# **Syllabus Checklist for WRIT 105 and WRIT 106 (FALL 2022)**

**Tone**. The syllabus is your first interaction with students, and it’s an opportunity to build excitement about the class. Given that WRIT 105 and WRIT 106 are required courses, securing student buy-in is especially critical. Use this opportunity to be welcoming and enthusiastic about working with students, as well as clear about your expectations.

**Schedule of writing and reading**. Be specific about major deadlines for drafts, final essays, projects, and readings. To encourage revision, space out your draft deadlines so that you have time to respond to student work, and students have time to revise based on your feedback.

**Minimum word requirement**. Students should write 4,500-5,500 words for which they are given your feedback. Feedback can take the form of written words, Screencastify/Loom (or other) videos, and face-to-face conferences. This writing should be revised by students *and/or* serve as scaffolded prose that will build toward future assignments in the class. This word count can be applied to essays/projects as well as low stakes, generative, or scaffolded homework, discussion boards, or writing assignments. Students will receive regular instructor feedback on draft/s and peer review feedback.

*Returning faculty*: If you are using a traditional grading system, the final draft will be issued a grade with justification.

*New faculty* (and any returning faculty who choose to): If you are using the labor-based/contract grading system, provide feedback, but no grade is required.

**4-credit sections**. The four-credit WRIT 105 course offers an additional 60 minutes of class time each week, beyond what is offered in the three-credit course. These 60 minutes have been split across two classes, so that each class meeting will last about 1 hour and 45 minutes.  Through diverse instructional approaches, you will collaborate on all aspects of the writing process including prompt dissection, idea generation, and draft development.

**Canvas**. All faculty should keep a record of all their major assignments (whether using numbers, letters, or complete/incomplete grades) in Canvas in the event of emergency. Additionally, the [Office of Information Technology](https://www.montclair.edu/information-technology/) offers regular classes, free to faculty, on how to effectively integrate Canvas into your classes.

**Accessibility.** All online syllabi must achieve university accessibility standards to ensure that all students are able to interact effectively with the course material. Consult the university’s [documentation guidelines and tutorials](https://www.montclair.edu/digital-accessibility-initiative/accessibility-documentation_tutorials/) for help in making your materials accessible for all.

**Contact information**. Please include your email, and office location/place on campus where you prefer to meet with students.

**Research practices.** Research is required in both WRIT 105 and WRIT 106. Keep in mind that some of your students will not have engaged in significant research before, if at all. Please provide direct instruction in citation practices, academic honesty, and effective research practices.

**Multimodal Option.** Multimodal composition is a *requirement* for WRIT 105 and is *encouraged* in WRIT 106. Options include lower stakes activities that combine words, images, and/or audio; a remix assignment that asks students to reimagine one of their earlier essays as a multimodal project; or a multimodal draft that builds toward a traditional essay. Contact Caroline Dadas with any questions about this requirement.

**Required texts**. Indicate which texts are required for your section(s). Consult the FYW website for options. **Textbook-free classes are acceptable, but please be mindful of copyright and avoid infringement; the library has a good** [**guide for this purpose**](https://montclair.libguides.com/copyright)**.** (New faculty must use the texts outlined in orientation). Please submit your textbook order through Canvas.

**Grading**.

*Returning faculty* (if using a traditional grading structure): Indicate the grading scale that you will use for the course (many instructors choose to use the one determined by Canvas). Doing so can help you at the end of the semester in the event of a grade dispute. Also provide a breakdown of how the students’ final grades will be reached. While writing projects should comprise at least 85% of students’ final grades, you have freedom in how you arrive at that 85%. Process work and scaffolded writing can be included in the 85% so that no one final draft is weighted too heavily.

*New faculty* (and any returning faculty who choose to): We will be following a contract grading labor model. This approach is being used in Writing Studies courses throughout the country as a model for antiracist writing assessment. For more information, read some of Asao Inoue’s open source work on grading contracts. You can adjust your contract as necessary to fit your pedagogical needs.

**Participation/citizenship**. While it is *not* required that instructors include participation or citizenship as a component of students’ final grades, if you do, please outline the specifics of what constitutes this grade. Students should be made aware that the grade is based on completion of online discussions, verbal participation in class, submitting essay drafts, etc., (if using a traditional grading model). Transparency in how a final grade is calculated helps to build and maintain students’ trust. Faculty using a contract grading model likely have participation/citizenship included as part of the contract.

