



ENGL 1301 | First Year Writing I

Section: 20088 | Asynchronous Online

Prerequisite(s): Must be TSI complete in English Language Arts Reading, or TSI exempt, as explained on the Undergraduate Student Success TSI website <https://www.uh.edu/ussc/tsi/>. A detailed study of the principles of rhetoric as applied in reading and writing expository essays. Students who are not complete in TSI English Language Arts Reading (ELAR) and who have not met the passing scores on the TSIA ELAR components must enroll in either IRW 1100 or IRW 1300 concurrently with ENGL 1301, based on advisor recommendation.

Instructor Information

Dr. Andrew Joseph Pegoda

Department: English

Email: ajpegoda@central.uh.edu

Office Hours

Zooms by appointment weekdays roughly 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. CST

General Course Information

Course Theme: First Year Writing I: Rhetoric of Garbage

Course Meeting Time: Asynchronous Online

Course Meeting Location: Canvas + Zoom, Microsoft Office, and UH Email

Due to this being a fully online course, Canvas is the primary means of administering this

course. All weekly course materials are posted in preparation for each week. Students must have strong computer skills and access to appropriate technologies (laptop or desktop, webcam, mic/earbuds, etc).

Course Goals and Methods: English 1301 satisfies 3 of 6 hours of the Communication Component Area of the Texas Core Curriculum. Per the state, Communications classes have two broad state-mandated outcomes: 1) focus on developing ideas and expressing them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively; and 2) involve the command of oral, aural, written, and visual literacy skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience.

The UH catalog describes this course as a “detailed study of the principles of rhetoric as applied in reading and writing expository essays.” More specifically, this course will help you identify and effectively use a variety of tools and strategies available to you as you face academic and day-to-day writing tasks.

We will approach writing both as a way of thinking and as a way of communicating thought, with our perspective including, invention, elaboration, and revision, each of which can help us explore the choices available to us as writers. We will use invention to discover what is possible to say; we will use our drafts to discover more precisely what we want to say and how to say it; and we will use our revisions to further develop our thoughts and ensure that they work for our intended audiences, moving back and forth across these activities as needed.

The key to succeeding in this course is to understand writing as an ongoing process of thinking, drafting, rethinking, and redrafting. As important as getting a “finished” draft down on paper will the process of exploring an idea and drafting and refining it to better meet your writing goals and your audience’s expectations. Finally, we will work on preparing manuscripts that are professional. We will address mechanics, grammar, and presentation as rhetorical issues that support or hinder our efforts to reach our objectives.

Tentative: All information herein is current to the best of my knowledge. This document remains tentative: Course handouts are living, evolving texts, not all-encompassing. Requirements, topics, and policies may change. Consider “Announcements”

clarifications of, reiterations of, additions to, and/or modifications to this syllabus.

Note that this a college class. Content may be sensitive and/or offensive to some. Materials are selected with learning in mind. This course approaches material in ways that are relevant to academic discourses. Students are, of course, never required to personally adopt any given fact, position, ideology, theory, or perspective.

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

Core Objectives

- Critical Thinking Skills—to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
- Communication Skills—to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
- Personal Responsibility—to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making
- Team Work—to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will understand and demonstrate writing processes including invention, organization, drafting, revision, editing, and presentation, developing teamwork through such classroom techniques as peer review and class discussion.
- Students will understand the importance of specifying audience and purpose, and make appropriate written, oral, and visual communication choices in such areas as voice, tone, level of formality, etc.
- Students will develop the ability to use critical thinking, writing, and reading for inquiry and research; i.e., find, evaluate, and analyze appropriate primary and secondary sources; integrate one's own ideas with the ideas of others; and write a research paper that conforms to the standards of the discipline, using a consistent documentation style (e.g., MLA, APA).
- Students will explore issues of personal responsibility in class and in their writing.

Course Policies and Procedures

- Students need to embrace curiosity and a willingness to learn.
- Students are expected to behave in ways appropriate for the college classroom.

