Composition Theory and Pedagogy

1. Course Description from ASSIST

A study of advanced composition techniques, theories, and methods of teaching. Prerequisites: 6 hours of English.
3.000 Credit hours
3.000 Lecture hours
Levels: Undergraduate
Schedule Types: Lecture

2. Professor Contact Info:

Dr. Beatrice Mendez Newman
Professor, Department of Writing and Language Studies
Office: ELABS 208
Email: beatrice.newman@utrgv.edu
Office phone: 665-7384
On site office hours: Monday, 8am-9am
Online availability: Tuesday-Friday 8am-noon
Email response times: You may contact me anytime; during the day through around 7pm, I will usually respond within minutes; however, if you contact me after 7pm, I will respond first thing the next morning.

3. A Brief Overview of ENGLISH 4343

If you are taking English 4343, you are either required to take it for your degree plan or you are taking it as an upper division elective. Additionally, many of you are likely to be working toward teacher certification. Regardless of your entry route into English 4343, my goal is to promote a greater appreciation of writing in each of you—in other words, to help you enjoy writing and to enable you to discover the importance of writing for your personal and professional growth.

Class Activities: We will have three basic types of online class activities: (1) lessons that introduce you to the content (the knowledge base) of the chapter and the writing task you are currently working on, (2) discussion boards or blogs that allow you to interact with your classmates, and (3) writing tasks that allow you to generate specific types of essays that reflect and apply our writing lessons.

Our ONLINE Environment: Our online environment will provide a great deal of autonomy for you as a learner, but with that independence comes responsibility for making sure you don’t get behind. In our summer course, you will need to log in to our course every day to make sure you stay on track and pay attention to course-related announcements and email messages. I will send you reminder messages every week to help keep you on track. Even though it’s an online class, I will be available for face-to-face conferencing in my office. I hope to actually meet some of you, even if you just come by to say hi and introduce yourselves. All our course material and assignments are on our Blackboard page organized into learning modules.
4. Materials Required:

REQUIRED: Kelly Gallagher’s *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. We will need this book starting on DAY1 so you need to order it or buy it at the bookstore right away. This book is available electronically and immediately so you cannot use “I ordered the book but it hasn’t arrived yet” as an excuse for not completing assignments on time.

Supplementary and resource materials will be posted in the module areas.

5. Course Objectives

5A. Departmental Goals: Student Learning Outcomes for English (SLOs)

**English 4343 Student Learning Outcomes**

**Departmental Goals: Student Learning Outcomes for English (SLOs)**

**SLO 1**—Students will be able to interpret and analyze a text using different approaches from literary, rhetorical and/or linguistic theories.

**SLO 2**—Students in certification tracks will demonstrate knowledge and skills in the areas of writing, literature, reading, oral communication, media literacy, and English language arts pedagogy.

**SLO 3**—Recent graduates who majored in English will demonstrate satisfaction with the programs in the English Department.

**SLO 4**—Students will be able to use discipline-appropriate technology applications (such as library databases, computer applications, Internet research, non-print media, multi-media applications, desktop publishing, etc.) in preparation and presentation of course projects.

5B. Student Learning Outcomes for English 4343

**Student Learning Outcomes for English 4343**

By the end of English 4343, students will be able to:

1. participate in the creation of a community of writers (SLO 4)
2. practice the planning, drafting, revising, and sharing processes of writing in a variety of genres (SLO 1, 2, 3)
3. connect individual writing experiences to theories and practices presented in course resources in writing theory and pedagogy (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4)
4. create a variety of learning artifacts using technology tools such as word processing, PPTs, videos, audio responses, and traditional and digital research strategies (SLO 1, 2, 4)

6. Quality Matters Certification for English 4343

Our English 4343 online course was recently certified as by Quality Matters, a national organization that provides guidelines, standards, and instruction in creating student-centered, accessible online courses.

