English 1101: Composition 1, Fall 2021

**Sections 292, 306, 340, and 342, Dr. Weaver, GSU-PC Clarkston**

\*\**The course syllabus & schedule provide a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary and will be announced in class / through iCollege.*

Syllabus Table of Contents

How to Contact Me (Dr. Weaver): ([rweaver@gsu.edu](mailto:rweaver@gsu.edu) / 678-891-3933 / 770-750-4945

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Dear Students: Hello! I am excited to be here with you as we embark on this journey through the semester!

### This course focuses on skills required for effective writing in a variety of contexts, with emphasis on exposition, analysis, and argumentation, and also includes introductory use of a variety of research skills.

## In This Course, You Will:

1. **Build a writing process for yourself** that helps you respond to a variety of writing situations in school (for all of your different classes which will require writing) and outside of school. This recursive process includes freewriting, revising, drafting, peer reviewing, editing, outlining, idea mapping, responding to feedback, reflection, and metacognition.
2. **Practice writing for and understanding** the needs of different audiences, rhetorical situations, different contexts, and in different styles and formats.
3. **Learn basics of** argumentation and rhetorical analysis.
4. **Learn the basics** of research in a university setting.
5. **Learn how to use and write** **about sources** effectively, ethically, and efficiently, including learning about citation.
6. **Understand what credible information is** and where to find it.
7. **Develop and practice** aspects of digital literacy, including checking your school email and iCollege accounts frequently.
8. **Participate in and attend** most class sessions. You miss out on necessary content, practice, and credit when you miss class.

How to Contact Me

## Open Drop-in Office Hours

If you want to talk in real time, I have both in-person and virtual student open drop-in hours (MW 1-2:30 p.m. and TR 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. / 2:30-3:30 p.m.). They are designed with you in mind: they are open to you, to your questions, ideas, or wonderings. **Importantly for this class, you can ask me to look over drafts of papers before they’re due!**

My office is a nice and comfortable place, and I almost always have **SNACKS and other resources**. If you need to bring a child to the office for a meeting, that’s ok—I have crayons and a couple of toys that they can play with while we talk.

You can use the iCollege chat function to meet with me if you don't want to do an in-person or vid meeting—let me know what time works for you. Please do not hesitate to come to my Webex room https://gsumeetings.webex.com/meet/rweaver) during posted virtual open hours or when we have agreed on a time. Note: my virtual office is ONLY open DURING OPEN HOURS (not at all times). I may be called into other meetings on very short notice. If I’m in my “meeting room” / am holding drop-in hours and need to step away for a minute, I’ll post a note or pause the meeting briefly. If you are “in” the meeting or “waiting in the lobby,” just be patient: I’ll get back as soon as I can.  Note: because of limited bandwidth, we may have use only the audio function in WebEx if there are a lot of people using it at the same time.

If you can’t get online and need to talk to me on the phone, you can call my office number, which forwards me your voicemail: 678-891-3933, and leave me a message with a callback number. Or, call or text my google voice number: 770-750-4945. You can call me and leave a message if I don’t pick up and tell me how to get back to you.

NOTE: if you text me, tell me who you are and what class you’re in! the GVoice number doesn’t record contact info!

## Contacting Me Outside of Open Drop-in hours

If you have a general question that anyone in the class can answer, you can use the discussion forum “General Class Questions or Concerns.”

If you’re only able to use your phone for internet stuff: download the Brightspace “Pulse” app for iCollege (orange, with a little heartbeat sign) so you don’t have to use your phone’s web browser.

Panthermail/outlook: if you can’t use iCollege, email me through your Panthermail / Outlook account: rweaver@gsu.edu (do NOT put “student” in the address)

Twitter handle: @WeaverRew—let me know if you want me to open DMs so you can contact me, and follow me now if you wish.

# What This Class Is About

This class is about writing, kind of. It’s about studenting, kind of. It’s about what we talk about when we talk about writing and what we talk about when we talk about writing in college. It’s about what we mean by college, kind of. I say “kind of” a lot here, because no class is perfect and there’s always something incomplete, there’s always something left undone at the end of class, there’s always something that we didn’t get to.

**That’s what writing is: never finished, never perfect**. Most of the time, writing is done. I’ve published things that were not perfect, and some that were pretty faulty, but done. What was important for me was that I turned those things in and that I learned to keep writing.

Some of you are probably anxious about a class like this, and may have heard about what to expect. Some of that may be true, and some not. Here is what I think the class is (and is not) about:

* This class is not about learning to write as much as it is about building a process for yourself that helps you continually improve as a writer: we’ll learn and practice a variety of writing strategies and approaches which you can adopt into your writing toolbox, including freewriting, revising, drafting, peer reviewing, editing, outlining, idea mapping, reflection, metacognition, and so on.
* This class is not about learning grammar; it’s about learning when to use different kinds of English in different contexts. Sometimes this means using “Standard English,” and sometimes it doesn’t.
* This class is not about being correct; it’s about learning how to communicate effectively with different communities and in different situations and for different contexts.
* This class is designed to help you build a process for yourself that helps you meet the writing situations you’ll find here at college and in your professional life. It’s designed for you to develop adaptability and flexibility in your approach to writing situations. I can’t anticipate all of those situations, but you can expect that I’ll tell you about what I know. You can expect that I will try to explain writing situations, that I will help you practice different kinds of processes and different strategies for getting writing done. You can expect that I see my job as helping all of us, no matter how we got here or when, write better.
* As in all 1101 courses at GSU-Perimeter College, the purpose of this ENGL 1101 class is to learn how to keep writing—how to create a writing process, how to communicate effectively in a variety of modes (including written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal) and to a variety of audiences (academic, professional, and popular). We will create individual and group projects over the course of the semester. We will emphasize critical and strategic reading, and will emphasize in all tasks the importance of critical thinking. We will also learn how to create knowledge by generating questions, investigating issues, developing research skills, and forming opinions.
* Even though you may have had classes at Perimeter before, this class is an important first in your college career.  Many consider good communication skills as evidence of being educated.  What you learn here will serve you throughout your time at Perimeter and beyond.  **Doing well in this class will help you make progress in the rest of your college career.** *Writing is a process, and writing is connected to thinking*.  By examining various models of good writing and by progressing through the necessary stages of composition for each assignment, you will build confidence and skill in reading and thinking critically and expressing your own ideas clearly and effectively.
* Also, we’ll talk about the **psychological aspects of becoming a good student and writer**: we’ll discuss myths about writing, we’ll learn about and practice effective and efficient study strategies, and we’ll learn about using metacognition, growth mindset, and school resources to get the most out of our experience.

# Some Guiding Questions

In this course, together, we will think and write about some important questions throughout the semester:

* How can you create a writing process that works for you, that helps you succeed in all of your writing tasks at college?
* What are the major differences between writing expectations for college and high school?
* Why and How is writing in college different professor by professor, and how do we handle that?
* What in your educational history has been helpful for you to grow as a student?
* What in your educational history has hindered your ability to grow as a student?
* What do you need in order to grow and thrive as a student now?
* What do you need in order to grow as a writer?

# Our Expectations

This class is designed to help you build a process for yourself that helps you meet the writing situations you’ll find here at college and in your professional life. It’s designed for you to develop adaptability and flexibility in your approach to writing situations.

1. I can’t anticipate all of those situations, but you can expect that I’ll tell you about what I know.
2. You can expect that I will try to explain writing situations, that I will help you practice different kinds of processes and different strategies for getting writing done.
3. You can expect that I see my job as helping all of us, no matter how we got here or when, write better.

**You can also expect that I strive to treat each of my students with dignity and respect and to meet each day with you as an opportunity for gratitude.**

**You can expect me to listen and to help you find ways to succeed in the class.**

**You can expect that I will post feedback for small assignments within 2-3 days and grades for major assignments within 10-14 days.**

**You can expect that I’ll be in my office (F2F and virtual) when I say I will (and that I’ll do my best to communicate with you if something changes).**

I am committed to your success (however differently we may define that). I value cooperative and collaborative learning, knowing that you all have much to contribute. I understand that this contribution can take many shapes and dimensions. I also value your best effort but recognize that no one can bring their best effort to every assignment, every day.

