

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
General Education Course Assessment Report

This report is a summary of the activities (assessments and modifications) that have occurred since the course was approved for inclusion in the General Education Program. Please submit the report as an e-mail attachment to the General Education Office at Sheila.Otto@mtsu.edu by March 23, 2012.

Course Prefix/Number and Title: **ENGL 1020 Research and Argumentative Writing**

Report Prepared by: **Dr. Laura Dubek**

1. Review the original General Education course proposal and revise if necessary (for example, a revised course proposal should reflect any changes in course topics, student activities, evaluation procedures, etc.). Explain the rationale for any revisions to the original proposal. If applicable, attach a revised course proposal.

No changes have been made to Section C: Contribution to General Education Learning Outcomes. However, some changes have been made to course content and course integrity. Therefore, **a revised course proposal is attached**. Changes to the original are as follows:

- **A.1. One course objective has been removed:** “Students will write at least one critical analysis of a longer literary work (e.g., fiction, creative non-fiction, play).” **Rationale:** The syllabus review revealed that instructors were spending up to 5 weeks (1/3 of the semester) on material and activities more appropriate for ENGL 2030: The Experience of Literature. Removing the literary component allows for more writing instruction and so more attention to the deficiencies in student writing revealed by the TBR-mandated assessment.
- **A.1. One course objective has been added:** “Students will receive at least one hour of library instruction.” **Rationale:** The assessment revealed serious deficiencies in our students’ abilities to manage and coordinate secondary sources, the primary objective of 1020. Requiring library instruction seeks to address this weakness. Each semester, the Director of Lower Division English coordinates with Jason Vance, literacy librarian, to provide instruction for both 1020 students and 1020 faculty.
- **A.1. One course objective has been revised so that students write fewer, but longer, essays.** “Students will write at least five research-based essays of 750+ words each or four research-based essays of 650+ words with a longer research paper of 1000+ words” **is now** “Students will write four source-based essays of 1250 words each. An annotated bibliography may be assigned in lieu of the third essay and in conjunction with the fourth.” **Rationale:** Longer papers require more critical thinking, putting a greater emphasis on the writing process—brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing. Fewer (but longer) essays also allow instructors, most of whom carry a 5/5 load, to provide substantial feedback on one essay before turning to the next. The annotated bibliography option extends both benefits mentioned above as well as giving students practice finding and evaluating secondary source material, the primary objective of ENGL 1020 and the most serious deficiency revealed by the assessment.
- **A.1. One course objective has been removed:** “Students will write out-of-class essays that illustrate their knowledge of the writing process and effective source-based argumentation.” **Rationale:** Redundancy (see above).
- **A.1. Course objectives have been rearranged, and two objectives have been combined.**

Rationale: The importance of developing “reading skills” has been foregrounded by making “strategies for synthesizing and analyzing different types of texts and materials” the first objective. “Varying sentence and paragraph length” is a function of effective grammar, so it has been combined with “students will write with grammatical competence.”

- **B.2. “From across the curriculum” has been added to “selected readings”; “letters” and “memos” have been deleted from “formal writing”; “creative projects” (originally a separate line) has been added to “formal writing”; “multimodal projects” has been added to “formal writing”; “exams” has been eliminated.**

Rationale: The first change underscores the important fact that ENGL 1020 is a general education course that prepares students to enter conversations across the disciplines. The deletion of “letters,” “memos,” and “exams” recognizes that instructors are no longer requiring these types of activities. (Instructors may use the final exam period for an in-class writing activity.) The other revisions reflect changes in composition studies, in particular the recognition that people communicate using a combination of text, image, and sound.

- **B.3.a. “Approximately 70%” has been changed to “At Least 70%,” and “Approximately 30% has been changed to “No More Than 30%.” The descriptor “major” now precedes “writing assignments.”**

Rationale: The TBR-mandated 1020 assessment provides evidence of grade inflation. Whereas the vast majority (approximately 85%) of student essays received either an “unsatisfactory” or “satisfactory” rating, approximately 70% of the students received a “superior” or “above average” (A or B) course grade. Requiring that the major writing assignments carry more weight when figuring a student’s final course grade addresses the problem of grade inflation.

- **D.1.** The numbers have been updated. **Rationale:** Accuracy.
- **D.4. Methods of ensuring consistency have been updated to include online faculty resources, curriculum meetings, faculty self-evaluation forms, and textbook requirements.**

Rationale: The program continues to grow, with almost all sections of 1020 staffed by contingent faculty. The syllabus review, initiated in spring 2010, revealed disturbing inconsistencies: for example, some instructors were not requiring a textbook. More alarming was the apparent lack of shared goals. Put another way, the course did not have a strong “anchor,” a situation that motivated all subsequent efforts to provide clear guidelines, support, and oversight.

2. Attach a common course syllabus. If there is no common syllabus (for example, if course syllabi differ across various sections—honors, learning communities, online, larger sections versus smaller sections, themed sections, etc.), provide a brief summary of the variation and attach representative syllabi.

Although syllabi vary according to instructor, each section of ENGL 1020 must meet the same course objectives. These objectives are not always articulated using the exact wording in the course justification and outline document. The purpose of the syllabus review, conducted each semester by the lower division committee, is to ensure consistency among all the sections of 1020 even as instructors are encouraged to theme their course and otherwise be creative in their presentation and pedagogical approach. Two sample syllabi are attached. Dr. Jim Comas focuses on the theme of violence. Dr. Laura Dubek uses a general reader with topics such as food, the economy, and popular culture.

3. Describe how the General Education learning outcomes are assessed and the extent to which students are meeting the outcomes.

Learning outcomes for ENGL 1020 are assessed each year as mandated by TBR. Dr. Allison Smith receives release time to conduct this assessment. The assessment continues to be the driving force behind all of the changes to the English general education program. The general education 2011 assessment report specific to ENGL 1020 is attached.

4. Discuss recent and/or planned improvements in curriculum, instruction, and/or student performance in response to assessments of student learning.

The attached assessment report (see pages 13-15) makes clear the steps the English department has taken and plans to take in response to the TBR-mandated assessment of student learning in 1020.

Note that this assessment has implications for both ENGL 1010 and, to a lesser extent, ENGL 2020/2030. ENGL 1010 is currently under review. In 2011, the lower division committee researched the first-year composition programs at all our peer institutions. This research revealed that our singular focus on the “writing process,” together with our “modes” approach, puts us behind the curve. Discussion will continue in 2012 about how to revise ENGL 1010 to better reflect not only changes in composition studies but the changing needs of MTSU students, most of whom do read and write regularly—just in the digital world.

5. Describe the process for overseeing this General Education course. (For example, is there a General Education coordinator or committee? What is the role of the coordinator or committee? Does the coordinator/committee review course syllabi? Is there a process for training new Gen Ed faculty? Is there a mentoring or evaluation process in place for Gen Ed faculty?)

The Chair of the English Department appoints a tenured faculty member to serve as the Lower Division Director. This person is responsible for overseeing the general education curriculum: ENGL 1010, 1020, 2020, and 2030. The Director chairs the Lower Division Committee, which consists of 1 GTA, 1 FTT, and 6 permanent faculty members. The Director of General Education serves as ex-officio. The LDC collaborates on all matters having to do with the program: curriculum, textbooks, faculty development, grants/awards. Its most important function is the biannual syllabus review.

Generally speaking, the role of the Director is to promote quality of instruction and student learning in all general education English courses. The Director fulfills this role in the following ways:

- **Curriculum Meetings.** Prior to both the fall and spring semesters, general education faculty (GTAs, adjuncts, FTTs, tenure-track, and tenured) are given the opportunity to participate in grade norming sessions and/or faculty presentations on such topics as “Best Practices,” “Classroom Management,” “Using Technology,” and “The 1020 Assignment Sequence.” We have had presentations by Jane Tipps (Counseling Services), Laura Sosh-Lightsey (Judicial Affairs), and Jason Vance (Literacy Librarian).

