

English 1101: Composition I
Arguments and Mediated Violence
Summer 2006: Section SF4, MWF 10:15-12:20

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Course Description

You've been arguing in one way or another for most of your life: this class will show you ways to manufacture the well-organized, well-reasoned, and well-supported arguments that will help you succeed in the years to come. The aim of English 1101 is to teach you methods of writing and critical thinking that will prepare you for the unique rigors of the Georgia Tech curriculum. You will hone your communication skills through individual and collaborative projects, thinking and working with and about technology.

This section of 1101 will begin by addressing the fundamentals of oral and written argument by exploring the disciplined approaches explained in Sylvan Barnet and Hugo Bedau's *From Critical Thinking to Argument*. You'll tackle several contemporary controversies as you heighten your verbal maneuverability, and then you'll sharpen your analytical skills by dissecting the issues involved in debates about the horrors, pleasures, and effects of media violence. You will improve your ability to engage with both ideas and audiences, mastering arguments about—and as—forms of mediated violence.

Required Texts

Barnet, Sylvan and Hugo Bedau. *From Critical Thinking to Argument*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2005. [abbreviation: CTA]
Goldstein, Jeffrey H, ed. *Why We Watch: The Attractions of Violent Entertainment*. New York: Oxford UP, 1998. [WWW]
Lunsford, Andrea, et al. *The St. Martin's Handbook*. 5th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2003. [SMH] NOTE: GET THE PACKAGE WITH COMMENT ACCESS!!!!
Additional texts are available via electronic reserves.

Graded Work

Each assignment has a point value. Assignments add up to a total of 1000 points. Convert point totals into percentages, and the letter grade equivalents are:

A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; F = 0-59

Failure to complete an assignment will result in 0 points.

Individual Essays, the Group Project, and the Editing Quiz [800 points, 80% of your grade]

Essay One: Critiquing an Argument [200 points: Outline Workshop, 10; Revised Outline, 20; Draft Workshop, 20, Revised Essay, 150]

Expose the strengths and weaknesses of one of the arguments in *CTA* and offer your own perspective on the argument's topic. Develop your own thesis and supporting arguments with evidence from the text. Be sure your analysis offers insights that differ from those already in *CTA*. Workshop an outline and a rough draft in class, and turn in revised versions of both on the due date. Essay length: 1000 words.

Essay Two: Arbitrating Perspectives [220 points: Draft Workshop, 20; Revised Essay, 200]

Referring to at least two readings from *WWW* and/or the supplementary materials, identify two opposed perspectives that could spark debate about the effects of technologically mediated violence. Write an essay in which you explain and arbitrate the underlying theoretical disagreement that would fuel the debate, and propose a resolution. Essay length: 1500 words.

Online Reading Assessment Essays [130 points: Two assessments, 65 points each]

Early in the course, sign up for TWO "Posting Discussions" during which the class will discuss your ideas about a recent reading assignment. Critique the reading in the manner of Essay One, or develop your own original argument using the reading's evidence. You must post your assessment on *Comment* NO LATER THAN NOON on the DAY BEFORE your scheduled Posting Discussion. Essay length: 750 words each.

Responses to Online Postings [20 points: Four responses, 5 points each]

Before each "Posting Discussion," read all of the Reading Assessment Essays posted on *Comment* for that discussion. On at least one essay, post comments about your responses to the author's ideas: state why you agree or disagree, provide additional insight, and/or ask provocative questions that will spur class discussion. Response length: 125-250 words each.

Group Project: Media Analysis [200 points: Topic, 5; Proposal, 10; Presentation, 150; Self-Evaluation, 35]

In an assigned group, choose one specific example of mediated violence and offer an oral and visual presentation about how media technologies might contribute to its attractions and effects. Your group's example might be a violent film, television show, video game, piece of music, televised sporting event, or any other violent phenomenon made accessible to mass audiences by media technologies. Turn in a detailed proposal of what the presentation will involve prior to the in-class presentation itself. In addition to presenting illustrated and integrated ideas with the group for approximately 15 minutes in class, you must turn in a 750-word self-evaluation that assesses your individual contributions to the project and the group's overall performance.

The Editing Quiz [30 points]

A quiz early in the course will assess your ability to identify and correct stylistic errors.

Turning in Work and Academic Honesty

You must submit all essays to turnitin.com, an online anti-plagiarism software. You are responsible for knowing and abiding by GT's policy for academic integrity. Consult the Honor Code online at <http://www.honor.gatech.edu> or in the General Catalog. Students who engage in academic dishonesty will receive a 0 on the assignment and may fail the course. I will report instances of academic dishonesty to the Dean of Students, who may take further action.

