English 1312: Research and Critical Writing

I. Course and Instructor Information:

Instructor: Adam Webb
Office: Vowell Hall 103
Office Hours: Tuesday – 2-4 pm, by appointment or by email
Phone #: 747-6242
E-mail: amwebb@miners.utep.com or adamwebb11@gmail.com
Section: 21660 (or 103)

Meeting Times: 7:30-8:50 am Friday
Classroom: Undergraduate Learning Center (UGLC) 234

II. Course Description:

The goals of English 1312 are largely based on the Writing Program Administrator’s Outcomes. These can be found at http://wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html.

The primary goal of English 1312 is to develop students’ critical thinking skills in order to facilitate effective communication in all educational, professional, and social contexts. This effective communication is based on an awareness of and appreciation for discourse communities as well as knowledge specific to subject matters, genres, rhetorical strategies, and writing processes.

The class presents an approach to communication that helps students determine the most effective strategies, arrangements, and media to use in different rhetorical contexts (Compose). It teaches students a systematic approach for analyzing rhetorical situations and then producing a variety of documents and presentations while gaining more confidence and fluency in visual, oral, and written communication (Design). In addition, because communication is central to being an active and engaged member of society, the course also provides a space for informed advocacy ( Advocate).

English 1312 is taught as a hybrid class--with one face-to-face meeting for lecture and discussion, and the rest of the course utilizing Blackboard software and/or other online tools. Blackboard provides students with permanent access to the syllabus, supplemental reading materials, e-mail, and discussion groups. It is vital that students check and participate online consistently as it is an integral part of the course. On occasion, you will be asked to meet on your hybrid day to participate in library research, technology workshops, presentations, or other activities your instructor might need you to be physically present for. Please keep this time available for this class. Otherwise, you will miss out on important information.
At the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Understand a theory of discourse communities;
- Engage as a community of writers who dialogue across texts, argue, and build on each other’s work;
- Draw on existing knowledge bases to create “new” or “transformed” knowledge;
- Develop a knowledge of genres as they are defined within discourse communities;
- Address the specific, immediate rhetorical situations of individual communicative acts; and,
- Develop procedural knowledge of the writing task in its various phases.

You will also have the opportunity to strengthen your skills in the following areas:

- Think, read, and write critically;
- Become familiar with the contents of the UTEP Library, in a variety of forms and areas of professional study (e.g. the arts, humanities, sciences, nursing, social sciences, business, engineering, and education);
- Analyze and synthesize material from outside sources;
- Formulate research questions and locate source materials in the library to substantiate your content;
- Develop a sensitivity to the significance of data and how it can be rhetorically applied to various genres; and,
- As part of a research process, apply research to various genres; receive instruction in the logic and form of documentation within a discipline (APA); learn writing strategies for integrating source material into your own prose (quoted, paraphrased, and summarized material); write analytical and argumentative papers appropriate to genres and larger discourse communities.

IV. Texts and Materials:


A flash drive to save all your course documents.

V. Course Assignments (this syllabus provides an overview of assignments for the class--specific assignment sheets will be discussed in class and posted online):
Genre Analysis: Students will find and compare two texts on the same subject but in different genres to write a genre analysis essay. 100 pts.

Literature Review / Primary Research Report: Students will conduct primary and secondary research on a social, political, or ethical issue to become well-informed experts on the issue. Students will then write a literature review of these sources to summarize and synthesize the arguments and ideas of the research sources. 200 pts.

Documentary Film Project: Using either Macintosh software (i-Movie, Garage Band and Motion) or Windows software (MovieMaker or PhotoStory), students will plan, write, film and edit a documentary film advocating a position on a current issue. Students will be provided with opportunities to become more familiar with this software throughout the semester. 200 pts.

Class Presentation: Students will present their documentaries to the class. 50 pts.

Online Opinion Piece: Students will write an online opinion piece on some aspect of the topic of their literature review/primary research report in order to advocate for a policy change. 100 pts.

