

English 102: Section 133
English Composition II
Spring 2007
Syllabus

T/R – 9:30-10:45
HUMB 142

Dr. Moira Amado Miller
University of South Alabama
Office: HUMB 272
Office Phone: (251) 460-7936
Main English Office (message) – 460-6146
E-mail: amadomiller@usouthal.edu
Mailbox: HUMB 240 (English Office)

Office Hours: T/R 11:00-2:00. I set aside these office hours for you – please feel free to drop by. Alternately, you may wish to make an appointment at another mutually convenient time. It's probably always best to let me know you'd like to see me in order to avoid unforeseen scheduling conflicts.

Texts: Crusius, Timothy W. and Carolyn E. Channell. *The Aims of Argument: a Text and Reader*. 5th Ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2006.

Modern Writer's Handbook. 2nd Ed. "With Resources for Composition at University of South Alabama." Taken from *The Modern Writer's Handbook*, 5th Ed., Frank O'Hara and Robert Funk. 2003.

Strongly Recommended:

Strunk, William Jr. and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style* 3rd Ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1979.

A dictionary and a thesaurus of your choice. Every good writer needs a good dictionary and a thesaurus. Begin to think of yourself as a writer!

Course Materials:

- Looseleaf paper or three-hole punched writing pad and a binder to fit.
- A dictionary and a thesaurus of your choice (every writer needs these; *begin to think of yourself as a writer!*).
- A 2-pocket folder or file folder.

Course Goals:

Welcome. English 102 is in many ways a continuation of the work of English 101. For instance, you will further develop your analytic reading and critical thinking skills, develop expository writing skills, argumentative writing skills, research skills, and use collaborative learning in various contexts. English 102 is also an advanced writing course designed to provide the time and opportunity that it takes to *practice writing*. In pursuit of a heightened understanding of what it means to read and write meaningful discourse, we will explore the power of writing arguments for real audiences and for the purpose of encouraging social change at many levels.

In this course, we'll be practicing the writing necessary for success both inside the university and in the larger community. The main goal of this course is to nurture and encourage your skills as a writer—to cultivate better *writers*. Better writing is produced by better writers *with practice and over time*; but, you

can learn many of the skills necessary for accomplished writing here in this class and take them with you as you go on to practice writing in other places and for other purposes. English 102 should help you think like a writer so that no matter what sort of writing task you must accomplish, you'll be able to handle the work with finesse. As a group of writers, scholars, and activists, we will reacquaint ourselves with effective composing processes and learn to adjust them to accomplish various writing tasks.

This is a writing course in which we explore the power of language in both our everyday lives and in our extraordinary struggles.

Please refer to the “Resources for Composition at the University of South Alabama” found at the back of your *Modern Writer's Handbook* (especially pages 661-675; Sections 1-4) for general course descriptions, goals, and requirements. These descriptions should be considered an integral part of the policy statement for this class.

Course Description:

We will all be exercising our intellects in very rigorous ways in this course. We will be reading and attacking problems in ways you might not be familiar, or even comfortable, with yet. We will explore the power of writing for real audiences and for the purpose of encouraging social change. Together we'll stretch our understanding of social problems in ways that will be both very challenging and very rewarding. We will concentrate our efforts this semester on the content and thoughts expressed in language, the ability of language to make knowledge, the power inherent in this fact of language, and the potential of language for truth seeking and policy making. We will consider the social and historical factors that shape the ways people use language for specific purposes: the ways people read and write. And, we'll practice shaping our own language use toward specific ends.

Reading is a complex social activity that reflects and shapes societal norms and choices. We'll spend lots of time reading responsibly—reading as both “doubters” and “believers.” Reading and writing cannot be understood as purely separate and discrete acts. Reading well will make you a better writer. Because of our focus on language as a tool for meaning-making-in-community, we will practice reading and interpreting texts about civic participation. We will be reading and writing several different types of texts/arguments in this class and will work towards an understanding and mastery of the concepts of thinking critically, understanding contexts, engaging with other learners, and reflecting and acting on what we have learned about language.

