Guidelines for Teaching EN 101 and 102 Online

These online courses were written in 2017 in a collaboration between the College of Continuing Studies, the Innovation Team, and the First-Year Writing Program. UA Libraries created the EN 102 library materials. They underwent minor revisions in summer/fall 2020. As you approach teaching these classes, here are some things to be aware of:

# Textbooks

The textbooks are the same for both EN 101 and EN 102.

* Distance learning classes (regular fully online courses offered through CCS): *A Writer’s Reference* (Hacker and Sommers, 9th edition). Contact our book rep, Curtis Rutherford, for desk copies: curtis.rutherford@macmillan.com. Refer to the approved book list for isbn’s.
* Main campus AV or Hybrid classes: The Norton Field Guide Custom UA edition, with Analog, ISBN 9780013490911. A link to the ebook should be built into your course in Blackboard. See Luke’s Sunday bulletin for instructions on providing access to your students and for getting a Norton account via our book rep Scott Cook (scook@wwnorton.com).

# Before the semester begins

1. Edit the following in your course:
   * Your name on the home page
   * Welcome letter on the home page. You can modify the existing letter (access it via content collection) or write your own. You can also create a video if you want. (Instructions for accessing and editing documents in the content collection are found in a separate handout.)
2. Create your syllabus in OIRA. Please note that your syllabus is a hybrid of FWP and online-specific content, so be sure all required elements are present.
   * Edit your instructor information on the syllabus. You do not have to enter your home phone number; students should generally contact you via email or IM. The general English dept office number is 205-348-5065.
   * Office hour days and times (can be by appointment)
   * See the Online English Instructor Blackboard page for sample syllabus content. Content to check
     + Other required course materials
     + Papers/projects/word counts/distribution
     + Policy on missed exams and coursework (you can set your own late paper policy)
     + Use of laptops and other technology
     + Minimum student technical skills
     + Technical support
3. Set up all of your Turnitin assignments
   * Turnitin assignments are located within the last part of each module. Go into that part and locate the placeholders. At the top click Assessments🡪Turnitin Assignments. Refer to the course schedule and syllabus for due dates. Everything is worth 100 points.
   * Each module has a draft, a PeerMark assignment, and revised essay. The placeholders include proper titles; please use these titles when naming your assignments so they match essay instructions.
   * Instructions for creating Turnitin assignments, as well as PeerMark instructions and question libraries, are located in a separate handout.
   * Once you have created the three Turnitin assignments, drag and drop them into the correct location on the page. Delete the placeholders by hovering over the arrow to the right of the name and clicking “delete.”
4. Set up your grade book by going to full grade center. Instructions for setting up the weighted grade column, reorganizing the order of columns, and hiding columns are found in a separate handout.
5. Review all of the modules and instructions. Familiarize yourself with the class.
6. Go to the Introduction discussion in the introduction module and introduce yourself to your class.

1. Email your students and/or send an Announcement that forwards to their Crimson account with information about logging in to the course, ordering textbooks, getting started, etc. You should also mention that anyone registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) are welcome to discuss their individual accommodations with you.
2. Figure out how you want to hold office hours. Some options include Zoom and Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. There are some tutorials here: <http://cit.ua.edu/tutorials/>.

# Grading procedures

* Rubrics are on a 100-point scale. Read the rubric and be kind; the journals, discussions, and prewriting activities are designed to have students write often, practicing their skills and building toward their major essays. Think of these as generative and confidence-building assignments. Reward students for their labor. Drafts should be thought of in the same way: not finished, polished pieces but works in progress.
* Missing work should be assigned a grade of “0” in the grade book. You can change the grade if a student submits late work. Failing to enter zeroes for late work can result in a falsely inflated grade because the grade book calculates only grades you assign.
* Discussions and homework assignments should be graded within a couple of days of completion. Because many assignments build on each other, please be sure to grade the first assignment by the time the second is due. Major essays should be graded by the time the first draft of the next major essay is due. If you are behind on grading, it’s courteous to email your students with an explanation.

## Process work

* Discussions, journal entries, and homework assignments require different amounts of feedback, depending on the assignment. Be sure to read the prompts to determine the type of feedback students will need.
* For these assignments, focus more on students’ ideas than on their grammar / organization / MLA format (unless specified in the assignment instructions), especially because many of these assignments are considered pieces of the writing process. Some assignments may specify that instructors will be leaving a certain type of feedback (such as letting them know whether their research is on the right track or helping them to narrow/refine ideas), so read all prompts carefully. A couple of sentences to a short paragraph or bulleted list are generally fine for most assignments leading up to the major essays. Blackboard also allows for spoken responses, if you prefer. You may wish to poll students about what type of feedback is most helpful to them.

## Essay drafts and peer review

* For both courses: Please use GradeMark within Turnitin to comment on and grade essay drafts, including the final essays. Do not export into Word or have students email you their essays. If the assignment is closed to students, or if Turnitin/Blackboard are experiencing technical issues, you can upload an essay on your student’s behalf or accept via email and have a student upload it when the site is back up. All essays and comments should be housed within your Blackboard courses. You can choose whether or not to submit drafts to the Turnitin database, under Advanced options when setting up assignments.
* The amount of feedback you leave on Turnitin rough drafts is up to you. You may wish to provide feedback verbally during a conference or as a voice memo, and/or you can make notes on the draft. Rubrics/draft grades are meant to help ensure students are on the right track and are not generally an indication of how well the student will do on the final essay. For all drafts, do make sure that the student is following the assignment and is learning to document sources.
* The document for how to set up PeerMark assignments is located in the instructor Blackboard shell (and on the FWP website). Students must complete two peer reviews plus a self review, for a total of three reviews. A rubric is provided to ensure that students are providing sufficient feedback on their peers’ essays, but keep in mind that some students are much more adept at this skill than others. After the first peer review, you may wish to review all comments and email students with the types of feedback you’d like to see them leaving on essays.

