

English 1301: Composition I

Fall 2026

Course: Composition I
Meets on: TTH, 11-12:15 am
Meets in: MAB 206

Instructor: Dr. Rosemary Briseno
Office: MAB 112-B
Office hours: M-Th 12:30-2
Office ph: 432-837-8152

email: rbriseno@sulross.edu

“Good composition is like a suspension bridge - each line adds strength and takes none away.” --- Robert Henri

Required texts *(please ensure you acquire the correct edition!)*

- 1) No textbooks are required for this course; however, there are required readings, and A/V materials that will be provided to students by the professor via Blackboard and in person.



Required materials

A laptop is required for this course. You should prepare to bring yours to class every day. Internet access to Blackboard and your sulross.edu email address. Most readings/ material and important class news/updates will be sent to you via Blackboard. **It is your responsibility to check**

Blackboard and your email/Announcements daily!

Course description: Introduction to college-level writing with emphasis on developing effective written communication through critical reading, analytical thinking, and the writing process. Students will practice invention, drafting, revision, editing, and proofreading while composing essays for a variety of purposes, audiences, and rhetorical situations. The course emphasizes thesis development, organization, paragraph development, style, grammar, and effective use of evidence. Students will engage with diverse readings as models for analyzing rhetorical strategies and developing their own arguments. Instruction introduces principles of academic research, source evaluation, integration and documentation of sources, and MLA conventions. Through multiple writing assignments and revision, students will develop the rhetorical awareness, critical-thinking skills, and writing strategies necessary for success in college-level coursework.

Student Learning Outcomes (English, undergraduate)

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

Apply the writing process through prewriting, planning, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading to produce effective college-level essays.

Compose focused, well-organized essays that demonstrate a clear central idea, logical development, effective paragraphing, and appropriate transitions.

Recognize and apply various modes of exposition, including narration, description, exemplification, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, process analysis, classification and division, and definition.

Select appropriate modes of exposition according to the writer's purpose, audience, subject, and rhetorical situation.

Develop ideas through specific and concrete details, examples, observations, and experiences rather than relying on vague statements or generalizations.

Apply the principle of "showing, not telling" by using sensory details, imagery, specific examples, action, dialogue, and description to create engaging and effective prose.

Write effective descriptive and narrative passages that use precise language, significant details, and purposeful organization to communicate experiences and ideas.

Develop effective thesis statements and controlling ideas that establish the focus and direction of an essay, and construct unified and coherent paragraphs containing clear topic sentences, relevant supporting details, and logical connections between ideas.

Analyze how professional and student writers use rhetorical and expository techniques and apply appropriate strategies to their own writing.

Revise writing for content and development, strengthening ideas through greater specificity, description, examples, organization, and clarity rather than focusing revision solely on surface-level errors.

Edit writing for clarity and correctness, demonstrating control of sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics appropriate for college-level writing.

Evaluate their own writing critically and identify strategies for improving development, organization, clarity, style, and effectiveness.

Marketable skills

- 1) Students will communicate effectively in writing and speaking.
- 2) Students will use different research strategies to address problems and develop ideas that engage a variety of perspectives.
- 3) 3. Students will recognize how social and cultural contexts shape meaning and language.

Core Curriculum Benchmarks

- 1) **Critical Thinking.** Students will develop critical thinking skills to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
- 2) **Communication.** Students will develop communication skills to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.

Required Student Responsibilities Statement

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Student Handbook and the Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog and for abiding by the University rules and regulations. Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements of such laws.

For Remote/Online Courses Only - SRSU Distance Education Statement

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE COURSE

- 1) **Required Format for Turning in Assignments** When
using Blackboard to turn in assignments, please turn in all of your assignments in either **Microsoft Word OR PDF formats**. I will not accept work turned in using any other format. Every assignment must be typed or digitally uploaded, unless otherwise noted.
- 2) **Collaborate** This course
sometimes uses Collaborate--- for office hours and to view occasional recorded lectures. It is imperative that you can use Collaborate from wherever you are taking the course. You must know how to do this---and you must be familiar with all other features of Blackboard Not knowing how is not excusable and is student negligence.

