The University of Akron
Buchtel College of Arts & Sciences

English Composition Program Handbook
The University of Akron
English Department

Composition Handbook

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COMPOSITION I (ENGLISH 111) BASIC OVERVIEW

- Engages students in the process of pre-writing, drafting, editing, and revising.
- Helps students respond effectively to a range of rhetorical situations by making purposeful and appropriate choices about structure, voice, tone, level of formality, format, and conventions.
- Gives students practice writing in different genres and for different audiences and purposes (memoir, literacy narrative, profile, observation, reflection, review, analysis, ethnographic research, etc.).
- Encourages students to incorporate primary and experiential research into their essays (interviews, observations, analysis of pop culture, etc.).
- Engages students in critical reading and analytical writing.

Teaches students to integrate their own ideas with those of others. This includes incorporating quotes, paraphrasing, summarizing, and citing. (In this course, students should primarily use texts that are common to the class as a whole. Library research will be covered in Comp. II.)

REQUIREMENTS:

- Four formal essays, plus a reflective letter for the portfolio, totaling a minimum of 20 pages of revised, polished writing.
- Informal writing assignments that focus on the writing process and rhetorical skills (using detail, summarizing, paraphrasing, evaluating, analyzing, etc.). These assignments might include journals, exercises, informal reading responses, and exploratory drafts.
- Opportunities for revision of formal essays, based on instructor’s feedback.
- Final Portfolio that showcases what students have learned in the course. The portfolio should include a 2-3 page reflective letter and three formal essays. These essays should demonstrate a range of purpose and genre and should be selected by the student to highlight his or her abilities and accomplishments. The reflective letter should give students an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned in the course and demonstrate their understanding of writing processes and concepts.

At least 60% of the final course grade should come from the formal paper assignments and the Final Portfolio.
COMPOSITION II (ENGLISH 112) BASIC OVERVIEW

- Builds on the skills of English Comp. I, with a continued emphasis on the writing process and rhetorical awareness.
- Primary focus on research, argumentation, and critical reading.
- Gives students practice in developing arguments for different purposes and different audiences, with a strong emphasis on academic writing.

Provides instruction in independent research, evaluation of primary and secondary sources, and incorporation and documentation of outside texts.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Four formal essays plus a reflective letter for the final portfolio, totaling a minimum of 20 pages of revised, polished writing. These essays should be evidence-based academic arguments. One way to achieve this requirement is to begin with experience-based papers and move into writing that includes more complex forms of evidence and support.

- Informal writing assignments—such as reading responses, journals, and exploratory drafts—should focus on the writing process and rhetorical skills (using detail, summarizing, paraphrasing, evaluating, analyzing, etc.).

- Opportunities for revision of formal essays, based on instructor’s feedback.

- The Capstone Essay: This essay, which serves as one of the 4 required essays, should be an argument with research, 6-8 pages long. Students should use a library database such as Academic Search Complete for this assignment. This paper should demonstrate the cumulative body of skills, concepts, and abilities the student has gained while moving through the composition sequence.

- The Final Portfolio should include the capstone essay and a 2-3 page reflective letter. In the reflective letter, students will analyze the rhetorical choices they made as they wrote the capstone essay.

At least 60% of the final course grade should come from the formal paper assignments and the Final Portfolio.
FREQUENTLY NEEDED CONTACTS

**Academic / Departmental Issues**

**University Libraries**
http://www.uakron.edu/libraries/

**Dr. Michael Tosko** (our departmental contact)
person he can assist you and/or your students with research practices and technology)
(330)972-2648
tosko@uakron.edu

**Audio Visual Services**
http://www.uakron.edu/itinstructional_services/avs/
(330) 972-7811

**Writing Commons**
http://www.uakron.edu/tutoring/bwc/visiting/

**Laura Monroe, Director**
(330) 972-6548
lmonroe@uakron.edu

**E-tutoring**
www.etutoring.org

All your students have access to this service. It is a web-based (but not automated) writing lab; your students will be matched with an individual tutor who can help them move through the drafting stages to the final essay.

**Office of Accessibility**
http://www.uakron.edu/access/

**Counseling Center**
http://www.uakron.edu/counseling/

You can contact this department (or direct students to it) if you are concerned about anything related to mental health issues or student well-being.

