**ENGL 1020: Research and Argumentative Writing**

**Instructor:** Dr. Amy Harris-Aber (she/her/hers)

**Email:** Amy.Harris-Aber@mtsu.edu

**Office and Phone: Peck Hall 359; 615-904-8155**

**Office Hours:** 10-3 on Tuesdays or by appointment.

**ENGL 1020** emphasizes analytic and argumentative writing as well as locating, organizing, and using library resource materials in that writing. A minimum grade of C- is required for credit. The prerequisite for this course is ENGL 1010.

Dear citizen scholars,

If you were a student in ancient Greece, your teacher’s purpose would be to prepare you to participate as citizens at the *Heliaia*, or people’s court. You’ll find that my goals for you are quite similar. My hope is that you will not only become a more informed members of the world by the end of this class, but that you’ll feel prepared to actively participate *in* it.

ENGL 1020 is meant to strengthen your critical thinking and research skills while empowering you to effectively analyze the constant flow of (sometimes inescapable) information around us. Much of what we encounter in terms of ads, TikTok, YouTube videos, songs, conversations, and even apparel are already explicit and implicit arguments.

How can we make sense of all these messages? How can we successfully communicate to the audiences that can help us affect change? My class will allow you to better navigate the societal landscape that you’re existing in now. It will also help you to remain informed and vigilant in the future.

For fifteen weeks, you'll be working on components leading up to a major project that is comprised of four separate assignments. The material and work you'll produce centralizes community engagement through pedagogy and will provide you with strategies for social empowerment as well as professionalization via learning audience-based communication skills.

What follows are the guidelines you need to be aware of if you are to be successful in this class. I also advise you to look through the week-by-week checklists on our D2L page and make a note of significant due dates on your calendar/in your planner.

We’ll be meeting on Thursdays (for on-campus classes) during your regularly scheduled class time. However, on days when we are not in-class, you are responsible for completing assignments and readings. Our in-person classes are important because we will be using them for vital in-class learning and strategies. I plan to set aside our in-person meetings for anything that cannot be achieved online, so it’s important for you to keep up and check D2L often.

This course is unique in terms of our textbook! You’ll be using our Open Educational Resources (OER) text. We’ll further discuss what that means during your first in-person class.

I’ll be assigning chapters from our text weekly, but I’ll also have links for you in our D2L space.

All other course texts will be available as PDFs on D2L and/or via links in the course calendar at the end of this syllabus.

**Objectives: What You Will Do in ENGL 1020**

* Conduct secondary research
* Demonstrate recursive relationships between reading, writing, research, and reflection
* Interpret and respond to complex ideas in sources
* Identify and contribute to critical conversations
* Identify and address appropriate audiences and contexts
* Demonstrate flexibility and awareness of effective delivery within different genres
* Identify connections between coursework and other academic and external contexts
* Locate sources and analyze their relevance and credibility
* Demonstrate rhetorical understanding of source attribution

**Labor-Based Assignments: My Methods of Assessment**

While designing this course, I thought about ways in which introductory writing classes I took as a student could have fostered a better sense of motivation, curiosity, and scholarly risk-taking. I also considered why we assess student work in the ways that we do.

So how will I be determining your grade? Great question. Here’s the answer.

***Your grade is determined by your work in the course – in other words, the work you complete and goals you reach.***

Do the work, and you’ll get a strong grade in the course. How “good” I think your paper is does not factor into your grade at all.

You’ll still get lots of coaching on how to make your writing as effective as possible. As you plan,

research, and draft your writing, I’ll read it and give you feedback. You’ll get feedback from your

classmates. You’ll use feedback to revise your paper. You’ll also spend a lot of time thinking about what

makes your paper effective. Before you turn in your work, you can review what we’ve identified as attributes of a successful paper/essay/project. All of this effort – the coaching, the feedback, the reflections, etc. – help you learn and become a stronger writer!

You will get a certain number of points for an assignment, but to head off any subjectivity, the elements that you receive points for will always be pretty concrete i.e. meeting the word count, citing your sources, etc. You get credit for submitting each project, draft, and in-class reading reflections, but in order to get full credit, you must meet specific, clear requirements.