- As specified, assignments must be composed in the UH OneDrive and saved for the duration of the semester. Assignments must show incremental understandings of course concepts.
- Students are expected to read and follow the instructions on assignments.
- Students are expected to submit work by the deadline, always 11:59:00 p.m. CST on the specified day. All work has an automatic 6-hour emergency grace period. Work must also be submitted to the correct place in Canvas. Extensions might be possible for major assignments only but only when arranged in advanced and only when progress has been made on said assignment.
- Students will use the handout "Dr. Pegoda's Writing Rules" as they complete written work. This document details standard expectations for college writing related to format, structure, citations, etc.
- Students are expected to devote quality time to this course each week. Across the semester, around 180 hours total is standard.
- I might use completed work as an example in this class or a future class—anonymity will be maintained.
- Students must use their UH email account when emailing Dr. Pegoda and allow 48 hours for a reply, excluding weekends and holidays. Emails must follow professional standards. (Don't use Canvas Mail.)
- Access to a webcam is required for students participating in this course. Webcams must be turned on during Live Sessions, Office Hours, and for some assignments as specified.

Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence

Students are always expected to do their own work. The University of Houston Academic Policies define and prohibit academic dishonesty as follows: “Academic dishonesty” means employing a method or technique or engaging in conduct in an academic endeavor that the student knows or should know is not permitted by the university or a course instructor to fulfill academic requirements.” The primary concern in this course is plagiarism, again defined in the Academic Honesty Policy: “Representing as one’s own work the work of another without acknowledging the source.” Plagiarism will be dealt with according to its type and severity: faulty citation of sources will be treated as a matter for teaching and revision; willful and knowing academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to University policy and can result in failure of the assignment or the course, and/or suspension from or expulsion from the University.

In addition, don’t manipulate fonts/margins, don’t adjust the speed of a video to be faster or slower, don’t submit papers used in another class, don’t buy papers, don’t pay

someone to do your work, don't get unauthorized help, and don't use any resources outside of those specifically assigned or recommended (unless you have prior approval). Don't upload, sell, or share your work or my materials to Chegg, Course Hero, or similar websites or to any AI or LLM.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) or Large Language Model (LLM) or similar is absolutely and strictly prohibited. Don't use any AI or LLM for brainstorming, consulting, thinking, reading, researching, writing, summarizing, translating, paraphrasing, revising, etc. Don't use CoPilot, Gemini, ChatGPT, Claude, Grammarly, Quill, or other tools/websites to help with anything, including any rewrite or edit suggestions from Word. Work completed with AI earns a zero.

****Only submit your own ideas in your own words.**** Should you learn of policy violations, you have an obligation to notify me—this helps protect the reputation of your degree.

Grading Rubrics and Weights

- **3 Major Essays, 65%**
 - Response Essay - major essay applying rhetorical techniques
 - Synthesis Essay - major essay applying rhetorical techniques
 - Analysis Essay - major essay applying rhetorical techniques
- **12 Small Assignments, 25%** - combination of short reflective, practice, and scaffolding essays and activities in preparation for the major essays--as indicated in the instructions, some such assignments must be completed in order to receive a grade on the associated major essay
- **5 Live Sessions, 10%** - live active attendance during scheduled Zoom sessions (or if you cannot attend live, watching the recording and writing a short paper)
- **Bonus Opportunities** - recover missed points or earn bonus points, worth 1 point toward final grade

Note that grades are earned. In general, A work is Excellent; B work is Good; C work is Satisfactory; D work is Unsatisfactory; and F work is Unacceptable.

Small assignments (activities/short essays and live sessions) are typically graded on a full credit/no credit basis. Grades on major essays are based on a holistic assessment according to what we have covered in class and general expectations for college writing.

Term grades are based on the following breakdown: 94.0 or more = A; 90.0-93.9 = A-; 87.0-89.9 = B+; 83.0-86.9 = B; 80.0-82.9 = B-; 77.0-79.9 = C+; 73.0-76.9 = C; 70.0-72.9 = C-; 67.0-69.9 = D+; 63.0-66.9 = D; 60.0-62.9 = D-; 59.9-0 = F

Students may receive a higher grade than their final point total, if they have shown substantial improvement or outstanding participation. I always look for ways to round up! Students should not ask for a higher grade; doing so will result in any rounding being revoked.