**Student Judicial Affairs**
http://www.uakron.edu/sja/

This office handles academic dishonesty and other behavioral/discipline problems.
Please contact Mrs. Carol Szabat regarding these matters:

Composition textbooks
Room assignments for composition courses
Personnel issues such as office assignments, seniority rank, direct deposit of paycheck, sick days (please let Carol know prior to your class time if you are ill or unable to attend for any reason)

Contact Carol at:
caroll@uakron.edu
x7471

Please contact Ms. Thea Ledendecker for anything related to departmental matters, such as office policies and procedures, travel requests and expenses, technology problems, computer lab issues, laptop loaners and accessories.

Contact Thea at:
thea@uakron.edu
x7230

Technology

Zip Support: (330) 972-6888; http://www.uakron.edu/support-desk/

Springboard: http://www.uakron.edu/training/springboard.dot
springboardhelp@uakron.edu

Security

University Police: http://www.uakron.edu/safety/police/
(330) 972-2911
-OR-
Dial 911
Sick days/Class Cancellation:

Please contact Mrs. Carol Szabat at x7471 or caroll@uakron.edu prior to when your class meets if you are ill or otherwise unable to teach.

You will need to notify the office (caroll@uakron.edu) when you cancel class. Carol will put a form in your box for you to fill out. If the classroom is in or near Olin Hall, we will put a sign on the door. You should always notify your students via email or Springboard.

Office Hours:

You are required to hold one office hour per week for each course you teach and to put your office hours on your syllabus. The Student Assistant will post your hours on your door. If you change your office hours, please notify the office.

Incompletes:

Incompletes may only be granted under the most dire and extreme of circumstances, and then only with approval (from both the Director of Composition and the Dean’s office). If you believe you have a student whose situation warrants an incomplete, please bring it to the attention of Jennie Young, Director of Composition.

Student Complaints:

If the issue cannot be resolved between your student and you, please direct the student to the Director of Composition.
Standard Grading Scale for English Composition

A   93-100
A-  90-92
B+  87-89
B   83-86
B-  80-82
C+  77-79
C   73-76
C-  70-72
D+  67-69
D   63-66
D-  60-62
F   59 or less
The attendance policy for the Composition program is as follows: Students may miss three class meetings (or the equivalent of one week for a class that doesn’t meet three days a week) without penalty to their grades. After three days (or equivalent), a penalty may be applied to the student’s grade. Absences that exceed (6) for a two-day-a-week course or (9) for a three-day-a-week course render the student unable to receive credit for the course. A student cannot be forced to withdraw and should not be encouraged to withdraw for any reason without direction to see his/her advisor and/or someone in Financial Aid first; withdrawing can have a negative effect on eligibility for financial aid. Below is a sample attendance policy statement that you may use in your syllabus.

Students are expected to attend every class and be on time. The goal of the class is to improve writing skills, and that can only be done through practice. Much of this practice will come during class. It is understandable that occasionally emergencies may arise; therefore, you may miss three (3) classes with no penalty to your grade. For each additional class missed you will lose five (5) points from your grade. If you miss more than a total of three (3) weeks of classes a passing grade will not be available, and you will be asked to withdraw.
You should have the following policy statement on your syllabus:

**Plagiarism is a violation of The University of Akron's Student Policy on Academic Dishonesty.** Plagiarism includes:

- Turning in a paper written in whole or part by another person
- Copying and pasting sections from another work directly into your paper without proper acknowledgement of the source
- Turning in a paper whose contents include the exact words or paraphrases from sources not properly documented through referenced quotations, parenthetical citations, and a Works Cited page, as determined by the MLA system
- Turning in a paper written by you for another class.

Response to plagiarism will be based on the seriousness of the violation and the intent to deceive. Consequences range from mandatory rewrite of the paper to a zero on the assignment to failure of the course. Students who have plagiarized may also be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. We will be talking more about plagiarism throughout the semester. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, talk to me.

The University of Akron’s Student Code of Conduct requires all plagiarism cases to be reported to Student Judicial Affairs and makes no distinction between intentional and unintentional plagiarism. However, the University also recognizes that courses like English Composition have the responsibility to teach students about plagiarism, not simply to penalize them.

