

## College Composition WRIT 101: Online

Welcome Message from the Online Course

### Welcome: A Voyage of Discovery!

*Dear Fellow Writers,*

**Welcome to the online version of WRIT 101: College Composition, Spring 2010.** This course will expose you to many types of writing. It should also help you develop your creative and critical thinking skills as you read the texts, discuss ideas with classmates, and work on four different essays.

**Our overall guiding topic** will be a renewable, but sometimes polluted, resource: **Rivers**. This semester in this particular section of online college composition we'll read Montana author Gordon Sullivan's "Saving Homewaters." (Many of the writing courses now work on the idea of 'Sustainability' and "Go Green". To that end, as writers and readers here, we will take a closer look at our rivers, lakes, and streams, from wherever we are.)

**The writing assignments** include essays such as a personal essay---your own story of how you were significantly changed by one of life's many events. In addition, you will learn to read and write informal/formal arguments by working on a formally researched essay such as a profile piece, an opinion/editorial essay, and a personal research essay. You will also have the opportunity during rough draft workshops to write feedback to other writers and share ideas about writing and reading. In the end you will write a reflection letter about your overall growth and development as a writer in this course.

**The overall purpose of the course** is to help you develop a stronger background as a college-level reader and writer. The main intention of the course is to help you further develop and practice skills in reading and writing college-level texts and essays.

**There are usually a variety of people** with different backgrounds and college/career plans represented in our class, so we should read a variety of interesting essays as we work through this semester's writing assignments together. This makes our time writing and reading each others' essays an excellent learning experience because we often come together in this class from a variety of locations, backgrounds, interests, cultures, and perspectives. Therefore, it is critical that we each act out of respect, honor, and politeness towards others in class. It is okay to disagree: Classmates' views, values, and beliefs may differ in discussions and in writing assignments. But the sense of community that we will create together as a group of writers is critical to our writing work in this course. Writers need good, fellow writers as readers. Writers also need to have the opportunity to learn from their own, as well as other writers', struggles and successes on writing assignments.

**I look forward to reading your introductions this week** and learning a little more about each of you. I am excited about the reading and writing assignments we have ahead of us! Thank you for joining the class on this "voyage of discovery," as Donald Murray writes about both life and writing. I hope you discover new things about yourself, about life, and about what it means to be a *college-level reader and writer!*

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*[Formal Syllabus Section follows]*

Welcome to WRIT 101, College Composition, online. I am glad to have you in this class. You should finish this course a more confident, experienced and better prepared college-level writer.

The main purpose of this online course is to help you become a more clear and effective writer. This is a basic college composition course designed to allow students the opportunity to read, write, and also discuss other essays. Students will also read about how to write better, explore and demonstrate the writing process, and learn to gather information. In addition, students need to learn to think critically about information, various ideas, beliefs, a variety of topics and the world in which we live. Students will effectively and persuasively communicate ideas through writing (your own original ideas, beliefs and thoughts) to others through the various forms of the written essay. (Please note that I expect students in this course to be competent with punctuation, grammar and mechanics, and familiar with a five-paragraph basic essay structure.)

I appreciate students who think creatively and critically, respond respectfully to other classmates' written ideas, and respond politely, intelligently, and with integrity, to all kinds of beliefs and ideas. Of course you can do this while maintaining your own thinking and beliefs as necessary.

In addition, please keep in mind that when we discuss or respond to essays and drafts we will discuss and critique the writing. (We are not critiquing *you*, but working on your writing.) So, much of this writing course depends on our abilities to respond to, evaluate and encourage each other's writing. Therefore, please allow yourself to step back from your essay or draft and look at it objectively as we work on improving your drafts with you in the writer's workshops.

**Helpful information for the course:**

- Students need to be self-motivated, self-disciplined and responsible for their own work.
- Students need to be positive and active class members.
- Students need to complete their work in a timely manner and be able to follow strict deadlines for assigned papers.
- Students need to respond to and edit other students' papers in their editing/revising groups.
- Students must participate in their assigned groups when assigned group work.
- Students are required to buy the textbooks and read the assigned chapters and any additional readings.
- Students must complete any assigned drafts and rewrites.
- Incomplete work will result in the failure of the class.