Here is how you log on to Collaborate:

- 1) Log into Blackboard, click on Collaborate in the left-hand menu
- 2) Click on the name of our class (Advanced Composition). A little office door icon appears to the very left of this
- 3) Click on Join Course Room

- 4) Make sure your webcam is ON and microphone is MUTED

3) Confirming You Have Successfully Submitted Your Work

EACH TIME YOU TURN IN AN ASSIGNMENT you **MUST** use this two-step method to ensure your work was submitted correctly. **FAILURE TO COMPLETE THIS STEP CAN RESULT IN YOUR WORK NOT BEING PROPERLY TURNED IN AND THIS WILL BE COUNTED AS A "0."** Do not email me to check for you.

Confirming Submission of Your Blackboard Assignments, Methods 1 and 2

METHOD 1: **Assignment Link**

Click on the Assignment link to view the submission history for that assignment. If you are allowed to make more than one submission, you will also see a **Submission History** that will display all your submissions by *date and time. This is important to note especially when you are required to turn in your work by a specific deadline. If you dispute the day and time in which you claim you submitted your work, but Blackboard cites a different time/date (i.e. past the due date), you negate any possibility for any makeup work.

METHOD 2: **My Grades Tool**

You can also confirm your Assignment submission by accessing the **My Grades** area of a course. A yellow circle with a white exclamation point in the center will appear next to any Assignment that has been successfully submitted. You can access the submission history page by clicking either the name of the assignment or the yellow circle/white exclamation point icon.

Tech Assistance

Not knowing how to upload your work properly via Blackboard is not an excuse for not turning in assignments late. If you need help with the technology when submitting an assignment, contact the Lobo Technology Assistance Center (see below) immediately. If you need technical assistance, contact the Support Staff at the Lobo Technology Assistance Center (LTAC)

Who should I contact?

Online Support Desk

☎ 888.837.6055
✉ blackboardsupport@sulross.edu

Available: 24/7

- Logging into Blackboard
- Questions about Blackboard tools/software
- Trouble with tests/quizzes/assignments
- Error messages on Blackboard
- Online course video problems

Lobo Technology Assistance Center (LTAC)

☎ 888.837.2882
✉ techassist@sulross.edu

Available: Monday-Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

- Logging into your mySRSU/Banner/SRSU email
- Campus computer, computer lab, or campus Wi-Fi issues
- Security concerns with your SRSU or VPN account
- Questions about Office 365 or OneDrive



EXCLUSIVELY FOR ONLINE-ONLY COURSES!

Sul Ross State University allows a maximum of 20% absences in a course before an instructor drops a student for excessive absences. In this online course, "excessive absences" is defined as non-participation in the course for three (3) weeks or more. Any student dropped for non-participation will receive an F in the course.

To avoid being dropped, you must participate regularly. Participation in the course is defined as

- logging in to the course to check activities and to read discussion boards,
- gaining access to and using supplemental materials,
- posting on discussion boards as scheduled, and
- turning in assignments in a timely manner

Absences

Regular class attendance is important to the attainment of the educational objectives of the University. Each instructor will keep class attendance records, and the instructor's policy on class attendance will be explained at the beginning of the semester or term. The instructors may, at their discretion, drop a student from a course when the student has a total of nine absences. A student who is dropped from a course for excessive absences will be notified in writing by the Center for Enrollment Services after the drop has been approved by the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. Any student dropped for excessive absences will receive either an "F" or a "W" depending upon the faculty member's discretion.

Sul Ross allows students who are absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. The student notifies the instructor of each class scheduled on the date that the student would be absent for a religious holy day. Arrangements must be made with the instructor five working days in advance, and any examinations or assignments must be completed within five working days after the religious holy day.

Because this course is designed in a workshop/discussion format, you cannot fulfill the requirements of the course unless you attend regularly and on time. Your questions and contributions are central to our discussions and, therefore, our understandings of readings and writing process. You are responsible for material covered in class, *whether you are present or not*. Note that some in-class work (ie Journals) cannot be made up.

EXCESSIVE ABSENCES WILL HURT YOUR OVERALL SEMESTER AVERAGE!

