



English 1301.303H1
Composition I
Fall 2025
Tuesday and Thursday, 7:10AM-8:30AM
COM League City, Room 220

Instructor: Dr. Elaine Childs (she, they)

E-mail: echilds1@com.edu

Phone: 409-933-8318

Office Hours: Additional meeting times available by appointment. My League City office hours are in room 220 unless another professor needs that room, in which case I will either be near the front entrance or you can ask for me at the front desk.

	League City Campus		Online, Brightspace chat and email
Monday	8:30-9 AM		2:30-3:30
Tuesday	8:30-9 AM		
Wednesday	8:30-9 AM		2:30-4:30
Thursday	8:30-9 AM 2:30 PM-5 PM		

No required textbook

Course Description: Composition I is an intensive study of and practice in writing processes, from invention and researching to drafting, revising, and editing, both individually and collaboratively. The class emphasizes effective rhetorical choices, including audience, purpose, arrangement, and style. The focus is on writing the academic essay as a vehicle for learning, communicating, and critical analysis.

Course Requirements: All major essays must be written in Google Docs and shared with me with the “Editor” role. You must have a personal Google account created with your complete legal name, and it may not be shared with any other person. You must be logged in to that account when you work on the essay.

Grade Scale:

A = 90%-100%
B = 80%-89.9%
C = 70% - 79.9%
D = 60% - 69.9%
F = 0% - 59.9%

Your grade may be rounded up slightly (usually less than a percentage point) if I judge that your work shows significant improvement over the course of the term. Your grade will never be rounded down. Keep in mind that you are not guaranteed a passing grade in this or any college course, and I will never round your grade up just so you can graduate on time. You must earn the grade you want.

Grade Calculation: These are the assignments in the class and how they are weighted:

Assignment # 1	10%
Assignment # 2	20%
Assignment # 3	20%
Assignment # 4	30%
Class Participation	10 %
Homework average	10%

**If you aren't familiar with weighted grades, an online grading calculator can be helpful in figuring out what grade you need on each assignment to get a certain final grade. I recommend this one:

<https://www.calculator.net/grade-calculator.html>

Extra Credit: I do not assign or accept extra-credit work. I encourage each of you to do your best on the major assignments.

Revisions: Revisions must take place **before** an essay is turned in for a grade. After an essay receives a grade, it usually cannot be revised for an improved one. The only exception to this policy is Essay 1. You will write that essay in class, and you will have the opportunity to revise and resubmit **one time** for an improved grade.

Grading: Your major assignments will be graded based on the evidence of your writing process, not only on the quality of the final product. Rubrics for each major assignment will be provided on the assignment sheet for each assignment and will be available in the D2L course.

Feedback on Papers and Homework:

In an 8-week class, it's important for you to get your assignment grades very quickly so you will be aware of where you stand in the class. Because of this, you will not receive written feedback on papers or on most homework assignments **until you ask for it**. For major papers, there is a detailed rubric on Brightspace that shows how well you did on various assignment requirements, but if you want more feedback than that, I strongly encourage you to ask me for more information about your assignment either via email or by coming to my student hours after your number grade is posted.

We will model this conference process after the first paper with a required one-on-one conference after you get your grade back.

Late work / makeup policies:

- **Major written assignments:** Each major assignment must be completed by 11:59 PM on the due date and the Google Docs link posted on D2L. After that deadline has passed, I will grade whatever content is in the document. If the document is blank or if you did not share the link with me, I will drop 10 points from the paper grade, and you will have until 11:59 PM the following day to submit your paper. Papers will not be accepted more than 24 hours late
- **Assignments included in the homework average:** Smaller assignments may not be submitted late and may not be made up after the deadline has passed. However, I will drop your four lowest homework grades at the end of the semester.
- **Presentations:** If you miss a presentation, you can make up the presentation during my office hours for **half the grade**, which means that if your presentation would have earned an 82, it will become a 41. If you arrive to class after 7:20 AM on your presentation day, your presentation grade will also be halved.

If you turn in your Powerpoint after 7:00 AM on the day you present, your grade will receive another 10-point deduction.

