First-Year Syllabus, English 1310 and 1320

First-Year Syllabus

English 1310 and 1320

This syllabus outlines policies common to all sections of first-year English at Texas State University. Students should read the syllabus carefully and ask their instructor to explain any information they do not understand.

In first-year English, students study the principles of expository writing—the kind of objective, audience-directed prose used in college and beyond to explain and defend ideas. Because reading, viewing, and writing are inextricably linked, first-year English also emphasizes critical reading and viewing, teaching students to analyze and understand a variety of texts, including expository and literary texts that represent diverse voices and ideas, visual images, and their own writing.

First-year English classes focus on developing ideas and expressing them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively. First-year English classes involve command of written literacy skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.

Because reading, viewing, and writing are inextricably linked, first-year English also emphasizes critical reading and viewing, teaching you to analyze and understand a variety of texts, including expository and literary texts that represent diverse voices and ideas, visual images, and your own writing.

First-year English has long been a cornerstone requirement in the undergraduate curriculum because of its practical value in the classroom and on the job. The two courses in the first-year English sequence address the Texas State General Education reading and writing competencies:

Reading: Students will demonstrate the ability to comprehend, analyze, and synthesize a variety of texts and genres.

Writing: Students will demonstrate the ability to draft, revise, and edit focused, organized, and appropriately developed documents for specified purposes and audiences.

At Texas State, the first-year English requirement also looks beyond these competencies. It aims to discipline thought and expression, giving you the opportunity to study the art of writing for its intrinsic worth. Some of the defining characteristics of first-year English are as follows:

- It introduces you to the writing process, helping you understand the multi-stage, recursive nature of that process.
- It equips you with skills and strategies needed for each stage of the writing process—from finding a topic to proofreading a finished paper.
- It explores writing as a means of communication and as a tool for learning. Writing to communicate challenges you to produce clear, coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion, and audience. Writing to learn gives you tools for understanding complex texts and ideas—and for exploring your own thoughts and experiences.
- It offers frequent opportunities for writing. Besides producing papers with related drafts and revisions, you may comment on the work of other students, respond informally to assigned readings, or keep a writing log.
- It challenges you with a variety of thought-provoking texts and offers strategies and diverse perspectives for reading and understanding those texts, both print and visual. Reading selections and visual images provide ideas for discussion and writing and serve as texts for rhetorical and stylistic analysis.
- It prepares you to integrate the work of others into your own writing, showing you appropriate ways to cite and document that work.
- It provides instruction and practice in using technology as a tool for writing.

English 1320: College Writing II

English 1320 is a continuation of English 1310, with emphasis on expository writing as a means of analyzing and understanding texts. While some instructors teach literary texts in English 1320, the course is not an introduction to
literature. Rather, it is a composition course in which you learn to read critically and to draw on written sources to support your ideas. All papers in the course are documented, with at least one of them (1000-word minimum) requiring the use of several print and online sources. You may work ahead. You must wait to submit any essay until the previous one has been returned to you.

After completing English 1320, you should be able to draft, revise, and edit texts in which you demonstrate the ability to understand and analyze a variety of texts, quote, paraphrase, and summarize print and online sources to support your ideas, and use standard procedures of citation and documentation.

Additionally, you must continue to meet the objectives outlined for English 1310, including the six Core Objectives for the Communication Component of the 2014 Texas Core Curriculum.

**Writing Assignments**

Both English 1310 and 1320 require a minimum of 4000 words of graded writing divided among at least five papers. The final exam is not included in this minimum. Besides the papers you submit for a grade, you will do a good deal of other writing in the course, including drafts, commentaries on the work of other students, and impromptu reactions to reading assignments. You may also be asked to keep a journal or writing log, and/or post to an online class forum or blog.

**Reading Assignments**

Your instructor expects you to complete every reading assignment. But you should not assume that all assignments will be discussed specifically in class or given equal treatment if they are discussed. Instructors may emphasize material of particular relevance to a given class, but they always assume that students have read the entire assignment before coming to class.

**Using the Course Textbooks**


Even if your instructor does not make extensive reading assignments from *The Bedford Handbook* 9e, you should regard the book as an essential reference tool—a resource to keep at hand as you draft, revise, and edit your papers.

The following table suggests several particularly useful sites that you may want to mark by placing small post-it notes or post-it tabs on the indicated page in your handbook.

**The Bedford Handbook Tabs**

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They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing, With Readings, 3rd edition — ISBN: 13:978-0393937510 The other book required in first-year English is a collection of readings that serve as a basis for class discussion and as a source of paper topics. A good part of what you gain from first-year English—including the ability to read more perceptively—depends on your careful and conscientious attention to assignments from this text.

Disability Accommodations

The University adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines required to afford equal educational opportunity.

