English 208: Composing Research

Ball State University - Fall 2026
Office Hours:

Welcome to English 208! This semester will be an opportunity to learn a multitude of ideas about the way writing, research, and rhetoric coincide to help us make sense of and enter into the tumultuous world of academic discourse. This course introduces and further develops your understanding of research methods introduced in English 103; as well as refreshes elements, strategies, and conventions of persuasion used in constructing written and multimodal texts. Specifically, this semester will require you to take a researched, critical stance on a particular topic of your choosing using credible academic texts as backing. While this course does not have a particular theme, as many composition courses across the country tend to, you may notice that discussions of community, context, and concerns regarding social justice arise. This is not accidental. If we are to understand how best to communicate with our audience, we may need to understand how to fit into their context and/or their community and make the best argument we can based on that information. Students that have completed their run in English 208 should be able to:

Course Outcomes

- Demonstrate proficiency in reading, evaluating, analyzing, and using material collected from electronic sources (such as visual, electronic, library databases, Internet sources, other official databases, federal government databases, reputable blogs, wikis, etc.).
- Plan, develop, and complete individual research projects that include generating a research question; finding, evaluating, and documenting relevant sources; analyzing and synthesizing researched information.
- Demonstrate cultural and disciplinary awareness of issues of audience, purpose, and conventions (including genre, grammar, format, and citation).
- Understand principles of relevant, effective, and ethical primary and secondary research.
- Draft and revise research-based writing in multiple, disciplinary and multimodal (where appropriate) formats, including a research report or paper using relevant research to support an organized argument that addresses a research question.

Course Content and Format

The content and format of ENG 208 are designed to enable students to achieve the course goals:

- Discuss, analyze, and respond to texts composed in a variety of disciplinary genres and a variety of media; from a variety of cultural perspectives; and using different kinds of research and addressing diverse audiences.
- Analyze the connections among research questions, research methods, audience, and genre, including digital, multimodal, and multimedia writing.

- Discuss and analyze the rhetorical history and impact of conventions (grammar, citation, format, and genre) as they vary by culture and discipline.
- Design research projects that involve generating a question; collecting data through various forms of primary and secondary research; and analyzing and interpreting that data using diverse perspectives and methods.
- Compose proposals, progress reports, final research reports, and other forms of disciplinary specific writing in multiple drafts, involving peer and instructor feedback, teacher-student conferences, and self-reflection.

Materials for Class:

We will be utilizing computers during this course and many of our projects (both large and small) will be explicitly multimodal. If I suspect that anyone in the class is misusing an electronic, I reserve the right to ask you to put your device away or count you absent for the day. If I notice a trend where certain people are spending more time looking at their screen than participating in class, I will reach out to you either after class or by email to ask you to redirect your attention. Also, while we may be discussing Twitter, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, etc this semester, I ask that you refrain from using those types of distracting sites while in the class. Feel free to share a funny Tik Tok or meme at the start of class (or on Canvas!), but electronics should be used for educational means only once class begins. Generally speaking, I will take my headphones out of my ear and put my phone away at the door, so I ask the same of you. You know, respect!

Labor Policies and Grading Criteria

Late Work Policy:

A late project is a late project, but that doesn't necessarily mean the end of the world. If you find yourself approaching a deadline and don't think you can make it, please reach out to me before two in the morning the day the assignment is due. Everything is negotiable, and I am here to help you. More specifically:

- A project or project draft is considered "late" if it is not completed by the deadline. That means a project due at 11:59 pm is late at 12:00 am. A major assignment that is late will not be considered completed. I reserve the right not to accept assignments one week after the original due date unless we have spoken ahead of time.
    - This class is all about discussion, responsibility, and negotiation. If you need a few extra days to complete an assignment, then you should reach out to me and ask this either in class or through our Canvas communication system. If you ask me for time before a project is due, I will rarely say no. If you ask me for extra time after it is due, I will decide on a case-by-case basis.
- If you miss a smaller assignment, you are encouraged to hand it in within a week without having to tell me you've done so. If you exceed the deadline of a smaller assignment by more than a week, you need to let me know you're planning on handing it in.

- If you exceed a certain number of absences in the class (detailed below), you lose the ability to hand in late or missing work.

Attendance:

According to university policy: you are required to come to our class every day, because participation in this course will help you in the development of your ideas through collaboration and critical engagement with text. That being said, we are all humans, we have lives, and we cannot always be present in class (physically, mentally, emotionally, etc.). That being said, I expect you to be in class when you can be. In terms of the actual policy in this class: There are no "attendance points," that I'm keeping track of. I will take attendance every day and will note your absence, but you are not "marked down" for missing a class. So, how do I hold you accountable for missing class?

If you hit a certain threshold of absences (20% of the class total; 9 absences overall this semester), a few things happen:

- **I will no longer allow you to make up any late work that you may already owe me.** THIS INCLUDES MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS IN THE COURSE THAT YOU MUST COMPLETE IN ORDER TO PASS THE CLASS.
    - Example: After you exceed the allotted 9 absences, you would not be able to hand in a homework assignment you may have missed from around the time of your third absence.
- **You must ask before completing any work you may miss after your ninth absence. If you attempt to hand in work late without notifying me first, it will remain marked as "incomplete."** THIS INCLUDES MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS IN THE COURSE THAT YOU MUST COMPLETE IN ORDER TO PASS THE CLASS.
    - Example: On the day of your tenth absence, an in-class writing is due. You must first meet with me in-person to ask if it is alright to hand in.
- **The highest grade you are able to achieve if you exceed the 9 absence limit without university approved absences is a B+.**

The following absences are excused per university guidelines:

- Disability accommodations
- Pregnancy, hospitalization, or medical leave
- Bereavement leave
- Religious observation
- Jury duty or court witness leave
- Military leave
- Ball State sponsored events

Major Assignments:

- Assignment 1: Annotated Bibliography & Proposal (Proposal due around Week 4, Annotated Bib due around Week 6)
    - This proposal will break down your main hypothesis, any primary research you plan to undergo, and will provide a basic timeline of completion. Taking your preliminary topic creation to the next step, your job will then be to research ~10 scholarly sources and hand them in alongside a proposal for your research paper.
- Assignment 2: Research Paper (Due around week 12)
    - The major task of the English 208 coursework: an 8-12 page academic research paper. Your goal will be to outline the primary and secondary research you discovered in connection to your topic of choice and present it in essay format.
- Assignment 3: Multimodal Abstract Project (credit: Emilie Scheiss; Due at the end of Finals Week)
    - This explicitly multimodal group project will task you with creating an abstract for your major research paper. This abstract should be around 200 words long, should include a basic summary of your topic and findings, and include a few keywords that might help make your research paper easier to find if you were to ever get it published!

Peer Review/Reflection

- Each major assignment will come with a reflection and/or peer review opportunity.

Grading Contract:

This course will be utilizing a grading contract model this semester. For more information about why a grading contract model has been chosen for this course, see the Course Policies Page on Canvas. As a class, we will discuss this contract at various points of the semester to make sure it feels fair. The minimum grade to pass this course is a C-.

Formal Assignments:

Your major essays/compositions in this class. Not handing in one of these three major assignments will translate into a grade of a D+ in the class. You *must* hand in all three formal, major assignments in order to pass this class.

Informal Assignments:

These are the smaller assignments we'll do during the week and over the weekends. ICWs (In-class-writings), homework, reading responses, discussion posts, etc. These will usually be marked either with the words "Informal assignment" or the "IA" tag on canvas for ease. There

will be approximately 18 of these over the course of the semester, but that number may change as needed.

Additional Assignments:

These are smaller opportunities to engage in writing experiences outside of the classroom. Things like reflections, tutoring sessions, librarian visits, group writing exercises, etc. These will be clearly explained in a document titled "Additional Assignments" on our canvas page.

You must earn a C- or above to pass the class, as per the University Core policy.

"A" Grade	"B" Grade	"C" Grade	D+ or Below
Formal Assignments • Project 1 • Project 2 • Project 3 **Additional Assignments** • Remix Annotated Bibliography or Proposal OR • 2 Additional Assignments AND • At Least 84% of Informal Assignments	**Formal Assignments** • Project 1 • Project 2 • Project 3 **Additional Assignments** • 1 Additional Assignment AND • At Least 75% of Informal Assignments	**Formal Assignments** • Project 1 • Project 2 • Project 3 **Additional Assignments** • Under 75% of Informal Assignments	**Formal Assignments** Missing at least one of the formal assignments required in the "C" column (each additional missing assignment lowers by a letter grade) OR **Informal Assignments** Less than 65% Assignments
If you have any questions about any requirements on this chart, or if you wish to negotiate with me on the amount of work required by this chart, please approach me or email me at any time.			

Required University Policies:

Academic Integrity and FERPA

The Writing Program is committed to upholding the university's academic ethics policy and to maintain a climate of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Always cite and give credit to the source, even if they're unpublished or from in-class discussion/notes. Additionally, students who are currently enrolled or formerly enrolled, regardless of their age, are subject to the Family Educational Right and Privacy Act.

Accommodations

If you need course adaptations or accommodations due to a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services office coordinates services for students with disabilities. You'll need to have documentation on file with them before any accommodations can be provided. You can contact them at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Writing Center

All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center to get additional feedback on your writing. The Writing Center can help you at any stage of the writing process, whether you're just getting started and need help brainstorming or when you're wrapping up a project and just want a second set of eyes. We work with writers from all disciplines and with all kinds of writing, including essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts.

You can choose from three appointment types: getting started on a new project (Planning appointment), discussing an existing draft (Feedback appointment), or scheduling time to work, with a tutor on hand to keep you motivated (Accountability appointment). To schedule a free appointment, go to bsu.edu/writingcenter. We offer online appointments any time we're open, or you can meet a tutor face-to-face in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays and Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings. Make sure you plan ahead, because appointments book quickly!

Counseling Services

The Ball State University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to all students. The Counseling Center is located in Lucina Hall, Room 320. To schedule an appointment, you can contact us at 765-285-1736. Ball State now also offers a 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached at 765-285-HOPE (4673). The Crisis Line is a mental health resource for those who are struggling with any mental health concerns, including thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide.

University Statement Required in All Syllabi Fall 2026:

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services Office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Please review Ball State University's Statement on Freedom of Expression, the resources on Ball State's Freedom of Expression webpage, and Ball State's Beneficence Pledge.