

English 302.H23 — Advanced Composition, Humanities Focus

Spring 2009 — TR 1:30-2:45, IN 223

Professor E. Shelley Reid

Contact Points:

Office: Robinson A420 (Mailbox in Robinson A 487)
Office Phone: 703-993-2772
Office Hours: M 11:00 - 2:00; T 3:00-4:30; Th. 12:00 - 1:15 and by appointment
Online: ereid1@gmu.edu, <http://mason.gmu.edu/~ereid1>
<http://esreid.pbwiki.com>

Course Goals

This is a course designed to build on the writing and research skills you have learned in English 101 and other college courses, and to introduce you to the specific ways of thinking, methods of research and documentation, and situations and genres of writing in the Humanities—in college and beyond. As a General Education course, English 302 is designed to improve critical thinking skills that will be useful to you in many academic and professional settings.

Humanists are readers and composers of many genres, with many purposes, often with a wide range of audiences and performance venues. This course will emphasize **learning how to determine for yourself** what is required of you as a writer in a range of academic and professional scenes. When you write for people in a particular discipline or profession, you need to attend to several elements:

- defining your question, problem, and/or purpose
- identifying your stance or lens
- selecting the appropriate evidence
- choosing an effective approach and tone to reach your audience

In addition, among the key questions you will need to answer about any text you are reading or writing are the following: *is this a summary, an explanation, or an argument?*

English 302 is a course in **developing a range of flexible writing and revising strategies** so that you can meet those expectations without compromising your own voice, convictions, or style.

Pre-Requisites

All students, regardless of discipline, who register for English 302 must

- have completed a minimum of 45 credit hours,
- have earned credit for (or been exempted from) English 100 or 101 or equivalent, and
- have completed, if required by your degree program, at least 3 credits of gen-ed literature

This course is designed for students in Humanities disciplines: communication, literature, languages, arts, performance, philosophy, and sometimes aspects of historical or other social science studies. If you are majoring in another field of study, you will be expected to find out what kinds of problems, stances, evidence, and approaches are relevant to that field.

If you have not completed a prerequisite, or you have questions about the relevance of your discipline to this class, please see me as soon as possible.

Tools

- Texts:** *The Complete Persepolis* (Satrapi)
The Bedford Researcher, Third Edition (Palmquist)
- Wiki:** This is a **Wiki-based course** with an intensive online component: you don't need any previous experience working with a wiki, but you'll need to have regular out-of-class access to an Internet-linked computer in order to meet assignment deadlines. And you'll need a little patience, like anyone working on a new technology!
- Other:** You'll need at least one plain pocket folder for class materials, and it's a good idea to have a flash-drive (memory stick) to help you move files from home to lab to class.

Instruction and Classwork Overview

The interlinked skills of active reading, researching, drafting, revising, and analyzing are best learned through repeated cycles of instruction, practice, feedback, and reflection. Most of our class sessions, face to face or online, will be **highly interactive** and involve a significant amount of focused student discussion, collaboration, and writing. You will be encouraged to find ways to connect class assignments with your other interests and activities. Since you will be involved in collaborative efforts to read, analyze, draft, and revise, other students will be depending on you during class.

This course also has an **online component** using our class Wiki, to provide you with peer and instructor support when you are not in the classroom, to motivate you to complete your writing assignments in regular steps rather than all-nighter brain-burners, to encourage collaboration, and to prepare you for online and other public writing tasks beyond the classroom.

Good writing is usually more indicative of the writer's investment of **time and patience** than it is of his/her inborn talent. Students who attend regularly, keep up with the small assignments, and block off extra time each week for thoughtful drafting and focused revising usually succeed in this class.

