

ENGL 108-072

FIRST YEAR COMPOSITION

CRN 19076 | Section 072 | Fall 2025
MWF SCHM RM 225 | 8:30 AM - 9:20 AM

Academic Rhetorics syllabus theme

GOALS & ICaP REQUIREMENTS

Welcome to English 108! ENGL 10800 is a composition course that, like ENGL 10600, satisfies the Written Communication and Information Literacy requirements of the university core. As in ENGL 10600, students should expect to produce at least 6,000 words of polished writing. Some of this text production may be done using multimedia, and some of it may be composed in short assignments. The course emphasizes a rigorous approach with high expectations on students' abilities to work quickly and independently. Student success in English 108 requires (a) more self-efficacy and self-regulation and (b) strong writing skills and/or prior writing experiences.

Engl. 108 is a 3-credit course. It will move quickly and will require strong time management skills. You will need to commit several hours per week to reading, researching, writing, revising, and engaging in collaborative activities. Do not let yourself fall behind on course material, as it is very difficult to catch up. I recommend that you maintain a calendar and to-do list for the class, schedule time each week to complete assignments and projects, and maintain a digital file management system like Box or OneDrive to organize your course materials.

By the end of the course, students will:

1. Demonstrate rhetorical awareness of diverse audiences, situations, and contexts.
2. Compose a variety of texts in a range of forms, equaling at least 6,000 words of polished writing.
3. Critically think about writing and rhetoric through reading, analysis, and reflection.
4. Provide constructive feedback to others and incorporate feedback into their writing.
5. Perform research and evaluate sources to support claims.
 - Locate and evaluate (for credibility, sufficiency, accuracy, timeliness, bias and so on) secondary research materials, including journal articles and essays, books, scholarly and professionally established and maintained databases or archives, and informal electronic networks and Internet source
6. Engage multiple digital technologies to compose for different purposes.

COURSE THEME: In our course, we will be focusing on Academic Rhetorics. The goal of this theme is to situate students within academic writing and conversations, or, the ways that we communicate in and with scholarly communities and disciplines. You will become more familiar with academic research and writing processes while also writing in genres typically associated

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Jessica Mercado (she/her)
Office: Stanley Coulter Rm. 254

Email:

jessicamercado@purdue.edu

Office Hours via Zoom:

T 10am - 12pm

& by appointment (email me!)

Office Hours Zoom Link (TBD)

Course Site: Brightspace

with the academy (e.g., summaries, argument research essays, and/or multimodal presentation of research).

In this course, we'll explore...

- What it means to compose as a scholar (not just “writing,” but designing, drafting, revising, presenting, creating content, etc.)
- How to search for and evaluate information, and how to conduct secondary research using library resources and databases as well as popular search engines and media
- How to be an ethical researcher and writer
- The conventions for communicating with a variety of audiences, including scholarly peers and laypersons
- How different technologies and media change the way that we write, communicate, and share information with each other
- How you'll incorporate writing and media into your future career

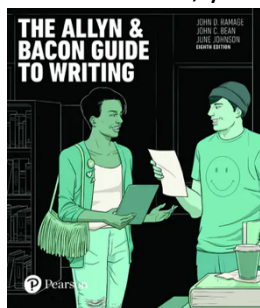
Additionally, the goal of the Academic Rhetorics theme is to prepare students to adapt their knowledge to broader audiences, including digital and public spaces. Students are thus prepared to understand and write in typical academic genres while also being able to adapt and negotiate their writing skills to more public and digital contexts.

COURSE PHILOSOPHY: This course is above all else a Composition course. We will read and write a lot. In terms of classroom dynamics, this class will rely on a workshop model of pre-writing, drafting, and revision. I learn a great deal from my students in English 108. I enjoy class discussions and reading what you write; in many ways I feel as if I am traveling with you as you discover and uncover new ideas and link those ideas to your own experiences. And you should learn from one another as well as from me in English 108. I will expect you to take notes during our weekly meetings, any PPTs and videos, as well as over your readings and then put your knowledge into practice during our class time as we engage in discussion, brainstorming, problem-solving, writing, and peer review activities.

We will approach all our assignments rhetorically, that is, for every assignment we will examine and analyze the audience, purpose, genre, stance, and design, especially through the lens of our everyday technologies. When you get into the practice of analyzing the rhetorical situation of your reading and writing, you can extend that practice to your other classes and to the writing you will do in your career.

