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English 1102: Composition 2 / Spring 2004: Exploring Contemporary America
Sections: P5--MWF 1:05-1:55/ E4--MWF 3:05-3:55/ M2--MWF 4:05-4:55

Instructor: Dr. Lisa Minnick
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Course Page: <http://www.lcc.gatech.edu/~lminnick/1102main>

Course Description

The goals of English 1102 at Georgia Tech are to develop research, analytical, and communication skills by focusing on the discipline of cultural studies. In this course, we will explore a variety of literary, theoretical, visual, and cultural texts and engage in sustained research to understand the relationship between culture and cultural production. We will work on critical reading and effective writing skills and on developing a deeper understanding of audience and the social contexts that inform communication. In order to enhance understanding of a variety of communication modes, we will work towards expanding and supporting written work with oral presentations. Additionally we will work on improving your writing through engagement with a variety of educational technologies. Incorporating independent and collaborative work to improve research, composition, and revision skills, English 1102 emphasizes writing as process, fundamental research practices, the importance of audience, and attention to the contexts that inform effective communication.

Exploring Contemporary America: Literature in the MTV Generation. In this section of English 1102, we will explore American life and cultural artifacts, including literature, produced during the last two decades of the twentieth century. We'll begin with your impressions of contemporary America, including events of the recent past such as Vietnam, Watergate, and other more recent events, and by examining a variety of literary sources, we'll explore how television and other popular media represents those events and how television in particular has come to be among the most significant influences on American culture. As members of what some argue is the "MTV generation," you have unique vantage points from which to think about and describe contemporary America, and you will be asked to draw upon your own views as the starting points for establishing rhetorical positions for your class writing assignments. In our course, we will be looking particularly at the convergence of technology, consumerism, and multiculturalism in the contexts of late-twentieth-century American culture and literature as the basis for research and writing projects.

Required Texts (available Engineers and GT Bookstores; also check online booksellers for affordable used copies):

- *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture*, by Douglas Coupland. St. Martin's, 1992.
- *White Noise*, by Don DeLillo. Penguin, 1991. Viking Critical edition, 1998, also acceptable.
- *The Bedford Researcher*, by Mike Palmquist. Bedford-St. Martin's, 2003.
- Electronic reserve readings, as announced on Schedule of Readings.
- your writing handbook from 1101. If you don't have one, get one. You'll need it.
- a good dictionary.

Important Georgia Tech Policies

Software and Computing Resources and Requirements: We will make frequent use of Internet applications in the LCC lab and from remote locations (i.e. your home or dorm room). You must meet the technology requirements for incoming freshmen at GT, including access to your own computer with Internet access to complete the work for this class. We will use e-mail, Web browsers, and online conferencing applications as a means of communicating both in and outside of class for online discussions, to annotate electronic texts, and to participate in collaborative hypertext projects. You will receive instructions within the first few weeks about how to access applications on your computer. Previous knowledge of these applications is not a prerequisite for this course, but it doesn't hurt. If you have concerns about your abilities, please consult with me as soon as you can. Also, please check the course updates page <lcc.gatech.edu/~lminnick/1102updates> regularly so that you do not miss any important class announcements or assignments.

Students with Disabilities: If you need an accommodation for any sort of disability, please make an appointment to see me during my office hours. Students with disabilities should also contact Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS) as soon as possible to discuss accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor call (404) 894-2564 (voice) / -1664 (voice/TDD) or visit 210 Smithgall Student Services Building. For more information visit <<http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/>>.

Academic Honesty: All work you turn in for this class must be your own, with all outside reference sources properly cited and acknowledged. All written assignments for this course are subject to analysis via the anti-plagiarism program "Turn It In" <<http://www.turnitin.com>>, which we will discuss further in class. Plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and other types of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form. **You are required to read, understand and comply fully with the policies and definitions outlined in the Georgia Tech Honor Code, available online at <<http://www.honor.gatech.edu/>>.** If you are in doubt about how to cite a source or whether a citation is needed, or if you are not sure what level of help on an assignment constitutes collusion, ask me. As I am also required to uphold the Honor Code, my policy is zero tolerance for any type of deception, and I do not want for any of you to find out the hard way how seriously I take this.

