Composition I (Online-friendly)

**Course code:** COM 101

**Term and year:** Spring 2021

**Day and time:** Tuesdays, 11:30 – 14:15

**Instructor:** Robert Warren, M.A.

**Instructor contact:** [robert.warren@aauni.edu](mailto:robert.warren@aauni.edu)

**Consultation hours:** Thursdays, 14:15 – 14:45

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Credits US/ECTS** | 3/6 | **Level** | Introductory |
| **Length** | 15 weeks | **Pre-requisite** | Assessment Test |
| **Contact hours** | 42 hours | **Course type** | Bachelor General Education Course |

# \*Students must score at least 70% on the Entry Assessment Test or have passed the COM099 and may be waived by the Dean in other exceptional cases.

# Course Description

COM 101 is designed to develop and improve students’ critical thinking skills, originality and ability to write in English across a variety of genres. The course emphasizes: writing as process, audience awareness and appropriate stylistic choices, and the production of cohesive, coherently structured, concise and accurate texts. Students are introduced to academic research and citation formats.

**Coronavirus Notice:**

*Classes will be divided into one live session using Microsoft Teams (MT), and one online session (done alone); or one synchronous and one asynchronous. The live session will be 100 minutes (1h 40m), and the online session will be 65 minutes (1h 5m), so 2 hours 45 minutes total. This is designed to create a more productive balance between lecture time and out-of-class work during this period of remote learning. Mini lectures will be pre-recorded (as part of the online learning) and in-class sessions will center primarily on class discussion and analysis of online readings, lecturers and other media.*

# Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to write a focused and clear essay with structure, content and style appropriate to an academic context. Specifically, students will:

* understand and effectively implement the writing process including: pre-writing, outlining, drafting, revising and editing;
* display a firm grasp of English grammar, usage and mechanics.
* demonstrate the ability to make stylistic and lexical choices appropriate to a specific audience and genre; e.g., expository and persuasive essays;
* understand and conform to the conventions of academic writing;
* produce writing which evidences critical thinking, an inquisitive mind and logical analyses;
* produce well-structured, coherent and cohesive essays including: introduction, body and conclusion;
* produce well-structured, coherent and entertaining presentations showing understanding of ethos, pathos and logos techniques.
* identify and produce clear theses and topic sentences supported by evidence and/or sound reasoning;
* understand how and why writers cite sources;
* incorporate sources through quotation and paraphrase;
* recognize and avoid plagiarism;
* produce work in a timely manner
* be an active and engaged member of the class; contributing to discussions and encouraging less confident peers

# Reading Material

## Required Materials

* Bailey, Stephen. *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students* (3rd Ed.).Routledge, 2003. eBook available on NEO
* Murphy, Raymond. *English Grammar in Use.* Cambridge University Press, 2004. eBook available on NEO (copies available in library)
* Open University. *Thinking Critically,* 2008. Open University Press

*Other materials are provided in class, available in Neo, or may be found in the library.*

# Teaching methodology

The course will be taught in a combination of lectures, seminars, and student-centered interaction, online video content and readings and exercises.

