



### Course Description

Composition I prepares students for academic writing by teaching critical thinking, reading, and writing skills and building their confidence as writers. Toward these goals, students will practice constructing sentences and paragraphs, reading and analyzing a variety of texts, using rhetorical principles to create work for different purposes, audiences, and contexts, collaborating with classmates on each stage of the writing process, evaluating and integrating sources, and conducting research. In class, students will examine the assigned readings alongside their own work, so they can imagine their classmates as one audience for their assignments (in fact, they can think of themselves as writing for the entire Fordham community, as Comp I essays may be published in Fordham's Rose Hill student journal, *Rhetorikos*). Each of the five assignments is an opportunity for students to teach this audience something new—about themselves, a piece of art, a current debate, a campus issue—and to grow as collaborators, communicators, and community members. Students will need to come to meetings ready to provide constructive feedback, participate in class activities, and discuss the day's reading. Through these efforts and individual guidance, students will cultivate skills, knowledge, and understandings that will empower them as writers and help them succeed in future college courses.

Welcome to Composition I! This course is designed to prepare you for academic writing by teaching critical thinking, reading, and writing skills and building your confidence as a writer. Toward these goals, we will practice constructing sentences and paragraphs, reading and analyzing a variety of texts, using rhetorical principles to create work for different purposes, audiences, and contexts, collaborating on each stage of the writing process, evaluating and integrating sources, and conducting research. In class, you will examine the assigned readings

alongside your own writing, so imagine your classmates as one audience for your assignments (in fact, you can think of yourself as writing for the entire Fordham community, as I hope to submit some of the essays for publication in Fordham's Rose Hill student journal, [Rhetorikos](#)). Each of the five assignments is an opportunity for you to teach this audience something new—about yourself, a piece of art, a current debate, a campus issue—and to grow as a collaborator, communicator, and community member. You will need to come to meetings ready to provide constructive feedback, participate in class activities, and discuss the day's reading. Through these efforts and individual guidance, you will cultivate skills, knowledge, and understandings that will empower you as a writer and help you succeed in future college courses and beyond.

### Learning Objectives

The course is designed to help you build

- Confidence and competence in developing short writing projects and communicating for a variety of purposes, including summarizing, narrating, analyzing, and persuading;
- Awareness of your own language habits, strengths and weaknesses as a writer, and assumptions about college writing as well as the varieties of English, the standards that codify these varieties, and the perception of these Englishes among various discourse communities;
- Strategies for identifying and revising sentence-level issues of style, voice, and grammar;
- Familiarity with conventions of academic writing, reading, and research;
- Skills in critical thinking, close reading, and rhetorical analysis; and
- Knowledge of the Fordham library and other research resources.

### Required Books

- [The Bedford Handbook](#), 11th edition (2020)
  - I encourage you to buy a new or used copy rather than rent a copy. This writing handbook is something you can refer to throughout your Fordham and post-Fordham career.
- All other readings will be available as hyperlinks on schedule or on Blackboard under the "Content" tab

### Digital Platforms

- Google Docs
- Fordham Blackboard
- Zoom Pro (free access on Blackboard)

### Assignments and Grading Policy

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| ● Attendance & Participation                                 | 20% |
| ● (2) Revision Quizzes                                       | 10% |
| ● (4) Short Writing Assignments                              | 40% |
| ● Final Inquiry Project (fieldwork, presentation, and essay) | 30% |

### Short Writing Assignments

**Narrative (WA #1)** (300-400 words):

Choose a famous living person (whom the class should reasonably know). Imagine this person passes away suddenly, and as their close friend or family member, you have been asked to speak at their funeral. Write a eulogy for this person without naming them. Based on the clues you provide as well as the tone of the eulogy, the class will try to guess who you are describing. Along these lines, please omit any direct references to your person. For example, if you are writing about Serena Williams, do not say “your sister Venus Williams.”