Basic Grading Outline

20%	40 points	Persepolis Folder	Due 3/3
35%	70 points	Research Folder	Due 4/7
20%	40 points	Collaborative Disciplines Project	Due 4/30
15%	30 points	Polished Writing: "The Ask" and "Perfect Pages"	Due 5/7
10%	20 points	Peer Review & Participation	

Other Grading Policies

Completion Policy: All three main essays must be accompanied by a draft, and must demonstrate significant revisions from early to final draft(s). You must complete all three essays plus the "Ask" assignment to earn a "C" or higher.

Participation: This is a hands-on, minds-on, laboratory-like class, with time devoted each meeting to collaborative discussion and practice. Your regular, active, and civil participation, in class and on-line, is considered as part of your final grade.

Final Grades: In this class, assignments will be tallied on a 200 point final-grade scale.

194-200	A+
186-193	A
180-185	A-
174-179	B+
166-173	B
160-165	B-
154-159	C+
146-153	C (If you earn less than a "C," you must re-take 302.)
140-145	C-
134-139	D+
120-133	D

At term-end, I round all half-points up. If you are **within 1 point (no more) of a higher grade**, and I have seen clear evidence of you "going the extra mile" throughout the semester—making great improvement as a writer, taking extra care with peer workshops, breaking a sweat with your revisions, enlivening class or online discussions—I reserve the right to give you the higher grade. There is no persuading me to do this with pleas or sad stories at the very end of the term or after the grade is recorded; my decision, once made, is non-negotiable.

Explanation of Evaluations Used for Homework & Review Assignments

Homework, reflection, and peer-review assignments will be rated H, S, L, or 0.

An "H" or "Honors" rating = 100%.

An "S" or "Satisfactory" rating = 80%

An "L" or "Late" score will be used as needed for strong work more than a day late (60%)

All turned-in-on-time assignments that are at least close to the mark will earn H or S. If you average more H's than S's, you'll be in the A- to B+ range overall.

Homework assignments are **time-sensitive**—they are designed to prepare you for the tasks at hand, or provide a peer with feedback he or she needs quickly—so **late homework will drop one rating** for each day late. (An "H" will become an "S" and an "S" will become an "L.") Assignments that are not turned in or are turned in more than two days late without advance arrangements will earn 0 %.

Homework assignments, part of each major project, add up to about **15% of your final grade**. If you turn **something** in, you'll earn 80%. If you turn nothing in, or you're frequently late, you could jeopardize your grade. The first two homework assignments may be revised; others may not be.

Explanation of Evaluations Used for Essays & Project Elements

A **"C"** denotes a **competent response** to the assignment: the essay or assignment meets, to some degree, all the assignment requirements, and demonstrates that the author has put significant time and effort into communicating his/her ideas to his/her targeted audience. Essays in this range have a steady controlling idea, present some support, move from point to point in an orderly fashion, and contribute some new insights to conversations on the topic. Other projects demonstrate some awareness of the genre conventions and purposes, and some attention to content material and formal details. Final versions have been proofread to catch most major errors.

A **"B"** rewards a **strong example** of academic writing and thinking. In addition to meeting the "C" level requirements, an essay or project demonstrates insight into the "gray areas" of the topic, provides original or very thorough support that is tightly woven into the overall argument, reads smoothly at both the sentence and paragraph levels, and/or exhibits a personal "voice" or style. It demonstrates that the writer is also a thoughtful reviser and is conscious of his/her writing, his/her audience and purpose, and the generic conventions of the task. It engages the reader, and has few if any grammatical errors.

An **"A"** celebrates essays and projects that are an ease and a delight for the reader—and that probably provided some moments of satisfaction for the writer. Even more than in a "B" assignment, it is easy to see that the author anticipates and responds to possible reader questions, uses a wide range of supporting evidence, engages the reader in a provocative conversation, pays attention to small details, takes risks as s/he writes and revises, provides unexpected insight, and/or uses language with care and facility. The apparent effortlessness of these pieces of writing usually conceals plenty of blood, sweat, tears, and hours that the writer spent drafting, seeking feedback, and revising.

"D" and "F" level assignments do not meet the basic expectations of the assignment, and/or fail to meet the basic expectations of college-level writing in terms of organization, focus, or mechanics.