Class Attendance: 3 Kinds of Absences

1) Authorized/Excused Absences (*Assignments MUST be completed BEFORE you'll be absent*)

These absences fall under university-sponsored activities (clubs, athletics, student government, etc). It is your responsibility to notify me before you will be absent, and to make arrangements to make up any assignment. You must notify me BEFORE you will be absent from class, not after. Work must be turned in BEFORE student is absent. **Student athletes:** You know ahead of time that you will be away at games; you MUST turn in work BEFORE you leave campus. No special privileges for anyone will be granted.

2) Explained Absences (*possibly excused*)

These are reserved for serious cases of illness or personal/family injury and/or other emergencies, which are beyond the student's control. ***Explained absences are given at the professor's discretion only.*** Makeup work allowed only IF student notifies professor ahead of time (a reasonable amount of time, not just prior to when class begins); student is solely responsible for completing /turning in assignment(s) within one week of absence. *If you are allowed turn in your work because of a pre-approved excuse, please follow these rules:*

3) Unexcused Absences (*never excused*)

The student did not turn in their work due to negligence. Negligence is defined as: the student not taking proper care in executing any and all assignments. For example: the student did not familiarize themselves with how Blackboard works. The student did not ensure their work was properly uploaded to Bb. The student did not check Announcements daily, as required. The student missed the deadline due to forgetfulness or other responsibilities getting in the way of uploading an assignment. Any work assigned/due earns "0" points. No makeup/late work allowed.

Excessive Absence Policy

--In a **MWF or TTh** course, you will earn a grade of "F", if you have **9 TOTAL absences**, which includes explained and unexcused absences. Authorized absences are not included.

Opportunities to make up assignments are available only for Authorized and/or Explained (extreme, urgent circumstances beyond university-sanctioned activities, given at the professor's discretion) it is your responsibility to turn in your work on or before the deadline. If the assignment is not turned in by the agreed upon deadline, the makeup work might be accepted by at 10 points off each day (weekends count) the assignment is late.

- 1) **Before you will be absent, notify me**—via email or phone call (email is preferred), in a reasonable amount of time (not 5 mins before class meets). Do not notify me during or after our class meets. Do not assume your absence will be excused.
- 2) **Make arrangements** with me to have the work turned in at a later time. If the excuse (for Explained Absence, not Authorized Absence) is granted, I will enforce a “0” as a placeholder grade. Generally, you will have 7 DAYS to make up the assignment; if you forget, the “0” stands. No exceptions.

Tardies

NOTE: I begin class promptly, so if you arrive late, you are disrupting the entire class and you potentially miss instructions and cutting into time you could be spending on an assignment or quiz.

Quizzes I give quizzes often. I administer them at the very beginning of class, so if you are late, know you will most likely be missing a quiz. These quizzes are usually short (about 6 questions, sometimes longer), and will take approximately 5 minutes to complete, which means---if you are more than 5 minutes late, you will most likely miss the quiz. **Being tardy to class does not provide students with the opportunity to make up missed quizzes.**

No Late Work Policy

Late work is not accepted for any reason due to **student negligence** (forgetting to turn in an assignment, forgetting to log in, not notifying your professor of impending absence, waiting until the last minute to begin assignments, not knowing how to use Blackboard, not managing your time properly, feeling exhausted after a long drive back to Alpine, etc).

Professor e-communication

I will communicate with the class through Announcements and by e-mail, so be sure to log in daily to check for announcements on the course home page and to check your Sul Ross e-mail account regularly.

Email

In an effort to maintain respect and clarity in the virtual classroom setting, please follow these guidelines when emailing your professor:

Please follow these guidelines when emailing your professor:

- 1) Include a salutation (Dear Dr. Briseno)
- 2) Provide your name, class, and section. Do not assume I know who you are because I have several students enrolled in different courses.

- 3) Clearly state the reason, problem/concern. Use full sentences; do a spellcheck.
- 4) Additionally, email is not the best way to teach; therefore, I do not respond to emails asking me to “look over” assignments. If you want to discuss any aspect of your work, please come to office hours.
- 5) Acknowledge that you have received my email with a simple, “Thank you” and a follow-up regarding your problem, issue, or concern; otherwise, I will be wondering whether or not your issue has been resolved.

