

## **Syllabus: ENGL 1301W Composition I**

### **Ethics of Western Civilization and American Tradition**

**Course:** ENGL 1301.66, Fall 2017, 3 Credit Hours  
CRN 83970

**Meeting Times/Location:** MWF 2:00–2:50, EV 318

**Instructor:** William Kerr

**Office:** EV 316

**Contact Information:** [william.kerr@shsu.edu](mailto:william.kerr@shsu.edu)

**Office Hours:** MWF 10:00–11:00 walk-in  
MWF 1:00–2:00 by appointment  
If these times conflict with your class schedule, contact me and I will meet you at a mutually convenient time.

#### **Course Description**

ENGL 1301, Composition I, is the basic study in English diction, sentence structure, and rhetoric with emphasis on the development of a thesis or claim. More specifically, the course involves the study of skills and methods used in writing at the university level, with the focus on writing academic texts and incorporating appropriate documentation. As the first half of a two-semester sequence that constitutes first-year composition at SHSU, ENGL 1301 is designed to introduce students to the nature of writing for academic purposes. The course builds a solid framework for students' understanding of how reading and writing operate concurrently in academic contexts. Learning the rules and conventions of Standard American English is an essential part of learning to write competently in a university setting.

This course is designed to encourage a productive discussion of core personal integrity through an investigation of the values of Western civilization. Furthermore, it will demonstrate that politicians, public figures, academics, and the general public have endured throughout history the same dilemmas that we as Americans bear today. As first semester freshman students, you have the opportunity to gain awareness, insight, and knowledge through an experience that is designed to address the questions that have been asked in one form or another in ancient Greece and Rome, and in every generation from that time to the present. The questions are general and overlapping, and any tentative answer to one question will begin to answer the others. Certainly, there is no one answer to any of the questions; our main concern is with the answers which may be suggested in the literature that we are to read and with the actual posing of the questions in the various works. Dr. John de Castro, former dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, argues that high school is for crystallizing knowledge; college is for understanding. This course is designed to encourage your first steps toward this goal.

#### **Aims and Outcomes**

This course addresses specifically the following Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Skill Objectives, reflected further in course objectives, requirements, and assignments:

- Critical thinking
- Communication
- Teamwork
- Personal responsibility

Freshman composition is a core requirement because writing well is an essential part of a university education. By the end of ENGL 1301, students will be able to develop a thesis or claim, in a discernible and effective order, and demonstrate that they have a command of the conventions of written English appropriate to the freshman level in college. The course includes a review of usage and grammatical terminology as they relate to the writing process. The main aims of ENGL 1301 are (1) to strengthen students' ability to read a variety of texts representing several rhetorical types and (2), through this reading component, to improve their writing skills, oral expression, and visual literacy. Students will also learn to work with peers to review their own writing and the writing of others. They will learn to draft and revise their own texts for content and organization of thought, as well as for editing. Thorough revision includes the re-visioning of the text, its structure, its contents, its visual effect, and how appropriately it meets the needs of its intended audience and purpose. Discussions, peer reviews, and oral critique will develop students' competence in clear verbal expression.

### **Course Objectives**

Upon completion of ENGL 1301 students will be able to

- analyze audience, purpose, and context,
- respond appropriately to different rhetorical situations and constraints,
- read analytically and think critically, with the aim of solving problems through the development of exposition and argument,
- build a solid connection between reading and writing, with the emphasis on understanding texts, oral, written, and visual,
- use the modified process method (prewriting, writing, and rewriting) to develop well-organized, formal texts in support of a thesis or claim,
- evaluate and critique others' writing, including that of their peers, logically and constructively,
- based on careful listening, give constructive verbal criticism to their peers' oral team presentations,
- work in collaboration to improve their written and oral expression through revision and editing,
- identify persuasive appeals in written, oral, and visual texts,
- use the MLA citation method for documenting basic, fundamental research tasks,
- demonstrate the conventions of Standard American English grammar and appropriate mechanics across various genres and writing situations.

### **Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL)**

The PLTL is designed to allow students the opportunity to discuss and debate the contents of the course. That is, it offers the occasion to present insights, facts, and opinions regarding the historical and contemporary applications of Western intellectualism and provides an opportunity for academically stimulating conversation. It is your responsibility to attend and participate in PLTL sessions. Failure to meet attendance and participation requirements during the semester will result in a reduction of your overall average.

