

ENGLISH 20803.075: Intermediate Composition
WRITING · A S · A R G U M E N T
T/Th 3:30-4:50
Reed Hall 120

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Overviews & Outcomes

Welcome to English 20803: Writing as Argument! English 20803 is intended to extend the introduction to various forms of writing that are the focus of English 10803; in particular, this course focuses on different aspects of composing and analyzing arguments for specific audiences and contexts. English 20803 will be especially concerned with preparing you to analyze and produce complex arguments, including arguments that go beyond print. While one goal of the course is to help you continue improving your ability to shape

Popular culture (often referred to as **pop culture**) is the totality of ideas, perspectives, attitudes, images and other phenomena that are deemed preferred through an informal consensus within the mainstream of any given society.

your writing for different audiences and different effects, another goal is to make writing—theories about how writing works—a subject of the course. In an American culture that seems focused on arguments as only two-sided battles to be won, dialogue seems harder to come by, and we'll consider how to create more nuanced and complicated arguments in a myriad of ways. The intent is not so much to “win,” but instead to learn and persuade. Open minds are mandatory in this class, as we will be examining arguments with which we do not necessarily agree.

Our discussions of argument and rhetoric this semester will focus on issues stemming from pop culture. Pop culture is all around us, and even if we attempt to avoid it, we are still exposed to it in some way. In this section of 20803, we will focus almost exclusively on texts relating to pop culture (and, of course, the act of writing) to learn about persuasion and argument.

Approaching these texts analytically will help us as to become stronger in understanding (and perhaps resisting or else perhaps accepting more readily) the arguments we encounter and also to become more effective producers of our own texts.

Course Outcomes

- ✓ Students will demonstrate facility with the language and analysis of argument.
 - Study the terminology of historical and current-day rhetorical theory
 - Analyze a variety of arguments in different media (e.g. print, oral, electronic, and visual)
 - Analyze and assess genre, discourse conventions, rhetorical situation, and argument strategy in complex texts
 - Recognize and produce familiar argumentative genres (e.g., narrative, personal-public, satire)
 - Study the implications of contemporary argumentation for individuals and communities

- Examine how their role as citizens includes participation as critical consumers and producers of arguments
- ✓ Students will demonstrate the ability to write an argument for a specific rhetorical situation.
 - Compose a variety of arguments in different media (e.g. print, oral, electronic, and visual)
 - Produce an argument with a situation—appropriate focus, thesis, or controlling idea and recognize such in others’ texts
 - Practice firsthand the complex dynamics of collaborative work and analyze how that affects the rhetorical situation in analyzing and producing arguments
- ✓ Students will demonstrate competency in using sources, (primary, secondary, electronic) in argument construction.
 - Find, evaluate, and analyze primary and secondary sources for appropriateness, timeliness, and validity
 - Incorporate and synthesize source material (primary, print, digital) in argumentative composing
 - Practice connecting their personal experiences, values, and beliefs with larger social conversations and contexts
 - Summarize, paraphrase, and quote from sources using appropriate documentation style
 - Edit for style as well as conventions of Standard American English
- ✓ Students will demonstrate the ability to use computers effectively as a communication mechanism.
 - Correspond online using email, blogs, etc.
 - Find, evaluate, and use online sources in academic assignments
 - Use word processing software to produce and format texts, as well as use computers to facilitate presentations, and produce and incorporate non-print information (e.g. charts, spreadsheets, images, videos, and illustrations) in academic arguments

Required Materials and Texts

Texts – Required

- *Everything’s An Argument*, 5th edition
- *The Writer’s FAQs: A Pocket Handbook*

Materials

- Thumb drive or other method to save work you might do in class
- Money to make copies or print-outs of some readings and drafts
- Access to a computer and printer to complete assignments and to print readings and assignments

1) Major Assignments

You will produce 4 major assignments in the course totaling 20-30 pages of text. Each project will go through subsequent drafts and revisions, and will be thoroughly workshopped in small workshops and whole class workshops. Please keep in mind that your work will be viewed by your classmates as well as by me, and choose your topics wisely. Anything you write in this class, not just the major assignments, may be used in class discussion, albeit anonymously (meaning that if I choose a passage from your paper for the class to revise together, I will take your name off of it). The purpose of this is not to embarrass you or bring focus to your errors, but to facilitate group work amongst you and your peers.

Your work on the major assignments will be graded as if in a portfolio – I will assign a grade to each of your major assignments consisting of your final paper, your drafts prepared and submitted for workshopping,

your performance in the workshop process, your daily work, and your blogging. You will receive a detailed grading sheet setting forth the individual grades as well as the cumulative grade.

Before each assignment is due, you'll receive a detailed assignment sheet and grade breakdown.

Unit 1: **Public Space Analysis**

You will spend time in a local public space and then analyze the arguments and rhetoric used in this place.



Unit 2: **Film Study: Rhetorical Analysis of a Film/Documentary in its Contexts**

This assignment requires you to select a relatively current documentary for rhetorical analysis, building upon skills that you used in paper #1.

Unit 3: **Argument of Definition**

For this paper you will choose a contested definition, explore its use and argue for its definition (or re-definition) based on your findings (including insights from others) and personal experience.

Unit 4: **Group Project**

You will get together in groups of 4 or so to create a visual argument in response to a problem you see in our current culture.

2) *Daily Work/Journaling/Threaded Discussions*

Daily work includes in-class writings, informal out-of-class writings, pop quizzes, written feedback to peers, etc. This work, while informal, will be some of the most important work we do for the course, and it is a part of the grade within the assignments (see below) in that not doing them adequately (or not doing them at all) can hamper your grade. The goal of daily writing is to generate ideas, “to think on the page,” not merely about having a finished product. Keep everything you write – it will be important for your portfolios.

3) *Blogging*

Each student must set up a blog at Blogger.com for the purposes of this course. You will write responses to the readings and discuss class matters on your blogs. The blog for each class meeting is due by 2pm each Tuesday and Thursday. Since the purpose of these entries is to prepare you for class discussion, late blog entries will not count for credit (you can, of course, post them early.) Full instructions for setting up your blog and your first blog post are in a separate handout. Remember that this is a graded portion of the class and that a blog is a public forum, so please keep in mind how professionalism impacts your grade and compose your blog entries with your readers in mind.

4) *Drafts/Workshops toward Projects*

For each major assignment, you will have the opportunity to extensively workshop your project with your peers. During workshops, you are expected to provide thoughtful, substantive, and constructive critical responses to your peers' work. During the semester, you may be asked to evaluate the performance of your peers as responders and these evaluations will contribute to my final evaluation of your work.

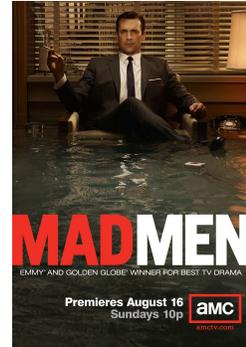
5) *Conference*

Early in the semester, we'll meet one-on-one to discuss your goals and work for the course. When we meet, please come prepared with questions or concerns—you will plan the agenda for our time together. Attendance is required for these conferences—if you need to reschedule, contact me ahead of time. Conferences will not be rescheduled due to lateness or an unexcused absence.

6) *Professionalism*

Your college courses are opportunities for you to learn what it means to be a “professional” in your field. Therefore, I expect you to act like a “professional” student in this course. Therefore, I will assign a holistic grade based on your overall “professionalism” as a serious student to each of your four major assignments. Your “professionalism” grade will be calculated on the following elements:

- The quality of your participation in and preparedness for class (including your interaction with other class members and with me). We all know that there is much more to being part of a class than simple presence in the classroom. The success of this class is completely dependent on your engaged and lively participation in it. Please come to class having completed assigned readings and ready to participate in class discussions. All students are recognized as viable sources of information and are encouraged to share their knowledge with their academic community.
- The quality (and effort) of your required drafts, notes, and daily assignments.
- Assertiveness. While I love hearing from my students, I want you all to take the initiative to try and find answers that I've already given you in class or on our class website before you contact me. For example: read the assignment sheet closely before e-mailing me to ask how many sources are required in your paper.
- Turning in your projects on time as assigned.
- Your class attendance and tardiness. (Frequent tardiness of more than 5 minutes will reflect poorly on your professionalism. And, any more than 3 tardies and 2 absences are considered excessive and will reflect poorly on your professionalism.)



Note: If you do not miss any class days throughout the semester, this does not mean you will automatically receive an “A” for professionalism. Only students who contribute to the class discussions and are actively engaged in the course both inside the classroom and out will receive full credit in regards to professionalism.

7) *Final Evaluative Experience*

At the end of the course, during our scheduled final exam time (*May 10, 3:00-5:30*) you will be required to present your final group project and you'll receive more details as we move into the semester. **You must be present during our final exam period, so do not plan to leave campus until our exam period is over.**

Attendance

Since this is a workshop course that requires that you engage in discussions about writing, that you produce writing regularly, and that you respond to the writing of your peers, your attendance in class is essential. What writers learn from workshopping simply cannot be made up, nor can it be learned when working alone. When you are absent from class, you miss out on what others say, and in return, they miss out on your input. By enrolling in this class, you accept that you have a duty to your classmates to help them better their papers, just as you hope and expect that they will assist you in bettering your own work.

The Composition Program has a policy that in writing workshop courses, only official university absences are excused. Students representing TCU in a university-mandated activity that requires missing class should provide official documentation of schedules and turn in work *in advance*. **Three weeks of unexcused absences (a total of 6 in this class) constitute grounds for failure of the course.** Absences due to illness or other non-university mandated activities are not excused--they all count toward the three weeks' absences limit. Since illness is likely at some point during the semester, students are urged to save their unexcused absences for times when you are too sick to come to class. Students whose absences are due to circumstances beyond their control may appeal this policy by scheduling a meeting with the Director of Composition. Generally, the Director of Composition does not excuse additional absences without documentation. *To do well in this course, you must come to class.*



Absences under the three-week maximum can still affect your grade adversely. After two unexcused absences, half a letter grade will be subtracted from your final grade for each additional absence (i.e.: if you are at a B and miss three classes, your grade would be a B-, with four, a C+, with 5, a C, etc). Students whose absences are due to circumstances beyond their control may appeal this policy by scheduling a meeting with the Director of Composition. Generally, the Director of Composition does not excuse additional absences without documentation. Absences are considered “excused” only when you are attending a University-required function, and if work is due that day, it must be turned in early rather than late. Merely notifying me of your intended absence does not equate to being excused from class. I do not, and cannot, “excuse” any absences.

If you must be absent, make arrangements with another member of the class to get copies of handouts for you, allow you to copy notes, or come by my office during office hours. I will only bring handouts and/or graded assignments to class on the day they are to be returned, in the event that they are not returned electronically.

Evaluation

The projects you create in this class will undergo substantial revision – keep in mind that you should never, ever submit a first draft for a grade. You’ll receive a handout that explains in more detail how the assignments are graded as the class gets underway. In preparation for constructing your assignments, please keep *all* of the work you do for this class—drafts (including those with my comments and those of your peers), in-class writing, etc., together. **SAVE ALL WRITING YOU DO FOR THIS COURSE!** Regular

computer backups of your data are strongly suggested (even if they consist of doing no more than emailing your work to yourself).

Merely doing what is expected of you does not equal an A grade. Working hard on a paper does not equal an A grade. Work that is consistently EXCELLENT and far beyond average will receive an A.

It is important to remember that simply fulfilling the *minimum* requirements of the course warrants an average grade (as in C), not an A. You all walk into my class as C students – you have to create work that is above and beyond the standard of excellence to obtain an A. Coming to class every day and doing assignments is not something that earns “extra credit” or an automatic A; it’s expected by you being in the course. A higher grade will be based on the distinctive quality and development of your work, on your ability to guide a piece of writing through the various stages of revision, and on a willingness to explore new subjects, genres, and techniques. Below is a thumbnail breakdown of how I view letter grades; as we move into the semester you’ll receive more detailed descriptions for each assignment and we’ll talk more about how I evaluate your work:

Grades:	Grade Breakdown	
A: consistently excellent overall	Unit 1	25%
B: good with some excellent aspects	Unit 2	25%
C: adequate	Unit 3	25%
D: mostly adequate with some unacceptable aspects	Unit 4	25%
F: unacceptable overall	Total	100%

Tardies: Please be on time for class. Students who are tardy (five minutes late or more) are a distraction to the whole class. **Three tardies will equal an unexcused absence for the course, and any in-class work missed due to tardiness cannot be made up.**

Late Work: Work will be due at the beginning of class and will be considered late thereafter. If you know you will be missing a class, you need to submit the assignment ahead of time to avoid a penalty for late submission. Late assignments will be penalized one letter grade for each class period beyond the due date unless a) the student has an official university absence and b) the instructor has agreed to late submission *in advance of the due date*.

Note: This course relies heavily on technology, so you will need to have reliable access to the internet, which is always available in several places (including the library) on campus. Problems with technology (i.e.: computer crash, printer malfunction, internet connectivity



issues, etc.) are not acceptable excuses for submitting late work. Plan ahead to avoid last minute crises related to submittal of your assignments.

Students who cannot or will not be professional and respectful towards others, or who cannot maintain an acceptable attitude will be removed from class and will receive an unexcused absence for that day. Continued issues of this sort can result in permanent removal from the class.

No tobacco products of any kind are to be used in the classroom. **Silence** your cell phones during class. Students who are using their phones during class will be asked to leave and will receive an unexcused absence for the day. Please do not sleep during class.

Classroom Technology: Since we are in a computer classroom, we will have access to technology at all times. This does not mean that you should be harvesting your crops on Farmville during class. Any student observed “surfing” during class time will be asked to leave and will receive an unexcused absence for that day.

Office Hours: During the office hours posted above, I will be in my office and available to talk with you about any questions, comments, or concerns you have about the course. Please stop by and see me during these hours—that time is yours. If the hours don’t work for you, make an appointment with me.

Pearson LearningStudio Class Website: We have a course website we’ll use for various activities throughout the course: sharing resources on the webliography; accessing handouts for the course, submitting course assignments to the course dropbox.

The Writing Center: *Please refer the TCU Undergraduate Studies Catalog, <http://tinyurl.com/85u7dcd>, quoted here:*

The Center for Writing offers assistance with writing projects and assignments to all TCU students. Staffed by professional writing instructors and peer consultants, the Center for Writing provides students with one-on-one tutorials free of charge. Conferences usually focus on a particular project or assignment but may also include general writing instruction.

The 10 PCs in the center's computer lab are available for use by any TCU student during normal office hours.

Located in Suite 419 of Reed Hall, the Center for Writing is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Students may make appointments by accessing an online scheduling service through the center’s website (www.wrt.tcu.edu) or by calling 817.257.7221. Students may also use the Center for Writing’s annex at the library Sunday through Thursday 6-9 p.m. Those who wish to submit a paper online may do so via the center’s website. A consultant will read the paper and offer feedback within 48 hours.

Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities in the Center for Academic Services located in Sadler Hall, 11. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained from the Center for Academic Services, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at (817) 257-7486.

Adequate time must be allowed to arrange accommodations and accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the academic term for which they are seeking accommodations. *Each eligible student is responsible for presenting relevant, verifiable, professional documentation and/or assessment reports to the Coordinator.* Guidelines for documentation may be found at <http://www.acs.tcu.edu/DISABILITY.HTM>. Students with emergency medical information or

needing special arrangements in case a building must be evacuated should discuss this information with their instructor/professor as soon as possible.

Academic Dishonesty:

The English Department has a zero tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty. The Department now requires that all suspected cases of academic dishonesty be submitted to the Director of Composition or the Chair of the English Department for evaluation. The minimum penalty for cases in which academic dishonesty is discovered is a grade of "0" for the assignment. In addition, instructors are typically advised by the Department to request from the Dean of AddRan that students guilty of academic dishonesty receive an F for the course.

For a definition of academic dishonesty, please see the Student Handbook. Most commonly, academic dishonesty in writing courses involves the use of others' words and ideas without attribution (e.g. citation information and quotation marks where exact wording is preserved, giving credit to the original source). This includes the unattributed use of writing produced by other students, or of print sources or Internet sources in part or in whole. It is also academically dishonest to submit writing you have done for previous courses, which has already received academic credit and cannot be given credit twice. The best guard against academic dishonesty is to take seriously the writing assignments given, to allow enough time to complete them properly, to submit drafts when required, and to seek advice from your instructor, the writing center, or competent references regarding the use of outside sources in your writing. **Keep in mind that if you can find it on the Internet, so can I.**

Please see the undergraduate catalog for more information, as quoted here:

"An academic community requires the highest standards of honor and integrity in all of its participants if it is to fulfill its missions. In such a community faculty, students, and staff are expected to maintain high standards of academic conduct. The purpose of this policy is to make all aware of these expectations. Additionally, the policy outlines some, but not all, of the situations which can arise that violate these standards. Further, the policy sets forth a set of procedures, characterized by a "sense of fair play," which will be used when these standards are violated. In this spirit, definitions of academic misconduct are listed below. These are not meant to be exhaustive.

I. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Any act that violates the spirit of the academic conduct policy is considered academic misconduct. Specific examples include, but are not limited to:

A. Cheating. Includes, but is not limited to:

1. Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files and listings.
2. Using in any academic exercise or academic setting, material and/or devices not authorized by the person in charge of the test.
3. Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during an academic exercise without the permission of the person in charge of the exercise.
4. Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in its entirety or in part, the contents of a test or other assignment unauthorized for release.
5. Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in a manner that leads to misrepresentation of either or both students work.

B. Plagiarism. The appropriation, theft, purchase, or obtaining by any means another's work, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one's own offered for credit. Appropriation

includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another's work without giving credit therefore.

C. Collusion. The unauthorized collaboration with another in preparing work offered for credit.

D. Abuse of resource materials. Mutilating, destroying, concealing, or stealing such materials.

E. Computer misuse. Unauthorized or illegal use of computer software or hardware through the TCU Computer Center or through any programs, terminals, or freestanding computers owned, leased, or operated by TCU or any of its academic units for the purpose of affecting the academic standing of a student.

F. Fabrication and falsification. Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification involves altering information for use in any academic exercise.

Fabrication involves inventing or counterfeiting information for use in any academic exercise.

G. Multiple submission. The submission by the same individual of substantial portions of the same academic work (including oral reports) for credit more than once in the same or another class without authorization.

H. Complicity in academic misconduct. Helping another to commit an act of academic misconduct.

I. Bearing false witness. Knowingly and falsely accusing another student of academic misconduct.”

All cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Director of Composition. Sanctions imposed for cases of academic misconduct range from zero credit for the assignment to expulsion from the University. This policy applies to homework and drafts as well as final papers.

Grading Criteria- This is generally the grading criteria I follow although you will receive a more detailed rubric for each assignment.

<p>A 95 A- 92</p>	<p>Exceptional college-level. An A paper is a publishable paper. It offers an excellent response to the assignment; it fulfills minor as well as major purposes. Its overall pattern of organization is appropriate; the internal organization of ideas is effective; transitions are smooth. The message is well written, interesting, and easy to read. It may show originality in organization, development, sentence structure or word choice. It is free of all major and almost all minor errors in format, grammar, mechanics, organization, and development. It follows instructions completely. <i>There is a limit to the number of A's I assign; thus, A work is stellar work, over and above what is required in the assignment.</i></p>
<p>B+ 88 B 85 B- 82</p>	<p>Good college-level work. It offers an effective response to the assignment. Both the overall pattern of organization and the internal organization are good. The writing style is clear, concise, and friendly. It may have a few minor mechanical errors or some awkward spots, but basically it is well written. It follows instructions completely.</p>
<p>C+ 78 C 75 C- 72</p>	<p>Satisfactory college-level work. It offers an acceptable response to the assignment; it uses an acceptable pattern of organization; the writing follows the conventions of standard English. There may be minor errors in style, tone, internal organization, format, or mechanics. It generally follows instructions. OR A good (B) paper with a major flaw in one of the following: the organization, development, tone, or writing style.</p>
<p>D+ 68 D 65 D- 62</p>	<p>A satisfactory (C) paper with a major flaw in one of the following: the organization, development, tone, format or writing style. OR A poor paper which shows some evidence of attempting to solve the problem, but which has many minor errors in organization, development, word choice, style, tone, format, and mechanics. None of these alone would necessarily doom the paper; however, together they make the paper unsatisfactory.</p>
<p>F+ 58 F 55 F- 52</p>	<p>A poor (D) paper with a major flaw in one of the following: the organization, development, tone, or writing style. OR A paper that violates the facts explicitly given in the problem OR A paper that is marred by an unacceptable number of errors in organization, development, word choice, style, tone, format, and mechanics. OR A paper that contains any form of dishonesty.</p>