**Academic integrity**: A student will not fail the course due to academic dishonesty. In cases of plagiarized material, please meet face-to-face with the student (in person, Canvas, Zoom, or Google Meet) and ask them to redo the assignment. If students commit academic dishonesty more than once, please contact Caroline Dadas to discuss the particulars of the situation.

**Class cancelations**. Make sure to let students know how you will reach them in the event that you need to cancel class unexpectedly. Please remember to notify Jazmine Thompson and Suzanne Deshchidn in the event that you must cancel your class.

**Finals period**. MSU no longer has a finals period. Each term will now consist of 15 weeks (30 classes). Plan the end of your semester accordingly so that you allow yourself enough time for calculating final grades.

**Classroom behavior**. You may opt to include specific expectations about common occurrences such as texting, the use of laptops, and lateness.

**Standardized policies**. Please copy/paste the policies below into your syllabus and add any additional policies that you choose.

**[Please paste this FYW standardized section into your own syllabus. This section has already been included in the sample syllabi. If you are returning faculty and not using contract grading, please adjust the grading policies to your specific system.]**

**Required Text**

[Faculty: please list your required texts. Consult our [public-facing website](https://www.montclair.edu/writing-studies/programs-of-study/first-year-writing-program/for-faculty/designing-your-course/text-selection-guidelines/) for textbook options.

**Required Text**

[Faculty: list your required texts. Consult our public-facing website for options. This syllabus utilizes the Norton Field Guide (NFG) and the Redhawk Writing Collection (RWC),the latter of which is open source via the library.]

**Important Dates**

September 2: Classes begin

September 5: Labor Day (no classes)

September 15: President’s Investiture (no classes)

November 24-27: Thanksgiving holiday (no classes)

December 20: Meets Thursday class schedule

December 21: Last Day of Classes. End of term. Meets Thursday class schedule.

**Course Outcomes:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Objective** | **Description** |
| **1. Knowledge of the argumentative genre** | Students will be able to define and identify the character of argumentative writing, and distinguish it from other genres in purpose and execution. |
| **2. Argumentative writing** | Students will be able to present strong central claims and arguments that are well supported with evidence, logic, and analysis, in clear prose. |
| **3. Writing Process** | Students will understand and be able to execute the key elements of a writing process: a series of rigorous, thoughtful revisions which re-imagine and rework any—and likely all—of the key criteria of good writing. |
| **4. Close reading** | Students will be able to demonstrate an ability to closely read text (i.e., be attentive to finer details of content, argument, rhetorical moves, audience, social/cultural/historical context, and reader/author assumptions), through analytical writing that draws on these skills of close reading to advance their own arguments. |
| **5. Citation & Referencing** | Students will be able to appropriately document and integrate external research into their writing, and be familiar with at least one style of formal citation (e.g. MLA). |

**Assignment Breakdown:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assignment**  | **Primary Inquiry**  |
| Literacy narrative final draft | Self Inquiry  |
| Analysis of a text final draft | Textual Inquiry  |
| Entering public argument final draft | Issue Inquiry  |
| Final reflection | Reflective + Remediation Inquiry  |
| Discussion board posts | [Varies with prompt] |
| Early and middle drafts (6) | [Varies with prompt] |
| Writer’s letters (3) | Reflective Inquiry  |

All major assignment prompts are located at the end of this syllabus.

**Contract Grading:**

**[Faculty: We are implementing labor-based contract grading as an anti-racist approach to writing assessment. The approach outlined below is taken from Asao Inoue’s book, *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies*:** [**https://wac.colostate.edu/docs/books/inoue/ecologies.pdf**](https://wac.colostate.edu/docs/books/inoue/ecologies.pdf) **. Feel free to adapt the labor contract or introductory language to meet your instructional needs. You do not need to use this particular contract.]**

This class will follow a labor-based model, meaning that you will be rewarded for the time and effort that you devote to the class. Your final grade will be determined by the expectations outlined below (i.e., a grading contract that we will follow together). I am using this approach because I believe in a growth model of writing instruction: you will all be starting from different places/levels, and what matters most in this class is how much you grow as a writer during the course of the semester. I find this approach to be a more compassionate approach to assessment; I hope that it encourages you to take risks in this class without fear that your grades will be negatively impacted.