## Textbooks

### Required Texts:

\*Aeschylus. *Oresteian Trilogy: Agamemnon, The Choephoroi, The Eumenides*. Translated by Philip Vellacott, Penguin, 1959. (ISBN 9780140440676)

Glenn, Cheryl and Loretta Gray. *Hodges Harbrace Handbook*. 19th. ed., Cengage, 2017 (ISBN 9781337293136)

\*Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*. Translated by George Bull, Penguin, 2003. (ISBN 9780140449150)

\*Shakespeare, William. *Julius Caesar*. Yale UP, 2006. (ISBN 9780300108095)

\*Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Penguin, 1985. (ISBN 9780143105947)

\* You may use other **unabridged** versions of these texts with your instructor's prior approval.

## Attendance

Attendance is mandatory for successful completion of this course. Even a moderate number of absences may seriously jeopardize your ability to learn the material and pass the course. Since much of our work will build on material previously completed and will include team and group interaction, you should make every effort to attend class and be on time. Students must be in the classroom for the entire time in order to receive credit for attendance. Your attendance is expected and will be documented. Department policy is that up to three absences will receive no penalty. Plan this time carefully, because any absence beyond three will result in a two-percentage-point deduction from your end-of-semester grade. For example, if you miss class five times beyond the excused three, your grade will go down ten percent (5 x 2%), an entire letter grade.

Class activities (including PLTL discussions, daily reading quizzes, and group presentations) and assignments cannot be made up, and no exam or quiz may be made up unless **prior** arrangements have been made with the instructor. If emergencies occur during scheduled exam times, the student **must** contact the instructor within 24 hours in order to qualify for a make-up. No make-up tests will be administered during class time. **It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor regarding any missed test or quiz.** [Instructors have the option of administering all the missed tests during one session on the last class day. To qualify to take the test on that day, you must have had a documented emergency (see below).]

Should an emergency arise (such as a serious illness or death in the family) please report your absences through the Dean of Students. His office will assist you in gathering the required documentation and make sure all your professors are made aware of the circumstances. The instructor will decide whether the documented circumstances qualify as an emergency or not.

A printed copy of all essays are due at the **beginning of the class period** indicated on the syllabus. Electronic copies are due by midnight on the due date of the printed copy. **Late essays will not be accepted.** If you anticipate being late or absent on the day the essay is due, you may either submit your essay through the TurnItIn link or attach it to an email and send it to your instructor **before class starts**, and he will accept the hard copy at the next class meeting. The printed and electronic versions of each essay must be identical.

If you are unable to attend a class, you must make sure you are prepared for the session when you return. Much of what you need to know in order to be prepared will be on the calendar, but unanticipated events can occur during classes that may change the calendar. Contact a classmate to see what unanticipated assignments, discussions, etc., you might have missed; this will help ensure that you are not surprised when the class is doing something for which you are not prepared.

### Grading Plan

This is a writing enhanced (W) course, which means that at least 50 percent of your course grade will derive from writing activities designed to help you master course objectives. Writing in this course is one of the tools your instructor will use to help you learn course material. Some writing activities will require you to draft and revise your work, with or without instructor feedback. Other assignments may not receive a grade but are designed to assist you in critical reflection of the course material. You should approach writing in this course as a tool to use as part of your learning as well as a tool your instructor will use to assess your level of learning.

### Course requirements

*Required components:*

Formal essays (4 x 12.5%).....	50%
PLTL sessions .....	15%
Reading, grammar, and usage quizzes .....	15%
Oral Presentations .....	10%
Final exam.....	10%

According to department policy, **no extra credit** is offered.

### Explanation of assignments

#### Formal essays

The bulk of your grade will come from your ability to create formal written documents in the course. Each of the four (4) essays will include time spent in various stages of the writing process. Essays will be drafted, will go through guided peer-editing, and will be revised by the original author before the instructor collects the paper for grading. All formal assignments must include all preliminary work in order for you to get credit for the paper. The essays will be expository in nature and developed through examples and details from the assigned works. Together, the formal essays will count as fifty (50) percent of the course grade.