- **Online Faculty Resources.** At the English department’s homepage, faculty can access information particular to general education teaching, including “1020 learning and teaching objectives,” “sample 1020 syllabi,” “sample 1020 assignment sequence,” “grading procedures,” and “1020 assessment results.” For a list of 34 links, go to: <http://www.mtsu.edu/english/forfaculty/genedfacresources.shtml>
- **Classroom Observations.** Since 2009, the Director has visited over 100 classes, observing nearly every faculty member responsible for teaching ENGL 1020. Informal mentoring of both new and veteran instructors often occurs following these visits.
- **Syllabus Review.** Every semester since spring 2010, the lower division committee has completed a formal review of all ENGL 1020 syllabi written by GTAs, adjuncts, FTTs, and tenure-track faculty. The purpose of the syllabus review is to ensure consistency among hundreds of sections of general education courses, communicate expectations and responsibilities, and provide support for general education faculty. It is also used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the program and so provide direction to the LDC. Faculty are expected to address concerns raised by the committee and revise their syllabi. Results of the syllabus review are communicated to the English Department Chair and factor into end-of-year performance reviews. (The syllabus review sheet for spring 2012 is attached.)
- **Faculty Self-Evaluation.** All adjuncts and FTTs complete a faculty self-evaluation checklist at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. The purpose of the checklist is to clarify general expectations and responsibilities. Faculty rate themselves “low,” “acceptable,” or “high” in 12 categories. The criteria for each category is specified. At the end of each semester, the Lower Division Director reviews and returns each self-evaluation form with comments. Copies are kept in each faculty member’s teaching file. (The self-evaluation form for spring 2012 is attached.)

6. Identify any additional resources needed to improve teaching and learning in this General Education course.

- **The Director of Lower Division English should be given adequate release time.** The quality of teaching and learning in such a large department can only be ensured by classroom observations, curriculum review, and faculty review—each taking place every semester. This would not be the case if these courses were taught by tenure-track and tenured faculty. The current load for the Director is 2/2, which allows for certain administrative duties (e.g., mentoring new hires, enrollment management, registration, transfer evaluation, conflict resolution) but not program development and faculty review. The current number of adjuncts and FTTs, all of whom teach general education English, is **61**. The number of students taking general education courses each year is approximately **14,000**.
- **Class sizes in ENGL 1020 should be kept to within the guidelines** established by the National Council of Teachers of English—no more than 20 for “regular” sections; no more than 15 for “remedial”; no more than 60 writing students per instructor.

- **FTTs should receive adequate office space.** Freshmen in particular need to be encouraged to take advantage of their instructors' office hours. In nearly all of our current FTT offices, you will find two desks, two computers, and two adults crammed into one small space.
- **Adjuncts should be paid more and in a timely manner.** The English department employs 20-25 adjuncts each semester. On average, their pay amounts to \$5/week for each student in a 15-week writing class. This may be the "going rate," but if we truly want quality teaching and learning, we should do more than sigh over dismal assessment reports and require periodic review of general education courses: **we should demand that the university invest more than the cost of a McDonald's happy meal in the literacy education of each MTSU student.**

ENGL 1020-075 – RESEARCH & ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

TR 8:00-9:25 • Peck Hall 304A
<http://www.mtsu.edu/~jcomas/1020/>

Dr. James Comas
Peck Hall 385 • 898-2606 • jcomas@mtsu.edu
Office hours: TH 12:00-1:00, W 8:00-12:00

SYLLABUS

This syllabus consists of four main sections:

- I. A description of the *basic purpose* and *general structure* of the class (1-3)
- II. A list of texts and other required materials (3)
- III. A description of class policies and procedures (3-6)
- IV. A list of important dates & a weekly schedule (7-9)

I. Basic Purpose and General Structure of the Class

1. GENERAL EDUCATION, THE ACTIVITY OF INQUIRY, AND THE ROLE OF WRITING INSTRUCTION

The Idea of General Education: It's possible to sort your university courses into two loose categories:

- *Specific Areas of Study:* the majority of your courses will be focused on *specific* areas of study (e.g., human anatomy) and *specific* professions or occupations (e.g., nursing);
- *Fundamental Skills:* the “core” courses in general education, on the other hand, are distinguished by their emphasis on *broad* knowledge and skills, that is, knowledge and skills not limited to specific areas of study or training but, instead, knowledge and skills you can apply to all areas.

But what is the nature of the broad knowledge and skills taught in these “core” courses? The Tennessee Board of Regents, in their statement of “Philosophy” on general education, define this “core” in terms of a basic human act—the act of *inquiry*: “General education provides critical thinking skills for analysis to continue to seek truths, to discover answers to questions, and to solve problems.” That is, the primary goal of “core” education courses, like ENGL 1020, is to teach students how to become better seekers, or inquirers.

The Activity of Inquiry: Interestingly, the Board of Regents’s definition of “core” courses can be applied not only to the education of undergraduate students but, also, to the work of their teachers. That is, many of your teachers are also researchers, inquiring into problems and questions that concern them. For example, my research is in the history of rhetoric, that is, the history of people trying to understand how language is used to influence beliefs and actions. Your teachers, in addition, are inquirers at a higher level. It’s obvious that one doesn’t have to be associated with a university to inquire into problems and questions; however, the degree-granting university is the home of an important tradition. From its beginnings in the 11th century, the university has developed out of a passion for learning how to think ever more carefully about intellectual and practical problems and, of course, learning how to effectively communicate one’s thinking about those problems. What we find at the core of the university, then, is not only the *practice* of inquiry but, also, *reflection* on the activity of inquiry with the goal of refining that activity. We might even refer to this second level as “inquiry into inquiry.” But the most important point for this class is that *the university has been that social institution most devoted to the nature of inquiry.*

The Role of Writing Instruction: Given this centrality of inquiry in the university, what is the role of “writing instruction,” especially as part of general education? In order to fully answer this question, we need to remember that the word *writing* refers to two things: (1) the activity of composing text and (2) the composed text itself (as when we say, “a piece of writing”). This distinction is significant in that it reflects

the basic idea that instruction in writing should give attention both to *the activity of writing* and to the activity of dealing with “pieces of writing,” that is, *the activity of reading*. Although the activity of reading typically receives less attention than the activity of composing, we recognize that there are higher levels of reading that require more training, levels that we call “analytical” and “critical.” These higher levels are recognized by the Board of Regents when it places critical reading at the top of its list of goals for core general education courses in communication. Core courses in communication, the Board writes, should develop the student’s ability to “[a]nalyze and evaluate oral and written expression by listening and reading critically for elements that reflect an awareness of situation, audience, purpose, and diverse points of view.”

Writing instruction in the university, then, plays three crucial roles:

- **Writing as Communication:** The most obvious role of writing instruction is to help students learn to communicate their thinking more effectively. This type of instruction emphasizes (a) better organization of ideas, (b) clearer paragraph and sentence structure, as well as (c) grammatical correctness and adherence to social conventions and other rhetorical expectations.
- **Writing as a Mode of Inquiry:** The second role of writing is less obvious but more fundamental to the goals of general education. This role is less obvious because it concerns the process of thinking, itself. The twentieth-century Southern writer Flannery O’Connor defines this role when she explained, “I write because I don’t know what I think until I read what I have to say.” Similarly, the twentieth-century French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty explained, “I write in order to discover what I think.” For O’Connor and Merleau-Ponty, writing is not merely a medium for the communication of thought but, more important, a crucial component of the process of thinking, the component that helps us judge whether or not our thinking is worth communicating to others.
- **Reading as a Mode of Inquiry:** Reading is typically regarded as the mining of written text for the purpose of extracting information. This idea of reading is true of textbooks; however, we will find that the reading and writing of most academic-level prose are interrelated in interesting ways. Most important, the act of reading academic prose is *an act of engaging the thinking of others*; consequently, writing academic prose is an *act of responding to the thinking of others*.

The primary purpose of this course, then, is to help you become a stronger writer, reader, and thinker by learning how to better understand and respond to the thinking of academic authors and other intellectuals.