REQUIRED TEXT & MATERIALS

For this course, you will need to purchase access to our digital textbook and learning platform:



Ramage, J., Bean, J. C., & Johnson, J. (2018). *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing (Brief Edition)*. 8th ed. Pearson. ISBN-13: 9780137536566. \$50.99

You will not purchase/receive a print textbook; you will need to buy the online version. **You will be able to purchase and access this text directly through our course Brightspace** by following the course link and registering for a Pearson account.

Other course texts and materials (readings, reports, videos, worksheets, etc.) will be available as links or PDFs on our class Brightspace site and are indicated on the course schedule.

All course readings and videos are required, unless otherwise noted.

TECHNOLOGIES

In order to participate in course activities, the following technologies are required:

- A high-speed internet connection, which you will access daily for course communication through email and Brightspace access
- A laptop or desktop computer with Windows Vista or higher, or macOS Big Sur or higher
- A microphone and/or webcam for video conferencing
- A program that can open PDFs (such as Acrobat or Preview)
- Microsoft Office, Apple's Office suite, or open source equivalents like Google Docs (please save documents in .doc, .docx, or .pdf formats—no .pages files, please!)

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Note that these are just brief descriptions; each project has several required components, and full assignments will be posted on Brightspace. Final drafts of projects 1–4 must be uploaded to Brightspace as a Word doc by 11:59pm on the assignment due date, unless otherwise specified on the syllabus. Please see the Class Schedule for due dates.

Percentage
100–97 = A+
96–94 = A
93–90 = A-
89–87 = B+
86–84 = B
83–80 = B-
79–77 = C+
76–74 = C
73–70 = C-
69–67 = D+
66–64 = D
63–60 = D-
59% or below = F
N.B. A score of 93.65 would be rounded up.

Grading Policy: Grades will be posted for all course assignments within 10 calendar days of their due dates on Brightspace.

If you are unhappy with your final grade, please contact me to seek an informal resolution. If we cannot come to agreement, you can ask for a grade review by the Department of English. If that resolution is not satisfactory, you can file a University-level grade appeal.

Late Work: Late work including discussion posts and short assignments are not accepted. Late essays are not accepted a week after the due date, and there will be a penalty of 1/3 a letter grade off for every day it is late. *Arrangements for extensions must be made at least 48 hours prior to the due date.*

Formatting and Filenaming: Refer to assignment sheets for formatting

requirements for each assignment. Filenames for electronic documents must include your name and the title of the assignment. Don't save your project as "Essay.doc." *Save it as:*

YOURLASTNAME_ScholarlyAnalysis_FirstDraft.doc or something similar, so that your (and my) files stay neatly organized.

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Note that these are just brief descriptions; each project has several required components, and full assignments will be posted on Brightspace. See the Class Schedule for due dates. You will submit all assignments online in our course Brightspace site.

SCHOLARLY ARTICLE ANALYSIS.....20%

You will analyze and evaluate an author's argument in a piece of writing related to your major while assessing the research that they use. Identifying the different rhetorical strategies that the author uses will help you to better understand how scholarly arguments are made in their

discipline. You will make an overall judgement about the piece's effectiveness for the author's intended audience. (Approximately 1400–1600 words)

RESEARCHED ARGUMENT.....30%

You will use scholarly and popular sources to construct a researched argument related to your field of study, making a suggestion for a continuation or change in conjecture, definition, quality, or policy. Conducting scholarly research using Purdue Library databases and open source digital tools (like Google Scholar), you will assess, summarize, and synthesize sources to present an argument to a community of scholarly peers. (Approximately 2000–2250 words)

RESEARCH POSTER.....20%

You will remediate your persuasive essay into a Research Poster. You will write an accompanying script for a 3-4 minute presentation on your topic geared toward the public (600-800-word script + poster).

DIGITAL PORTFOLIO.....5%

You will compile the work that you have brainstormed, drafted, revised, edited, and reflected on throughout the semester. At the end of the course, you will also be expected to compose a final reflection (~750 words) that synthesizes all that you have learned. The portfolio is as an opportunity for you to showcase your written communication skills, how they have developed, and how you can adapt and negotiate your skills based on context.

Short Writings & Discussions.....15%

Over the course of the semester, you will be asked to submit written work regularly in the form of pre-writing, discussion posts, peer review, and reflective activities. Each activity will be approximately 100-400 words of polished writing. These will be averaged to form your short writing grade. Additional information on these short assignments will be given on Brightspace.

Professional Ethos.....10%

Ten percent of your grade is based on both your online and physical presence in this course, in other words, participation, how you conduct yourself in class with your peers, myself and within all online work (discussion boards, homework assignments, etc.).