#### Grammar and usage quizzes

Together with the reading quizzes, these form twenty (15) percent of the grade. Because the intent of ENGL 1301 is to develop and practice writing skills that are academically and professionally essential, it is important to give brief weekly attention to those grammatical and usage principles that are most frequently and glaringly violated. Each of these quizzes will focus on a specific aspect of usage/grammar/mechanics, but they are comprehensive in nature and will include questions from previous usage topics.

#### Reading quizzes

Together with the usage quizzes, these form twenty (15) percent of the course grade. Short quizzes will be given based on the assigned readings. The purpose of the quizzes is to ensure that the students have done the readings, comprehended their meaning, and are able to analyze and synthesize the content.

#### Departmental final exam

Students will take a final exam, based on usage and mechanics (basic editing skills). The final is an objective test, which will be administered (designed and scored) centrally by the Department of English. Your instructor does not know the detailed content of the exam in advance. The final comprises ten (10) percent of the grade.

### Oral presentations

According to new established guidelines, every student must participate in an oral team activity. The ability to speak confidently and cogently to an audience is an essential skill of leadership.

### **Classroom Policies**

#### Individual and group responsibility

During the semester you will be working in teams whose responsibility will be to read and provide constructive criticism on each member's written work and at times create a document (such as an oral team presentation) as a team. Because your input is essential to the success of the entire team, your attendance is required. Failure to work as part of the collaborative team will mean that you do not have the proper background to do the assignment and no grade will be recorded.

If you are to bring a draft of an assignment, make sure you are clear about its purpose and have that draft with you. Do not come to class without the needed materials, including your book and your drafts. You must have prepared the proper materials by the calendar deadline in order to be able to participate and get the full benefit of the class interaction. Failure to work as part of a classroom cooperative will jeopardize your individual grade.

#### Assignments

Because writing is a process and involves various stages, students are expected to work through projects in a step-by-step fashion and **turn in all of these steps** when the assignments are due. If any step in the process of a particular assignment is missing or completed unsatisfactorily, the final paper will not be accepted.

Your instructor may require that you submit all of your essays to a plagiarism detecting service such as turnitin.com. Your enrolling in the course and electing to stay in that section constitutes your agreeing to submit your work as your instructor requires.

Essays will be due at the **beginning of class** on the day listed in the Course Schedule below. Late essays will not be graded. If you must be absent or late to class on a day when an essay is due, you may submit the essay electronically through the TurnItIn link on Blackboard, or email it to your instructor **before** class. If the electronic copy is thus submitted, you may bring the hard copy to the next class period without penalty.

Quizzes will usually be given near the beginning of the class period. No makeup quizzes will be offered.

#### Email

Your instructor will convey essential information to you via email. For this reason, you are required to check your email often, at least once each morning and each evening, so you may remain aware of changing course requirements and schedules.

#### Cell phones and electronics

The use (including visible presence) of cell phones, text messagers, and all similar electronic devices is disruptive to the conduct of the class and, therefore, prohibited during class-time. Failure to comply with this policy will result in the offending student being marked absent for the day of the offense. Even the visible presence of such a device during a test will result in a zero for that test. All such devices should be turned off or put in a silent mode and not be taken out during any class. Emergencies occasionally arise; should you have an emergency situation where you are expecting an important call or text, please step into the hallway, deal with your issue, and then return to class.

#### Electronic notes

Taking copious notes during class is necessary to your success in college. Even if you do not use the notes, the mere act of taking them will enhance your learning experience. Using notebook computers to

take class notes electronically will be permitted with the instructor's permission. During class, however, these devices must not be used for surfing the net, accessing Facebook, Twitter, or other similar sites that are not class related. Failure to comply with this policy will result in the offending student being marked absent for the day of the offense.

### **University Policies** (More at [www.shsu.edu/syllabus](http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus))

#### Academic Honesty

English Department policy states that a paper or assignment, which evidence can support as plagiarized or in any manner not the result of a student's own intellectual endeavors, will receive zero points. The second offense will result in failure of the course and possible university disciplinary action. Submitting your own previously written work for a current assignment or submitting an assignment in more than one class without the prior permission of the instructors is also considered academically dishonest. For information on plagiarism and other Classroom Rules of Conduct, see the following site:

<http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide> .

