

# ENGL 103

## Rhetoric & Composition I



Northern Illinois  
University

### Class Information

Location: Reavis Hall, 300  
Day/Time: MWF 1:00-1:50  
Texts: PDFs in Blackboard  
URL: <https://webcourses.niu.edu/>

### Instructor Information

Name: Malcolm Reynolds  
Email: [mreynolds@niu.edu](mailto:mreynolds@niu.edu)  
Office: Reavis Hall, 299B  
Office Hours: MWF 12:00-1:00 or by  
appointment

### Course Description

ENGL 103 builds on and expands your writing experiences. Drawing on rhetorical approaches to writing, you will create traditional written texts as well as multimodal digital texts for various audiences and purposes. Helping you better understand your writing choices is at the heart of ENGL 103. This requires that you reflect deeply on your writing practices, including how your writing is produced, how it meets audience expectations, and how it meets genre conventions. Through these reflections, you will get help in connecting writing taking place throughout your life: at school, at your part-time job, in clubs and organizations, and in your personal life. ENGL 103 culminates in a final eportfolio that showcases your best writing and what you've learned.

### Course Outcomes

By the end of ENGL 103, students will be able to:

- Establish a clear purpose for writing.
- Identify and respond to the needs of different audiences and rhetorical situations.
- Recognize and write in a variety of genres.
- Recognize the relationships among language, knowledge, and power.
- Develop recursive strategies for generating, drafting, and revising texts.
- Write collaboratively with peers.
- Reflect carefully on choices made when writing.

## Major Projects

During the semester, you'll be asked to complete three writing projects (WP) and an eportfolio

### WP1: Literacy Explanation



At the beginning of the semester, you will be asked to write a short narrative in which you explain a time when you were new to a space and what things confused you about it at the time. For WP1: Literacy Explanation, you will explain those things that confused you as a new user: what language, symbols, and other ways of making meaning does a new user need to know? You will create this in a form that's helpful for the new user, such as a video, a podcast, a website, a comic, or some other form of media. Then, you'll write a short reflection explaining the adaptation and how it fits your audience.

### WP2: New Discourse



For WP2, you will find a space that's new to you. Then, you'll observe that space, specifically looking for the language and genre conventions used. You'll compare and contrast this language and these conventions with the space you used for WP1. You'll specifically look for ways in which there may be problematic aspects of the space, such as sexist, racist, homophobic, or ableist language. Finally, you'll make suggestions for how to improve the space to make it more welcoming for new users.

### WP3: Making Local Change



Taking what you have learned about writing and rhetoric, you and two to three other students will create a text persuading a local audience to take action on an issue directly related to your life. This text must address a specific problem your group sees in your home or university community, and it must address people who can act to solve that problem. The text may take several forms depending on what you think is most convincing for your audience. For example, it may be a video, an infographic, a slide presentation, or a physical binder of documents. Your group is encouraged to present this text to the real audience but isn't required to. At the end of the project, your group will write a reflection explaining the rhetorical choices in your persuasive text, and a report detailing challenges and successes in your collaboration.

### ePortfolio & Reflection



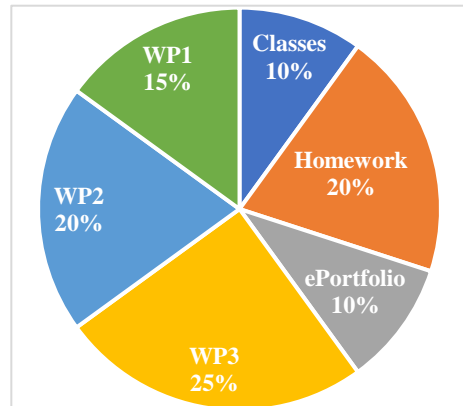
Your eportfolio will include writing projects and reflections you have done throughout the semester as well as a final reflection in which you think back about what you have learned and how you might apply that learning to a future situation. This culminating project will help you not only see the progress you have made but also set you up to continue the practices you have established in other situations outside of class.

## Grading

The grading scale below will be used for major projects and overall grades:

- A: 93-100%
- A-: 90-92.99%
- B+: 87-89.99%
- B: 83-86.99%
- B-: 80-82.99%
- C+: 77-79.99%
- C: 70-76.99%
- D: 60-69.99%
- F: 59.99% and Below

Your grade will be based on the categories below. See “Grade Breakdown” for more info



## Class Policies

### Syllabus Updates

This syllabus is subject to change with notification. Any changes made will be posted in Blackboard, and you will be notified via email.