Personal Responsibility

It is your responsibility to check Blackboard and your email/Announcements frequently! I leave detailed instructions and details in the Announcements/email feature and in the Tentative Assignment Schedule in Blackboard; it's up to you to check in and find out what's due, when, and how to turn in assignments. *I will not re-open links once they are closed*; as this is time consuming and a waste of precious time, so you must be aware of due dates and times.

If you are absent, do not ask me, “What did we do on the day I was absent?” I review each class day on Bb under Announcements/email; it's your responsibility to check that every day. *I will not privately re-teach the material the day you were absent. I am a professor, not a tutor.*

Academic Honesty

I expect each student to strictly adhere to the rules and regulations regarding academic pursuits. The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of their classroom. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. You are expected to do your own work.

Plagiarism Policy

---THIS COURSE HAS A ZERO TOLERANCE PLAGIARISM POLICY---

As a simple guideline, if you submit your own work, you will avoid all serious types of plagiarism. Nevertheless, a responsible student should also consider the less obvious variants of plagiarism, especially when writing research papers that require citations.

Instances of plagiarism, such as submitting an essay with sentences or passages cut and pasted from an online source, or a paper obtained from an online “paper mill,” **AI-authored homework, ChatGPT, or other assistance where the student did not author the work they have turned in, will automatically fail the assignment, receive a final grade of F, and be recommended for dismissal from the university. There is no excuse for serious plagiarism.** I will also regard unattributed citations – verbatim copying of another's person's work without indication of the source – as a serious form of plagiarism. In other words, don't insert any text in a paper that is not your own without also noting the source. You can email me with a question before an assignment is due, stop by my office during my office hours, or even parenthetically raise the question in your paper. *It's your responsibility to comply with principles of academic honesty; it's my responsibility to see that every student receives a fair and accurate grade.*

Here is my policy on plagiarism for this course:



The *first offense* of plagiarism, in part or in whole, will result in a failing grade in the course. The student has the right to appeal to the Dept. Chair, then Provost, and eventually to the Provost and VP for Academic and Student Affairs before imposition of the penalty. The decision of the Provost and VP for Academic Affairs is final.

ADA Accommodation/Disabilities Statement: Persons with disabilities that may warrant academic accommodations should contact me as soon as possible so that we may make arrangements to ensure the most hospitable and enhancing (cyber) learning environment as possible. Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact the counselor below asap.

Counselor
Sul Ross State University
Ferguson Hall, Rm 112 C
counseling@sulross.edu
432-837-8203

Graded Course Requirements

Two Major Essays.....40%

Essays are completed in class, in a timed essay format using Respondus LockDown browser. Each student will have the entire course period (75 minutes) in which to respond to the prompt of their choosing. The essay must be completed during class. Students will not see the prompt ahead of time; instead, they will view the prompt when they begin the essay assignment. Students may also have access to the main reading and any pre-approved material from class. NO OUTSIDE MATERIAL IS ALLOWED.

Assignments/homework.....30%

Frequent quizzes, short in-class essay assignments, journals, and various other daily work

Final essay exam.....20%

Students will take a two-part essay exam in class during Finals Week. You will be given a diagnostic exam comprised of a reading and prompt in the first few weeks of the semester. Students will be given a participation grade of 100, regardless of how they perform on the exam. This essay exam will then be repeated at the end of the semester. The average of both grades on the essay exam will then be your final essay exam grade. Therefore, it is important to do your best on the diagnostic because the grade you get will be used to calculate your final essay exam grade, which is 20% of your overall semester average. If one of the essay exams is not taken, the highest grade given will be a 50.

Student participation.....10%

Students will be graded on the following: promptness, participation (in class, attending class, office hours, emailing, staying engaged with course proceedings, ability to thoughtfully and respectfully engage with instructor and peers in and out of class). For specific grading criteria regarding student participation grade, please see below:

This rubric will be used to grade student participation:

0 (F): Absent (each time a student is absent, they will receive a "0" for that day's class participation. The only way this can be avoided is if the student has an excused absence (guaranteed to be waived) and/or an explained absence (not guaranteed to be waived) AND if the student notifies the professor ahead of time (not 5 mins before class begins and certainly not after class ends).

