ENG 108, Accelerated First-Year Composition

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Heavilon Hall 303B (for now, T W R 2:00–3:30pm, and by appt)
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Because of my poor hearing, I don't use voice mail. Please 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 12:00 noon to 1:15pm (Fall 2014, CDN 10800-69271-007):
  Tuesday: Krannert Building G009 (classroom)
  Thursday: Stanley Coulter Hall G046 (computer lab)

Welcome to ENG 10800, Accelerated First-Year Composition. This course is designed to help you use community engagement to become a better writer. We'll work in a classroom, a computer lab, and the field, 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 108 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. **In particular, if you're not interested in performing and writing about volunteer service, 106 is a better course for you.** If you have any questions or concerns, please talk with me as soon as possible.

Introduction

Many writing researchers argue that writers are always guided by their knowledge of the contexts in which they work. This course is designed to help you consider the contexts in which you have learned to write, and in which you have developed specific skills and knowledge, with the hope that you'll be able to build writing skills, knowledge and experience adaptable in future contexts. Researchers agree writing is not easy. This course cannot make writing easy for you—no course can!—but I hope it will offer you strategies for managing the complexity and difficulty of writing. With this in mind, our work has three important focuses:

Community engagement: you will complete about 15 hours of volunteer work with community partners, and a mix of both primary and secondary research—that is, connecting directly with the communities you wish to understand, not only reading what others write about their interactions. The concept of *discourse community* will help us describe the exchanges between community organizations, charities, Purdue, and the public.

Writing, activity, and genre studies: research also suggests genre shapes writing quite powerfully—perhaps more than anything else. This semester, you'll learn to study writing, and to think carefully about your own reading and writing, by considering the back and forth relationship between writers, genres, and the situations in which writing is created and used. We'll use a framework called *activity theory* to provide a vocabulary for understanding how writers' tools, the communities in which readers and writers work, the rules we follow, and our shared outcomes are related and interconnected. My experience suggests a rhetorical approach to genre can help you *transfer* knowledge from this course to other writing contexts—and vice-versa.

Public health and the environment: the relationship between human beings and our world is extremely complex. There is no doubt we have impacted our environment radically, and no doubt that in the last 100 years our knowledge about those impacts has grown increasingly sophisticated. Regardless, we have much to learn about the ways we are impacting our own health, as a species, by changing our planet and our behavior. We will focus on public health, especially cancer and the environment, to have a common set of texts and issues to discuss when considering the relationships between readers, writers and our communities.

Objectives

Our course goals map to objectives established by ICaP. Find them in our textbook *Composing Yourself* and on the ICaP web site: http://www.icap.rhetorike.org/10800gmo. Assignment sheets will have more specifics.

Assignments

You will have three large writing projects this semester. Each project will be divided into milestones you will complete along the way. This is just an overview; I will provide in-depth assignments throughout the semester. Please see those and "Grading" below for details. Dates and percentage of grade are indicated for each project.

- **Literacy, community, technology self-study (8/25 to 9/26, 20%)**
  Document the ways your literacy has developed, paying special attention to the communities in which you are engaged, and the technologies which have shaped your literacy. Write a literacy narrative which focuses on a single event.

- **Community engagement project (9/29 to 11/14, 35%)**
  Write a proposal for working with a community organization. Perform a limited amount of volunteer work, interview staff and/or volunteers, and write a report which discusses the organization as a discourse community, paying special attention to the genres important for community members.

- **Remediation project: web site (11/17 to 12/16, 25%)**
  Remediate your literacy narrative or community engagement project as a web site, extending or revising it as necessary.

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 I will review all of them. Participation will account for 20% of your grade.

English 108 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.

- Deans, T. (2013). *Writing and Community Action: A Service-Learning Rhetoric with Readings*. Pearson/Longman.

- Fagin, D. (2012). *Toms River: A Story of Science and Salvation*. Bantam.

All textbooks are available at the University Book Store; Deans and Fagin are also available online.

I will make a small number of articles and other handouts available to you via my web site (dtext.org). Please print them and/or download them onto your devices so they are available to you in classes and conferences. All of our texts will be available on reserve in the Humanities and Social Sciences Library (HSSE).

In our detailed schedule, find useful information about the ways readings will be used in class, so you'll know when you need to carefully read and retain information, or just become familiar with it for later reference.