2. THE ROLE OF ENGL 1020 IN GENERAL EDUCATION

Although ENGL 1020 continues the work of ENGL 1010 by developing the student’s abilities to read critically and write effectively, there are several important differences:

1. **Research Writing:** Unlike ENGL 1010, which covers a range of expository writing types, ENGL 1020 is focused on the primary type of writing in the university: research writing. As you will see, “research writing” is not merely the presentation of information but is *a reasoned argument in response to some question or problem*. Hence, the title of this course: “Research and Argumentative Writing.”
2. **Analytical and Critical Reading:** As you will see, research writing depends heavily on the work of others, that is, on what are called “primary” and “secondary” sources. That being so, ENGL 1020 gives more attention to the ability to read analytically and critically. Also, ENGL 1020 devotes more attention to the art of including the work of others within your writing, that is, the art of quoting.
3. **Acquiring Information:** Again, because research writing depends heavily on the work of others, ENGL 1020 gives more attention to the skill of acquiring information (e.g., libraries and online databases).

3. *General Structure of this Class*

Most of the academic-level writing we will be reading focuses on the topic of *human violence*. That is, we will be examining different approaches to understanding human violence. For example, we will begin the semester by reading two opposing positions—one by a psychiatrist and one by a professor of criminal law—on the issue of whether rap music incites violent behavior. Also, we will be reading a literary approach to understanding violence, Flannery O’Connor’s well-known story about a psychopathic killer, “A Good Man is Hard to Find.” During the second half of the semester, we will examine one of the most influential books of the twentieth century on the psychology of violence, Sigmund Freud’s *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Although we will be interested in what these writers have to say about violence, we will be more interested in *how these writers present their thinking*, that is, *how they inquire into the nature of violence*. More specifically, we will examine,

- the ways in which writers formulate and justify the questions they ask;
- the ways in which writers develop approaches to questions; and
- the ways in which they support their responses to those questions.

We will also pay attention to the ways in which these writers arrange, or organize the presentation of their ideas. And, finally, we will spend time looking at the “styles” of these writers; that is, we will examine how writers use certain words, descriptions, and even punctuation to make their ideas more attractive and their writing more effective.

The purpose of this course, then, is not only to give you an opportunity to improve your writing; but, more important, I have in mind a class where you can learn to reflect critically on your own writing and thinking, a place where you can learn to become more responsible for the positions you take and learn how to continue improving your writing after our short 15 weeks together are over.

II. Texts & Other Required Materials

Textbooks: The following textbooks are required and are available at Phillips Bookstore. For those of you who prefer to purchase your books elsewhere (e.g., online services), I have included ISBN numbers:

G. Graff & C. Birkenstein, *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*
0393924092

S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* 0393301583

Also available free (pdf format): <http://www.archive.org/details/CivilizationAndItsDiscontents>

Research Matters at MTSU 0077536762

Reference books: In addition to the required textbooks, you will need access to a good dictionary, one with etymological information. The best English dictionary, the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, is available online via Walker Library’s website. If you want to purchase a print dictionary, good choices are *American Heritage*, *Merriam/Webster*, and *Random House*. Finally, you should consider buying a thesaurus; I like *Roget’s Thesaurus* because its organization of words into conceptual categories reminds us of how language is used to divide up the world.

III. Class Policies and Procedures

1. WRITTEN WORK

Written Work: There will be informal and formal writing in this class. The informal writing will consist of short responses to the readings and other homework. In addition to the informal writing, there will be *four* formal papers; and you will have opportunities to revise the first two. Paper copies of assignments and other handouts will be distributed in class, of course; in addition, all these materials are available on the class website:

<http://www.mtsu.edu/~jcomas/1020/>

If you lose a handout or are absent from class when a handout is distributed, it is your responsibility to get a copy from the website.

Formal papers should be *substantial* work, by which I mean that I'll look to see that your work reflects a serious attempt at thinking through the issues that are introduced in the readings and the assignments. I will also be interested in whether or not you have edited your papers for errors. If it appears to me that your paper does not meet these basic requirements, I will not accept it and will require you to rewrite it for a lower grade. When papers are due, they are due at the *beginning* of class. The grade of a late paper will be dropped a full grade each day it is late; in addition, late papers may not be revised.

Paper Format: Informal and formal papers must be word-processed or typed, double-spaced, and on one side of the paper only. The standard font for academic papers is 12pt Times or Times New Roman. Please leave margins of 1" for my comments (for additional format information see *Research Matters at MTSU*).

2. GRADING

General: In addition to the specific goals mentioned above, your primary goal in this class is to take charge of your abilities to write and think: to be able to identify your strengths and weaknesses as a writer, then to work on developing your writing. In other words, the quality of your writing should not be your teacher's responsibility since you won't always have a teacher to fall back on. As I see it, the teacher's responsibility lies, instead, in helping students to fulfill their responsibility for their own writing and thinking. In other words, if you're interested in improving your ability to write and think, I'm quite happy to help; if you're not interested, I'm not sure there's much I can do. The minimal requirement of this class, then, is that you develop a sense of your responsibilities as a person who can think about important matters and write about them. Also, by the end of the semester, I hope to see in your writing the reflection of a critical intelligence, that is, an intelligence that 1) can understand the issues raised by other writers and 2) can develop arguments in response to those issues.

Assessment of Formal Papers: You will have the opportunity of revising your three formal papers. Instead of averaging the grades of the original submission and the revision, your paper will receive the highest of the two grades (typically, the grade of the revised paper).

The Department of English has adopted the following general criteria for the assessment of papers in 1010 and 1020:

An **A** paper is rated **SUPERIOR** and shows originality of ideas and control of coherence, unity, development, and flow. A controlling main idea is readily apparent and is supported well with clearly developed examples and details. Paragraphs are structured well and include a variety of sentence structures and the use of transitions. Sentences show a superior command of word choice appropriate for audience, topic, purpose, and point-of-view. There are very few minor errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

A **B** paper is rated **ABOVE AVERAGE** and has an interesting topic with an obvious structure or plan but lacks full competency in coherence, unity, development, and/or flow. A controlling main idea is apparent and is supported with examples and details. Paragraphs are structured well and include some sentence variety and transitions. Sentences show a command of appropriate word choice for audience, topic, purpose, and point-of-view. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are usually appropriate with very few major or minor errors.

A **C** paper is rated **AVERAGE** and has a clear topic but lacks originality and full competency in coherence, unity, development, and/or flow. A controlling main idea is used but lacks some necessary supporting details and examples. Paragraphs show some structure but may not use a variety of sentence styles or structures. Some transitions are used but may not be appropriate for content. Sentences show a limited command of appropriate word choice for audience, topic, purpose, and point-of-view. The paper may have a few major errors or frequent minor errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

A **D** paper is rated **WEAK** and has a poorly defined central idea that shows little insight and/or lacks full competency in coherence, unity, development, and/or flow. Sentences are sometimes unrelated to the main idea and give only limited supporting details and examples. Transitions are present but most are lacking or inappropriately used. Sentence structure is frequently correct; however, sentence style and patterns are usually repetitive forms. Word choice is often inconsistent, incorrect, and inappropriate for audience, topic, purpose, and point-of-view. Major and distracting minor errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling are obvious.

An **F** paper is **VERY WEAK** and may have no clear main idea. Sentences do not support a main idea and do not provide specific details or examples. Sentences are faulty in style and not readable in parts. Transitions and sentence variety are quite limited or unused. There are frequent serious errors and excessive minor errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

A **ZERO** paper is rated **UNACCEPTABLE** and does not follow the framework or address the topic given. This score is also given to those papers that deliberately use explicit language that attacks the assignment or topic. It is also frequently given to plagiarized papers.

Final Grades: In general, your final grade will be the average of your grades for the formal writing assignment; however, because the purpose of this class is to improve your writing, I give more weight to your work in the second half of the semester. Needless to say, failure to complete all course work will result in a failing grade. Also, at mid-semester, I will assess your work in order to give you an idea of how you're doing in the class.

