Course Syllabus
UN 1015, Composition
Sections R04, R05, R35

Fall 2015

Instructor Information
Instructor: Dr. Maria Bergstrom, Instructor
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Telephone: (906) 482-0984
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Office Hours: MTRF 1-3 pm, TR 10am to noon, or by appointment

Course Description
In this course, students will examine and interpret communication practices and apply what they learn to their own written, spoken, and visual compositions. Students will learn to communicate in a variety of modes and to attend to audience, purpose, and context.

Course Overview
Composition (UN 1015) is a course designed to introduce you to college-level communication. We will begin the semester using the “This I Believe” program to write narratives that express a personal philosophy or belief. You will then develop a proposal for a research paper that will involve finding and consulting secondary sources and developing a persuasive, well-reasoned, and well-supported written argument. Finally, you will produce a multi-modal project (visual and audio in addition to writing) related to your research project theme. You will present your finished project to the class as part of an oral presentation.

Throughout the semester, we will be considering how all modes of effective communication require us to pay attention to audience, context, and purpose. We will also focus on writing and composing as a process, not just an end point. As a class we will work through each stage: generating ideas, topic selection, library research, evaluating sources, framing an argument, drafting, seeking input from others, and revising. Because we learn best how to communicate effectively by practicing communication skills, the course will be writing-intensive and discussion-based.

Course Learning Objectives
This course is designed to meet two of Michigan Technological University’s Student Learning Goals: Communication (Goal 5) and Information Literacy (Goal 6). To learn more about these two learning goals, please see the rubrics posted at http://www.mtu.edu/assessment/program/university-learning-goals/
Communication: Students will be able to communicate effectively, orally, in writing and in new media, to a wide variety of audiences.

Information literacy: Students will be able to identify the need for information, procure and evaluate information, and subsequently revise their strategy for obtaining information. Students will access and apply information in an ethical and legal manner.

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- recognize and use several strategies for producing and interpreting persuasive texts that are appropriate for a particular context, audience, and purpose;
- know how to develop an organized text in written, aural, and/or visual modes and demonstrate a basic understanding of the conventions of a genre or discipline;
- develop carefully crafted arguments informed by research, critical reasoning, and persuasive techniques

Course Resources

Course Website

- Canvas: We will use the Canvas course site throughout the semester for communication, to complete various assignments, and to submit papers for grading. Please adjust your Canvas settings so that you can receive new announcements and any changes in the syllabus and assignments in a timely manner.
- A word about contacting the instructor: I check my email regularly, but not typically after 3 pm. DO NOT EXPECT that an email sent after 3 pm or late at night will be read before 8 am the next day.

Course Texts:


Both books are available through the University bookstore, or you may purchase them on your own.

University Resources

- The Michigan Tech Multiliteracies Center (Walker 107) is a free resource to help you work on your assignments. Coaches at the center can help you brainstorm ideas, refine your topic, edit and revise your drafts, even listen to you practice your oral presentation. Help is available on a walk-in basis, but an appointment is recommended. Check out their webpage at: http://www.mtu.edu/humanities/resources/mtmc/
- The J. Robert Van Pelt and Opie Library will be your source for a number of services related to this course, including print resources, online databases, and online journals. If you haven’t already, consider taking a library tour.
Course Assignments

Assignment details are posted on our Canvas site with specific details about the individual assignment requirements. Below is a brief summary of the graded assignments for the semester. Please note: Students must turn in complete, final drafts of ALL major assignments in order to receive a passing grade in this course. “Major assignments” includes the “This I Believe” essay, Research Project, Multi-Modal Project, and Final Portfolio.

This semester, the Research Process Evaluation (Annotated Bibliography) and Researched Argument Essay (Research Paper) will be submitted as part of Michigan Tech’s yearly assessment of the General Education program. This means that in addition to submitting these assignments to me for grading, you will be required to submit them to LiveText through a link on Canvas. (I will provide you with more details about this process later in the semester.) If you wish your work to remain anonymous, make sure to remove any identifying information from the documents prior to submitting them to LiveText. You must submit these two assignments to LiveText for assessment before the end of the semester in order to receive your grade for the course--failure to do so will result in an “I” (incomplete) grade in the course, until the assignments have been submitted.

“This I Believe” Personal Essay:
(15% of total grade)
This assignment has two parts: a 200-250 word personal credo, and a 350-500 word essay that fits the requirements of the “This I Believe” website (you will turn in both a draft and a final version of the essay). You will be given the opportunity to read your essay for the class for extra credit. Students will not be required to submit their essays to the “This I Believe” website, but that will be an option for those who wish: www.thisibelieve.org

Research Paper:
(40% of total grade)
The research paper forms the core of the graded assignments for this course. This paper will also be completed in several parts: a research proposal outlining your topic, an annotated bibliography and research log; and a written draft and revision of your research paper (approximately 10 pages).