Discussion and Lecture Topics

1. Introduction to College Reading and Writing
2. Introduction to Garbology
3. Active Reading, Close Reading & Globalizing Garbage
4. Invention and Composing the Response & Garbage Literature
5. Structure & Garbage Health
6. Global Revision & Recycling Garbage
7. Composing the Synthesis & Hoarding Garbage
8. Audience and Evidence & Storing Garbage
9. Credibility & Selling Garbage
10. Local Revision & Garbage Diving
11. Composing the Analysis & Analyzing Garbage
12. Point-of-View & Garbage Mores
13. Perception & Reusing Garbage
14. Metacognition

First Year Writing I: Rhetoric of Garbage

The sewer is the conscience of the city. Everything there converges and confronts everything else. In that livid spot there are shades, but there are no longer any secrets. Each thing bears its true form, or at least, its definitive form. The mass of filth has this in its favor, that it is not a liar. All the uncleannesses of civilization, once past their use, fall into this trench of truth, where the immense social sliding ends. They are there engulfed, but they display themselves there. This mixture is a confession. There, no more false appearances, no plastering over is possible, filth removes its shirt, absolute denudation puts to the rout all illusions and mirages, there is nothing more except what really exists, presenting the sinister form of that which is coming to an end.The last veil is torn away. A sewer is a cynic. It tells everything.

--Victor Hugo, Les Misérables

*Where is "away"? When we say we throw something "away," where do we imagine it goes? It seems more of us are closer to flat-earththers than we realize, believing there is some way to shove the trash off the planet. In her book *The Story of Stuff*, Annie Leonard says there is "away" by burial, by burning, and by sight, but our trash never truly leaves us.*

--Cynthia P. Rosenfeld, "Talking Trash: The Rhetoric of Waste Bins"

The Live Course Calendar

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
Please go through materials in the order they are listed. Links may require your CougarNet username and password. Sometimes the "gift links" might require that you create a free account with that publications (such as <i>The New York Times</i>).		

You can do so using your UH email address.

If a link stops working, let me know!

GETTING STARTED	• The Syllabus (revisit as needed) • READ ME FIRST (revisit as needed) • The Live Sessions • Writing Center Bonus • "Trashy" Conversations • Succeeding Asynchronously	
-W1- 8/24- 8/30	Introduction to College Reading and Writing • "The Big Idea English Studies Syllabus" • "How to Read Like a Writer" • "What is the Academic Paper" • "What is Rhetoric" • "Questions for Thinking Rhetorically" • Writing Memes **Mark your calendars: Zoom Meet and Greet, Tuesday, August 25, 7-8 PM CST	• First Day Quiz--100% required to earn grades (due 8/28) • Course Folder--full credit required to earn grades (due 8/29) • Introductions (due 8/30)
-W2- 8/31-9/6	Introduction to Garbology • "Garbology" • "An Archaeologist Talks Trash" • "Bulk Waste Collection" • "The Story of Stuff" • "Wasteland of the Free" **Mark your calendars: Zoom Live Session, Wednesday, September 2, 7-8 PM CST	• The Live Sessions, Panel I--response required unless you attended live (due 9/5) • Opening Composition--must be completed to move forward in the class (due 9/6)
-W3-	Active Reading, Close Reading	• Scaffolding Activity (Reading)--must be