Advocacy Website (ongoing all semester): Students will create, design, and maintain a website that will advocate for the topic of their literature review/primary research report. Students will add additional links and provide the needed content to this website in any way they want—with the stipulation that it is focused on advocacy and draws from their semester’s work and research. 150 pts.

Class Participation: Because this is a hybrid class, participation in-class and online is mandatory. The activities included in this category ensure that you learn the material and help you to compose effective projects. This score will include your attendance in class as well as homework, drafts, discussion postings, peer reviews, and any other work your instructor assigns. 200 pts.

Grade Distribution (Students can earn a total of 1000 points for the course):

1000-900 = A
899-800 = B
799 -700 = C
699- 600 = D
599 and below = F

VI: Course/Instructor Policies:

Projects Format: All projects must be word-processed using Microsoft Word—12 pt. font, one-inch margins, and double-spaced. Use a font style that is easily readable like Times New Roman, Arial, or Georgia.
Microsoft Word is available to students at all campus computers and can be purchased at discount through the UTEP Bookstore using a current UTEP ID card. Students may also go to openoffice.org and download a free and compatible version of Word/Office.

Be sure to name each submitted assignment with your first initial, last name, and an abbreviation of the assignment. Do not include spaces (although you can use _ if you’d like): For example:

klomaligenredraft.doc or k_lomali_genre_draft.doc
klomaligenrefinal.doc or k_lomali_genre_final.doc

Please use the correct extension (.doc), and don’t erase the extension; if it is missing, your project cannot be opened.

In order for the grading committee to assist students, rough drafts must be completed projects. Partial projects may not be accepted or will receive minimal feedback. They must also be submitted before or on the due date. Those submitted after, even if just two minutes, will not receive comments for revision.

Assignment Evaluation: To ensure fairness and objectivity, all assignments, except for the presentation, eportfolio, and participation grade will be assessed by evaluators who are not the student’s instructor. This committee consists of English Department instructors who will comment on and grade assignments according to the rubric included with each assignment.

To facilitate this, your projects will be submitted and returned to you through the English 1312 MinerWriter. The website’s address is http://english1312.utep.edu. More information about using MinerWriter is available in the Guide.

University Writing Center: UTEP’s University Writing Center (UWC) offers free writing tutoring assistance for all UTEP students. The tutors are undergraduate and graduate students who can help with all parts of a writing assignment, including prewriting, organizing, revising, and editing. They can also help to understand any writing assignment and help work on comprehending difficult textbook material.

The UWC is an important part of English 1312. During the first two weeks of the semester, students are required to attend an orientation at the UWC, which is located on the 2nd floor of the library (behind the check-out desk). Instructors will distribute the times that these orientations are offered. During the orientation, students will be given a self-evaluation sheet to fill out and give to their instructors.

Students who receive a C-, D, or F on an assignment (except for the documentary) will be required to go to the UWC at least twice before the next assignment is due. To show their instructors that they met this requirement, students need to give their
instructors the forms that tutors fill out after each tutoring session. If a student chooses not to comply with UWC requirement, he/she will not be able to submit their subsequent paper. To facilitate revision, UWC tutors will not hold a tutoring session fewer than 12 hours before the assignment is due.

**Participation/Attendance:** Because this is a hybrid course, attendance is determined by class participation both in class and online. Students must be prepared and attend consistently to understand and incorporate the skills and processes used. Participation is worth 20 percent of final grade.

Each semester has a drop date beyond which an instructor can no longer drop a student with a “W.” Students who fail to attend or fulfill assignments after the drop date must necessarily receive an “F.” However, in the event of exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of the instructor of the course and the academic dean, a grade of “W” may be obtained. The student is responsible for supplying written documentation to support the request for a “W.” Acceptable reasons for a "W" include: personal or family medical emergencies, death of family member, military leave, or an exceptional work schedule that prevents you from completing the course.

Please also be aware of the six-course drop limit. According to the Texas Education Code, “all first-year students enrolled for the first time at any Texas public college or university are limited to six drops during their academic career. This includes student and faculty initiated drops and courses dropped at other Texas public institutions. This policy does not apply to courses dropped prior to census day or to complete withdrawals.” So, be sure to start your college experience on the right track by attending class regularly.

