



ENGL-1301-005I1
Composition I
Fall 2025
Online Course

Instructor Information: Ryan, rsmith37@com.edu, 832-766-8391

Office hours and location: Available Fridays, 2pm – 3pm; also available by appointment

Required Textbook/Materials: All reading materials, including supplemental readings, will be provided without additional cost to student.

The Roughwriter's Guide: A Handbook for Writing Well, by Dr. Karen Palmer and Dr. Sandi Van Lieu (<https://pressbooks.pub/roughwritersguide/>)

Handbook: Purdue Online Writing Lab (<https://owl.purdue.edu/>)

Course Description: Intensive study of and practice in writing processes, from invention and researching to drafting, revising, and editing, both individually and collaboratively. Emphasis on effective rhetorical choices, including audience, purpose, arrangement, and style. Focus on writing the academic essay as a vehicle for learning, communicating, and critical analysis.

This accelerated course uses the horror genre to explore college-level writing, research, and analysis. Through short stories, films, and critical essays, students will study how fear is constructed and what it reveals about society.

Course Prerequisites: See college catalog or consult with advisor for current prerequisite requirements for English 1301.

Course Requirements: Besides the major assignments listed below, class activities and teaching tools may include discussions, group work, presentations, videos, and supplemental readings. Students are expected to read and review all material assigned.

Essays

Students will receive separate handouts and instructions for major essay assignments. Major essay assignments will range from 3-8 pages in length, and each essay will build on your ideas as you focus on certain interests or topics over the course of the semester. For certain essay assignments, students should be aware that the final draft may not be submitted for credit if the early steps are not completed.

Journal Assignments

Students will be asked to generate 1-2-page journal entries, consisting of reflections and thoughts generated by the readings, class discussions, and other assigned journal topics. Journal assignments will be assigned in class or online and turned in either electronically or in printed form (as instructed). Although students have a lot of liberty in completing the journal assignments, they should not use journal assignments as a way to vent about the class, other students, or instructors at the college; this may result in a failing grade on the journal. Please remain professional and use common sense. Inform the instructor directly if you have a concern. While journals will not be graded for grammar or punctuation, it also makes sense to be mindful of these concerns, and you should proofread if you have time. MLA format should be used on all journals.

Oral Presentation

As part of the college's continuing oral communication across-the-curriculum initiative, this class includes an oral presentation assignment. More information on this assignment will be distributed later.

Discussions

Discussions are an important way to gauge student participation and keep the class engaged and interactive, particularly in an online class. Discussions give you a way to share ideas and interpretations with other classmates and the instructor. Because we do not meet in a face-to-face environment, discussions are graded as a way to encourage and objectively measure student participation. A discussion rubric will be distributed to help you understand how discussions are graded. You should avoid using outside sources (such as websites) to complete discussions, since I'm interested in your thoughts and analysis, but if you do use such a source, you should of course give credit with proper citations.

Note on discussions and other class materials: Certain questions and notes may be used or adapted from textbook and publisher resources.

Other Assignments

Minor assignment grades may include turning in a preliminary Works Cited list or working thesis for major paper assignments. Other assignments may include prewriting exercises, research checks, grammar and style exercises, and shorter writing assignments.

Extra Credit

Because this class is skills-oriented and focuses on the rigors of the writing process, extra credit will not normally be made available. I will award extra credit to students who pursue certain writing accomplishments outside of class (e.g., having a letter published in the newspaper). Let me know if you think you think you might have done something that would qualify. I may also award extra credit for attending certain college events if they're deemed especially valuable.

Determination of Course Grade/Detailed Grading Formula:

Major Assignments: 1000 total points for the course

- Journal Assignments: 200 total (25 each)
- Discussion Posts: 100 total (12.5 each)
- Essay 1: 150
- Essay 2: 150
- Essay 3: 250
- Oral Presentation: 100
- Final Reflection: 50

Notes: There may be some adjustment of point distributions, totals, or weights as needed to correct for errors or changes in assignments/schedules. Any extra credit points will be added as raw points.

Online Gradebook: The online gradebook in Brightspace allows you to review and keep track of completed grades and get an overview of your grade. Please note that the final grade display may be incomplete at any given time and is simply for your convenience (not a substitute for the instructor's official records). The final grade display may be artificially inflated or deflated at any time if assignments have not been graded. Certain assignment points, like extra credit, may not be posted until the end of the semester, and the final gradebook may require some adjusting if the class schedule has been changed or just to correct for technical problems or input errors. You are responsible for keeping track of your progress in the class and keeping up with all assignments. Your final grades will be made available through WebAdvisor at the end of the semester. The final grade total (at the end of the semester) on Brightspace will also be considered official.

You should also not use the gradebook area as a way to locate assignments, as this can lead to confusion and missing deadlines. You will need to read all learning module instructions and all instructions for individual assignments. Please email me if you have questions.