Here's how your *professional ethos grade* will be determined:

A (9-10): Student is consistently prepared for class, participates appropriately in class and group discussions, and is engaged in class activities.

B (8): Student is generally prepared for class, completes all additional assignments, generally participates in class and group discussions, and is generally engaged in class activities.

C (7): Student is not regularly prepared for class, may miss one or two additional assignments, is present for and provides helpful feedback during peer review, is occasionally distracted from class activities.

D (6): Student's participation is inconsistent. There are preparation or engagement issues. No one area stands out.

F (1-5): Student does not participate or engage during the semester. Student fails to observe classroom civility, even after having been warned.

STUDENT GUIDE

All Purdue policies apply to this course. Learn more in the [Student Guide to ICaP](#).

ABSENCES

We cover a lot of material in this class. I expect a good deal of group work, discussion, and activity every time we meet, so your regular attendance and participation are vital to your success in this class. To participate in discussions, activities, peer reviews, and in other instructional activities, you must be present. **If you miss more than four classes, your final letter grade will be lowered by one third letter grade per absence.** For example, if your final grade is an A- but you have missed four classes, your course grade will be a B+; if you miss 5 classes, your course grade will be a B, etc. **If you miss 10 or more classes, you will fail the course regardless of your final course grade.** I will not excuse absences for personal crises. If you miss too many classes, you will not have received the required instruction to pass this course. **If you miss 9 classes (for whatever reason),** you should consider dropping the class if you are still able to do so; otherwise you should be aware that you will need to retake ENGL 108 the following semester.

Tardiness: If you arrive late, please come in quietly and do your best not to disturb your peers. If you are more than **10 minutes late you will be marked absent for that day.** You are responsible for missed work or information; therefore, I urge all students to have the e-mail address of at least one other student to borrow notes, ask for assignments, etc.

In addition, I expect you to let me know before class via e-mail when you are going to be absent. I often schedule specific group activities, and I need to know how many students will be participating. Your absence can alter effective group activities.

Please review the information found at this website for further guidance on [excused absences](#), including Grief Absences and the new Medically Excused Absences Policy.

Remember, if you feel sick, follow the standard protocol - email me that you are unwell and cannot attend class. In accordance with university policy, absences for illness will be addressed and excused individually at my discretion.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Please conduct yourself professionally at all times. I ask that you remain focused on our class activities and that you do not text during class, don't do homework for other classes, don't play games on your computer or phone, and do not even open Facebook (or other social media sites) during class unless we are accessing social media sites as part of our research.

Please make sure your cell phone is silent or put on "vibrate" while you are in class. I do not want you to be distracted during class by checking your phone every time it vibrates, but I realize that it's possible for you to have an emergency call. Therefore, I'm asking that you use discretion, be mature and responsible, and show that you can exhibit your professional side during class. If I do see you engaged in unrelated Internet activity, I may ask you to put your device away. Note that inappropriate use of technology also weakens your professional ethos.

COMMUNICATING WITH ME

I encourage you to reach out to me with your questions and concerns that are not addressed by the syllabus or your course materials. Should you wish to further discuss a project, your progress in the

course, or if there is anything else you think I should know, please visit me in virtual office hours or contact me via email. I am reachable via email Monday-Friday from 9am-6pm. Emails sent outside of these hours may not be answered until the next workday. Further, during busy points in the semester, it may take me up to 24-hours to respond to your email.

Please plan accordingly and refrain from sending last-minute emails regarding deadlines or project requirements. In addition to office hours, I am available for video conference appointments M-F, though I ask that you request an appointment for a given day 48-hours in advance so that we can work out an appointment time that works for both of us.

All emails should maintain professional ethos, including appropriate greetings, complete sentences, subject lines, and a signature. I will send you emails via Brightspace Announcements and it is your responsibility to check your email, as well as Brightspace, daily. Failure to review the Announcements page and your email will not excuse missed assignments, attendance, etc. Please be sure to only email me via your Purdue email account.

Purdue English Policy on Responsiveness: The Department of English expects instructors to respond to in-class questions, emails, Brightspace posts, and other communication within a reasonable amount of time (two business days). We also expect that instructors will return writing assignments with comments and grades before the next assignment is due. Please report any possible issues by using this web form: <https://cla.purdue.edu/academic/english/query/>.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic integrity is one of the highest values that Purdue University holds. Individuals are encouraged to alert university officials to potential breeches of this value by either emailing integrity@purdue.edu or by calling 765-494-8778. While information may be submitted anonymously, the more information that is submitted provides the greatest opportunity for the university to investigate the concern.