If you are a student with a disability who will require one or more accommodations to participate in your first-year English class, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. You will be asked to provide documentation from the Office of Disability Services. It is your responsibility to register with that office and to contact your instructor in a timely manner to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

Other Members of the Class

Exchange names, phone numbers, and email addresses with several members of your class. Because you are responsible for all assignments, even when you are absent, you should know how to reach a classmate in an emergency. You may also want to contact a classmate to discuss an idea for a paper or to seek advice about an upcoming assignment. Think of your first-year English class as a community of writers; strive to become an active member of that community.

Conferences

All instructors keep regular office hours and encourage students to take advantage of those hours. When you observe a persistent problem in your writing or have questions about an assignment, seek help from your instructor. If you cannot meet the instructor during regular office hours, make an appointment for another mutually convenient time.

Attendance and Participation

Because the skills taught in first-year English are cumulative, regular and punctual attendance and active participation are essential. Many instructors conduct their courses as workshops in which students draft and revise their papers and comment on one another’s work. You cannot benefit from such activities unless you are there to participate. You should therefore plan to attend, be on time to, and actively participate in every class meeting.

If you must be absent because of illness, your instructor may require a written statement from the Student Health Center or a private physician before excusing the absence. Each instructor may establish a specific attendance policy; if yours does, make sure that you understand it.

Personal Technology

If you bring a laptop, netbook, or tablet computer to class, you should use it only for class work, such as taking notes or working on some stage of an assigned paper. You should not check email, Facebook, your bank balance, watch videos, play games, or in any other way distract yourself and your classmates from what is going on in the classroom. Each instructor may establish a specific policy regarding classroom computer use; if yours does, make sure that you understand it.

Please turn off and put away your cell phone at the start of class. If an emergency situation requires you to be available by telephone, confer with your instructor for his/her preference for handling this situation.

Class Discussion of Reading Assignments and Ideas

The university classroom is a diverse community. During class discussions, you may hear points of view with which you disagree, as well as express points of view with which others will disagree. Remember that such exchanges are critical to both the development and the communication of informed opinions and beliefs.

So expect to disagree with, refute, and/or challenge the ideas of others. However, when doing so, remain calm, polite, and respectful at all times toward your classmates, your instructor, and their ideas.

Class Discussion of Student Work

Students learn much about how to improve their own work by reading and discussing the work of other students. Your instructor may duplicate some of your and your classmates’ papers to use as texts for discussion by the entire class. You should therefore consider your work available for public discussion by an audience (your class) once you have turned it in.
Deadlines

Students have rightly protested that those who hand in late work enjoy an unfair advantage over those who complete work on time. Your instructor is not obliged to accept late papers or to allow you to write an in-class assignment after the rest of the class has done so. Late work—if your instructor agrees to accept it—may be penalized by grade-reduction. If you have a legitimate excuse for lateness, speak with your instructor in advance. Each instructor may establish a specific policy for late work; if yours does, make sure that you understand it.

Format for Papers

A standard format for typed papers is illustrated on pages 583-588 of The Bedford Handbook 9e. Unless your instructor tells you otherwise, follow this format in preparing final copies of your papers.

Final Exams

The final exam in first-year English is a substantial in-class paper. The paper may be impromptu, or your instructor may announce topics in advance and allow you to bring notes. In any event, the paper itself must be drafted and revised during the regular final exam period. The exam will count for no more than 20% of the course grade.

Grades

The grade you earn on a paper indicates the way you have met the demands of a particular assignment; it is not a cumulative grade, nor does it assess your character. While your instructor may use tests and class participation to measure your performance, your final grade in first-year English is based primarily on the papers you write.

All graded papers, except the final exam, are returned to you during the semester in which you write them. Your instructor may ask you to keep papers for use later in the course. In any case, you should routinely save copies of all your work.

To help you stay informed about your course performance, many instructors will record your grades on TRACS Gradebook 2. Keep in mind, however, that grades recorded on Gradebook 2 are not necessarily comprehensive; for example, they may not include points earned for journals, quizzes, portfolios, or the final exam. The grades in TRACS are not official.

Grading Standards

The following general standards apply to all papers written in English 1310 and 1320. Early in the semester—and as the course progresses—your instructor may spell out specific criteria in addition to these.

C C indicates a satisfactory performance. A C paper demonstrates positive qualities and avoids serious errors. The positive qualities include the presentation of a central idea that is adequately developed and competently organized. The errors to be avoided include serious flaws in the construction of paragraphs and sentences, in the selection of appropriate words, and in the use of conventional written English. The style of the writing is generally clear.

B The B paper surpasses the C paper by demonstrating a higher level of effectiveness in the organization and development of a central idea. The B paper shows greater complexity of thought and development, while sustaining clarity in expression. It has few or none of the common errors in the use of conventional written English. The style of the writing is generally fluent and polished.

