

ENG 106, First-Year Composition

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Thanks to poor hearing, I don't use voice mail. Send me an email or text instead.

I'm @cbdilger on most social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc); friend or follow me if you like.

All class meetings 7:30 am to 8:20 am:

Monday: Beering B275 computer lab

Wednesday & Friday: Heavilon Hall 104 classroom

Tuesday & Thursday: Heavilon Hall 225 conference studio

CDN: 10600-108-43840, 10600-111-43843, 10600-097-43829

Welcome to ENG 10600, First-Year Composition. This four-credit course is designed to help you build on your writing skills, experience and knowledge, preparing you to write in other contexts. We'll work in a classroom, a computer lab, and a conference space, completing a wide variety of individual and collaborative work. I'm eager to help you make this successful, and Purdue provides many valuable resources as well. Please read this syllabus carefully so we can make the most of our time together!

English 106 is one of several first-year writing courses administered by Introductory Composition at Purdue (ICaP), part of the Department of English. Please read the relevant parts of our textbook *Composing Yourself* to ensure you are in the course which fits you best. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk with me as soon as possible.

Using awareness of genre to become better writers

This particular section of English 106 uses an approach called *genre awareness*, one method for what many scholars call *writing about writing*. You've probably heard of genre in connection with music: hip-hop, country, rhythm and blues, and many more. Or perhaps movies: sci-fi thrillers such as *Gravity*, documentaries, or campy thrillers like *Sharknado 2*. Knowing what genre you're listening or watching, or knowing common features associated with that genre, shapes your expectations. For example, it would be odd, to say the least, for any film you see in a movie theater to have a laugh track—but that's normal for a sitcom on television. Knowing George Clooney or Tara Reid is in a movie says something about it. Something good? That depends on the viewers, and what they are looking for. You can probably think of many ways that genre shapes both films and music: the design of movie posters; the visual style musicians choose for publicity photos or album covers; the previews which show before a film; the length of both films and music. The list goes on, for sure.

Genres are by no means fixed and inflexible. This applies in two ways. First, they vary between contexts and individuals. "Hip-hop" or "grunge" may mean something very different to you than someone you meet from southern California. You've probably experienced this as you write for different subjects: a research paper for history isn't the same as one for English, though it shares many common features—and these smaller differences can be very hard to understand! Second, genres change over time, in response to changes in technologies, their roles in culture, and other forces. When I was your age, grunge was still cutting edge, relatively hard to find, and not at all mainstream. Twenty years later, it's all over the place. We could say the same about many genres and the situations they are engaged in over time.

Writing works the same way. Genres shape the way we read, react to, prepare to write, draft, re-write, and share texts in very profound ways. Writing which is perfect for a certain situation can be completely inappropriate for another. For example, could you imagine trying to use the "Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion" approach common to scientific articles to write a short story? Or making a PowerPoint presentation to ask your parents to help you pay for a Spring Break trip? It's easy to see the

mismatches there. But many writers fail to see similar, smaller mismatches: word choices which are questionable, or reliance on sources which are not usual for a given field, or an unusual visual design. I believe genre awareness can help you avoid those mistakes. This semester, you'll learn how an understanding of genre can help you write in a wide variety of different contexts. Along the way, you'll learn how to work with important concepts writing researchers have identified in connection with genre: rhetorical situations and ecologies, discourse communities, writing processes, and the relationship of writing and technology.

Now, let's get a little more formal. (This is a syllabus, after all.) Writing researchers like to say that genres are *typified rhetorical ways of interacting within recurring situations*. Let's unpack each of those:

- **Typified:** genres are developed over time, through practice, and represent the consensus of groups of writers with shared interests and/or goals. They are never arbitrary, but designed for specific purposes, and shaped with those purposes in mind.
- **Rhetorical:** genres are built for persuasion—influencing the ways others think, and/or shaping their actions. This persuasiveness can take many forms, and it can be implicit or very direct.
- **Interacting:** genres are social. They arise from social action, and shape it too. Writers often shape genres in collaboration with other writers. Genres often work in concert with other genres.
- **Recurring situations:** genres are tied to specific contexts many people face again and again. Genres help people respond to those situations, often in a manner which changes them radically.