**Opinion Editorial (WA #2)** (450-550 words):

First, identify a significant day in your life. Next, describe the day in 280 characters or fewer (i.e. the one-time character limit on Twitter) and choose one photograph from the day. You will compare the two pieces of evidence to develop an opinion about one of these mediums as well as communication in our digital age.

- In the first paragraph, describe the photograph in terms of its content, composition, and style, and explain what it effectively communicates about the day and what it fails to convey about the day.
- In the second paragraph, describe the text in terms of its content, composition, and style. Does it capture something the photograph does not? Does it fail to communicate something the photograph does?
- In the last paragraph, draw a conclusion about either photographs or writing. For example, what does your comparison suggest about the visual medium of photography? What is a unique strength and/or weakness of photography? Do you think your image or your text provides a better record of the day? Last, how does this example relate to your opinion on Instagram, Twitter, or social media broadly? Explain. Please attach a copy of the image and tweet to the essay.

**Rhetorical Analysis (WA #3)** (450-550 words):

Choose a passage from Kiese Laymon’s essay “Here We Go Again, We See the Crystal Visions” or Paul Yoon’s short story “Person of Korea.”

- In the first paragraph, summarize the essay or story as well as your chosen excerpt. How does your chosen scene fit into the overall narrative? And how does the scene reflect *one* of the writer’s main themes (taken from the list we generated in class).
- In the second paragraph, describe two or three of Laymon or Yoon’s literary techniques. Identify and describe the different “literary devices” (from the list on BB), including diction, metaphor, syntax, imagery, juxtaposition, repetition, and symbolism.
- In the last paragraph, draw a conclusion about how their style and technique (¶ 2) impacts your understanding of the larger theme(¶1). In other words, how do their sentence-level choices contribute to the meaning of the work?

**Campus Activism Inquiry Project (WA #4)** (500-600 words):

Choose one of the sources on the history of college activism (either Malcolm Gladwell's "Small Change" or Philip Altbach and Robert Cohen's "American Student Activism") and find one source about a recent example of activism on a college campus (no earlier than 2020).

- Summarize the source. What is the main argument? What example(s) does the writer provide? Who seems to be the intended audience?
- Summarize your chosen instance of activism on an American campus. What actions did the students take? How do those actions define the main problem and intended audience? What were the outcomes?
- In the last paragraph, draw a conclusion about the significance of the recent example. Does the recent instance support or challenge the argument about the history of student movements (¶1)? What does the comparison between the source and your chosen example teach us, members of a university community, that is valuable?

### **Multimodal Project Proposal (WA #5) (600-800 words)**

First, please answer the following in approx 400 words:

- What is your campus issue topic?
- What two genres and/or modalities will you be using for your project?
- Who is your audience?
- What fieldwork do you plan to conduct?

Second, reflect on your rhetorical strategy in approx. 400 words. This strategy should be based on WA 4 and your Fordham source, and it should help you make choices with your purpose and intended effect in mind:

- What message are you trying to communicate to your audience?
- How do your chosen modes communicate your message? How do they compare to those you described in WA 4?
- Why is this message important to you?

### **Attendance and Participation**

Your attendance and participation are important. Great classes are built on a collective commitment to working together to formulate questions, share ideas (laughs, frustrations, challenges, etc.), develop special interests, expand our respective perspectives, debate different interpretations, and learn the subject matter. So come to class ready to participate! To participate, you will need to

1. read/watch the assigned text,
2. organize your thoughts about the work prior to our meeting, and
3. bring the assigned text to class.

Participating in class and on Blackboard will take different shapes for different people, but to receive full credit for attendance and participation, you must attend class, share your ideas with the group, contribute to in-class activities, and engage with your classmates. To this last point, let's do our best to create an environment where everyone feels respected, valued, and included. As the thinker Judith Butler argues, "If I am to live a good life, it will be a life lived with others. I

will not lose this I that I am; whoever I am will be transformed by my connections with others, since my dependency on another, and my dependability, are necessary in order to live and live well.”

