

ENGL 103

Rhetoric & Composition I



Northern Illinois
University

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Course Description

ENGL 103 builds on and expands your writing experiences. Drawing on rhetorical approaches to writing, you will create traditional written texts as well as multimodal digital texts for various audiences and purposes. Helping you better understand your writing choices is at the heart of ENGL 103. This requires that you reflect deeply on your writing practices, including how your writing is produced, how it meets audience expectations, and how it meets genre conventions. Through these reflections, you will get help in connecting writing taking place throughout your life: at school, at your part-time job, in clubs and organizations, and in your personal life. ENGL 103 culminates in a final eportfolio that showcases your best writing and what you've learned.

Course Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

Articulate goals and processes for writing—both writing you've done and writing others have done.

Articulate connections between writing contexts.

Identify and use genre and style conventions appropriate for multiple situations and audiences.

Work productively on collaborative writing projects.

Major Projects

During the semester, you'll be asked to complete four writing projects (WP), each with a reflective component.

WP1: Remediation Project



For WP1, you will adapt a narrative into a new medium appropriate for your audience, such as a video, a podcast, a website, a comic, or some other form of media. Then, you'll write a reflection explaining the adaptation, the choices you made in creating it, and how it fits your audience.

WP2: Value Analysis



For WP2, you will compare materials from your possible major at NIU to a different university. You will choose one single artifact made by your department (such as a single page on a website, a single social media post, a single video made by your department, a single assignment sheet, etc.) and find a very similar artifact from a different university. You'll compare the artifacts, noting differences you're seeing, and offer rhetorical reasons that those differences might be appearing.

WP3: Making Change



WP3 is a freeform persuasive project that combines what we learned from WP1 and WP2. In its simplest form you will need to persuade someone of something. Like WP1, you have radical freedom in terms of genre and media. The choices regarding audience, genre, and media should be intentional and related to your persuasive goals. Like WP2, you will need to pay close attention to specific rhetorical strategies, and you will need to gather evidence to support your claims. Also like WP2 this is a collaborative project and you are encouraged to work in small groups. Unlike WP1 and WP2, WP3 additionally requires you to integrate other perspectives into your own argument, demonstrating both summary and source integration.

WP4: Reflection Overview



WP4 puts together all of the reflections from the previous writing projects. In this digital document, you will include each of the three reflections from WP1, WP2, and WP3 as well as write a new reflection that focuses on your overall learning in the course: What major things did you learn, what evidence do you have to point to that learning, and how will you use what you learned in the future? In order to make your points, you will use evidence from your writing projects and reflections as well as any other work you did in the class this semester. You're even welcome to include writing you did outside of class for other classes, part-time jobs, or just for fun!

Class Policies

Syllabus Updates

This syllabus is subject to change with notification. Any changes made will be posted in Blackboard, and you will be notified via email.

Attendance

You are expected to attend every class and conference. Absence without prior approval may result in all class points lost for that day. If you are late to class or leave early without permission, you may lose half of the class points for that day. If there is a problem keeping you from attending, please let me know as soon as possible.

Homework

Homework should be submitted to Blackboard at least 30 minutes before class time.

Late Work

Late major projects will be accepted. Without prior approval, late major projects may lose up to 10% per day until they are submitted. Deductions will be capped at 50%, meaning no matter how late, you can still get half credit for any major assignment. If you have a reason to submit work late, please let me know in advance, and we can try to create an alternative deadline with no deduction.

Drafts & Revision

All major projects will have a completion and a revised draft. Students may submit additional drafts for comments or to be regraded with permission from the instructor.

Discussion

You are expected to actively engage in class and conference discussions. Please be civil to other members of the class and actively keep the dialogue open—even when you disagree. If you cannot remain civil, you will be asked to leave class and be counted absent.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense in which writers use other people's words without giving credit and pass them off as their own. During class, we will go over the [plagiarism policy](#). If you are unsure

AI Policy

if something is plagiarism, please ask me in advance—and always err on the side of caution.

(Guidelines regarding AI use will be specified in detail by the Instructor during class)

Students may use AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, or other writing assistants) to support their writing process, including brainstorming, outlining, and revising. However, all submitted work must reflect the student's own understanding, voice, and original thought.

Guidelines:

- AI-generated content must be critically evaluated and revised by the student.
- Students must disclose when AI tools are used and describe how they contributed to the work.
- Plagiarism or over-reliance on AI without meaningful student input may result in academic consequences. □ The instructor reserves the right to request drafts or process documentation to ensure academic integrity.

Responsible use of AI can enhance learning, but it should never replace the student's own intellectual engagement.