Composition Program Information

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Welcome (back) to the English Department at the University of Pittsburgh

Main Office: 526 Cathedral of Learning, 4200 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15260
Phone: 412.624.6506 Fax: 412.624.6639
On the Web: http://www.english.pitt.edu

The office staff would like to welcome you to the Department of English and has developed this document for your information and convenience. It contains information to help familiarize you with the department.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact any of the program assistants at (412) 624-6506.

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Note: Office phone numbers dialed within Pitt do not require that you dial the complete number. Simply dial the last five digits of the phone number. For the numbers listed below, dialing from off-campus requires area code 412, plus 62[X]-XXXX.
Main Office and Individual Offices:
The English Department’s main office is located in the Cathedral of Learning, room 526 (“CL 526”). Hours of Operation: Monday through Friday - 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
The department has offices on the 4th, 5th and 6th floors of the Cathedral. Individual office assignments are handled by the department administrator. Any problems that you may have with your office can be reported to the front office staff or the department administrator.

About the Building:
1. The Cathedral of Learning is a smoke-free building, as are all of the buildings on campus. Smokers must go outdoors to a designated smoking area to smoke.
2. Do not place anything on the walls in the public spaces (elevator, lobby, stairwells, etc.). It will be removed immediately. University policy expressly prohibits taping anything to painted surfaces in common areas as it damages the paint.

Office Keys:
If you have recently changed offices please remember to return your old keys to Joe Kluchurosky in the main office. Office keys for your assigned area(s) are distributed by the front office staff. All Part-Time and Visiting Faculty must return any keys at the end of their contract periods.
Payday:
Payday at the university is the last working day of each month. All newly hired employees are required to sign up for direct deposit. If you are still receiving a paper check please see the front office staff for a direct deposit form.

Important Note: Check your pay statement for correct information including spelling of name, social security number, address, pay amount, and deductions for health benefits.

Security:
Be extremely careful with your valuables. Purses, books, computers, coats, and anything important to you should not be left in unlocked spaces. There have been incidents of theft in the past. If you need an office key, this is a reminder to please see the staff in the front office to obtain one. If you are unsure about the security of a personal item, keep it with you.

U.S. Mail:
All departmental mailboxes are located in CL 501. Incoming mail is distributed by mid-morning each day. Outgoing mail should be placed in the appropriate mail bins in CL 526 no later than 1:00 p.m. Do not put personal mail in the department's mail bins without affixing first-class postage. We reserve the right to examine all outgoing mail, and personal mail without postage will be returned to your mailbox. Do not use university envelopes for personal mail. Packages are not placed in mailboxes, you will receive an e-mail asking you to pick up any packages in the main office - CL 526. Please do not have personal items shipped to the department.

Part-time Office Space:
The part-time office space this year will be on the 4th floor of the Cathedral. Occupants will have access to lockers to secure their belongings. You must provide your own lock and remove all materials by the end of your teaching term. The department assumes no responsibility for loss or damage of any item in a locker, locked or unlocked.

Graduate Student Computer Lab
The Graduate Student Computer Lab has moved to CL 617B as of last year. This lab is for graduate student use only. No food or beverages are permitted in the room at any time. This door will be secured by a combination lock. Please get the combination from the front office staff (CL 526). Do not give the combination out to anyone else. Keep the room neat and clean. Report any problems to the main office. These are departmental machines, and we pay for maintenance and supplies. Please use the equipment responsibly to help conserve them.

Printers: Please try to edit on screen rather than from a printed draft to help save on toner cartridges and paper.

You can also help conserve our supplies by printing at any of the several campus computer labs. Please note: all machines are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

A UNIVERSITY STUDENT COMPUTING ACCOUNT is automatically generated with student admission.
**COPIERS AND DUPLICATOR**

The copiers and duplicator are located in CL 509 and we ask the occupants of the 5th and 6th floors utilize these machines. We also have a copier located in 454A (combination lock on door) that is to be used by the part-time instructors and occupants of that floor.