# Course Schedule

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Class Agenda** |
| Class One:  February 8th | **Topic:** Course Introduction & Syllabus Overview  **Description:** *This class will open the topics of composition and language uses in an academic context. Students will have the chance to get to know each other and address any queries they may have about the course and its outline.* |
| **Live session (MT) (100 mins):**   * Introductions and FAQs * Syllabus overview: Description of course aims, structure, assessment, and expectations * Introduction to writing academically; structure and style   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Review week two online content (NEO) |
| Class Two:  February 15th | **Topic:** Understanding the Academic Writing Process  **Description:** *This class will examine the core principles and methods used in producing academic essays; from structuring paragraphs to developing objective argumentation.*  **Online session tasks (65 mins):**   * Watch introduction to academic writing videos (NEO) * Prepare answers for academic writing questions (NEO)   **Readings:**   * Bailey, Part 1.1 *Background to Writing* (NEO) |
| **Live session (MT) (100 mins):**   * Review of academic writing answers + class discussion   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Review week three online content (NEO) |
| Class Three:  February 22nd | **Topic:** Writing Workshop: Common Mistakes  **Description:** *This class will examine the most common mistakes in academic writing. Students will become teachers for the day; reading and assessing a series of sample academic papers.*  **Online session (65 mins):**   * Read and review sample academic essay (pros and cons) * Prepare complete essay assessment; grammar, paragraph structure, supporting evidence, flow, voice, argumentation etc.   **Readings:**   * Murphy (pp. 1-6, 7-12, 13-16) * Bailey, Part 1.4, *From Understanding Titles to Planning* * Bailey, Part 1.5, *Finding Key Points and Note Taking* |
| **Live session (MT) (100 mins):**   * Brief discussion on ‘Future Self’ essay * Review of grammar exercises * Class discussion on pros and cons of sample paper   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Review completed assignments in preparation for final class |
| Class Four:  March 1st | **Topic:** Writing Workshop: Paragraph Structure  **Description:** *Students will learn not only the fundamentals of how to structure a coherent paragraph but also how to logically transition between paragraphs and organize them as part of a wider narrative.*  **Online session (65 mins):**   * Watch videos on paragraph building (NEO) * Prepare answers for paragraph structure questions (NEO)   **Readings:**   * Bailey, Part 1.10 *Organizing Paragraphs*   **Assignments:**   * Complete readings & video exercises |
| **Live session (MT) (100 mins):**   * Review of answers + class discussion (queries) * Further examples + methods of application   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Analytical essay (‘Future Self’): *Making reference to some of your past and present life experiences, explain how you will be living and working in ten years from now?* (700-800 words)(Due next class) (Submit on NEO) |
| Class Five:  March 8th | **Topic:** Critical Thinking: The Case for Charity  **Description:** *Before producing their second piece of written-work, students will critically analyze a topic they will eventually through a series of readings and discussions.*   * Topic: *When is it acceptable to be charitable?* * Group research and argument development for discussion * Group essay development (one member one paragraph)   **Online session (65 mins):**   * Watch introductory videos on debate topic (NEO) * Complete readings on debate topic and critical thinking (NEO)   **Class readings:**   * Bailey, Part 1.2B *Reading: Developing Critical Approaches* * Open University. *Thinking Critically,* 2010,pp. 7-28   **Discussion readings:**   * *Giving to charity is selfish – and that’s fine* by David Shariatmadari (Guardian, 7.4.15) * *Indonesia Takes Beggars Off Jakarta Streets* by Norimitsu Onishisept (New York Times, 1.5.09)   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Prepare answers for questions on discussion topic * Prepare own points of interest/argument for discussion |
| **Live session (MT) (100 mins):**   * Conduct class discussion * Teacher will use question prompts and mediate between student comments.   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Produce analytical essay on the discussion topic. (800 – 1000 words) (Due next class via NEO) |
| Class Six:  March 15th | **Topic:** Grammar Review: Article & Noun Usage  **Description:** *Through grammatical theory and grammar exercises students will gain an understanding of the importance of correct article and corresponding noun usage.*  **Online session (65 mins):**   * Watch videos on article usage (NEO) * Prepare answers for article questions (NEO)   **Readings:**   * Murphy (pp. 68-77, 120-126) * Bailey, Part 3.3 *Articles*   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Complete Murphy & Bailey exercises |
| **Live session (MT) (100 mins):**   * Review of answers + class discussion (queries) * Further examples + methods of application   **Assignments:**   * Review week ten online content |
| Class Seven:  March 22nd | **Topic:** Writing Workshop: Topic Development  **Description:** *Students will read an extended excerpt from the book, ‘Between the World & Me’ by Ta-Nehisi Coates, then produce and analysis of the reading in preparation for a class discussion.*  **Online session (65 mins):**   * Complete Ta-Nehisi Coates excerpt (prepare summary) * Answer questions relating to excerpt (NEO)   **Readings:**   * Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World & Me,* Spiegel & Grau, 2015. [excerpt, pp. 5-28]   **Viewing:**   * James Baldwin Debates William F. Buckley (1965) (Youtube) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFeoS41xe7w&t=2028s> |