60 (D): Tries to respond when called but does not offer much in the way of class discussion. Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion

70 (C): Demonstrates adequate preparation. Offers straightforward information without elaboration. Demonstrates sporadic involvement in discussion

80 (B): Demonstrates good preparation. Offers interpretation and analysis. Responds to other students constructively. Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement

90 (A): Demonstrates excellent preparation. Offers analysis and synthesis. Puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches. Always on time, courteous, and never turns in late work/assignments.

Grades

I do not change final grades *unless* I made an error calculating your grade. Always check your work and the corresponding percentages that make up your final semester average. Make sure that any possible make up work has been uploaded.

A 90-100: Outstanding performance in mastering of the subject. Achievement of superior quality.
(4 grade : points per credit hour)

B 80-89: Consistent performance in achievement beyond the usual requirements of the course.
Achievement of high quality. (3 grade points per credit hour)

C 70-79: Performance of a satisfactory nature. Achievement demonstrating an understanding of the subject sufficient for continued study in the discipline. (2 grade points per credit hour)

D 60-69: Minimally acceptable performance. Achievement demonstrating below average understanding of the basic elements of the course. (1 grade point per credit hour)

F 50-59: Achievement at a level insufficient to demonstrate understanding of the basic elements of the course. (0 grade points)

Incomplete grade(I): The grade of "I" is given by the instructor upon consultation with the student. The work to be completed and deadline for completion must be specified on the grade report to the Director of Records and Registration. A student may have a maximum of one academic year in which to remove an I during which time the "I" will not be calculated in the student's grade point average. If the work is not completed by the deadline set by the instructor, the "I" will be converted to an "F" and will be calculated in the student's grade point average for the semester in which the "I" was given. Normally, an incomplete grade will be awarded only for situations such as illness, family emergencies, or unusual circumstances which prevent a student from completing a course in a semester or summer term. Incomplete grades must be removed prior to graduation.

Withdrawal grade (W): The grade of "W" is given for courses dropped after the 12th/4th class days

through the last day to drop a course with a "W" as published in the University's calendar. Students who wait until the published deadline must have complied with the class attendance policy of this catalog. An instructor is not obligated to recommend a "W" for a class if excessive absences have occurred. Students will not be permitted to drop a course or withdraw from the University after the published deadline.

Classroom Climate of Respect

Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

Supportive Statement

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports various perspectives and experiences. I understand that the recent pandemic, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events may impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create a supportive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

Final Note

It's worth noting that there's a predictable and positive correlation between careful time management and academic success. I encourage you to make a wise decision as to what kind of student you will be early on and to plan accordingly.

No extra points, no extra work will be assigned, so don't ask.

You are completely responsible for meeting all deadlines and keeping track of any changes made to the course schedule. You have several resources made available to you to ensure your success in this course, so I strongly encourage you to take advantage of them.

You will get the grade you earn, not the grade I give you.

Fall 2026 Tentative Schedule

(scheduled to change)

For detailed information regarding assignments, due dates, etc., please read **Announcements** in Blackboard. Information regarding homework and assignments in the Announcements section

takes precedence over that info in the syllabus. I review what we did during class, what's for homework, and relay any other important information. **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK ANNOUNCEMENTS ON A DAILY BASIS; FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN EARNING A LOWER COURSE GRADE. THIS IS GUARANTEED.**

*all readings and assignments are embedded within the relative modules. You will not have to click elsewhere to find them.

8/25: First day of fall 2026. Course policies, procedures, and requirements discussed. Diagnostic and Final Essay discussed.

8/31, M: Academic Integrity Policy DUE 8/31@11:59 pm.

9/3: Practice LockDown Respondus exam

9/7, M: Labor Day Holiday (no classes held)

9/9, W: last day to drop a class without academic record last day to drop a class without a record (no W recorded)

9/10: Diagnostic essay

10/19-10/23 (midterm): discuss major essay; **Major Essay #1 DUE, Th, 10/22@12:15 pm.**

11/6, F: last day to withdraw from a class with academic record (with a W).

12/1, T: Major Essay #2 DUE @12:15 pm.

12/2, W: Last class day

12/3, Th: Dead Day (no classes held; no new material assigned; students prepare for final exams)

12/7, M: Final Essay Exam (in our regularly scheduled classroom)

12/14, M: All grades due to Registrar's by noon

---END OF FALL 2026 SEMESTER---