Late Work, Make-Up, and Extra-Credit Policy:

1. *Late work/deadlines:* Please keep in mind that this class is not self-paced. Students are expected to know deadlines and to turn work in on time. This is in the interest of fairness as well as keeping the class manageable. Students should check deadlines carefully and understand that assignments may be locked down after the deadline, preventing further access. Points may be deducted for late or incomplete discussion postings (posting after the initial deadline); once an assignment has been taken down or a discussion has been "locked," it will not be reopened. Late papers (essays) will only be accepted late with permission from instructor, and then a late penalty will apply as appropriate. Please contact me if you're having difficulty with deadlines. Because of the asynchronous nature of the class, quizzes and exams cannot normally be made up or taken late, so plan accordingly.
2. *Make-up work:* Students may only turn in a major essay late or complete a make-up exam with the instructor's express permission. Documentation may be required for students who request a makeup or deadline extension due to an emergency.

3. *Extra Credit:* Extra credit may be offered for attending certain presentations, lectures, plays, and other activities outside of class. These will be announced as opportunities arise. Extra credit will not be offered to individual students as a way of making up grade deficiencies.

Attendance Policy: For the purposes of this online class, “attendance” means logging on to the class and completing tasks and/or communicating with the instructor. Regular class participation is expected; a student cannot expect to pass this online class without contributing to discussions and other assignments on a regular basis. Students are expected to check course email at least every other day and to sign on to the class at least 4-5 times a week to check assignments and participate in D2L discussions and other learning activities. Students should expect to devote a minimum of three hours to class each week in terms of Brightspace participation only (for a 16week class), just as they would be attending a normal class for three hours each week. This time commitment does not include the time required for reading, completing writing assignments, and other preparation, but it does include reading discussions, viewing learning materials, taking notes from learning materials, and crafting discussion posts. Please be aware that I am able to check a student’s progress (including last sign-on date, items accessed, etc.) through Brightspace. Reading all instructions is essential for your success.

Please note that I do not normally drop students based on lack of attendance, although this is done automatically for those who do not attend class or participate in some way before Census Day. (As explained in the Student Handbook, simply logging in is not enough to count for online attendance.) After that time, students are responsible for withdrawing themselves and for managing their own schedule and how they might be affected by the six-drop rule. See withdrawal policy below.

Communicating with your instructor: ALL electronic communication with the instructor must be through your COM email. Due to FERPA restrictions, faculty cannot share any information about performance in the class through other electronic means. (Faculty may add additional statement requiring monitoring and communication expectations via D2L or other LMS)

Student Learner Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of individual and collaborative writing processes.
2. Develop ideas with appropriate support and attribution.
3. Write in a style appropriate to audience and purpose.
4. Read, reflect, and respond critically to a variety of texts.
5. Use Edited American English in academic essays.

Please note that these learning outcomes are state mandated.

Secondary objectives include:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of MLA bibliographic and citation systems.

2. Use technology in the writing process.

Core Objectives: Students successfully completing this course will demonstrate competency in the following Core Objectives:

1. **Critical Thinking Skills (CT):** Students will demonstrate creative thinking, innovation, and the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesis information.
2. **Communication Skills (CS):** Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
3. **Teamwork (TW):** Consider different points of view and work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

Personal Responsibility (PR): Evaluate choices and actions of others or one's own and relate consequences to ethical decision-making.

Student Learner Outcome	Maps to Core Objective	Assessed via this Assignment
Demonstrate knowledge of individual and collaborative writing processes.	Teamwork (TW)	Research-based Essay Peer Review Activities Essay assignments
Develop ideas with appropriate support and attribution.		Research-based Essay
Write in a style appropriate to audience and purpose.	Communication Skills (CS)	Research-based Essay Essay assignments
Read, reflect, and respond critically to a variety of texts.	Critical Thinking (CT)	Research-based Essay Essay and journal assignments
Evaluate choices and actions of others or one's own and relate consequences to decision-making.	Personal Responsibility	Course interaction and participation. Professionalism grade if applicable.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic Dishonesty: Any incident of academic policy will be dealt with in accordance with college policy and the Student Handbook. Academic dishonesty – such as cheating on exams – is an extremely serious offense and will result in a **grade of zero** on that exam, and the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for the appropriate disciplinary action.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas and claiming them as your own. Plagiarism is a very serious offense. Plagiarism includes paraphrasing someone else's words without giving proper citation, copying directly from a website and pasting it into your paper, or using someone else's words without quotation marks. Any assignment containing any plagiarized material will receive a **grade of zero** and the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for the appropriate disciplinary action and remediation.

The plagiarism and academic-dishonesty policy applies to all written work submitted for this class, including tests, journals, quizzes, online forums, and essays. If you use anything from another source, you must document properly using MLA standards. Making up quotes or falsifying information will also be construed as academic dishonesty. Reusing your own assignments from an earlier class or this class (except for your own discussion posts or prewriting as instructed) is also not allowed; please ask me if you need guidance on this.

Please note that not all papers will necessarily be checked for plagiarism; the decision to check a particular paper for possible plagiarism is made based on my professional judgment and expertise, in part garnered from years of grading student papers.

