ENGL 1101: Science in Public

Section J4 | 10:05-10:55am MWF | Skiles 311

Section P2 | 1:05-1:55pm MWF | Hall 106

Section L2 | 2:05-2:55pm MWF | Skiles 156

Instructor: Dr. Christina M. Colvin | Contact: christina.m.colvin@gatech.edu
Office: Skiles 304 | Office Hours: MWF 11:00am-noon and by appointment

Course Website: www.ColvinCourses.com

Course Description

Neil deGrasse Tyson, David Attenborough, Jane Goodall, Stephen Hawking, and Bill Nye the Science Guy: these household names likely come to mind when we consider the "public face" of science. Beyond the work of these popular figures, a diversity of science communicators—journalists, artists, web designers, documentary filmmakers, and others—also nourish the public's appetite for accessible and entertaining discussions of scientific breakthroughs, controversies, and curiosities. Broadly, this course will explore the values, ethics, and communication challenges revealed when we look closely at the intersections of science, culture, and composition. While compositions produced by students will constitute the major texts of this course, additional readings will include recent nonfictional texts composed about science-related topics. We will practice how to structure and support arguments, produce meaning through situation-appropriate language, genre, and design choices, and critically reflect on our rhetorical strategies and the strategies of others. In addition, we will develop a familiarity with the rhetorical and cultural trends that currently shape how public audiences consume, circulate, and comprehend scientific knowledge and methods.

This course will train you to identify, employ, and synthesize the principles of *w*ritten, *o*ral, *v*isual, *e*lectronic, and *n*on-verbal (WOVEN) communication through informal and formal writing assignments, collaborative work, in-class discussion, exercises, and presentations, as well as the use of a variety of digital tools.

Course Outcomes

Using the learning outcomes established by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents and the Council of Writing Program Administrators, Georgia Tech's Writing and Communication Program (WCP) has established learning outcomes and expectations for English 1101, which you can review here. Go to the site and read the policies; you are responsible for knowing and adhering to them.

In addition to the course goals for all WCP courses (above), in this course, you will also *identify and describe* several ways contemporary American culture conceptualizes and represents scientific inquiry and its place in human societies.

Required Materials

1. *The Best American Science and Nature Writing 2015* (*BASNW*), edited by Rebecca Skloot, ISBN 9780544286740

2. *WOVENText*, edited by Amy Braziller, Elizabeth Kleinfeld, and the Georgia Tech Writing and Communication Program; this is the official textbook for Georgia Tech's first-year Writing and Communication Program and is available for purchase as a RedShelf eBook

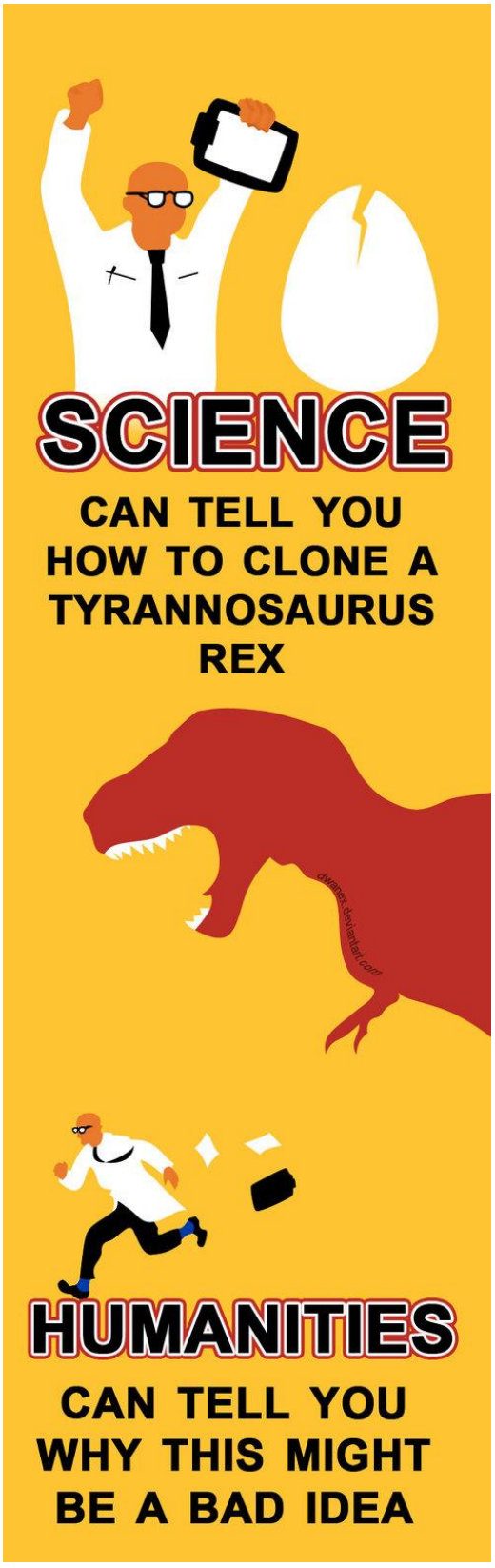
3. Laptop computer with access to internet-based tools, brought to class daily