In English Composition, there is a pedagogical zone—a place where students may make errors as they are learning to work with sources and cite them properly. As a Composition instructor, you have the responsibility to make the judgment call about whether or not an individual case falls into the learning zone or should be treated as plagiarism. You should consider factors like whether the student made any attempt to cite, the amount of uncited material, and the intention to deceive.
When to Notify SJA

- Any time you are going to penalize a student’s grade because of plagiarism
- First-time cases of blatant, intentional plagiarism
- Second offenses—students can be in the pedagogical zone only once.

Procedures for Notifying SJA

- Get proof. Make copies of student paper and sources, with plagiarized material highlighted.
- Get a form from the Student Judicial Affairs website.
- Write up a brief summary of the situation.
- Decide on a penalty. Should the student rewrite the essay? For full credit, half credit, a grade no better than a C? Get an F on the assignment? Get an F for the course?
- Meet face-to-face with the student. Show the evidence. Explain exactly what the student has done wrong.
- Get the signatures.
- Turn in form and copies to Jennie Young, who will forward them to SJA (4601).
- If it’s the last paper of the semester and you can’t arrange for a face-to-face meeting, follow the same procedure. Instead of having a face-to-face meeting, make a PDF of the form and email it to the student. Make a copy of this email and turn it in with your other materials.
- If a student refuses to sign the form, make a note of this before submitting the materials to SJA (4601).
- If you want SJA to meet with the student, you can request that as well.
You should have the following statement on your syllabus:

If you have issues or concerns about the course and its policies, you should first discuss them with your instructor. This is the way that the vast majority of problems are worked out. If you feel the situation has not been resolved after talking with your instructor, you should contact the Director of Composition, Dr. Jennie Young, at (330) 972-7744.

The following pages contain the questions students will be asked when they complete course evaluations for Composition I and II.

These evaluations were developed to yield more concrete and specific information regarding learning outcomes. The questions for each course are intended to measure whether our teaching is supporting both student learning and our stated program goals.

The questions are based up the benchmarks established by the Ohio Board of Regents, the WPA (Council of Writing Program Administrators) outcomes, and UA’s articulation of Composition program goals.
I found the writing assignments in this class to be meaningful and academically relevant; they encouraged me to analyze and think critically beyond my own knowledge and experiences.

a. very true
b. somewhat true
c. not true

My instructor addressed effective essay structure and organizational strategies with regard to audience awareness issues (interest, clarity, logical development)

a. in depth, and offered examples of various successful techniques
b. to some degree
c. these skills were not addressed

This course gave me the opportunity to engage in the various processes related to college writing: idea generation, drafting, revision, editing, proofreading

a. very true
b. somewhat true
c. this course did not emphasize or prioritize these processes

Integrating my own ideas with those of others by incorporating quotes and paraphrases from other sources was

a. required for at least one essay
b. encouraged but never required
c. not addressed

By the end of the course, I feel that my knowledge of MLA format (or APA, or Chicago) is:

a. developing or thorough
b. minimal; it was mentioned but never required in any way
c. we did not address academic documentation in this course

In terms of this class, I would say that critical and analytical thinking, reading, and writing skills

a. were of extremely high importance; these issues were addressed frequently
b. mentioned or discussed, but not focused upon
c. not mentioned or discussed

My instructor emphasized the importance of correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling in his or her teaching and grading practices

a. in all final drafts of essays; to earn a high grade these things had to be right
b. to some degree, but it didn’t seem to matter much in terms of grading
c. these issues were not addressed
By the end of the course I felt confident in my ability to develop and defend a clear and arguable thesis.
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. I don’t yet feel confident about this

My instructor addressed the importance of voice, tone, and appropriate level of formality in essay writing
   a. in depth, and offered examples
   b. to some degree
   c. these issues were not addressed

My instructor began and ended class on time and used class time effectively and productively
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. not true

My instructor was well-organized and prepared for class
   a. consistently
   b. sometimes
   c. almost never

My instructor cancelled class for some reason other than conferencing with students
   a. 0-2 times during the semester
   b. 3-5 times during the semester
   c. more than 5 times during the semester

My instructor communicates course information and expectations clearly
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. not true