Multi-modal Project:
(20% of total grade)
Using some aspect of your Research Paper, you will develop a self-playing Power Point presentation of approximately 2-3 minutes. Again the assignment includes several parts: a preliminary proposal for instructor approval, the actual Power Point (including visuals and audio), a written document explaining the project and the rhetorical choices you made in creating it, and a 5-10 minute oral presentation of your project at the end of the semester.

Final Portfolio:
(10% of total grade)
The final portfolio will include your “This I Believe” essay, your research paper, your multi-modal project, and your reflections on what you learned in the course, including some discussion of the rhetorical choices you made in composing and revising your assignments. If you choose, you can revise one of the writing assignments again before including it in the portfolio and indicate that you would like
me to re-grade it. If I see significant improvement, I will revise the original grade on that assignment (either you get a higher grade or your grade stays the same, you don’t risk getting a lower grade if you resubmit).

**Attendance/Participation:**

(15% of total grade)

Nearly every class session we will have some kind of assignment—-a response to the reading, a question for discussion, a reading quiz, a peer review of a paper, etc. Some of these will be written and/or turned in during class, some will be online submissions through our Canvas site. All “daily writings” will be graded on a pass/fail basis and will count towards the Participation part of the final grade. **More than 6 absences is grounds for failing this course.** If you have extenuating circumstances that will interfere with consistent attendance in class, please communicate your concerns with me and/or the Dean of Students at 906-487-2212 or deanofstudents@mtu.edu.

**Grading Scheme**

**Grading System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade points/credit</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93% &amp; above</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>87% – 92%</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82% – 86%</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>76% – 81%</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>Above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% – 75%</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>65% – 69%</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>Below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 64%</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Inferior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Incomplete;  only when a student is unable to complete a segment of the course because of circumstances beyond the student's control.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Conditional, with no grade points per credit; given only when the student is at fault in failing to complete a minor segment of a course, but in the judgment of the instructor does not need to repeat the course. It must be made up by the close of the next semester or the grade becomes a failure (F). A (X) grade is computed into the grade point average as a (F) grade.</td>
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**Missed/Late Assignments**

The instructor reserves the right to give NO CREDIT for missed/late assignments. Any extenuating circumstances must be discussed with me in a timely manner. Plan ahead and complete your assignments on time. **Students must turn in complete, final drafts of ALL major assignments in order to receive a passing grade in this course.**


Course Policies

Classroom Expectations:

We have the luxury in this course of a small class size and the opportunity for a great deal of interaction. The nature of the course requires that everyone is actively participating. Therefore, electronic devices (cell phones, tablets, etc.) should be turned off and stowed away during class. Unless I have specified that computers are welcome (for an assignment or reading), I will also ask you to put away your computer during class. Technology can be a temptation to distraction for all of us. Resist the urge to check your email or Facebook for the 50 minutes we are together. You will get out of this course what you put into it. Don’t cheat yourself or your classmates by skipping class or detracting from our discussions.

Attendance:

Come to class, and come prepared to participate. All class activities contribute to your grade. If you are absent, you miss the activities for that day, and lose the opportunity to participate in the peer review and collaborative process. Attendance is part of your overall participation grade. More than 6 absences is grounds for failing this course. If you have extenuating circumstances that will interfere with consistent attendance in class, please communicate your concerns with me and/or the Dean of Students at 906-487-2212 or deanofstudents@mtu.edu. If you miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed.

Plagiarism Rules

From the University’s Academic Integrity Policy:

Plagiarism is: “Knowingly copying another's work or ideas and calling them one's own or not giving proper credit or citation. This includes but is not limited to reading or hearing another's work or ideas and using them as one's own; quoting, paraphrasing, or condensing another's work without giving proper credit; purchasing or receiving another's work and using, handling, or submitting it as one's own work.”

The University also considers it academic dishonesty to “knowingly or recklessly allow or help another individual to plagiarize, cheat, or fabricate information.”

In this class, we will discuss the practical and ethical aspects of source attribution so you can learn how and why to avoid plagiarism in your academic work. It is crucial that you take care to acknowledge the sources of your written, audio, or visual material in this and other classes. Instances of plagiarized work will be handled according to university procedures, which includes a reporting of the incident to the Office of Student Affairs.

As a class, we will be using turnitin.com as a means of screening submitted essays for plagiarism and incorrect use of secondary sources. More information about the logistics of this will be in your individual assignment sheets.

University Policies

Assessment: Student work products (exams, essays, projects, etc.) may be used for the purposes of university, program, or course assessment. All work used for assessment purposes will not include any
individual student identification; therefore, students should remove their names, teachers' names, course and section identifiers before submitting work for assessment.

**Disability Services**: [http://www.mtu.edu/deanofstudents/students/disability/](http://www.mtu.edu/deanofstudents/students/disability/)

If you have a disability that could affect your performance in any class or that requires an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact your instructor or Disability Services at 487-1494 as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

**The Office of Institutional Equity**: [http://www.mtu.edu/equity](http://www.mtu.edu/equity)