 Do not worry: you will receive lots of feedback on your writing and other work during the semester from your peers and me. Use these assessments (written and verbal) to rethink ideas and improve your writing and practices, to take risks, and to fail and learn from that failure. Always know that I will read your writing and shape our classroom assessment activities and discussions around your work, but you will not receive grades from me.

**The default grade for this course is a B.** If you do all the labor asked of you, then you’ll get a B course grade. If you do not participate fully, forget to do assignments, or do not follow the labor instructions precisely, you will get a lower course grade.

The following chart will guide you as to how your grades will be determined. If you do not meet all the criteria for a particular grade, a +/- grade will come into play. We will revisit the contract part-way through the course to determine if we want to amend it in any way.

**LABOR CONTRACT**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade you want: | # of non-participation days: | # of missed discussion boards: | # of missed projects (4 total) | # of mastery assignments |
| A | 3 or fewer | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| B | 3 or fewer | 2 | 0 | optional |
| C | 4 | 3 | 1 | optional |
| D | 5 | 3 | 2 | optional |
| F | 6+ | 4+ | 3+ | 0 |

\*Participation is not defined only as speaking, but also contributing in writing during various activities during our sessions

All students in this course begin with a B, and in order to maintain that grade, you must follow the terms of the contract above. Based on criteria such as missing assignments (see above), you can slip to a C or below. In order to earn an A grade, you must complete a “mastery” activity. These activities are listed below; additionally, you may propose one to me if you want to create your own.

* **A lesson/activity/handout**: These handouts are on a topic and material that you research for the class’s benefit and will need at least 2 weeks lead time, working with me on the materials.
* **Revise one of your individual projects an additional time.** Include a memo addressed to me detailing the changes that you made.
* **Record a how-to video on some element of our class** (technology, writing techniques, etc.)
* **Respond to at least 10 other students during two separate Canvas discussion threads (20 responses total).** You must respond to the current discussion thread, not one from a previous module/unit.
* **Some other labor that benefits the class** and our mutual learning. Do you want to write about and report to us on a cultural event related to the class? Or maybe you would like to read an article for us and summarize some of its findings or ideas that you think will help us do our work in class? If you have an idea, come to me early.

Note that the mastery assignments are **optional**—you should only complete them if you want an A in the class. You may not substitute a mastery assignment for another assignment in the syllabus. They must be completed no later than two weeks before the end of the semester.

I realize that this method is a different way of thinking about grades, so reach out to me any time if I can provide clarification.

**Scale for final grades**

A 100-94

A- 93-90

B+ 89-87

B 86-84

B- 83-80

C+ 79-77

C 76-74

C- 73-70

D+ 69-67

D 66-64

D- 63-61

F 60-0

**Drafts**

Revision through multiple drafts is the foundation of this class. Your drafts will be the focus of this class, so it is critical that you complete them according to the schedule on the syllabus. We will use your drafts to practice various techniques for effective writing during class time. You will complete three drafts (early, middle, final) for each major essay assignment and will submit them to me via Canvas. The syllabus will indicate when you should bring a copy of your draft to class. If you are having trouble making progress on an essay, let me know right away. We will help you make forward progress.

**Do We Have Your Name Correct?**

If your name is not listed accurately on Canvas, please [update your name in HawkSync](https://orgsync.com/160559/forms/349170). Please also inform me of any changes.

**A Note on Personal Pronouns**

Please let me know your pronouns at the start of the semester. We will have on-going conversations about which pronouns we should use for each other and for the writers that we read in class. If we are using the wrong pronouns to refer to you, please let me know via email or in person. Stop by the LGBTQ Center located in the Office for Equity and Diversity, Student Center, Room 113A, for strategies for discussing pronoun usage.

**Attendance**

[Faculty: in creating your policy, remember that a student cannot lose more than 15 percentage points due to attendance \*and\* a student’s grade cannot drop below a C- due to attendance. Students cannot fail based on attendance.]

**Late work**

[Faculty: Embrace flexibility around deadlines. You might give students a certain number of “gimmes” during the semester, which allows them to hand in a late assignment without penalty up to any number of days that you choose. Handing in all major projects guarantees a passing grade. A student will not automatically fail for not handing in the final draft of an essay.]

**Class Cancelation**

If a class must be canceled due to an emergency, I will contact you via email. Make sure that you check and empty your MSU mailbox frequently to avoid missing important emails. (Once it is full, it will not accept further email).