Our readings will help you understand how these four elements of genre function, and you'll put that understanding into practice with a variety of small and large assignments. By reading and writing similar texts in different genres, you'll be able to make comparisons which help you understand not only the specific genres themselves, but genre in general. For example, reading *Toms River*, then listening to Dan Fagin talk about the connections between cancer and the environment, can help us understand the writerly decisions he made along the way. Like other writing researchers, I believe the genre awareness approach can help you develop a flexibility and adaptability which allows you to build on prior writing skills, experience, and knowledge. Here are our goals, cast as bullets:

- Learning a rich definition of genre, then applying this framework to better understand writing;
- Reflecting on the roles specific genres have played in your past writing experiences;
- Learning about genres important to relevant communities or professional disciplines;
- Considering ways visual elements, technologies, and networks impact the operation of genre.

Objectives

Our course goals map to objectives following those established by ICaP and published in *Composing Yourself* and on the ICaP web site: <http://icap.rhetorike.org/106gmo>.

Assignments

You will have four large writing projects this semester. Each one will build on, and likely borrow from, the previous. This is just an overview; I will provide in-depth assignments throughout the semester. Please see those and “Grading” below for details. Project dates and percentage of grade are indicated.

- **Project 1: Literacy self-study & reflection (8/25 to 9/19, 15%)**
Document the ways your literacy has developed and then write a literacy narrative which focuses on a single event.
- **Project 2: Literacy narrative (9/22 to 10/10, 20%)**
Further investigate your literacy history in comparison to others, and write a reflection about it.

- **Project 3: Discourse community report (10/13 to 11/21, 25%)**
Investigate a discourse community of interest to you, conducting both primary and secondary research, and write a report about the genres which shape it.
- **Project 4: Discourse community web presence (11/24 to 12/16, 20%)**
Further investigate your discourse community of interest and remediate your report into a genre targeting a broad audience.

You'll complete smaller assignments such as reading responses and in-class practice writing in connection with each project. I may or may not respond to these in depth, but rest assured I will review all of them. Participation in classes and conferences will account for 20% of your grade.

English 106 does not have a final examination.

Readings

Assignments and class activities will lean heavily on readings from our three required texts:

- Blackmon, S., Haynes, L., and Pinkert, L. A. (2014). *Composing Yourself: A Student Guide to Introductory Composition at Purdue*. Fountainhead Press.
- Bullock, R. (2013). *The Norton Field Guide to Writing, 3/e*. Norton/MacMillan.
- Fagin, D. (2012). *Toms River: A Story of Science and Salvation*. Bantam.

Composing Yourself is available at the Follett bookstore (1400 W State St). *Toms River* is on sale at a very good price at Von's (315 W State). You can find the *Norton Field Guide* at either store or online.

In addition, I've made a small number of articles available to you via my web site. Please print them and/or download them onto your devices so they are available to you in classes and conferences. All of these texts are available on reserve in the Humanities and Social Sciences Library (HSSE).

Course handouts are also important readings; find any I distribute in class on my web site (dtext.org).

In our detailed schedule, you'll find useful information about the way readings will be used in class, so you'll know when you need to carefully read and retain information, or just make yourself familiar with it so you can refer to it later.

Our three classroom spaces

All English 106 classes use three spaces: a computer lab, a regular classroom, and the conference studios in Heavilon Hall. These spaces will shape our work: computer lab time will often be used to give you the opportunity to conduct research or work on projects with help from me and others. Every two weeks, you'll have a short conference with me to discuss your reading and writing. Attendance to all of these is expected and essential. See the detailed schedule and the conference assignment and schedule for details.

About me

Like you, I'm in my first year at Purdue! Previously, I was at Western Illinois University, a public university in Macomb, Illinois, about four hours due west of here. I worked at WIU from August 2003 until May of this year, teaching in Macomb and Moline, IL as well. I come to West Lafayette with my bride Erin Easterling and two very busy grrrls, Madelyn (8) and Amelia (5), both born on October 27. I got my PhD in English from the University of Florida in 2003, focusing on the ways writing and networks (both human and technological) are intertwined. When I'm not working, I love to spend time with my family, bike, swim, or run (though an injury is discouraging the latter), make beer, or work on my house. I'm thrilled to be at Purdue, and I hope you are too.

This is a good place for me to thank Christiane Alcantara, Thomas Rickert, Dan Kenzie, and the ICaP staff for sharing their syllabi with me and helping my transition to Purdue go very smoothly so far.