**Anchoring the work of this course are several principles or understandings about writing and learning:**

- People learn best through their own active investigation and participation, rather than through readings or lectures alone
- Learning is a social as well as an individual activity
- Writing is a process that helps people discover their ideas and understandings as well as convey them to others. All aspects of that process will be important elements of your writing for this course--from brainstorming and making quick jottings of ideas to preparing final, edited papers

- Writing and reading in a variety of genres allow for practice in the sorts of thinking, reading, and writing necessary in academic, business, and civic communities
- Your ongoing responses, observations, data-collection, analyses, and reports will give you practice in the sorts of research and writing that will be called for in many of your courses
- Writing, reading, speaking, and listening are complementary activities and to write effectively within a particular discourse community, individuals need to read, speak, and listen in the ways of that community.

### Course Structure and Requirements

- SPRING SESSION: Four Major Writing Projects and an overall Final Reflection Letter:
- Personal Essay (CH 4) (Topic: A significant, life-changing event.)
  - **Guiding Topic/Focus for last three essays: Rivers;** Read Sullivan's book "*Saving Homewaters*".
- Profile Essay (Ch 5)
- Op-Ed Essay (CH 8)
- Personal, Academic Essay (CH 11 +)
  - In addition: We will work with *The Everyday Writer*, the handbook for the course, and (CW's) CHs 14 and 15 as needed.
- Other ongoing work for the course will involve:
- Reading all assigned materials
- Any informal writing/journal or discussion board responses
- Often, these shorter assignments will build on each other and on what was learned from previous assignments.
- Small group, pairs, and class participation
- All of this coursework is done online. With other members of the class, students will carry out specific weekly discussions and tasks, respond to drafts of each others' writing, and analyze findings in ongoing research.
- Some longer journal responses or exploratory essays that give you a chance to practice and discuss some of the types of writing that are typically assigned in university courses.
- You will have an opportunity to revise drafts of essays after receiving initial drafting comments and suggestions from classmates and the instructor.

You will have the opportunity to develop all of your major projects through a process of inquiry and drafting. You will compose papers in and out of class, alone and with your small group or online work partners. For all the major writing assignments I'll ask you to post your rough draft in a rough draft workshop located on the main discussion board inside the course. After receiving comments and reading the example essays in the textbook, you should work to revise and improve your essays. We will include whole-class workshops into the drafting process. *All inquiry projects must be completed for you to pass the course.* I will respond to these projects (sometimes as a whole) with written comments focused on suggestions for revision.

### Common Policies and Procedures

#### Registration-related issues.

I will not (typically) sign overrides because it's critical to keep the composition class size small to support its rigorous writing and workshop environment.

If you miss the first two days of any UM or COT class (and haven't talked in advance with me about extenuating circumstances) you must drop the course on Cyberbear and enroll another semester. The reason for this policy is that important groundwork for the semester is put in place in the first couple of class meetings, and students without that foundational framework are better served by taking the course when they can give it the attention it deserves. Note: Important add/drop dates can be found on Cyberbear.

### **Online Course Attendance.**

**For online courses the general guideline is to check in every other day OR at least three times in a seven day period.**

- I strongly recommend that you check in at least every two days or every other day.
- For online courses, please check your email daily Monday through Friday.
- Sometimes I send "friendly reminders," additional writing tips, etc., directly to your Grizmail. *UM/COT requires you to use your Grizmail.*
- I can "take attendance" as in a typical in-campus class. I enable "statistics tracking" on most items. So, I can "see" you. This means I can check on how often you login to the course. I can see how often you visit, where you go, and how many posts you've left, what you've written, etc.
- In addition, you earn grade points by contributing assignments as required and directed.
- You are required to complete the course work assigned on time according to posted due dates.

Late work is not accepted. Instead, follow the course schedule as posted on Announcements.

There is good reason for an attendance policy. Without attending class, you cannot perform your role as a student involved in learning, planning, inventing, drafting; discussing reading and writing; learning and practicing rhetorical moves and concepts; or collaborating with your instructor and classmates. Personal situations and required university events may arise that, on a rare occasion, make it impossible for you to be online and "in class." Remember, however, to please reserve those for emergencies. NOTE: **Incomplete work or a lack of work online may result in you failing the course.**

**Participation and attendance online is required!**

Make sure you talk with your instructor in *advance* if you are worried about meeting a deadline. (If you miss something, also check in with me right away.)