You can expect me to bring my best effort also. This means I will be prepared to facilitate your learning, listen to you and talk with you (rather than at you). But just like you, it is unlikely that I can bring my best to every single class period (though I’ll try my best).

I hope that this helps you understand what to expect from the class, and that it makes you at least a little excited to get started! Please know that you are welcome to ask me any questions that help you get what you need.

I'm looking forward to our time together this semester!

-Dr. Weaver / Professor Weaver / Becky

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# Required Materials and Projects

## Required Materials and Skills

1. All assignments for this class will be turned in here through iCollege. If you are having trouble using this platform to turn stuff in, please contact me ASAP so we can make alternate arrangements.
2. Hardware / Software: Students must have reliable access the internet, to a device that can connect to the internet and that you can type on, and MS Office. The MS Office suite is available to students free at GSU-PC: <https://technology.gsu.edu/technology-services/it-services/email-and-file-storage/panthermail/microsoft-office-suite-students/>
3. If you need access to devices or the internet, try this resource: <https://cetl.gsu.edu/resources/resources-for-learning-remotely/internet-options/>
4. Texts:
   1. [*The Transition to College Writing, 2nd. Edition*](https://www.amazon.com/Transition-College-Writing-Keith-Hjortshoj/dp/0312440820) , by Keith Hjortshoj.  You can get it through our bookstore or--if early enough--order it online. You'll need it by the end of August, so get it as soon as you can. Press: Bedford / St. Martins (Available at our bookstore and online). \*\*PLEASE let me know if you’re having trouble buying the Hjortshoj book—I can help you access it!\*\*\*
   2. *Bad Ideas About Writing*, edited by Cheryl E. Ball and Drew M. Loewe. (FREE): <https://textbooks.lib.wvu.edu/badideas/badideasaboutwriting-book.pdf>
   3. *Successful College Composition*. (FREE, in iCollege: see our Table of Contents)
   4. Various handouts / materials supplied by me, the library, or found on the Internet (including library databases).

Please let me know as soon as you can if you would like help with any of these.

**Skills:** Everything you turn in will be typed, and turned in here through Perimeter College’s online learning management system, iCollege. Basic computing and word-processing skills (on programs such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs) will be necessary. You should also have basic web navigation skills.

## Grading: Untraditional

Major projects for this class will not be graded. Instead, feedback for all major assignments will come with written and verbal feedback and a rubric which I will introduce before the first major assignment. You will meet with me for scheduled & required meetings throughout the semester. In these meetings, we will discuss your work and the feedback, as well as your overall progress in the class and any questions or concerns you may have.

Why?

I’ve been teaching writing for over 25 years, and students pay more attention to (and learn more from) feedback that isn’t attached to a letter or number grade. Research backs this up. Students in writing classes learn better through feedback that focuses on their growth as writers.

So, what will the feedback look like?

We will meet frequently over the course of the semester—I would like to meet with each of you at least three times, and I would be ecstatic to meet with you more often! In our first meeting, we’ll discuss your goals for the class and any questions or concerns you have. In other meetings, we will talk about your assignment rubrics, which will include both general and specific feedback provided to help you become a better writer, and the written and verbal feedback will work in concert with the rubric to help you get a full picture of how you need to improve. These meetings will be driven by you.

The major project rubric for this class (a blank copy is in the “Assignment Sheets” module here in iCollege) breaks the project down into parts and each part will be given feedback in one of these three categories:

Not Satisfactory/Passing Yet: room to build missing pieces, poor quality, late, or not submitted

Satisfactory/Passing: Meets all assignment requirements

Impressive: Goes above and beyond assignment requirements (as specified in the rubric)

Each major assignment will come with an assignment sheet that explicitly lays out the expectations, criteria, and ways to get started.

What about minor or “IP” assignments?

