**ENC 1102-79**

Instructor: Arlynda Lee Boyer

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Time: M W F, 12:20 -1:10

Location: HCB 314

Office: Dodd Bldg. basement

Hours: 1:30 – 3:30 Monday

**FIRST YEAR WRITING**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

First-Year Composition courses at FSU teach writing as a recursive and frequently collabora­tive process of invention, drafting, and revising. Writing is both personal and social, and students should learn how to write for a variety of pur-poses and audiences. Since writing is a process of making meaning as well as communicating, FYC teachers respond to the content of students' writing as well as to surface errors. Students should expect frequent written and oral response on the content of their writing from both teacher and peers. Classes rely heavily on a workshop format. Instruction emphasizes the connection between writing, reading, and critical thinking; students should give thoughtful, reasoned responses to the readings. Both reading and writing are the subjects of class discussions and workshops, and students are expected to be active participants of the classroom community. Learning from each other will be a large part of the classroom experience.   
  
If you would like further information regarding the First-Year Composition Program, feel free to contact the program director, Dr. Deborah Coxwell-Teague ([**dteague@fsu.edu**](http://english3.fsu.edu/writing/dteague@fsu.edu)).

**COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

This course aims to help you improve your writing skills in all areas: discovering what you have to say, organizing your thoughts for a variety of audiences, and improving fluency and rhetorical sophistication. You will write and revise three papers, respond to readings, devise your own purposes and structures for those papers, work directly with the audience of your peers to practice critical reading and response, and learn many new writing techniques.

**REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS**

* *The Curious Researcher: A Guide to Writing Research Papers*, FSU Edition, by Bruce Ballenger, 2009
* *Beyond Words: Cultural Texts for Reading and Writing*, FSU Edition, by Ruszkiewicz, Anderson, & Friend, 2009
* *The McGraw-Hill Handbook,* FSU Edition, by Maimon, Peritz, & Yancey, 2010

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

**All of the formal written assignments below must be turned in to pass the course.** Attendance is also a requirement. (More than six absences in a MWF class will make failure likely.)

* Three papers, edited and polished
* Drafts and revisions of each of the three formal papers
* Journals (to be posted on Blackboard)
* Two individual conferences
* Thoughtful, active, and responsible participation and citizenship, including discussion, preparation for class, in-class informal writing, and Blackboard

**EVALUATION**

Paper 1 20%  
Paper 2 30%  
Paper 3 20%   
Blog 15%  
Journal/Participation 15%

**EVALUATION (CONT.)**

Participation in class discussion, conferences, workshops, and preparedness for class all factor into your grade. Final papers will be graded on audience awareness, organization, coherence, supporting evidence, thorough analysis, and editing. All other written and oral work will be graded on meaning or content and appropriate-ness to the assignment. See the grading rubric below for a further explanation of grades.

**DRAFTS, REVISIONS, & FINAL PAPERS**

You'll always need to make three copies of your drafts and revisions (not final papers) before you come to class on days we workshop. I require that all drafts and revisions be typed (MLA format, 1-inch margins). You have access to a number of computer labs around campus if you need one. Final papers do not need covers or title pages. All your written work must have your name, my name, the class name and section, and the date at the top of the first page: You may be responsible for some photocopying expense for this class in order to share your writing with your peers, but you can also take advantage of any of the campus computer labs to print additional copies of your papers (for free). You will generally be choosing your own topics and structures for the drafts and papers in this class (after the first paper). You will be required to share your work with your classmates – take care in what you choose to write about. Your writing for this class is nearly always public writing in the sense that others will be reading, hearing, and commenting on it.

**ATTENDANCE**

You’re allowed a total of **6** absences. I highly recommend saving them for when you get sick or for family emergencies. **Not showing up for a conference counts as an absence.** If you miss more than 6 classes there is a serious possibility you will fail the course. **If you fail to bring in your paper for a workshop day, you will be counted as absent (1 absence) but are required to stay and workshop the rest of your group’s papers.**

**CIVILITY POLICY**

* Either turn your phones off or put them on silent. **Absolutely NO texting!**
* No laptops in class – pen and paper only, please (except for ADA needs)
* Expect class to last the whole period.
* Carrying on conversations with your classmates while others are talking is rude and I will call you out on this.
* I reserve the right to ask you to leave if I feel you are being offensive or rude.
* Show respect for your classmates. You know the drill.
* “In order to get respect, one must give respect; this starts with self-respect” - Tyrone Wilkerson

**PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is grounds for suspension from the university as well as for failure in this course. It will not be tolerated. Any instance of plagiarism must be reported to the Director of First-Year Writing and the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Plagiarism is a counterproductive, non-writing behavior that is unacceptable in a course intended to aid the growth of individual writers. Plagiarism is included among the violations defined in the Academic Honor Code, section b), paragraph 2, as follows: "Regarding academic assignments, violations of the Academic Honor Code shall include representing another's work or any part thereof, be it published or unpub-lished, as one's own." A plagiarism education assignment that further explains this issue will be administered in all first-year writing courses during the second week of class. Please note: Self-plagiarism is also plagiarism, and the penalties (failure and suspension) are exactly the same. You cannot turn in one of your own papers from another class for credit in this one. Each student will be responsible for completing the assignment and asking questions regarding any parts they do not fully understand.

**GORDON RULE**

In order to fulfill FSU’s Gordon Rule “W” Designation (writing) credit, the student must earn a “C-” or better in the course, and in order to receive a “C-” or better in the course, the student must earn at least a “C-” on the required writing assignments for the course. If the student does not earn a “C-” or better on the required writing assignments for the course, the student will not earn an overall grade of “C-” or better in the course, no matter how well the student performs in the remaining portion of the course.

The University stipulates that students must write 7000 words in ENC 1101 & 1102 (around 3500 per class).

**ADA**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should in the FIRST WEEK OF CLASS 1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) and 2) bring a letter to the instructor from SDRC indicating the need for academic accommodations. This and all other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

**FIRST-YEAR COMPOSITION COURSE DROP POLICY**

This course is NOT eligible to be dropped in accordance with the “Drop Policy” adopted by the Faculty Senate in Spring 2004. The Undergraduate Studies Dean will not consider drop requests for a First-Year Composition course unless there are extraordi­nary and extenuating circumstances utterly beyond the student's control (e.g.: death of a parent or sibling, illness requiring hospitalization, etc.). The Faculty Senate specifically eliminated First-Year Composition courses from the University Drop Policy because of the overriding require-ment that First-Year Composition be completed during students' initial enrollment at FSU.

**READING/WRITING CENTER**

The Reading/Writing Center, located in Williams 222-C, is devoted to individualized instruction in reading and writing. Part of the English Department, the RWC serves Florida State University students at all levels and from all majors. Its clients include a cross-section of the campus: first-year students writing for composition class, upper level students writing term papers, seniors composing letters of applications for jobs and graduate schools, graduate students working on theses and dissertations, multilingual students mastering English, and a variety of others. The RWC serves mostly walk-in tutoring appointments, however it also offers three different courses for credit that specifically target reading, undergrad-uate writing, and graduate-level writing.

The tutors in the RWC, all graduate students in English with training and experience in teaching composition, use a process-centered approach to help students at any stage of writing: from generating ideas, to drafting, organizing and revising. While the RWC does not provide editing or proofreading services, its tutors can help writers build their own editing and proofreading skills. Our approach to tutoring is to provide guidance to help students grow as writers, readers and critical thinkers by developing strategies to help you write in a variety of situations.

During the fall and spring semesters, the RWC is open Monday through Thursday from 10 - 6 and Friday from 10-2. Hours of operation vary in summer. Visit the RWC web site website or call 644-6495 for more information.

A satellite RWC location at Strozier Library provides tutoring to students where they congregate most often, and where writing and research can co-develop. This location includes more evening hours to align with student needs. Late-night tutoring is also offered at this location during peak times in the semester when students are up late writing mid-term or final papers.

The Strozier location serves only walk-in appointments on a first-come, first-served basis, but students can sign up in advance the same day they want an appointment at the tutoring area. Hours vary by semester, but are updated on both the RWC web site and the Strozier Library web site at the start of each semester. The Center is a great asset; please take advantage of it.

**DIGITAL STUDIO**

The Digital Studio provides support to students working individually or in groups on a variety of digital projects, such as designing a web site, developing an electronic portfolio for a class, creating a blog, selecting images for a visual essay, adding voiceover to a presentation, or writing a script for a podcast. Tutors who staff the Digital Studio can help students brainstorm essay ideas, provide feedback on the content and design of a digital project, or facilitate collabora­tion for group projects and presentations.

Students can use the Digital Studio to work on their own to complete class assignments or to improve overall capabilities in digital commun-ication without a tutoring appointment if a work station is available. However, tutor availability and workspace are limited so appointments are recommended.

To make an appointment e-mail us at fsudigitalstudio@gmail.com or visit the Digital Studio in Williams 222-B. Hours vary by semester and are updated at the website.

**UNDERSTANDING YOUR GRADE**

***The ‘A’ Student’s writing...***

* Demonstrates creative thinking rather than reliance on a predictable, formulaic style – goes beyond the scope of his/her assignments and has made it his/her own in some way.
* Shows insight – it appears the writer has discovered something through the act of writing.
* Offers analysis – has a clear, controlling idea that is sophisticated in both statement and insight.
* Consistently develops the controlling idea.
* Entices the reader with titles and introductions that make the reader want to keep reading.
* Includes well-chosen examples without stacking them.
* Makes connections between ideas.
* Is expertly organized.
* Uses meticulously crafted sentences.
* Has an absence of surplus words and filler.
* Has a strong writing voice and tone.
* Has very few errors in mechanics and usage.

***The ‘B’ Student’s writing...***

* Shows some creativity and independent thought.
* Writes with a few inconsistent facts or concepts.
* Has a clear, controlling idea.
* Is titled thoughtfully and contains a strong introduction.
* Includes major points with appropriate supporting detail.
* Shows effort to link ideas rather than to stack them.
* Contains well-arranged paragraphs.
* Might have grammatical and/or mechanical problems.
* Might exhibit problematic word choice or syntax errors.
* Lacks the strength and confidence to say scream "Read me!"
* Shows some growth between first and final drafts

***The ‘C’ Student’s writing...***

* Fulfills the assignment with little creative and original thought.
* Displays some factual, interpretive, or conceptual inconsistencies.
* Occasionally moves off topic.
* Contains a general main idea, but not an insightful one.
* Is titled appropriately, but it may be lackluster.
* May introduce the essay using a formula.
* May cinch the last page with a summary or re-cap.
* Offers shallow analysis.
* Leaves some ideas undeveloped or unsupported.
* Contains weakly unified paragraphs.
* Contains clumsy sentences and imprecise words.
* Has an awkward or stiff paragraph arrangement.
* Uses a bland tone and weak voice.
* Displays major grammatical errors.
* Shows little to no change from the first to final draft

***The ‘D’ Student’s writing...***

* Does not respond directly to the demands of the assignment.
* Has significantly confusing or inconsistent concepts or interpretations.
* Has a vague controlling idea or is missing it entirely.
* Frequently veers off topic or loses focus.
* Is simplistic and superficial, summarizes rather than letting the reader inside the subject.
* Is made up of language marred by clichés, colloquialisms, repeated and inexact word choices.
* Contains consistent immobilizing errors that interfere with readability.
* Consists of illogically arranged ideas.
* Shows a disappointing disregard to previous corrections.

***The ‘F’ Student’s writing...***

* Is plagiarized.
* Is ridiculously undeveloped.
* Is so incoherent that I can’t understand what it is saying.
* Has no focus or topic.
* Has not been revised.
* Is very rare.

**A–** The introduction explodes like a bomb. An A paper may complicate the text, experience, or issue at hand and may try to resolve the resulting complication. The paper is relatively free of mechanical errors, which are slight. There is excellent detail, sophisticated and in-depth analysis, and a tight focus. Outside sources if not required may have been used (where applicable) but not overused. The paper flows. The conclusion does a good job of tying up the paper and perhaps pointing in a new direction but does not merely restate or bring up new issues. The writer enlightens me about something or offers me a perspective I had not thought about before reading the paper. I am impressed.   
  
**B–** The assignment is fulfilled. Good detail, good analysis, relevant examples. The paper is fairly focused and seems strong. There are some errors, but they are relatively minor things such as misuse of possessives. The paper has a sense of structure, but does not demonstrate superior organization. There is a good level of detail but there could be more. Analysis is evident but not thorough enough. The paper offers some insights but leaves a reader wanting a bit more.   
  
**C–** The paper minimally fulfills the assignment. There is little detail, little analysis, and few to no examples. Significant portions of the paper seem to be filler, but the filler is related to the paper; it may be, for example, information that is common knowledge. The transitional sentences are weak or nonexistent. There is a conclusion, but it does little more than restate the issue or rework the introduction. The paper seems too broad and brings in meaningless examples. A high C paper may have fair to good use of examples but might not expound upon the significance of those examples.   
  
**D–** This paper does not adequately fulfill the assignment. It is lacking any detail and offers no analysis. The paper is too short (25% or more of the essay is missing), and there are serious errors. The reflection and/or analysis is superficial at best. There is no coherence and no insights offered to the reader.   
  
**F–** There is no paper. The paper is half of the required length. Mechanical errors interfere to such a degree that I cannot tell what the writer is saying. The paper is plagiarized.

**LATE PAPER POLICY**

I do accept late papers. **However**, papers will lose one full letter grade for every day they are late. This does not mean every class meeting day – since you can e-mail me a paper any time, including late nights and weekends, it means *every* day. If you write an A paper, but turn it in a day late, it can earn no higher than a B. Three days late, the same paper is a D. Mind you, that’s if you start with the best possible paper. Start out with a C paper, and by day two it’s an F. If you need an extension, talk to me at least 24 hours *before* the due date – do not just show up to class with no paper and ask for an extension, because I won’t grant it.

**MY CONTRACT WITH YOU**

I understand that you may be worried about passing this class, since it is a university requirement, and that you may be worried about the strength of your writing (although I promise you, you will come to realize that you are not a bad writer after all, and that whatever problems you may have can be fixed). To relieve your worry, I am prepared to make a contract with you: if you put in a good-faith effort and meet all the requirements of the class, you will walk

away with no less than a C. That means that all your papers will be the required length, that you will do all the research they require, and that they will be turned in on time. It means you will not miss class unless there is an unavoidable emergency. It means that you will be prepared for class (having done the readings) and that you will participate in workshops and discussions and show up for conferences. Do all of this, and I guarantee that you will pass, even if you’re the worst writer on the planet (I promise, you aren’t). But, blow off any of this, and the deal is gone – I respect your efforts and your fears, but I want you to respect the work that I’ve put into this class and my requirements as well. I will fail students who blow off the class, but if you show me real, honest effort, I will reward that.

The Gordon Rule still applies, meaning that you must earn a C- or greater on all written assign-ments. But if you read over the explanation of grades here, you will realize that a good-faith effort on length, research, analysis, and mech-anics will get you most of the way there.

I also realize that you may have been a straight-A student with little to no effort until now. That will change – the worst mistake you can make is to underestimate what you need to do here.

**COURSE OUTCOMES**

*Rhetorical Knowledge*  
By the end of FYC, students should

* Focus on a purpose
* Respond to the needs of different audiences
* Respond appropriately to different kinds of rhetorical situations
* Use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation
* Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality
* Understand how genres shape reading and writing
* Write in several genres

*Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing*  
By the end of FYC, students should

* Use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating
* Understand a writing assignment as a series of tasks, incl. finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources
* Integrate their ideas with those of others
* Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power

*Processes*  
By the end of FYC, students should

* Know that it takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text
* Develop flexible strategies for generat-ing, revising, editing, and proof-reading
* Understand writing as an open process that permits writers to use later invent-tion and re-thinking to revise their work
* Understand the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
* Learn to critique their own and others’ works
* Learn to balance the advantages of relying on others with the responsibility of doing their part
* Use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences

*Knowledge of Conventions*  
By the end of FYC, students should

* Learn common formats for different kinds of texts
* Develop knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics
* Practice appropriate means of documenting their work
* Control such surface features as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

*Composing in Electronic Environments*  
By the end of FYC, students should:

* Use electronic environments for drafting, reviewing, revising, editing, and sharing texts
* Locate, evaluate, organize, and use research material collected from electronic sources, including scholarly library databases; other official databases (e.g., federal government databases); and informal electronic networks and internet sources
* Understand and exploit the differences in the rhetorical strategies and in the affordances available for both print and electronic composing processes and texts.

Major Papers

The theme of this course is “American Culture – The Popular, The Personal, The Political.” Its aim is to help improve your fluency and rhetorical sophistication, to develop the skills to write for a variety of audiences, and to practice critical reading, writing, and response techniques. More specifically, in this course we want to focus on media and context – I want you to think critically about your own cultural context, the way the media shapes your culture, and what happens when cultural contexts compete.

**Paper 1: The Film/Television Paper**, 5-7 pages

This paper asks you to examine a facet of culture as it is portrayed on an American television show or within an American film. This paper is really an exercise in semiotic reasoning. In other words, as you work with your material, you should keep asking (and answering!) two fundamental questions: *why* and *what does this mean*?

You may choose **no more than** one show/film to study in-depth or two shows/films to compare/contrast. There are almost endless ways this paper can be approached, but the real goal here is analysis. Whether you look at gender, race, class, stereotypes, some combination of these, or something all your own, your task is to produce an argument in terms of what the show says about some facet of our culture. One of the challenges will be to avoid simply summarizing the material you’ve viewed, so be sure to strike a balance between recapping what happened on the show and what that means in a larger sense.

For example, if you were to watch an episode of *Survivor* and notice that it seems to constantly portray women as whiny and backstabbing, your goal would be to (1) show evidence of this by citing specific examples from the show and (2) to ask the questions why and what does that mean in a broader sense, i.e. what is the message being sent? You might then branch out to discuss how, conversely, the men are portrayed. Are there any women who defy the stereotypes? If so, how do they do this? How are they received by the other women on the show? By the men? Does this world (the world of *Survivor*) seem to privilege one gender over the other?

Possible avenues this paper could explore:

* Speaking of *Survivor*, you might compare two reality shows that are contests. Perhaps you could compare/contrast and analyze *Project Runway* versus *Top Chef*. What elements are present in both shows and what effect do they have? Does the show seemed scripted even though the people are supposedly every-day Joes? What do you notice about the contestants? What about the editing?
* You might look at an American director (like Tarantino) and analyze his/her depiction of gender, race, class in one or two of his/her films.
* You might look at an episode of MTV’s *Jersey Shore* and take on an analysis of the stereotypes the show works with.
* What about the shows that have contestants humiliate themselves in some way? What does that say about American values?
* Perhaps you could look at one of the many shows that has women or men vying for the prize of one person’s “love.” How are the contestants portrayed? What kinds of values are being promoted?
* You could discuss the lack of female directors in Hollywood, or the lack of people of color in Hollywood, and analyze a couple of Oscar nominated American films that defy those standards.

Again, there are many approaches that you could take here, but always keep in mind that your goal is analysis, not summary.

**Paper 2 – Reflecting and Shaping American Cultures** 7-10 pages

This paper moves beyond personally exploring one’s own culture and asks you to critically analyze various cultures existing within America. You will select a particular facet of American culture—one that reveals something significant about us. Then you will compose a feature article or exposé in order to reveal how your particular topic defines our overall culture and how the rhetoric and images surrounding this topic impact one’s understanding of it. We want to examine what we take for granted in our culture, interrogate it, and bring our discoveries to light in this paper. In order to investigate a particular part of our culture, you will become journalists, freelancers, and authors, writing for the news publication, magazine, or insider program of your choice.

When approaching this topic, you need to look past the simple news story and closely analyze what this specific part of our culture means both to us and the American culture. Like the first paper, do not summarize but analyze. Find something that engages or troubles you within the American culture.

For example:

* Where do you get your news about the world? CNN? Fox? *The Daily Show*? *The Colbert Report*? Headlines you don’t bother to click on? Facebook posts from friends? How do you keep up with what’s happening in the world, or do you? Examine, closely and thoughtfully, what these methods of news-gathering say about you and how they might alter your understanding of events.
* Who knows what you’re doing on the web? Facebook does, and so does Google. They sell that information about you to companies. On the other hand, cookies and tracking have made web surfing more convenient than ever, and because they know what you like, companies can tell you about things you would never have found on your own, things that you really do value. Research privacy issues and take a stand on them.
* You could take a closer look at some of America’s obsessions such as a particular type of clothing, music, TV show, etc. What does the fact that we can’t get enough of *Dancing with the Stars* say about us?
* You could also explore America’s shifting understanding of gender, politics, race, sexuality, and other concepts.
  + You could analyze the “modern” American concept of beauty (where does it come from or how has beauty shaped our culture and vice versa?).
  + A survey of soldiers, many of whom are your age or only a few years older, just discovered that for the most part they couldn’t care less about gays serving alongside them. This came as rather a shock to top military brass, who argued against this position for years and who are almost always in their 50s or 60s. What didn’t they understand about their own soldiers, and what does it mean for the changing position of gays and lesbians in society?
  + African-American culture always speaks both to itself and to the larger world, while white culture largely is concerned with speaking only to itself. Given that, explore how African-American music has changed. What messages does it send? Who is receiving those messages, and what are they doing with them?
  + Many pundits talk about the “culture wars.” Are we at war with ourselves? More importantly, do we only listen to the side we already agree with? Explore.

After finding an interesting topic to analyze, you need to consider who you want to address—**who your audience** **is**—as you compose your feature article or exposé. Where might such an article or exposé be published? A feature article informs the reader and engages them in an interesting way, while an exposé exposes some stories or information, uncovering untold truths. Make the topic interesting for the audience; make us want to read it. You need to not only catch the reader’s attention but also hold that attention through your choice of language and your tone. Your language and rhetoric become tools for presenting your critical stance of this part of American culture. Think about how writer’s rhetoric and your own rhetoric conveys a topic; how do images alter one’s perception of culture and how can you also use images to deliver your message?

There is a **minimum of 5 sources**, which you will analyze and comment on, required to support your **7–10 page article**, drawing from a **variety of source materials:** library books, journals, magazines, newsprint, credible web publications, interviews, etc. Our text, *The Curious Researcher*, will guide us through the steps to researching for your feature article/ exposé and to documenting your sources using MLA format. You are also welcome to use images, but there will be a maximum of 5 images–you must cite them as you would your other sources (in MLA format) and the space they take up does not count toward your seven-page minimum (if you have a half-page of pictures, then you need a minimum of 7 ½ pages total).

**Paper Three – Personal Politics: Reach Out and Understand Someone** 5-7 pages

I take part in an online forum where everyone is very smart, but the political discussions could sometimes get pretty heated. What most frustrated me was that people were just throwing back and forth talking points from the news they consumed and citing sources no one else would accept as legitimate. One day, I started a thread called “How I Would Run the World.” The rules were that you had to imagine yourself as president and say exactly what you would do in terms of the budget, social policy, and international relations. The only people allowed to make comments about your philosophy were those who were also willing to post their own.

The results were pretty astounding. We were all surprised at how *close* in philosophy we really were (actually, I kind of suspected it, because that was exactly why I’d started the thread). In the end, we all wanted a better world, and we weren’t really that far apart on how to get there – not nearly as far apart as all the other threads on that forum, with their drive-by political insults, would have led any of us to believe. It was an eye-opening experience, and now it’s one I want you to have.

Find a person with whom you disagree politically. You can pair up within this class, or you can talk to a suitemate, a classmate from another class, a Greek brother or sister – anyone. The goal is to interview them and to incorporate that material into a paper in which you discuss what goes into shaping a person’s political views, what you and your interviewee regard as a better world, and how you would each go about getting there. Along with outlining your own philosophy and that of your interviewee, talk about how you each feel your views were formed. Consider points on which you agreed – were you surprised by the agreement? – and on which you disagreed – are there areas on which either of you felt you could compromise, or did you disagree on fundamental areas? Start from the basis of an interview – if you become uncomfortable, you can simply make notes on your interview and share your own thoughts in the paper rather than with them, but if you feel comfortable, let this be an experiment in building a bridge.

NO FIGHTING! No matter how impassioned you get, remember that the other person is helping you complete an assignment – they are doing you a favor. And remember that you both have the right to simple respect as a human being – no one is less of a person because of anything they believe. If you honestly feel that doing this paper with someone would permanently damage your ability to relate to them, pick a more neutral person – ask a completely random student if you could talk to them over lunch. If you don’t care about politics or don’t know how you feel, go to meetings of the College Democrats and College Republicans, talk to a few people there, and report back, checking on their sources and analyzing them from your own point of view. What values were evident within each group? What assumptions did they make about their opponents? What messages did their meeting send about them?