### Attendance

You are expected to attend every class and conference. Absence without prior approval may result in all class points lost for that day. If you are late to class or leave early without permission, you may lose half of the class points for that day.

### Homework

Homework should be submitted to Blackboard at least 30 minutes before class time.

### Late Work

Late major projects will be accepted. Without prior approval, late major projects may lose up to 10% per day until they are submitted. Late homework will be accepted only with prior approval.

### Drafts & Revision

All major projects will have a completion and a revised draft. Students may submit additional drafts for comments or to be re-graded with permission from the instructor.

### Discussion

You are expected to actively engage in class and conference discussions. Please be civil to other members of the class and actively keep dialog open—even when you disagree. If you cannot remain civil, you will be asked to leave class and be counted absent.

**Tech**

Class will meet in a Bring-Your-Own-Device (BYOD) classroom. You are encouraged to bring a laptop, tablet, or phone to class every day. If you do not have one, several school-owned laptops are available. You can get help using your device by calling 815-753-8100. Please use your tech during class time for class-related subjects.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense in which writers use other people's words without giving credit and pass them off as their own. During class, we will go over the [plagiarism policy](#). If you are unsure if something is plagiarism, please ask me in advance—and always err on the side of caution.

**Anti-racism & Inclusion**

All students should feel safe and respected in all classes. This includes a rejection of white supremacy, a commitment to LGBTQ+ rights, and every effort to include people of different cultural backgrounds, abilities, and beliefs. If you feel unsafe or disrespected in this class or any other, please reach out to me, and I will do all I can to help.

**Preferred Pronouns**

You will be asked for your preferred pronouns on the first day of class. If these change during the semester, please let me know.

**Resources****University Writing Center**

All students are encouraged to take advantage of the [University Writing Center](#). They can offer experienced feedback on writing for this class or any other. The Center is located on the first floor of Founders Memorial Library. They can be reached at 815-753-6636 or [hasc@niu.edu](mailto:hasc@niu.edu). Online appointments are available through the [Tutor Matching Service](#).

**Counseling Services**

[Counseling and Consultations Services](#) offers counseling for students. They can also be reached at 815-753-1206 or by visiting room 200 in the Campus Life Building. Students may also consider getting into touch with [Couple and Family Counseling](#), which offers greatly discounted counseling services for students. They can be reached at 815-753-1684, [familytherapy@niu.edu](mailto:familytherapy@niu.edu), or by visiting room 146 in Wirtz Hall.

**Students with Disabilities**

If you have a disability and would like an accommodation for this class, please contact the [Disability Resource Center](#). The center is located in the Campus Life Building in Suite 180. They can be reached at 815-753-1303 or [drc@niu.edu](mailto:drc@niu.edu). I am happy to provide a productive learning environment in any way I can.

**First-Generation Students**

If you are the first in your family to attend college, NIU acknowledges that this comes with additional challenges to those faced by other students. Resources for first-generation students can be found [here](#).

**International Students**

NIU welcomes students from all around the world. [International Student Scholar Services](#) can assist you if you are facing any problems, such as visas or cultural adjustment. They are located in Willston Hall and can be reached at 815-753-1346 or [isfo@niu.edu](mailto:isfo@niu.edu).

**ESL Center**

If English is not your first language, you can receive one-on-one tutoring and support at the [ESL Center](#). Appointments can be [scheduled online](#).

**Language Diversity**

You are welcome in this class regardless of your first language or fluency in English. If language barriers are causing problems for you in class in any way, please reach out to me.

**Undocumented Students**

You are welcome in this class regardless of your documentation status with the US government. If you are undocumented and need help, you can contact [Undocumented Student Support](#) in the Campus Life Building in Suite 230. They can also be reached at [undocumented@niu.edu](mailto:undocumented@niu.edu).

**NIU Land Acknowledgement**

The four locations of Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Naperville, Rockford, and Oregon occupy the traditional homelands of Anishinaabe peoples— Niswi-mishkodewinan, also known as the Council of the Three Fires—comprised of the Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Odawa. Other Indigenous peoples who call this land home include the Sac and Fox, Kickapoo, Peoria, Miami, and Sioux. We acknowledge the presence and continued vitality of these and other Native communities in our state and Midwest region.