Additional required texts will be made available through our course website, Course Reserves, or T-Square.

Final Grade Scale	**Project Grade Weights**
90-100……..…..A	Common First Week Video 1%
80-89……..….B	Blog Entries 19%
70-79……..….C	Spinning Science 10%
60-69……..……D	Transforming Tech Science 15%
Below 60……..…..F	The Value(s) of Science 20%
	Course Website 10%
	Reflective Portfolio 15%
	Class Participation 10%

WCP Common Policies

Review the WCP Common Policies here. You are responsible for reading, knowing, and adhering to these policies. By signing the syllabus agreement at the conclusion of this document, you verify that you have read and understand both this syllabus and the WCP Common Policies.



Overview of Graded Components

Common First Week Video (1%)

Review the syllabus for the class and "Critical Concept Three: Communication is Multimodal" in *WOVENText* Chapter 2 (pp. 37-42). Create a video (60-90 seconds) in which you articulate a challenge relating to one of the modes—written, oral, visual, electronic, or nonverbal communication—that you'll be engaging with in class projects this semester. What challenges do you expect to face in relation to this particular mode (use specific examples from your past experience)? How might you overcome these challenges (again using examples from your past experience)?

Your project should comply with all the specifications on the assignment sheet that will be available via our course website. After uploading your video to YouTube, post a link to the video on T-Square.

Blog Entries (19%)

For each of the dates indicated on the course schedule below, you will post an entry of *at least* 250 words to your website's blog. In each post, respond to one or more of the specific texts associated with the due date.

Writing blog posts enables you to develop your public writing voice; you should anticipate that these posts will be read not only by me, but by a larger audience that includes your peers. You may even choose to continue writing in your blog after the conclusion of the course! Oftentimes, your blog entries will be used to generate class discussion, so keep in mind as you write that you may be called on in class to discuss the content of your posts. Further, writing blog posts enables you to engage and explore the readings, topics, and writing and communication strategies brought up during class more thoroughly than our class exercises and discussion allow.

On the dates indicated, blog entries are due by 9:00am. Late blog entries (i.e., those posted after 9:00am on a due date) will earn a "zero" ("0"). I will comment directly on your blog entries; make sure comments are enabled on your website.

Communication competencies emphasized: Written; Visual; Electronic

Spinning Science (10%)

Using the genre of a photo essay, develop an argument about the definition, use, implied value, and/or rhetorical function of science in either a print or electronic advertisement (you may use a television advertisement available for viewing on the internet, for example). You may choose from a range of possible advertisements: to name just a few examples, you might analyze an ad for a product, company, startup, nonprofit organization, or university.

Your Spinning Science projects will consist of two components: your Revised Text and Reflection. The Revised Text should contain 600-750 words and 3-5 images that correspond to your written analysis.

Your project should comply with all the specifications on the assignment sheet that will be available via our course website. Post your completed projects on your website with a separate and labeled Page for each component.