Guide to success

I think of myself as a reasonable hard-ass: I ask a lot of you (and myself). I'm eager for you to succeed in this class and learn the difficult but rewarding craft of writing. Here are some of the best ways to do that:

1. **Stay in touch.** Use texts, email, phone calls, whatever. I'm happy to talk to you—I'm not giving you my phone number just for show! If you write and don't hear back, try again in a few days.
2. **Use the detailed schedule.** My web site includes a link to a more detailed schedule with specific prompts about the readings and details about course activities. **Please use it!** It describes the readings you can skim, which you need to really work hard to master, notes when assignments are due, etc. I hope you will use it to make class most effective for you.
3. **Read the texts and take notes.** There's no better way to learn the content of a book than taking notes. They will make writing responses easy. I will share my method with you; clone it or adapt your own. Always bring the texts we are reading to class, and your notes too if you can.
4. **Take notes in class.** If you like to use a laptop or tablet to do this, please bring one—but don't get lost in Facebook or texting or whatever. I won't say anything, but I'll surely notice.
5. **Participate.** Make comments. Ask questions when you have them. Share your experiences, good and bad. Doing so helps me help you and everyone else—and 20% of your grade depends on it. Our class meets early; if you need coffee beforehand, get it. Oversleep? Come to class anyway; just sneak in as quietly as you can. Better to be late than absent.
6. **Start work on the projects immediately.** Writing takes a lot of time, and you can't do it all at once. So please begin work on your projects immediately.
7. **Share your work and show your work.** If you want to come to my office to talk about your editing, bring what you've been working on. Don't throw anything away—seeing your work in progress can help me help you.
8. **Stay on target and be on time.** You can't change plans you outline in project starters or proposals without my approval—inasmuch as I can't change the way I plan to spend grant money I've earned, or radically change the topic I'm writing about for a conference, etc. **You need to ask first.** And as any creative professional will tell you, deadlines are just that—unless you get permission from me, turn your work in early or on time, or expect nothing in return.
9. **Get help with writing if you want it.** My office hours are for you — I'm happy to work with you as often as you like. Purdue's writing lab is one of the best in the country; take advantage! Read *Composing Yourself* chapter 3, then ask me if you need other ways to get help.

Policies

Students are expected to follow Purdue's standards for academic conduct, as codified at <http://www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/>. Please read *Composing Yourself*, especially chapter 7, to learn more about the most important policies which shape all ICaP classes.

1. **Academic honesty is required.** All academic honesty violations will be reported and will result in a failing grade for the assignment and likely the course. See *Composing Yourself* for details, including the definition of plagiarism used by the Department of English.
2. **Accommodations for special learning needs are gladly arranged.** Please contact me ASAP to make an appointment to discuss any accommodations. As per Purdue policy and Federal law, you must initiate contact with me and the Disability Resource Center; I cannot do so.

3. **Active participation is required.** Under-prepared students will be asked to drop the class. Reading course texts and participating continually is part of preparation. You must buy the assigned texts, do the readings, and come to class ready to talk about them.
4. **Attendance is expected.** If you miss more than four classes, your final grade will be reduced by one-half letter for every subsequent absence. Absences for bereavement, or for other circumstances which I agree are unavoidable, will not count against this total. However, if you miss more than eight classes, for whatever reason, I will recommend you drop the course.
5. **Class cancellations and emergencies sometimes happen.** Please check your Purdue email before heading to class. If I cancel class, I'll notify you by email in advance if I can. If class has to be cancelled due to weather or another emergency, or if an emergency occurs during classes, we'll follow Purdue's procedures and notifications from Purdue ALERT.
6. **Ethical and professional conduct is required.** I expect academic honesty, collegiality in class, and professionalism when working with others. Purdue's non-discrimination policies apply for all classes and course activities.
7. **Feedback about the course is welcome any time.** Just drop me a line. If you want to be anonymous, put a note in my mailbox in Heavilon Hall 324. You can also contact ICaP Assistant Director Linda Haynes at any time.
8. **Grading uses a power of ten scale.** A=100–90, B=89–80, etc. Keep all graded assignments, and track your own grades. Don't hesitate to contact me if you have a question about a grade I assign. See "Grading" below for more.
9. **Mind all deadlines.** I don't accept late work, unless you have prior permission, or unless extreme circumstances warrant. Need extra time? Please ask. I'm usually happy to give you more time to get things done—if you ask in advance. (This is how it works in the real world, too.)
10. **Purchasing required books and supplies is required.** At the minimum, you must have course texts, computing hardware needed to do coursework, and materials to produce your documents.
11. **Your privacy is important to me.** I don't want to know your PUID or Social Security numbers. Please don't put them on your assignments or in emails. In compliance with relevant privacy laws (FERPA), Purdue requires that I discuss grades with you in confidence, which means I may ask you to move a conversation from email or the hallway to a more private medium.