As a teacher, I want to be as fair as possible. I want everybody to have the best chance to succeed in

our class. Labor-based grading seems to be the answer to this.

Weirdly, focusing solely on grades and percentages for every assignment makes you less likely to actually learn. Additionally, research shows that students from privileged backgrounds (e.g. white, middle-class students who have traditionally thrived in school) receive higher grades than students from minoritized backgrounds, so removing grades is a way to ensure that *everybody* thrives.

That means, if you’ve always felt nervous or lacked confidence in your writing, or if you’re worried about learning to write online, or if you’ve always gotten A’s and are nervous about keeping up a high GPA –– don’t be nervous! You’ll be able to take risks, try new ways of writing, and get better without worrying about your grade. Do your work, keep up with the class, and the grade will follow.

To pass my course, you’ll need to completion all major projects, do thorough and significant revision of at least one project, complete your drafts, and engage with us (me and your colleagues) during peer workshops.

Failure to complete work will result in a failing grade in the course. But don’t freak out – you will be successful if you put forth the necessary effort. Will you be challenged? Sure! Fail? Not if you hang in there. Just do the work and talk to me if you need help.

**How I Determine Your Final Grade**

Although your grade is dependent on labor, to receive credit for a project it must be complete. Thus, if your project does not meet the requirements of the assignment (if it does not include required research, use appropriate citation, meet length requirements, or adhere to academic integrity standards, for instance), then it will not receive credit.

**A** = satisfactory completion of all four major projects, one documented University Writing Center tutoring session, thorough and significant revision of one project, and completion of 90% or more class work (including drafts, workshops, and in-class reading responses)

**B** = satisfactory completion of all four major projects, thorough and significant revision of one project, and completion of 80% or more class work (including drafts, workshops, and in-class reading responses)

**C** = satisfactory completion of all major projects, one revision, and completion of 60% or more class work (including drafts, workshops, and in-class reading responses)

\* To pass, students must earn a C- or higher.

\* Failure to complete all major assignments (Projects #1 - #2.2 and one revision) will result in a failing grade. However, there is no need to fail! Just do the work and talk to me if you get in a jam.

**Revisions**

In order to pass my class, you must submit a revision of Project #1: Research & Rhetorical Analysis. Please keep in mind that revision must entail rethinking and rewriting process. To receive credit for a revised project, students must do the following: 1.) make significant, thorough revision that potentially includes global changes (i.e. adding/deleting paragraphs, reorganizing, adding/deleting evidence, etc.), 2.) use track changes to demonstrate revision choices; and 3.) write a paragraph reflection describing the revision choices and their impact.

**Turning in Work**

Turn in all work via D2L dropboxes. Keep everything you write for class, because hopefully it will help you with the longer projects. **All work must be submitted before midnight on the due date**. Remember, you are responsible for meeting all related deadlines, including the submission of work. I require twelve hours’ notice for late assignments.

**Late Work Policy:**

Major projects cannot be submitted once the next project is due. For example, Project 1 will only be accepted before the due date of Project 2. However, all practice tasks in a unit must be turned in before the major project’s due date. This class has assignments that are built upon each other; not doing them in a timely manner means you are not getting the information you need to learn these skills and apply them to future projects.

In-class reading responses are part of immediate conversations that we’re having in our classroom community, so you cannot make those up directly. However, you can regain the points by attending tutoring sessions at the UWC and sending me your session report.

**Showing Up**

Even in a web-assisted class (and maybe especially then), showing up to class is important. I expect you to do so. However, I recognize that we all need self-care sometimes. Life can get hard for all sorts of reasons, and I want you to know that if you need a day off where you focus on yourself, you should take it. At times when I need self-care, I like to work on my own writing (!!!), go to Pilates classes, and watch reruns of *What We Do in the Shadows* on Hulu. Take the time you need when you need it. Most of your assignments and readings are online, so you can work on them independently.

The exception to this is, of course, your in-class reading responses and peer workshop days.