Incidents of academic misconduct in this course will be addressed by the course instructor and referred to the [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities \(OSRR\)](#) for review at the university level. Any violation of course policies as it relates to academic integrity will result minimally in a failing or zero grade for that particular assignment, and at the instructor's discretion may result in a failing grade for the course. In addition, all incidents of academic misconduct will be forwarded to OSRR, where university penalties, including removal from the university, may be considered.

When writers use material from other sources, they must acknowledge this source. Not doing so is called plagiarism, which means using without credit the ideas or expression of another. You are therefore cautioned (1) against using, word for word, without acknowledgment, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, etc. from the printed or manuscript material of others; (2) against using with only slight changes the materials of another; (3) against using the general plan, the main headings, or a rewritten form of someone else's material. These cautions apply to the work of other students as well as to the published work of professional writers. If you have questions about what is and is not plagiarism, do not hesitate to ask me during office hours, or via e-mail.

Responsible Use of AI: AI use is not forbidden but must be used responsibly and in moderation. All written work provided in this course should be original and predominantly student-authored with limited assistance from AI. Any student who chooses to use AI to assist them in generating any work is required to treat AI as a source and follow MLA or APA citation policies accordingly. This includes providing both in-text citations and a works cited entry. Using AI for assistance includes but is not limited to brainstorming, research, generating ideas, and/or any portion of an assignment (discussion

board entry, draft, essay, etc.). Failure to disclose use of AI in generating written work constitutes plagiarism. More information be provided throughout the semester.

Large Language Models (LLMs) and generative AI technologies like ChatGPT are changing how writing works. We will discuss the affordances and limitations of generative AI, as well as ethical issues it raises (particularly social and cultural biases). Generative AI can support writers' efforts to develop ideas, conduct research, and write clearly, but it cannot replace human creativity and attention to context. Students who submit writing produced largely by generative AI may be reported for violations of academic integrity guidelines.

For more information on academic honesty and integrity at Purdue, see the [Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities webpage](#). If you still have questions about AI use, please do not hesitate to ask me.

ACCESSIBILITY & ACCOMMODATION

Purdue University strives to make learning experiences accessible to all participants. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) at: drc@purdue.edu or by phone: 765-494-1247.

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. Purdue's nondiscrimination policy can be found at: http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.html.

CAPS & MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (765) 494-6995 or <https://www.purdue.edu/caps/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS offices in [West Lafayette](#) or [Indianapolis](#).

PURDUE WRITING LAB

The Purdue OWL is also available to help you with any writing project, at any stage of your process, and for any course. It has three locations on campus as well as its famous web site. You can meet with a Purdue OWL consultant face-to-face, through a video conference, or receive feedback asynchronously. West Lafayette students are the only people who get free consultations by appointment or just dropping in, so please take advantage! Students who seek out help at the Purdue OWL (or any support unit) tend to have better grades, GPAs, and greater success in college. To make an appointment, visit <https://cla.purdue.edu/wlschedule> or call 765-494-3723.


EMERGENCIES


To report an emergency, call 911. To obtain updates regarding an ongoing emergency, sign up for Purdue Alert text messages at [Purdue Emergency Alert page](#).



Please review the Emergency Preparedness website for additional information: [Purdue Emergency Preparedness](#).

COURSE CALENDAR

This schedule is *tentative*. All readings, unless indicated, are from our textbook. All work is due the day it is listed. If additional readings are posted or anything is changed, a revised class schedule will be posted and you will be notified via Brightspace Announcements. All due dates are Eastern Daylight/Standard Time.