Participation [200 points, 20% of your grade]

Participation in Class Discussion, Group Activities, and Workshops

Make class meetings productive by sharing your insights and completing group assignments. This class focuses on oral as well as written communication, so regular in-class contributions are mandatory. Speak up! Saying something is more important than saying the “right” thing.

In-Class Essays and Unannounced Quizzes

You will write two in-class essays for grades. If and when I feel that people in the class are not keeping up with the readings, there will be quizzes, which are usually unpleasant.

Attendance

This class moves quickly, and each assignment and class meeting builds upon previous assignments and meetings. Attendance is crucial for your success. If you must miss class due to illness or an unavoidable schedule conflict, please email me ahead of time. You may miss one class without penalty. Each additional absence will result in a 20-point (out of 1000) penalty on your final grade unless you have a doctor’s note or other institutionally-approved excuse. More than four absences will result in a penalty of at least 100 points. *Failure to attend on a workshop day will result in a zero on the draft unless you clear the absence with me ahead of time.*

Class Decorum

Lateness, noisy cell phones, and other interruptions lower the productivity of the whole class and might, therefore, lower your participation grade. We will discuss a number of sensitive issues in this class: failure to treat classmates with respect is a communication failure and could result in a lower grade as well as disciplinary action.

Additional Information

Software/Computing Resources and Requirements

All students must meet the technology requirements for incoming freshmen at GT. You must have access to your own computer with Internet capabilities, word processing software, and the software packaged with *SMH* to complete the work in this class.

Students with Disabilities

If you need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please see me during office hours. Students with disabilities should contact Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS). For an appointment with a counselor call (404) 894-2564 (voice) / (404) 894-1664 (voice/TDD) or visit Suite 210 in the Smithgall Student Services Building. For more information visit <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>.

The Fine Print

I reserve the right to alter the policies and assignments on this syllabus. I will exercise this right rarely, but I will often provide more detailed information about assignments during class. This syllabus is your guide for the entire course. Keep it. Know it. Love it.

Schedule of Meetings, Topics, Readings, and Assignments

Complete readings BEFORE the class meeting for which they are scheduled.

*A * indicates a date when you must bring a hard copy of an assignment to class.*

“E-res” indicates a reading available via electronic reserves.

Week One

June 19: Course Introduction

IN-CLASS ESSAY

June 21: Reading and Writing Basics, *CTA, Ch. 1, 3-22; SMH, Intro, 1-27*

June 23: Close Reading, *CTA, Ch. 2-3, 23-80*

Week Two

June 26: Rhetorical Dissection, *CTA Ch. 9, 232-265*

EDITING QUIZ

*June 28: Battle Plans, *CTA Ch. 6, 115-149; SMH 3, 57-82*

ESSAY ONE OUTLINE WORKSHOP

*June 30: Staging Conflicts, *CTA Ch. 5, 97-114*

ESSAY ONE DRAFT WORKSHOP (bring hard copy and submit via *Comment*)

Week Three

July 3: Continue working on drafts of Essay One via *Comment*

*July 5: Violent Studies, *WWW Intro, 1-6, and Ch. 9, 179-211,*

ESSAY ONE AND OUTLINE REVISIONS DUE (turn in hard copies of both and submit only the essay via turnitin.com)

July 7: Managing Fear, *Glassner* [E-res]

POSTING DISCUSSION 1 (read Assessment Essays on *Comment* and respond)

Week Four

July 10: Mediated Death and Religion, *WWW Ch. 2, 27-52, and Ch.8, 163-178*

*July 12: Violence and Sports, *WWW Ch. 1, 7-26,*

POSTING DISCUSSION 2; **GROUP TOPIC DUE** (turn in one hard copy per group)

July 14: Violent Values, *Phillips and Robie* [E-res]; *Jones* [E-res]

POSTING DISCUSSION 3

Week Five

*July 17: Violence and Video Games, *WWW Ch. 3, 53-68; Grossman* [E-res]

GROUP PROPOSAL DUE (turn in one hard copy per group)

July 19: Twisted Data, *Freedman* [E-res]; *Potter* [E-res]

POSTING DISCUSSION 4

*July 21: Preparing for the Final Battle(s): Group Interviews

ESSAY TWO DRAFT WORKSHOP (bring hard copy and submit via *Comment*)

Week Six [film: *Natural Born Killers*, screening time and location TBA]

*July 24: Rabid Viewers, *WWW Ch. 6-7, 116-162*

ESSAY TWO REVISION DUE (turn in hard copy and submit via turnitin.com)

July 26: Violence on Trial, *Grisham* [E-res]; *Stone* [E-res]

IN-CLASS ESSAY

*July 28: **GROUP PRESENTATIONS**

SELF-EVALUATION DUE (turn in hard copy after your group's presentation)