And please, if you’re not feeling well, do not come to class! I can help you catch up under mitigating circumstances, but spreading illness (especially when one considers the very real threat of long Covid) isn’t wise. I mean, think about it – if I go down, this may turn into a full-time online experience instead of remaining a hybrid course (***whomp*** *whomp*).

**Communication**

Hybrid classes can feel isolating because we don’t meet as often in-person, so please know that I’m happiest when interacting with my students. I hope to speak with you regularly.

Please email me at my MTmail account:**Amy.Harris-Aber@mtsu.edu**
With rare exceptions, I will respond to all email within 48 hours. Even though I have set office hours, remember: I’m always happy to answer questions about class, give you feedback on drafts, share my limited writing wisdom, etc. In terms of meeting online, I’m happy to communicate with you through Zoom, Skype, email, etc.

You must stay in communication with me throughout the semester, especially if you get sick and shouldn’t be in class. If I have not heard from you (email) or seen you in class for two weeks, I will not grade any of your work; you will need to meet with me during my office hours to decide whether any missing/late work will be accepted.

**Please note that you could get an FA that will impact your financial aid if you do not keep interacting with me through November 15th!** Interaction can be an email – but there has to be verifiable proof that you were still active in my class.

P**articipation and Civility**

This is a class that can only thrive through discussion and interaction. I expect everyone to participate courteously. Thus, please treat all members of the class with respect and support. Writing is hard and can make people feel vulnerable. Our class is structured in such a way that workshops, in-class sessions, and all other points of contact must serve as the primary opportunity for discussion. **Note: discussion is key to improving writing.**

Please make these engaging, thoughtful spaces for learning. If you’re challenged by something another student says, please address it thoughtfully and with compassion. You might also take some time away from the conversation before you return to it. ***However, blatant discrimination and threatening or derogatory/hateful language or actions will not be tolerated.*** In short, [we don’t do that here](https://thagomizer.com/blog/2017/09/29/we-don-t-do-that-here.html). I reserve the right to remove you from our class if you exhibit such behavior towards me or your classmates.

**Artificial Intelligence and Our Classroom Community**

The entirety of higher ed is currently grappling with the inevitable use of AI in our classes. More often than not, I have found that I can trust my students. However, AI is a reality that all instructors must address. Therefore, I prefer to view AI tools as a kind of calculator. It’s a tool but cannot be substituted for your own written intellectual efforts.

**The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, Dall-e, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities:**
● Brainstorming and refining your ideas;
● Fine tuning your research questions;
● Finding information on your topic (although you may have trouble locating the original source);
● Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts;
● Checking grammar and style.

**The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:**
● Impersonating you in classroom contexts, i.e. using the tool to compose in-class reflections.
● Completing work that your group has assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed upon
that you may utilize the tool.
● Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
● Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.

**True Blue Core English 1020: Requirements**

**(Legacy) Information Literacy (Info Lit)**

* Information Literacy (Info Lit) (3 hours)
* For all catalogs 2024-2025 and beyond, this course (ENGL 1020) satisfies the True Blue Core (TBC) curriculum requirement (3 hours) for Information Literacy (Info Lit). To learn more about TBC requirements: <https://w1.mtsu.edu/truebluecore/core.php>.
* For all catalogs prior to 2024-2025, this course (ENGL 1020) satisfies one of the general education curriculum requirements for Communication (3 of 9 hours). To learn more about general education requirements for catalogs prior to 2024-2025: <https://w1.mtsu.edu/gen_ed/requirements.php>.
* **The TBC outcome for Information Literacy**: Students demonstrate competence in information literacy by determining what information they need, where to access it, how to evaluate information they encounter, and how to use information effectively and ethically.

**MT Engage Designated Course**

Connect, Reflect, Engage! In this MT Engage course, you will be an active learner who participates in a beyond-the-classroom experience and makes connections across learning opportunities. You will complete reflections that help you make sense of your learning and its value to your educational and career goals. To support a developing sense of yourself as a learner, upload at least one assignment from this course involving reflection to your OneDrive and create a folder named MT Engage so you can easily locate all the work from your MT Engage classes. Then, look back on this collection of your work later to assess your growth and identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities you have developed during your time at MTSU.