You will not be penalized for your first three absences or latenesses; thereafter, your final course grade will drop one grade for each day missed. Six or more absences may result in failure of the course per [Fordham’s attendance policy](#).

### **Extensions, Emails, Etiquette, and COVID-19**

Everyone is entitled to one extension over the course of the semester. If you decide to use the extension, simply request it 24 hours before the deadline via email, and we can establish a new due date—typically two days after the original deadline.

Also, there is no time like the present to begin honing your email etiquette, so please consider all emails and messages professional correspondences and include subject headings, appropriate salutations, and minimal grammatical errors. This skill will prove invaluable throughout your career at Fordham and beyond.

Last but not least, I know we are still navigating a devastating global pandemic and that our lives have changed dramatically over the last three years. While learning about literature, film, and history is important, your health and well-being are my top priority. I am happy to make adjustments, so please ask for what you need. Communication is key (always but especially now), so please do not wait or be afraid to reach out to me after class or via office hours if an issue arises. Fordham’s [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) is also an excellent resource. They offer free one-on-one appointments and group workshops to support your mental, psychological, and emotional health.

### **Academic Integrity**

Participating in an academic conversation means learning from others and giving them credit for what you have learned. This skill is one of the great responsibilities and joys of writing. Moreover, plagiarism undermines the integrity of your work, our classroom, and our school. Therefore, plagiarism will not be tolerated. Following [Fordham’s policy](#), evidence of plagiarism will result in an automatic zero for the assignment as well as a notification to the Dean’s office and possibly failure of the course.

Please note that Chat GPT and other AI tools are not permitted in this course, and AI generated work will be considered plagiarism. As a reader (and your professor), it is not difficult to identify AI writing because it does not replicate the excitement, curiosity, creativity, originality, and critical insight that comes from humanities writing. In short, it does not replicate what makes us human. For more information on Fordham University’s policy on academic integrity, please consult your student handbook. Also, while we’ll practice citing, synthesizing, and incorporating

the work of others in class, please don't hesitate to reach out to me with questions about using outside sources.

### **Paper Submission and Formatting**

Submit an *electronic copy* of each assignment on Blackboard under the Content tab and bring a *hard copy* to class. Essays should be formatted according to MLA standards: double spaced; Times New Roman, 12-point font; header and title; citations and works cited page, etc. See *The Bedford Handbook for Writers* or [Purdue Owl Online Writing Lab](#) if you need a refresher. Fordham's [Writing Center](#) is also an excellent resource.

### **Revision, Feedback and Conferences**

For the midterm, you will revise W2. At this time, you are invited to revise one additional piece (the Diagnostic, W3, or W4) for a new grade. You will also be expected to meet with me for an individual conference regarding your final project in November, but I will be available for one-on-one meetings during office hours and in-class workshops throughout the semester.

### **Mandatory Reporting**

As a faculty member, I am a mandatory reporter. If I observe, learn, or suspect that you have experienced sexual or any other type of misconduct, I am obligated by law to report this information to Fordham's [Gender Equity & Title IX Office](#). This obligation extends to the work that you produce in this class. Once reported, the University has committed to supporting you and ensuring that the misconduct stops and does not happen again.

### **Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**

One of my goals is to make this course inclusive, equitable, and explicitly antiracist by supporting the vital truth of Black Lives Matter and its charge to all of us to recognize biases, confront privilege, and labor toward justice for all Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). During this semester, we will strive to be courageous and empathetic when we navigate difficult topics and discuss complex issues related to racial and other intersectional forms of social justice.

As part of this effort, we will answer [Toni Morrison's](#) challenge to ensure that oppressive language is "rejected, altered and exposed." This means disavowing speech that attempts to silence, threaten, and degrade others and communicating in ways that are inclusive of individuals and groups regardless of race, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, political affiliation, disability, religion, appearance, and more. For example, we will use gender-inclusive and non-sexist language, which avoids misgendering people, and recognizes the distinction between biological sex and gender expression. Similarly, we will not repeat racial slurs even when we watch a video or read an essay that includes them. This choice shows respect to all the people who have been subjected to hate speech and acknowledges the history and violence of this language. Last, like everyone, I am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something is said in class by me or a classmate

that makes you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it or provide anonymous feedback via Blackboard.