This is a challenging course, not necessarily in the *quantity* of work you will be expected to do, but in the *quality* of thinking and participation you'll do to succeed in this class. We rely on language every day to make meaning in both our public and private lives, to uncover important ideas that drive academic inquiry, and to frame questions for our own unique participation in our various communities. The material that we cover and the work that you do in this class are designed to help prepare you for the responsibility of active participation in your own education. We will all be working through this material together, so please come prepared to think, act, engage and discover every Tuesday and Thursday morning this semester. Act in the spirit of *sincere inquiry*.

This course takes as its inspiration three related beliefs. First, the course design acknowledges that in contemporary life writers who use language to its fullest potential and who are capable of writing well for various tasks and audiences can mean the difference between having an opinion (as we all do) and actually making a difference. Second, we seem to write with more purpose, control, and finesse when we write about that which we genuinely care. So, you will not be expected to write about issues I think are important, but rather, you will involve yourself in issues that you care about now, or issues that become meaningful to you as you read more. Third, this course acknowledges that the privilege of education infers a heightened sense of responsibility to ourselves and to each other. Through reading carefully,

closely, and critically, and writing carefully and purposefully, we hope to come to a better understanding of the strengths of our voices (and attendant personal *responsibility*) within the social sphere.

Organization of the Course:

Another reason that participation in this course will be a matter of commitment and quality of thought is that you will share joint responsibility with me for determining the content of some of the assignments that you will write. That is, at times I might give you a very specific prompt, while at other times I will give you general guidelines for your essays/papers/arguments, and you will be responsible for determining the details of what you'll write about: the exact focus of your paper, the argument you'd like to make, the audience that you feel will benefit most from your discoveries. This should be a relief, not a burden; it's only a matter of thinking about the purpose of writing instruction a little differently than you may be used to. I believe you'll get much more out of each assignment, and the course in general, if you are at least partially responsible for determining what is most productive for you to write about. I'll provide you with basic guidelines for your written assignments and your presentations.

Here, in short, are the due dates and general ideas for your formal written assignments and your in-class presentation, plus short discussions of Learning Log entries, in-class writing, and Portfolios.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| 2/01: | Summary/Executive Summary/Review/Annotated Bibliography |
| 3/06: | Documented White Paper/Argument |
| 3/29 | Timed, In-Class, Blue-Book Essay |
| 4/12 | Researched Essay |
| 4/12-4/24 ** | You will be responsible for one individual (possibly group, with my approval) presentation covering the content, topic, and process of the work you consider to be your most successful in this course. You'll be expected to talk not only about the document itself, but about how your practice training as a writer helped you to <i>perform as a writer</i> and helped to make the <i>document successful</i> (two closely related, but different, things). TIP: The most helpful and successful presentations are those that are most specific and concrete. TIP: Successful presentations always offer discussion participants some sort of "handout." (Not donuts; think outline or "discussion points"). ** Presentations will be given during the last three weeks of the semester; you should schedule a presentation time/date with me sometime after spring break. |
| 4/26 | Portfolios Due |
| 4/30-5/03 | Finals Week – End of Semester Conferences (appointment times TBD) |

I hope you'll recognize immediately that these are not five separate and discrete assignments—the *sequence* has been designed in the hope that you will take the opportunity to link assignments, to build one assignment with the help of work you've done for others. Know too, that I believe that information from and work for other classes can be used to inform these assignments, and vice versa, and, of course, experiences from your "other" life and with your other communities should feed into all of it. Be creative. Be smart. Think large. Make Connections. Synthesize.

Learning Logs:

Because of the amount of reading in this course and our focus on writing, you will write several "Learning Logs" related to our readings (kept these entries in a folder, no spiral notebooks please).

Good readers read with a purpose: to prepare for a class lecture, to review important material, to find material to support a position when writing, to find out about interesting subjects, and of course, for

relaxation and enjoyment. We will be reading texts closely in this class: to find main ideas and the evidence supporting those ideas, to discover something about the author and the author's intentions and motives, to seek out historical and social influences, to learn about ourselves. Learning Logs are designed to help you read texts in complicated and meaningful ways.