University policy requires a minimum grade of **C-** to pass English 1020; thus, performance lower than **C-** will receive a final grade of **F** (there is no final grade of **D** for this course).

The grade of **N** will be awarded to students who complete the first attempt of the course(s) but fail to meet minimum standards. In other words, for the first time the student takes the course, the grade of **N** is appropriate if the student has completed all the writing assignments and has met all the course requirements, including the attendance, yet has not developed satisfactory writing skills to pass the course. The grade of **N** will be assigned only once in English 1010 and 1020; in subsequent semesters the student will be assigned a grade of **F** if minimum writing standards for the course are not met. The grade of **N** is not punitive; it will calculate into Hours Attempted but not Quality Hours.

3. ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE (WRITING CENTERS)

The Writing Center is located on the 3rd floor of the James Walker Library. Trained tutors provide students with one-on-one assistance with their writing. Conferences are available by appointment only, and may be made online (www.mtsu.edu/~uwcenter) or by calling 904-8237.

4. CLASS ATTENDANCE

The writing class is unlike most other courses; that is, you can't find out what you need to know from reading a textbook. What you do need to know for this class will come from our use of class time to closely examine our writing and the writing of others. Thus, to do well in this course, your attendance is necessary. I'll do my best to keep things from getting monotonous; but I also have a very simple rule regarding attendance: *three* unexcused absences during the semester will result in lowering the final grade by a full grade; more than three unexcused absences will result in a failing grade. An absence will be regarded "excused" if (1) it is sanctioned by the university (i.e., an official university activity) or (2) it is the result of a documented illness or family emergency.

5. CLASSROOM AND ACADEMIC CONDUCT

Classroom Conduct: I do not permit any use of cell phones, mp3 players, or other electronic devices in class (except, of course, in emergency situations, e.g., MTSU Rave alerts). Any student who uses an electronic device during class will be dismissed and regarded as absent. Repeated disruptions could result in temporary or permanent removal from the class. If you wish to use a laptop or other device for the purpose of taking class notes, you will need my prior permission.

Academic Misconduct: MTSU has defined four types of academic misconduct:

Plagiarism. The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one's own without proper acknowledgment.

Cheating. Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.

Fabrication. Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Facilitation. Helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic misconduct.

If I suspect academic misconduct on your part, I will ask you to meet with me to discuss the situation. In addition, MTSU requires me to forward your name to the Assistant Dean for Judicial Affairs and Mediation Services for possible disciplinary action. If you are found responsible for committing an act of plagiarism or any other type of academic misconduct, you will receive an **F** for the class.

MTSU's definition of plagiarism does *not* distinguish between voluntary and involuntary plagiarism. What counts as *involuntary* plagiarism may appear a bit confusing to college students; but we will spend a good deal of class time learning the best ways of quoting and paraphrasing the writing of others. If, during the semester, you have any questions whether your writing may be construed as plagiarism, you should talk with me. Finally, my subscription to MyDropBox.com allows me to search the Internet (including essay databases) for plagiarized passages.

6. LOTTERY SCHOLARSHIPS

To retain Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted hours and a cumulative TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. You may qualify with a 2.75 cumulative GPA after 72 attempted hours (and subsequent semesters), if you are enrolled full-time and maintain a semester GPA of at least 3.0. A grade of C, D, F, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. Dropping a class after 14 days may also impact eligibility; if you withdraw from this class and it results in an enrollment status of less than full time, you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship. Lottery recipients are eligible to receive the scholarship for a maximum of five years from the date of initial enrollment, or until a bachelor degree is earned. For additional Lottery rules, please refer to your Lottery Statement of Understanding form, review lottery requirements on the web at <http://scholarships.web.mtsu.edu/telsconteligibility.htm>, or contact the Financial Aid Office at 898-2830.

7. REPORTING OF UNOFFICIAL WITHDRAWALS

Federal regulations require that students who cease class attendance but do not officially withdraw from the University must be reported so that future financial aid will cease and/or the student will be required to return funds. Therefore, during the term I will be required to complete a roster indicating those students who have stopped attending class without officially withdrawing.

8. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a disability that may require assistance of accommodations, or if you have any questions related to any accommodation for testing, note taking, reading, etc., contact the Office of Disabled Student Services (898-2783).

IMPORTANT DATES & WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Important Dates

Formal Papers

- Paper 1 - 1st submission: Thu, Jan 28; final submission: Tue, Feb 09
- Paper 2 - Tue, Mar 08
- Project, part I: Tue, Apr 01 (no joke)
- Project, final submission: Tue, May 04

Other Important Dates

- Last day to drop without a grade: Jan 27
- Spring Break: Mar 08-14
- Last day to withdraw from the university with "W": Apr 21
- Final Class Session: Tue, Apr 27

Weekly Schedule

I may make minor changes in our schedule; but I will always alert you to any changes at least one week in advance. As you'll see, the semester is divided into three units:

Unit I. Reading Academic Arguments: The Basics

Unit II. Reading Academic Debates: Two Controversies on the Nature of Violence

Unit III. Making Sense of Longer Works: Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*

Abbreviations for Book Titles:

TS = *They Say / I Say*

Freud = *Civilization and Its Discontents*

UNIT I. Reading Academic Arguments: The Basics

This class is grounded in an assumption about academic prose. During our first unit, we will focus our attention on becoming better *readers* of the kinds of reasoning, argument, and rhetoric used by academics and other intellectuals.

WEEK 1 (Jan 14)

Session 1 (Thu, Jan 14)

Introduction to the Reading of Argument (Douthat's "Let's Talk about Faith")

Reading Academic Arguments: Analyzing the Problem (Phillips's "Rap Music Promotes Sexual Violence")

WEEK 2 (Jan 19-21)

Session 2 (Tue, Jan 19)

Reading for the Problem 2: Does Rap Music Incite Violence? (Tatum's "Studies Have Not Establish a Link")

Session 3 (Thu, Jan 21)

Paper 1, with Bayles's "The Perverse in the Popular"

WEEK 3 (Jan 26-28)

Session 4 (Tue, Jan 26)

TS, Introduction, Chp. 1, 2, & 3

Session 5 (Thu, Jan 28)

Paper 1 - First submission

WEEK 4 (Feb 02-04)

Session 6 (Tue, Feb 02)

No Class – Individual Conferences

Session 7 (Thu, Feb 04)

No Class – Individual Conferences

WEEK 5 (Feb 09-11)

Session 8 (Tue, Feb 09)

Paper 1, Final Submission

UNIT II. Intellectual Debates: Two Controversies on the Nature of Violence

Now that we have a better understanding of the basics of academic-level argument, we will sharpen our analytical and critical tools by turning our attention to the argumentative strategies of several writers involved in two controversies regarding the nature of violence.

Session 9 (Thu, Feb 11)

F. O'Connor, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" (photocopy)

WEEK 6 (Feb 16-18)

Session 10 (Tue, Feb 16)

W. S. Doxey, "A Dissenting Opinion of Flannery O'Connor's 'A Good Man Is Hard to Find'" (photocopy)

K. G. Ochshorn, "A Cloak of Grace: Contradictions in 'A Good Man Is Hard to Find'" (photocopy)

Session 11 (Thu, Feb 18)

M. Jones, "A Good Man's Predicament" (photocopy)

TS, Ch. 4

WEEK 7 (Feb 23-25)

Session 12 (Tue, Feb 23)

John Dewey, "Force, Violence, and Law" (photocopy)

E. Garver, "What Violence Is" (photocopy)

Session 13 (Thu, Feb 25)

J. Betz, "Violence: Garver's Definition and a Deweyan Correction" (photocopy)

TS, Chps. 5-7

WEEK 8 (Mar 02-04)

Session 14 (Tue, Mar 02)

V. Bafucchi, "Two Concepts of Violence" (photocopy)

Session 15 (Thu, Mar 04)

Paper 2 - In-class Essay

SPRING BREAK (MAR 08-14)

UNIT III. Making Sense of Longer Works: Freud's Civilization and Its Discontents

Up to this point in the semester, we have limited ourselves to articles and other short pieces. Now we will turn to a longer work, one of the most influential books of the twentieth-century, Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Although the content of this book is fascinating, we will be more interested in Freud's style of argumentation, including how he refashions the main problem that concerns him in this book: the tension between the individual and civilization (i.e., living with others).