\*Everyone has the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns that they use for themselves. Please let me know what name and pronouns I should use for you. A student's chosen name and pronouns are to be respected at all times in the classroom.

### **Disability Services**

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities at our university. If you believe that you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please schedule an appointment to speak with someone at the [Office of Disability Services](#).

### **Course Schedule**

Please note: The syllabus is subject to change. See Blackboard for updates.

Weeks 1-2

#### **What is Good Writing?:**

##### **An Introduction to Composition and Rhetoric**

- Sept 2: Diagnostic Essay
- Sept 6: No Class / University Closed
- Sept 8: Harold Evans, excerpt from *Do I Make Myself Clear?* (2017)
- Sept 9: Narrative WA #1



Weeks 3-4

#### **Classical Rhetoric for the 2020s:**

##### **Ethos, Pathos, and Logos Across Mediums and Contexts**

- Sept 13: Douglas Rushkoff, "Why I'm Quitting Facebook" (2013) and excerpt from *Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now* (2014).
- Sept 16: Douglas Rushkoff, [Present Shock](#) video essay on Vimeo (2011)
- Sept 20: No reading
  - Revision Quiz 1
- Sept 23: Op-ed WA #2

Weeks 5-6

#### **The Art of Writing:**

##### **Using Literary Techniques as Rhetorical Strategies**

- Sept 27: Kiese Laymon, ["Now Here We Go Again, We See the Crystal Visions"](#) (2020)
- Sept 30: Paul Yoon, ["Person of Korea"](#) (2021)
- Oct 4: No Reading
- Oct 7: Rhetorical Analysis WA #3

Weeks 7-8

**The Pros and Cons of the College Essay:**

**Organizing, Structuring, and Challenging Your Thinking**

- Oct 11: Rebecca Shuman, [“The End of the College Essay”](#) (2013) and Vershawn Ashanti Young, “Should Writers Use They Own English?” (2010)
- Oct 14: Peer Writing Workshop
  - Please bring a hard copy of the midterm revision (WA #2, #3, or the diagnostic essay) to class for workshop
- Oct 18: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, [“The Danger of a Single Story”](#) (2009)
  - Revision Quiz 2
- Oct 21: Midterm Revision WA #4

Weeks 9-11

**The History of Student Activism:**

**Evaluating Sources and Entering into a Conversation**

- Oct 25: Zachary Jason, “Student Activism 2.0” (2018)
- Oct 28: Randa Jarrar, excerpt from *Love Is an Ex-country* (2021); Papas Sabrina, “Experiencing Joy Is Revolutionary’: An Interview with Randa Jarrar” (2021);
- Nov 1: The Colbert Report, [“Occupy U.C. Berkeley”](#) (2011); Malcolm X, [“Interview at Berkeley”](#) (1963)
- Nov 4: Meet in Walsh Library for Source Hunt Assignment
- Nov 8: Group Presentation of the Source Hunt Assignment
- Nov 11: Inquiry Project Part I WA #5

Weeks 12-15

**A Social Justice Inquiry for Fordham:**

**Developing a Project from Question to Thesis and Strategy to Publication**

- Nov 15: Roger Smith, “Fordham Is Our School,” *Rhetorikos* (2014) and Peter Murray, “Graduate Student Statement: Cancelled Jasbir Puar Lecture,” Email (2016).
- Nov 18: Fieldwork for Final Research Project Part II WA #5
- Nov 22: Reading TBA
- Nov 25: Thanksgiving Break
- Nov 29: Research Question and Outline Part III WA #5
  - Please come to class prepared to share your research question
- Dec 2: Reading TBA
- Dec 6: Presentation of Final Project WA #5
- Dec 9: Presentation of Final Project WA #5

**Final Project due by 11:59 PM on Friday, December 17**