The use of any form of Artificial Intelligence (including but not limited to ChatGPT) to complete discussions, journals, or papers may be considered a form of academic dishonesty. Please note that our current plagiarism-checking tool provides information on possible use of AI, though the instructor is responsible for making a final determination. Use of “smart” grammar checkers and “writing advice” aids may be permissible, but students should be aware that suggestions are not always valid or helpful to improving writing style. Use your own judgment and make sure you’re doing your own work.

In English 1301, we will also be receiving additional instruction, resources, and guidance on avoiding plagiarism.

Student Concerns: If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this course, please contact me using the contact information previously provided. If, after discussing your concern with me, you continue to have questions, please contact Humanities Chair Dr. Brian Anderson at 409-933-8186 or banderson@com.edu.

Other Policies:

- 1. Withdrawals:** Please note that I do not normally drop students based on lack of attendance, although this is done automatically for those who do not attend class or participate before Census Day. After that time, students are responsible for withdrawing themselves and for managing their own schedule and how they might be affected by the six-drop rule. See institutional withdrawal policy below.
- 2. Caveat on Grading.** The instructor reserves the right to make subjective decisions on student grades and assessment based on his own expertise and judgment in the subject matter.
- 3. Syllabus Changes.** The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus and/or schedule as needed. Readings may also be added, but no major assignments will be added unless needed due to a weather emergency or other outside circumstances. You will be duly notified of any such changes.

Course outline: Schedule and daily topics subject to change as needed or at instructor's discretion; only major due dates are listed here. Readings, minor assignments, and other due dates will be announced as the course progresses.

Each Monday, that week's content will be made available in Brightspace. If you see a discrepancy between the calendar here and what's available in Brightspace, please let me know.

Week 1 – Introduction to Fear

- Read Stephen King and Poe
- Discuss horror as personal and cultural experience

Week 2 – Building Suspense

- Read Shirley Jackson
- View iconic horror film scenes for analysis

Week 3 – Monsters as Metaphor

- Read H.P. Lovecraft and Carmen Maria Machado
- Discuss allegory, symbolism, and social commentary in horror

Week 4 – Horror and Society

- Read critical essays on horror and society
- Connect horror tropes to real-world anxieties

Week 5 – Argumentation & Research Skills

- Library session: Finding credible sources
- Explore horror in other forms of media (music, video games, art, etc.)

Week 6 – The Body

- Read Clive Barker and Junji Ito
- Peer review sessions

Week 7 – Research Project

- Student Oral Presentation
- Workshop drafts in peer groups

Week 8 – Portfolio & Reflection

- Submit Essay 3
- Submit final reflection essay

Institutional Policies and Guidelines

Grade Appeal Process: Concerns about the accuracy of grades should first be discussed with the instructor. A request for a change of grade is a formal request and must be made within six months of the grade assignment. Directions for filing an appeal can be found in the student handbook <https://www.com.edu/student-services/student-handbook.html>. *An appeal will not be considered because of general dissatisfaction with a grade, penalty, or outcome of a course. Disagreement with the instructor's professional judgment of the quality of the student's work and performance is also not an admissible basis for a grade appeal.*

Academic Success & Support Services: College of the Mainland is committed to providing students the necessary support and tools for success in their college careers. Support is offered through our Tutoring Services, Library, Counseling, and through Student Services. Please discuss any concerns with your faculty or an advisor.

ADA Statement: Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodations is requested to contact:

Kimberly Lachney, Student Accessibility Services Coordinator

Phone: 409-933-8919

Email: AccessibilityServices@com.edu

Location: COM Doyle Family Administration Building, Student Success Center

Textbook Purchasing Statement: A student attending College of the Mainland is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from the college-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

Withdrawal Policy: Students may withdraw from this course for any reason prior to the last eligible day for a "W" grade. Before withdrawing students should speak with the instructor and consult an advisor. Students are permitted to withdraw only six times during their college career by state law. The last date to withdraw from the 1st 8-week session is October 1. The last date to withdraw from the 16-week session is November 14. The last date to withdraw for the 2nd 8-week session is November 25.

FN Grading: The FN grade is issued in cases of *failure due to a lack of attendance*, as determined by the instructor. The FN grade may be issued for cases in which the student ceases or fails to attend class, submit assignments, or participate in required capacities, and for which the student has failed to withdraw. The issuing of the FN grade is at the discretion of the instructor. The last date of attendance should be documented for submission of an FN grade.

Early Alert Program: The Student Success Center at College of the Mainland has implemented an Early Alert Program because student success and retention are very important to us. I have been

asked to refer students to the program throughout the semester if they are having difficulty completing assignments or have poor attendance. If you are referred to the Early Alert Program you will be contacted by someone in the Student Success Center who will schedule a meeting with you to see what assistance they can offer in order for you to meet your academic goals.

Resources to Help with Stress:

If you are experiencing stress or anxiety about your daily living needs including food, housing or just feel you could benefit from free resources to help you through a difficult time, please click here <https://www.com.edu/community-resource-center/>. College of the Mainland has partnered with free community resources to help you stay on track with your schoolwork, by addressing life issues that get in the way of doing your best in school. All services are private and confidential. You may also contact the Dean of Students office at deanofstudents@com.edu or communityresources@com.edu.

Nondiscrimination Statement:

The College District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of College District policy.