These small regular (mostly weekly) assignments are designed to help you think on paper about a class idea or theme and in some cases are designed to be “pre-writing” assignments that help you get started on larger projects. I don’t grade these; instead, they become part of our frequent and ongoing discussions about your progress as a writer.

So, will you get a letter grade at the end of the semester?

Yes, if you earn one! We will have our last meeting at the end of the semester (during finals) and will talk about your work over the semester. *You will come out of that meeting knowing what your letter grade will be*. **Prior to our meeting, you will turn in a portfolio (Major Project 5) with a cover letter arguing for the grade** you think your semester’s worth of work deserves. I will read the letter and parts of the portfolio before our meeting. During the meeting, we’ll use your portfolio as a basis for a discussion in which we’ll come to an agreement on the grade. As a class, we will talk about how to revise and how to best make use of feedback to grow as writers.

Is it possible to fail this class?

Yes, it is possible to fail this class. Students fail this class by not showing up, or not turning in enough satisfactory work. *Students have failed this class even though they have turned work in.* Most of your work (a majority of the major projects, for example) needs to be satisfactory, not simply turned in on time.

Here are the major projects you’ll work on:

* **Project #1**: Studenting Self-Assessment Essay (develops skills of self-observation, evaluation, and direction)
* **Project #2**: Patch-writing exercise (strengthens skills at strategic & ethical source use)
* **Project #3**: SAR Paper (strengthens skills at summarizing, analyzing, and responding critically to sources)
* **Project #4**: Research Project (strengthens skills at collecting, evaluating, and making sense of research found in library databases, digital literacy)
* **Project #5**: Reflective Portfolio (strengthens skills at reflection, description, narrative, and persuasion)
* **Process-writing** (including drafts, peer review, process writing, and IPs)

**The Participation and Attendance policy for this class is:** Attend class as much as you can and miss as little as possible (see below).

Make sure to be aware of the Major Project due dates on our class calendar and do your best to turn them in on the deadline. If you get less-than-satisfactory feedback on any of your projects 1-4, you will be able to revise the projects for the portfolio due at the end of the semester, *as well as during the semester*. We will collaborate on making your work better.

**There is no final exam, but your Major Project 5 will be due during finals week.**

Note: Projects 1-4 need to be in before December 6, our last day of classes. You will have the opportunity to revise Projects 1-4 throughout the semester if you turn them in on time. You will not be able to revise Project 5 because it’s due during finals.

**Late Work Policy:** When you turn in your writing by the deadline, you help me do my job, which is provide feedback on your writing and help you improve as a writer. Also, it’s important for us to practice turning in written work on time. Deadlines help us in this way.

**Think of deadlines as "best-by dates"**: like yogurt or potato chips, each of your writing assignments has a "best-by date," the deadline listed on the weekly calendar. If you can't meet the deadline, in cases of emergency or other extenuating circumstances, **be in communication with me,** and I'll be flexible if I can. Like other kinds of best-by dates, though, the longer you go past the target, the staler things become, and I will not be able to guarantee the same amount or depth of feedback as I would be able to give if you meet the original deadline.

**There's only one time in the semester where I cannot be flexible:** the end of the semester. The school sets VERY FIRM deadlines for grade submission, which means your professor's deadlines for you to turn in work during finals CANNOT be flexible.

**Once I turn in semester grades, there is no more time for me to collect class work or change anything. The class is over** (even if I submit grades before the official school grade submission deadline). During finals and after I turn in grades, I can't let a student revise something for a better grade or do more work, for reasons of time and fairness.

# Attendance, Participation, Meta

## If You're Sick

Health and safety come first. **Do not come to "class" if you're feeling ill** (or at all in doubt) or if anyone in your household is ill (or at all in doubt). **SERIOUSLY.** I will be flexible about course assignments and expectations if illness/related concerns arise for you and those you serve as caregiver for or interact with.