9/7-9/13	• <u>Excerpt from <i>The Word on College Reading and Writing</i></u> Globalizing Garbage • <u>"Is This the End of Recycling"</u> (will post gift link) • <u>"Stunning Photos of a Vast E-Waste Dumping Ground"</u> • <u>"Chittagong Ship Breaking Yard"</u>	completed to earn credit on the first major essay (due 9/12) • <u>Scaffolding Activity (Annotating)</u>--must be completed to earn credit on the first major essay (due 9/13)
-W4- 9/14- 9/20	Invention and Composing the Response • <u>"Doing a Response Essay"</u> • <u>"Dr. Pegoda's Writing Rules"</u> • <u>"Paper Walk Through and MLA Style"</u> • <u>"Course Works Cited Page"</u> • <u>Excerpt from <i>Essential Writing Skills for College and Beyond</i></u> • <u>"I Need You to Say 'I': Why First Person Is Important in College Writing"</u> Garbage Literature • <u>Wall-E</u> (UH Streaming) • <u>Google Ngrams for garbage, trash, junk, rubbish</u> (just for fun) **Mark your calendars: Zoom Live Session, Tuesday, September 15, 7-8 PM CST	• <u>The Live Sessions, Dr. Luke Vines</u>--response required unless you attended live (due 9/19) • <u>Practice Activity (Response)</u> (due 9/20) **Officially start the <u>Response Essay</u>
-W5- 9/21- 9/27	Structure • <u>"Where's This Going!?: Metadiscourse for Readers and Writers"</u> • <u>"Signposting"</u> • <u>"Back to Basics: The Perfect Paragraph"</u> • <u>"Intros and Outros"</u>	• <u>Scaffolding Activity (Introduction)</u> (due 9/27) **Schedule an online or face-to-

	Garbage Health • "How Epidemics of the Past Changed the Way Americans Lived" • "Trash Incinerators Disproportionately Harm Black and Hispanic People" • "Tiny Ocean Plastics Tied to Big Brain Problems"	face visit with the Writing Center to discuss the major essay due soon; see "Writing Center Bonus"
-W6- 9/28- 10/4	Global Revision • "Global Editing and Revision" • Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace (explore as desired) Recycling Garbage • "The Story You've Been Told About Recycling Is a Lie" (will post gift link) • "Recycling: Is It As Good As We Think?" • "5 Reasons Why I Love Buy Nothing Groups (and You Will, Too!)" • "How Long Common Items Take to Decompose"	• ***Response Essay*** (due 10/4) • Post-Essay Worksheet (Response)--must be completed to receive a grade on the major essay (due 10/4)
-W7- 10/5- 10/11	Composing the Synthesis • "Doing a Synthesis Essay" Hoarding Garbage • "STUFFED: The Unintended Result of Our Attachment to Personal Belongings" • "Hoarders: Tempers RAGE When Hoarder is Confronted With Reality" • "Understanding Hoarding" (watch first 30 minutes)	• Practice Activity (Synthesis) (due 10/11) **Officially start the Synthesis Essay
-W8-	Audience and Evidence	

10/12-10/18	• "Deep Dive: Kairos" • "Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Sources" • "Conducting Research Interviews" Storing Garbage • "Finding Solace in a Storage Unit" • "Inside the Storage Units of Six New Yorkers" **Mark your calendars: Zoom Live Session, Friday, October 16, 7-8 PM CST	• The Live Sessions, Panel II--response required unless you attended live (due 10/17) • Scaffolding Activity (Interview)--must be completed to earn credit on the second major essay (due 10/18)
-W9-10/19-10/25	Credibility • "What Determines Credibility" • Excerpt from <i>Essential Writing Skills for College and Beyond</i> Selling Garbage • "The Whimsy and Heartbreak of America's Garage Sales" (will post gift link)	• Scaffolding Activity (Peer-review) (due 10/25) <i>**Schedule an online or face-to-face visit with the Writing Center to discuss the major essay due soon; see "Writing Center Bonus"</i>
-W10-10/26-11/1	Local Revision • "Research Writing Process: Local Revision" • "Notes on Punctuation" • "Getting the Mechanics Right" Garbage Diving • "Why Do Stores Throw Away So Many Perfectly Good Products?" (will post gift link) • "Dumpster Diving on a Busy College Campus!" (just get some impressions) **Mark your calendars: Zoom Live Session, Tuesday, October 27, 7-8 PM CST	• The Live Sessions, Dr. Gillespie--response required unless you attended live, (due 10/31) • ***Synthesis Essay*** (due 11/1) • Post-Essay Worksheet (Synthesis)--must be completed to receive a grade on the major essay (due 11/1)
	Composing the Analysis	