| **Live session (MT) (100 mins):**   * Review of answers, Baldwin speech + class discussion * Develop deeper understanding of Coates narrative, and wider topic of race relations in the United States   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Write informative essay on 21st century African-American life as depicted by Ta-Nehisi Coates (Title TBD) (800–1000 words) (Due next week via NEO) |
| Class Eight:  March 29th | **Topic:** Gathering Research & Using Citations  **Description:** *This class looks at the essentials of conducting research and using citations correctly.*  **Online session (65 mins):**   * Watch videos on citation styles and usage (NEO) * Prepare answers for citation questions (NEO) * Complete Bailey readings   **Readings:**   * Bailey, Part 1.2A *Reading: Finding Suitable Sources* * Bailey, Part 1.3 *Avoiding Plagiarism* |
| **Live session (MT) (100 mins):**   * Review of answers + class discussion (queries); citation styles, forms of plagiarism, producing a bibliography etc. * Further examples + methods of application   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Review online content for class eight |
| April 5th – 9th | **MIDTERM BREAK** |
| Class Nine:  April 12th | **Topic:** Debate Class: Should intensive animal farming be banned?  **Description:** *Students will take part in an Oxford-style academic debate. Students are grouped into two teams, are provided a side of the motion to defend, conduct group research, prepare leading arguments, and finally, take on the opposing team in the live session.*  **Online session (65 mins):**   * Watch introductory videos on debate topic (NEO) * Complete readings on debate topic (NEO)   **Readings:**   * Anomaly, Jonathon. *What’s Wrong with Factory Farming?,* Public Health Ethics, Vol. 8 No. 3, pp. 246-254, Pub: Duke University, 2015. (NEO) * Food & Water Watch: “The Urgent Case for a Ban on Factory Farms” (May 2018) (NEO) * Debate Europe: “Should intensive animal farming be banned?” (20.9.16) – <https://www.debatingeurope.eu/2016/09/20/intensive-animal-farming-banned/#.X09rg8gzY2w>   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Meet with group and prepare for next week’s debate |
| **Live session (MT) (100 mins):**   * Motion: *In the interest of life on the earth and the evasion of a climate catastrophe, intensive animal farming world-wide must be banned.* * Conduct debate; introductory speeches, rebuttals, open Q&A, post-debate discussion   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Review week ten online content |
| Class Ten:  April 19th | **Topic:** Film Critique Class  **Description:** *Students will watch the 2004 film ‘Crash,’ writing an analysis of the film from a perspective of their choosing; examining not on the plot and characterization but wider topics of societal racism.*  **Online session (65 mins):**   * Watch film: *Crash* (2004) (NEO) * Answer film questions (NEO) * Prepare questions for class discussion |
| **Live session (MT) (100 mins):**   * Discuss plot, characters, narrative and underlying messages of film   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Complete film critique (700-900 words) (due next class via NEO) |
| Class Eleven:  April 26th | **Topic:** Grammar Review: Subordinate & Relative Clauses  **Description:**  Through grammatical theory and exercises students will gain an understanding of clause structure, conditional tenses, and corresponding punctuation usage.  **Online session (65 mins):**   * Watch videos on clause usage (NEO) * Prepare answers for clause questions (NEO)   **Readings:**   * Murphy (pp. 91-96, pp. 37-40)   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Murphy questions/exercises |
| **Live session (MT) (100 mins):**   * Review of answers + class discussion (queries) * Further examples + methods of application   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Review week twelve online content |
| Class Twelve:  May 3rd | **Topic:** Fundamentals of Academic Writing: Recap  **Description:** *This class aims to tie up any loose ends regarding paragraph structure, argumentation, citation usage, and critical thinking before students write their final essay.*  **Online session (65 mins):**   * Complete all exercises and readings (Bailey & Harari) * Answer questions on Harari readings   **Readings:**   * Bailey, Part 2.1 *Arguments & Discussion* * Bailey, Part 2.2 *Cause & Effect* * Bailey, Part 2.4 *Comparisons* * Bailey, Part 2.7 *Generalizations* * Bailey, Part 2.10 *Style*   **Essay readings:**   * Harari, Yuval. *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind.* Ch. 1, pp. 10-22, McClelland & Stewart. 2014 (on NEO) * Ibid., Ch. 2, pp. 23-39 |
| **Live session (MT) (100 mins):**   * Review key points from Bailey readings * Discuss main ideas from Harari readings   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Write analytical essay on Harari readings: *According to Harari, what is the leading cause of the success of Homo Sapiens?* (1200-1400 words) (Due May 19th – final class) |
| Class Thirteen:  May 10th | **Topic:** The Art of Public Speaking: Ethos, Pathos, Logos  **Description:** *Building on their understanding of research methods, argumentation and structure, students will take a momentary pause from systems of writing and examine the practice of public speaking.*  **Online session (60 mins):**   * Watch introduction to public speaking videos (NEO) * Prepare answers for public speaking questions (NEO)   **Readings (selected chapters):**   * Carnegie, Dale. *How to Develop Self-confidence & Influence People by Public Speaking.* Simon & Schuster, 1956. * Gallo, Carmine. *How to Talk Like TED.* St. Martin’s Press, 2016 |
| **Live session (MT) (105 mins (extended)):**   * Review of public speaking answers + class discussion * Receive presentation topics + brief class discussion   **Assignments/deadlines:**   * Prepare 5-minute persuasive presentation (Due next class) * Added session minutes must be used for practicing presentation (timing/structure) |
| Class Fourteen: May 17th | **Topic:** Final Oxford debate  **Description:** *Students will again be put into teams and, using the skills they have developed throughout the semester, take on their opponents arguing for or against the motion.* |

# Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **Workload (average)** | **Weight in Final Grade** | **Evaluated Student Learning Outcomes** | **Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes** |
| Attendance and participation in class discussions and activities |  | 20% | 1) display a firm grasp of English grammar, usage and mechanics.  2) be an active and engaged member of the class; contributing to discussions and encouraging less confident peers | 2, 3 |
| Readings & exercises (Homework) | 28 | 20% | 1) display a firm grasp of English grammar, usage and mechanics.  2) produce work in a timely manner | 2, 3 |
| Presentations & Debate | 30 | 20% | 1) produce well-structured, coherent and entertaining presentations showing understanding of ethos, pathos and logos techniques.  2) understand how and why writers cite sources;  3) recognize and avoid plagiarism;  4produce work in a timely manner | 2, 3 |
| Writing assignments:   * ‘Future Self’ essay * Analytical essay * Informative essay * Filmcritique * Final paper | 50 | 40% | 1) understand and effectively implement the writing process including: pre-writing, outlining, drafting, revising and editing;  2) display a firm grasp of English grammar, usage and mechanics.  3) demonstrate the ability to make stylistic and lexical choices appropriate to a specific audience and genre; e.g., expository and persuasive essays;  4) understand and conform to the conventions of academic writing;  5) produce writing which evidences critical thinking, an inquisitive mind and logical analyses;  6) produce well-structured, coherent and cohesive essays including: introduction, body and conclusion;  7) identify and produce clear theses and topic sentences supported by evidence and/or sound reasoning;  8) understand how and why writers cite sources;  9) incorporate sources through quotation and paraphrase;  10) recognize and avoid plagiarism;  11) produce work in a timely manner | 1, 2 |
| TOTAL | 150 hours | 100% |  |  |

\*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

# Detailed description of the assignments

**Assignment 1: Attendance, participation, discussions & activities**

**Assessment breakdown**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assessed area** | **Percentage** |
| Presence, timeliness, and preparedness  Active engagement in discussion | 50% |
| Positive, constructive contribution to discussions and presentations, and the application of relevant course concepts | 50% |

**Assignment 2: Homework & activities**

**Assessment breakdown**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assessed area** | **Percentage** |
| Completion and comprehension of assignments | 40% |
| Evidence of reflection and critical thinking in the written peer review | 40% |
| Positive interaction with peers and response to feedback | 20% |

**Assignment 3: Presentation & debate**

**Assessment breakdown**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assessed area** | **Percentage** |
| Organization: clarity and logical development | 30% |
| Content: relevance, interest with evidence of reflection and critical thinking | 30% |
| Delivery: language quality and stylistic appropriateness | 20% |
| Positive interaction with peers and response to feedback | 20% |

**Assessment 4: Writing assignments**

**Assessment breakdown**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Assessed area** | **Percentage** |
| Structure: organization, unity and cohesion | 25% |
| Content: topic sentence, coherence and development of supports, evidence of reflection and critical thinking. | 25% |
| Style: appropriate register, word choice, syntax, concision and clarity | 25% |
| Accuracy: spelling, grammar, usage and punctuation and citation format and bibliographic technique | 25% |

**NB:** Writing assignments must be typed, paginated and double-spaced, in a font and point size designated by the instructor. Assignments will be submitted electronically on NEO and may be required in hard copy by the instructor. Essays will be evaluated in accordance with the AAU writing rubric, which includes: organization, content, language and style, mechanics and citation. Corrected essays will include substantive and appropriate instructor feedback.

