

English 101 Composition – Course Policies  
Section 063  
MWF 7:40 – 8:30, LA 204

*“He couldn’t express himself and that was what caused his terror, the greatest terror of his life and of his death.”  
Gabriel Garcia Marquez*

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Fall 2009  
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Required Texts:

- 1) *The Curious Writer* by Bruce Ballenger.
- 2) A spiral bound notebook.
- 3) Additional readings and handouts.

Course Objectives:

My hope is that through this class you will come to think of writing as something you *get* to do, instead of something you *have* to do. Writing is not taking out the trash or filling out income taxes. Writing is rooting through the trash with your fingernails and your teeth, feeling the squish of rubbish and vegetables, making a mess on the kitchen floor and then finding two pairs of socks. Writing is a moment of you saying to the universe, “Hey, Universe, I exist.” The Universe will not care, but it still feels good to say so. In this class, you will not write just for me, but for yourself and for a variety of audiences. You will write because you have something to say that matters (believe me you do).

BSU’s Writing Program also has a few specific goals for its E101 students:

- Produce writing that has a purpose, as well as a clear focus and point.
- Use revision to extend your thinking about a topic, not just fix mechanical errors or rearrange material.
- Make assertions which are supported by evidence gathered from your experience, your reading, your observations, or your conversations with others, and the nature of these assertions and evidence is appropriate to the particular genre in which you are writing.
- Articulate the rhetorical choices you have made, illustrating your awareness of a writer’s relationship to the subject, a text’s purpose, and audience.
- Use a variety of strategies for generating ideas for writing, for planning and organizing material, for identifying purpose and audience, and for providing useful feedback to peers during the writing process.
- Produce prose without mechanical errors that distract readers from attending to the meaning and purpose of the writing.

## Basic Course Requirements:

### Reading and Writing

Assigned Readings: Generally you can expect 2 readings per week (roughly 25-30 pages).

Reading Responses: Reading and responding to what you read is very important. These responses will give you the chance to analyze and react to works you read for class. They will help you prepare for in-class discussions about the readings and will also help you become a better, more active reader. I expect your responses to reveal that you actually *read and understood* the reading or if you don't understand a reading this is the place to articulate your questions. Each reading response or homework assignment will be worth 5 points and they should be typed.

Writer's Notebook/Journal: You will need to keep a notebook, one with a spiral binding and standard sized paper. Your notebook will include pre-writes for your essays, various in-class writing activities, occasional reading responses, revelations, messages from the dead, etc. I want you to treat your notebook like an extension of your mind. Whatever goes on up there should be captured in the notebook. I expect you to use this notebook in class and on your own time. I'm especially interested in you capturing everyday moments that for one reason or another seem significant on any given day. From time to time, I may ask you about this. You can expect to write between 4 and 5 pages per week in your journal.

Essays: You will be expected to write three essays over the course of the semester. These essays will be discussed thoroughly as each is assigned. You will have considerable freedom in choosing subjects for these essays. You will be given specific due dates for each essay as the semester progresses. In class we will discuss all aspects and stages of these essays – sketches, drafts, revisions, etc. So be prepared to discuss and share your ideas and drafts with the class.

For each essay you will receive feedback from me on your strengths and weaknesses. I will assess each draft as either, Early, Middle or Late, indicating where I feel your draft is in the writing process. Final grading of your essays will not occur until the end of the semester, when you hand in your final portfolio.

While these drafts and sketches will not receive a letter grade, evidence of laziness or lack of effort (such as not meeting page requirements, failure to spell check, etc.) will result in zero to partial credit for the assignment. Sketches are worth 5 points. Drafts are worth 10.

Reading Responses and Drafts of Essays will comprise 25% of your grade.

### Participation

You are expected to be an active and thoughtful participant in class discussions and workshops and conferences with me. Participation requires that you have done the work required for the day. It also requires you be a good listener, fully present, as well as a contributor to class discussions.

Workshops: You will be required to share your writing with one another on a regular basis and at various stages of your writing process. These in-class workshops will not only provide you with valuable feedback from your peers but will also allow you to share your own insight with them as well. At first this activity might seem daunting—*How can I make suggestions and give criticism to others when I'm no expert myself?* But what I want each of you to realize is that you are all *readers* and this alone gives you authority. Chances are if *you* don't understand what the writer is trying to say *I* won't either. If you are bored, there's a good chance I will be too. After all, I too am just a reader. *With this in mind, it is expected that you will utilize the feedback you receive in workshops and revise your drafts accordingly.*

I will go over workshop etiquette in more detail when we do one, but know this: We are all trying to become better writers. Your comments should be constructive and you should be able to provide evidence for your opinions and comments. Likewise, if it is your paper that we are discussing, the comments you receive will concern the ideas and language set forth in your paper. Be prepared to receive both positive and negative comments and know that they are not directed at you as a person but toward your writing. We are trying to help each other.

