale	
Attendance & Participation	10%	A	90-100
Course Work	20%	B	80-89
Reflections	35%	C	70-79
Essays	35%	D	60-69
		F	0-59

COURSE CALENDAR

Calendar

This is our general weekly calendar—for mini-mesters, winter-mesters, or summer courses, the schedule will be condensed to fit into the allotted time, but adhere this basic order and structure. Changes will be made to fit learning needs:

1. **Week 1:** Course intro & note-taking strategies
2. **Week 2:** MLA format & Emblem Essay launch
3. **Week 3:** Student samples & Essay 1 drafting
4. **Week 4:** Emblem Essay workshop
5. **Weeks 5-6:** Conferences & library orientation
6. **Week 7:** Source credibility & reflections intro
7. **Week 8:** Technology & connected society readings
8. **Week 9:** *Spring Break*
9. **Week 10:** Neuromarketing & synthesis overview
10. **Week 11:** Works cited & Essay 2 drafting
11. **Week 12:** Informative Synthesis workshop
12. **Weeks 13-14:** Conferences & Essay 2 revisions
13. **Week 15:** Essay 2 final & argument essay intro
14. **Week 16:** Argument Essay workshop & wrap-up
15. **Finals:** Argument reflection due

Daily Schedule

1. The daily schedule is in the course workbook on the [schedule page](#) of my website. It includes links and due dates for homework and assignments. Consider it your guide to this course.
2. *You should consult it at least 3 times a week to make sure you are ready for class and working on assignments.*
3. *Make sure and refresh the digital version of the daily schedule on a regular basis.*
 1. The schedule is tentative and subject to change. I will change it only to best support our learning throughout the semester.
 2. Changes will be announced in class, and/or in weekly “What’s Going On?” videos, or via other means of communication used during the semester and depending on the class format.

Final Exam

We will meet for the final exam as scheduled by the college. The date and time for your class exam is listed on the daily schedule. As with the schedule, this is subject to change if circumstances require it, but you will be notified in advance except in cases of emergency.

I DO NOT ACCEPT: “I don’t know how to do this.”
You are here to learn and experience new things.

I RESPECT: “I wasn’t sure how to do this, but I tried.”
It is only by trying that you get an opportunity to succeed.

HELPFUL LINKS & NUMBERS



Get Connected

When you see this link on any college webpage, you can click on it to connect with someone via Blackboard Collaborate (audio and/or video) if they're "in the office" then.

If you're not familiar with Blackboard Collaborate, [here's a short video introduction](#).

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Academic Calendar 2. Counseling 3. Degree Works 4. Distance Learning Support Services (DLSS) 5. EPCC Catalog 2025-2026 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See pages 32-37 for Grading & Academic Policies including drop policies and procedures. 2. See pages 37-43 for Services for Students 3. See pages 48-58 for Student Rights and Responsibilities and Code of Conduct 6. Financial Aid (check out the scholarships) 7. Finals Schedule | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Library 9. Mental Health Resources (EPCC Cares) 10. Password Recovery Link 11. Registration Office Collaborate Link 12. Registration Guide—2023-2024: Includes Semester Calendars, Finals Week Schedule, and more. (This is the old one, but it still has good info. If you can find a link to the new one, let me know.) 13. Student Handbook (Same here) 14. Tejano Food Pantry 15. Tutor Finder (Student Success) 16. Veterans' Resource Center 17. Writing Center |
|--|---|
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1. EPCC IT Help Desk at [915-831-6440](tel:915-831-6440) (Call them for help with EPCC website and services, but NOT Blackboard.)
 2. Blackboard Helpdesk: [\(888\) 296-0863](tel:888-296-0863) (Call them for trouble with Blackboard issues)
Distance Learning Support Services (DLSS): (915) 8

ENGL 1301; Revised Fall 2025/Spring 2026

**El Paso Community College
Syllabus
Part II
Official Course Description**

SUBJECT AREA	<u>English</u>
COURSE RUBRIC AND NUMBER	<u>ENGL 1301</u>
COURSE TITLE	<u>Composition I (CF)</u>
COURSE CREDIT HOURS	<u>3 3 : 0</u> Credits Lec Lab

I. Catalog Description

Intensive study of and practice in writing processes, from invention and researching to drafting, revising, and editing, both individually and collaboratively. Emphasis on effective rhetorical choices, including audience, purpose, arrangement, and style. Focus on writing the academic essay as a vehicle for learning, communicating, and critical analysis. **Prerequisite: Placement at college-level English Language Arts Reading by TSIA2 or equivalent; OR completion of INRW 0311 or INRW 0312 or INRW 0313 with a “C” or better; OR concurrent enrollment in INRW 0311 or INRW 0313. (3:0).**

II. Course Objectives

Upon satisfactory completion of this course, the student will be able to accomplish the following.

