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# English 1101, In the News: Researching and Writing about Social Justice, Syllabus

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## ***In the News: Writing and Researching about Current Events***

This syllabus is a guide to the semester. It begins with the frameworks of goals and objectives — that is, what a student can expect to have achieved by the end of the semester. The syllabus also provides a calendar of course content, descriptions of assignments and resources needed to complete assignments. The semester is divided into five units. Within each unit are the lists of assigned articles and videos related to various assignments. Each unit contains a unit calendar of when various assignments are due. The final unit is devoted to preparing for the final examination. Being familiar with the syllabus is especially helpful for staying on schedule in the event of absence.

### **Goals**

- Read and listen critically and analytically, including identifying an argument's major assumptions and assertions and evaluating its supporting evidence.
- Write clearly and coherently in varied, academic formats (such as formal essays, research papers, and reports) using standard English and appropriate technology to critique and improve one's own and others' texts.
- Demonstrate research skills using appropriate technology, including gathering, evaluating, and synthesizing primary and secondary sources.
- Support a thesis with well-reasoned arguments, and communicate persuasively across a variety of contexts, purposes, audiences, and media.
- Formulate original ideas and relate them to the ideas of others by employing the conventions of ethical attribution and citation.

### **Specific Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, participants can expect to be able to:

- critically respond in writing to published articles;
- react to an article, and defend the reaction with supportive examples;
- react to an article and defend it based on research from academic journal articles;
- revise essays in response to feedback from peers and from the instructor;
- edit essays for mechanical errors at the sentence level;
- avoid plagiarizing by summarizing, paraphrasing and quoting;
- employ the MLA format to cite sources.

### **Activities**

To achieve the above objectives, participants will:

- Draft and revise a range of formal and informal writing assignments and writing projects both in-class and outside-of-class in a variety of genres and modes to meet appropriate rhetorical purposes related to academic inquiry, totaling, at a minimum, 2500 words. Two or more of these assignments or projects must include the use of thesis statements and incorporate the ideas and words of other writers as exhibited through the use of textual evidence, summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting.
- Draft and revise a researched writing assignment or project that includes the incorporation of material from library resources and databases and includes the use of methods of citation and attribution appropriate to a specific discipline.
- Read, analyze, and interpreting essays and texts across a variety of genres, disciplines, and media for the purposes of academic inquiry, rhetorical and textual analysis, and understanding, improving, and critiquing writing processes and reading strategies.
- Submit drafts of work for instructor and peer-review so students can be introduced to the various stages of writing and revising as a process, as well as be assessed on their ability to develop and revise formal writing assignments.
- Apply and use the basic structure and conventions of Standard Written English (SWE) and exhibit basic competency in SWE.
- Take a departmental final exam.

## Course Organization

At the beginning of the term, students select topics related to current public affairs, topics that can be classified under the following headings:

- Environmentalism
- Immigration
- Racism
- Social and mass media
- Technology
- Women's Issues

Students compose four short essays (three to five pages each), over the course of the term. The essays are to relate to their selected topics and themes. Based on theme selection, six small working groups will form. It is required that each essay refer to and reference outside sources (including professional journal articles) for evidence to support points made. Moreover, students will compose the following types of essays: problem-solution, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect and literary analysis. Taken together, the essays comprise a minimum of 2,500 words for the semester.

## Texts

Birchett, Colleen, Open Educational Resource, *In the News: Writing and Researching about Current Events* [Posted on Open Lab]

Handouts and Videos Available through Open Lab and distributed in class.

## **Other Requirements**

To succeed in the class, students:

- Complete worksheets and receive feedback during the process of developing essays.
- submit typed essays, using appropriate MLA style;
- submit essays as attachments to emails;
- interact with peers in small groups, making meaningful contributions to the group's work;

The class is designed so that students learn via composing essays, responding to lectures, participating in small group work, viewing and responding to videos. Therefore, all electronic devices (cell phones, IPODs, laptops, etc.) must be turned off completely and put away during class time. No texting is allowed.

Absences and tardiness are considered lack of class participation. The following behaviors are considered to be disrupting the class, and reduce the class participation score that is part of the final grade:

- walking in and out of class while class is in session;
- conducting ongoing side conversations;
- bringing smelly food to class;
- having to be asked to shut down electronic equipment;
- consistently entering class late, making it necessary for the instructor to repeat instructions and other information;
- asking questions, forcing the instructor to repeat information when the student was not listening.

Class participation comprises 20% of the final grade.

## **Communication**

All communications outside of class will be handled through email and Blackboard. In order to get such communications, it is necessary to have a CUNY email account and to be connected with the Open Lab. Not having a CUNY email account and not being connected to OER cannot serve as an excuse for not knowing whether a given class period has been cancelled, or moved. Students are expected to be alert for all announcements that are sent through CUNY email.

## **Attendance**

A WU is the equivalent of an "F". Students who are tardy sign the tardy attendance sheet. Students who enter the class more than five minutes after it begins are

considered tardy. The instance of walking in and out of the class while it is in session is considered a tardiness, as is leaving early. Moreover, even though the total number of absences and tardiness may not reach the level of receiving a "WU", tardiness and excessive absences will be considered a part of the class participation score, to be computed into the terminal grade.

## **Class Calendar**

8/29	Class Begins
9/3-4	No Classes
9/5	Labor Day, No Classes
10/2-4	No Classes
10/6 (Th)	Classes follow a Monday Schedule
10/10	No Classes
10/11-12	No Classes
10/31	Mid-term Grades
11/24-27	No Classes
12/13	Reading Day, No Classes
12/13-20	Final Examinations

## **Writing Assignment Due Dates**

There are four essay assignments, with the options of revising the first two essays for a better grade. Each essay is to be three to five pages in length (Double-Spaced, 12pte Font, one inch margins). The essays are to be sent as email attachments by midnight on the day they are due.