Extension policy: My late work policy is strict because I want you to plan and to ask for help in advance. I am usually willing to be pretty flexible on extensions for major assignments **if** a student **asks** me for extra time well in advance (usually at least a week is best). Good reasons for extensions might be surgery, a major exam in another class, a long illness that made you miss a week of research or drafting time, or sometimes even if you're just struggling with the assignment itself. Just remember that sometimes I will not be able to grant an extension (as in the case of group projects), so you shouldn't depend on getting one, and also that even a whole extra week on an long project is not necessarily enough to make a difference if you waited too long to **start** the assignment.

Help with drafts: It is more effective and helpful **for you** to receive revision feedback in real time, in a dialog rather than an info-dump. Over email, I can't judge if you're "getting it" or try to rephrase an explanation if the first way I explained wasn't clear; it takes longer for you to ask follow-up questions, etc. If you would like extensive help with a draft, please attend my student hours or request an appointment. Email should be used for brief and simple informational questions, like "Is this a good thesis?" or "How do I cite a YouTube video?" I almost never provide revision feedback on drafts via email because I have rarely seen writing improvement come from such feedback.

Google Docs: All essays must be composed in a Google document that is shared with me and that gives me the "Editor" role, and the document may not be deleted or the permissions revoked until final semester grades have been posted. This allows me to evaluate your writing process directly and to aid in deterring and detecting AI-based scholastic dishonesty. That means you must write and revise your papers in the shared Google document, not paste them there from elsewhere. If you do not share your document with me with the correct permissions, do not write the paper within that shared document, delete the shared document, or revoke my "Editor" role, your grade may be significantly reduced (possibly to zero).

Electronic Plagiarism- and AI-detectors. I may submit any written assignment in this class to TurnItIn and to other electronic tools to evaluate its adherence to course policies. The accuracy of AI detectors fluctuates as AI evolves, and I use whatever **paid** service is currently considered highly reliable (in addition to TurnItIn). I do not depend on free tools to evaluate the presence of AI in an essay, and you shouldn't either: they are not reliable.

Attendance policy: Classroom attendance is required. You are allowed only **two** unexcused absences, and absences may be excused only for military service and legal religious holidays, not school activities or events such as clinicals or sports. Each additional absence after the second will result in a 5% deduction from your final grade.

You are expected to **save your unexcused absences for emergencies and illness because those are not grounds for excused absences.** This class has fewer than 16 required meetings all semester, so each time you are absent for any reason, you miss around 7% of classroom instruction. Moreover, students are never excused from knowing the course content because they missed class.

However, because I teach two sections of the same class, you may be able to attend class a different day if you have to miss your scheduled class time. If you're enrolled in the Monday/Wednesday class and you know you have to miss a Monday, email me at echilds1@com.edu to request permission to attend class on Tuesday instead. This is first-come, first-served, and I can't have 40 people in class on Tuesday, so I can't promise you'll be granted permission. If you know in advance you have to miss a day, request permission early to guarantee your spot.

Lateness: Lateness distracts everyone in the class and causes you to miss important information; you may also miss an in-class writing assignment that may not be made up. Frequent lateness will greatly lower your participation grade, and if you are more than 10 minutes late you may be marked absent. It is usually much better to show up late than to skip class entirely; however, sometimes the front door of the building locks at 7:25AM and does not reopen until 8:30. There may not be anyone at the front desk to open the door for you. So do your best to be on time.

Conference Attendance / Rescheduling policy: I will provide feedback on your first essay at a one-on-one conference in Week 3. You will sign up for your conference by enrolling yourself in a time slot on Brightspace. The deadline for signing up for a conference is 11:59 PM on Sunday of Week 2. **Conferences usually cannot be rescheduled**, so be sure to check your schedule carefully before selecting a time. If none of the available times work for you, you must email me no later than Friday of Week 2.

Failing to sign up for a conference by the deadline or missing your scheduled conference may result in an absence.

Communicating with your instructor: ALL electronic communication with the instructor must be through your COM email or within Brightspace. Due to FERPA restrictions, faculty cannot share any information about performance in the class through other electronic means.

Email policy: I rarely check email after 5PM, but I do my best to respond to email within 24

hours Monday-Friday and usually much more quickly than 24 hours. I often check email on weekends, but not always, so don't hesitate to email me over the weekend, but don't necessarily expect me to get it until Monday morning.