Week	MONDAY	WEDNESDAY	FRIDAY
UNIT 1: RHETORICAL THINKING & ANALYSIS			
Week 1: Aug 25-29	Syllabus review, Course Outcomes & Academic Honesty	<i>Allyn & Bacon Guide</i> (ABG) Ch 1: "Posing Problems" Writing in College: From Competence to Excellence: Chapter 1 (sections 1.0-1.4)	ABG, Ch. 3: "Thinking Critically about Rhetorical Problems"; Writing in College: Chapter 2 : (sections 2.0-2.4)
Week 2: Sept 1-5	No Class -Labor Day 	ABG, Ch. 4: "How Messages Persuade" & Ch. 6: "Reading Rhetorically: The Writer as a Strong Reader" Discussion on Library Sources due W & Two Responses Due by Fr 11:59 pm	Rosenberg PDF WP1 Article selection & Summary due Sun by 11:59pm
Week 3: Sept 8-12	Day for Patricia journal making	ABG, Ch. 2: "Exploring Problems: Making Claims" ; Purdue OWL, "The Rhetorical Situation" (all 11 sections)	Ch. 17 ; <i>WRITING IN COLLEGE: Chapter 3: 3.1-3.3</i> ; Lamott "Shitty First Drafts" WP1 Draft due Sun by 11:59pm
Week 4: Sept 15-19	Bill Hart-Davidson, "Describe-Evaluate-Suggest" Peer Review due by 11:59pm	TBD	ABG, Ch.26 ; Giles "Reflective Writing and the Revision Process" on Brightspace
UNIT 2: RESEARCH & ARGUMENT			
Week 5: Sept 22-26	ABG, Ch. 21: "Asking Questions, Finding Sources" WP1 Due Monday 11:59 pm & Reflective Essay Due Tues 11:59pm	ABG, Ch. 22: "Evaluating Sources" Review WP2 Prompt	Topic & Research Session Topic/Argumentative Research Stance/RQ due Sun by 11:59 pm Patricia Day for Zine?
Week 6: Sept 29-Oct 3	ABG, Ch. 8: "Writing an Exploratory Essay or Annotated Bibliography"	Ch. 24: "Citing and Documenting Sources" Discussion Board: Popular Source Annotated Bib. Entry	In-class Research & Summary Workshop Patricia Day for Zine?

		Due W & Two Responses Due by Fr 11:59 pm	
Week 7: Oct 6-10	ABG, Ch. 14: "Writing a Classical Argument" Scholarly Source list, Justification/Updated RQ(s) due by 11:59 pm	Patricia Day for Zine?	Thesis Workshop – Discussion Board: Thesis & Outline by Fri 11:59 pm <i>Peer Response to Thesis due Sun by 11:59 pm</i>
Week 8: Oct 13-17	NO CLASS –  Fall Break	ABG, Ch. 16: Propose a Solution & Ch. 23: "Incorporating Sources Into Your Own Writing"	ABG, Ch. 18 WP2 Draft Due 11:59 pm
Week 9: Oct 20-24	Peer Review Day Peer Review due 11:59 pm	Graff & Birkenstein, "They Say, I Say" argument templates	Reverse Outline & You Turn in Reverse Outline by 11:59 pm
Week 10: Oct 27-31	Workshop Intros/Conclusions	Revision Day	Revision Day WP2 Final Due Sun 11:59 pm Reflective Essay Due Mon 11:59 pm
UNIT 3: REMEDIATION & MULTIMODALITY			
Week 11: Nov 3-7	ABG, Ch. 5: "Thinking Critically About Document..." "The Most Common Mistakes by Non-Designers" & "11 Visual Hierarchy Design Principles" Review WP3 Prompt	ABG, Ch. 20: "Strategies for Composing Multimodal Texts" Curtis Newbold, "The 50 Most Important Rules of Document Design" & HackDesign, "Achieving Visual Hierarchy"	Review Poster Templates (links on BS) & Karl Gude, "Seven Design Tips for Making Great Infographics" Poster Design Strategies Due Sunday
Week 12: Nov 10-14	CRAP Design Principles: https://vwo.com/blog/crap-design-principles/	Drafting Day <i>Sign-up sheet TBD</i>	Research Poster & Presentation Script Draft Research Poster Peer Review due Sunday by 11:59 pm
Week 13: Nov 17-21	Presentations (4 per day)	Presentations (4 per day)	Presentations (4 per day) Discussion Board Two Responses Due by Fr 11:59 pm

Fall Undergraduate Research Expo: In-person Poster Sessions Abstract Deadline TBD NOVEMBER 18, 2025 PMU BALLROOMS			
Week 14: Nov 24-28	Presentations (4 per day)	 THANKSGIVING BREAK! 	
	Discussion Board Two Responses Due by Wed 11:59 pm		
UNIT 4: REFLECTION			
Week 15 Dec 2-6	Finish WP3 Submit by Mon Dec. 2 Reflection Due Tues Dec. 3	Review Portfolio Assignment	Review ABG, Ch. 26 Portfolio Workshop
Week 16 Dec 8-12	Peer review of Cover Letter	Revisions?	Course Evals
PORTFOLIO DUE Sun. December 14 by 11:59 pm on Brightspace			