Optional Revision Policies

Major elements of the Persepolis Suite, Disciplines Suite, and Research Suite may be re-revised after being graded for a possible new grade—either through a Complete Revision or a Revision Memo.

1. Before undertaking a **Complete Revision**, you must **schedule a Revision Conference** with me. You should come to this conference—face to face or electronic—prepared to explain and ask questions about your plan for your revisions.
2. **Complete Revisions** must themselves **demonstrate substantial change** to the focus, support, approach, or organization of the text in addition to comprehensive error correction, or they will be returned with no grade change. Substantial change may be thought of as change to at least 15-20% of the essay's text; you must address **widespread issues** as well as providing small fixes. Revised essays must, however, retain the original text's topic and approach; revision does not mean "write a new essay."
3. **Complete Revisions** will result in a new assignment grade: thoughtful revisions usually result in a 5-10% improvement, though some grades may improve by 10-20%.

4. You may instead choose to write a **Revision Memo**, to earn a slight grade addition (2-3%). You must use standard memo form. In about 250-300 words, you should include actual examples of improvements you would make ("In paragraph 3 I would add two sentences about the article I found on zebras") along with explanations of why the changes would improve your writing. Memos that only repeat my comments or that provide vague ideas will earn no points.

5. **Complete Revisions or Memos** must be **completed within two weeks** of the essay's return to you. You must also resubmit the original assignment and instructor comments.

Participation and Late-Work Policies

In a collaborative, workshop-based class, as with choir practice or team sports, **attending** is both a physical and a mental process, and is crucial to your success.

Activities in each class meeting will be recorded and valued at .5 point per class. Peer review workshops will count double. You will not be able to "make up" any missed participation points. At the end of the term I reserve the right to increase or decrease the final score by up to 2 points in acknowledgment of steadily superior or half-hearted contributions.

You should also be **actively present** in face-to-face meetings. Students who are sleeping, surfing unrelated websites, texting, or doing other homework (etc.) are not actively present and thus may lose points. If you are unprepared for class or group work you may lose points. Any serious breach of good classroom conduct may cause you to lose all participation points.

Please **plan to be on time** for each face-to-face class. If you are frequently late, you may lose points. However, in an emergency ***I would rather have you come late than not at all.***

Late assignments are those arriving any time after the start of class on the due date. If you need to, you can email or post a copy before class to avoid the grade penalty. If you're turning in a late assignment, send me an email to let me know. Do not place assignments on or under my office door.

Generally, **late assignments lose 5% immediately, and then an additional 5% of their value for each calendar day (5pm to 5pm) they are late.** A folder due Thursday at the start of class would lose 5% if turned in before 5:00 pm that day, lose 10% if turned in by 5:00 pm Friday, and lose 20% if turned in the following Monday. Late drafts for workshop days—face-to-face or virtual—incur a daily penalty worth 5% of the final assignment's value.

Lateness due to Rare, Uncontrollable Natural Disasters will not usually incur penalties; it is your responsibility to provide explanation/documentation of such occurrences. (The flu is not rare, and a lack of parking spots is not a natural disaster; these may be crises for you, but one expects a certain number of crises as part of the life we all deal with.)

Computer Crises are neither Rare nor Natural, and most of them can be avoided or controlled with good advance preparation. Lateness due to electronic disasters will earn sympathy but will also earn the grade penalty. **Back up your files, print as needed while in process, and print/post final assignments before the Last Minute.**

Crisis Pass: For any **ONE** assignment you may be up to **three days late without penalty.** You must notify me in writing (print or email) ASAP that you will be using a Crisis Pass for an assignment.

University and Composition Program Policies

Dual Submission: The dual submission option permits students to submit a paper written for English 302 to meet the requirements of another course during the same semester (or vice versa). However, be aware: This option requires **prior approval from both instructors**. In addition, I will **require a written proposal** outlining your strategies for adapting your writing from one assignment to another before I will accept a dual-submission draft for a 302 assignment. Thus you need to get an early start on any assignment you hope to engage in under the dual submission policy.