My instructor creates a positive classroom environment where students can question, discuss, and learn.
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. not true

Overall, I would rate this teacher as
   a. excellent
   b. acceptable
   c. unacceptable

Have you missed 6 or more class sessions of the course?
   a. no
   b. yes
By the end of this course I feel confident that I can develop, support, and defend a clear, valid, and arguable thesis.
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. I do not yet feel confident in this ability

In this course, we focused on identifying and avoiding faulty or illogical reasoning
   a. extensively
   b. to some degree
   c. this was not addressed

I learned to analyze argumentative strategies and various persuasive appeals in others’ writing
   a. very true; these skills were emphasized in this course
   b. somewhat true
   c. these skills were not emphasized in this course

I learned to employ argumentative strategies and various persuasive appeals in my own writing
   a. very true; these skills were emphasized in this course
   b. somewhat true
   c. these skills were not emphasized in this course

In this course I learned to anticipate and respond to audience concerns and counterarguments
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. these skills were not emphasized in this course

This course prepared me to support my thesis with researched evidence that is valid, compelling, and legitimate
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. these skills were not emphasized in this course

My instructor emphasized the importance of proper MLA (or APA) documentation, including citing sources and incorporating a works cited (or references) page, and upheld these standards in his or her grading
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. my instructor did not emphasize academic documentation

In this course I learned to critically analyze and evaluate academic sources and research material for validity and relevancy
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. these skills were not emphasized in this course
This course prepared and required me to access and navigate scholarly databases such as Academic Search Complete, LexisNexis Academic, etc.
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. this was not a requirement for this course

This course prepared me to effectively integrate my own ideas with those of others in order to support my arguments
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. these skills were not emphasized in this course

This course prepared me to smoothly and effectively introduce and integrate quotations and paraphrases from other sources
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. these skills were not emphasized in this course

My instructor upheld academic standards of grammar, punctuation, and spelling in his or her teaching and grading practices
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. my instructor did not emphasize these skills

My instructor began and ended class on time and used class time effectively and productively
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. not true

My instructor was well-organized and prepared for class
   a. consistently
   b. sometimes
   c. almost never

My instructor cancelled class for some reason other than conferencing with students
   a. 0-2 times during the semester
   b. 3-5 times during the semester
   c. more than 5 times during the semester

My instructor communicates course information and expectations clearly
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. not true

My instructor creates a positive classroom environment where students can question, discuss, and learn
   a. very true
   b. somewhat true
   c. not true

Overall, I would rate this instructor
   a. excellent
   b. acceptable
   c. Unacceptable

Have you missed 6 or more class sessions of this course?
   a. no
   b. yes
Copy services at the front desk

- Course content must be on Springboard!. This includes syllabi, readings, assignments, quizzes, tests, etc.
- At the beginning of the semester, one set of your syllabus for each of your classes can be copied to be given to your students. Please make sure that the document that you turn in to be copied is your final version. This can still be done by emailing the attachment to englishcopy@uakron.edu.
- In emergency situations, copies of documents can be made, but the length of that document should be limited to four pages.
- Documents can be turned into .pdf format at either of the copiers. Your UA email will be programmed into both copiers for your convenience. You can also place the paper document in the copy bin at the front desk and indicate that you would like to have it turned into a .pdf. The .pdf will be emailed to you.
- When printing to the Department printers, you must be logged in under your uanet id. The log-in EnglishSA1 no longer works. Please limit your printing to individual copies of documents. Printing and copying will be tracked under your uanet id for budget reporting purposes.
- Students should be expected to bring their own copies of their paper to student conferences. Please refrain from printing the paper for them.

Our student assistants are happy to do copies for you. Please be aware that everyone needs copies at the beginning of the semester, which means that we will need a minimum of one full business day to process your request. Copies are done in the order that they are received.

Email your copy request to englishcopy@uakron.edu. Specify the number of copies you need and the time you need them (preferably at least one day in advance).

You can also fill out a copy/scan request form at the front desk.

Printers

You can print from your office computer to the printer/copier in the hallway by the recycle bin. It should be your only print option.

If there is a printer jam, please let us know immediately so that we can fix it.

One of our lab assistants can help you set up your laptop to print if you need it.

