

**Instructor:** Troy Hicks, Ph.D.**Office Hours:** Tuesday, 2:00 – 3:30; by appointment**Phone:** Office (989) 774-3101; Cell (517) 930-3600**Email:** troy.hicks@cmich.edu; hickstro@gmail.com**Section:** 22015918**Meeting Times:** T/Th, 12:30–1:45**Meeting Place:** Anspach 252**Skype ID:** hickstro**Course Overview**

ENG 201 offers you as a writer a chance to explore how texts are constructed and to use argumentation and research to develop texts of your own. To that end, we will be doing in-depth exploration of three books as well as analyses of shorter texts to both see how the authors develop and support their ideas while also examining the broad themes of technology, media, and identity. Throughout the semester, you will have many opportunities to write individually, give and receive feedback on writing, write collaboratively, and compose with newer technologies. My goal for you in the course is to see yourself as a professional writer who understands how different modes, audiences, and purposes alter your writing and what it takes to become an expert writer in your chosen career.

**Course Texts**

## Required Texts

- Johnson, S. (2006). *Everything bad is good for you: How today's popular culture is actually making us smarter* (1st Riverhead trade pbk. ed.). New York: Riverhead Books.
- Postman, N. (1993). *Technopoly: The surrender of culture to technology* (1st Vintage Books ed.). New York: Vintage Books.
- Turkle, S. (1995). *Life on the screen: Identity in the age of the Internet*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Additional readings chosen by class members to be emailed or posted in Blackboard™

## Suggested Texts

- Hacker, D. (2006). *A writer's reference* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martins.
- OR other discipline-specific writer's guide

## Suggest Materials

- A one gigabyte (1 GB) or larger USB flash drive

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**Course Objectives**

As you move into your major fields of study and professional discourses, the objectives of ENG 201 build the habits of mind that a good writer can take into various composing situations. To that end, you will develop

- competence in some forms of writing about and in response to texts and empirical data;
- analytical and critical thinking skills essential to mature written expression; and,
- strategies of written expression appropriate for learning in a variety of general academic and/or professional areas.

### **Specific Skills and Learning Objectives**

Certain intellectual processes and skills are essential to the achievement of college-level competence in academic and non-academic writing. To successfully complete ENG 201, you will have demonstrated competence in the following interrelated skills:

- Generating ideas and gathering information.
- Selecting, analyzing, and evaluating information from a variety of sources for relevance, completeness, balance, and authority.
- Analyzing, evaluating, selecting, and limiting topics, and developing clear, arguable, and/or researchable theses from them.
- Analyzing readers' needs and expectations.
- Supporting claims with appropriate evidence, and specifically, drawing valid conclusions from textual information and empirical data, recognizing assumptions and implications of information and arguments, and arguing a position logically, ethically, and free of fallacies.
- Effectively using context-appropriate rhetorical appeals (i.e., ethos, logos, and pathos) and lines of argument (topoi).
- Formatting and designing documents in context-appropriate ways that make the content accessible, suitable, and usable.
- Preparing a clear, balanced, and thorough presentation of evidence and/or information.
- Organizing and formatting information in texts in ways that are appropriate to the discipline, profession, or other context for which it is written.
- Correctly citing sources in discipline- and/or profession-specific formats.
- Developing a context-appropriate, yet readable writing style.
- Developing the ability to use Standard Written English.
- Developing the ability to "write on demand" to produce short texts that are readable, suitable, accessible, and usable for the intended audience and purpose.

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### **Attendance, Participation and Late Work**

This course rests on a workshop approach to writing. Dialogue and individual practice are at the heart of it. You need to be in class—fully prepared—to get the benefits of such a system. Because we meet only twice a week, it is even more critical that you attend consistently. Participation includes participating in discussions, being responsible and helpful readers of each other's writing, having your materials prepared on time with the requisite number of copies, including bringing copies of the day's readings with you, being a useful addition to the elementary classroom, etc. I will consider two absences for personal reasons or illness appropriate. After that, each additional absence will result in a 20 point reduction in your final grade. If you have extenuating circumstances that may lead to multiple absences, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss options.

Work is due no later than the beginning of class on the day listed in the course schedule. For some assignments that count for credit/no-credit, late work will only be counted as half credit, regardless of circumstance. For all other assignments, I will accept late work with a one letter grade reduction for each day it is late (past class start time) for three calendar days, at which point it will become a zero.