#### Americans with Disabilities Policy

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination.

Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center, Lee Drain Annex (tel. 936.294.1720). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

#### Religious Holy Days

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

#### Visitors in the Classroom

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom. This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational process.

#### Instructor Evaluations

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

**COURSE SCHEDULE\***

You are responsible for having carefully read the assigned readings **before class** on the day listed. Be prepared for quizzes.

- WEEK 1: Aug. 23 Topic: Introduction to the course / Review syllabus  
 Aug. 25 Topic: Student introductions
- WEEK 2: Aug. 28 Topic: Introduction to academic writing and *The Hodges Harbrace Handbook (BH)*  
 Academic English: What’s wrong with the way I talk?  
 Origins of English grammar  
 Aug. 30 Topic: *The Oresteian Trilogy* & Essay construction: choosing a topic  
 Read: *Oresteia* pages 41–70 (about the first half of *Agamemnon* for those using a different translation)  
 Usage: Unit 1: posted on Blackboard (Bb) under course documents

*Why should I read this stuff? “Reading makes a full man, meditation a profound man—discourse a clear man” (Ben Franklin). Of course, this also applies to women; ol’ Ben was wise but a little chauvinistic.*

- Sept. 1 Topic: *The Oresteian Trilogy* & Essay construction: choosing a topic  
 Read: *Oresteia* pages 71–100 (finish *Agamemnon*)  
 Usage: Unit 2 (Bb)

- WEEK 3: Sept. 4 *Labor Day holiday*  
 Sept. 6 Topic: *The Oresteian Trilogy* & Plagiarism  
 Read: *Oresteia* pages 103–123 (about the first half of *Choephari*)  
 Usage: Unit 3 (Bb)  
 Sept. 8 Topic: *The Oresteian Trilogy* & Essay construction: thesis statements  
 Read: *Oresteia* pages 124–143 (finish *Choephari*)  
 Usage: Unit 4 (Bb)

*September 8: Twelfth class day. Last day to drop without a “Q” by 5:00 (see resignation policy).*

- WEEK 4: Sept. 11 Topic: *The Oresteian Trilogy* & Essay construction: get readers’ attention and keep it/organization/presentation group sign-up  
 Read: *Oresteia* pages 147–182 (*The Eumenides*)  
 Usage: Unit 5 (Bb)  
 Grammar: English is an SVO language  
 Sept. 13 Topic: *The Prince*



		Read:	<i>The Prince</i> through chapter VII (Be sure to read Machiavelli's letter to Lorenzo de' Medici.)
		Usage:	Unit 6 (Bb)
		Grammar:	Subject/verb agreement
	Sept. 15	Topic:	Research Day: <i>The Prince</i>
WEEK 5:	Sept. 18	Topic:	Integrating quotations
		Due:	Paper #1, <i>King Oedipus</i>
		Usage:	Unit 7 (Bb)
		Grammar:	pronoun/antecedent agreement
	Sept. 20	Topic:	<i>The Prince</i>
		Read:	<i>The Prince</i> chapters VIII–XVIII
		Usage:	Unit 8 (Bb)
		Grammar:	Punctuation: Comma with coordinating conjunctions
	Sept. 22	Topic:	PLTL: Oresteia
		Due:	Bring a copy (digital OK) of the PLTL topics to class (posted to Bb)
WEEK 6:	Sept. 25	Topic:	<i>The Prince</i>
		Read:	Finish <i>The Prince</i>
		Usage:	Unit 9 (Bb)
		Grammar:	Punctuation: Comma with introductory elements
	Sept. 27	Topic:	Presentations: <i>The Prince</i> (Groups 1–3)
	Sept. 29	Topic:	Presentations: <i>The Prince</i> (Groups 4–6)
WEEK 7:	Oct. 2	Topic:	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
		Read:	<i>Caesar</i> Act I
		Usage:	Unit 10 (Bb)
		Grammar:	Punctuation: Comma with restrictive and nonrestrictive elements