**Academic Integrity**

Students and faculty at Montclair State University depend on academic integrity to build the University-wide community that they share. The First-Year Writing program applies the [University Academic Dishonesty Policy](https://www.montclair.edu/faculty-handbook/academic-policies/academic-requirements/academic-dishonesty-policy/), which includes plagiarism, and the [Campus Climate for Civility and Human Dignity policy](https://www.montclair.edu/policies/student/human-relations-statement/) as part of its approach to teaching and community-building. We will review these policies and their consequences throughout the semester. It is always a good idea to talk to me or take advantage of other provided resources if you are having trouble with a classroom discussion, a topic in class, or an assignment. Always reach out to me first if you have any questions about how to use or cite sources properly.

**Accommodations**

If you require accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the [Disability Resource Center (DRC)](https://www.montclair.edu/disability-resource-center/) in Webster Hall, Room 100 to receive a letter requesting accommodations. This office will work with you to assure that you are given the services necessary to equalize access.

**Mid-Semester Review**

The Mid-semester review is a way for instructors in the First Year Writing Program to measure your progress and to help guide you toward the best WRIT106 course for you in the Spring. This assignment also allows you to reflect upon the development of your writing process at the midpoint of the semester. All WRIT105 students will complete this program-wide assignment. Further details will be provided once we get closer to enrollment season.

**Completion of Course Evaluation**

A link for an online evaluation of this course will be sent to you from the Office of the Provost late in the semester. As a program, we consider your evaluation of the course to be part of your participation as a student in your own learning. Once you complete the survey, you will receive a confirmation of completion through email, which you should email to me. Course evaluations are a valuable part of the First Year Writing Program as they help to maintain standards of excellence. These surveys are anonymous, and I will not know the results until I have submitted grades for the semester.

**Resources**

● Your classmates. Rely on one another for the questions you have regarding the work we’re doing in class. You all, both individually and as a collective, embody a vast bank of knowledge and experiences.

● Me*.* I will do all I can to assist you in succeeding in this course. Feel free to make an appointment with me, or just talk before or after class. Email is a reliable way to contact me and I will try my best to respond in a timely manner.

● The [First Year Writing program](https://www.montclair.edu/writing-studies/programs-of-study/first-year-writing-program/) website offers information about aspects of the program such as the Exemplary Essay Awards, faculty contact information, and other news.

●  [The Center for Writing Excellence](https://www.montclair.edu/center-for-writing-excellence/) is available for online or in-person consultations at any part of the writing process.

● The [Registrar](http://www.montclair.edu/registrar/) offers information about adding, dropping, or withdrawing from a class.

●  [OIT](http://www.montclair.edu/oit/)  (Office of Information Technology) provides help with Canvas and computer issues.

●  [Peer-led discussion groups](https://www.montclair.edu/social-justice-diversity/get-involved/discussiongroups/) provide an environment for students who share similar identity markers and interests to build community.

●  [CAPS](http://www.montclair.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services/) (Counseling and Psychological Services) offers short-term individual and group counseling, including the [Let’s Talk](https://www.montclair.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services/services/lets-talk/) program that includes multiple weekly drop-in sessions around campus.

●  [Dean of Students Office](http://www.montclair.edu/dean-of-students/) offers services and information that enables you to reach your academic and personal goals.

●  [Community resources](https://www.montclair.edu/dean-of-students/support-services/) offer support to students who are facing a variety of personal challenges.

●  [OWL (Online Writing Lab) at Purdue](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/) offers information on MLA/APA style, grammatical questions, and other writing issues.

●  [Center for Student Development](https://www.montclair.edu/student-development-campus-life/) offers support for Veteran students.

● University Hall (5th Floor) offers [a laptop lending service](https://www.montclair.edu/information-technology/borrow-a-laptop/).

●  [Acade](https://www.montclair.edu/academic-success-center/)[mic Success Center](http://www.montclair.edu/student-development-campus-life/academic-success-center/) offers tutoring and workshops in several subject areas.

●  [LGBTQ Center](http://www.montclair.edu/student-development-campus-life/lgbtq-center/%29) sponsors workshops, events, and group meetings throughout the semester.

●  [Tara Reinecker](https://montclairathletics.com/sports/2015/2/12/GEN_02121501.aspx?id=253) can answer advising questions for those students enrolled in athletics.