## **Assignments**

Given the dynamic nature of a writing course, your interests and needs as students, and the ever-evolving topics that we will be focusing our attention on, I reserve the right to modify assignments and due dates. As writers, you will come to realize that a piece of writing is never really done, it is just due. Part of being a writer is recognizing your own and others' deadlines and planning strategically to meet them.

All work for this class that is turned in for a grade should be considered formal and must be typed, carefully edited, cited properly in a consistent format (MLA, APA, or other-discipline-specific format), and submitted to me in a digital format (preferably saved online and shared via email).

Also, note that you earn a grade based on the writing that you do as an individual and as a part of a collaborative group. While I could track participation points or quizzes, instead I chose to focus most of your grade on the writing that you do – both in process and final products – as well as a self- and peer-assessment at the end of the course. We will talk about this more throughout the semester, but I put it here in the assignment section of the syllabus to alert you to the fact that even though I am not assigning “credit” for every type of participation you might see, your final peer- and self-assessment will reflect what you and your peers thought of your performance over the entire semester.

## **Critical Responses (Blog Posts)**

Over the course of the semester, you will post ten critical responses to our common readings, your own outside readings, and our discussions. The purpose of the assignment is that given choice in topic and the chance to write without strict evaluation criteria, you will become more fluent in your thinking and writing. These responses must be posted by the beginning of class time on Thursdays for full credit (20 points). Otherwise, you will only receive half credit (10 points) or a zero if you choose not to complete them. These responses are flexible both in terms of topic and timing (as you can choose what you want to respond to and what ten of the fifteen weeks you want to post). See “Questions to Consider” for ideas about how to begin writing these responses.

Requirements: There are no particular word requirements on these responses, although I encourage you to think about the kinds of writing that you can do that will help you grow as a writer. That said, if I feel that the quality of your critical responses are consistently poor, I will discuss my concerns with you.

## **Text Analysis (Brief In-Class Presentation)**

Part of becoming a good writer is becoming a good reader. The purpose of this assignment is to invite you and a partner to choose a text that you both agree on and do a rhetorical analysis of that text as a presentation to the class. The texts can take any of a number of forms (print, electronic, audio, video, but should be engaging for others and related to the topics we are discussing in class.

You will work with your partner to choose a text, announce that text to the class by the end of our Tuesday session so that they can read it, and then prepare a short presentation that analyzes features of the text. See “Questions to Consider” for ideas about how to frame your analysis.

### **Critical Analysis Paper**

In this assignment, you will integrate course materials and your own research to analyze and evaluate one of the following:

- professional writing, performance, or exhibition,
- a situation, institutional pattern or series of behaviors, or
- a laboratory experience or field experience.

In your paper, you will use ideas from Postman's text to frame this analysis while also commenting on the effectiveness of his text.

Requirements: 1,500-2,000 words, or 5 - 7 typed pages, double spaced, references on additional page(s)

### **Annotated Bibliography (Individual)**

In this assignment, you will analyze multiple readings germane to a particular topic and draw upon varied, credible sources and appropriate documentation/presentation formats. Information gathering techniques will be introduced. Genres and contexts may vary, but appropriate documentation/presentation formats will be addressed. Specific work on documentation format will be done during the composing process. The focus in this unit is not, however, on persuasion, but on effectively reporting information. In your paper, you will present annotations of at least ten sources that you have explored up to this point in the semester.

Requirements: Informative text based on bibliographic research of 1,500-2,000 words, or 5 - 7 typed pages, double spaced references on additional page(s)

### **Research Report (Individual)**

In this assignment, you will write documents based on empirical data (qualitative or quantitative) that you gather in response to a topic of your choice that is relevant to the course themes. Data gathering techniques will be introduced such as survey responses, interview responses, numerical data, direct observations, instrument measurements, etc. Genres and contexts may vary, but appropriate documentation/presentation formats will be addressed. Specific work on documentation format will be done during the composing process. The focus in this unit is not, however, on persuasion, but on effectively reporting information. In your paper, you will present results of a brief research project that you will have completed related to your topic.