Grading

You earn a final grade based on performance, as in any other class.

1. Please track your own grades. If you think I've made a mistake, or evaluated your work unfairly, please let me know. I am happy to re-evaluate your work.
2. You will receive a final grade of F if you do not complete all parts of the major assignments.
3. Academic honesty violations will result in an F grade (1%) for the assignment. Severe violations will result in a final course grade of F as well. All suspected violations are reported.
4. Grades of "Incomplete" are only given in the case of military service, documented medical emergency, or documented death in the family. Generally speaking, I do not oppose retroactive withdrawals; that is often a better alternative.
5. The table at below left shows the points per assignment. Drop a zero to see the percentage of your final grade each assignment represents (e.g. 100 pts = 10%). This works for milestones, too.
6. The table at below right shows how I figure grades:

- a) I use the “Normal %” to figure the points you earn for an assignment of a given “Letter” grade. For example, a “B+” on a 50 point assignment earns you 44 points (88% of 50).
 - b) For drafts, I often assign pass-fail grades based on effort and extension of assignments.
 - c) “Point range” shows how final grades are assigned. I do not assign D+ or D– grades.
7. If you disagree with your final grade, you can appeal your grade through ICaP; see *Composing Yourself* for details.

Grading point system

Assignment	Points
Literacy narrative	150
Literacy reflection	200
Discourse community report	250
Discourse community web site	200
Participation	200
Total	1000

Letter	Normal %	Point range
A	95	1000–930
A–	91	929–900
B+	88	899–870
B	85	869–830
B–	81	829–800
C+	78	799–770
C	75	769–730
C–	71	729–700
D	65	699–600
F	50	599–0

Weekly schedule

This schedule will change. For a detailed, up to date schedule, please see our course web site at dtext.org.

Week 1: 08/25 — 08/29: Introduction and rhetorical situation

computer	Brief introductions, syllabus walkthrough Intro to computer lab space and online course resources Review <i>Composing Yourself</i> ch. 4 Sign up for conferences
class	Detailed introductions; Complete short writing sample Discuss <i>NFG</i> 1–4 (1: Purpose; 2: Audience; 3: Genre; 4: Stance) and course assignments
conference	Orientation to conferencing (groups of 5, for 25 minutes) Discuss <i>Composing Yourself</i> ch. 1–2

Week 2: 09/01 — 09/05: How genre works

No classes 09/01 (Labor Day)

computer	(none)
class	Discuss Dirk, “Navigating Genres” Group work on genre conventions Discuss <i>NFG</i> 6: Academic Writing; <i>NFG</i> 7: Literacy Narrative; 21: Choosing genres P1 starter due 9/05
conference	Understanding rhetorical situation and/or genre

Week 3: 09/08 — 09/12: Key genre features for literacy narratives

computer	Peer conference for P1 starter
class	Discuss <i>NFG</i> 36: Describing; 38: Dialogue; 40: Narrating; 47: Quotating, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing Group work developing dialogue and descriptions
conference	Understanding rhetorical situation and/or genre

Week 4: 09/15 — 09/19: Sponsors of literacy

computer	Discuss Nielsen, “Twitter Postings: Iterative Design” Revise dialogue written in class
class	Discuss Brandt, “Sponsors of Literacy” including crib sheet Individual, then group work on literacy sponsors P1 final due 9/19
conference	Identifying genre features

Week 5: 09/22 — 09/26: Literacy, genre, and technology

computer	Discuss Spinuzzi, “(writers love txt)” Group work mapping literacy technologies
class	Discuss WIDE, “The Writing Lives of College Students” Revisit technology maps Discuss <i>NFG</i> 31: Guiding your reader; 41: Reading First participation self-evaluation due 9/26
conference	Identifying genre features

Week 6: 09/29 — 10/03: Key genre features for reflection

- computer Discuss *NFG* 18: Reflections then create crib sheet from it
P2 starter due 9/29
- class *NFG* 32: Cause & effect; 37: Describing; 39: Processes
- conference Research or revision

Week 7: 10/06 — 10/10: Conducting research

- computer Read *Composing Yourself* ch. 5
Researching with Purdue library resources
- class Discuss Driscoll, “Introduction to Primary Research”
Discuss *NFG* 43: Research Plan; 44: Finding sources; 45: Eval sources
P2 final due 10/10
- conference Research or revision

Week 8: 10/13 — 10/17: Discourse communities

No classes 10/13-14 (October break).