*Workshops make up a healthy portion of your participation grade. Missing class when a workshop is scheduled automatically results in a zero as does coming to workshop without a draft to share with your group. On workshop days you will be held responsible for bringing copies of your draft to share with the group.*

Conferences: Throughout the semester I will arrange to meet with each of you in a conference, during which we will discuss works-in progress and revision ideas. Come prepared and be on time. On the days we have conferences, regular class will not meet. These conferences will be intensive and helpful to you. They also will take time out of both our schedules so *Failure to attend a conference will count as two absences.*

Participation will comprise 25% of your grade.

Portfolios: The bulk of your grade (50%) will be determined by your final portfolio—at least 20 pages of your semester's best writing. Due at the end of the semester, your portfolio will comprise your revised essays and reading responses you feel best represent you as a writer. Also you will need to include a reflective essay which reveals what you have learned about your work, the writing process and the class in general. Additionally, you may include rough drafts and peer feedback received in workshops, so I advise you to keep until the end of the term every piece of writing that pertains to the course. We will discuss your portfolio in greater detail as the semester progresses. Remember your portfolio is 50% of your grade. You may not include work from other classes in your portfolio. Doing so is plagiarism.

## Course Policies

**Papers:** All papers need to be typed, double-spaced, in 12 point Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins on all sides, pages numbered, and with no space-eating headers or designs. Please do not include title pages or shiny plastic covers. Your name, class and section number, my name, and the date need to be on the top left of the first page. All papers need to be titled, stapled and proofread.

**Late Work:** Assignments are due the day they say they are due. For the major essays you write, you will have weeks of preparation, therefore it is expected that these will be handed in on-time. If you are absent the day an essay is due, it is expected that you will email the essay to me before class. Work that is over a day late will receive half credit. Work that is over a week late will receive zero credit. Students who fail to hand in a major essay will fail the course.

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. As a class we will aim to create a community of writers through on-going group work, sharing of works in progress, and open, uncensored discussion of texts. Sporadic attendance signals, among other things, that you don't take your membership in this community or yourself as a student seriously. Furthermore, insights about your writing process emerge from discussion with other writers. These discussions most often occur in class. If you miss them, you'll be missing a crucial component of the course.

In accordance with BSU's Writing Program's Attendance Policy:

- Your absence is permitted for official absences (participation in official university-recognized activities). To learn more go to <http://english.boisestate.edu/writing/courses.htm>.
- You are allowed 5 absences. You can expect your letter grade to drop after 3 absences. Upon your 6<sup>th</sup> absence, you fail the class.

**\*Tardiness:** This class starts at 7:40. It is imperative that you show up on time. If you are consistently tardy, I will start adding the time up and treat it like an absence.

**Cell Phones:** Shut them off. If you text during class, you will be counted absent.

**Come Prepared:** In order to get credit for the day, you have to do more than show up. Don't sleep. Don't work on homework for other classes—this isn't study hall. Don't use your laptop to surf the web or play a game. If you can't resist, I'll ask you to leave and count the day as an absence.

**Plagiarism:** Undocumented use of someone else's writing or ideas are prohibited and will be grounds for instant dismissal from the course. We will devote class time during the semester to discuss and clarify this important issue. If I catch you plagiarizing you will be reported to the authorities and the incident will show up on your permanent record.

## Final Grade Breakdown:

<u>Class Participation:</u> (Workshops, Conferences, Attendance, & Class Participation)	25%
<u>Homework:</u> (Drafts of Major Essays, Writer's Notebook, and Other Assignments)	25%
<u>Portfolio:</u>	50%

## Other Helpful Things:

- For writing help contact: The Writing Center, LA 200, Phone: 426-1298, [www.boisestate.edu/w\\_center](http://www.boisestate.edu/w_center).

- If you have any special needs or disabilities contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Administration Building Room no. 114, 426-1583, or contact Blaine T. Eckles: [Bleckles@boisestate.edu](mailto:Bleckles@boisestate.edu).
- If you want to know about the rules of the land, see the Student Code of Conduct, [www2.boisestate.edu/studentconduct](http://www2.boisestate.edu/studentconduct)

### Helpful Websites

I will not be spending a lot of time discussing grammar and punctuation in class, so I strongly recommend you make use of these websites if you have questions about grammar.

- The Grammar Guide, <http://www.writingcenter.emory.edu/grammar.html>.
- BSU's Online Student Anthology, <http://english.boisestate.edu/writing-anthology/>
- Purdue's Online Writing Lab, <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>