I.P. Address: 130.101.229.98
Name: Savin MP2852

Copier in the back room (Thackaberry Room)

All instructors can use the scanner and copier in the back room (Olin 326a). Your user code is the last four digits of your social security number. Copy counts are tracked.
Scanning
We encourage you to scan documents to upload to Springboard for students instead of making copies. Our student assistants have experience making very clear scans. Just fill out a copy request form with the page numbers that you need to be scanned. You can also use the copier in the back room (Olin 326a) if you feel comfortable doing that. Please be mindful of copyright regulations.

Laptops and accessories
We have a few laptops available to borrow if you need one for class. They are older and slow, but they do the job.

If you need A/V cables for your laptop for your classroom, we have a few available. Please bring those back within a day so that there are plenty for others to use.

If you need to get an A/V cart for your classroom, you can reserve one by calling A/V services at x7811. They can bring one to your class one time or for each class for the entire semester.

Office supplies
Reams of paper are available at the front desk if you need more for the copier or printer.

Other supplies, such as grade books, envelopes, tape, highlighters, whiteboard markers, band-aids, pens, etc. are available in the cabinet by the copier in the front office. You are welcome to come in and take what you need for your classes. There are also supplies in the cabinet in Olin 326a.

Break area
There is a microwave and a fridge you can use in the Thackaberry Room (Olin 326a). There are couches and tables for you or students to use near there.

Conference room (Olin 326e)
This room is for student conferences and small department meetings. We post a schedule two weeks in advance on the door of the conference room. Just write your name and the times you need on it.

Cleaning supplies
There are cleaning supplies in the supply cabinet in the front office. We also have vacuum cleaners in the front office and the back copy room (Olin 326a) for your use. We do not have a janitorial service, so you are responsible for keeping your office clean and putting the trash outside your door when you want it to be emptied. You can also walk down the hall and empty it yourself. The janitors don’t empty the recycle bins in your offices. Our student assistants clean the offices during summer and winter breaks.
Student portfolios
If you have portfolios that students have not picked up, you should keep them in your office for one semester. You can give old portfolios to student assistants so that they can sort through them to recycle/shred old papers and keep folders for reuse.

Student pick-up box
If you need to leave an assignment or a paper for a student to pick up, please put the document in an envelope, write their name on it, and leave it in the student pick-up box at the front desk. Do not leave it in your mailbox. Envelopes that have not been collected after one semester will be discarded.

Campus mail
The campus mailbox is at the front desk. Please address the envelope with only the person/department and their 4-digit zip (we have campus directories at the front desk). Do not put a return address, as it will most likely just be returned to the department.

Office computers
It often takes several weeks after the beginning of each semester for the computer in your office to be updated with your information so that you can log in. If you can’t log in, let me know so that I can get it fixed.

Web site
All of our part-time faculty are listed on our website at http://www.uakron.edu/english/faculty-staff/lecturer-directory.dot. We can add a picture, a bio, a CV, or links to another website you might have. Just send the info to Thea at thea@uakron.edu.

E-mail notifications
All notifications of events, meetings, etc. will be sent to your UA email only. If you prefer to use another email, you will need to set your UA email to forward to it.

Syllabi
The office keeps files of all syllabi for each semester. When you submit a copy request for syllabi, the student assistants save a copy for the files. If you print your syllabus somewhere else or upload it to Springboard instead of printing, please email it to us.

Keys
The key to your office also opens the front and back doors of the department, Olin 362, Olin 374, and Olin 369.
Department Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Dr. Jennie Young**  
Director of Composition  
(330) 972-7744  
jyg1@uakron.edu | **Carol Szabat**  
Administrative Secretary  
(330) 972-7471  
carol1@uakron.edu |
| **Ms. Katie Stoynoff**  
Asst. Director of Composition  
(330) 972-7480  
cf@uakron.edu | **Thea Ledendecker**  
Administrative Assistant  
(330) 972-7230  
thea@uakron.edu |
| **Student Assistants**  
(330) 972-7470  
englishcopy@uakron.edu |
Notes
Notes
For updated information and English Department events, visit us at
http://www.uakron.edu/english

Mailing Address:

The University of Akron
Department of English
Olin 301
Akron, OH 44325-1906

Phone: (330) 972-7470
Fax: (330) 972-8817