**About Quality Matters**

Quality Matters (QM) is the global organization leading quality assurance in online and innovative digital teaching and learning environments. It provides a scalable quality assurance system for online and blended learning used within and across organizations. When you see QM Certification Marks on courses or programs, it means they have met QM Course Design Standards or QM Program Review Criteria in a rigorous review process. (Quality Matters, 2019, qualitymatters.org).
7. Course Calendar

This overview provides a general schedule of our course work. The unit materials and activities on our Blackboard page include detailed overviews, due dates, and time and effort expectations for each unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Activities and Assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 5</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>Orientation Lesson Softchalk and Orientation Quiz required</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 5</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>DB1—Meet &amp; Greet required</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 7</td>
<td>Module 1</td>
<td>Module 1 Softchalk lesson on Chapter 5 with self-check required</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 12</td>
<td>Module 1</td>
<td>Blog #1—micro essay topic possibilities required</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 14</td>
<td>Module 2</td>
<td>Module 2 Softchalk lesson—Chapter 2 and self-check required</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 18</td>
<td>Module 2</td>
<td>Blog#2.1—constructed response to Chapter 2 required</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 20</td>
<td>Module 2</td>
<td>Blog#2.2—constructed response to mentor texts required</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 21</td>
<td>Module 3</td>
<td>Writing the Micro Essay—Video Lesson required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 25</td>
<td>Module 3</td>
<td>LEVEL 1 micro essay required</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 26</td>
<td>Module 3</td>
<td>Module 3 Lesson + Chapter 3 &amp; Chapter 7 designated pages—The Magic of Revision +self-check required</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 27</td>
<td>Module 3</td>
<td>Blog#3.1—constructed response to Module 3 lesson required</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 3</td>
<td>Module 3</td>
<td>LEVEL 2 micro essay required</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 5</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>DB 3—Course reflection required</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL COURSE POINTS:** 412

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Class days</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Module/Course Ratio</th>
<th>Module % of total course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71/412</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40/412</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>68/412</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Module 3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>183/412</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50/412</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>412/412</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Assignments and point totals for each unit are projections; unit materials and due dates may be changed if it appears that we need to spend more time and effort on specific aspects of the unit.

**All assignments shown here are required. Submission area access for each assignment will occur only when the prior assignment has been satisfactorily completed with a minimum score of 70%.**
8. Course grade calculation:

Your final grade will be based on the percentage of points you've accumulated. Our course schedule shown above tallies up to 412 total course points. Your score is calculated automatically by the Blackboard gradebook which is based on the current number of assignments. The TOTAL in your “My Grades” at any given time reflects your score for the assignments that are due through that date. So, if there’s an assignment due on June 12 and you haven’t yet submitted it, Blackboard calculates the score as a zero until you submit it and it’s scored. CAVEAT: simply submitting an assignment will not register a score or clear you to move on to the next assignment; you have to wait until I score it. This is why submitting your assignments early is important: early submissions allow time to revise and resubmit and ensure a top score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points Required*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-90%</td>
<td>412-369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>89-80%</td>
<td>368-328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>79-70%</td>
<td>327-286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69-60%</td>
<td>285-245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59-0%</td>
<td>244-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Points for each unit may change if we add or adjust an assignment in order to meet learning goals and learner needs.

For each unit, you'll have multiple bonus point opportunities that will allow you to build up a repertoire of extra points that reflect going above and beyond basic expectations. Additionally, we may add or change assignments if the class appears to be having trouble mastering a specific learning point.

There are redundancies throughout our course to help you stay on track and meet the requirements for an A in each unit and holistically in the course. Additionally, I will send the class an announcement at the beginning of each week to remind you of upcoming due dates.

9. Some course logistics and info

**BLACKBOARD SUPPORT:** The Blackboard Support tabs in our menu offer tutorials if you need to bolster your Blackboard knowledge. If you something should go wrong with your Blackboard access, here's the basic contact info from the Blackboard support tab on your syllabus menu. You need to keep in mind, however, that a Blackboard issue exacerbated because you waited till the last minute to do an assignment is not an excuse for a late submission. Also, I cannot change or “fix” anything related to Blackboard technology.