- A. Engage in **critical thinking skills**, creative thinking, innovation and inquiry; demonstrate analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
- B. Demonstrate effective written, oral, and/or visual **communication skills**.
- C. Analyze the subject, occasion, audience, and purpose of writing assignments.
- D. Apply appropriate strategies to generate ideas and use modes of expression for writing assignments.
- E. Draft essays of approximately 700-1000 words that focus on a thesis statement, with introduction, multiple body paragraphs which develop the major points indicated in the organizational plan of each essay, and an appropriate conclusion.
- F. Demonstrate **teamwork skills** including the ability to consider different points of view, work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal, and integrating peer responses and instructor suggestions into the revision process.
- G. Revise the essay.
- H. Edit to improve content, organization, style, grammatical correctness, spelling, punctuation, usage and mechanics using Standard Written English.
- I. Analyze assigned readings and relate the styles and approaches to the student's own writing.
- J. Demonstrate comprehension of the reading assignments in class discussions, exercises, summaries, and/or objective quizzes.

- J. Demonstrate **personal responsibility skills** including the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making.
- K. (Optional) Demonstrate basic library and research skills by using reference materials such as periodicals, books, electronic sources, and interviews.
- M. (Optional) Demonstrate interpretive insight in a written response to a short story, novel, poem, play, or film.

III. THECB Learning Outcomes (ACGM)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of individual and collaborative writing processes.
2. Develop ideas with appropriate support and attribution.
3. Write in a style appropriate to audience and purpose.
4. Read, reflect, and respond critically to a variety of texts.
5. Use Edited American English in academic essays.

IV. Evaluation

A. Activities and Other Concerns

1. Students will write a minimum of four major essays or other types of writing projects. It is suggested that at least one essay be written in class. These essays should involve the multiple stages of the writing process and demonstrate a variety of strategies. These assignments may vary in length, depending on the nature of the work, but the major essays should be at least 700 words. In addition to academic writing assignments, other types of writing assignments may include proposals, reports, commentaries and reviews. One of these activities must comply with the Community Essay requirements. As a form of "Learning About the Community as a Community," the Community Essay encourages students to connect and engage with El Paso and / or its surrounding communities and requires facts about the topic gathered through primary research. The instructor can decide when to assign the essay, and its genre. Community essay genres frequently assigned include profiles, ethnographic analyses, reviews, evaluations, responses, among others. Students should compose at least one assignment on a word processor or computer.
2. Correct use of Standard Written English will be emphasized, including grammatical sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, mechanics, and usage.
3. The various rhetorical patterns may be covered separately; however, instructors should stress the potential of these approaches to overlap.
4. Plagiarism is both intellectual theft and academic dishonesty and will not be tolerated. Any work that is plagiarized could result in failure of the course. See the Student Handbook.

B. Final Examination

All English 1301 instructors must meet their classes during the scheduled two-hour final examination period and administer an appropriate activity.

C. Grading Percentages

Grade percentages for determining the course grade may be devised by the individual instructor, but the writing projects/essays will account for at least 70% of the student's grade.

D. Remediation

1. At the instructor's discretion, students may be allowed to rewrite papers or retest for higher grades.
2. The EPCC Writing Centers: Students are encouraged to visit EPCC Writing Centers for writing assistance throughout the semester. The centers' goal is to help students grow and improve as writers during any stage of the writing process. Tutors work one-on-one with students to provide guidance, feedback, and help students find their voice through the written word. For more information about writing tutoring services and resources at all campuses, visit: www.epcc.edu/Services/WritingCenter

E. Grading Scale

Note: This course is the prerequisite for all further English courses, including literature courses, and must be passed with the grade of "C" or better before it can be used as a prerequisite.

A = 90 - 100
 B = 80 - 89
 C = 70 - 79
 D = 60 - 69
 F = below 60
 I = Incomplete
 W = Withdrew or withdrawn

V. Disability Statement (Americans with/Disabilities Act [ADA])

EPCC offers a variety of services to persons with documented sensory, mental, physical, or temporary disabling conditions to promote equal access in classes. If you have a disability and believe you may need services, you are encouraged to contact the Center for Students with Disabilities to discuss your needs with a counselor. All discussions and documentation are kept confidential. Offices located: VV Rm C-112 (831-2426); TM Rm 1135 (831-5808); RG Rm A225A (831-4198); NWC Rm M-54 (831-8815); and MDP Rm C144 (831-7024).

VI. 6 Drop Rule

Students who began attending Texas public institutions of higher education for the first time during the Fall 2007 semester or later are subject to a 6-Drop limit for all undergraduate classes. Developmental, ESL, Dual Credit and Early College High School classes are exempt from this rule. All students should consult with their instructor before dropping a class. Academic assistance is available. Students are encouraged to see Counseling Services if dropping because exemptions may apply. Refer to the EPCC catalog and website for additional information.

VII. Title IX and Sex Discrimination

Title 9 (20 U.S.C. 1681 & 34 C.F.R. Part 106) states the following "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) prohibits stalking, date violence, sexual violence, and domestic violence for all students, employees, and visitors (male and female). Students who are pregnant or parenting should consult the Parenting Student Liaison in the Office of Student and Enrollment Services at 915-831-2655 for accommodations and additional services. If you have any concerns related to discrimination, harassment, or assault (of any type), you can contact the Assistant to the Vice President for Student and Enrollment Services at 915-831-2655. Employees can call the Manager of Employee Relations at 915-831-6458. Reports of sexual assault/violence may also be reported to EPCC Police at 915-831-2200.