**ePortfolio Statement:** As part of the MT Engage program, students will build an ePortfolio presentation showcasing their ability to make connections across and reflect on various learning experiences. Students should be aware that ePortfolios are not to contain confidential personal information, and that a student’s unauthorized storage or use of copyrighted works or proprietary information in an ePortfolio is prohibited. ePortfolio privacy: ePortfolios are private until the public link is shared (this access continues until the box is unchecked). ePortfolios are not internet searchable until they are posted to a host webpage.

**Other Resources**

**Honors College Information**

I highly encourage you to check out the Honors College and all the opportunities you can access through their program. To graduate from the University Honors College, students must complete 18 hours of lower-division of Honors coursework, and 11 hours of upper-division Honors coursework, including a capstone thesis research or creative project. Students must maintain a 3.25 to participate in the Honors Program. For all of the special benefits of the Honors program, specific course graduation requirements, and/or questions about the thesis or creative project, please contact one of our Honors College advisors: Ms. Laura Clippard (FOR SPECIAL SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS) in HONR 227; Laura.Clippard@mtsu.edu; or 615-898-5464;ORMs. April Goers (FOR FRESHMEN) in HONR 228; April.Goers@mtsu.edu; or 615-494-7767;OR Ms. Judy Albakry (FOR SOPHOMORES THROUGH SENIORS) in HONR 229; Judy.Albakry@mtsu.edu; or 615-494-8819.

**Title IX**

MTSU faculty are concerned about the well-being and development of our students and are legally obligated to share reports of sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking with the University’s Title IX coordinator to help ensure student’s safety and welfare. Please refer to MTSU’s Title IX site for contact information and details at: http://www.mtsu.edu/titleix/.

I am a mandatory reporter; this means that if you share with me that you’ve been hurt or are in danger, I must share this information with the Title IX Coordinator, Marion Wilson.

**The Writing Center**

The Writing Center is located in the James E. Walker Library, room 362, and online at [www.mtsu.edu/uwc](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CAmy%5CDesktop%5CF20%201020%5Cwww.mtsu.edu%5Cuwc). Online and face-to-face conferences are available by appointment (904-8237). The WC is a great FREE resource for student writers— and they do virtual appointments! My advice is to schedule sessions early and often. You can set up a virtual appointment right now at <https://mtsu.mywconline.com/>

**MTSU Counseling & Testing Services**

There’s no way around it; we’re living in \*ahem\* interesting times. MTSU Counseling Services is there to make sure you have the resources to support your mental health. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out at (615) 898-2670. Counseling Services is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. M-F and you can find their website at <https://www.mtsu.edu/countest/>

**MTSU Student Veterans**

If you are a veteran, I would like to speak with you and make sure that you know about the Veteran & Military Family Center on campus. The center has a myriad of opportunities and beneficial services for those who have served or are actively serving. You can find out more information about the center by visiting their website at [http://www.mtsu.edu/military/](http://www.mtsu.edu/military/%20)

**Students with Disabilities Statement**

I want everyone in my classes to be comfortable, respected, and successful. If you would like to discuss with me how I can assist you with your learning needs, please feel free to do so.

You should also know that Middle Tennessee State University is committed to campus access in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any student interested in reasonable accommodations can consult the Disability & Access Center (DAC) website [www.mtsu.edu/dac](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CAmy%5CDesktop%5CF20%201020%5Cwww.mtsu.edu%5Cdac) and/or contact the DAC for assistance at 615-898-2783 or dacemail@mtsu.edu

**Lottery Scholarship Requirements**

Do you have a lottery scholarship? To retain the 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. A grade of C, D, F, FA, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility.

 If you drop this class, withdraw, or if you stop attending this class you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship, and you may not be able to regain eligibility at a later time. For additional Lottery rules, please refer to your Lottery Statement of Understanding form (<http://www.mtsu.edu/financial-aid/forms/LOTFOD.pdf>) or contact your MT One Stop Enrollment Counselor (<http://www.mtsu.edu/one-stop/counselor.php>).