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 received 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 Don Unger, Katie Yankura, Jon Wallin, Linda Haynes, Jenny Bay, and the rest of the ICaP staff for sharing their syllabi with me, offering other help, 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 too. I'm eager for you to succeed in this class and learn more about the difficult but rewarding craft of writing. Some good 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 if it can't wait.

2. **Use the detailed schedule.** My web site will soon include 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. 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. If this happens more than once, I will suggest you find other ways to take notes, etc.

5. **Participate.** Make comments. Ask questions when you have them. Work steadily and carefully in the computer lab. Share your experiences, good and bad. Doing so helps me help you and everyone else— and 20% of your grade depends on it. Oversleep? Forget where we are meeting? Come to class anyway; just sneak in as quietly as you can. Better to be late than absent.

6. **Be nice and be honest.** Whether in class, working in small groups, visiting the writing lab, or working in the community, be nice. But be honest too—if you don't understand, or don't like something, say so (nicely). That's the best way we can help each other on the long term.

7. **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.

8. **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.

9. **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.

10. **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

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 before September 5 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 (http://www.purdue.edu/drc); 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 (as per Purdue policy), 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. We will discuss emergency procedures several times in the first weeks of classes.

6. **Ethical and professional conduct is required.** I expect academic honesty, collegiality in class, and professionalism when working with others—especially in community engagement work. Purdue's non-discrimination policies (http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.html) apply to all classes and course activities. I work hard to ensure my classrooms are spaces where everyone is treated with respect, grace, and common decency, and I welcome your feedback any time—see the next item.

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 if you feel better speaking with someone else about a course-related issue.

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. In-class work cannot be made up; we'll have enough it that occasionally missing it won't hurt your grade. For major assignments, if you need extra time to meet a deadline, please ask. I'm usually happy to give you more time—*if* you ask in advance and explain how extra time will be mutually beneficial.

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.

Selected Purdue policies which apply to this course

Please read *Composing Yourself,* especially chapter 7, to learn more about the most important policies which shape all ICaP classes.

Academic Integrity: Purdue offers a detailed "Academic Integrity: A Guide for Students" at http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academicintegritybrochure.php

Attendance: The Dean of Students has established a "Class Attendance and Absence Reporting Policy"; find it at http://www.purdue.edu/odos/services/classabsence.php. See also the bereavement policy at http://www.purdue.edu/odos/services/griefabsencepolicyforstudents.php.

Emergencies: As per Purdue policy, "In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Relevant changes to this course will be posted onto the course website or can be obtained by contacting the instructors or TAs via email or phone. You are expected to read your @purdue.edu email on a frequent basis. For more information about Emergency Preparedness, see http://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency_preparedness/."

Purdue University's Student Conduct Code applies to all work related to our course (in classrooms, completing course work, etc.): http://www.purdue.edu/studentregulations/student_conduct/index.html

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.

<u>Grading point system</u>

Assignment	Points
Lit, comm, tech self study	200
Community engagement project	350
Remediation (web or talk)	250
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.

Wk	Dates	Readings	Activities
1	08/26, 08/28	Deans 1–15; *Composing* 1-21; syllabus	Introductions
2	09/02, 09/04	Deans; rhetorical situation	
3	09/09, 09/11	Deans; genre	P1 Self-study catalog due 9/12
4	09/16, 09/18	Deans; Fagin	
5	09/23, 09/25	Revision and rewriting	P1 Literacy narrative due 9/26 Participation evaluation #1 due 09/26
6	09/30, 10/02	Deans	
7	10/07, 10/09	Fagin; Kain & Wardle	P2 Proposal due 10/07
8	10/16	Deans; Fagin	No class Tue (Fall break)
9	10/21, 10/23	Deans; Fagin	P2 Research protocol due 10/24
10	10/28, 10/30	Fagin	
11	11/04, 11/06	Fagin	Fagin talk Thu 7:30pm Fowler Hall
12	11/11, 11/13	Style	P2 Report due 11/14
13	11/18, 11/20	Visual rhetoric	
14	11/25	Web	No class Thu (Thanksgiving break)
15	12/02, 12/04	Web	P3 Framework due 12/02 Participation evaluation #2 due 12/05
16	12/09, 12/11	None	
EX	12/16	None	P3 final due 12/16