Instructor's Policies

Attendance: English 1102 is an experiential, hands-on course. This means you need to be present every day to the extent that it is humanly possible. Readings, discussions, and activities complement each other, so you need to be in class in order to participate in all components of the course. If you must miss class, my policy is to permit four "freebie" absences. By "freebie," I mean that I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. I also mean that's all you get. Your four days need to be used judiciously so that you do not burn all four of your absences by skipping a month of Fridays and then wake up with the flu one day and have no days left. Four is four. Exceptions can only be made in cases of serious illness (such as those requiring hospitalization) and other documentable emergencies. If you miss more than four class meetings, there may be a substantial deduction in your course grade. Minimal absences reflect favorably. Six or more don't, and may result in a course grade of F.

Late work is generally frowned upon in college and elsewhere, and this class is no exception. Arrangements should be made *in advance* (and you'll need a documentable explanation). Unexplained late work (or excuses after the fact) will not be accepted and a grade of zero will be assessed for the assignment.

Being late to class should never happen. Of course, we all have our moments, and infrequent lapses may occur. Overall, however, make it a habit to be in class on time. Otherwise, you risk missing important course content (such as instructions or quizzes) which may be over by the time you get there. Keep in mind that when you walk in late, it is distracting to other students. The same goes for leaving early. It is your responsibility to stay on top of what goes on in class whether you are there or not. If you are late, it is your responsibility to stay after class to make sure you have been marked present. Absences resulting from uncorrected lates count towards your four allotted absences. Habitual lateness will result in a reduction of your participation grade.

Makeups: Daily assignments, draft deadlines, quizzes, and in-class activities cannot be made up if missed because of lateness or absence. Makeups on major assignments, such as papers, must be arranged with me in advance of due dates in order to avoid penalties, and you will have to make a pretty strong case in order to be granted an extension.

Classroom etiquette: You are not required to agree with everything you read or everything that is said during discussions in this class. You are encouraged to read and think critically. Occasionally, our readings and discussions may center on issues about which you and your classmates may feel strongly, and some of the readings might not be to your liking. That is perfectly okay; an open dialogue is encouraged, and all thoughtful contributions are welcome. Disagreement with the points of view of others, including me, is also welcome, provided that everyone is respectful during class discussions. The goal is for our classroom and online forums to be safe places for flexing your intellectual muscles, where everyone feels comfortable generating, expressing, and challenging ideas. Your help in reaching this goal is essential.

Other etiquette issues: Sleeping, eating, grooming, reading non-course materials, doing homework, having conversations, and other such activities are discouraged because of their disruptive and impolite nature, and also because they keep you from fully participating. Your active participation is part of your course grade, of course, and also, nothing interesting will happen in class without your input. That is, the class will be as interesting as you make it. Showing up on time and prepared (that means completing all reading assignments and other homework and being ready to work when you get here) will help your grade as well as enhance your learning experience.

If you would like extra help with your writing: The Georgia Tech-OMED Writing Center provides free one-on-one writing help to all students on a first come, first served basis--no appointment is needed. They are located at 208 Chapin, across Cherry Street from the Skiles building. Hours are Sunday through Thursday evenings, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Bring a draft of your paper and the paper assignment, as well as any feedback you've received from the instructor or your classmates. They will not serve as a proofreading service, but they will help you end writer's block, organize your ideas, or identify and correct persistent writing problems you might have. And it's free.

Formatting for Written Assignments and Other Things to Remember:

1. **Formatting for all written assignments:** All hard copies of assignments must be **typed and double-spaced**, including drafts to be turned in or to be workshopped in class. All final drafts must have **1" margins** and follow **MLA style for page headings, page numbering, formatting and documentation** (we'll review this in class; also, see the sample paper on page 475 of the *LB Handbook*). For formal essays, I recommend using Times New Roman 12 or a comparably sized sans serif font, if you prefer. Larger than standard print and/or margins will not be acceptable and will raise questions about whether the author who uses these strategies has actually met the requirements of an assignment.

