

ENG 101/ENG 102
Composition Instructor
Handbook



Department of English
2008–2009

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GETTING STARTED

Teaching Orientation

Before the beginning of each fall semester, the English Department at the University of Southern Mississippi hosts a five-day orientation on campus to introduce new graduate students to the composition program. The director of composition will inform you of the orientation dates, times, and location via e-mail.

Teaching Practicum

As a new composition instructor, you will also enroll in a teaching practicum course, ENG 690, for your first two semesters of work at the university. In addition to answering any questions not addressed in the handbook or orientation, these classes will provide discussions of composition theory, teaching pedagogy, and professional development relevant to the university's teaching goals and your own.

Contact Information

The university requires you to keep your current address, phone number, and email address on file so we and your students may contact you as needed. Please update your personal information profile in the English Department office at the beginning of each semester. We, the English Department office staff, are located on the third floor of the Liberal Arts Building (LAB) directly across from the elevator. You may also reach us by email at english@usm.edu or by phone at (601) 266-4320.

Desk Assignments

Composition instructors hold office hours in LAB 336 or 338. Please stop by the English Department office at the beginning of your first semester at the university to sign up for a desk. Due to space limitations, you will share a desk with one other instructor, so we recommend you communicate with your desk partner to ensure you schedule office hours at different times.

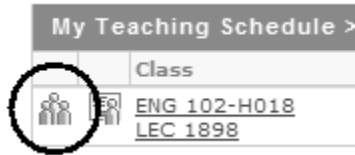
Class Assignments

Before each semester begins, we will notify you of your teaching and/or other assistantship requirements at your mailing address (if you are new to the department) or in your mailbox in the English Department office.

Class Rosters

To view your class roster(s):

1. Log into SOAR (soar.usm.edu) using your EmplID and password.
2. Click on the "Faculty Center" tab under "Self Service."
3. Under "Select Term," choose the current term, and click the "Change" button. You will see a list of classes you are teaching.
4. Click the button with the pink, blue, and green student silhouettes on the row of the class you want to view.



TEACHING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Syllabi

To maintain consistent quality and fairness across the curriculum, composition instructors at the University of Southern Mississippi all use the same syllabi, which are included on pages 20–28 of this handbook. During orientation or practicum, the director of composition will also give you a course schedule for the class(es) you will teach.

Photocopies

To make copies of syllabi, assignments, and vital course information, fill out a copy request form in the copy room just inside the English Department office to the left. Please allow us 24 hours to complete requests. To help us manage our supply budget, please do not request copies of long readings, sample student papers, or other materials that require excessive amounts of paper and ink. You may, however, place such documents on reserve in Cook Library.

Add Request Forms

Students who hope to add your class after the enrollment deadline has passed may fill out an add request form in the English Department office and submit it to either the director of composition or the office staff. After review, we will deliver these forms to you along with an official university add/drop permission form for each student whose enrollment has been approved. Fill out the permission forms and return them along with the students' add request forms to the office staff to complete the process.

Absences and Tardies

Our attendance policy is that composition students who are late or absent may not be allowed to make up any in-class activities they missed, including quizzes and tests. For those who accumulate more than three unexcused absences in a semester, you must lower their final grades according to the policy on the course syllabus. More than six absences will result in failure of the course, so please ask your students to read the absence policy carefully, and address it in detail when you distribute the syllabus on the first day of class.

Extensions

You may allow individual paper extensions on a case-by-case basis if you choose.

If you are considering extending a deadline for an entire class or classes, please discuss the issue with the director of composition beforehand.

Late Work

We ask that you accept late papers only if students can demonstrate that they have encountered valid obstacles before the deadline. Advise them in advance to contact you as soon as possible but no later than two days before the due date if they believe they may be unable to complete an assignment on time. After you review all the work they have done on the assignment, set a new deadline together.

In all other cases, dock late work one letter grade per day past the deadline, beginning the day the assignment was due. If possible, please collect late assignments at your desk; however, if students deliver them to the English Department office, we will stamp them with the time and date they were received for your records.

GRADING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Grade Distribution

A – D = pass (ENG 101)

A – C = pass (ENG 102)

F = fail

WP = withdraw passing

WF = withdraw failing

I = incomplete

Note: You may only assign an incomplete if a student has finished 80% or more of the required coursework but needs more time for a medical reason or other legitimate purpose outlined in the course syllabus. Then, you and the student must decide on a new deadline collaboratively. If the student has not completed the coursework by the end of the following semester, the grade of incomplete will become an F.

Grade Books

In case any former students raise grade disputes occur after you have left the university, you are required to maintain official university grade books, which are available in the English Department office.

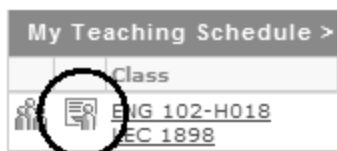
Grade Entry

During the last week of each semester, all instructors at the university must file grade reports on SOAR. Grades are due before 9:00 AM on the Monday after final exam week. Please do not move away or leave for vacation until after you have submitted your grades. If you change your address after grade submission, leave your forwarding address and phone number with the office staff in case your students have questions about their grades.

To submit final grades:

1. Log into SOAR (soar.usm.edu) using your EmplID and password.
2. Click on the “Faculty Center” tab under “Self Service.”
3. Under “Select Term,” choose the current term, and click the “Change” button. You will see a list of classes you are teaching.

4. Click the button with the icon of the teacher standing in front of a chalkboard on the row of the class for which you want to enter grades.



5. On the next screen, select the appropriate “Grade Roster Type” (midterm or final).
6. Leave the “Approval Status” as NOT REVIEWED until you have entered all grades.
7. Assign each student’s “Roster Grade” using the drop-down menus. If the student in question has never attended your class, select “NA.”
8. When you have finished, change the “Approval Status Box” at the top of the page to APPROVED. Note that once you have done so, all grades are final and can only be changed via change of grade forms.
9. Click the “Save” button at the bottom of the page.

Grade Disputes

Students who believe their final grades are incorrect or unjust have the right to attempt to negotiate a grade change with you up to two semesters after the semester ends. If students find the outcome unsatisfactory, they may contact the department chair or the director of composition and then the provost’s office. Therefore, it is important to keep detailed and precise records of all the grades you assign throughout each semester in case a disagreement arises.

Grade Changes

After you have submitted final grades, the only way to alter them is to fill out a change of grade form in our office. You will be asked to write down the student’s ID number and a brief explanation for the change. In accordance with the university's privacy policy, these forms may not be removed from the English Department office, so please have all the necessary information available when you arrive on campus.