**Note:** The code to login to either copier in 509 is 99999. The code to login to the copier in 464B is 1582. **Please don't share these login codes with anyone!**

Use of the Department copiers is limited to duplicating material for English Department courses that you teach, research that you are conducting, and departmental committee work. Any personal duplicating must be approved in advance and paid for at the rate of 5 cents per page.

**BE CAREFUL NOT TO LEAVE PAPER CLIPS, STAPLES, ETC., AROUND THE MACHINES.** This kind of carelessness will cause breakdowns.

When finished copying, please be sure to sign out to clear your account number from the copier.

**Important Note:** For obtaining permission and duplicating copyrighted material, we are required to use the University’s Copyright Clearance Office. For more information about copyright clearance, please phone Ext. 8-1461, and ask for Greg Sciulli. You may also stop by his office at The University Store, upstairs next to the EBM (Espresso Book Machine). Please allow six to eight weeks for all copyright clearances. You must obtain advanced approval for any expenses you expect to incur for copyright permissions. Greg also handles custom publishing – out of print or self published. [https://www.pittuniversitystore.com/t-ebm-about.aspx](https://www.pittuniversitystore.com/t-ebm-about.aspx)

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**INSTRUCTOR RELATED INFORMATION**

Please familiarize yourself with the **faculty resources webpage** on the English Department website at [http://www/english.pitt.edu/about/faculty-resource-page](http://www/english.pitt.edu/about/faculty-resource-page)

**PITT ID:**

You must obtain a **UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH ID** as soon as possible. Please bring one form of photo ID (such as a photo driver’s license) to Panther Central located in the Main Lobby of Litchfield Towers. Students should take a copy or their registration form (indicating that you are currently registered for classes). For additional information, call the ID Center at Ext. 8-1100.

**BOOK ORDER FORMS:**

Book Order forms must be completed as soon as you are assigned a course. Please submit your book orders directly to the Book Center via the internet at:


**SYLLABI:**

**ALL Syllabi** must be turned in to the curriculum coordinator, Chelsea Blake, at the beginning of each term. Please e-mail them to her at chelseablake@pitt.edu by the end of the second week of classes, **this is a very important accreditation requirement.** Copies of syllabi are kept electronically for all courses.
INSTRUCTOR’S OFFICE HOURS:
This is an important form that is available on the Faculty Resources webpage. If a student needs to meet with you or if an emergency call comes in to the main office for you, we will know where you are teaching and when you hold office hours. **We must have a completed form from everyone who teaches in the department.**

CLASS CANCELLATIONS:
All class cancellations must be reported to the main office (phone (412) 624-6506) regardless of the reason. This includes emergencies as well as non-emergencies. If you know in advance that you will be missing a class, you must arrange for an appropriate substitute or provide appropriate out of class work and timely notice to your students. An official Department of English cancellation sign will be posted on the door of the classroom. Remember to remove the cancellation sign when you attend the next class.

RETURNING STUDENT PAPERS:
Professional and personal respect for students’ work, as well as privacy laws, warrant that instructors return papers in person, either during class or office hours. In some instances, papers may need to be returned via first class mail. However, the department does not have funds in its operating budget to cover the cost of postage to return student papers. If students cannot come to your office to pick up final papers, please ask them to provide you with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

UNITED WAY:
Campaign begins September 16, 2016 with the Day of Caring. Show your support this year! We address the greatest needs by giving to United Way. United Way focuses on the critical health and human service issues of our day. From elder care to after-school learning to job training to crisis support – United Way works to address the greatest challenges facing people in our community.

Help us to increase participation this year. Donations can be as little as $2 and be deducted directly from your Pitt paycheck. Contact Jennifer Florian for more information.
Course Goals
Seminar in Composition

Seminar in Composition is the course that most undergraduates take to fulfill the first of three writing-intensive requirements in the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. While the readings and assignments in different sections of the course may vary, this section, like all the others, consists of a sequence of assignments that will require you to:

1. Engage in composing as a creative, disciplined form of critical inquiry.

   In this course, you'll compose as a way to generate ideas as well as explain them. You'll form questions, explore problems, and examine your own experiences, thoughts, and observations. Investigating a multifaceted subject, you'll be expected to make productive use of uncertainty as you participate in sustained scrutiny of the issues at hand.