Requirements: Informative text based on empirical data gathering of 1,500-2,000 words, or 5 - 7 typed pages, double spaced, references on additional page(s)

### **Argument/Recommendation/Proposal (Individual)**

In this assignment, you will go beyond merely reporting information to developing effective written arguments for a specific audience and purpose, or a recommendation or proposal for specific action(s) or decision(s). Information gathering techniques will be reinforced, and strategies for constructing effective evidence-based arguments will be emphasized during the composing process. Your text may incorporate multimedia elements, however this would be the assignment that you might consider as a "traditional" research paper in that you will situate your argument in the field, review literature, cite your own empirical data, and generate an original argument based on that work.

Requirements: Argument/Recommendation/Proposal 2,500-3,750 words,

or 8-12 typed pages, double spaced, references on additional page(s)

### **Multimodal Argument/Recommendation/Proposal from Affinity Group**

In this assignment, you will have the opportunity to collaborate with others in your affinity group to create a multimodal representation of your work that is suitable for presentation to audiences outside our class and for purposes that you will consider together. You will receive both an individual and group grade for this assignment and we will discuss purposes, topics, formats, and other considerations throughout the semester.

As a collaborative project, this text or series of texts will connect the work of everyone in your group and invite participation from audiences outside our classroom. We will discuss how this process will unfold – as well as individual and group requirements for it – over the course of the semester. That said, I feel that this is an exciting opportunity for collaboration that will help you further your goals as a writer and in your career.

To that end, possible texts that I could see arising from this work might be:

- An informational video (like a public service announcement) about a unit or service on campus;
- A set of texts such as a brochure, web site, and business cards for a local community organization; or
- A series of podcasts with accompanying documentation that offer insightful interviews and commentary about topics covered in the course.

Requirements: Although there will be some particulars on word count and documentation format, much of what will constitute a quality project will be determined by class members.

### **Writing and Affinity Groups**

Every week, some time in class will be devoted to writing workshop. During this workshop time, you will be sharing your own writing and responding to the writing of others. Different combinations of groups will be employed for different purposes throughout the semester.

Moreover, you will be choosing Affinity Groups for your final multimodal research presentation. We will discuss procedures and choose groups in class, but for now understand that you will have some degree of freedom to pick your topic and choose who you want to work with, but that I will have some say in that decision as well.

### **A Note about Technology**

Newer technologies such as blogs, wikis, podcasts, voice over internet protocols, virtual worlds, social networking, and many other tools of “Web 2.0” are changing (sometimes drastically changing) the ways in which we read, write, and research online. In this course, we will explore many of these new media for reading and writing on the web with the intention of creating our own texts for various purposes and to disseminate to wider audiences than what we could within the walls of our classroom.

I ask for your patience and trust as we do this. Sometimes technology works well, sometimes it causes us all headaches. But, in the end, I feel that spending the time up front to learn about these new tools will reap dividends for you in terms of productivity and enjoyment as the course goes on.

## Course Schedule

Date	Topic(s) for Class	Homework/Assignments to be Completed Before Class
8/28/07	Intros, course overview, tech survey, syllabus	None
8/30/07	Discussion of rhetoric MAPS Text Analysis – Led by Troy	Read: “Modes of Persuasion” and related links for “Ethos,” “Pathos,” and “Logos” from Wikipedia’s entry at: <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modes_of_persuasion">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modes_of_persuasion</a>  Also, “Topoi” at: <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inventio#Topoi">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inventio#Topoi</a>  Find, read, and compare at least one other source for definitions of rhetoric, ethos, pathos, logos, and topoi
9/4/07	Visit from Nicki Acker, Career Services  Setting up Google Reader and Blogs  Modeling of critical response writing with Postman	Read Postman, Chapters 1-4 (pp. 1–70)
9/6/07	RSS Reading and Response to Classmates  Text Analysis – Led by ___ and ___  Workshop Time  Identifying Affinity Group Preferences	Read Text Analysis Selection
9/11/07	Writing Center Peer Response Presentation  Peer Response Groups with Postman’s ideas	Read Postman, Chapters 5-8 (pp. 71-143)
9/13/07	RSS Reading and Response to Classmates  Text Analysis – Led by ___ and ___  Workshop Time	Read Text Analysis Selection