**Hybrid Format:** The hybrid format is an advantage to students because they will not always have to be on campus to attend class, and most hybrid-experienced students report that it gives more time to focus on learning and writing. It is strongly recommended that students have access to the Internet from home and are comfortable using a computer. If a student does not have access, he/she can get free access through the university. ([http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=40](http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=40)).

If home access is not possible, arrangements can be made to use a computer regularly on campus in order to complete the work. Student computer labs such as ATLAS ([http://atlas.utep.edu](http://atlas.utep.edu)) are often available until midnight, but schedules do vary. A great deal of work will be done online, and not having access to a computer will not be an excuse for incomplete or late assignments.

Technology problems are also not an excuse for work that is late or missing. Students need to get into the habit of completing assignments for this course well before the due date to allow time for dealing with technology problems. Expect that at some time, the network will be down, computers will go on the fritz, or some other small catastrophe will occur. If students are prepared ahead of time, they can go to plan B.
Instructions for Accessing Your Course Online: Students must have a UTEP email ID and password before they can access Blackboard. UTEP automatically generates an e-mail ID for students when they are entered into the system. Any questions or problems can be directed to the Helpdesk at 747-5257.

Course content will be delivered via Blackboard. Students can access Blackboard by the steps outlined below:

- Go to [http://my.utep.edu](http://my.utep.edu)
- Login is e-mail ID. Password is e-mail password.
- Click on the link to Blackboard
- Once logged into Blackboard, all the courses a student is registered for are listed under the appropriate semester.
- Click on the course title to access the course.

Classroom Etiquette:

- No checking email, typing assignments, or surfing the web during class. Please turn monitors off when computers are not being used for class-related activities.
- Absolutely no using the printer after class has started.
- Absolutely no food or drinks in this classroom.
- Turn off cell phone ringers, and please do not text message or listen to iPods/MP3 players during class.

Online “Netiquette”:

- Always consider audience. Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading any postings.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- Do not use inappropriate language, all capital letters, or language short cuts. Online entries should be written in Standard English with edited spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- When reacting to someone else’s message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a f2f situation.
- Be sure to read everyone’s responses before posting. Avoid repetition of what someone else has already said. Add something new to the discussion!
- No credit will be received for yes/no answers. Posts should justify positions and provide specific examples. Students must demonstrate that they have read the assignment and their classmates’ comments carefully and thoughtfully.
- Be sure to post in a timely fashion to receive credit for attendance and for the discussion. Late postings will not receive credit. Pay close attention to the posted deadlines.
- Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and
paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space. If students wish to do so, they have the ethical obligation to first request the permission of the writer(s).

Drop Policy:

- To preserve a student’s GPA, he/she may be dropped from the course after missing four classes, either online or face to face.
- To be considered present in face-to-face classes, one must be prepared as well as physically in class.
- To be considered present online, one must post within the deadlines and in the appropriate space/thread.
- Missing a scheduled conference with the instructor constitutes an absence.

Late Work:

- Commenting and grading is scheduled by due date. Students who fail to submit assignments on time might not receive feedback on performance. Therefore, it is important to submit work before deadlines for full credit and feedback.
- Assignments submitted one class day after the due date will be penalized up to one letter grade.
- Assignments submitted more than one day late may not be acceptable to the instructor for credit.
- Be sure to submit all major assignments in order to pass this class. While late work may adversely affect a grade, a zero can adversely affect enrollment.
- If a major assignment is over two class days late, the student faces failure for this section.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic Dishonesty is NEVER tolerated by UTEP or the First-Year Composition Program. All cases are reported to the Dean of Students for Academic Sanctions. These sanctions may include expulsion. All work submitted must be original; students may not submit graded work from another course.

Forms of academic dishonesty include: Collusion—lending your work to another person to submit as his or her own; Fabrication—deliberately creating false information on a works cited page, and Plagiarism—the presentation of another person’s work as your own, whether you mean to or not (i.e. copying parts of or whole papers off the Internet). See the Dean of Students website at http://www.utep.edu/dos/acadintg.htm for more information. Also see the UTEP Guide to First-Year Composition for more information on how to avoid plagiarism.