	Oct. 4	Topic:	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
		Read:	<i>Caesar Act II</i>
		Usage:	Unit 11 (Bb)
		Grammar:	Punctuation: Comma with coordinating adjectives
	Oct. 6	Topic:	PLTL: <i>The Prince</i>
		Due:	Bring a copy (digital OK) of the PLTL topics to class (posted to Bb)
WEEK 8:	Oct. 9	Topic:	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
		Read:	<i>Caesar Act III</i>
		Usage:	Unit 12 (Bb)
		Grammar:	Punctuation: Comma with absolute phrases
	Oct. 11	Topic:	Logical fallacies
		Review:	<i>BH 143–59</i>
		Due:	Paper #2 <i>The Prince</i>
			<b>Note: Only papers with a copy of your essay #1 editing log stapled to them will be graded. See assignment</b>
	Oct. 13	Topic:	Research day: <i>Julius Caesar</i>
WEEK 9:	Oct. 16	Topic:	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
		Read:	<i>Caesar Act IV</i>
		Usage:	Unit 13 (Bb)
		Grammar:	Punctuation: Comma with appositives
	Oct. 18	Topic:	<i>Julius Caesar</i>
		Read:	Finish <i>Caesar</i>
	Oct. 20	Topic:	Presentations: <i>Caesar</i> (Groups 4–6)
WEEK 10:	Oct. 23	Topic:	Presentations: <i>Caesar</i> (Groups 1–3)
	Oct. 25	Topic:	<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>
		Read:	<i>Huck Finn</i> through Ch. 6
		Usage:	Unit 14 (Bb)
		Grammar:	Punctuation: Comma with series and the semicolon

	Oct. 27	Topic:	PLTL: <i>Caesar</i>
		Due:	Bring a copy (digital OK) of the PLTL topics to class (posted to Bb)
WEEK 11:	Oct. 30	Topic:	Concerns, yours and mine
		Due:	Paper #3 <i>Caesar</i>
			<b>Note: Only papers with a copy of your essay #2 editing log stapled to them will be graded. See assignment</b>
	Nov. 1	Topic:	<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>
		Read:	<i>Huck Finn</i> Ch. 7–12
		Usage:	Unit 16 (Bb)
		Grammar:	Punctuation: Comma to prevent misreading
	Nov. 3	Topic:	<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>
		Read:	<i>Huck Finn</i> Ch. 13–17
WEEK 12:	Nov. 6	Topic:	<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>
		Read:	<i>Huck Finn</i> Ch. 18–20
		Usage:	Unit 17 (Bb)
		Grammar:	TBA
	Nov. 8	Topic:	<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>
		Read:	<i>Huck Finn</i> Ch. 21–25
		Usage:	Unit 18 (Bb)
		Grammar:	TBA
	Nov. 10	Topic:	<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>
		Read:	<i>Huck Finn</i> Ch. 26–28
		Usage:	Unit 19 (Bb)
		Grammar:	TBA
	<i>November 10: Last day to drop with a “Q” by 5:00 (see resignation policy).</i>		
WEEK 13:	Nov. 13	Topic:	<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>
		Read:	<i>Huck Finn</i> Ch. 29–32
		Usage:	Unit 20 (Bb)

Nov. 15 Topic: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Read: *Huck Finn* Ch. 33–37

Usage: Unit 21 (Bb)

Nov. 17 Topic: PLTL: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Due: Bring a copy (digital OK) of the PLTL topics to class (posted to Bb)

WEEK 14 Nov. 20 *Classes must meet*

Topic: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Read: *Huck Finn* Ch. 38–51

Usage: Unit 22 (Bb)

*November 22 & 24: Thanksgiving holiday*

WEEK 15: Nov. 27 Topic: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Read: Finish *Huck Finn*

Nov. 29 Topic: End-of-course review

Dec. 1 Topic: End-of-course review

Due: Paper #4 *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

**Note: Only papers with a copy of your essay #3 editing log stapled to them will be graded. See assignment**

*December 1: Last class day. Last day to resign and drop all courses with a “W” by 5:00 p.m. (see resignation policy).*

FINAL Examination: Please refer to the university final exam schedule for time and date. The schedule may be found in the *Fast Links* drop-down menu on the SHSU homepage.

The final is an in-class final to be administered during the time to be specified for each section by the University. The final (10% of course grade) focuses on grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Grades will be posted by Monday, December 11, 12:00 P.M.

\*NOTE: The course schedule is tentative and subject to change. It is your responsibility to keep up (see email policy above).