2. Compose thoughtfully crafted essays that position your ideas among other views.

   In response to reading, listening to and discussing challenging texts, you'll compose essays in which you develop informed positions that engage with the positions of others. You'll analyze as well as summarize the texts you read, and you'll compose essays that pay close attention both to the ideas voiced by other writers and to specific choices they make with language and form.

3. Compose with precision, nuance, and awareness of formal conventions.

   You'll work on crafting clear, precise prose that uses a variety of sentence and paragraph structures. You'll be required to learn the conventions for quoting and paraphrasing responsibly and adeptly, and you'll be assisted with editing strategies that reflect attention to the relation between style and meaning. You'll also have opportunities to consider when and how to challenge conventions as well as follow them.

4. Revise your writing by rethinking the assumptions, aims, and effects of prior drafts.

   This course approaches the essay as a flexible genre that takes on different forms in different contexts—not as a thesis-driven argument that adheres to a rigid structure. Much class time will be devoted to considering the purpose, logic, and design of your own compositions, and you'll be given opportunities to revise your work in light of comments and class discussion, with the aim of making more attentive decisions.

You must earn a “C-minus” in order to pass Seminar in Composition.
Policies
at the University of Pittsburgh

Attendance

Since composition courses focus primarily on the work of students themselves, whose reading and writing is central to class discussion, attendance is required. Come to class on time, prepared to take part in conversation about the materials under study. If there is a time when you cannot come to class, it is your responsibility to communicate with your teacher, to arrange to turn in written work, and to find out about subsequent assignments. Missing class is likely to affect your work (and grade); missing more than three classes can be grounds for failure. Students in this situation should consider withdrawing from the course and taking it again under better circumstances.

Writing Assignments

Composition courses involve some form of writing every week, and it is important that you submit your work on time. Late papers cannot become part of class discussion nor be returned to you promptly for revision. You may be asked on occasion to bring in multiple copies of your work for a small group of students to read and comment; at other times your work may be copied by the teacher and distributed to the class as a whole. In other words, it is important that you recognize that the audience for your writing in a composition course extends beyond the teacher, and that you will be expected to respond to the work of other students, just as they will respond to yours. All papers should be typed or printed from a computer; and since you may turn in several drafts of a single paper, it is wise to keep all of your work saved on a disk.

Writing Center

The Writing Center, located at 317B O'Hara Student Center, is an excellent resource for working with an experienced consultant on your writing. Although you should not expect consultants to "correct" your paper for you, they can assist you in learning to organize, revise, and edit your work. Consultants can work with you on a one-time basis or throughout the term. In some cases, your teacher may require that you go to the Writing Center for help on a particular problem; otherwise, you can decide on your own to seek assistance. To make an appointment, come to the Writing Center or call 624-6556.

Composition Tutorial

Those of you enrolled in Seminar in Composition (SC) may have also been placed Composition Tutorial, a one-credit tutorial that helps you examine your writing more closely. If you are enrolled in SC, you need to attend every session of the tutorial and bring with you the material from your SC course (syllabus, assignments, drafts of papers, teacher's comments, etc.). Remember: if you have been placed into Composition Tutorial, you must pass it in order to pass SC.

Grading

Though each teacher will have his or her own approach to grading, most composition teachers determine a final grade by reviewing a folder of your writing two or three times during the semester. In other words, rather than grading each paper individually, the teacher writes comments on initial drafts and then evaluates your work after you have had an opportunity to revise it. At midterm, your teacher will schedule a conference with you to discuss your progress. You should also feel free to visit your teacher during his or her office hours to discuss your work or your grade.

Special Assistance

If you are a student with a disability, you may wish to contact Disability Resources and Services in 140 William Pitt Union or at 412-648-7890. Pitt also offers free counseling for students who are experiencing personal or emotional difficulties. The Counseling Center, located on the 2nd Floor Nordenberg Hall, offers Psychological Services and Sexual Assault Services (412-648-7930) (8:30 am-5:00 pm, Monday-Friday) or (412-648-7856) (after 5 pm, Monday-Friday or on weekends).
Plagiarism: Policies and Procedures

Please read with care. You can save yourself considerable time and grief by following standard procedures.