-W11- 11/2- 11/8	• "Doing an Analysis Essay" • "Backpacks vs. Briefcases: Steps Toward Rhetorical Analysis" • "How to Write Descriptively" • "Reading Too Much Into This" Analyzing Garbage • "Discarded Anthropology with Dr. Robin Nagle"	• Practice Activity (POV) (due 11/7) • Practice Activity (Analysis) (due 11/8) **Officially start Analysis Essay
-W12- 11/9- 11/15	Visual Rhetoric • "Visual Rhetoric" • Excerpt from Reading Rhetorical Theory: "Visual Rhetoric" • "Everything We See is a Mash-up of the Brain's Last 15 Seconds of Visual Information" Garbage Mores • "7 Days of Garbage" • "Garbology: How to Spot Patterns in People's Waste" • "What Can Hundreds of Pieces of Litter Tell Us About Manhattan?" (will post gift link)	• Scaffolding Activity (Garbage)--must be completed to earn credit on the third major essay (due 11/15) **Schedule an online or face-to-face visit with the Writing Center to discuss the major essay due soon; see "Writing Center Bonus"
-W13- 11/16- 11/22	Perception and Point-of-View • "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema" • "Selective Attention Test" • "Why You Miss Big Changes Right Before Your Eyes" • "6 Things You Can Miss While Reading a Newspaper" • "Test Your Observation Skills"	• The Live Sessions, Jenny E. Fenwick--response required unless you attended live

	Reusing Garbage • "A Conversation with Thomas Deininger" • "New York City's Museum of Trash Rescued by a Sanitation Worker" • "Discard Culture" (explore) **Mark your calendars: Zoom Live Session, Tuesday, November 17, 7-8 PM CST	(due 11/21)
-W14- 11/23- 11/29	Thanksgiving Break, 11/25-11/29	• Scaffolding Activity (2min. Video) (due 11/24)
-W15- 11/30- 12/5	Metacognition • "Writing the Reflection"	• ***Analysis Essay*** (due 12/3) • Post-Essay Worksheet (Analysis)--must be completed to receive a grade on the major essay (due 12/3) • Closing Composition (due 12/5)

Dear class,

Welcome! Welcome! I'm Dr. Pegoda, and I'm glad you are here. I look forward to our time together.

To get started in this course, please complete the following in the order listed:

- Read the [Syllabus](#).
- Read the **"First Day Addendum for Dr. Pegoda's Classes."** (below)
- Take the [First Day Quiz](#) until you earn a 100%. If you haven't earned a full credit by the due date, you will be unable to advance in the class until doing so.
- Complete the [Course Folder](#) assignment. If you haven't earned a full credit by the due date, you will be unable to advance in the class until doing so. You'll get another opportunity if you miss a step the first time. I have to manually process submissions for the Course Folder, so please be patient after submitting. I'll be watching submissions closely.
- Read and study the [Live Course Calendar \(LCC\)](#) linked on the Canvas homepage. This setup is likely different from most college classes, but students say it's very effective. The LCC is extremely important. It lists all readings and assignments. This is the only place you should access readings and assignments. Everything in the class aside from my announcements and your grades is available through the LCC.

Whenever you have general questions or need to contact me, send me an email from your UH email account. Be sure to follow the guidelines of professionalism. My address is ajpegoda@central.uh.edu. I'm always glad to schedule a Zoom.

Note that we will have a Zoom meet and greet session on Tuesday, August 25, 7-8 p.m. CST. Please come in you have any questions or just want to say hi! Link forthcoming.

Sincerely,

Dr. Pegoda (and the Support Team!)

First Day Addendum for Dr. Pegoda's Classes

****The information herein is the kind of information we'd discuss together if we were together live**

discussing “first day” information and going over my expectations. It’s a bit long, but I want to be sure you have the necessary information to thrive.

Welcome to our *brave space*.

Students call me “Dr. Pegoda.” “Professor Pegoda” or “Professor” are also acceptable. I have been teaching since May 2007 and at the University of Houston since 2008. You can learn about my background by visiting <https://andrewpegoda.com>.