Learning Logs also help you to do the sometimes taxing work of summarizing difficult texts, identifying evidence, and evaluating arguments. A full Learning Log requires six steps: 1) Preview and Two Questions, 2) Review, 3) Summarize, 4) Evaluate/Analyze Rhetoric, 5) Question, 6) Apply. I'll provide details of what is required in each of these sections in a formal assignment sheet. Completed Learning Logs will serve as the basis for discussion and further analysis in class. Learning Logs will receive marks of S (Satisfactory), S+, S-, and R (Revise). When completed, LL should also be included in your final portfolios. Together, they are worth a maximum of 10 points.

Always include your name, the date, and a title for each LL entry. You should bring your LL folder to every class, because we will often use them to initiate class discussion, because you may want to share ideas from your LL during class time, and because I may pick them up unexpectedly for evaluation.

In-class writing:

Many times we will begin class with short writing assignments or quizzes. The writing assignments should help to make you more comfortable with your writing; relax and have fun with them. Sometimes I will give a question or topic for you to write about, other times I will ask you to write freely on any topic you wish, and sometimes I'll ask you to choose a topic from the day's readings to write about. Quizzes help assure close reading of texts. These assignments should be kept in your binder or your folder.

Portfolios:

A portfolio is a collection of your work which is representative both of progress and proficiency. As such, you will organize your portfolio to demonstrate the progress of your work in the course and to articulate an argument for your proficiency as a reader and writer. We'll talk about what to include and ideas for arranging your portfolio closer to the end of the semester. Because you'll be including at least the three major written projects (and other materials), *be sure to save and organize all your draft work, research work, and any and all documentation of your service projects throughout the semester.*

The Portfolio will also include one original piece of written work that I will not have evaluated until I see it in your completed Portfolio. This essay/statement/review will be a Reflective/Synthesis work, and we will have much discussion about what such a work entails toward the end of the semester as well.

The Portfolio culminates the semester's work and, in this respect, resembles a comprehensive final examination. Strong performance through the course will not compensate for poor or careless performance in the portfolio. Similarly, as long as the requirements for earning a passing grade have been met, strong performance in the portfolio can help offset marginal or inconsistent performance through the course.

Summary of Requirements for this course:

- Attendance
- Everyday participation in class discussions and in-class writing assignments and quizzes
- Satisfactory completion of 4 major writing tasks
- Satisfactory completion of all assigned Learning Logs
- Completed peer review sessions, including Writer's Notes
- Revision of selected papers
- Preparation and presentation of discussion forum

- End of term Portfolio
- Mandatory final conference

Grading Criteria:

In this course, I will be practicing a combination of “contract” and “holistic” grading, along with a certain amount of traditional percentage grading. The “contract” part of the evaluation is your compliance with this syllabus. That is, you must attend class, read the material, contribute to class discussion, and turn in all assignments in order to pass the class. After that, you will be graded for your formal assignments. In this course, Participation, the Learning Logs, the Presentation, and the Portfolio will be graded holistically. For instance, I’ll pick up your Logs occasionally and assign them a holistic score (see Learning Log section of this syllabus), both as an advisory mark for your information and to give me a sense of the overall quality of the Log at the end of the semester. Your presentation will be evaluated on content, quality of oral presentation skills, and interest/contribution. The four essays/papers will be given formal A-F letter-grades.

To earn a C or better in this course, you must complete all major assignments satisfactorily, as well as meet the attendance requirements outlined below. If you have attended class and earned a C equivalent or better on your written assignments, your grade will be calculated as follows:

- Attendance and Participation: 10%
- Learning Logs: 10%
- 3 “Researched” Compositions: 15% each
- 1 in-class timed Composition: 10%
- Presentation 5%
- Portfolio: 20%

If at any time during the semester you are concerned with the letter grade you are receiving in this course, consult with me and I’ll provide you an advisory grade based on your performance to date.

Other Course Procedures:

Project Folders:

For each formal assignment, you should turn in a complete folder of your work (this is what the 2-pocket folder in the “course materials” section is for). These folders should include the following:

- Your Learning Log entries and/or in-class writing (and quizzes) for this time period
- All drafts of the assigned document
- Your own “Writer’s Notes”
- Any and all Peer Review responses you may have obtained
- The final, edited, draft of the assigned paper
- Any other material you think it may be helpful for me to see during the evaluation of the work

“Process” Writing:

We would all like to sit down at the computer and write the perfect paper, but this simply does not happen. Writing is a process, and as such, in this course we will engage in all sorts of writing and recognize all sorts of writing that validate the fact that “writerly” moments happen throughout the thinking and synthesizing continuum. We will engage in writing as personal writing, academic writing, and writing for audiences outside the university. We will practice freewriting, invention, drafting, peer-reviewing, rewriting, and attending to surface errors to improve your writing.