1. You must include a statement on academic integrity (including plagiarism) in your syllabus or course description. There is a prepared statement on the A&S website. To access it, go to A&S Faculty page (http://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty) and navigate to the section on Teaching (http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/teaching) and click on Syllabi: Academic Integrity Statement (http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/teaching/academic-integrity-statement-syllabi) or consult with a Program Director.

2. If you have reason to believe that a student has plagiarized, you must follow A&S procedure in a timely fashion.
   - Advise the student that you have reason to believe that he/she has committed an offense related to academic integrity. The student must be given the opportunity to respond.
   - If the student refuses to admit to the offense, the student has the right to a hearing with the Academic Integrity Board. You cannot issue a sanction until the student has exercised this right.
   - If the student admits to the infraction and signs the report form (see below), you may follow the sanction guidelines outlined in your course description. If you have any questions on an appropriate penalty, consult with a Program Director or the Chair.

3. As part of the process, you must complete the Academic Integrity Violation Report Form.
   You can get a copy from Kristin Hopkins or online on the English Department Faculty Resource Page (http://www.english.pitt.edu/about/faculty-resource-page).

4. For more information on the Dietrich School of A&S Academic Integrity Policies & Procedures please visit the A&S website at: http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity.

Updated: 08/19/2016
Print this page, complete it in a timely fashion, and send to address below.

Student Name: ___________________  Course No: ___________________

Student ID: ___________________  Course Name: ___________________

Date of Incident: ___________  Faculty Name: ___________________

Term of Incident: ___________  Faculty Phone/E-mail: ___________________

Brief description of violation (if necessary, additional sheets may be used).

Brief description of discussion held with student(s).

Sanction determined by instructor.

________________________________________  __________________________________________
Student’s Signature Accepting Sanction  Instructor’s Signature Accepting Sanction

SEND TO:
Frederick Whelan, Assistant Dean
Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Studies
140 Thackeray Hall

For more information, please review the Dietrich School’s Academic Integrity guidelines:
http://www.as.pitt.edu/fae/policies/academic-integrity
In-Class Assignment
Seminar in Composition
University of Pittsburgh

This in-class assignment has a dual purpose: it begins the intellectual work of Seminar in Composition, and it provides your instructor with a sample of your writing at the start of the term. While your response will not affect your grade, it may be used to determine whether your needs as a writer would best be served by your taking in a one-credit elective tutorial that accompanies Seminar in Composition.

Please print your name clearly at the top of the first page of your essay. You will have 45 minutes to complete your essay. Take time to proofread and correct errors in wording, punctuation, and spelling before submitting the essay to your teacher.

Read the following paragraphs from David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky's *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers* (8th edition) and write an essay in which you respond to the questions below.

Reading involves a fair measure of push and shove. You make your mark on a book and it makes its mark on you. Reading is not simply a matter of hanging back and waiting for a piece, or its author, to tell you what the writing has to say. In fact, one of the difficult things about reading is that the pages before you will begin to speak only when the authors are silent and you begin to speak in their place, sometimes for them—doing their work, continuing their projects—and sometimes for yourself, following your own agenda.

This is an unusual way to talk about reading, we know. We have not mentioned finding information or locating an author’s purpose or identifying main ideas, useful though these skills are, because the purpose of our book is to offer you occasions to imagine other ways of reading. We think of reading as a social interaction—sometimes peaceful and polite, sometimes not so peaceful and polite. (1)

What do you understand Bartholomae and Petrosky to be saying about reading in this passage?

For example, what do you understand them to mean when they say reading involves a "fair measure of push and shove"? How do you imagine a reader would actually continue an author’s project or speak in an author’s place? Why might a reader want to read in these ways?

How do you, as an experienced reader, respond?

Please refer to specific passages in the text and to specific experiences you have had as a reader.