I’m glad you’re here. I know times are stressful and uncertain for many. My mission is to help facilitate your learning—and unlearning—and to provide opportunities for growth. I hope that we can all 1) appreciate “the learning worth crying about” (Dr. Michael Wesch); 2) understand the role of failure in learning (Professor Clint Tuttle); 3) own decisions and “become an active owner of [our] education” (Dr. Gabriela Diaz de Sabates); and 4) embrace “the emotional demands of college” (Dr. Andrew Joseph Pegoda). In sum, learn all that you can because they can never take that away. We’re going to nurture actual intelligence, not artificial intelligence. Thus, this AI is absolutely forbidden in this class.

Curiosity and a willingness to learn is vital. You will likely encounter views you find morally wrong and encounter persons and identities that are new, confusing, or uncomfortable. Please avoid agreeing or disagreeing. There are more sophisticated forms of engagement. For our purposes, we want to consider many different, different perspectives and think about how and why those exist. If we give respect to the thoughts that others offer (and consider intersectionalities and positionalities) we can learn and be more appreciative of our complex, nuanced world. Related, an important skill to learn in college is sometimes moving away from centering or referencing personal experience.

Note that I select content with education in mind. Materials might be excellent, terrible, new, or different. There should be no implied or assumed agreement between course content and myself. Covering every perspective on a given topic is not only impossible but irresponsible; thus, we cover a range I deem appropriate.

Some notes about college in general are in order, too.

Some think that since this isn’t a STEM class, it won’t be, can’t be, or shouldn’t be just as challenging. Remember that being a student is a job. Some also think that online classes will have less work than face-to-face classes. By law, all course formats are required to have equivalent

workloads and to provide equivalent opportunities. You're paying the same price and earning the same credits, so it's only fair to have the similar responsibilities. If anything, online classes have *more* work because you are learning more independently.

There's also an alarming trend of students taking too many credits per semester. The traditional pathway was to take four or five classes in a regular a semester (and one or two during the summer), while not doing any paid work or doing such on a very part-time basis. Now, students frequently attempt to take six classes in a regular semester (and three or four during the summer), while also holding down one or two jobs that demand 40-60 hours weekly. All before family responsibilities. This doesn't work well. If you're working full time, don't take an overload. To be successful in college, college must be a top priority. College is an investment in your future, your intellectual future most importantly. Sometimes investments require short-term sacrifices. For example, during the semester you might have to forgo some leisure activities to be successful.

College sometimes gets extra challenging for students. Note that anything shared concerning illness, safety, or wellness may be relayed to the appropriate office. I am a mandatory reporter if I learn about sexual violence that occurs by/to an enrolled student.

Some basic reminders and notes about the class.

This class is "Asynchronous Online." Such, per the University, "do not meet face-to-face, and they do not have a regularly scheduled meeting time. Most of the class materials are available online at any time. Some asynchronous online classes may include virtual class meetings, which will be arranged on a class-by-class basis by the instructor." In addition to weekly readings and assignments, this asynchronous class *does* include such virtual meetings in the form of Live Sessions and may also include a requirement to Zoom with me to discuss academic matters related to class. Dates for the live sessions are detailed on the Live Course Calendar (LCC). Please make every effort to attend these live, but if you cannot make it, there will be a recording and a short assignment to do

To succeed in online classes, you need a regular Windows or Apple computer. An iPad or iPhone (or similar) will not work. The Canvas App does not work correctly. A Chromebook will also not have the necessary power and functions to do everything. University policy requires that you have a regular laptop (or desktop) computer. Always contact UIT (University Information Technology) for help with anything computer related, not me. Cameras must be on during any virtual meetings and possibly during some assignments.

Speaking of the LCC from above. The LCC is the most important part of our Canvas shell, along with

the Grades and Announcements tabs. This LCC is the only place you should access readings and assignments. You will encounter errors otherwise and will not have the necessary information to do well. If links ever stop working or become paywalled, let me know, and I'll fix it. When reading or watching the assigned material, take notes. These notes will help you with assignments. Take note of vocabulary, names, places, dates, stats, and the like. Chronology, significance, cause/effect are important, too. Songs are meant to be heard--so don't just look for the lyrics and read them. Songs and videos are meant to be watch on regular speed.