9/18/07	Class discussion of Postman “Personal Technology History” Writing as prelude to Critical Analysis	Read Postman, Chapters 9-11 (pp. 144-199)
9/20/07	RSS Reading and Response to Classmates  Text Analysis – Led by ___ and ___  Workshop Time	Read Text Analysis Selection
9/25/07	Review of Critical Analysis Draft in Peer Response Groups  Revision strategies for critical analysis draft based on group needs	Critical Analysis Draft
9/27/07	Text Analysis – Led by ___ and ___  TBD – Catch Up, Status of the Class, Work Time, Pressing Needs, etc.	Critical Analysis Paper Due
10/2/07	Discussion of Johnson  Examining evidence and implications	Johnson, pp. 1-62
10/4/07	Visit to Library	Researching the library databases Keeping track of citations
10/9/07	Accuracy and bias  Selections from <i>Control Room</i>	Read Johnson, pp. 62-136
10/11/07	RSS Reading and Response to Classmates  Text Analysis – Led by ___ and ___  Workshop Time	Read Text Analysis Selection
10/16/07	Peer Response to Annotated Bib  Discussion of Johnson	Read Johnson, 137-199 Annotated Bib Draft Due
10/18/07	RSS Reading and Response to Classmates	Annotated Bib Due

	Text Analysis – Led by ___ and ___ Workshop Time	
10/23/07	Discussion of Turtle Research methods and what counts as evidence	Read Turtle, Intro and Part 1 (pp. 9-73)
10/25/07	RSS Reading and Response to Classmates Text Analysis – Led by ___ and ___ Workshop Time	Read Text Analysis Selection
10/30/07	Peer Review of Research Report Discussion of Turtle	Read Turtle, Part 2 (pp. 77-174) Research Report Draft Due
11/1/07	RSS Reading and Response to Classmates Text Analysis – Led by ___ and ___ Workshop Time	Read Text Analysis Selection
11/6/07	Affinity Groups – Long Term Planning TBD – Catch Up, Status of the Class, Work Time, Pressing Needs, etc.	TBD
11/8/07	RSS Reading and Response to Classmates Text Analysis – Led by ___ and ___ Workshop Time	Research Report Due
11/13/07	Discuss Turtle Affinity Group Meeting and planning	Read Turtle, Part 3 (pp. 177-269)
11/15/07	Affinity Group Meetings (Troy at NCTE/NWP)	Project Overview Memo Emailed to Troy by midnight on Monday, November 19
11/20/07	Peer Response to Argument	Argument/Recommendation/Proposal Draft Due

11/22/07	Thanksgiving	None
11/27/07	RSS Reading and Response to Classmates  Text Analysis – Led by ___ and ___  Workshop Time	Argument/Recommendation/Proposal Due  Read Text Analysis Selection
11/29/07	RSS Reading and Response to Classmates  Text Analysis – Led by ___ and ___  Workshop Time	Read Text Analysis Selection
12/4//07	TBD – Catch Up, Status of the Class, Work Time, Pressing Needs, etc.	TBD
12/6/07	RSS Reading and Response to Classmates  Text Analysis – Led by ___ and ___  Workshop Time	Read Text Analysis Selection Multimodal Draft
Thursday, 12/13/07, 12:00 - 1:50 PM	Group Presentations	Multimodal Argument Due

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### Academic Integrity

I would expect that because you are planning to be professionals, you already value academic honesty and respect for others in the classroom and your future careers. Violation of the University policies will result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or course and could seriously jeopardize your future plans. **All forms of plagiarism are in violation of these policies and are unacceptable in this class.** You may find the policy on academic integrity at [http://academicsenate.cmich.edu/NonCad/ACADEMIC\\_INTEGRITY\\_POLICY.pdf](http://academicsenate.cmich.edu/NonCad/ACADEMIC_INTEGRITY_POLICY.pdf).

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### Writing Center

Because writing is such an important part of a college education, CMU provides free writing center support to all CMU writers, at any stage of the process, from brainstorming to final editing, and for any class. I encourage, but will not require, you to utilize the writing center. As writers, you will benefit from the peer tutoring services that can help you focus your ideas, respond to questions, and help you revise your writing.

The Center has three sites: Anspach 003 (x1228) Mon.-Thurs. 9-4:00 p.m., Fri., 9-1:00 p.m.; Towers (Wheeler basement, x1002) Mon.-Thurs. 10-4:00 p.m., 6-9:00 p.m.; Park Library (Rm. 321, walk-in only) Sun.-Thurs. 6-9:00 p.m. Because the Center gets busy,

it helps to go well before assignments are due; be sure to take your draft and guidelines with you. Anspach or Towers sites take appointments first so call in advance; the Library site is first-come first-served only.