Peer Review/Writing Workshops:

In this course, you will find yourself engaged in some very sophisticated learning situations. These situations will generally be defined by the way they include some, or all, of the following elements: 1)

close critical reading of texts experienced by and produced by others, 2) significant real-world participation in arguments that are meaningful to you and others, 3) adaptation of writing you do for this class for other forums or into other genres, 4) critical reflection resulting in updating and revising written work.

Sometimes, a writing workshop situation will require you to provide copies of your work for peer review. Readers and other “outside” influences can, do, and should come to bear on our thinking, drafting, and researching processes. Workshopping can only be effective in an environment of trust and mutual respect. Students are reminded to treat each other’s draft work with respect, making constructive comments that will help the writers revise. We will decide about other expectations for peer review sessions in class. It is important to say immediately that the content and style of draft work and the finished draft are the *intellectual property* of the writer; students should not discuss classmates’ essays outside of class without the writer’s written permission. Failure to secure permission from the writer may be treated as academic misconduct.

“Writer’s Notes” are an important part of the workshopping process. Writer’s Notes serve to direct the peer review process—they typically include comments that help a reader understand what the writer hopes to accomplish in their written work, what sorts of problems the author had (and which parts s/he thinks are the most well written), and, on which areas the writer would appreciate special attention given by the reviewer. You should provide a set of Writer’s Notes to your review team with each review, and these notes should be included in the final folder when the project is turned in for evaluation.

All written work will submitted for evaluation will require at least one written reviews. When a peer review session is not scheduled during class time, it will be your responsibility to arrange for substantial review(s). I will be happy to schedule a conference with you if you would like me to read and comment on first drafts of the major papers.

Rewriting and Drafts:

You may do as many revisions as you like on each paper, but there is no guarantee that you will receive a higher grade for any rewriting. We will discuss revision deadlines for each paper.

Manuscript Presentation:

The style, or presentation of the work you turn in to me for evaluation should be appropriate to its task. This means several things. First, it means that the various types of writing we do here as students and as writers are obviously of different degrees of formality. An in-class free-write will naturally be handwritten, your personal writing will look however you decide, whereas the short and long formal writing assignments that you turn into me should adhere to certain standards, both for purposes of ease of reading and to provide practice for formal assignments in other classes. Second, the actual *documentation style* that you apply to your text should coordinate with either 1) the audience for whom you prepare the work and/or 2) the field of academic study for which the document is prepared. Most generally, in this course you will style formatting as recommended by the MLA (Modern Language Association), although, if there are other style handbooks you’d like to practice with, let me know.

While much that determines manuscript presentation depends upon the context for the work submitted, formal presentation of written work in the university setting is also governed by certain standards. In this class, all word-processed prose writing, turned in for evaluation on plain white paper, and taking the form of a traditional essay, must have a professional appearance. Documents must be word-processed, double spaced, in 12 point font, with a one-inch margin all around. If you do not have a computer, there are several labs on campus that have computers that you may use. *All* documents must always be both proofread and spell checked. Work not proofread and spell checked may be returned unevaluated. Please title everything.

Work of a more “creative” or non-standard nature must be negotiated with me ahead of time.

Be sure to make backup files of all your computer work for this class. I can empathize with technological difficulties, but I cannot normally accept these problems as legitimate reasons for missing or late work.

Attendance:

You must come to class and you must participate in class discussion. If you don't, you can't pass the course (see more on class participation in the “grading policy” portion of this syllabus). Here's my policy: I'll take attendance every class period. You are granted two excused absences (one full week of class). That means that these absences will not count against your grade. However, beyond the two absences (and those covered by permission from the Office of Academic Affairs), there is no such thing as an excused absence, and that includes absences for your illnesses or those of a loved one, job interviews, sporting events, etc. If for any reason you miss three or more class meetings, your final grade will suffer. Absences beyond two will lower your letter grade by ½ letter grade per absence. More than six absences may mean automatic failure of the course (you simply cannot miss three full weeks of a writing course and still pass). There are no exceptions to this policy. Even students who excel in all other areas are subject to this policy. The moral of this story is, of course, to use your two absences wisely because you may need them in the event of an emergency.