What if you plan to "go out of town" or you happen to "get sick" in an online course? Please stay near a computer or find someone else's computer! **In this day and age, it is almost impossible for you to be somewhere without computer access. You signed up for a completely online course so it is your responsibility to have internet access.** If you are away from the internet/computers, in any case, *it is still your responsibility* to keep up on the coursework, check emails, write, read, and participate in any discussion boards. In the end, it boils down to this: no one is getting "sick" or "going out of town." Instead, get yourself to a computer if you plan to pass the course!

**Participation.** Participation includes logging in to class prepared and on time, taking part in online and ongoing class discussions, asking questions, contributing your knowledge and insights in whatever form is appropriate, and striving to make all your contributions excellent. It includes doing the required reading and writing for each class. Note: Lateness or late work will hurt your grade because it is an unnecessary interruption and because latecomers are likely to miss valuable information. Please see *Participation Grade Descriptors* located in the Assignments folder or under Course Information in the Syllabus folder for more information about participation.

**Late/Missing Work** If you miss a draft deadline, you've missed a crucial chance for feedback on your rough draft work. If you aren't ready with a response to a group member's draft, you're letting down someone who is counting on you for help. If you aren't prepared for class, you limit your own voice and contributions to the class and community of writers and readers. For all these reasons, *late work is unacceptable*. If you ever have a problem with an assignment, talk to me well in advance of the deadline and you may be able to negotiate a special arrangement. Deadlines are not negotiable after you've missed them.

**Academic Conduct** You must abide by the rules for academic conduct described in the Student Conduct Code. If you have any questions about when and how to avoid academic dishonesty, particularly plagiarism, please review the Conduct Code and talk with your instructor. The Council of Writing Program Administrators describes plagiarism as follows: "plagiarism occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else's language, ideas or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source." Academic honesty is highly valued in the University community and acts of plagiarism will not be tolerated. The appropriate use of sources is, however, one topic of study in this course.

**Office Hours**---an opportunity to talk one on one. *As an online writing instructor I do not hold official office hours, especially in the summer.* Some of you may also be taking this online course quite a distance from Missoula. In any case, we can always meet to talk by phone, or perhaps, if you are in Missoula, we can meet in the cafeteria on the COT campus if necessary. To schedule an individual writer's conference with me or to make an appointment with me to talk about any questions you have about your progress in the course please email me. Please allow 24-48 hours for me to return your email. My hours online occur anytime between the regular business hours of 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday through Friday. (*Sometimes* I check in on the weekend to see if there are any class questions, etc.) I also teach on campus during the week.

**Communication.** I'm happy to talk with you inside the course if you have a question about the course or an assignment. **Please do not email me drafts or attachments. These should be posted inside the course.** You are welcome to email me privately about private grade questions or an individual writer's conference. Again, I will respond to emails Monday through Friday within 24-48 hours. What if yours is a weekend email? You should typically expect to wait for my reply to come on Monday morning.

**Classroom Community.** Community is important in a small workshop class; we will work together to create an environment that promotes collaborative learning and effective, thoughtful discussion. The student conduct code asks students to "respect the rights, privileges, and dignity of others" – these are important ways to engage in class discussion, particularly when the topic might be provocative.

**Required Resources beyond our Classroom.** *The Mansfield Library* and *The Writing Center* are both excellent resources for researchers and writers. You will be asked to participate in a session on library research and take a draft of a paper to the Writing Center for feedback from one of their tutors as a way to expand your circle of writing support.