# General Requirements and School Policies

## General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU’s academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules in the Academic Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

## Electronic communication and submission

The university and instructors shall only use students’ university email address for communication, with additional communication via NEO LMS or Microsoft Teams.

Students sending e-mail to an instructor shall clearly state the course code and the topic in the subject heading, for example, “COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question”.

All electronic submissions are through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take-home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

## Attendance

Attendance, i.e., presence in class in real-time, is expected and encouraged. However, the requirement that students miss not more than 35% of real-time classes is temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Absence excuse and make-up options

Should a student be absent from classes for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), s/he can submit to the Dean of Students an Absence Excuse Request Form supplemented with documents providing reasons for the absence. These must be submitted within one week of the absence. If possible, it is recommended the instructor be informed of the absence in advance. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if s/he submits an Absence Excuse Request Form along with the finalized add/drop form.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean of Students are entitled to make up assignments and exams provided their nature allows. Assignments missed due to unexcused absences which cannot be made up, may result in a decreased or failing grade as specified in the syllabus.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week of the date the absence was excused to arrange for make-up options.

## Late work: No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

## Electronic devices

Electronic devices (e.g. phones, tablets, laptops) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information, etc.). Any other use will result in the student being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. No electronic devices may be used during tests or exams unless required by the exam format and the instructor.

## Eating is not allowed during classes.

## Cheating and disruptive behavior

If a student engages in disruptive conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the class and shall report the behavior to the Dean.

Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misconduct, the exam or assignment will be failed and the student will be expelled from the exam or class.

## Plagiarism and Academic Tutoring Center

Plagiarism is “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work.” (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Random House, New York, 1993)

Turnitin’s White Paper ‘The Plagiarism Spectrum’ (available at http://go.turnitin.com/paper/plagiarism-spectrum) identifies 10 types of plagiarism ordered from most to least severe:

1. CLONE: An act of submitting another’s work, word-for-word, as one’s own.

2. CTRL-C: A written piece that contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations.

3. FIND–REPLACE: The act of changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source in a paper.

4. REMIX: An act of paraphrasing from other sources and making the content fit together seamlessly.

5. RECYCLE: The act of borrowing generously from one’s own previous work without citation; To self-plagiarize.

6. HYBRID: The act of combining perfectly cited sources with copied passages—without citation—in one paper.

7. MASHUP: A paper that represents a mix of copied material from several different sources without proper citation.

8. 404 ERROR: A written piece that includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources

9. AGGREGATOR: The “Aggregator” includes proper citation, but the paper contains almost no original work.

10. RE-TWEET: This paper includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text’s original wording and/or structure.

At minimum, plagiarism from types 1 through 8 will result in a failing grade for the assignment and shall be reported to the Dean. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Allegations of bought papers and intentional or consistent plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

If unsure about technical aspects of writing, students are encouraged to consult with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at: http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/.

## Course accessibility and inclusion

Students with disabilities are asked to contact the Dean of Students as soon as possible to discuss reasonable accommodations. Academic accommodations are not retroactive.

Students who will be absent from course activities due to religious holidays may seek reasonable accommodations by contacting the Dean of Students in writing within the first two weeks of the term. All requests must include specific dates for which the student requests accommodations.

# Grading Scale

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | **Percentage\*** | **Description** |
| A | 95–100 | **Excellent performance**. The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject. |
| A– | 90–94 |
| B+ | 87–89 | **Good performance**. The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort. |
| B | 83–86 |
| B– | 80–82 |
| C+ | 77–79 | **Fair performance**. The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work. |
| C | 73–76 |
| C– | 70–72 |
| D+ | 65–69 | **Poor**. The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student’s work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives. |
| D | 60–64 |
| F | 0–59 | **Fail**. The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course. |

\* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by: Robert Warren

Date: 19th January 2021

Approved by:

Date: