

Morgan Ormond  
First Year Writing Syllabus  
Dr. Roundtree  
12/6/2023

## ENGL 102 COURSE SYLLABUS

### Contact

Instructor: Morgan Ormond  
Preferred Pronouns: they/them  
Email: mormond1@students.towson.edu  
M/W: 1 pm-3 pm  
Class Location: LA 4316

#### **Office Hours:** T/TH: 4 pm-5 pm

Office Hours are designated times set aside each week for you to visit or contact me outside of the scheduled class time. Reasons for contacting or visiting me could include:

- **Individual Assistance**  
You can seek my help with course material, discuss what you find challenging, or you might want to visit me simply to explore further into topics covered in class.
- **Discussing Grades or Feedback**  
We can review and discuss your grades and performance in general. If you feel uncertain about class material, the assignments, or your performance, we can discuss options and opportunities for improvement.
- **Guidance on Assignments**  
You can come to me for advice on upcoming projects, papers, presentations, homework, and more.
- **Academic Counseling**  
I can offer guidance on academic decisions, such as research opportunities and career advice related to the field.

### Course Description

ENGL 102 focuses on the development of strategies for writing expository prose based on analytical reading. The course features intellectually challenging writing and reading activities and student-teacher interaction emphasizing collaborative and active learning. Not open to those who have successfully completed ENGL 190. ENGL 102 requires a grade of C or higher to fulfill the Core English Composition requirement.

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of ENGL 102, students should be able to:

- **Write** academic essays that effectively and appropriately respond to specific rhetorical situations.
- **Improve** literacy skills, including the ability to read and analyze a variety of texts.
- **Foster** critical thinking skills through analyzing texts, questioning rhetoric, and constructing well-reasoned arguments
- **Organize** an essay around a sound central idea supported by relevant material.

- **Organize** supporting material with a discernable and logical plan.
- **Present** ideas in complex and effective sentences relatively free from mechanical errors.
- **Support and share** ideas and opinions with confidence.

## Course Overview

This course is designed to enhance your writing skills, with a particular focus on the art of rhetoric and the strategic use of hedging language. For those new to these concepts, rhetoric involves the art of effective communication, while hedging language consists of words and phrases that soften or qualify statements, crucial for persuasive and argumentative writing. This course is tailored to first-year college students, aiming to develop your ability to communicate effectively and persuasively in writing.

Throughout this course, you will engage in an exploration of rhetoric, learning to identify and analyze hedging language in various texts. Understanding this nuanced form of expression is key to influencing and persuading different audiences. A significant part of the course is dedicated to adapting your language to meet the specific needs and expectations of these audiences. This course also focuses on the practical application of these skills. You will be writing various persuasive and argumentative assignments, from essays to speeches.

This course is not just about learning to write effectively; it's about mastering the art of communication to suit varied contexts and audiences.

## Course Objectives

This course aims to help students:

- **Understand** when to use (and not to use) hedging language in different rhetorical situations
- **Analyze** the use of hedging language in different rhetorical and persuasive contexts
- **Develop** an understanding of both rhetoric and hedging language
- **Evaluate** how language choices can be tailored to suit the specific needs and expectations of target audiences.
- **Write** persuasive and argumentative assignments.

## Course Texts

All course texts and additional reading materials will be available online through Blackboard. No purchases of any texts are necessary. However, you are required to have internet access to access these materials. Public libraries—such as Baltimore County Public Library, Albert S. Cook Library, and Enoch Pratt Library—offer free internet use and is open Monday through Saturday from 9 am to 8 am, and on Sunday from 1 pm to 5 pm. The Towson University campus also has open wifi available. Both the public library and Towson University offer printing and other helpful services.

It is important that you have the course texts available to you during class time. You can have them in print form or digitally on a laptop, tablet, or other electronic device.

## **Other Materials**

- Digital or hard-copy storage, such as flash drives, Google Drive, or Dropbox for digital work, or a binder or folder for printed work.
- Access to Microsoft Word, Google Docs, or another kind of word processor for your writing assignments.
- A notebook and pen, or laptop or other electronic devices for taking notes in class.

## **Recommended Resources**

Writing Guides:

- "The Elements of Style" by Strunk and White: A classic resource for understanding the essentials of clear and concise writing.
- "On Writing Well" by William Zinsser: A guide that provides principles of clear and effective writing, applicable to essays and academic papers.

Research and Access to Online Databases for Research:

- "The Craft of Research", Fourth Edition (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing) by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams: Guides students through the process of conducting and writing research.
- Databases such as JSTOR, EBSCOhost, and Google Scholar will be vital for accessing scholarly articles and research papers.

## **Assignments**

The following assignments are designed to align with the course objectives, outcomes, and overall ethos of the ENGL102 course. These tasks will progressively develop your skills over the academic year. These assignments are structured to build upon each other and progress your understanding and skills. They aim to provide a comprehensive learning experience, equipping you with the tools needed for effective writing and critical thinking in various contexts.

### **Homework**

Homework assignments are designed to reinforce the concepts discussed in class, develop your writing and analytical skills, and prepare you for larger projects and your presentation.

### **Audience Analysis Report**

Objective: Cultivate audience awareness

Word Count: 500 - 750 words

Description: Choose a specific target audience and write a report analyzing their characteristics, needs, and expectations. Discuss how language and arguments would need to be tailored when writing for this audience.

### **Rhetorical Analysis Essay**

Objective: Develop an understanding of rhetoric and hedging language

Word Count: 750 - 1,000 words

Description: Analyze a selected piece of persuasive writing (eg. an op-ed, advertisement, or speech), focusing on the use of hedging language and rhetorical strategies. Identify instances of hedging language and discuss their effectiveness in the context.

### **Argumentative Essay**

Objective: Foster critical thinking and effective communication in writing

Word Count: 1,000 - 1,500 words

Description: Write an argumentative essay on a given topic, ensuring clarity, coherence, and persuasive language use. This essay should demonstrate your ability to construct a well-reasoned argument supported by evidence.

### **Group Presentation**

Objective: To analyze and present on the use of rhetoric and hedging language in a contemporary context, fostering collaborative skills, critical thinking, and application of rhetorical principles.

Length of Presentation: 15-20 minutes

Description: In groups, select a current topic, event, or trend that has significant rhetorical implications. This could be a political speech, a social media campaign, an advertising series, or a public policy debate. The group will analyze the rhetorical strategies employed, focusing on the use of hedging language, persuasive techniques, and audience engagement. Each group member should contribute to both the research and the presentation.

### **Reflective Writing Assignment**

Objective: Reflect on your growth as a writer over the course of the year so far

Word Count: 500 - 750 words

Description: Discuss specific instances where you effectively used hedging language and rhetorical strategies, and areas where you see further improvement.

### **Final Portfolio**

Objective: Demonstrate cumulative learning and skill development

Description: Compile a portfolio of your written work throughout the course, including revised versions of each major assignment. Include a revised version of your reflective

essay discussing your development as a writer and how you met the course outcomes. Include any artifacts you created in class or for homework that you think portrays a part of your writing journey throughout the semester.

## Assessment and Grading Policies

This course emphasizes active participation and thoughtful engagement with the coursework. Your grades reflect your progress in developing the intended skills and understanding of the course material. Should the overall class performance not meet the learning objectives, I reserve the right to modify the coursework or class structure.

Participation is key, and it's not about how often you speak during class, but how you contribute to the class dynamics. This includes active listening, posing insightful questions, connecting various discussion points, encouraging others, and fostering an inclusive environment. Participation also includes in-class group activities and peer reviews.

Participation: 5%

Homework exercises: 5%

Rhetorical Analysis Essay: 15%

Audience Analysis Report: 15%

Argumentative Essay: 15%

Reflective Writing Assignment 10%

Group Presentation: 15%

Final Portfolio: 20%

Highest	Lowest	Letter
100%	93%	A
92%	90%	A-
89%	87%	B+
86%	83%	B
82%	80%	B-
79%	77%	C+
76%	70%	C
69%	67%	D+

66%	60%	D
59%	0%	F

There are no C- final grades. An FX grade is assigned for lack of attendance or early withdrawal from the course. Incompletes are granted under specific circumstances where most coursework is complete, but unforeseen situations prevent final completion. In such cases, the remaining work must be submitted within 180 days after the final class.

## Course Policies

### Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

All class recordings are for internal use only. Sharing without prior permission is a breach of privacy. Plagiarism will result in a 0 for the entire course. The rest of TU's academic integrity policy can be found here: [Student Academic Integrity Policy](#)

### Course Repeat Policy

TU gives credit for a repeated course only once, with the higher grade considered for your GPA. The original lower grade remains on your record with an explanatory comment. Note that repeating courses with a D grade or higher won't increase your earned credits. Third attempts require approval with a completed petition form submitted to the Registrar's Service Centre. Withdrawals (W grades) do not count in this policy, although some departments may have their own restrictions. Courses taken at Towson cannot be replaced by transfer credits from other institutions and vice versa.

### Attendance

You are allowed two unexcused absences (the equivalent of one week of classes) without penalty. Additional unexcused absences will reduce your final grade (an A becomes an A-, an A- becomes a B+ and so on). Missed work due to absence is your responsibility as most work can be submitted to Blackboard asynchronously. Excused absences include illness, family emergencies (see [Family Bereavement Policy](#)), religious observances, official university activities, and other significant, verifiable reasons. Notify me in advance or as soon as possible for excused absences. I might request documentation. The COVID-19 pandemic may introduce further flexibility for excused absences because of extended illness(long covid), quarantine, caring for family members, childcare due to school closures or online learning, or urgent job concerns related to financial need, emergency situations, or food insecurity.

### **Late or Missing Work**

Late submissions are accepted without penalty under certain conditions listed above for excused absences (illness or injury, religious observance, official university activities, bereavement, COVID-19 pandemic situations, and other verifiable circumstances beyond your control). For late work outside these criteria, students must request an extension at least 48 hours before the deadline. Extension requests should include a brief explanation of the circumstances and a proposed new submission date. These requests are considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure fairness and manage workload effectively. Please note, extensions granted in the final week of classes are rare to avoid end-of-semester grading challenges. I encourage open communication and am here to support your success, so please feel free to discuss any concerns or uncertainties regarding this process.

### **Classroom Etiquette and Technologies**

Our classroom is a space dedicated to respectful discourse, where diverse viewpoints are shared in a manner that is considerate and constructive. Respect here means listening attentively, responding thoughtfully, and engaging in dialogue that is free from offensive or harmful language. We foster an environment where critical thinking is encouraged, and all opinions are examined with academic rigor and cultural sensitivity.

Any form of threatening or disrespectful behavior is unacceptable, which includes both in person and online behavior.

Technology is an integral part of learning and will not be restricted as I believe it is essential for today's learning process and environment. However, I require respectful use of any and all technology used in the classroom and at home for schoolwork and online classes. Treat online spaces with respect as you would in physical spaces.

### **Formatting and Submitting Papers**

Submit work in a polished, professional format. Include a header with your name, the assignment title, my name, and the due date. Submit electronically via Blackboard in Word format (.doc or .docx), with a proper file name (Assignment title, draft version, your name). Use certain fonts and formatting that have high legibility (Times New Roman 11 or 12 or something similar, with 1.5 spacing), and ensure the format aligns with the content of your work. Other format requirements will be discussed in class for specific assignments (for example, how to format a script when writing a speech or TV dialogue). Pay attention to dialogue formatting and quotation formatting when including cited works from your research. Use a page numbering system.

### **Students with Disabilities Policy**

We all learn differently. If any aspect of this course hinders your learning, inform me early so we can devise appropriate strategies.

If you are a student with a disability and believe you may need accommodations for this course, please notify me with a memo from Accessibility and Disability Services (ADS). Since accommodations are not retroactive, it is strongly recommended that you provide me with notification as early as possible in the term. To register with DSS, or if you have questions about disability accommodations, contact Accessibility and Disability Support Services at 410-704-2638, or visit the ADS office in the Administration Building, Room 232.

### **Mental Health Policy**

Towson University's Counseling Center offers confidential counseling, including after-hours assistance. To reach the Counseling Center, call 410-704-2512. You can learn more about these services: <http://www.towson.edu/counseling/>. The Baltimore County Crisis Response offers 24-hour emergency help and can be reached at 410-931-2214.

## **Resources**



### **The Writing Center**

The Writing Center operates as a location for additional feedback on your writing and additional conversation about writing. The Writing Center is located at LA 5330. Appointments can be made by calling 410-704-3426 or by stopping by the Writing Center. Writing Center consultants are happy to work with you at any point in your writing process, all the way from getting started on an assignment to putting the final proofreading touches on your writing. More information on the writing center can be found at: [www.towson.edu/cia/centers/writing](http://www.towson.edu/cia/centers/writing).

### **The Office of Technology Services (OTS)**

The Office of Technology Services (OTS) provides technology information, training, resources, and support to the students, faculty, and staff of Towson University. For Blackboard assistance or technology support, please visit the OTS website to find out more about their services: <https://www.towson.edu/technology/>. You can also reach OTS by calling 410-704-2041 during business hours (Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.).

### **Student Counseling Services**

The Counseling Center offers (<https://www.towson.edu/counseling/>) individual counseling, group counseling, and a variety of other services to students. They are offering a full array of services for the term, including expanded after-hours coverage. To protect the health and safety of students and staff, services will continue to be offered remotely with a few exceptions, including the use of massage chairs or meditation room (**by appointment only**). To reach the Counseling Center, please call 410-704-2512 during normal business hours (Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm).

### **The Food Pantry**

The FoodShare program addresses the needs of students, faculty, and staff who are experiencing food insecurity by providing a weekly bag of food. The FoodShare is located at the Ward and West Health and Counseling Center. The entrance is located on the back side of the building, directly across from the main entrance to Residence Tower. To find out more about the FoodShare program, please visit the webpage: <https://www.towson.edu/studentlife/housing/dining/food-insecurity-foodshare-programs.html>.

### **Student Emergency Grant Fund**

The Student Emergency Grant Fund was established to assist Towson University students who are experiencing an exceptional financial crisis that impedes their academic progress and success.

Students should apply for consideration for funding when they have exhausted all other resources, including but not limited to personal credit, payment plans, additional student aid, assistance from family and friends, or other personal resources. This funding is not intended to reimburse for expenses that have already been paid or supplement existing financial aid.

Managed by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Student Emergency

Grant Fund is made possible by generous donors. It is intended to provide one-time, short-term relief for students experiencing immediate financial hardship. To find out more about the Student Emergency Grant Fund, please visit the webpage:

<https://www.towson.edu/studentaffairs/care/student-emergency-fund.html>.

## Course Schedule

Week #	Date	Class Topic/Objective	Due
1	Monday	Course Introduction, Syllabus Review, Introduction to Rhetoric and Composition	
	Wednesday	Basics of Persuasive Writing and Rhetoric	
2	Monday	Understanding and Identifying Hedging Language	Reading due: article posted on Blackboard on rhetoric fundamentals
	Wednesday	Workshop: Analyzing Hedging in Sample Texts	
3	Monday	Effective Communication and Writing Clarity	Task due: Analyze hedging language in the provided article on Blackboard
	Wednesday	Audience Analysis: Tailoring Language to Audience Needs	
4	Monday	Audience Analysis Workshop & Introduction to Argumentative Writing	Reading due: article on audience analysis (posted on Blackboard)
	Wednesday	Crafting Thesis Statements and Arguments	Assignment due: First draft of your audience analysis report
5	Monday	Critical Thinking and Text Analysis	

	Wednesday	Rhetorical Analysis Essay Workshop	Reading due: essay on rhetorical analysis (fposted on Blackboard)
<b>6</b>	Monday	Peer Review workshop and Feedback on Rhetorical Analysis Essays	Assignment due: First draft of Rhetorical Analysis Essay
	Wednesday	Writing Coherent and Persuasive Arguments	
<b>7</b>	Monday	Developing Argumentative Essays	Reading due: essay on persuasive and argumentative writing (posted on Blackboard)
	Wednesday	Argumentative Essay Workshop	Assignment due: Draft a thesis statement for an argumentative essay
<b>8</b>	Monday	Advanced Writing Techniques: Cohesion and Coherence	Assignment due: Argumentative Essay Outline due
	Wednesday	Workshop on Drafting and Revising Writing	
<b>9</b>	Monday	Group Presentation Skills	Assignment due: First draft of Argumentative Essay
	Wednesday	Working in Teams: Group Presentation Project Introduction	
<b>10</b>	Monday	Presentation Techniques and Audience Engagement	Assignment due: Group Presentation topics
	Wednesday	Group Presentation Project Workshop	

<b>11</b>	Monday	Group Presentation Practice Sessions	Reading due: articles on identifying rhetoric and arguments in speeches (posted on Blackboard)
	Wednesday	Group Presentation Project (Part 1)	
<b>12</b>	Monday	Group Presentation Project (Part 2)	
	Wednesday	Reflecting on Writing Growth	Reading due: essay on what is growth in writing (posted on Blackboard)
<b>13</b>	Monday	Advanced Persuasive Strategies	
	Wednesday	In-class Peer Review of Reflective Writing	Assignment due: First draft of reflective writing due
<b>14</b>	Monday	Workshop on Integrating Course Learnings with a focus on compiling and revising major assignments for the portfolio.	
	Wednesday	Peer Review and Feedback Session - provide and receive feedback on portfolios. Discuss strategies for final revisions.	
<b>15</b>	Monday	Course Reflection and Wrap-Up Reflect on key learnings, challenges, and accomplishments. Discuss how the skills acquired in this course can be applied in future academic and professional contexts.	Assignment due: Reflective writing assignment
	Wednesday	Final Class: Portfolio Compilation and Course Reflections	Assignment due: Portfolio

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*Assignments Due Dates:*

- Audience Analysis Report: Week 4
- Rhetorical Analysis Essay: Week 6
- Argumentative Essay: Week 9
- Group presentation projects: Week 11&12
- First draft reflective writing assignment: Week 13
- Reflective Writing Assignment: Week 15
- Final Portfolio: End of Week 15

*Note: The schedule may be subject to adjustments based on holidays, class progress, and university policies.*