**The attendance and participation policy for this class is: attend as often as you can and miss as little as possible. Be nice, respect everyone in the class, and do your part to build a community.** Attendance and participation tends to grade itself (the more you attend, and the better you participate, the better you’ll do in the class). If you need to miss class, be in touch with me and a fellow classmate about what you’ve missed and how to recover from that absence. **Don’t come to school if you are sick or someone you know is sick.**

I trust that you have a good reason for being gone. Just be in touch—that’s the most important thing: find another way to keep up with the class. Since attendance and participation isn’t graded traditionally in this class, we don’t need to bother with counting absences or verifying whether you have an “excused” absence. *Note: I will unofficially mark attendance (for institutional record-keeping reasons) but won’t base any grades on it.*

Class work includes: writing and reading in class, discussion about reading and/or writing done before class, group work, peer review, collaborative writing, and online discussion. You need to have 3 required meetings with the professor and be responsible to your colleagues in class.

## Human Needs

**I know that many of us face financial, ethical, familial, and cultural costs** to be here and that those costs and struggles don't stop on the first day of class. I know what that’s like, and I will do my best to listen to you, to work with you in negotiating those struggles, and to help you access resources that can aid you.

**Nobody signed up for the ways this pandemic has forced us to alter our lives** and adjust the circumstances of your education, but we will get through it together. We will support each other as humans and communicate about evolving learning and personal needs.

**Let's work together** to try and build a class environment which is a fun, flexible, and interesting as possible—AND to take advantage of the alternatives that technology provides to generate useful new approaches and skills.

## Flexibility and Communication for Fall 2021

**We will be flexible and adjust as needed**, through maintaining clear communication about logistics and physical and mental well-being.

Evolving and up-to-date information about the university’s operations and assistance available can be found here: <https://covidinfo.gsu.edu/>

SAFETY FALL 2021

Do You have to Wear a Mask? In general, no. In accordance with University of System of Georgia (USG) policy, masks are not required on campus except when accessing the University Health Center. However, all individuals, especially those who are unvaccinated, are strongly encouraged to wear a mask as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to lower the risk of COVID-19. **I will wear my mask in class and in my office and I would like you to, also.**

**I may move my face-to-face open hours from my office to a classroom to facilitate socially distant meetings. If I move them, I will tell y’all in class and leave a note on my office door.**

Other Pandemic FAQs: If you have questions about campus-based vaccines, testing, and healthcare, please go to the website: <https://covidinfo.gsu.edu/covid-19-resources/covid-19-vaccine/>

Course Outcomes

As in all 1101 courses at GSU-Perimeter College, the purpose of this ENGL 1101 class is to learn how to keep writing—how to create a writing process, how to communicate effectively in a variety of modes (including written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal) and to a variety of audiences (academic, professional, and popular). We will create individual and group projects over the course of the semester. We will emphasize critical and strategic reading, and will emphasize in all tasks the importance of critical thinking. We will also learn how to create knowledge by generating questions, investigating issues, developing research skills, and forming opinions.

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Also, we’ll talk about the psychological aspects of becoming a good student and writer: we’ll discuss myths about writing, we’ll learn about and practice effective and efficient study strategies, and we’ll learn about using metacognition, growth mindset, and school resources to get the most out of our experience.

Dept. Policies, and Resource Information You Need: ONLINE

**If you need help or any resources**, look here: <http://sites.gsu.edu/rweaver/ifyouneedhelp/>  
• Links to free MS Office and other software  
• Links to resources for basic needs, such as food, housing, and medical care  
• Information on academic help  
• Information about disability accommodations

**General Information for my English department classes,** and the Perimeter English department policies can be found here: <http://sites.gsu.edu/rweaver/2016/11/16/engdeptandgeneralinfo/>  
• Prerequisites  
• Paper formatting   
• Reading

**Specific information about English 1101** can be found here: <http://sites.gsu.edu/rweaver/english-1101-specifics/>  
• Expectations for this “gateway” class  
• Core competencies

**Numbers and Policies** can be found here: <http://sites.gsu.edu/rweaver/numbersandpolicies/>  
• Attendance  
• Technology  
• Contacting Dr. Weaver  
• Grading  
• Participation  
• Course Evaluations