## Final drafts

Final drafts should include four types of feedback within Turnitin:

* Use QuickMarks for common errors: grammatical or mechanical errors, style, formatting, etc. You can find a library of commonly used quickmarks within turnitin and can also create your own. In order to prevent your feedback from overwhelming students and to teach them to proofread their own papers, try not to mark every grammatical mistake. Rather, mark them all on one paragraph or page and make a note that you won’t be marking any more for the rest of the essay. Or, choose a few of the students’ most frequent errors to comment on and refer students to specific places in the Hacker to fix these errors.
* Use in-text bubble comments and highlighting to mark sentence-level content issues. (Good introduction; this topic sentence needs work because…; transition between the ideas in these two sentences; this point is out of place/doesn’t fit your thesis/the paragraph; etc.) Try to comment on the good as well as the bad and offer specific suggestions for improvement. Again, provide good feedback but don’t overwhelm your students.
* Use the Comment box for end comments. Try to begin and end with something positive, providing students with specific things they do well and can continue to work on. End comments should address the essay’s overall content, organization, and sentence-level issues. Remember that the goal of these courses is to help students develop and support their ideas with good writing; you may wish to review the course objectives and the rubric (including how things are weighted on the rubric) and shape your comments accordingly.
* Use the Rubric to score the student in each category. You can edit the score if necessary (to reflect late paper penalties, for example) but please do not deduct specific numbers of points for missed commas, MLA errors, etc. These issues should be reflected in your rubric category grades.
* For a rationale of this grading method, please see Nancy Sommers’s *Responding to Student Writing*.

## Academic misconduct/plagiarism

* If you see an alarming Originality Report at the draft stage, you can talk to the student about revising to follow instructions, writing a new paper (if he/she submits one written for another class) or using proper citation methods. Don’t accuse the student of plagiarism, but do work with him/her to correct any problems you see. If you have a questionable draft, don’t hesitate to contact Natalie with your concerns. If you suspect an essay revision (final draft) of academic misconduct, you need to follow departmental and university protocols for submitting the questionable paper for review. Do not mention plagiarism to students at this stage; we have a set process for dealing with academic misconduct that we must follow. Contact the FWP as soon as you notice a questionable paper. Please read and follow the procedures [here](https://fwp.english.ua.edu/instructors/academic-misconduct/).

# Frequent Communication with Students

* Please be fully present in your classes. Let students know when you have graded major assignments. It can also be helpful to compile a list of frequently asked questions or common errors you see on essays and send them out to everyone. Some instructors send a weekly announcement or email with reminders, tips for work-in-progress, clarification about instructions (especially if students are emailing you individually with questions), etc.
* Check your email daily—both Blackboard and UA email—and respond promptly. If you will be out of town or won’t have access to email, it’s a good idea to let students know when you will check your messages. You can set up notifications in Blackboard to let you know when students email you there.
* Be thoughtful in your late work policy and be sure to apply it to all students. See the FWP standard syllabus materials for sample late work policies. Even though it is on your syllabus, it’s a good idea to remind students of your policy from time to time.
* Remind students when course evaluations are available at the end of the semester. You should get email reminders about these evaluations. To get maximum participation, you may need to send multiple reminders.

# Posting Midterm and Final Grades

* Be on the lookout for emails about submitting grades. All 100-level instructors must submit midterm letter grades for students by the deadline.
* You may enter a grade of NA (never attended) if a student has not logged into your class and/or has not submitted any work by midterm.
* If students stop participating and earn a final grade of NC, you can list DO (dropped out) as a reason and put the date they last logged into the course.
* For all other reasons for NC grades, including missing work, list “Earned.” **Make sure you enter zeros in your Blackboard grade book after each deadline has passed so students are aware of their current grades in the course.**
* You may need to remind students of the ABC No credit policy (on syllabus). There’s also a grade appeal process, which is found on the [FWP website](https://fwp.english.ua.edu/students/grade-appeals/).
* After you’ve posted final grades, you’ll need to submit your final grades to the FWP office ([mfields@ua.edu](mailto:mfields@ua.edu)). Look for more information from the FWP director. Instructions and templates will be emailed in the Sunday bulletin, which you should read every week.

# Other

* Contact tech support (techsupport@ccs.ua.edu) for technical issues you encounter. Please copy Natalie ([nloper@ua.edu](mailto:nloper@ua.edu)) so she can check for the same issues in other sections.
* Please let Natalie know if you find any typos, missing material, unclear instructions, etc. It would help to list these by course and module, with specific information about the problem.
* You can find lots of helpful tutorials and other info on the Center for Instructional Technology [website](https://cit.ua.edu/).
* For First-Year Writing Program questions (including program policies, plagiarism procedures, and anything else you might imagine) see the FWP [website](https://fwp.english.ua.edu/).
* All online instructors must complete certification through the [CCS Online Educator Development Program](https://itas.ua.edu/teaching-online/online-educator-program/). Even if you’ve already been certified, you can take or re-take courses that look helpful. This training is not required of main campus hybrid/AV teachers.

# Editing Course Content

All online courses at UA go through a rigorous development and review process every 3-5 years. A&S must ensure that these courses comply with our accreditation standards and CCS must renew copyrights for all materials each semester.

Because of this, courses must contain four major papers/projects, including the final. The online curriculum builds in writing assignments, discussion posts, homework assignments, readings, videos, and instructions that meet UA standards for accessibility and accreditation.

Natalie will provide tutorials for editing deadlines and content, but any changes you make to your courses should be clearly communicated to your students and accessible to all learners.

Additional questions? [nloper@ua.edu](mailto:nloper@ua.edu)