Always email me ASAP if you find something wrong in the D2L shell: a broken link, a missing assignment, a graded assignment that says the due date has passed or that won't allow you to open it.

Weekly Checklists: Each week of class has its own checklist of assignments in Brightspace. Most checklists are divided into three sections: assignments that must be completed before each class meeting and those that must be completed by 11:59 PM on the last day of the week. Students are required to complete all assignments listed on the checklists by the posted deadlines.

Course Reading: Attendance is not just about your presence. It's also about your **preparedness**. You will have a reading assignment to complete before almost every class. You are responsible for checking the weekly checklists to be sure you're prepared. All required readings are available on D2L.

In-class writing: Often I will start class by giving you an in-class writing assignment. Each of these assignments is a homework grade. If you are late or miss class, these assignments usually cannot be made up for a grade

Brightspace Homework: When the Weekly Checklist includes a graded assignment to be completed before class, it is due by 7 AM on the day you attend class. These posts are time-stamped, and any posts made after 7 AM on the day you attend class will receive zeros and may not be made up. I expect you to put some thought into these responses: don't crank them out at the last minute. However, I will drop your four lowest homework grades at the end of the term, so if you miss a few it won't hurt your grade.

Class Participation: 10% of your final grade will be given for class participation. You may earn this two different ways: active participation in small-group activities in class or old-fashioned talking in class. There are usually more class-wide discussions than anything else, so that's the easiest way.

If I can't **remember** at the end of the semester whether you participated in class, your participation grade will be between 0 and 50%. You don't necessarily have to be vocal every single day, but your goal is to contribute to the classroom community and make me remember you! Remember that there is an element of subjectivity here, as there is in real life (for example, you'll be evaluated at work partly based on how effective your supervisor **perceives** you to be). Learn how to respond effectively to that.

Classroom Conduct and Cell phones: Before class begins, please silence your cell phone. The success of any English course relies heavily on the classroom environment, so I expect your presence, attentiveness, and participation. If you engage in any behavior which I judge to be distracting to others or disruptive of the learning environment, such as loud or frequent whispering, regularly interrupting or "talking over" others, or frequently leaving the room or falling out of your chair, you may be asked to leave. Please be aware that, as a college professor, I can require you to leave my classroom and forbid you to return until you meet with our Dean of Students.

Inattentiveness related to smartphone use, sleeping, using the computer, doing homework for

another class, or any other non-distracting activity **will** result in a lower participation grade, and it is rare that an inattentive student passes this class.

Additionally, College of the Mainland requires that students enrolled at COM be familiar with the Standards of Student Conduct, which can be found in the online Student Handbook, <http://www.com.edu/student-services/student-handbook.php>. Any breaches of the Code of Conduct will result in a referral to the Office for Student Conduct and may result in dismissal from this class.

Smartphone policy: Use a personal computer to access D2L, not a smartphone. Brightspace's mobile app is good for getting notifications and for some class activities, but it does sometimes collapse the menus you'll need in order to find assignments. If you do choose to use a smartphone to navigate D2L, do so at your own risk: not being able to find assignments will not be an acceptable excuse for missing deadlines.

Online Tutoring: COM's online tutors are available to help students who would like feedback at any stage of the writing process, and I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this service! However, a tutor will not "fix" your paper for you. You are expected to actively contribute to the learning involved in tutoring sessions. Here is the website: <https://www.com.edu/tutoring/writing-resources>

Student Learner Outcome	Maps to Core Objective	Assessed via this Assignment
1. Demonstrate knowledge of individual and collaborative writing processes.	Teamwork (TW)	Assignment 3
2. Develop ideas with appropriate support and attribution.		Assignment 4
3. Write in a style appropriate to audience and purpose.	Communication Skills (CS)	Assignment 1
4. Read, reflect, and respond critically to a variety of texts.	Critical Thinking (CT)	Assignment 3
5. Use Edited American English in academic essays.		Assignment 4
6. Evaluate choices and actions of others or one's own, and relate consequences to decision-making.	Personal Responsibility (PR)	Assignment 3

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism is a serious breach of student conduct that occurs when a student turns in work from another source as if it were the student's own. The essence of plagiarism is falsification for the purpose of personal gain. Students are expected to **earn** their grades by demonstrating the skills and knowledge that they actually possess, but when a student copies a paper from the internet, uses outside sources without citing them, takes someone else's

ideas and “changes the words,” or allows another person or online tool to improve, add to, or rewrite their paper, then the assignment is not an honest demonstration of the student’s own skills and knowledge. When students commit these acts or others like them, they defraud the taxpayer, College of the Mainland, and their future universities and workplaces and thus defeat the purpose of taking this class at all. Thus, the first instance of intentional plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Students and will automatically result in an F for the course. Whether the plagiarism was accidental or intentional will be my judgment call.

Academic dishonesty is a more general term that, according to the Worcester Polytechnic Institute, “is any act which interferes with evaluation of academic work,” including such seemingly minor acts like citing a source you don’t use in your paper, leaving out an in-text citation, or taking a source’s ideas without acknowledging the source. These acts do not need to be intentional to be dishonest—one of the major outcomes of English 1301 is for students to learn how to integrate sources into their own writing honestly and how to cite them correctly. That is why ignorance is not an acceptable defense against charges of plagiarism or dishonesty: all students are responsible for learning and implementing the rules of source integration and documentation that will be taught in this course. Penalties for “minor” acts of dishonesty like those listed above will increase over the course of the semester and, if persistent, will result in failure of the course.

This website has more information about academic dishonesty:

<https://www.wpi.edu/about/policies/academic-integrity/dishonesty>

AI Policy: Unless a professor gives you permission to use AI in an assignment, doing so may be considered plagiarism according to COM’s Student Conduct policy, which states that plagiarism “shall be defined as the appropriating, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another’s work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one’s own written work” ([link](#)). Your assignments in this class are intended to show me what **your** skills are in writing, researching, and critical thinking, and your grades reflect the skill level you are at. Using AI in an attempt to make it look like your skills or ideas are better than they actually are is falsification. Any assignment submitted for a grade in this class that I determine to be generated by AI may receive a zero and may not be rewritten.

Whether or not a paper was AI-generated or -revised will be based on various types of evidence, including but not limited to electronic AI detectors and your Google document history.

Grammarly/QuillBot, etc: In this class, you may not use Grammarly, QuillBot, CoPilot or any similar tool to paraphrase or reword your assignments. Although I do not believe there’s anything inherently wrong with using basic grammar-check tools, Grammarly and similar sites have many additional tools for skills like paraphrasing and drafting that you need to learn to do yourself in this class. Moreover, when you use these tools to alter your own writing, TurnItIn may identify it as AI-generated.

Therefore, for the purposes of this class, Grammarly and similar tools are completely banned. Be forewarned that any text identified as AI-generated may receive the same penalty as any other type of plagiarism or falsification, even if you “just used Grammarly.”

Concerns/Questions Statement: 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 the Humanities department chair, Brian Anderson, at 409-933-8186 or banderson@com.edu

Course Outline:

This schedule lists due dates for major assignments and is subject to change with prior notice. The checklists in each weekly folder list the requirements for reading assignments and homework activities; students are required to follow the checklists.

Week 1: August 18 – August 24	Required reading assignments and homework activities are listed on the week's checklist in Brightspace.
Week 2: August 25 – August 31	Write Essay 1 in class
Week 3: September 1 – September 7	No class on Monday, September 1 Required reading assignments and homework activities are listed on the week's checklist in Brightspace.
Week 4: September 8 – September 14	Essay 2 due by 11:59 PM on Friday, September 12 Required reading assignments and homework activities are listed on the week's checklist in Brightspace.
Week 5: September 15 – September 21	Required reading assignments and homework activities are listed on the week's checklist in Brightspace.
Week 6: September 22 – September 28	Group Presentations and research notes due this week. If you choose to revise Essay 1, the revisions are due by 11:59 PM on Sunday, September 28. Required reading assignments and homework activities are listed on the week's checklist in Brightspace.
Week 7: September 29 – October 5	Required reading assignments and homework activities are listed on the week's checklist in Brightspace.

Week 8: October 6 – October 9	<u>Final research paper due by 11:59 PM on Wednesday, October 8</u>

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 accommodation 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.