WEEK 9 (Mar 16-18)

Session 16 (Tue, Mar 16)

Freud, Introduction

Session 17 (Thu, Mar 18)

Freud, Ch. 1

WEEK 10 (Mar 23-25)

Session 18 (Tue, Mar 23)

Freud, Ch. 2

Session 19 (Thu, Mar 25)

Freud, Ch. 3

WEEK 11 (Mar 30 - Apr 01)

Session 20 (Tue, Mar 30)

Freud, Ch. 4

Session 21 (Thu, Apr 01)

Freud, Ch. 5

WEEK 12 (Apr 06-08)

Session 22 (Tue, Apr 06)

Freud, Ch. 6

Project, Part I due

Session 23 (Thu, Apr 08)

Freud, Ch. 7

WEEK 13 (Apr 13-15)

Session 24 (Tue, Apr 13)

Freud, Ch. 8

Session 25 (Thu, Apr 15)

TS, Ch. 8-10

WEEK 14 (Apr 22)

Session 26 (Thu, Apr 17)

No Class – Individual Conferences

Session 27 (Tue, Apr 22)

No Class – Individual Conferences

Week 15 (Apr 27)

Session 28 (Tue, Apr 27; last day of class)

No Class – Individual Conferences

Final Paper Due: Tue, May 04 by 12 noon in my office (PH 385)

Research & Argumentative Writing

Dr. Laura Dubek
Peck Hall 324A
ldubek@mtsu.edu

Summer Session III
10:10 & 12:50
Peck Hall 300

TEXTBOOKS

Graff, Gerald, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russel Durst. “They Say/I Say”: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing with Readings. New York: Norton, 2008.

Howard, Rebecca and Amy Taggart. Research Matters at MTSU. McGraw-Hill, 2011.

COURSE JUSTIFICATION: No matter what your major, you will need strong writing skills to succeed in college. Your professors will expect you to write clear and detailed summaries, lab reports, analyses, proposals, position papers, research papers, and essay exams. A recent study published by the University of Chicago called *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* (2011) showed that the more students read and write in college, the more they learn. By giving you practice in critical reading and writing, **English 1020: Research & Argumentative Writing** will prepare you for more advanced course work, significantly increasing the value of your MTSU degree.

This course will also prepare you for an increasingly competitive job market. No matter what your job, you will be expected to perform a wide range of writing tasks, beginning with a job application and a resume. Once employed, you will probably write on a daily basis:

- Business owners write bids and proposals.
- Musicians and artists write profiles and grants.
- Pilots keep logs and file reports.
- Teachers write lesson plans, evaluations, and letters to parents.
- Nurses write instructions regarding a person’s care.
- Citizens read and listen to the news, writing blogs and letters to the editor so they can participate in the public discourse over matters that affect their lives.

The learning outcomes in English 1020 correspond to the abilities that employers say they want college graduates to have. According to a 2009 survey conducted for the Association of American Colleges and Universities, a vast majority of employers think higher education should place *more* emphasis on oral and written communication skills (89%), critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills (81%), and locating, organizing, and evaluating information from multiple sources (68%). In English 1020, you will get plenty of practice reading and analyzing texts—print, digital, and visual. You will also complete a variety of informal and formal writing tasks. The semester culminates in a research paper that requires you to find reliable and relevant source material so you can explain what other scholars are saying about your topic before you enter the conversation and assert your own view.

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING: To pass the course, you must complete all the written work with a C- or higher average. You must also meet the attendance requirement: 0 absences = plus 2%; 1-3 absences = no penalty; 4 absences = minus 10%; 5 absences = F. *Please note that I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. If you anticipate missing more than 3 class sessions, you should consider either taking this class online or when your life circumstances allow you to attend regularly.*

<u>Summary Essay:</u> Are TV shows, video games, and texting good for you?	10%
<u>Argumentative Essay:</u> Is the American Dream a fantasy?	15%
<u>Research Proposal</u>	5%
<u>Annotated Bibliography</u>	
Topic: The Food Industry: Consumption, Production & Marketing	20%
Length: 10 entries, at least 5 different types of sources, one paragraph annotations	
<u>Research Essay</u>	25%
Topic: Food (chemistry, health, psychology, media, economics, politics/law, etc.)	
Length: 6-8 pages	
<u>Workshops:</u> Preparation 10% + Participation 10%	20%
<u>Reading/Research Log</u>	5%

92-100	A	89-91	B+	84-88	B	82-83	B-
79-81	C+	74-78	C	72-73	C-	0-71	F or N

If you are taking this class for the first time, meet the attendance requirement, complete all written work, and earn less than 72%, you will receive an N (no grade/no credit). The N does not affect your GPA.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Students will understand academic writing as a **conversation** about topics of consequence.
2. Students will understand their **responsibilities** as writers—to cite accurately the work of other writers, to provide their audience with reliable information, and to do their topic justice by conducting thorough research and considering multiple points of view.
3. Students will learn **to take their writing seriously**, approaching writing tasks as opportunities to increase their knowledge about a topic and to improve and expand their communication skills.
4. Students will understand academic writing as governed by the **conventions** of specific discourse communities.
5. Students will become more **critical readers**, learning strategies for previewing, annotating, summarizing, analyzing, and critiquing print, digital, and visual texts.
6. Students will acquire **informational literacy**—the ability to locate and evaluate source material.
7. Students will improve their ability to write clear and compelling **thesis statements**.
8. Students will become adept at using appropriate **rhetorical strategies** (description, analogy, planting a naysayer, etc.) to develop and make their arguments.
9. Students will develop the skill of **constructive critique**, focusing on higher order concerns during peer workshops.
10. Students will understand the distinction between **revising and editing**.
11. Students will know how to use their **handbook** as a guide and a reference tool.
12. Students will gain confidence in their ability to generate **a plan** for conducting research and for writing across the curriculum.

POLICIES

Late Arrivals: Sometimes you can't avoid being late, but consistently arriving late shows poor commitment. Arriving more than 30 minutes late equals ½ absence. Three tardies (less than 30 minutes each) equals 1 absence. If I am ever late, you can disregard one of your own tardies to even the score.



Late Papers: Due dates for each major writing assignment are marked in **bold** on your daily schedule. If you are absent on one of those days, your paper will not be late if you send it to me as an attachment via email **before the end of the class period**. I will accept one graded assignment late, without penalty, *provided it is submitted the following class period*. Subsequent late assignments will receive a maximum of 50 points. (Workshops are not considered assignments.)

Workshops: Drafts for workshops must be submitted at the **beginning** of class. Arrive early if you expect to print your draft in class. **Always save your work on a jump drive**. Coming to a workshop without a complete draft is unwise: not only will you miss the opportunity to get feedback on your writing, (1) you will be counted absent, (2) you will get no credit for preparation, and (3) you will no credit for participation---**a triple whammy!** Workshops are worth 20% of your final grade.

Disruptive Behavior: If any of my electronic devices go off during class, if you see me texting or checking *Facebook* during class, or if I am disrespectful or aggressive in a way that makes you uncomfortable, you should report me to Judicial Affairs. Such behavior indicates that I do not take you or your education seriously.



Plagiarism: Never download a paper and put your name on it. Do not cut-and-paste without using quote marks and citing your sources. Always do your own work. Unintentional plagiarism is “a teaching moment”; intentional plagiarism will result in either a zero or an F for the assignment and, depending on the type and amount, may get you an F for the course. I am required to report all instances of intentional plagiarism to Judicial Affairs.