9/10	Essay ONE Due
9/17	Return of Essay ONE
9/26	Essay ONE Revision Due
10/10	Essay TWO Due
10/17	Return of Essay TWO
10/24	Essay TWO Revision Due
11/23	Essay THREE Due
11/30	Return of Essay THREE
12/5	Practice for Final Exam
12/10	Essay FOUR Due
12/20	Final Exam

## **Essays**

#1 The Problem-Solution essay (3-5 pages) involves selecting a problem related to public affairs. The assignment requires providing a historical overview, identifying relevant statistics, and referencing at least one article located in the NYCCT library database collection.

#2 The Comparison/Contrast essay (3-5 pages) involves comparing and contrasting two aspects of the problem selected for Essay #1 above. The essay must incorporate information from outside readings and online sources such as interviews, debates, documentaries, the New York Times coverage, political party platforms and Fact Checking Websites. such as: Evaluating/Fact Checking Websites: FAIR (<http://www.fair.org> ) AND/OR Fact Check (<http://www.factchec.org/>).

#3 The Cause/Effect essay (3-5 pages) involves identifying causes and effects related to a problem related to the theme assigned to the student's small group. The essay must use concrete examples and related published commentary to support points made.

#4 The Literary Analysis Essay involves using the information from the above research along with other sources to analyze a short story. The story will be assigned based on the theme assigned to the student's small group at the beginning of the term.

## Grading Weights

Essays	60 %
Final Exam	20 %
Class Participation	20 %

## Plagiarism

**New York City College of Technology Policy on Academic Integrity:** Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog.

If an essay is plagiarized the author of it cannot be given credit for the essay.

## Unit Schedules

Links are provided within the following table for easy access of articles, short stories and videos mentioned throughout.

### Unit One

Date	Topics	Assignment
8/29	Introductions Syllabus Introduction to OER Term Assignments, Class Participation	Review the course syllabus.
8/31	Thesis Statements, Sample Essay Outlines, Fact Checking Editing and Proofreading Thesis Statements, Sample Essay Outlines, Fact Checking Editing and Proofreading	<a href="#">THESES STATEMENTS AND ITINERARIES</a> <a href="#">REVISION</a> <a href="#">FACT CHECKING</a> <a href="#">PROOFREADING</a> <a href="#">INTRODUCTION TO WRITING AS A PROCESS</a> <a href="#">BRAINSTORMING</a> <a href="#">THE BASIC FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY</a> <a href="#">FIVE PARAGRAPH ESSAYS</a>

### Unit Two

Date	Topics	Assignments
9/7	Problem-Solution Essays; Identifying and Exploring a Problem; Parsing Problems	<a href="#">Gevirtz, Leslie, "Puerto Ricans Fight for Right to Vote"</a> Problem-Solution Worksheet
9/12	Sources for Narrowing Topics Small Group Collaboration	<a href="#">The Sentencing Project, "Felony Disenfranchisement: A Primer"</a> <b>Problem-Solution Worksheet</b>
9/14	Audience	<a href="#">Audience</a> <a href="#">Amar, Akhil Reed, "The Troubling Reason the Electoral College Exists"</a>
9/19	Small Group Collaborations on Essay Topics	Problem-Solution Planning Worksheet for Essay ONE;
9/21	Citing Sources: MLA	<a href="#">Plagiarism</a> <a href="#">Sample Works Cited Page</a> <a href="#">In-text Citations</a>
9/26	Summary of Unit	Summary of Unit Essay ONE Due

### Unit Three

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
11/2	Cause/Effect Essay	<a href="#">Cause and Effect Essays</a>
11/7	Parsing Causal Relationships	<a href="#">Staples, Brent, "Just Walk on By: A Black Man Ponders His Ability to Alter Public Space"</a> Cause/Effect Worksheet
11/9	Drawing Inferences	<a href="#">Miller, Yvonne, "Making Inferences"</a> <a href="#">CNN, "China Stock Market Crash"</a>
11/14	Small Group Collaborations	<a href="#">Miller, Yvonne, "Making Inferences"</a> <a href="#">CNN, "China Stock Market Crash"</a> <a href="#">China Market Effects on U.S. Stocks</a> Cause/Effect Worksheet for Stock Market Causes and Effects
11/16	Inductive Reasoning (Data)	Completed Cause/Effect Essay Planning Worksheets
11/21	Outlining Cause/Effect Essays Small Group Collaborations	Completed Cause/Effect Planning Worksheets
11/23	Unit Summary	Essay Three Due

### Unit Five

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
11/28	Theme and Setting	Review "Theme" and "Purpose" in <a href="#">Literary Terms</a> ;  <a href="#">Sanger, Erin, "The Bombshell"</a>  Read short stories assigned to small groups, based on themes selected at the beginning of the term.[See the list of articles at the beginning of Unit Four]
11/30	Characterization and Conflict	Review "Characterization" and "Conflict" on <a href="#">Literary Terms</a> <a href="#">Kampenhout, Willen, "The Surface"</a> ;



		Complete the Literary Analysis Worksheets.
12/5	Plot and Purpose	Review "Plot" and "Purpose" in <a href="#">Literary Terms</a> ; <a href="#">DUST</a> , "Seam" Complete Literary Analysis Worksheets.
12/7	Literary Analysis Small Group Collaboratons	Completed Literary Analysis Worksheets
12/12	Unit Summary	Essay #4 Due

### Unit Five Schedule – Final Exam

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
12/14	Practice for Exam	<b>TBA</b>
12/19	Final Examination	