Copyright and Fair Use: The University requires all members of its community to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for student violations of fair use laws.
Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies.

**Group Assignments:** Group assignments can sometimes create tricky situations. Some students don’t always “pull their weight” and this upsets group members that are doing their work and being good contributors to the group. Despite this, group assignments are valuable because they help students work together for a common goal. Group work is a “professional life” reality and learning how to work in a group will be central to one of the projects in this class. **Students who are not doing their group work can be voted off of their groups and will have to complete the entire work of a group on their own.**

**Documentation Styles:** Instructors will introduce you to in-text, parenthetical documentation early in the semester and require this documentation convention throughout the course. You will learn and utilize the American Psychological Association (APA) form of documentation throughout the course.

Because much of the course is founded on research and the use of primary and secondary sources, checks on inadequate documentation, or using exact language from a source without quotation marks and scholarly citation are necessary as part of your learning process. Instructors fully explain the nature of inadequate documentation early in the semester and thereafter continually monitor assignments that require the use of primary and secondary sources.

It is important to realize that the most important words in a paper are yours, not those of the supportive research. You should strive always to draw inferences from research material and weave into your papers your reaction and evaluation of source material. One of the worst things you can submit to your peer group or your instructor is a “patchwork”—that is, a project that simply links a series of quotations or paraphrased sentences that is followed by citation or footnote numbers.

**ADA:** The *Americans with Disabilities Act* requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you suspect that you have a disability and need an accommodation, please contact the Disabled Student Services Office (DSSO) at 747-5148 or dss@utep.edu. The DSSO is located in Room 106, Union East Bldg. Students are responsible for presenting the instructor any DSS accommodation letters and instructions.

**Nature and Time Spent on Course:** Although this is a required course for all students at UTEP, it is not an easy course. The course intends to help you develop a wide variety of strategies for communicating in a variety of media. To succeed in this course requires dedication and focus.

Be sure to allocate sufficient time for the class projects and work. The general rule for all classes is that students spend two hours working outside of class for each class
credit. Because this is a 3-hour class, you would spend 6 hours doing homework each week. However, remember that you are only meeting with your instructor and classmates for 1.5 hours a week. Therefore, add the additional 1.5 hours to the 6 for a total of 7.5 hours. Some weeks you may work more; some weeks you may work less. However, keep this average in mind.
Course Calendar (may be subject to change):

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<tr>
<th>Calendar</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Compose, Design, Advocate</th>
<th>Guide</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week One</td>
<td>Introduction to class, review of syllabus.</td>
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<td>Week Two</td>
<td>Begin discussion on Advocacy website and Genre Analysis.</td>
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<td>Week Three</td>
<td>Genre Analysis draft due.</td>
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<td>Week Four</td>
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<td>Week Five</td>
<td>Genre Analysis Final Draft due.</td>
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<td>Begin Literature Review / Primary Research Report</td>
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<td>Week Six</td>
<td>Literature Review / Primary Research Report continued.</td>
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<td>Week Seven</td>
<td>Literature Review / Primary Research Report draft due.</td>
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<td>Week Eight</td>
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<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>Week Nine</td>
<td>Literature Review / Primary Research Report Final Due.</td>
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<td>Begin Documentary.</td>
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<td>Week Ten</td>
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<td>Week Eleven</td>
<td>Documentary continued.</td>
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<td>Week Twelve</td>
<td>Begin Online Opinion Piece</td>
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<td>Begin discussion of Presentation</td>
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<td>Week Thirteen</td>
<td>Documentary Due.</td>
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<td>Week Fourteen</td>
<td>Begin presentations</td>
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<td>Week Fifteen</td>
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<td>Online Opinion Piece</td>
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<td>final draft due.</td>
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<td>Week Sixteen</td>
<td>Advocacy website</td>
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<td>Finals Week</td>
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