Test questions, essays, and other assignments must always show knowledge of course materials and be approached from such perspectives, so reading the material is absolutely essential.

Some notes about me and accommodations.

I am 40. I am a queer, crip (i.e., disabled), feminist scholar. I have neurofibromatosis and dozens of related conditions. I have had seven surgeries, so far(!); most recently a second brain surgery in January 2026. I take two dozen medications. I am dyslexic and neurodivergent. I have basically been in lockdown since March 2020, as SARS-CoV-2 continues its destruction, something I have written articles about. I was told by medical professionals long ago that my health posed too many obstacles to ever be a professor or even attend college. Yet, I have five college degrees, have countless publications, and am a professor.

Thus, I am committed to supporting equitable opportunities. You are encouraged to communicate access needs; please schedule a Zoom with me to do so. I know that the Medical Model of Disability doesn't always make healthcare accessible, safe, or comfortable. If you are registered with the Disability Center, let me know. As needed, you are charged with coordinating communication with the Disability Center. Every effort is made to follow these accommodations or appropriate and reasonable alternatives.

Some notes about communicating me with.

When you have a question or want to share something with me, please email. (Remember: I do not use Canvas Mail or Teams.) Depending on the message, I will reply directly to you, or I will address it in the next daily announcement. I will respond promptly (i.e., within 48 hours, excluding weekends/holidays), if the message is professional. Practice professionalism by sending messages from your UH email account and by including a subject, greeting (and addressing me by name) and sign-off with your full name, concise paragraphs, appropriate content, your student ID, and your class name. Emails should be written by you without any outsourcing to AI. When requesting an appointment, include all of the times you are available to expedite the process. Don't resend

messages within minutes or hours or ask that I answer as soon as possible. Emails are triaged and answered according to relative importance (and according to the spoons I have available). Make sure to check your UH email regularly, and if you receive a direct email from me, please reply promptly.

Some notes recapping essential core requirements.

Commitment – Study every week. Three-credit college classes require around 180 hours across the semester, per UH and state/federal policies. If you work hard, you'll do well. If you make good-faith efforts to finish the class, you'll likely pass.

Writing – No AI. Written work must be in English and use appropriate capitalization, complete sentences, and paragraphs to earn credit. Give punctuation, grammar, and spelling due attention. Follow “Dr. Pegoda’s Writing Rules.” You are always expected to fully answer prompts with examples, analysis, and/or synthesis that explores who, what, when, where, how, and why. Further, except as otherwise noted, remember it’s required to use the online version of Word provided in AccessUH for the entirety of written assignments—simply give files appropriate names and save them to your OneDrive Course Folder. This allows me to access a document’s version history, as needed.

Instructions – Please read and follow them carefully. Not following instructions is the biggest thing that frequently holds students back.

Materials – For this class, all materials are provided. It’s college, so always allow for the possibility that you will need to spend small amounts on other supplies or materials.

Integrity – No cheating. No AI. No plagiarism. No shenanigans. Do your own work, and you’ll be fine. Do note that unless otherwise notes, outside materials (i.e., that is materials not assigned to the entire class) are prohibited. You can and should always use course materials for assignments.

In addition, don’t mass message the class, and don’t make/join a group chat, such as GroupMe. This is because such spaces often foster cheating, bullying, and other behaviors that are not productive. You can use the Introductions activity and the UH Student Directory to contact one or two others in the class, if so desired. (As of Summer 2026, UH also specifically prohibits use of GroupMe and other means of communication outside the UH networks.)

Things you can do: You are always welcome to use course materials and your personal notes while completing graded work, including exams. Study groups are fine, too, just no more than two or three. You are encouraged to visit the Writing Center (<https://uh.edu/writing-center/>). For tutoring,

student success workshops, or an academic coach, contact LAUNCH (<https://www.uh.edu/ussc/launch>). Both the Writing Center and LAUNCH offer services online and face-to-face. It's fine to have a friend or relative proofread work—provided they do not use any kind of AI or LLM and they only point out typos or areas in need of possible clarification. Of course, you can always reach out to me. I am happy to review assignments before you submit them for grading, but I need at least 48 hours (excluding weekends/holidays), and you need time to make any revisions.