2. Please plan ahead with respect to your printing needs. Things frequently go wrong with printers, so waiting until five minutes before class starts to try to print is not a good idea. There are computer labs all over the GT campus; it is simply a matter of leaving yourself enough time not only to print but also to formulate and enact an alternate Plan B if your original printing plan is thwarted. A disk is not a draft; therefore, if you do not have a printed copy (or the requisite number of copies for peer editing days) at the beginning of class on a due date, you will be assessed a grade of zero for the assignment. Even if we are scheduled for lab time, **please do not expect to use class time for printing.**

3. Please email me any time if you have questions or concerns, and know that you are always welcome in my office. There is no need for an appointment if you wish to drop by during my office hours (Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:05-2:55), but please make arrangements with me if you are not free during office hours so that we can set up a time to meet.

4. The workload for this course is heavy, with substantial daily reading assignments, some of them quite challenging. You will need to keep up with all readings and other deadlines as assigned, as this accounts for a major part of your grade in the course. Also, if you don't read, you won't be able to participate in class discussions, which will be (1) boring for you and (2) detrimental to your participation score.

5. A word to the wise: Failure to follow directions is one of my two pet peeves; the other is failure to listen or read carefully when instructions are being given. The first is almost always a result of the second. Points will be subtracted from work which does not properly respond to all requirements of the assignment. If you are ever not completely clear on what is being asked of you, please check with me either in person or via email.

Assignments and Grading Criteria: You'll be working on a variety of formal and informal, individual and collaborative, writing assignments and other projects during the semester. You will demonstrate your competency in writing conventional critical, research-oriented essays, and you will also communicate in online discussion forums and work with classmates on oral presentations and collaborative hypertext/media writing projects. Additionally, we'll explore alternative forms of "text," including visual and oral texts. I expect you will find English 1102 a challenging course, but I also hope you'll find your projects exciting and rewarding.

Here's how the course breaks down:

Exploratory essay.....	15%
Analytical essay.....	20%
Collaborative project using electronic media.....	20%
Interpretive presentation.....	15%
Homework and draft deadlines.....	15%
Participation and attendance.....	15%

Grading Scale for all assignments

A = 90-100%	Excellent (not merely good) work.
B = 80-89%	Above average to very good work.
C = 70-79%	Adequate or average to above average work.
D = 60-69%	Below average work.
F = 0-59%	Work does not meet minimum standards.

Course grades:

A = minimum of 900 total points
B = 800-899 total points
C = 700-799 total points
D = 600-699 points
F = 599 points or less

Note: Please don't expect final grades to be rounded up unless you have a *stellar* participation and attendance record. And please do not expect unreasonable rounding (i.e. more than ten points on the 1000-point scale) on your course grade.

Schedule of Reading and Writing Assignments

I reserve the right to make minor adjustments or massive changes to this syllabus as a result of interference from reality. Also, additional activities and readings may be assigned in class. If you come to class every day and follow along with any announced changes, you'll never be out of the loop. Also, you are encouraged to check our class updates page <<http://www.lcc.gatech.edu/~lminnick/1102updates>> regularly for news, schedule changes, and announcements. **Please read all assignments in advance of class discussions.**

Week 1. Topics: English 1102 and research-oriented writing; thinking about contemporary America.

Jan 05 Introduction to course. For Wednesday, read *Generation X* 3-16.

Jan 07 Discuss reading. HW for Friday: Short writing on impressions of contemporary America, part 1, and *Generation X* 17-27.

Jan 09 In class: Impressions of contemporary America, part 2. Come to class having read *GenX* through page 27.

Week 2. Read and discuss Coupland's *Generation X*. Exploratory Essay assigned.

Jan 12 Come to class having read *GenX* 29-45 and *BR* Chapter 1. **Exploratory Essay assigned.**

Jan 14 Come to class having read *GenX* 47-59.

Jan 16 Come to class having read *GenX* 61-72 and *BR* Chapter 3.

Week 3. *Generation X*. First Exploratory Essay WebX posting (research question) due Friday, January 23, at midnight.

Jan 19 **No school! Martin Luther King day.**

Jan 21 Come to class having read *GenX* 73-117 and *BR* Chapter 8.