**Assessment Criteria for Written Work**

*Central Claim*

The central claim is a debatable, complex stance or position that establishes your argument for an intended audience. Your high school teacher might have called this a “thesis statement.” You should further explore, support, and advance the central claim or “set of ideas” throughout the composition (the word “composition” represents both an essay or multimodal project). The central claim is the foundation upon which you build the essay or multimodal project and which you use to drive the discussion forward. Successful compositions consistently demonstrate attention to and focus on the central claim.

*Development*

An effective argumentative essay or multimodal project integrates evidence and analysis into an extended discussion that engages in sustained and expanded conversation. Effective development uses examples and evidence from other writers, primary and outside sources, scholarly and popular research, anecdotes, and lived experience. Effective development means going beyond listing examples by exploring the implications of the central claim and taking your audience through the building of your ideas.

*Analysis*

Analysis is the innovative heart of a composition where you synthesize the connections and relationships between texts, ideas, evidence, and the central claim. Analysis explores and answers the questions “So what?” or “How?” or “Why?” These questions push you as the writer to offer reasons for the connections between ideas and available supporting evidence. The most successful analysis affirms and furthers the central claim by demonstrating its complexity and significance.

*Organization*

Two main criteria define organization: (1) a core argument that is presented consistently throughout the essay and (2) sub-claims, supported by logically connected and structured paragraphs, that move through the argument as it is developed and substantiated. The organizational logic of a composition relies on a series of sub-claims designed to support and advance the central claim. The composition moves from one sub-claim into another in a cohesive way. You may have in the past used the word “flow” to describe this movement and cohesiveness. With good “flow” the progression of ideas makes sense to readers as they follow your argument. In a composition with effective organization, each sub-claim builds on what comes before it and transitions smoothly to the next in a logical progression.

*Clarity of Prose*

A successful essay demonstrates clarity of prose, which requires proficiency with English grammar, usage, and mechanics, as well as MLA formatting and citations. Such proficiency may also involve varied sentence structure, accurate word choices, and careful proofreading that serve the rhetorical purpose you are exploring.

*Revision*

Adrienne Rich defines revision as a process of “re-seeing”: you make some new discovery or build further on an existing idea in ways that ultimately create a more sophisticated, expanded, and complicated composition. You successfully accomplish this level of revision by making decisions about the feedback and responses you receive from peers and instructors; ultimately you must incorporate, interpret, and translate this feedback in productive ways that reshape the original composition.

**Syllabus Caveat**

I am happy to answer any questions that you have about this syllabus. I may adjust the course schedule if needed and will notify you of any changes.

**Benchmark Language [if using a grading system on essays]**

WRIT 105

\***A\*** papers present powerful, engaging arguments and central claims. In an A paper, the writer’s central claim is clear and yet also complex and sophisticated. The central claim and core ideas of the essay are supported by compelling evidence, logical reasoning, and analysis. Relevant sources are integrated and documented appropriately. The essay is highly readable because it is organized for the reader’s ease of understanding, and the paragraphs and sentences are clearly, articulately written and enhance the overall effectiveness of the essay.

**\*B\*** papers present strong central claims and arguments that are well supported with evidence, logic, and analysis. Relevant sources are integrated and documented appropriately. The essay is organized appropriately, and the prose is clear though it likely does not have the articulateness of an “A” paper.

**\*C\*** papers present central claims and arguments that a reader can follow but that may be only partially supported by evidence and examples. Organizational focus and analysis may be weak, suggesting that significant revision is needed. Often there is evidence that the author has either misread or only superficially read the text or sources under analysis; sources may not be integrated well or documented appropriately. The prose is generally readable, though sentences are not always clear, and errors are sometimes distracting.

**\*D\*** papers are either unsuccessful in presenting central claims and arguments, or present arguments that are essentially unsupported. D papers may vary in length, but the paragraphs are frequently organized in a way that confuses rather than guides readers. External sources are often not present or well-integrated; sources are likely not documented correctly. Papers that are written in prose that is confusing will receive Ds, though not all D papers will have confusing prose.

\***F**\* papers are unsuccessful in presenting and supporting arguments, either because they contain no central claims or, if they do, these claims are poorly developed. Essays are organized and written in a confusing manner, and prose is often inaccessible for the reader. Sources are typically not documented at all or not documented correctly. Often the essay does not meet the expectations outlined in the assignment.