### **Students with Disabilities.**

**It is YOUR responsibility to inform me of your request for fair accommodations immediately on day one.** Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please

Speak with me privately: You can do this by email or by an official DSS letter sent to me by email. Please, again, be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator. I'm happy to work with you and will make any fair accommodations as requested by DSS and you on your behalf, but *I need an official DSS letter!*

### **Procedural Basics**

1. Complete all reading and writing assignments on time. Be sure that all electronic/online assignments are word-processed. Please use .docx, .doc or .rtf if possible. (As a class, if we cannot open your file, we will let you know!)
2. Use the following format for submitting written assignments unless instructed otherwise or unless you're following specific genre conventions:
  - Provide a basic header in the upper left hand corner of page 1:
    - Your name
    - Course section and number
    - Instructor's Name: Tammie Slater Smith
    - Date
  - Double-space the text
  - Use one-inch margins
  - Use a standard 12-point font (like Times New Roman) or use an equivalent, like Georgia.
  - Number all pages in the upper right hand corner starting with page 2
  - Give assignments a title, centered just above the text and following the header
  - Use a Works Cited page as needed (At all costs: Avoid plagiarism!)
3. **Keep copies of all your work, as hard copy and on CD, disk, or memory card.**
4. **Again: Save everything on your own computer.**

### **Grades**

I encourage you to talk with me at any time to better understand my comments or to discuss your overall progress and success in the class. Success in this class depends on:

- Meeting all the requirements
- The quality of your written, electronic work: essays and discussion boards and any other assignments.
- Your willingness to enter into the spirit of inquiry. Be a curious writer!

Your final grade will be based on a cumulative points total of all your submitted and required online coursework. Late work is not accepted and results in a zero for the missing/late assignment(s).

**Any Informal Writing on Discussion Boards:** You will receive a grade (possible points) on informal writing submissions (typically for the discussion board) based on the following grade descriptors:

#### *INFORMAL WRITING:*

**A range** This writing is well developed and demonstrates acquired knowledge. The writing takes risks that work.

**B range** This writing has been done with considerable care and attention. It is developed and detailed.

**C range** This writing is acceptable but requires more development and deeper engagement with the topic.

**D range** This writing is unacceptable. It may be unfinished or inappropriate to the assignment.

**F or 0** Student did not turn in any writing or tried to turn in the writing late.

**See also:** Please see the folder **for Grades; Basic Features located in the Assignments area for a rubric on how formal, final essays are scored.**

### **Plagiarism Warning**

Plagiarism is the representing of another's work as one's own. It is a particularly intolerable offense in the academic community and is strictly forbidden. Students who plagiarize may fail the course and may be remanded to Academic Court for possible suspension or expulsion. (See the Student Conduct Code section of UM's catalog.)

Students must always be very careful to acknowledge any kind of borrowing that is included in their work. This means not only borrowed wording but also ideas. Acknowledgment of whatever is not one's own original work is the proper and honest use of sources. Failure to acknowledge whatever is not one's own original work is plagiarism.

<http://www.umt.edu/catalog/academic/policy.htm>

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### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:** Students, both textbooks are new this year and UM custom editions. The two required textbooks are available at The University of Montana bookstore located on the mountain campus inside the University Center building in Missoula, MT. **(406) 243-1234 THE BOOKSTORE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA**

1. **The Curious Writer** by Bruce Ballanger **(3rd Custom Edition for The University of Montana.)**

ISBN 0-558-32348-0

2. **The Everyday Writer**, *(Fourth Edition with Portfolio Keeping)* by Andrea A. Lunsford

This is an essential handbook and grammar and usage guide. This resource can be used throughout your college coursework to assist you with style, grammar, formatting, etc., on a variety of college-level essays and written assignments.

ISBN 0-312-61082-3

3. **Additional Required Reading: *Saving Homewaters (The Story of Montana's Streams and Rivers)* by Gordon Sullivan. ISBN: 978-0-88150-679-2 .Please have this additional reader for the course by February 13th.**

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Students, *This particular book is available through your local bookstore. Or, you may need to special order it. You might also find a used/new copy at Amazon.com or another book retailer. Or, check it out at your local library. (Some copies are on their way to Missoula's Hastings under your teacher's name. You can check on those with Allison in the book department.)*

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### **WRIT 101 ONLINE: Spring 2010 Course Calendar**

1. Week 1: **Introductions to the course:** Print and Read Syllabus; Send an Email Confirmation; Ask any self-orienting question on the main board: Any Class Questions? Buy your textbooks.