Communication competencies emphasized: Written; Visual; Electronic

Transforming Tech Science (15%)

For this project, work in groups of 4-5 to transform (and, as is appropriate, translate) a text that discusses science on our campus. First, choose a text that represents science at Georgia Tech; this may be a promotional video, academic article, piece of science journalism, news feature, bulletin posted on a campus board, or

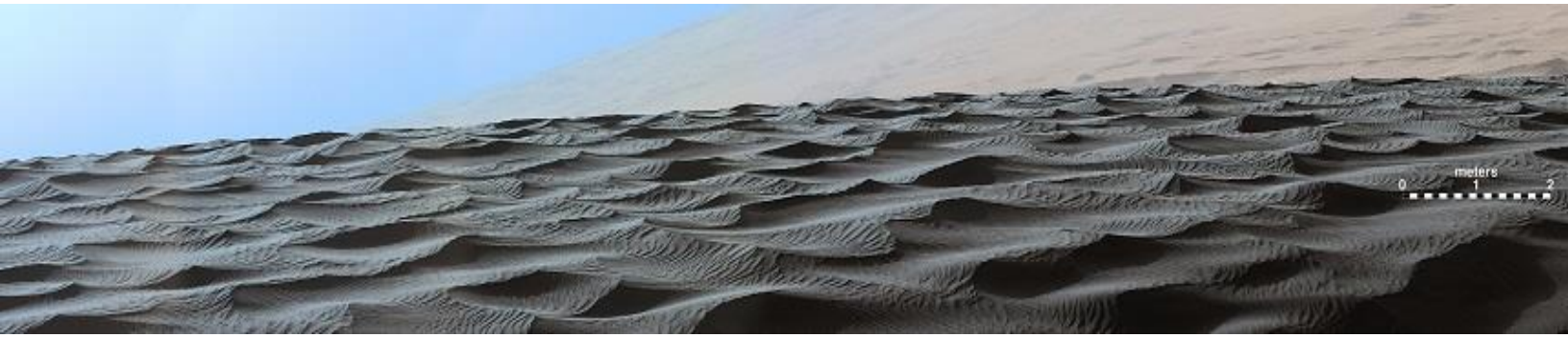
digitally disseminated solicitation for lab participants, for example. Then, transform your text's genre, medium, and at least one aspect of its rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, setting).

Ask: what can your chosen genre, modes, and medium do that the text's original form could not? What kind of constraints, opportunities, and obligations do you have to your chosen audience? How can the synergy between genre, modes, and medium support your text's purpose?

This project will consist of four components: your group's Topic and Genre Declaration, Revised Text, Class Presentation, and Reflection. Regardless of genre and medium, your Revised Text should include at least 650 words of written material. If your group produces a filmed TED Talk, for example, post your script in addition to the video.

Your project should comply with all the specifications on the assignment sheet that will be available via our course website. Post your completed projects on your course website with a separate and appropriately labeled "Page" for each component.

Communication competencies emphasized: Written; Oral; Visual; Electronic; Nonverbal



From NASA's Curiosity Mars rover. Credits: NASA/JPL-Caltech/MSSS

The Value(s) of Science (20%)

For this project, craft an argument about the rhetorical function of a single stated or implied value in two pieces of public science communication. One of your two texts must rely primarily on written communication and be taken from the course readings (the only exception being if you choose to compose in response to *Project Nim*); choose the other based on your interests (that is, the second text *should not* be from our course readings and can be in any mode or medium).

You have the option of completing this project in a group or individually.

Your project should be multimodal and demonstrate your attention to the possibilities and constraints of the genre you choose for composing. In particular, you should choose a genre and medium that best suit the rhetorical purpose of your composition.

Your project should comply with all the specifications on the assignment sheet available via our course website. Post your completed projects on your course website with a separate and appropriately labeled "Page" for each component.

Communication competencies emphasized: Written; Oral; Visual; Electronic

Course Website (10%)

Throughout the semester you will update and design an individual, WordPress-based website to feature and make public the work you produce for the course, including blog entries, drafts, reflections about writing in

progress, and final drafts. Your website enables you to share your work with a large, digital audience that includes members of the class, your peers, members of the public, potential employers, and others. No prior experience with web design or digital authoring is required for successful completion of course assignments. Additionally, while you are required to include the items listed below, you are encouraged to add more content to your site. When completing your Reflective Portfolio (described below), you will draw on the collection of work hosted on your Course Website to show how you have met the course learning outcomes.

To begin, create an account at https://wordpress.com/. After you have registered, email me your website's address (the due date for this step is listed on the class schedule below). Then, take some time to customize your site via WordPress. Customization will help make your site reflect your interests and personality.

In addition to the more polished assignments of the course, your website must include a continually updated "Works-in-Progress" page. On this page, you will post drafts, peer review reflections, as well as in-class work and compositions-in-the-making. Each addition to your Works-in-Progress page should be clearly dated for organizational purposes and ease of review. You will use this page to aid in reflection, drafting, and revision.

To receive full credit, your website *must* include the following items:

- 200-350 word Welcome Statement
- Six blog entries*
- Works-in-Progress page*
- Spinning Science project*
- Transforming Tech Science project (can be the same content across all group members' sites; must include all required components)*
- The Value(s) of Science project (must include all required components)*
- Optional revisions of major projects, posted to an independent page (not the same page as the original version of the project)
- 200-350 word Website Reflection
- External Links Page (optional)

*You will produce these pieces as part of the progression of the course; I describe them briefly above and in detail on the assignment sheets.

Create blog entries using the "Posts" link on your WordPress dashboard. Create all other items as static "Pages" directly accessible from your site's landing page. Project components should be clearly labeled and organized via your site's Menus.

Communication competencies emphasized: Written; Visual; Electronic

Reflective Portfolio (15%)

In lieu of a final exam, ENGL 1101 students complete a final multimodal portfolio that is due during your section's scheduled final exam time (see http://www.registrar.gatech.edu/students/exams.php for the final exam schedule).

The portfolio will include a substantial reflective essay, brief introductions to each artifact, and selected examples of your WOVEN work products. The general portfolio assignment sheet can be found here. You will develop your portfolio throughout the semester and work on finalizing it at the end of the semester. You will create your portfolio by drawing on much of the material on your Course Website. While your Course Website displays your work as a means to engage with a public audience, develop your public writing voice, and practice revision and reflection, you will design your Reflective Portfolio to persuade WCP professors that you have met the stated outcomes of the course. Your project should comply with all the specifications on the assignment sheet that will be available via our course website.

The multimodal reflective portfolio is produced in an open-source portfolio platform called Mahara; you can access the GT instance of Mahara using your GT login credentials at http://mahara.gatech.edu.

Communication competencies emphasized: Written; Visual; Electronic

Class Participation (10%)

The success of this course depends on your active, engaged class participation. You are required to have completed all of the assigned readings prior to the beginning of the class session; you are also required to have the text we are discussing open to the proper page (digital and/or physical) during class.

You will participate in a number of in-class activities including peer review sessions, writing workshops, and group collaborations. These activities, in addition to your regular contributions to discussion (I expect, at minimum, at least two substantive contributions to class discussion every week), will be factored into your class participation grade.

You are expected to attend all class sessions. You are, however, permitted four absences without penalty. If you exceed four absences from class, your overall, final grade for the course will drop by 1/3 of a letter (i.e., a final grade of a "B" will become a "B-"). Your grade will continue to drop 1/3 of a letter for every additional absence thereafter. Missing eight or more classes will result in an "F." I take attendance every day.

If you miss a class session, you are responsible for finding out what the class covered in your absence. You should first contact a classmate for this information; only after having consulted with a classmate (or two) should you get in touch with me for additional clarification, if needed. I will not respond to generalized, "So what did I miss?" inquiries or requests for summaries of class content.

You are expected to come to class on time. Every three late arrivals to class will count as an absence. In short, three tardies equal one absence. Such an absence will count towards your total number of missed classes.

Communication competencies emphasized: Written; Oral; Nonverbal

Assessment and Feedback

The WCP common assessment rubric is a guide to how your work for the course will be assessed and will help you understand where your work can improve. We will reference the assessment rubric frequently throughout the course and discuss the ways it can support the completion and revision of your projects.

You are welcome to see me during office hours to discuss strategies for improving your work. Additionally, I will provide feedback for each of your major projects; this feedback will reference the assessment rubric. In addition, you should keep track of your own grade in the course. If you have trouble doing so, please email me to clarify your current standing in the class.

When I return a graded assignment to you, I request that you read my comments about your work carefully and wait 24 hours before coming to speak with me about your grade. I have found that this approach results in more productive discussions about graded work.

Contact/Communication

Email is the best way to contact me if you have questions or concerns. Generally, I will respond to all student email within 24 hours (although on weekends and holidays, it may take a little longer). Likewise, I may need to contact you by email. You are responsible for checking your campus-based email account at least once every 24 hours.

Late Work

All projects and assignments must be turned in on the date and time indicated. Late submission of a major project will reduce the highest achievable grade of that project by 1/3 of a letter (i.e., a "B" project will become a "B-"). The project's grade will continue to drop 1/3 of a letter for every additional 24-hour period the assignment is not submitted in full. Blog entries submitted after the due date will earn a "zero" ("0").

Electronics

Since we are composing multimodally throughout the course, you are expected to bring to class and operate laptops, tablets, and smart phones. I encourage you to develop best practices for negotiating among virtual communities and the real time of the classroom. What choices can you make to remain attentive to your peers and me, while at the same time engaging with digital resources for appropriate class use?

Public Nature of the Course

Consider all writing for this class to be "public." Part of becoming an effective writer and communicator is learning to appreciate the ideas and feedback of others. In this course, our purpose is to come together as a community. Avoid topics that you wish to keep private or that you feel so strongly about that you are unwilling to listen to the perspectives of others. You have the option of not associating your full and/or real name with the public work you produce. Your grades will not be made public.

Resources for Students

Communication Center. The peer and professional tutors at the Georgia Tech Communication Center are trained to help you brainstorm, plan, and execute your multimodal projects. I encourage you to take advantage of this excellent resource. The Communication Center is located in Clough Commons 447, and you can find information about it on the web here.

Academic Misconduct. I take plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct seriously. Should I suspect that you engage in academic misconduct in this course, I will refer the case to Georgia Tech's Office of Student Integrity. You can find their website here: http://osi.gatech.edu/

You should also become familiar with Tech's Academic Honor Code (http://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-affairs/academic-honor-code) as well as the OSI's Academic Misconduct Process (http://osi.gatech.edu/content/academic-misconduct-process).

Schedule of Classes, Readings, and Assignments

Schedule Changes. Please be aware that this schedule is tentative and may change as the course progresses.

Week One, August 22-26

MON. *In class:* Introductions; syllabus review

WED. *Read:* The syllabus for ENGL 1101: Science in Public
In class: Syllabus Q&A; introduction to WOVEN communication
Due today: Signed syllabus form

FRI: *Read:* "Critical Concept Three: Communication Is Multimodal" in *WOVENText* Chapter 2 (pp. 37-42)
In class: Common first week activities

Week Two, August 29-September 2
MON. *Read:* "Climate Change" and "Fracking" by Darryl Cunningham in *Science Tales: Lies, Hoaxes, and Scams* (T-Square)
Due today: Common First Week Video

WED. *Read:* "Into the Maelstrom" by Eli Kintisch in *BASNW* and browse (that is, develop a general impression of the purpose of) the website for the Union of Concerned Scientists http://www.ucsusa.org/
Due today: Email christina.m.colvin@gatech.edu your name and a link to your completely set-up website before the beginning of class

FRI. *Read:* "Linux for Lettuce" by Lisa M. Hamilton in *BASNW* and "Sexy Science? The New Glam of Science in Advertising" by Chris Mooney in *Discover Magazine*
Due today: Blog entry on Kintisch and/or UCS

Week Three, September 5-9
MON. No class; Labor Day holiday

WED. *Read:* *WOVENText* Chapter 13 "Photo Essays" as well as the breakdown of Eric Hoagland's "Life in the Googleplex" from this section

FRI. *Read:* Browse the following two websites:
- "Why mouse genetics?," The Jackson Laboratory http://research.jax.org/mousegenetics/index.html
- "Mice and Rats in Research," the National Anti-Vivisection Society http://www.navs.org/science/mice-and-rats-in-research

Due today: Blog entry on any Week Three websites/readings

Week Four, September 12-16
MON. *In class:* Peer review, introductions
Due today: An introduction from your Spinning Science project

WED. *Read:* Peer's project
In class: Writing workshop

FRI. *In class:* Peer review, complete Spinning Science project. You will read and evaluate the projects of the members of your peer review group according to the provided grading rubric. Your grade for this exercise will be determined by the thought and effort you put into your reviews as well as your reflection on the review process. At the conclusion of the in-class review session, post to your WIP page 1) a "grade" for your peer's project determined according to the provided rubric, 2) 1-3 sentences describing what you learned about *your* writing or *your* project through the peer review session, and 3) *your plan* to revise *your* project.
Due today: Spinning Science projects (Revised Text and Reflection)

Week Five, September 19-23
MON. *Read:* "How does multimodality encourage translation, transformation, and transference?" from *WOVENText*, Chapter 3
In class: Transformation group exercise

WED. *Read:* "Robot Replicates How Our Ancestors First Walked on Land" by Samantha Cole in *Popular Science* and "Robot Helps Study How First Land Animals Moved 360 Million Years Ago" by John Toon from *Georgia Tech News*

FRI. *Read:* "Running is Always Blind" by Sam Schramski in *Nautilus*
Due today: Blog entry on Cole, Toon, and/or Schramski

Week Six, September 26-30
MON. *Read:* "Teaching dogs to talk is easier than you think" by Anne Woolsey in *CNN News* and "Dogs, not Dawgs" by Jason Maderer from *Georgia Tech News*
Due today: Transforming Tech Science Topic and Genre Declaration

WED. *In-class:* Group meetings

FRI. *In class:* Group meetings

Week Seven, October 3-7
MON. *In class*: Transforming Tech Science Class Presentations
Due today: Transforming Tech Science Revised Text

WED. *In class:* Transforming Tech Science Class Presentations

FRI. *In class:* Transforming Tech Science Class Presentations
Due today: Transforming Tech Science Reflection

Week Eight, October 10-14
MON. No class; Fall Break

WED. *Read:* "Waiting for Light" by Jake Abrahamson in *BASNW*

FRI. *Read:* "Curious" by Kim Todd in *BASNW*
Due today: Blog entry on *The Martian* and how science is portrayed by the film *or* any Week Eight reading

Week Nine, October 17-21
MON. *In class*: *Project Nim* screening

WED. *Read:* "Retired chimps may cost Emory millions" from the Associated Press
In class: *Project Nim* screening continued

FRI. *In class*: Discussion of *Project Nim*
Due today: Blog entry on *Project Nim*

Week Ten, October 24-28
MON. *Read*: *WOVENText* Chapter 6, "Selecting and Proposing Projects"

WED. *Read*: "The Really Big One" by Kathryn Schulz from *The New Yorker*

FRI. *Read:* "Curious" by Kim Todd in *BASNW* (reread it)
Due today: Blog entry on Schulz or Todd (if you didn't write about Todd during Week Eight)

Week Eleven, October 31-November 4
MON. *Read*: "Lost in Translation—Basic Science in the Era of Translational Research" by Ferric C. Fang and Arturo Casadevall from *Infection and Immunity*
Due today: Value(s) Topic and Genre Declaration

WED. *Read*: "Introduction" by Rebecca Skloot from *BASNW*
In class: Revision exercise

FRI. *In class*: TBA

Week Twelve, November 7-11
MON. *In class:* Peer review, incorporating evidence
Due today: A supporting section from your Value(s) of Science project

WED. *Read:* Peer's project
In class: Writing workshop

FRI. *In class:* Individual and group work

Week Thirteen, November 14-18
MON. *In class*: Value(s) Class Presentations
Due today: Value(s) Supported Argument

WED. *In class*: Value(s) Class Presentations

FRI. *In class*: Value(s) Class Presentations
Due today: Value(s) Reflection

Week Fourteen, November 21-25
MON. *Read:* Reflective Portfolio instructions
In class: Reflective Portfolio discussion and preparations

WED. No class; Thanksgiving break

FRI. No class; Thanksgiving break

Week Fifteen, November 28-December 2
MON. *In class*: Reflective Portfolio drafting and revision

WED. *In class*: Reflective Portfolio drafting and revision

FRI. *In class*: Reflective Portfolio drafting and revision

Week Sixteen, December 5
MON: *In class*: Closing remarks; course evaluations
Due today: Course Website and optional revision

The week of December 8-15: *the Reflective Portfolio is due* during your section's scheduled final exam.

STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

PLEASE READ, SIGN, AND RETURN THESE STATEMENTS TO DR. COLVIN.

I affirm that I have read the entire syllabus and Common Policies site for ENGL 1101 and understand the information and the responsibilities specified.

_____
print full name

_____
legible signature

_____
Date

DIRECTIONS: Read carefully and check all that apply.

☐ I give my instructor, Christina M. Colvin, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, ENGL 1101, as examples in presentations and in print and electronic publications.

☐ I do not want my work used as examples in any situations.

If you give permission for your work to be used, please indicate how you want to be acknowledged:

☐ Please acknowledge me by my full name.

☐ Please use my work, but do not acknowledge me by name.

The following information enables me to contact you if your work is used.

_____
print full name

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legible signature

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print campus address

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cell and home phones

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school and home email addresses

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