A The A paper is outstanding work. It is clearly a superior performance according to the criteria of clarity of expression and logical development of a central idea. It shows originality of thought and imaginative competence in the development of the material. It engages and holds the reader’s attention and invites rereading. The style of the writing is consistently fluent, polished, and distinctive.

D D indicates an unsatisfactory performance. A D paper is flawed by any one or several of the following: weakness in establishing or developing a central idea; serious errors in sentence or paragraph construction; serious errors in grammar, spelling, or the mechanics of written expression.

F F indicates an unacceptable performance. An F paper is flawed by one or more of the following: failure to follow the assigned topic; failure to conceive, state, or develop a central idea; serious repeated errors in sentence construction or paragraph development; serious repeated errors in grammar, spelling, or the mechanics of written expression.

Academic Honesty

The complete Texas State University Honor Code and University policies on plagiarism are available online at: www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-07-10-01.html.

https://tracs.txstate.edu/portal/tool/4db7c050-3ea3-412f-bb69-1533ce673f1f/printFriendly
The English Department expects all students to be familiar with the Honor Code and related policies.

The Texas State University Honor Code states,

As members of a community dedicated to learning, inquiry, and creation, the students, faculty, and administration of our University live by the principles in this Honor Code. These principles require all members of this community to be conscientious, respectful, and honest.

We Are Conscientious:
We complete our work on time and make every effort to do it right. We come to class and meetings prepared and are willing to demonstrate it. We hold ourselves to doing what is required, embrace rigor, and shun mediocrity, special requests, and excuses.

We Are Respectful:
We act civilly toward one another, and we cooperate with each other. We will strive to create an environment in which people respect and listen to one another, speaking when appropriate, and permitting other people to participate and express their views.

We Are Honest:
We do our own work and are honest with one another in all matters. We understand how various acts of dishonesty, like plagiarizing, falsifying data, and giving or receiving assistance to which one is not entitled, conflict as much with academic achievement as with the values of honesty and integrity.

The Pledge for Students
Students at our University recognize that, to insure honest conduct, more is needed than an expectation of academic honesty, and we therefore adopt the practice of affixing the following pledge of honesty to the work we submit for evaluation:

I pledge to uphold the principles of honesty and responsibility at our University.

The Pledge for Faculty and Administration Faculty at our University recognize that the students have rights when accused of academic dishonesty and will inform the accused of their rights of appeal laid out in the student handbook and inform them of the process that will take place.

I recognize students’ rights and pledge to uphold the principles of honesty and responsibility at our University.

Plagiarizing is submitting work that is in any way not your own. Refer to The Bedford Handbook 9e, pages 563-68.

Any cases of verifiable plagiarism, whether deliberate or accidental, will result in a failing grade on the assignment and may result in a failing grade for first-year English. (Note: Peer review and consultation with your instructor or a tutor at the Writing Center do not constitute plagiarism and are encouraged.)

Your instructor may ask you to write and sign the Texas State student academic honesty pledge on all written work in the course. Your instructor may also require you to submit your papers to Turnitin, an online program that will check your work for originality. If your instructor requires these measures, he or she will provide specific directions.

Writing Center and SLAC

The Texas State Writing Center (located on the first floor of Academic Services Building-North, across from The Den) offers individual writing tutoring for all Texas State students, including those taking English 1310 and 1320.

While tutors cannot edit your papers for you, they can work with you during any stage of the writing process—from exploring an idea to polishing a draft.

Your instructor may advise you to visit the Writing Center or may require that you do so. You may also seek help on your own. Visit the Writing Center’s Website at www.writingcenter.txstate.edu to make an appointment with a tutor. For additional assistance, call 512-245-3018.

The Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC), located on the 4th floor of the Alkek Library, also offers free tutoring for student writers. Call 512-245-2515 for information, or visit SLAC’s online site at www.txstate.edu/slac.

Flowers Hall Computer Labs

The English Department offers some sections of first-year English in computer labs located in FH G13, FH 114, and FH 120. When classes are not in session, the computers in these labs are available for general student use. An English coursework printing lab is available in FH G06.

https://tracs.txstate.edu/portal/tool/4db7c050-3ea3-412f-bb69-1533ce673f1f/printFriendly
Online Resources

Your instructor may ask you to use online sources to supplement course readings or to support ideas in a documented paper. You will find detailed information about using both print and online sources in The Bedford Handbook 9e, chapters 50 ("Thinking Like a Researcher") and 52 ("Evaluating Sources"). Alkek Library offers a valuable tutorial specifically for English 1320 students at http://guides.library.txstate.edu/eng1320_tutorial.

Other Writing Courses

If you would like additional writing instruction beyond first-year English, the Department offers various advanced courses in expository writing, technical writing, professional writing, creative writing, and editing. The Department also offers a writing minor and an English minor with emphases in writing and rhetoric and in creative writing. For more information, visit the English Department in Flowers Hall 365, or call 512-245-2163.

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