Writing Center: Your tuition dollars support the University Writing Center, located on the 3rd floor of the James Walker Library. Trained tutors are available to help you at any stage of the writing process. Make an appointment to clarify a thesis statement, generate content, integrate and cite source material, or improve sentence structure and diction. Seeking assistance at the UWC shows strong commitment.

Final Folders/Grades: Grades tend to make people anxious. I have seen many students fall apart when faced with a grade that will lower their GPA and thus put financial aid in jeopardy. In this class, you will be graded according to the choices you make regarding workshops and your reading/research log, but primarily, you will be graded on the **quality of your written work**. While grades are not negotiable in the sense that you and I come to some sort of compromise regarding the assessment of this quality, you do “negotiate” your grade in the sense that each writing assignment is planned, drafted, workshopped, and revised. At every step in the process, you will have the opportunity to get feedback from me, your peers, and the tutors in the UWC. Also, assignments are “weighted” in a way that should work to your advantage: the first assignment is worth only 10%; the last assignment is worth 25%. On the final day of class, you will present all your written work (including workshop material) and a complete grade sheet in a two pocket folder for my assessment.

No final folder/grade sheet = F. Final grades will be posted on Monday, August 15th.



Do you have a **Lottery Scholarship**? To retain Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted hours and a cumulative TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. You may qualify with a 2.75 cumulative GPA after 72 attempted hours (and subsequent semesters) if you are enrolled full-time and maintain a semester GPA of at least 3.0. A grade of C, F, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. Dropping a class after 14 days may also impact eligibility; if you withdraw from this class and it results in an enrollment status of less than full time, you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship. Lottery recipients are eligible to receive the scholarship for a maximum of five years from the date of initial enrollment, or until a bachelor degree is earned. For additional Lottery rules, please refer to your Lottery Statement of Understanding form, review lottery requirements on the web, or contact the Financial Aid Office at 898.2830.

Disability Statement: If you have a disability that may require assistance or accommodations, or if you have any questions related to any accommodation for testing, note taking, reading, etc., please speak with me as soon as possible. You may also contact the Office of Disabled Student Services (898.2783) with any questions about such services.

Daily Schedule

TSIS: They Say/I Say

RM: Research Matters

- 6 June "They Say/I Say" Exercise; Personal Interest Inventory
- 8 June TSIS: Part IV. "Entering the Conversation" 135-148; "Watching TV Makes You Smarter" 213-230; "Thinking Outside the Idiot Box" 231-235; "What's the Matter with Kids Today?" 236-240; RM: Chapters 1 & 2
- 13 June TSIS: Part I. "They Say": 17-47; "Can You Hear Me Now?" 270-280; "Reality Television: Oxymoron" 293-296; "Hidden Intellectualism" 297-303
- 15 June** Hour 1: Workshop #1 Hour 2: Revise & Edit **Summary Paper Due**
- 20 June TSIS: Part II. "I Say": 51-97; "The Growing Gulf Between the Rich and Rest of Us" 308-311; "The Truth About Wages" 312-315; "Inequality and the American Dream" 316-320; "Confronting Inequality" 322-339; RM: Chapters 3-4
- 22 June RM: Chapter 9 & 11 *Capitalism: A Love Story* (documentary)
- 27 June TSIS: Part III. "Tying It All Together": 101-132; "Up Against Wal-Mart" 342-354; "A More Perfect Union" 360-376; "The Growing College Gap" 378-390 (Bring interview notes)
- 29 June RM: Chapters 12-15 **MEET IN THE WRITING CENTER (Library)**
- 6 July** Hour 1: Workshop #2 Hour 2: Revise & Edit **Argumentative Paper Due (2 copies)**
- 11 July TSIS: "Don't Blame the Eater" 153-155; "What you Eat is Your Business" 157-160; "Lawsuits . . . to Combat Obesity" 162-170; "Obesity: Much of the Responsibility Lies with Corporations" 172-180; RM: Chapters 1-3
- 13 July TSIS: "Your Trusted Friends" 182-197; "Fat as a Feminist Issue" 200-204; "Being Fat is OK" 206-209; *Food, Inc.* (documentary—Part I)
- 18 July RM: Chapter 4 "Is Food the New Sex?" (handout) *Food, Inc* (Part II)
- 20 July** RM: Chapter 17 Hour 1: In-Class Writing: **Research Proposal** Hour 2: Workshop #3
- 25 July RM: Chapters 5-8 & 10 **MEET IN LIBRARY Room 272** *Missing Class = 2 Absences*
- 27 July **NO CLASS.** Plan for success: Make an appointment with a Writing Center tutor. Meet with a classmate to work on your bibliography and the outline for your Research Essay.
- 1 August** Hour 1: Workshop #4 Hour 2: Revise & Edit **Annotated Bibliography Due**
- 3 August In-Class Writing with Sources: Bring your notes and source material to class.
- 8 August** "Skimming the Surface" (handout) **Reading/Research Log Due**
- 10 August** Hour 1: Workshop #5 Hour 2: Revise & Edit **Research Essay & Final Folder Due**

Final Folder Grade Sheet

Name _____

Summary Essay	Grade: _____ Points _____	x 10%	_____
Argumentative Essay	Grade: _____ Points _____	x 15%	_____
Research Proposal	Grade: _____ Points _____	x 5%	_____
Annotated Bibliography	Grade: _____ Points _____	x 20%	_____
Workshops--Preparation	6/15 ___ 7/6 ___ 7/20 ___ 8/1 ___ 8/10 ___	x 10%	_____
Workshops--Participation	6/15 ___ 7/6 ___ 7/20 ___ 8/1 ___ 8/10 ___	x 10%	_____
Reading/Research Log	Grade: _____ Points _____	x 5%	_____
Research Essay	Grade: _____ Points _____	x 25%	_____

TOTAL: _____

Did you meet the attendance requirement? Yes/No

Did you attend every class session, arriving on time and staying for the duration? Add 2% + 200

Did you miss 4 classes? Subtract 10% -1000

Record the days you missed class _____

Record the days you arrived late _____

ADJUSTED TOTAL: _____

92-100 A	89-91 B+	84-88 B	82-83 B-
79-81 C+	74-78 C	72-73 C-	0-71 F or N

LETTER GRADE: _____

Results of Assessment of General Education Learning Outcomes

Academic Year 2010-11

Subject Area: Writing

1. Identify the course(s) used in the assessment. Include the prefix, number, and title of each course.

English 1020: Research and Argumentative Writing

2. Indicate the number of students who were assessed. Was sampling used? If yes, briefly describe the method of selecting student work and the percentage of students whose work was assessed.

All 1020 instructors were asked to submit one copy of a research essay (specifically the essay requiring the most research) submitted by each student. There were 2,379 students enrolled in English 1020 in spring 2011, a pool of 1,939 essays was collected, and 1,690 essays were able to be used for the study. The essays of 689 students enrolled in English 1020 were not able to be used for the study due to two main issues: instructor non-compliance (e.g., not turning in any essays, turning in essays that were written on or graded, or turning in essays after the deadline) and student non-compliance (e.g., not turning in an essay to the instructor). A computer-generated randomizer (www.random.org/lists) was used to decrease the original pool of 1,951 essays to a pool of 250 essays that were double blinded by clerical staff, using cover-up tape. The assessment organizer then double checked that the pool of 250 essays matched the data generated by the clerical staff. The computer-generated randomizer was used on these 250 essays, and the first 100 essays from the randomized pool were chosen as the final sample. Out of the original 1,939 essays, 5.16% of the total essays were chosen for the final sample and grading session. The next 50 essays picked by the randomizer were considered for the grade norming session, and five essays dealing with social networking and technology (from five different instructors) were chosen as the grade-norming samples.

3. Do the procedures described in Items 1 and 2 represent any significant changes from previous assessments? If so, describe the changes and rationale.