If you're interested in the University's policy on attendance, please have a look in the *Academic Bulletin*. Note that the University's general attendance policy defines excessive absences as missing “two or more consecutive class meetings,” and that the University does not recognize any absences as “excused” except for those that are a result of the student being removed from class for attending a university-authorized off-campus function. In addition, please understand that these “excusable” functions must be cleared by the sponsoring faculty member through the Office of Academic Affairs, and if the event causes you to be absent from this class, you will be expected to bring me copies of this documentation. According to University policy, you must let me know in writing during the first two weeks of the course if you will be missing class for a religious holiday. Please talk to me regarding such situations and contact the Office of Student Activities if you will be absent from class for an extended period of time.

If you come in late (especially consistently), you may be marked absent.

In the case of anticipated absences, the work due must be handed in before the missed class, not after. Late work, except in rare cases, will not be accepted. I reserve the right to lower your paper grade one full letter grade for each day that a paper is late.

If you miss a class you are expected to turn up prepared for the next class meeting. If this means visiting with me about what you missed, you'll need to make an appointment with me before the next class meeting; please don't expect me or anyone else to fill you in during class time. *I will not review a missed class meeting for you over email.*

Participation:

A big part of being a university student and responsible contributor to the community is learning how to rap about important ideas with your peers and your teachers. Now is the time to throw off any remaining anxieties and take risks by asking off-the-wall questions and trying out new ideas. Also, try to consider it a compliment when folks critically analyze and make suggestions about your work – it *is* a compliment. Success of the class, for all of us, depends largely on our willingness to discuss, dissect, question, wrestle with, and entertain the ideas we encounter here – *out loud* – with one another. It's also important, even as we voice our own concerns and interpretations, that we work together to create a classroom environment that encourages and support all viewpoints. This does not mean that you either have to 1) agree with

everyone, or 2) keep silent when you don't. In fact, it's only through deep exchange and dialogue that we actually grow as thinkers. Let's create a community of inquiry that makes this course worth the effort.

Your enthusiasm for asking questions and talking in class, by the way, should be surpassed only by demonstrations of actual familiarity with the assigned readings. Thus, participation also means coming to class WITH YOUR BOOKS IN TOW AND HAVING COMPLETED ALL THE ASSIGNED READINGS FOR THAT DAY. It is absolutely essential that you come to each class meeting prepared. As an added incentive, you will be graded for attendance and participation on a scale of 1-10, and 10 points of your final grade will be attributable in the same way.

Conferences: Required conferences will be scheduled once at midterm (at student's request) and once during finals week (mandatory). Individual conferences may also be scheduled with me at our mutual convenience; see section on "Office Hours" at the beginning of this syllabus.

Academic Misconduct / Plagiarism: This is serious business. Issues of academic misconduct will be handled according to the University's "Student Academic Conduct Policy," which you can read in the student handbook, *The Lowdown*, beginning on page 188. The entire student handbook can be found in PDF at the University's Web site (www.southalabama.edu/lowdown/). In part, the policy reads:

The University strives to set and maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. . . . acts [of academic misconduct] are subject to investigation and disciplinary action through appropriate University procedures. . . . Penalties may range from the loss of credit for a particular assignment to dismissal from the university.

Please read these pages from the student handbook for a full definition of plagiarism and the penalties for this offense. Plagiarism includes submitting someone else's work as your own (that person is also subject to sanctions), failing to give appropriate credit to all sources used in your work, submitting a paper of your own for credit in more than one course without the prior consent of both instructors, and in any way distributing drafts of a class member's work without the permission of the author. No one should tolerate any form of plagiarism in this class; I certainly won't. *I want to read only your work.*

Students with Disabilities: If you have or believe you have a disability, you may wish to self identify. You can do so by ascertaining the steps involved in documenting a disability and providing documentation to the Special Student Services Office in the Student Center, Room 270 (460-7212/7213). Appropriate accommodations may then be provided for you. You should also contact Special Student Services if you have general questions about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

If you have a condition which may affect your ability to exit safely from the premises in an emergency or which may cause an emergency during class, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with me and/or the director of Special Student Services.

