

ENGL 1550 - Writing 1

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 31, CRN 44264,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Jay L. Gordon

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Public Instructor Information

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Course Description

1550. Writing 1. This course develops an awareness of writing processes and provides strategies for generating ideas, drafting, giving and receiving feedback, revising, and editing. Students analyze texts in light of specific audiences, purposes, and contexts and develop critical skills in reading, thinking, and writing. Students write a minimum of 5,000 words (approximately 20 double-spaced pages) cumulatively across the major assignments and incorporate sources into their writing. English 1550 is the first of two required composition courses in the general education core. Grading is ABCDF but must earn a "C" or better to satisfy the General Education requirement and continue to ENGL 1551 or ENGL 1551H. English 1550 is three semester hours. Prereq.: Placement by ACT/SAT test results OR Composition Placement Test results. 3 s.h.

Dr. Gordon's section: Writing with Archival Sources. We can find many fascinating documents in public archives, from newspaper articles to photographs to genealogical records, and much much more. Moreover, we all have a personal "archives" in the form of documents that are meaningful to us, such as photographs, letters, and official documents. Throughout the course, we'll explore how these documents can be used as sources for your writing projects

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	Milestone Documents at the National Archives	National Archives	
Required	President Washington's First Inaugural Address	George Washington	
Required	Estelle Bedford oral history (audio file and transcript)	Estelle Bedford	
Required	Selected birth records, New York, 1855-1895	(various authors)	
Required	Excerpt from Are They Dead Yet	Sam Roberts	
Required	Things to Do at Homes: Organize Your Personal Archive	The Writer's Guild Foundation	
Required	It's a Marathon, Not a Sprint: Personal Archiving	The Central Arkansas Library System (CALS)	
Required	Five biographies in The Ohio Women's Hall of Fame	The Ohio History Connection	
Required	Cuyahoga River Fire: The Blaze that Started a National Movement	Michael Rotman	
Required	Brainstorming Ways to Develop and Expand Your Writing	Jay L. Gordon	

For course readings, you will do the following:

- Read online texts as assigned.
- Read both primary and secondary sources that you find and use yourself for your major writing projects.

Note that your student fees pay for The Norton Field Guide to Writing textbook. However, you have the option to opt out of the student fee charge. Keep in mind that you may be required to use it later, in Writing 2 (ENGL 1551).

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

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SCHEDULE (all readings are online, and links will be provided)

Week of	Reading(s)	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
8/24	"Milestone Documents" at the National Archives "Introduction to Archives" at the Purdue OWL website	What is an archive?	
8/31	"President Washington's First Inaugural Address"	Exploring online archives	Exploring online archives
9/7	Estelle Bedford oral history (audio file and transcript)	Birth records, certificates, and announcements	Documenting My Birth - draft 1
9/14	Selected birth records, New York, 1855-1895	Birth records, certificates, and announcements	
9/21	Excerpt from "Are They Dead Yet?" by Sam Roberts	Putting births information into context	Documenting My Birth - draft 2
9/28	"Things To Do At Home: Organize Your Personal Archive" at The Writer's Guild Foundation website	Revision strategies	
10/5	"It's a marathon, not a sprint: Personal Archiving" at the CALS website	Family history, family records, genealogical archives	Documenting My Family's Past - draft 1
10/12	"My Father's Home" by Antonio Reis	Family history, family records, genealogical archives	
10/19		Revision strategies	Documenting My Family's Past - draft 2
10/26	"Research Guides: Local History and Genealogy" at the Library of Congress website	Revision strategies	
11/2	Five biographies in The Ohio Women's Hall of Fame" at the Ohio History Connection website		Exploring Ohio in the Archives - draft 1
11/9	"Cuyahoga River Fire: The Blaze That Started a National Discussion" by Michael Rotman		
11/16		Revision strategies Strategies for further development and expansion	Exploring Ohio in the Archives - draft 2
11/23		Thanksgiving: Wed-Fri (Nov 25-27)	
11/30	"Brainstorming ways to develop and expand your writing" (video)		Development and Expansion
12/7		Finals week	All final revisions due per arrangement with instructor

The course schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better learning.