Students with disabilities: Students with documented disabilities are legally entitled to certain accommodations in the classroom. If you request such accommodation, you must present me with a contact sheet from the Disability Resource Center (703-993-2474). I will be happy to work with students and the DRC to arrange fair access and support.

Composition Program Policy on Plagiarism: Instructors in the Composition Program recognize that learning to effectively—and ethically—blend one's own ideas and analysis with information and evidence obtained from outside sources is a significant challenge for college writers in the twenty-first century.

To avoid plagiarism, meet the expectations of a US Academic Audience, give their readers a chance to investigate the issue further, and make credible arguments, writers **must**

- put quotation marks around, *and* give an in-text citation for, any sentences or distinctive phrases (even very short, 2- or 3-word phrases) that writers copy directly from any outside source: a book, a textbook, an article, a website, a newspaper, a song, a baseball card, an interview, an encyclopedia, a CD, a movie, etc.
- *completely rewrite*—not just switch out a few words—any information they find in a separate source and wish to summarize or paraphrase for their readers, *and also* give an in-text citation for that information
- give an in-text citation for any facts, statistics, or opinions which the writers learned from outside sources and which are not considered "common knowledge" in the target audience
- give an in-text citation for any facts, statistics, or opinions which the writers *know* but which are not part of the "common knowledge" of their target-audience (this may require research to provide credible outside-source support)
- give a *new* in-text citation for *each element* of information—that is, a single citation at the end of a paragraph of outside-source information is not usually sufficient to inform a reader clearly of how much of the paragraph comes from an outside source.

Writers must also include a Works Cited or References list at the end of their essay, providing full bibliographic information for every source cited in their essay.

While different disciplines may have slightly different citation styles, and different instructors may emphasize different levels of citation for different assignments, writers should always begin with these conservative practices unless they are expressly told otherwise.

Instructors in the Composition Program support the George Mason Honor Code, which requires them to report any suspected instances of plagiarism to the Honor Council. All judgments about plagiarism and assignment of penalties are made after careful review by the Honor Council.

The Electronic Classroom & The Virtual Classroom

In class: Please keep your computer screen focused on class activities. While some net-surfing is no more distracting to a student than other common non-class-related activities (doodling, jotting down song lyrics, daydreaming), the Web is more tempting and interactive than a doodle, so an innocent little surf "just to check Facebook" can quickly consume 80-90% of your attention. And while your neighbor is unlikely to be distracted by your daydreams, she may get sucked in by the dancing bears or blinking advertisements on your screen and miss an important piece of information.

Students who must be reminded to keep their mouse-fingers under control during face-to-face class meetings will lose class participation points. Please don't make me have to surveil and chide you!

Online: Please post early, be patient, and be constructive. We have several WikiAssignments and options for online WikiWorkshops. You should note that

Some of the deadlines will be in-between course meetings: Please pay close attention to the exact information on the syllabus to avoid late-work penalties (5% per asgt. per day).

Many of the assignments will be interactive/collaborative. If you miss your end of the assignment, someone else may have to go out of his/her way to finish up.

Even informal Wiki writings still need a professional tone. Call it the "Casual Friday" level of communication: you can use your own "voice" and language, and there's no penalty for a missed comma, but your words are still publicly etched in your peers' brains. Please act respectfully to your peers as you build enjoyable working relationships.

What if my computer gets a virus or my disk crashes or my Internet connection dies?

You get some leeway: you can use your one Crisis Pass (see above) to limit the late-work penalties, *provided* you find a way to contact Prof. Reid *and* find a way to make up your work. Beyond that, you're on your own, so don't wait until the last minute to complete and post your assignments!

What if I'm sick or have to rescue a friend or am stuck in traffic? These are all crises; you can use your Crisis Pass for the first one you encounter (but contact Prof. Reid as soon as possible). If you know your life is crisis-prone, plan to complete your WikiClass assignments early. If you believe you have encountered a true Rare, Uncontrollable, Natural Disaster, contact Prof. Reid.

What if the server crashes or a tornado strikes or aliens attack? In case of a true system-wide or natural disaster, we will reschedule or change the assignment. If you are on-time in starting a WikiClass assignment but something crashes in the middle of it, or in the case of another kind of breakdown, contact Prof. Reid about making up part of the workshop.

Three final points:

1. ***Give tech a chance:*** Be patient, try new things, and stay optimistic wherever possible.
2. ***Remember the 10-minute Rule:*** If something goes weird, and you spend 10 minutes trying to de-weird it but fail, **STOP**. Call tech support (993-8870) or a friend, and go to your back up plan for getting most work done, sent out, turned in. (You had a backup plan, didn't you?)
3. ***Don't Panic!*** There's another way, a solution, an option. Together, we'll figure it out.

Major Assignment Overview

More-specific assignment descriptions will be handed out as we start each project.

Persepolis Suite

PrepWork (5%)	Three wiki responses & commentaries
Conversation analysis (5%)	Summary and analysis of a critical source
Text analysis essay (10%)	A 4-5 page essay analyzing and presenting an argument about some aspect of <i>Persepolis</i> , informed by perspectives from an outside secondary source

Researched-Argument Suite

PrepWork (5%)	Proposal, audience analysis, research exercises
Conversation analysis (5%)	Annotated Bibliography (with type-contrast & ranking)
Argument essay (20%)	A 6-8 page argumentative essay that provides the background for an important request (the "Ask"), using comprehensive research strategies to locate reliable sources and integrate them responsibly and effectively

Disciplines Suite

PrepWork (5%)	Issues + Information sketch
Conversation analysis (5%)	Comparative source analysis: what's in a discipline?
Group Info Page (10%)	An online/wiki group project providing researched perspectives on an issue from multiple disciplinary backgrounds

Polished Writing Suite

The "Ask" (15%)	300-600 word intensely edited document (or equivalent) asking a specific, real audience for something big, official, and/or difficult <i>but specific & entirely reasonable</i> : money, program, admission, employment, law, action
Perfect Pages (5%)	300-600 words from your argumentative essay re-edited to make the logic, power, coherence, style, concision, and correctness <i>the best you can possibly make them</i>

All essays/projects will go through drafts & peer-review; you'll submit all versions, peer comments, and your own reflective commentary on the process/product for the final grade.

Keep Everything You Write!

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Class topics	Reading Due	Writing Due
R Jan 22	Introductions		<i>Interview (in-class)</i>
T Jan 27	101 review; noticing	McCloud, <i>Persepolis</i> 1-93	WikiWarmUp
R Jan 29	Research Review; analyzing	Naghibi, <i>Persepolis</i> 94-153 BR: xv-xxiii, Ch 1-3	Persepolis Response 1
T Feb 3	Critical reading 1; look ahead	TBA:Bkgrnd, <i>Pers.</i> 155-245, BR: Ch 4	Resp. 2 + Comment 1
R Feb 5	Audience, genre, discipline	TBA:Research, <i>Pers.</i> 246-341	Resp. 3 + Comment 2
T Feb 10	Topics v. Problems	BR: Ch 8 & 9	5 poss. topics / Source pick
R Feb 12	Mini-wikishop; Topic/Prob.		Conversation Analysis A
T Feb 17	Rhet v. Rules; Source mgmt.	BR: Ch 5 & 15;	
R Feb 19	WikiShop: online option		Persepolis Draft
T Feb 24	Advanced Research 1	BR: Ch 10-11; Zotero; BedBiblio	<i>Turn in R/A prop. at conf.</i>
R Feb 26	Revision v. Editing; Crit. reading 2: text features	BR: Ch 7 & 17	Research Exercise 1
T Mar 3	Information Landscapes	Online: InfoCycle	Persepolis Essay Folder
R Mar 5	Arg & counterarg; Citation 1	BR: Ch 12 & 19	Research Exercise 2
SPRING BREAK			
T Mar 17	Organization strategies	BR: Ch. 13-14	Conversation Analysis B
R Mar 19	Workshop: online option		SFD+cites: Research Draft
T Mar 24	Expanding from the Center; Citation 2	BR: Online tutorials/exercises	
R Mar 26	WikiShop: online option		Research Project Draft
T Mar 31	Advanced research 2; shifting genres	Devitt: TBA	<i>Discipline Group Topics</i>
R Apr 2	Closing the deal		Ask SFD
T Apr 7	Group project set-up		Research Essay
R Apr 9	Writers and/in Disciplines		
T Apr 14	Beyond text: visual rhetoric	BR: Ch. 18	Discipline Sources + Sketch
R Apr 16	Library work day		
T Apr 21	WikiShop: online option		Disciplines Draft
R Apr 23	Editing: power & concision	BR: Ch 16 + Online exercises	Ask Draft
T Apr 28	Editing: logic & grace	BR: Online tutorials/exercises	Perfect Pages Draft
R Apr 30	Synthesis strategies		Disciplines Project
T May 5	Beyond English 302		Conversation analysis C

Thursday May 7: Final Exam Period (1:30-4:15)—Final Draft & Presentation of “Ask” & Perfect Pages

Create a Page from a New Link on a Current Page

1. **Click** to **Edit** the page you're on.
2. **Type** the text you want linked.
3. **Highlight** that text using your cursor.
4. **Click** the **Link Icon** (top) or the "**Insert link to new page**" command (right).
5. **Choose "PBWiki Page"** from the drop-down menu
6. **Name your page.** Remember, PBWiki page names cannot contain punctuation or special characters except dash (-) and underscore (_).
7. **Save** that page.
8. **Click** on your new link.
9. **Check** the page-name and put the page in a **FOLDER** (at least "Engl302Sp09 Public Folder")
10. **Type** on your new page and **save** it.

Work With Links in Edit Mode

1. You can link to a **PBWiki Page**: either a new one (see above) or an existing one; for the latter, just click on any existing page name in the list of pages on the right Page Tools bar (Edit mode).
2. You can link to a **PBWiki Folder** that's listed in the Insert Link dialog box or listed Page Tools bar (Edit mode). (You can also create a folder any time you want: top right, View mode).
3. You can link to a **URL** for any other webpage: Insert Link (Edit mode). If you want to make the page open in a new window/tab (recommended), then in the Insert Link dialog box, click the tab for "**Target**," then choose "**New Window**."
4. You can link to an **email address** using Insert Link (Edit mode).
5. You can link to a **document**. In Edit mode,
 - a. In the right Page Tools bar, click on "**Images and files**."
 - b. Click on **Upload files**.
 - c. **Choose** your file from your computer source.
 - d. **Highlight** the text you want to link to.
 - e. **Click** the name of the file you just uploaded.

Top 10 other things to do in PBWiki (Go ahead—explore!)

1. Use **Copy** (ctrl-C) and **Paste** (ctrl-V) to add text you've written in Word or on another page.
2. Steal an Edit! (If someone's been editing a page but not doing much recently, you can steal it!)
3. Use colors, type styles, headings, formatting, highlights to spice up text.
4. Add pictures (cite 'em if they're not yours!)
5. Include tables (modifying one cell-size modifies the whole row/column)
6. Use a Plug-in to make a Table of Contents, arrange photos, create a chat room, etc.
7. Add tags to pages: which pages are "smart!" or "LOL" or "dance"-related?
8. Show who's done what to a page (in View mode, click Page History (top)).
9. Use your HTML coding experience to do fancy stuff (click "Source" in Edit mode).
10. Create a new "XYZ" page that you think everyone will appreciate—we probably will!