

# English 201



## *The Human Nature Debate: Dialogues Across the Disciplines*

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And by appointment

ENGL 201  
Spring, 2014  
Room: NB 1.77  
Days: Tue/Thurs  
4:15-5:30 pm

### **Course Description:**

#### In a Nutshell:

Our course is an introductory, yet intensive, first-year “Writing Across the Curriculum” (WAC) class that focuses on critical thinking and analysis, skills integral to the process of writing in any field. The goal of this course is to significantly improve students’ writing in all areas through our investigations and applications of rhetorical “moves” that writers across the disciplines make.

The Theme:

As we explore writing as subject, we will focus on the theme of “Human Nature Debates,” through multiple perspectives including (but perhaps not limited to) sociological, psychological, philosophical, religious etc. What *is* the nature of humans? What’s wrong with us? What’s right? To what extent are we the sum of our choices? To what extent are we products of genes or fate? Do the answers to these questions apply to *all* humans? Says *who* and *how* do they say it? What will *you* have to say on these subjects? How can you say it in the best way possible (in a variety of forms and genres) given your context and audience?

The Material:

As we attempt to grapple with these questions through dialogue and inquiry, we will work on our analyzing and critical thinking skills in order to improve our writing by applying a variety of interdisciplinary theoretical excerpts to case studies, film, literature and other forms of pop-culture via writing responses, free-writing exercises, discussion posts, comments/ arguments raised in class, group work, group/collaborator/individual writing workshops, research steps/assignments, quizzes, and formal writing pieces.

*Reflective Writing:*

Quite often, students will also be asked to reflect upon their own writing in metacognitive/reflective exercises. In this way, we will treat our own pieces of writing as course texts—just as we would with published writers’ work.

*The Portfolios (101 and 201):*

By the completion of the course, students will have a working 201 portfolio to which they can refer and expand during future writing situations. In a final reflective writing piece, students will use both their 201 portfolios and their 101 portfolios as primary sources in order to analyze their entire first-year writing experience.

*So, wait. What does “Writing Across the Curriculum” mean exactly?*

For our purposes, it means this: We will strive to identify and practice the moves that writers in many fields make with the purpose of honing both our rhetorical skills as well as our abilities to recognize *when* to apply these skills and in *which* forms—decisions largely dependent upon your object of study and your intended audience.

To identify rhetorical patterns and to practice how, why, and when to apply them, we’ll cover quite a bit of ground together, including (but not necessarily limited to) the following:

<u>Skills:</u>	<u>Forms:</u>	<u>Objects of Study:</u>
Describing	Email	Art Pieces/Artifacts
Persuading	Analysis Essay	Other Visuals
Analyzing	Incident Narrative	Literature
Narrating	Observation Report	Events
Researching	Social Science Report	Secondary Research
Connecting/Comparing	Social Science Analysis	Primary Research
Reporting	Annotated Bibliography	Theory Text Excerpts
Drafting	“Timed-Writing” Essay	Film Clips
Revising	Research “Lit Review”	Your Own Writing
Refining/Polishing	Interview/Survey	Your Classmates’ Writing
Reflecting	Creative Non-Fiction	
Drafting		

John Jay Writing Program Learning Objectives:

*Invention and Inquiry:* Students learn to explore and develop their ideas and the ideas of others in a meaningful and complex way.

*Awareness and Reflection:* Students learn to metacognitively analyze their writing, to plan their writing tasks, to monitor their progress, and to adapt their writing methods as needed.

*Writing Process:* Students learn methods of composing, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading.

*Sentence Fluency:* Students learn to write clear, complete and correct sentences and use a variety of independent and dependent clause forms.

*Conventions:* Students learn to control language, grammatical structures, and punctuation necessary for academic success.

*Rhetoric and Style:* Students learn rhetorical and stylistic choices that are appropriate and advantageous to a variety of genres, audiences and contexts.

*Claims and Evidence:* Students learn to develop logical and substantial claims, provide valid and coherent evidence for their claims and show why and how their evidence supports their claims.

*Research:* Students learn to conduct research (primary and secondary), evaluate research sources, integrate research to support their ideas, and cite sources appropriately.

## Course Texts:

### Required:

Unless otherwise specified, all required readings on the course schedule can be found in our Blackboard (Bb) course under the “Readings” tab. Please note that we will use Bb very often; you will need to have consistent access to it.

### Required:

Please familiarize yourself with Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (OWL) at this link, which you should save in your computer’s “favorites” or on your phone for easy access: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>. We will use and refer to this free resource often. In addition, you should adopt this site as your one-stop-shop for *all* writing needs—for all classes and beyond!

### Optional:

A writing manual such as the John Jay Handbook or any other guide with up-to-date samples/sections of MLA and APA format can be purchased if you’re interested—and especially if you won’t be able to refer to OWL online because of Internet restrictions at home or elsewhere. There are many options available on Amazon low-cost, but the OWL site above is free. Please see me if you’d like recommendations for a hard copy manual.

Note: We will conduct a basic “tour” of both our Bb course and the OWL website during the first weeks of class.

## Office Hours:

During any point in the semester, all students are welcomed and encouraged to utilize my office hours as necessary for questions, discussions et cetera. Throughout the semester, I may hold *required* “one-on-one” conferences in my office. These meetings are intended to address student strengths, weaknesses, questions, concerns, and progress; signs-ups will be discussed in class and held via Discussion Board in Bb.

My general weekly office hours are posted above; you *do not* need an appointment for the hours listed above. However, if you plan to come during community hour, it’s a good idea to let me know ahead of time, because that time gets very busy and, occasionally, meetings are scheduled during that time. While these hours will most likely remain the same each week, I reserve the right to reschedule them (with advance notice) in order to best serve both class and department needs.

On occasion, I will also hold additional hours, but these are only by appointment. If you’re not able to meet me during any of the above hours, please email for an appointment. On rare occasions, telephone conferences may be scheduled.

## **Participation:**

An extremely important component of the class is student participation. All students should come to class prepared with assignments, appropriate texts, and notebooks and should be ready to participate with questions, comments, ideas, and opinions. Attendance points are part of the participation component of this course, because absence (full or partial) renders students unable to participate. (*See Attendance Section.*)

### Attendance:

Given the nature of a discussion-based workshop course, attendance is required. All absences will affect students' final participation portion of the course. (*See Grading Section.*)

While *all* absences affect your grade, missing more than four could result in failure of the course according to department policy.

*Absent students are responsible for all assignments, announcements, class work, et cetera missed during class including the submission of any assignment due on that day. Work is due on the day indicated whether you are present or not. Quizzes missed due to absence or tardiness will not be available for make-up. (See Quizzes Section.)*

Students should be aware that their attendance is not just marked on their physical presence. Any student who does not make an attempt to participate and/or is unprepared and/or is visibly distracted during class by taking part in any other activity including sleeping, texting, doing homework for another class et cetera will be marked absent.

Note: Any technological distraction (texting, ringing, etc) that occurs when we're not using such technology for class purposes will result in an absence.

### Late Arrival/Early Exit:

Class will begin and end exactly on time. Entering at any point after attendance has been taken (or leaving before class is dismissed) will result in a "late" documentation. Three "lates" will equal one absence; however, arriving more than twenty minutes late (or leaving more than twenty minutes early) is considered an automatic absence for that class session. However, please note that you are always welcome to join or leave class at any time, regardless of whether you are receiving late/absent status.

### Leaving/Reentering:

If you absolutely must leave class briefly (to use the bathroom, for example) you

do not need to ask permission. Please discreetly exit and re-enter the room with minimal distraction. However, I expect that this will be a very rare occurrence. Because *all* exits and entrances, no matter how discreetly you handle them, are somewhat disruptive, I can't help but (pretty quickly) notice those who make a habit of coming in and out. Repeatedly missing class-time in this way will affect your participation grade.

In sum: All attendance is documented and counted as part of your participation grade—regardless of *any* reason for having to miss (all of or part of) class. This policy is designed to keep distractions to a minimum and to ensure that you're fully a part of each class session; these policies are not intended to make anyone feel excluded or “trapped” during unavoidable circumstances, including (but not limited to) illness, weather, and obligations to family, work, other classes, appointments, professional development etc. We must all make choices every moment of the day regarding where we'll be when, and we all understand that surely, certain situations certainly *do* call for having to miss class time. However, the fact remains that participation is noted during each and every class for each student; if you're not there—no matter the reason—you can't earn participation points.

### **Assignments:**

English 201 students will be held responsible for a wide variety of assignments including several formal assignments: the Observation Report, the Character Psych Analysis, and the Social Science Project. Each of these assignments will incorporate primary and secondary textual analysis (both in process and product) and each of these three essays will be built from a variety of smaller, scaffolding assignments—especially the social science research project, which will require a variety of different writing types and steps at different points of the process.

Specific readings, models, instruction, group work and preliminary writing steps will be devoted to preparing students for each phase of each writing project. However, students will be held responsible for explaining, analyzing, and reflecting on the prescribed steps that led to their “final” products in order to improve knowledge transfer. In other words, students will reflect on *how* they built each advanced piece of writing in order to better apply some (or all) of these steps to future product-focused writing assignments—those with few pre-steps.

Other assignments include readings, writing exercises/ worksheets, presentations, group work, article presentations, response writing/homework, and preliminary writings including outlines, proposals, rough drafts, et cetera. Writing will be assigned *very* regularly; this is a *writing* course!

It is the student's responsibility to remain aware of all assignments by staying up to date with *both* the course outline *as well as* Blackboard postings, checking both on a very regular basis. Please note that all students (present or not) are responsible for any

announcements made in class as well as those posted in blackboard pertaining to assignments or any other order of business. (*See Participation/Attendance Sections.*)

Questions concerning assignments are always welcomed and are strongly encouraged. Such questions may be asked in class, via email, via telephone, via conference, et cetera. Please note, however, that without exception all assignments are due *by the beginning of class* on the date specified (including Blackboard/online submission assignments) unless announced otherwise or unless a specific excuse has been approved in advance. Excusals will be granted only due to extenuating circumstances.

#### Assignment Late Policy:

- Formal assignments will drop one letter grade for each day late.
- Rough drafts, homework writing, and any other informal writing/class work will never be accepted late.

Be aware that an assignment handed in at any point after the specific time on the due date will automatically be considered one day late unless a specific exception has been made between the professor and student.

Unless otherwise specified, all essays and assignments (other than online submissions—such as Discussion Board—that don't allow for proper formatting) should be submitted in typed hard copy using Times New Roman, Size 12 and should be double-spaced, stapled and formatted according to current MLA requirements (including 1" margins).

#### **Plagiarism Policy:**

It is expected that you will work honestly in every way. All work—for all assignments—must be your own. When including the work of others, you must cite properly (as we'll cover in class).

Please review CUNY's policy on academic honesty by clicking the link below. By staying in this course, you're agreeing that that you've both read and understood the following: [http://www1.cuny.edu/portal\\_ur/content/2004/policies/image/policy.pdf](http://www1.cuny.edu/portal_ur/content/2004/policies/image/policy.pdf)

#### **Quizzes:**

Short unannounced quizzes will be given often throughout the semester (approximately once a week). Quizzes are designed to assess students' comprehension of the basic knowledge that should have been attained upon completion of the homework. The reading quizzes are very easy; they're simply designed to give credit to those who did the reading or any other kinds of homework that do not require you to hand in work.

In order to practice timed writing as a genre (one that you'll need for midterms/finals/tests in other classes), you will also take timed writing quizzes from time to time once we've covered this form of writing as a "genre."

All quizzes will be averaged at the completion of the semester with the exception of the lowest grade, which will be dropped. The lowest grade is dropped, because missed quizzes (due to any circumstance) result in a zero (0). Since there's not enough time for weekly makeups, a missed quiz can be your dropped zero.

### **Grading:**

- ~ 10% Quizzes
- ~ 10% Participation (Incl: Attendance/Writing Center)
- ~ 15% Low-Stakes Informal Writing (Incl: HW/Classwork/Project Steps etc)
- ~ 20% Incident Report/Psych Character Analysis Project
- ~ 45% Final Portfolio (Incl: Social Science Project, Creative "Spin-off" Project, and First-Year Writing Reflective Essay—101 and 201 Portfolio Reflection)

### **Technology:**

DoIT helpdesk: 212-237-8200.

Some of our classes will be held in computer labs on campus; please see our course schedule and watch for Bb announcements regarding these details.

Given the amount that we will use Blackboard, email, and e-portfolio for class—especially for accessing reading assignments and for uploading work that will be graded—it's imperative that you allow for appropriate amounts of homework time in areas with computer and/or Internet access. There are several computer labs on campus and the entire campus has free Wi-Fi for JJ community members and guests. If you need more information on where (and how) to arrange computer lab time outside of class, please see me. If you're having trouble accessing Wi-Fi, please contact the DoIT helpdesk at 212-237-8200.

#### Email:

*With no exceptions, you must use your John Jay email for this course.* As per the request of the Provost, instructors are not to respond or send to any other email address. Furthermore, because your JJ email is synched with our Blackboard course, all announcements made through Bb will be delivered to you via your John Jay email account. If you do not use your JJ email, you will miss out on important class information. The college sends information to this address as well; it's important that you're aware of opportunities and announcements sent from the school, since many of them can benefit you!



We will cover email etiquette very extensively during the beginning of the semester; once we have gone over this writing form, you will be held responsible for your emails as part of your low-stakes writing. I'll expect that you will write appropriately for your audience—a key element of all good writing. Since we all write emails *a lot* in our professional and academic lives, email writing is perhaps the first type of writing that we should master in order to put it into immediate, everyday practice. (*It doesn't take a whole lot more effort to write an "appropriate" email than it does an "inappropriate" one; I promise! And, remember, the term "appropriate" can only be defined in the context of "audience."*)

As part of our email etiquette work, we'll also discuss the importance of consistency with regard to "checking in." In 2013, almost all professional environments (such as John Jay) expect colleagues and participants (such as yourself) to check email *at least* once a day on weekdays. Given that New York City (where you live, study, and work!) could be labeled as the fastest-paced and most competitive city in the *entire* world, it's advisable that you get in the habit of checking your professional email as often as necessary. I will not be emailing you daily (so don't worry about that!), nor are you expected to answer daily, but surely, each day, many a times a day, you will receive important emails from a variety of senders. So, you should get in the habit of checking your professional email at least once every single day.

*Efficient students and professionals do not let email pile up in their professional accounts. They know that it results in missed opportunities and even in bad reputations.*

#### Blackboard:

This class requires that you use Bb, which we will go over together during the beginning of the semester. All of our readings, and many of our assignments, will be posted in Bb. Sometimes you will submit your work here, and very often you will find readings and assignments here—including announcements regarding upcoming classes, special events, pointers etc. Please be sure that you obtain the information/passwords et cetera needed to access our Bb course. *Without consistent Bb access, it will be very difficult for you to keep up with the class.* As our key resource, Bb is a great way to both eliminate text costs and stay connected in a centralized easy-access location.

#### **Writing Center:**

212-237-8569

<http://jjcweb.jjay.cuny.edu/writing/about.htm>

As part of the participation grade, all students are required to attend at least one Writing Center session or workshop. Within the first two-three weeks of class however, I will let

you know if I suggest making a standing appointment, which will be part of your participation grade.

It is your responsibility to make appointments and to cancel any if need be by calling ahead of time. It is also your responsibility to be prepared for each tutoring session with whatever we are working on in class. This includes any steps we have done together or any work that you have done on your own. Providing a copy of the assignment itself (which you can pull up anywhere via Bb) will greatly help the tutor to help you!

Students have the entire semester to complete the Writing Center requirement; in turn, there will be *absolutely no exceptions* made concerning this portion of the final grade, even if you are unable to squeeze in sessions at the end of the semester. The WC books up very quickly at the end of the semester!

### **Accessibility Services:**

John Jay's Accessibility Services provide comprehensive access to support services and programs for students with hearing and visual impairments, mobility impairments, learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders, chronic illnesses and psychological impairments. If you know or suspect that you need accommodations, please visit: <http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/2023.php> for more information.

Please note that any accommodations required in/for class must be arranged through Accessibility Services before discussed with the instructor.

## Course Schedule:

### Notes:

1. All readings/assignments listed below are due on the day for which they're listed. Unless otherwise noted, students are responsible for each reading on the day marked. Readings have been highlighted with a green mark.
2. Most informal writing and homework are *not* marked on this schedule. Short writing assignments and homework will be assigned daily—both in and out of class—and will be announced in class and on Bb. These will be assigned based on writing project needs as well as class needs.

### ➤ 1 [1/28-1/30]

#### *Thurs:*

- Basic course overview/introduction
- Basic Bb overview
- Reading and homework assigned for Tuesday
- Diagnostic Essay (completed in class)

#### *Tues:*

- "Man's Nature is Good" - Mencius
- "Man's Nature is Evil" - Hsun Tzu

-Note: In class, we will go over the syllabus and basic Bb functions. We will also introduce ourselves. If time, we will start class theme discussion.

### ➤ 2 [2/4-2/6]

#### *Tues:*

- "The Individual and the Pattern of Culture" - Ruth Benedict
- HW due: 2-3 Paragraphs in which you discuss the arguments of Mencius and Hsun Tzu

-Note: Last week's work/conversation will continue in class

#### *Thurs:*

- "The Rival Conceptions of God"—C.S. Lewis
- "Goblin Market"—Rossetti

-Note: "Theorist Dialogue" assigned in class

➤ 3 [2/11-2/13]

*Tues:* Computer Lab L2.72.05  
-Theorist Dialogue due

-Note: “Personal Rhetoric” writing and discussion will take place in class. Email workshop will take place in class as well. Lastly, object homework will be assigned in class.

*Thurs:* Computer Lab L2.72.05  
-Object HW due in class for in-class workshop

-Note: Both “Museum Assignment” and “Research Article Homework” will be introduced in class today. If time, quick overview of academic articles, focusing on our major course genres.

➤ 4 [2/18]

*Tues:* -Rubin Museum of Art field trip  
-Meet at the museum: See Bb for details

*Thurs:* No class on 2/20; JJ follows a Monday schedule today

➤ 5 [2/25-2/27]

*Tues:*  
-Article HW due  
-Museum HW due

Note: In class, your first formal writing project #1 will be assigned today;  
\*\*See assignment for due dates

*Thurs:*  
■ “A Good Man is Hard to Find”—O’Connor  
-Incident Narrative HW due (See project #1 assignment)

➤ 6 [3/4-3/6]

*Tues:*

- Project 1 Incident Narrative due for your selected text (hard copy)  
(See Assignment for more info)

Note: In class, we will collaborate on Incident Narratives and continue with “A Good Man is Hard to Find” as a model text. You will also start your own character analysis and a “Triple-Entry Journal” will be assigned.

*Thurs:* Computer Lab L2.72.05

- Reading: Freud overview: Chapter from *Ten Theories of Human Nature* —Haberman and Stevenson
- “Triple-Entry Journal” on character due

Note: In class, we will work on character psych analysis, secondary source selection, and “unifying themes” based on your triple-entry work

➤ 7 [3/11- 3/13]

*Tues:*

- “Thesis” and supporting text HW (See assignment)

Note: In class, we’ll discuss structure, paragraph models, and the project rubric.

*Thurs:* Computer Lab L2.72.05

- Full Draft of Character Psych Analysis and Incident Report due

Note: In class, we will work with partners on our drafts before handing them in for instructor review. Also, you will be assigned the “Social Science Project.”

Also, in class, we will watch *Through the Wormhole* clips: Harvard Social Science Experiments, if time.

➤ 8 [3/18-3/20]

*Tues:* Computer Lab L2.72.05

- Social Science article (sample) reading due (See assignment)
- Social Science pre-research step due in class (See assignment)

Note: You will get your drafts back today  
and we will also hold an Inquiry Workshop  
for the Social Science Project.

*Thurs:* Library Presentation (Meet in Lib Classroom: Lib 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl.)

➤ 9 [3/25-3/27]

*Tues:*

- Social Science pre-research step due in class (See assignment)

Notes: In class, we will review analysis and  
argument issues with Project 1, continue to  
workshop our Social Science inquiries.

*Thurs:* Computer Lab L2.72.05

- Social Science research/prep work due (See assignment)
- Final Project 1 drafts due

➤ 10 [4/1-4/3]

*Tues:*

- Reading: *Ten Theories of Human Nature*—Haberman and  
Stevenson's "Existentialism" Chapter
- Social Science research/prep work due (See assignment)

*Thurs:*

- Excerpts from *Winesburg, Ohio*- Sherwood Anderson
- Social Science research/prep work due (See assignment)

➤ 11 [4/8-4/10]

*Tues:* Computer Lab L2.72.05

-Continued in-class work on Social Science Writing  
(See Assignment in Bb)

-Social Science research/prep work due (See assignment)

*Thurs:* Computer Lab L2.72.05

-Continued in-class work on Social Science Writing  
(See Assignment in Bb)

➤ 12 [4/15-4/17]

SPRING BREAK! ☺

➤ 13 [4/24]

*Tues:* Spring break continued ☺

*Thurs:* Computer Lab L2.72.05

-Final collaborator editing session

-Presentation overview in class

*Fri:*

-Last day to hand in final Social Science project (11am, Bb)

➤ 14 [4/29-5/1]

*Tues:* Computer Lab L2.72.05

-Presentation workshop day

-Full portfolio overview and brainstorm session in class

*Thurs:* Computer Lab L2.72.05

-Portfolio Prep day

-Collaborator review workshop

➤ 15 [5/6-5/8]

*Tues:*

- Social Science/Creative Writing “Spin Off” Project Presentations
- Final Portfolios due and reflections shared in class (See assignment for instructions)

*Thurs:*

- Social Science/Creative Writing “Spin Off” Project Presentations

➤ 16 [5/13-5/15]

*Tues:*

- Social Science/Creative Writing “Spin Off” Project Presentations

*Thurs:*

- Social Science/Creative Writing “Spin Off” Project Presentations
- Evaluations/ Wrap-up

➤ 17 Finals Week

- Portfolio Return/Conferences
- See Schedule in Bb

\*\*\*Please note that the syllabus and course schedule are subject to change at the instructor’s discretion. In the rare case of a syllabus change, students will be notified in class and/or via Bb announcements.