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### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

CMU provides students with disabilities reasonable accommodation to participate in educational programs, activities or services. Students with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in class activities or meet course requirements should first register with the office of Student Disability Services (250 Foust Hall, 774-3018, TDD #2568), and then contact the professor as soon as possible.

### **Assessment and Evaluation**

To the extent possible, we as a class will discuss and decide upon the criteria by which you will peer- and self-assess your work as well as how I will make final evaluations for grades. Over the course of the semester, you will have the opportunity to earn up to 1000 points and I will not offer any extra credit.

Individual assignment point values are as follows:

Critical Responses (Blog Postings)	200 points
Text Analysis Presentation	100 points
Formal Multi-draft Assignments	
• Critical Analysis Paper	150 points
• Annotated Bibliography (Informative Text based on Bibliographic Research)	150 points
• Individual Research Project (Informative Text based on Empirical Data)	150 points
• Individual Argument/Recommendation/Proposal	150 Points
• Multimodal Argument from Affinity Group	100 points
Total	1000 points

The scale for your final course grade is as follows:

Final Point Total	Final Letter Grade
960 – 1000	A
920 – 959	A-
880 – 919	B+
850 – 879	B
810 – 849	B-
770 – 809	C+
740 – 769	C
700 – 739	C-
660 – 699	D+
640 – 659	D
600 – 639	D-
599 or below	E

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### **Closing Thoughts**

Writing is a skill that we each learn in different ways, at our own pace, and throughout our lifetimes. Thus, during our work together, I will do three things for you:

- I will do everything I can to help you learn;
- I will attempt to make what we read, write, and do applicable to your current needs and future career; and
- I will be consistent and fair with everyone.

My sincere hope is that you will do everything you can to help yourself learn by coming to class, engaging with the material outside of class, and asking questions along the way. By doing so, together we can all become better writers.

## Questions to Consider in Writing Responses and Other Course Papers

I have adapted the following questions and ideas, with permission, from a professor who helped me become a better writer by asking us to write with them in mind. I thank Lynn Fendler from Michigan State University for allowing me to share them with you.

### Questions inappropriate for a critical response or course paper:

- Do you like the text(s)?
- Do you agree with the author(s)?
- Are the premises realistic?
- Do the assertions reflect your personal experience?

### Questions you will want to consider for a critical response or course paper:

- Is the research method appropriate to the claims?
- What significant factors have been ignored in the analysis?
- What perspectives do the articles fail to account for?
- What counts as evidence? What doesn't count?
- What rhetorical strategies make the argument compelling, provocative, and/or weak?
- How does the article advance our understanding of what constitutes technology, media, and/or identity?
- What are the political implications of this article for different populations?
- What intellectual traditions does this article draw from?
- Even if not made explicit, what is the article arguing against?

### Thus, a good critical response or course papers will:

- Demonstrate critical thinking and/or analysis. The paper should make a clear point that is more than description or narration; it should be your own contribution, not simply a summary of other peoples' ideas.
- Acknowledge multiple viewpoints. Your paper should give evidence that you understand and appreciate more than one perspective on an issue. This does not mean you should be wishy-washy. Make a clear point by showing that you have considered alternate views.
- Situate the argument in larger conversations. Your paper should make it clear to the reader what topic and perspective you are addressing. The paper should draw from current texts, explain how others have addressed your issue, and state explicitly how your piece makes a contribution (e.g., synthesizes, emphasizes someone else's findings, compares viewpoints, changes the question).
- Draw from course materials. Your paper should give evidence that you are taking this course. You do not need to agree with any of the readings, presentations, or discussions, but your paper should show you have considered the course materials thoughtfully.
- Support claims with appropriate evidence. Evidence can come from the readings, discussions, your bibliographic and empirical research, and your personal experience, as long as the kind of evidence is pertinent to the claim.
- Recognize complexity. The world is not simple. Your paper should not propose simple solutions (e.g., "stop media bias" or "ban online games") to complex problems nor reduce issues to either/or, black/white, good/bad, etc.
- Challenge assumptions. The paper should show that you have learned something by writing it. There should be evidence that you have been open to changing your mind.