Your goal is to make connections between your own experiences and the ideas in the passage. Think of your essay as a short history in which you use your experience as a reader to help you understand the passage and in which you use the passage to help you understand your experience as a reader.
Sample Course Descriptions

Course Description A

Seminar in Composition may differ in several respects from many of the courses you'll take while you're in college. First of all, this course is a seminar, which means it's relatively small—fewer than 20 students—which enables me to give close attention to your writing, ask for your ideas in class, and meet with you individually during the term. Whereas some courses leave you entirely on your own, with no obligation to attend or speak in class, this course requires you to be both present and prepared to participate. Rather than lecture, I'll guide discussion, and the value of class meetings will be largely determined by the conversation you and your classmates create with me each day.

Another difference between this seminar and other courses you may be taking lies in the amount and quality of writing that is expected of you. I'll ask you to write at home and in class every week of the term, and it's important that you not fall behind. Many students who have performed well in English courses throughout high school are surprised by how challenging the writing assignments for this course can be and by the high standards set for achievement. The readings you'll be assigned are similarly difficult, and you'll need to read them more than once in order to grapple with their complexity. In other words, you should be prepared for a course that will require considerable effort, no matter what your previous record as a writer and reader.

Finally, Seminar in Composition differs from most other courses in that student writing is regularly presented in class. By the end of the semester, every student will have had at least one piece of writing (and probably more) distributed for class discussion. In other words, your writing for this course will address not only me as the teacher but also other members of the class. While you may occasionally ask me not to share a particular piece of writing, for the most part you should imagine your writing as part of a public conversation.
Course Description B: “Expectations and Encounters: Writing the Essay”

Don’t you wish you were one of those people who could sit at your computer and fluently, effortlessly dash off provocative, mind-bending prose? I do. I wish that I could rapidly pen the perfect course description—the one that would be inviting as well as challenging, thoughtful and witty—that would make you all excited to take this required seminar in composition. But, alas, I cannot write hastily or without struggle. I do not know anyone who can. It’s not just that writing well takes practice and persistence. It also takes courage, inquisitiveness, self-reflexivity, a willingness to dive into unknown territory and consider a subject from all angles. Strong writing requires sustained, complex inquiry rather than closed or systematic thinking. Thus, rather than providing you with a list of rules to follow, a toolbox of writing techniques, this course will ask you to consider the value and limits of a range of approaches—to examine not only the how of writing, but the why.

We will begin by sharpening your awareness of the choices that you are already making every time you read or write or think. Much of the course will be devoted to reading your writing and that of your classmates critically (as in carefully, acutely, with precision and care), weighing the strategies employed and the effects produced by those decisions.

We will also work to expand and extend the range of options you have to choose from as a reader, writer, and thinker. To that end, the selections that we will read from The Best American Essays will serve as both models and points of departure. You will be asked to consider the methods of other writers and to try your hand at similar projects. In some assignments you will write about the assigned texts, while in others you will be given the opportunity to choose your own subjects, to be driven by your own passions, questions, and complaints.

Though we will read and discuss the work of published authors, the focus of this course is your writing. Writing as a method of inquiry, as an attention to language, as having something to say. Writing as the practice of making one’s way—through trial and error, by way of fitful starts and slow distillations—toward what one thinks.
Seven Sentence Exercises

a. Compose a single sentence of at least one hundred words (or considerably longer if you can). In the course of your sentence, make use of the colon, the dash, and the parenthesis at least one time each. When you finish, count the words in your sentence and place the number at the top of the page beneath your name. In class we'll look at sentences that are the most comic, or the most dramatic, or the most elaborate; and so on.

b. Last week we focused on writing a long, elaborate sentence. This week we'll turn our attention to what is generally called an incomplete sentence—namely, the fragment. To prepare for class, you should review the section called “Recognizing Sentence Fragments” in Rules of Thumb (33-37).

As experienced writers know, whether or not a fragment is an “error” depends on when and how it’s used, for there are times when fragments can serve to enhance the writer’s voice and express meaning in powerful ways. For this assignment, write two paragraphs. The first should consist entirely of fragments—that is, fragments that you try to use purposefully and effectively. The second paragraph should convert the first into complete sentences. Then write a final paragraph in which you comment on the consequences of your writing in the previous two paragraphs. What are the gains and losses in each paragraph? Might they be combined for a better result? If so, how? If not, why not?

c. Some poets avoid capitals and conventional forms of punctuation, but Cornelius Eady’s poems are composed of sentences. Reread several of Eady’s poems and pay close attention to his sentence structures. How would you characterize his use of the sentence in these poems? What methods does he use to combine features of poetry (such as line breaks) with the sentence as a form of expression?

d. Write a parody of some form of official discourse: the bureaucratic announcement, the newspaper editorial, the business memo, the television documentary, the cable news bulletin, etc. The aim of parody is to make fun of the linguistic tendencies and habits of its target, so you should work carefully to capture the kinds of phrasing and terminology favored by whatever group you imitate. (For sample parodies, look at The Onion—a parodic newspaper—online.)

e. Write a paragraph composed of what could be called “experimental sentences.” Then write a paragraph in which you explain your experiment and what you think the implications would be—that is, what would be gained and/or lost for writers and readers—if its ways of communicating were to become widely used.

f. For this exercise, copy a passage from one of our readings that you find especially well-written (even if you do not agree with its ideas). Then write a paragraph on any subject in which you imitate that writer’s style, trying to capture the characteristic rhythm of his or her prose. Finally, write another paragraph in which you analyze his or her style and your attempt to mimic it.
What is the Writing Center?
The Writing Center is an academic center supported by the Department of English and the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences for students to come to work on their writing. Students must be enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh in order to register for an appointment. Our staff, which includes faculty and undergraduate peer tutors, have been trained to help others with their writing.

You can get support on academic, professional, and creative writing. Our consultants can help you with writing for traditional or digital media.

When should I go to the Writing Center?
Suppose you're writing a paper for one of your classes and you find yourself wondering:

- Will what I've written make sense to the audience I've chosen?
- Have I done what the assignment asks me to do?
- Are there parts that are unclear?
- Have I left something important unsaid or included too much?
- How do I give credit to the sources I've used?
- How can I make sure that there aren't a lot of grammar mistakes?
- How can I revise my writing given the comments my instructor has made?

A consultant at the Writing Center can help you find the answers to these and other questions when you are writing.

Keep in mind that the consultant's role is to provide support and guidance, not to correct your writing for you or tell you what to write. Ultimately, only you, the writer, can be responsible for your writing. The success of every appointment depends on the work you are willing to put into your writing.

What happens when I go to the Writing Center?
There are no grades, no homework, and no grammar drills at the Writing Center. Instead, you will be asked to identify why you've come to the Center, what sort of paper you're working on, and when it is due. You and the consultant will discuss your concerns as well as any added suggestions that the consultant might have.

But what if I don't have anything written yet?
Come to the Writing Center with whatever you have: notes, questions, ideas, worries. You and your consultant can work from where you are to where you want to be.

How do I arrange to speak with a consultant?
You can make an appointment by visiting our online scheduler at pitt.mywconline.com and selecting either the OSC or Hillman schedule for the current term. Appointments are 25 minutes long, starting on the half hour. Students may make two appointments per week. Using multiple identities to book additional time is a violation of academic integrity.

You can also drop in during our operating hours at OSC or Hillman. If a consultant is available, you'll be seen right away. Appointments are 25 minutes long, starting on the half-hour. You may not have more than one appointment a day, whether you book it in advance or drop in.

Does the Writing Center offer anything other than one-on-one tutoring?
For information about the Writers' Café, International Café, Composition and Workshop Tutoring, the Peer Tutoring Program, and Dissertation Boot Camp, visit our website: writingcenter.pitt.edu.

Writing Center 412-624-6556
317B O'Hara Student Center
4024 O'Hara Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15260
writingcenter.pitt.edu

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 9 to 7
Wednesday 11 to 7
Friday 9 to 3

Hillman Library, Ground Floor:
Tuesday 1–6, Wednesday 1–5, Thursday 1–4

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