2. Week 2: Feb. 1-5: **Read CH 4, The Personal Essay.** (Read also Chs 1 and 2, recommended reading for an overview.) Print and read the UNIT I folder for CH 4 materials and the writing assignment: Personal Essay.
  3. Week 3: Feb. 8-12: **Monday, Feb. 8: Roughdraft Due to Workshop on Discussion Board.** Workshop throughout the week; See directions inside the workshop; Workshop ends on Feb. 12, Friday, 11 p.m.
  4. Week 4: Feb 15-19 (Presidents' Day, Feb. 15: OFF) **Wednesday, February 17: Final Personal Essay due to Assignment LINK** (Links will be located in Assignments folder when items are due. Links disappear at deadline time.) This week: **Read Chs 1-12 in Sullivan's "Saving Homewaters."** (Take some notes for yourself: Personal Responses to the S.H. reading will be due on February 26th.)
  5. Week 5: February 22-26: **Personal Response to S.H. is due Friday, Feb. 26th** (Directions TBA); **Begin UNIT II: Profile Essays: Read CH 5; Print CH 5 folder; Find a water/river expert** in your community to interview; Plan your time and interview questions.
  6. Week 6: March 1-5: **CH 5 continued... Interview your river/water community expert; Craft a Profile Essay** roughdraft and ask further questions as needed in preparation for the workshop.
  7. Week 7: March 8-12: **Profile Essay Roughdraft Workshop this week.** (Essays are due to workshop Monday mornings at 8 a.m./ Then, we step in and work on each other's writing throughout the week per the directions. Workshopping ends at 11 p.m., Friday nights.)
  8. Week 8: March 15-19: **Wednesday, March 17: Final Profile Piece due to the Assignment Link. Read: Finish reading S.H. and complete your musings in your notebook. Write a summary** of the book along with your personal response and conclusions about what you've learned as you read; Offer some new insights.
  9. **Week 9: March 22-26: Informal Arguments: Read CH 8; Print the CH 8 folder; Read the ERES article, "Running Dry...";** Consider the CH 8 writing assignment and **write an initial draft** of an Op-Ed that centers around our topic of rivers, water, lakes, and streams....
  10. **Week 10: SPRING VACATION: March 29-April 2 (NO online activity.)**
  11. Week 11: April 5-9: **DRAFT Op-Ed Workshop: April 7-9.** (Roughdraft is due to workshop Wednesday, April 7th, at 8 a.m./Workshop ends Friday night, 11 p.m.) LOOK AHEAD: River Experiences....
  12. **Week 12: April 12-16: Take a Field Trip:** Go out on the river, lake, or stream and do something: Fish, swim, float, canoe, etc., and write a descriptive and detailed personal response about your experiences there. **Final Op-Ed Due Friday, April 16; Personal River Experience Response Due by Sunday, April 18.**
  13. **Week 13: April 19-23: LAST UNIT: Personal, Academic Essay: Read CH 11** and any additional chapters as needed/recommended. Write a personal, academic essay. (*You may cite S.H.*; You must also use another 7-10 river resources (can use Profile's community expert(s)) to assist you in addition to researching deeper into an issue surrounding the renewable resource: the Earth's water.)
  14. **Week 14: April 26-30: LAST Roughdraft Workshop Week**
  15. Week 15: May 3-7: **Monday, May 3: Final Personal Essay due to Assignment Link.** LOOK AHEAD: Reflection Letters.
  16. **FINALS WEEK: May 10-14: FINAL: Reflection Letters** due May 10th, Noon, to Assignment Link.
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**REQUIRED: File Protocol**

**Attaching a File w/Last Names:**

**In order to help you 'name' and keep track of your writing assignments**, when you attach a file and/or turn in a final essay, please save your file in the following format. (This format should prevent everyone from naming their file the same name, etc., when they turn in assignments.)

**File protocol format:** lastname\_assignment.doc **or** lastname\_assignment.rtf

**1st Example:** Smith\_ProfileEssay.doc

**OR 2nd Example:** Smith\_PersonalEssay.rtf

*Are there any questions about this file protocol? Please ask on the main discussion board.*

*Tip: Do not use hyphens or any other punctuation; Use only 'underscore'.*