Overall, my integrity policy underscores the importance of original, independent thinking and simply being truthful in all interactions with class. As Dr. David Smiley says, “[We] must state unequivocally that if you do not want to be formed in the classroom and be tested by the fires of critical thinking and academic rigor, then the University...is not the place for you.”

Some notes about grades.

Dr. Adam Grant writes, *“There’s a reason we award Olympic medals to the athletes who swim the fastest, not the ones who train the hardest. What counts is not sheer effort but the progress and performance that result. Motivation is only one of multiple variables in the achievement equation. Ability, opportunity, and luck count, too. Yes, you can get better at anything, but you can’t be great at everything. The ideal response to a disappointing grade is not to complain that your diligence wasn’t rewarded. It’s to ask how you could have [done better]....The true measure of learning is not the time and energy you put in. It’s the knowledge and skills you take out.”*

Thus, grades are earned. Major writing assignments, projects, and open-ended questions on assessments are graded holistically according to the following general descriptions:

Assignments that earn the highest marks shine in original, creative, critical thinking and show serious engagement. Audiences read these works effortlessly when it comes to format, diction, grammar, mechanics, and spelling. Assignments follow instructions and go beyond minimum expectations. Work is interesting and engages with materials and makes use of examples, synthesis, and analysis, as appropriate. Sources are appropriately cited. Effort is not a factor. **In sum, “A” work is excellent.**

Assignments that earn the grade of “B” sometimes exist in an odd limbo. Generally, these assignments lack degrees of originality, analysis, and/or “correctness.” Weaknesses might be present in the analysis and evidence or in the presentation of ideas. Such assignments tend to just do the assignment without anything special. **In sum, “B” work is good.**

Assignments that earn the grade of “C” tend to show disengagement. Analysis, organization,

or prose lack sophistication due to generalizations, obvious statements, or already-established ideas. Submission lacks clear, personalized understanding of the topics. Work may appear rushed. Formatting might be on the sloppy side. **In sum, “C” work is satisfactory.**

Assignments scored at the “D” level typically show some very basic knowledge of some of the ideas at hand. Work might contain numerous factual or stylistic mistakes or might not follow the instructions. Work may show significant misunderstandings or partial understandings. Work may be incomplete. **In sum, “D” work is unsatisfactory.**

Assignments earn an “F” when serious gaps exist between submissions and expectations. Such work might be off-topic, show that important concepts have not been grasped, suggest that the student has guessed, have excessive stylistic mistakes, and/or be substantially incomplete. **In sum, “F” work is unacceptable.**

When you have questions about grades or feedback or if a mistake happened: first, take 24 hours to review and reflect upon your submission and class resources; and after this moratorium, second, please email me to schedule a Zoom. Grades will not be discussed by email. I am always glad to discuss improvement or correct a mistake. Don’t use the Canvas “Comment” feature to communicate any thoughts or questions.

Once work is graded, focus on the future. DO NOT ask to re-do work. As above, assignments are open for large windows, there are numerous assignments, you can always receive feedback early, and UH offers its students many resources. Grades are always imperfect measurements—not indicators of worth—of your performance in the given contexts and goals of your life and the larger geopolitical realities we find ourselves in. When struggling, reach out early.

Grade bullying, per Professor Bridget Fernandes, is prohibited and is “when students ask for grades that have not been earned and/or place the blame for low grades on the professor.” Such unethical behavior is prohibited and can result in conduct sanctions. Specific examples of “grade bullying” or “grade grubbing” include when someone might fuss and (1) demand a higher grade, (2) suggest the grade earned will prevent graduation, law school, or a scholarship, (3) emphasize the time or effort used, (4) allude to other courses or programs with work considered more important, (5) reference past grades, or (6) say—after the fact—the assignment was confusing or too hard.