In the pre-pilot (2007-08) and pilot (2008-09) studies, the assessment organizer discarded any essay that did not include a Works Cited. Based on a request from the Assessment Subcommittee of the General Education Committee, in last year's and this year's study, the assessment organizer did not discard any essays that were missing a Works Cited. Nine of the 100 essays used for the final sample did not include a Works Cited, even though instructors were asked to turn in a set of essays that resulted from assignments calling for the most student research in English 1020. Thus, 9% of the graded essays did not include a Works Cited, which would have an immediate detrimental effect on grading.

4. Per the evaluation rubric utilized at your institution, adapt the table below to record the results of the assessments of each learning outcome in the subject area discussed in the report. Below is an example of a table for writing. Revise the table to reflect the descriptors used at your institution. If you rephrased a TBR goal statement, type your institution's version below the corresponding

TBR goal and within the same cell. If you addressed additional outcomes not included in the TBR list, create rows for them at the bottom of the table.

<p style="text-align: center;">Writing</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Outcome to be Assessed</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Superior</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Number and Percent</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Satisfactory</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Number and Percent</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Unsatisfactory</p> <p style="text-align: center;">0000 Number and Percent</p>
Students are able to distill a primary purpose into a single, compelling statement. [revised on our rubric to: The student writer is able to distill a primary argument into a single, compelling statement.]	23/200= 11.5%	123/200= 61.5%	54/200= 27%
Students are able to order major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on that purpose. [revised on our rubric to: The student writer is able to order major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on primary argument .]	24/200= 12%	124/200= 62%	52/200= 26%
Students are able to develop their ideas using appropriate rhetorical patterns (e.g., narration, example, comparison/contrast, classification, cause/effect, definition).	23/200= 11.5%	97/200= 48.5%	80/200= 40%
Students are able to employ correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics.	27/200= 13.5%	102/200= 51%	71/200= 35.5%
Students are able to manage and coordinate basic information gathered from multiple sources. [revised on our rubric to: The student writer is able to manage and coordinate basic information gathered from multiple secondary sources.]	24/200= 12%	87/200= 43.5%	89/200= 44.5%
[added criterion for our rubric: The student writer gives a clear purpose and audience.]	75/200= 37.5%	82/200= 41%	43/200= 21.5%
[added criterion for our rubric: The student writer has written a minimum of 1,000 words or four typed pages at 250 words per page (please estimate).]	9/200= 4.5%	135/200= 67.5%	56/200= 28%

5. Summarize your impressions of the results reported in item 4. Based upon your interpretation of the data, what conclusions emerge about student attainment of the learning outcomes?

- Based on **adequate or more than adequate** achievement by student writers in the pool, four criteria are notably higher than others:
 - i. The student writer gives a clear purpose and audience. (78.5% of all students this year compared to 78% last year)

- ii. The student writer is able to order major points in a reasonable and convincing manner based on primary argument. (74% of all students this year compared to 58% last year)
 - iii. Students are able to distill a primary purpose into a single, compelling statement. (73% of all students this year compared to 65.5% last year)
 - iv. Student writers have written a minimum of 1,000 words or four typed pages at 250 words per page. (72% of all students this year compared to 67% last year)
- Student achievement in all four criteria above improved this year over last year's assessment study.
- Based on **less than adequate** achievement by student writers in the pool, three criteria need more attention than others:
 - i. Student writers are able to manage and coordinate basic information gathered from multiple secondary sources. (44.5% of all students this year compared to 54% last year)
 - ii. Students are able to develop their ideas using appropriate rhetorical patterns (e.g., narration, example, comparison/contrast, classification, cause/effect, definition). (40% of all students this year compared to 30% last year)
 - iii. Students are able to employ correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics. (35.5% of all students this year compared to 40.5% last year)
- Student achievement in two of the above criteria (managing and coordinating basic information from multiple secondary sources/correct diction, syntax, usage, grammar, and mechanics) improved this year over last year's assessment study. One criteria (developing ideas using appropriate rhetorical patterns) did not improve since last year's study.

6. Do you plan to implement strategies to correct any deficiencies that emerged from the data obtained? If yes, please explain.

The English Department plans to

- disseminate results of the 2010-11 assessment study. We will
 - provide copies of the results to Dr. Tom Strawman, Department Chair; Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director, Dr. Julie Myatt, English Coordinator of Graduate Teaching Assistants, and Dr. Wes Houp, Director of the University Writing Center.
 - discuss results at GTA orientation, fall and spring Lower Division curriculum meetings, and general faculty meeting at the beginning of the academic year.
 - mention specifically at orientations, curriculum meetings, and general faculty meetings the need for instructor compliance in providing all 1020 essays for the assessment study each spring semester.
- actively encourage tenure-track and tenured faculty to include ENGL 1020 on their requests for either fall or spring semester teaching.
- focus on student management and coordination of basic information. We will
 - have Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director, and Dr. Julie Myatt, English Coordinator of Graduate Teaching Assistants, continue to invite Dr. Jason Vance and

others from James E. Walker Library to GTA/adjunct/FTT orientations to discuss available library assistance, including Research Coach, SearchPath, and Embed a Librarian options.

- have the English Lower Division Committee continue the requirement for each English 1020 instructor to take their classes to the library for at least one class period for a librarian-led introduction to using the library effectively for research in 1020.
- investigate the role departmental grade inflation may play in less than adequate scores. We will
 - have Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director, and the Lower Division Committee continue to review 1020 syllabi (for GTAs, adjuncts, FTTs and tenure-track faculty) for how instructors represented and fulfilled the Course Objectives for English 1020. The results will be given to each instructor with a request to revise any deficiencies by the next time the instructor teaches 1020. The committee will also confirm that each 1020 instructor uses appropriate texts that focus on the specific course objectives for 1020.
 - continue to provide instructors with end-of-semester grading data specific to their own courses and to the program.
 - have Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director, and Dr. Julie Myatt, Coordinator of Teaching Assistants, organize grade norming sessions for GTAs/adjuncts/instructors in fall 2011 and spring 2012.
- continue the restructuring of the English 1020 course into a research and argumentative course that focuses on Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC), rather than on one that focuses on literary analysis, to stimulate more student interest in research and argumentation. We will
 - have Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director, lead the way in this restructuring. All 1020 instructors are required to choose one of the new WAC-based books and prepare new syllabi for this focus.
- review and revise the curriculum for ENGL 1010 to better prepare students not only for the demands of ENGL 1020 but for expository writing requirements in other courses. A review of the ENGL 1010 curriculum and objectives will be conducted by the Lower Division Committee and include researching the first-year writing programs of our peer institutions.
- further customize the new handbooks for ENGL 1010 and ENGL 1020 to emphasize the course objectives, the General Education Learning Outcomes, and the resources available to MTSU composition students.
- provide new opportunities for professional development for adjuncts and full-time instructors. We will
 - have Dr. Laura Dubek, Lower Division Director, establish a foundation account with grant monies donated by Bedford/St. Martin's, publishers of our new 1010 handbook *Easy Writer*, and McGraw-Hill, publishers of our new 1020 handbook, *Research Matters at MTSU*. Dr. Dubek and the Lower Division Committee will evaluate applications for travel funds for faculty to attend the annual Composition and Communication Conference, sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English. Recipients will receive all travel expenses and will return to the department and host information sessions on composition topics.
- emphasize the 1020 course objectives for new hires and returning GTAs, adjuncts, and instructors. We will
 - guide all GTAs, adjuncts, and instructors to the General Education Faculty Resources and Lower Division FAQs web pages, located on the English Faculty website, that include the course learning and teaching objectives, sample syllabi and assignments, general information for contingent faculty, and specific assistance with grading, developing effective assignments, and judging written work in General Education courses.

- provide more intensive oversight of General Education faculty. Course objectives, syllabi, assignments, and grading are already reviewed in the annual evaluation of each GTA, adjunct, and instructor in the department. Dr. Laura Dubek will receive reassigned time to conduct additional classroom observations.
- emphasize the need for freshman writing courses to follow the guidelines of the National Council of Teachers of English with regard to class size. Dr. Tom Strawman and Dr. Laura Dubek will
 - make a request to upper administration that the current class size of 25 students per freshman writing class fall into NCTE guidelines: “No more than 20 students should be permitted in any writing class. Ideally, classes should be limited to 15. Students cannot learn to write without writing. In sections larger than 20, teachers cannot possibly give student writing the immediate and individual response necessary for growth and improvement.”