- computer (none)
- class Discuss *NFG* 9: Reporting information; 14: Lab reports
Discuss Beaufort, “College Writing and Beyond”
Discuss Swales, “The Concept of Discourse Community”
Individual work mapping discourse community
- conference Workshop P3 starter

Week 9: 10/20 — 10/24: Discourse communities & activity systems

- computer Individual work on P3 research plan
Pair review of discourse community map
- class Discuss Kain & Wardle, “Activity Theory”
Group work mapping activity systems
Follow up on research plans
P3 starter due 10/22
- conference Workshop P3 starter

Week 10: 10/27 — 10/31: Genre and discourse community in *Toms River*

- computer Discuss *Toms River*
- class Discuss *Toms River*
Inventory of genres in text
- conference Analyze genre important for your discourse community

Week 11: 11/03 — 11/07: Genre and discourse community in *Toms River*

- computer Map genres, activity systems, and/or discourse communities in *Toms River*
- class Discuss *Toms River*
Discuss Fagin talk
P3 draft due 11/07
- conference Analyze genre important for your discourse community

Week 12: 11/10 — 11/14: Revision of discourse community report

- computer Peer conference P3 draft

- class Discuss NFG 26: Assessing; 27: Getting Response; 28: Editing
In-class practice editing and responding to others' work
- conference Follow up on P3 draft

Week 13: 11/17 — 11/21: Writing style

- computer Discuss Williams, "Characters" and "Actions"
Practice editing sentences for style
- class More on Williams, "Characters" and "Actions"
Continue practice editing sentences for style
Look ahead to P4, end of semester
P3 final due 11/21
- conference Follow up on P3 draft

Week 14: 11/24 — 11/28*No classes 11/26-28 (Thanksgiving break)*

- computer Discuss NFG 5: Media / Design; 55: Writing Online
Brief tour of WordPress
- class (none)
- conference Discuss P4 starter or visual rhetoric

Week 15: 12/01 — 12/05

- computer Individual work finding suitable visuals for P4
P4 starter due 12/01
- class Discuss Blackburn, "The Web Surfer"
Compare individual technology map with discourse community
Discuss NFG 52: Choosing Media; 53: Designing Texts; 54: Using Visuals, Incorporating Sound
- conference Discuss P4 starter or visual rhetoric

Week 16: 12/08 — 12/12

- computer Individual work on projects
- class Discuss WordPress how-to articles (bring laptop or tablet if you can)
Final participation self-evaluation due 12/12
- conference P4 focus group (groups of 5, for 25 minutes)

Exam Week: 12/15 – 12/19

- computer (none)
- class No final examination
P4 final due 12/16
Optional P3 revision due 12/16
- conference (none)

Draft list of online readings for ENG 106

Updated 2014-0812 ~ Not yet complete ~ subject to change

Jessie Blackburn, “The Web Surfer”

<http://compositionforum.com/issue/21/web-surfer.php>

Deborah Brandt, “Sponsors of Literacy”

CCC 49.2 1998 (sent via attachment)

Kerry Dirk, “Navigating Genres”

<http://writingspaces.org/sites/default/files/dirk--navigating-genres.pdf>

Dana Driscoll, “Introduction to Primary Research”

<http://wac.colostate.edu/books/writingspaces2/driscoll--introduction-to-primary-research.pdf>

Jeff Grabill et al (WIDE), “The Writing Lives of College Students”

http://www2.matrix.msu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/WIDE_writinglives_whitepaper.pdf

Donna Kain & Elizabeth Wardle, “Activity Theory for the Writing Classroom”

(sent via attachment)

Jakob Nielsen: Twitter Postings: Iterative Design

<http://www.nngroup.com/articles/twitter-postings-iterative-design/>

Clay Spinuzzi, “(writers love txt)”

<http://spinuzzi.blogspot.com/2013/03/every-once-in-while-i-have-conversation.html>