Jan 23 *GenX* 119-128. **First Exploratory Essay WebX posting (research question) due at midnight.**

Week 4. Finish *Generation X*. Second Exploratory Essay WebX posting (working thesis) due Wednesday, January 28, at midnight.

Jan 26 *GenX* 129-152 and *BR* Chapter 9.

Jan 28 *GenX* 153-173. **Second Exploratory Essay WebX (working thesis) due at midnight.**

Jan 30 *GenX* 175-183 and *BR* Chapters 10 and 11.

Week 5. Exploratory Essay draft deadlines Monday and Friday. Interpretive projects assigned.

Feb 02 **First draft of Exploratory Essay due.**

Feb 04 *BR* Chapter 12.

Feb 06 **Final draft of Exploratory Essay due by 5 p.m.** Interpretive group projects assigned.

Week 6. Short fiction readings on electronic reserve. Drop deadline.

Feb 09 Electronic reserve readings: Mason, from *In Country*, and Alexie, "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven."

Feb 11 Electronic reserve reading: McPherson, "A Loaf of Bread."

Feb 13 **Drop deadline.** Electronic reserve reading: Gaitskill, "Tiny Smiling Daddy."

Week 7. Analytical Essay assigned. Work on Interpretive Projects.

Feb 16 Electronic reserve readings: Bambara, "The Lesson," and Stephenson, from *Snow Crash*.

Feb 18 Electronic reserve reading: DeLillo, "Videotape." Group work on Interpretive Projects, time permitting.

Feb 20 Group work on Interpretive Projects. **Analytical Essay assigned.**

Week 8. Interpretive project presentations, as scheduled. Midterm grades, February 27. Start reading *White Noise* for Week 9.

Feb 23 Presentations.

Feb 25 Presentations.

Feb 27 Presentations. **Midterm grades.**

Week 9. Begin discussion of *White Noise*. First Analytical Essay WebX posting (research question) due Wednesday night.

Mar 01 *White Noise* through Chapter 10.

Mar 03 *White Noise*, Chapters 11-14. **Analytical Essay WebX posting (research question) due by midnight.**

Mar 05 *White Noise*, Chapters 15-18.

Week 10. March 8-12: Spring Break! Enjoy a little vacation reading: *White Noise*, Chapters 19-24.

Week 11. *White Noise*. Second Analytical Essay WebX posting due Monday night. Outline due Friday, March 19.

Mar 15 *White Noise* through Chapter 24 and *BR* Chapter 13. **Analytical Essay WebX posting (working thesis) due by midnight.**

Mar 17 *White Noise*, Chapters 25-26.

Mar 19 *White Noise*, Chapters 27-29. **Outline due for Analytical essay.**

Week 12. *White Noise*. Analytical essay first draft deadline. Collaborative projects assigned.

Mar 22 *White Noise*, Chapters 30-31.

Mar 24 *White Noise*, Chapters 32-33 and *BR* Chapter 16. **Analytical essay first draft deadline.**

Mar 26 *White Noise*, Chapters 34-37. **Collaborative hypertext projects assigned.**

Week 13: *White Noise*. Analytical essay second draft deadline.

Mar 29 *White Noise*, Chapters 38-40 and *BR* Chapter 14.

Mar 31 Work on and discuss Analytical Essays.

Apr 02 **Analytical essay second draft deadline.**

Week 14: Analytical essay FINAL DRAFT deadline.

Apr 05 Work on and discuss Analytical Essays.

Apr 07 Work on and discuss Analytical Essays.

Apr 09 **Analytical essay final draft due by 5 p.m.**

Week 15: Work on collaborative projects.

Apr 12 Work on collaborative projects.

Apr 14 Work on collaborative projects.

Apr 16 Work on collaborative projects.

Week 16: Collaborative Hypertext project presentations, as scheduled. Last week of class.

Apr 19 Presentations.

Apr 21 Presentations.

Apr 23 Presentations. **Last day of class.**

- **Self- and group-evaluation sheets due by 5 p.m. Friday, April 23.**

- **Final draft of hypertext project must be uploaded by midnight on Friday, April 23. Please email me your group's URL**

- **WebX component due by noon on Monday, April 26.**

Finals Week: April 26-30: No class meetings or exam.