

English 1101: Composition I
Arguments and Mediated Violence
Fall 2005: Sections A4, B2, G2

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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]
Additional texts available via electronic reserves and the instructor.

Graded Work

A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; F = 1-59

A+/98 ; A/95 ; A-/92 ; B+/88 ; B/85 ; B-/82 ; C+/78 ; C/75 ; C-/72 ; D+/68 ; D/65 ;
D-/62; F/1-59*

*Failure to complete an assignment will result in a "0"

Individual Essays and the Collaborative Project [80%]

Each individual essay assignment involves several written steps. Failing to turn in a workshopped draft and/or any other required steps along with the final draft will result in a penalty of *at least* one letter grade.

Essay One: Critiquing an Argument [Revised Outline: 5%, Revised Essay: 10%]

Expose the strengths and weaknesses of one of the arguments in *CTA* by offering your own perspective on the argument's topic. Develop your own thesis and supporting arguments by responding to 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. *1000 words.*

Essay Two: Argument about Media Technology and Violence [Revised Essay: 15%]

Referring to chapter 1, 2, 8, or 9 in *WWW* for support, develop an original argument about the role that media technologies play in people's responses to specific kinds of violence. Focus on careful definition: clarify what you mean by terms such as "media," "technologies," "responses," and "violence." *1250 words.*

Essay Three: Arbitrating Perspectives [Revised Essay: 20%]

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 mediated violence. Write an essay in which you explain and arbitrate the underlying theoretical disagreement that would fuel the debate, and propose a resolution. *1500 words.*

Group Project: Media Analysis [Prospectus, Synopsis, and Presentation: 20%]

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 prospectus 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 20 minutes in class, each group member must turn in a 750-word self-evaluation that includes an explanatory synopsis of her/his material and ideational contributions.

Reading Response Essay [WebCT posting, 10%]

Early in the semester, sign up for a week in which you will write a detailed response to one of the week's reading assignments. Critique it and offer your own opposing view, or develop its perspective with your own ideas. No later than *Tuesday at 5pm* of that week, post your response on your section's WebCT page. *1000 words.*

Turning in Work and Academic Honesty

Unless otherwise noted, submit hard copies of all assignments during class on the due date AND via 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 [20%]

Responses to Online Postings [10 points each]

On your own, choose three of the six weeks in which students will post online reading responses and write responses to the student's posted work. Critique ONE student's response in a supportive, constructive manner, or augment it with your own original insights. Post your response to your classmate via WebCT by *Thursday at 9am*. *3 postings, 250 words each*.

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.

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 two classes without penalty; missing more than six classes will lower your final grade by *at least* one letter. *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 semester. Keep it. Know it. Love it.

Schedule of Meetings, Topics, Readings and Assignments

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

[NOTE: Dates preceded by a "*" are important due dates]

Week One

Aug. 22: Course Introduction—So What?

Aug. 24: In-Class Essay

Aug. 26: Writing Basics, *SMH, Intro, 1-27; CTA Ch. 1, pp. 3-22*

Week Two

Aug. 29: Critical Interrogation, *CTA 2, 23-41*

Aug. 31: Rhetorical Dissection, *CTA 3, 42-80*

Sept. 2: Battle Plans, *CTA 5, 97-114*

Week Three

Sept. 7: Your Arsenal, *CTA Ch. 9, 232-265; selections from SMH, parts 6 and 7, TBA*

*Sept. 9: THESIS AND OUTLINE WORKSHOP, *CTA 6, 115-149, SMH 3*

Week Four

Sept. 12: Claiming Territory, *SMH 17 and 18, 380-403* [intro, turnitin.com, in class]

*Sept. 14: WORKSHOP, ESSAY ONE DRAFT

*Sept. 16: ESSAY ONE DUE

Week Five

Sept. 19: Violent Studies, *WWW Intro, 1-6; selections, The Culture of Fear* [e-res]

Sept. 21: Psychological Explanations, *WWW 9, 179-211*

Sept. 23: First Posting Discussion, *read WebCT postings*

Week Six

Sept. 26: Mediating Death, *WWW 2, 27-52*

Sept. 28: Violence and Religion, *WWW 8, 163-178*

Sept. 30: Second Posting Discussion, *read WebCT postings*

Week Seven

Oct. 3: Violence and Sports, *WWW 1, 7-26*

Oct. 5: Violent Trials, *CTA 7, look over 150-196, read 197-212*

Oct. 7: Third Posting Discussion, *read WebCT postings*

Week Eight

Oct. 10: Organization, *SMH, TBA*

*Oct. 12: WORKSHOP, ESSAY TWO DRAFT

*Oct. 14: ESSAY TWO DUE, *CTA 4, 81-96*

Week Nine

Oct. 19: Violence and Children, *WWW 4-5, 69-115*

Oct. 21: Fourth Posting Discussion, *read WebCT postings*

Schedule, Continued

Week Ten

- Oct. 24: Violent Values, *selections*, Horror and Violence and Killing Monsters [e-res]
- Oct. 26: Dangerous Games, *WWW 3, 53-68 and selections*, Media Violence Alert [e-res]
- Oct. 28: Fifth Posting Discussion, *read WebCT postings*

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

- Oct. 31: Rabid Viewers, *WWW 6, 116-143 and selections*, Screen Violence [e-res]
- Nov. 2: Sickness, *WWW 7, 144-162*
- Nov. 4: Sixth Posting Discussion, *read WebCT postings*

Week Twelve

- Nov. 7: The Big Picture, *WWW 10, 212-226 and selections*, Eleven Myths... [e-res]
- Nov. 9: Revisiting Data, *selections*, Media Violence and Its Effects on Aggression [e-res]
- *Nov. 11: WORKSHOP, ESSAY THREE DRAFT, *SMH TBA*

Week Thirteen [film: *Scream*, optional screening, time and location TBA]

- *Nov. 14: ESSAY THREE DUE, Topic Brainstorming, *SMH TBA*
- *Nov. 16: GROUP TOPIC DUE, Nonlinear Organization, *SMH TBA*
- Nov. 18: In-class analysis of *Scream*

Week Fourteen

- *Nov. 21: GROUP PROSPECTUS DUE, Group Interviews
- Nov. 23: Integrating Perspectives, *SMH TBA*

Week Fifteen

- Nov. 28: In-class analysis of example(s), *SMH TBA*
- Nov. 30: In-Class Essay
- Dec. 2: Evaluation, *SMH TBA*

Week Sixteen

- *Dec. 5: PRESENTATIONS
- *Dec. 7: PRESENTATIONS
- *Dec. 9: PRESENTATIONS