7. Did you implement any plans to correct deficiencies based upon data obtained from the assessment in 2009-10?

The English Department has

- disseminated results of the assessment studies. Dr. Allison Smith, the assessment organizer, has
 - provided copies of the results to Dr. Tom Strawman, Department Chair; Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director, Dr. Julie Myatt, English Coordinator of Graduate Teaching Assistants, and Dr. Wes Houpp, Director of the University Writing Center.
 - discussed results at GTA orientation, fall and spring lower division curriculum meetings, and general faculty meeting at the beginning of the academic year.
- focused on student management and coordination of basic information. Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director,
 - attended the MTSU Library Retreat in August 2011 to discuss how the librarians can support students in ENGL 1020.
 - formalized the requirement for all English 1020 instructors to take their classes to the library for at least one class period for a librarian-led research introduction.
- investigated the role departmental grade inflation may play in less than adequate scores. Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director, and the English Lower Division Committee have
 - reviewed ENGL 1010 and 1020 syllabi and meticulously noted how each syllabus (for GTAs, adjuncts, and instructors) represented and fulfilled the Course Objectives. The results were given to each instructor with a request to revise any deficiencies. This syllabus review continues each year.
 - organized grade norming sessions for adjuncts/instructors in fall 2010 and spring 2011. Dr. Julie Myatt, Coordinator of GTAs, has also organized grade norming sessions for the GTAs.
- emphasized the 1020 course objectives for new hires and returning GTAs, adjuncts, and instructors. Dr. Laura Dubek, English Lower Division Director, has
 - created two new web pages—General Education Faculty Resources and Lower Division FAQs—that include the course objectives, teaching and learning objectives, sample syllabi and assignments, general information for General Education faculty, and specific assistance with grading, developing effective assignments, and judging written work in GE courses. Course objectives, syllabi, assignments, and grading are all reviewed in the annual evaluation of each GTA, adjunct, and instructor in the department.

- revised the ENGL 1020 curriculum to be more closely aligned with the General Education Outcomes. The Lower Division Committee
 - removed the literary analysis requirement from the ENGL 1020 curriculum.
 - selected new textbooks for ENGL 1020 that have a Writing Across the Curriculum focus and that better support the General Education Learning Outcomes.
 - selected new handbooks for both ENGL 1010 and 1020 that emphasize the distinctions between the two courses.
 - used the Syllabus Review to encourage more required reading and additional reading instruction in both ENGL 1010 and 1020 and more classroom workshops and peer review opportunities.

The syllabus is a rhetorical document that should provide students with clear course objectives, requirements, and policies. It should also give them a sense of their instructor, setting a serious yet welcoming tone. The purpose of the syllabus review is to ensure consistency among hundreds of sections of general education courses, communicate expectations and responsibilities, and provide support for general education faculty. It is also used to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the program, thereby directing the efforts of the lower division committee.

BASICS

- _____ Instructor's Name, Email, Phone, Office
- _____ Course Name, Number, Day/Time/Place
- _____ Office hours _____ # of hours
- _____ Textbook/Reader _____ Handbook*
- _____ Course Description/Objectives
- _____ Grading Scale (A through C-, F)
- _____ Explanation of N grade
- _____ 4 required essays +

Comments:

Comments:

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

- _____ substantial reading requirement
- _____ workshops/peer review (English 1010)
- _____ library instruction (English 1020)
- _____ cancel class for individual conferences:
1 week maximum
- _____ writing to learn activities
- _____ deadline for dropping with a W

Comments:

POLICIES

- _____ Attendance
- _____ Late Papers
- _____ Plagiarism Statement
- _____ Disability Statement
- _____ Lottery Scholarship
- _____ Writing Center
- _____ * Please advise students to keep their handbook for future reference

Comments:

PRESENTATION

- _____ Visually effective
- _____ Appropriate and consistent tone

General Education Faculty Self-Evaluation

Spring 2012

Part I: The purpose of the checklist is to clarify general expectations and responsibilities. Please read page two for specific criteria before you complete the checklist. Return the form to Cindy in 324 or via email.

	Low	Acceptable	High	Your Comments
1. Meets classes at assigned time & for duration				
2. If unable to meet class, calls department				
3. Holds appropriate number of office hours				
4. Syllabus adheres to guidelines & standards. Explain any deviations:				
5. Submits syllabus (including weekly schedule) to department for accreditation & syllabus review				
6. Returns graded assignments promptly				
7. Maintains class records				
8. 1010 instructors: uses the workshop method				
9. 1020 instructors: uses library support services				
10. Professional demeanor and appearance				
11. Communicates with department				
12. Participates in professional development activities directly related to teaching. List here:				

Faculty Member: _____ Date: _____

Lower Division Director: _____ Date: _____

1. Our program has an incredibly high cancellation rate. “Acceptable” means you meet each of your classes at the assigned time and for the duration for the entire semester. It also means that if you must cancel class, you provide students with instruction in some other way: D2L, out-of-class assignment, etc. “High” means you not only meet all your classes, but you also make a habit of arriving early to talk with students, and/or you are always the last one to leave the classroom, making sure that everyone has an opportunity to talk with you, and/or instruction often takes place during email exchanges.
2. “Acceptable” means you call the department every time you are unable to meet your class or if you will be late to class. If you email your students about a class cancellation, you should copy the department (Cindy.Maguffee@mtsu.edu). If you miss several classes in a row, you should arrange for a substitute. There is no “high” rating for this one.
3. “Acceptable” means you hold 2 hours/week for each class you teach. Your “office” may be in the Starbucks or somewhere else, but your students should know where/when they can expect to find you outside of class. “High” means you hold more than 2 hours/week for each class and/or you go out of your way to accommodate students who cannot attend your office hours.
4. This one is very important. “Acceptable” means you teach from an approved textbook/reader, you assign the appropriate number/type of essays, and you meet the stated objectives for the course. Note that these objectives have recently changed (see “learning and teaching objectives” on the website) and that *Research Matters* is considered a handbook, not a textbook. If you have approval to use a specific text, note this in the comment box. There is no “high” for this one.
5. “Acceptable” means you submitted an electronic copy of your syllabus (for each class) to the department (Rachel.LaForte@mtsu.edu) at the beginning of the semester. “Low” means Rachel had to pester you.
6. “Acceptable” means you always return graded (major) assignments at least two class periods before the due date for the next major assignment. There is no “high” for this one.
7. “Acceptable” means you maintain an attendance/grade book (available in 323). “High” means that in addition to an attendance/grade book, you maintain records of emails, conference notes, papers, etc. that would be helpful in the event of a complaint or grade appeal.
8. “Acceptable” means you have students workshop each of the major writing assignments. “High” means that in addition, you use class time for peer editing sessions. (Workshops and peer editing sessions are not the same thing.)
9. “Acceptable” means you either bring your 1020 students to the library for guided instruction (with a librarian), or you arrange for a librarian to visit your class. “High” means that in addition, you integrate library webtools or activities into your instruction.
10. “Acceptable” means that you wear appropriate (“business casual”) attire and always conduct yourself in a professional manner. There is no “high” rating for this one.
11. “Acceptable” means that you stay connected by responding promptly to email and by sending email whenever a problem or potential problem exists. (Email is better than calling because we’ll have a written record.) “High” means that you consistently remain visible, making an effort to communicate in informal ways with the department.
12. “Acceptable” means you attend 2 professional development activities each semester directly related to teaching: grade norming session, small group session, curriculum presentation, workshop sponsored by the department (e.g. Peck Comp Series), LT&ITC or ITD (e.g. D2L tutorial) presentation, a conference such as CCC, etc. “High” means you attend 3 or more.