Disclaimer: You are responsible for abiding by the terms set forth in this Policy Statement and any subsequent additions and amendments. As such, it is to your distinct advantage to fully comprehend this and other documents and to understand them as contracts. To this end, if something seems fuzzy or disturbing or confusing to you, please ask me to clarify. Chances are someone else will benefit from your having asked the question too. There is no way for me to know if you have concerns unless you tell me. Always ask. *This simple rule of thumb holds true for all your various participation in this class.*

Skeleton Schedule

This is a skeleton schedule and meant for your general planning only. This schedule is also a living document and is therefore subject to meaningful revision throughout the course of the semester. You will be given advanced notice as we determine meaningful changes and/or additions. *Please keep track of these changes directly on this document.*

Week One:

09 January 2005 First day of classes: Review of Syllabus, Introductions, Pre-view of textbook
11 January Chapter One, "Understanding an Argument" – *Aims of Argument* (pages 3-19),
from Chapter Six, "Looking for Some Truth: Arguing to Inquire, pages 145-160.

Week Two:

15 January – Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
16 January Writing a Learning Log (have read "The Decorated Body," pages 39-41, and
"Analysis of 'The Decorated Body,'" pages 41-43)
18 January Chapter Two, "Reading an Argument" – *Aims of Argument* (pages 21-43)

Week Three:

23 January Chapter Three, "Analyzing Arguments: A Simplified Toulmin Method"
– *Aims of Argument* (pages 45-58)
25 January **Directed (Toulmin analysis) Peer Review / Writers' Workshop**

Week Four:

30 January Chapter Five, "Writing Research-Based Arguments" – *Aims of Argument*
(pages 93-141)
01 February **Summary/Executive Summary/Review Due**

Week Five:

06 February Chapter Four, "Reading and Writing about Visual Arguments" – *Aims of*
Argument (pages 59-71)
08 February Chapter Four, "Reading and Writing about Visual Arguments" – *Aims of*
Argument (pages 71-91)

Week Six:

13 February In class review of: mature reasoning, paraphrasing, summarizing,
claims-reasons-evidence-refutations, causality, plagiarism and attribution,
incorporating research, sources, and MLA style
15 February Meet in Library Auditorium for Library Information Session (Room 305)

Week Seven:

20 February *Mardi Gras Holiday*
22 February Chapter Six, "Looking for Some Truth: Arguing to Inquire," – *Aims of Argument*
(pages 159-188)

Week Eight:

27 February

01 March

Peer Review/Writer's Workshop

Week Nine:

06 March

Documented White Paper/Argument /Exploratory Essay Due

08 March

Chapter 7, "Making Your Case: Arguing to Convince" – *Aims of Argument*
(pages 189-225)

March 12-18 – Spring Break

Week Ten:

20 March

Review of: academic writing, analogies and comparisons, formulating a thesis, the "brief," analyzing the audience, developing the thesis

22 March

Attribution Review and Punctuation Workshop

Week Eleven:

27 March

Chapter 8, "Motivating Action: Arguing to Persuade" – *Aims of Argument*
(pages 227-265)

29 March

Timed, In-Class, Blue-Book Essay

Week Twelve:

03 April

05 April

Week Thirteen:

10 April

Review: Audience Analysis—assumptions, principles, hierarchy of values, ends and means, interpretation, implications or consequences

Forms of Appeal—to reason, to character, to emotion; Style and style

Peer Review / Writer's Workshop (possibly outside of class)

12 April

Presentations Begin

Researched Essay Due

Week Fourteen:

17 April

Presentations

19 April

Presentations

Week Fifteen:

24 April

Presentations

Workshop for Portfolios, Synthesis Essay

26 April

Portfolios Due

27 April – LAST DAY OF CLASSES

Week Sixteen:

30 April – 03 May – FINALS WEEK

Mandatory Conferences (schedule individually with Dr. Amado Miller)

Saturday 05 May – COMMENCEMENT