- **Location:** Casa Bella 613 in Brownsville and Education Complex 2.202 in Edinburg
- **Phone:** 956-882-6792 Brownsville and 956-665-5327 Edinburg
- **Toll-Free:** 1-866-654-4555
- **Blackboard support:** https://www.utrgv.edu/online/getting-support/index.html

**DIGITAL LITERACY AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:** In signing up for a completely online course, you will be required to apply and expand your current digital literacy skills. To succeed in our course, you need to be an adept user of learning tools that support online learning, such as discussion boards, blogs, journals, online resources, online feedback and grading, video lessons, digital participation in course work (such as through audio feedback). Our course is founded on the expectation that you already have at least minimal computer and digital literacy skills so that you can participate meaningfully from day 1. Additionally, you must ensure that your software and hardware set ups meet minimal course technology requirements. The RESOURCES section of our 4343 Blackboard menu page includes a Course Technology link. A caveat: “I don't have access to internet” is not an acceptable "excuse" for failing to complete course requirements or for submitting work late. UTRGV offers numerous computer labs all over all campuses to support digital learning, so you will always have access to required course technologies.

**BASIC DIGITAL LITERACY TOOLS AND APPLICATIONS:**

- Skilled use of Blackboard, including negotiation of units, modules, assignment varieties, Collaborate, Tegrity, SoftChalk, and micro lessons,
- Effective use of email communication (SOPHIE includes a section on email protocol),
- Adept use of word processing as preparation for essay submissions, blog creation, and discussion board posts,
- Skillful application of Microsoft Word and PPT (both of which are available through Outlook) for creation of learning materials and assignments,
- Ability to integrate visuals and images into blogs, discussion boards, and traditional essay submissions,
- Ability to convert Microsoft Word files into PDFs,
- Access to peripherals (such as a good microphone) for creation of MP3 and MP4 files as options in selected course assignments,
- Access to updates for minimum course software and hardware to ensure optimal participation in class activities.

**PREREQUISITES:** Each assignment has a threshold score that will indicate you've met expectations for the assignment at a minimal level. If you meet this score, then you can move on to the next assignment. Prerequisites are designed to promote success in the major unit assignments. Each assignment includes a rubric which specifies the "meets expectations" requirements; if you don't meet the success expectations, you'll get feedback or be sent back to the instructions so that you can resubmit the assignment until you meet the threshold score for the next assignment.
FEEDBACK: When you submit an assignment, you’ll get formative feedback which tells you how effectively you completed the task and what you need to do to improve the submission. If you did not meet the minimum score (usually 70%) to move to the next assignment, you will need to apply feedback to revise and resubmit the assignment until you reach the “meets expectations” level described in the rubric. This is to enable you to end all assignments with the highest possible score and optimum learning levels. As a learner, it is your responsibility to check your scores immediately, read feedback, and make suggested revisions and resubmission if you want to safeguard your top score possibilities.

RESPONSE TIME: For minor assignments, such as discussion boards, you’ll get feedback usually within a few hours of your submission. Drafts of essays will generally be back to you with feedback in 24 hours. If I can’t stick to these feedback turn around times for a specific assignment, I’ll let you know via an Announcement once we launch the assignment.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and EMAIL: I will rely on class announcements and emails to stay in touch with you. Since we are in an online, virtual classroom environment, this cyber communication will be vital to staying up with adjustments and updates. You need to check your email every day to ensure you have not missed reading important class updates. Failing to read an email or an announcement will not excuse you from responsibility for the information in the course communication.

LATE WORK: Submitting assignments late will hurt your grade, derail your progress in interacting with classmates on our discussion boards, and significantly cut back on your revision and resubmission time. For all other assignments, a late assignment will be eligible for maximum 70% credit, with a sliding scale down to 50% credit if it’s over 2 days late.

CLOSING DATES: All assignments have closing dates about one week after the original due date. This means you will not have access to the submission area after that date.

SUCCESS ALERTS: If you fail to meet the deadline for an assignment, you will be sent a reminder about the missed due date. You will be able to submit the assignment through the closing date, but the grade will be reduced.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS: Please check the technical requirements for full participation in online learning, presented in the syllabus tab and the technical requirements tab from our course menu on our Blackboard page. Some caveats: (1) do not send assignments from your phone; such submissions tend to be garbled and unformatted and will yield a low score; (2) not having updated hardware and software on your personal computer will not justify problematic submissions or non-submissions. We have numerous computer labs on campus which you can use to complete your course work.