The writer should keep in mind their audience of peers when writing this paper. This assignment should make use of at least 3 outside sources. One will be your interview – cite it in MLA format. The other two (or more) should be fact-checking research you did into either your position or your interviewee’s. What counts as impartial fact-checking? What doesn’t? How do you tell the difference between the two? In the paper, you **must** discuss how you know when a research source is impartial.

**Final Project: The Cultural, Blogging Critic** approx 2-4 pages

In this assignment, you will be creating a blog and critiquing an aspect of American culture.

The goal is for you to identify yourself as a cultural critic, which you should feel comfortable doing at this point in the semester. This project requires you to choose a specific angle from which to attack/analyze/ comment on the world. You might choose to organize your work thematically and decide that, say, advertising is going to be your focal point and proceed from there, looking at anything from a specific ad campaign to a quick rant on the nature of advertising as a whole. You might take the position of music critic, a film critic, a food critic, or a celebrity gossip critic (ie Perez Hilton). Perhaps you are interested in soccer, Hip Hop, gardening, college life, ballet dancing, gourmet food, etc… Or maybe you want to take on a persona for your blog—someone that sounds nothing like the “real” you but who has a lot to say on a variety of topics. In line with the other assignments, I'm going to encourage you to review a series of films, TV shows, or another form of American media as you've hopefully become more comfortable with this topic throughout the semester. Overall, the topic(s) that you choose and the way you organize and approach your work will be entirely up to you.

A blogger can look at anything. What is key is that the tone is correct; I am asking you to be a critic here, which means you must generate something interesting to read for your audience—something at least partially analytical/critical. Voice is of the utmost importance. Just claiming that what unifies your work is that it sounds like you is not enough. How does it sound like you? What features of the writing make your voice unique? Or if you take on a persona, how does it sound like that other person?

You will compose anywhere from 6-12 blog entries (ultimately, three-four typed pages). And as we have spent the semester analyzing different types of texts, this is the project that really synthesizes your ability to do this. There must be a visual component to each blog entry. You will see from the blogs that we look at that there are many ways to incorporate visuals (YouTube clips, music videos, still pictures, etc…). Getting the visuals and the text to really support and work off one another will be one of the unique challenges to this genre of writing.

Finally, have fun with these. You have a lot of freedom, so as long as you aren’t doing anything outright offensive (which would receive no credit), you can really get away with a number of different things. Just make sure there is something that unifies your work (either a theme, voice, content...) AND a visual component to each one.

***For students, after some time has been spent on the projects:***

For the three final days of the semester, you will be giving presentations on the blogs you’ve been working on. It is up to you how you present your work, but the following should be taken into consideration and addressed during your presentations, as it is the criteria by which you will be judged:

* Cohesiveness. What unifies your work? Do you have a theme that connects all of the pieces? If not theme, what is it that makes the blog identifiable as having been created by you?
* Voice. What kind of voice did you try to work with? Is it your “authentic” voice, or did you try something else? Why? If it’s your voice,
* Audience. Of course, the audience is me and the rest of the class, but who else could you imagine reading your blog? Who would enjoy it and why? Who wouldn’t touch it with an eight-foot pole? How did you address audience in the writing? Did you think about it as you wrote?
* Visual component. Do you think your visuals are effective? What makes them work? Are any of them your own photos? If not, where did they all come from?
* Could you see yourself ever keeping a public blog? Would you consider continuing this one?
* I recommend making some notes for your presentation, but try to refrain from just reading the paper in your hand – explain your thought process behind your blog, what you enjoyed about the project, your past experience with blogs, etc.

Classroom Policies Agreement

Student Name

Instructor Name

Course and Section

Semester and Year

I have read and understood the syllabus and course policy sheet for this course, including the following policies and requirements:

* Required Texts
* Course Requirements
* Major Papers
* Evaluation and Grading
* Attendance Policy
* Civility Policy
* Late Paper Policy

In signing this form, I acknowledge that my success in ENC-1102 relies on my abiding by these policies. Furthermore, I attest that I am the author of all writing that I submit and post, online and offline.

Student Signature Date