IN PERSON CONFERENCING: Even though we are an online class, I invite you to come by my office whenever you feel that a face-to-face conference might help you better understand our course content or a specific assignment but please make an appointment ahead of time to ensure I don’t already have conferencing scheduled with my English 1302 students.

DISABILITIES AND ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES: If you have a condition that inhibits your full and timely participation in our class activities and requirements, it is your responsibility to contact Student Accessibility Services (see Institutional Policies in the next section) to request an official accommodations letter. You cannot be granted additional time or other accommodations without such a document. The document is not retroactive, so if you have failed to complete successfully before you obtain an accommodations letter, you will not be able to go back and do those missed assignments.

DROPS: If you miss several consecutive assignments or fail to participate in our class for an extended period, you will be sent a drop notice advising you that you will be dropped if you don’t contact your professor immediately and get back on board with your course work. If you fail to start our course by Friday, August 31, you will be sent a drop notice.

ROUGH TIMES: If you find yourself going through a rough or tough period (and this happens to all of us), do not just stop participating in our online work. A lot of times, if you contact me to explain what’s going on, we can adjust the deadline to provide a bit more time to give you some breathing room and still allow you to stay in our class community. A particularly rough time involving illness or incapacitating condition will require that you contact Student Accessibility Services. I cannot make ad hoc adjustments for medical conditions. Please note that the institution considers pregnancy a condition that requires special accommodations that must be handled through the SAS office.
**10. UTRGV Policy Statements: link available on Blackboard page RESOURCES**

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Required on all syllabi. Do not modify.

Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive academic accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible to schedule an appointment to initiate services. Accommodations can be arranged through SAS at any time, but are not retroactive. Students who suffer a broken bone, severe injury or undergo surgery during the semester are eligible for temporary services. Link to Student Accessibility Services: ability@utrgv.edu.

**Pregnancy, Pregnancy-related, and Parenting Accommodations**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination, which includes discrimination based on pregnancy, marital status, or parental status. Students seeking accommodations related to pregnancy, pregnancy-related condition, or parenting (reasonably immediate postpartum period) are encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services for additional information and to request accommodations.

Student Accessibility Services:
Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at ability@utrgv.edu. Edinburg Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

**MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD:** Required on all syllabi. Do not modify.

Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account; you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available July 1-July 8.

**ATTENDANCE:** Recommended on all syllabi; may be modified by the instructor as long as it is not inconsistent with UTRGV policy.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV’s attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.

**SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY:** Recommended on all syllabi.

As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, and VIOLENCE:** Required on all syllabi. Do not modify.

In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “Responsible Employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

**COURSE DROPS:** Recommended on all syllabi; may be modified by the instructor as long as it is not inconsistent with UTRGV policy.

According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.

**STUDENT SERVICES:** Recommended on all syllabi.

Students who demonstrate financial need have a variety of options when it comes to paying for college costs, such as scholarships, grants, loans and work-study. Students should visit the Students Services Center (U Central) for additional information. U Central is located in BMAIN 1.100 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 1.145 (Edinburg) or can be reached by email (ucentral@utrgv.edu) or telephone: (888) 882-4026. In addition to financial aid, U Central can assist students with registration and admissions.

Students seeking academic help in their studies can use university resources in addition to an instructor’s office hours. University Resources include the Learning Center, Writing Center, Advising Center and Career Center. The centers provide services such as tutoring, writing help, critical thinking, study skills, degree planning, and student employment. Locations are:

- **Learning center:** BSTUN 2.10 (Brownsville) or ELCCTR 100 (Edinburg)
- **Writing center:** BLIBR 3.206 (Brownsville) or ESTAC 3.119 (Edinburg)
- **Advising center:** BMANN 1.400 (Brownsville) or ESWKH 101 (Edinburg)
- **Career center:** BCRTZ 129 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 2.101 (Edinburg)