BALDWIN AND THE ESSAY
ENGLISH 1101 - COMPOSITION I - SF5

Writing and Communication Program
School of Literature, Media, and Communication
Georgia Institute of Technology
Summer 2021

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Drop-in office hours held virtually on BlueJeans: Mondays at 12pm EDT (Atlanta time) or by
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Course Description

Georgia Tech English courses are designed to strengthen your ability to communicate effectively while challenging you to think critically about how communication works. In these courses, we approach communication as a *multimodal* skill. Basically, we use the term "multimodal" to acknowledge that we use English language skills across multiple modes: we write, we speak, and we also communicate visually, electronically, and non-verbally. Here at Tech, each English course takes on a unique theme designed by instructors like me and my colleagues. While these themes give us something to communicate about, they also help you develop certain modes of communication, depending on the attributes of the theme. **Because this section of English 1101 focuses on essays, a written genre, it's especially suited for those eager to work on written communication.** But you will have ample opportunity to explore and practice other communicative modes, too.

Our Theme: Baldwin and the Essay

This English 1101 class is entitled **"Baldwin and the Essay."** In one of his earliest collections of essays, James Baldwin introduced himself to his readers by explaining, "I want to be an honest man and a good writer." From the beginning, writing well was a central aim of Baldwin's intellectual project, a goal which helped shape him into one of the world's foremost thinkers on racism and inequality, global diaspora, Black culture, whiteness, and American identity. What was "good writing" to Baldwin? What is "good" about his work to us today? In this class, we will focus on a selection of Baldwin's essays, meeting him at various points in his writing life, to explore how Baldwin honed his thinking while honing his craft. Engaging Baldwin today means taking on contemporary discussions about race and power in our communities, including issues related to the Black Lives Matter movement. Expect to think critically about the world around you while strengthening your ability to communicate effectively, especially through writing.

Our Goals

The main goal of this class is to help you practice and improve your ability to communicate.
We'll use the acronym WOVEN to identify the five main modes of communication: Written,
Oral, Visual, Electronic, and Nonverbal. As explained above, this section of English 1101 will
focus especially on electronic communication this term, a focus that's embedded in our online
classroom format. You'll also be invited to identify one of the WOVEN modes as your personal
area of focus this term.

Georgia Tech Education Goals for All English 1101 Courses

In addition to your personal goals and the specific goals of our course section, Georgia Tech has
set three overarching goals for all English 1101 courses:

Primary Learning Goal: Communication
To demonstrate proficiency in the process of articulating and organizing rhetorical
arguments in written, oral, visual, and nonverbal modes, using concrete support and
conventional language.

Secondary Learning Goal: Critical Thinking
To be able to judge factual claims and theories on the basis of evidence.

Secondary Learning Goal: Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics
To be able to describe relationships among languages, philosophies, cultures, literature,
ethics, or the arts.

What to Expect in an Online Classroom

As asynchronous online course, this section of English 1101 will take place online through Canvas modules, discussion boards, e-mail, video conferencing, and other electronic modes of communication.

"Live" Events, Synchronous Meetings, and Conferences

While all course work is available asynchronously, this class will also include occasional opportunities for synchronous meetings and events, including conferences, discussions, and Q&As with me (Dr. LeRud), your peers, and Georgia Tech librarians and other experts. Your "live" attendance will not be required at events that can be recorded, but if you are unable to attend these events, then you will be required to review the recordings of them on your own time. **You may be asked to attend some conferences and meetings synchronously, but you will be able to schedule these to suit your own calendar.**

Managing Your Time

This class will require several hours of work per week for reading, researching, writing, revising, and collaborating with me and your peers. Each week, a new "module" will be available on Canvas. Modules will include an "Objectives and Assignments" page that will provide an overview of the goals and tasks to complete each week, and you'll find readings, instructional materials, and links to assignments embedded within each module, too.

Expect to check your email regularly, maintain open channels of communication, and don't be afraid to ask a lot of questions. You can't fade into the background in this course: your active participation is absolutely necessary. **I recommend that you maintain your own personal calendar and to-do lists to help you organize your time each week.**

Course Materials

Required Textbooks
- *James Baldwin: Collected Essays*, ISBN 9781883011529
- *WOVENText*, Digital Edition, ISBN 8220113196359
- Additional materials will be available through Canvas in digital formats.

  Texts are available through the Georgia Tech bookstore or can be purchased through other venues.

Hardware
- A laptop or desktop computer with high-speed internet connection for access to course communications, participation, and evaluation
- A microphone and/or webcam for video conferencing and collaboration *(some equipment may be checked out from the Georgia Tech library)*

Software
- An active Georgia Tech Canvas account
- A program that can open PDFs (such as Acrobat or Preview)
- A word-processing tool such as Microsoft Office, Apple's Office suite, or other open-source equivalent *(please note: Canvas can't open Pages files, so please avoid this one)*
- Audio editing and analysis software (available for free download on Canvas)

Course Content

Many of the texts we will explore together this term deal with difficult issues and have troubling and disturbing content. Religion, sexuality, and politics will be in our reading and conversation; cruelty and violence are often present in texts about culture and history. We will be thoughtful in taking up issues that can and should disturb us, as they raise special ethical, intellectual, and emotional challenges.

Assignments and Artifacts

During the course of our class, you will complete four primary "artifacts" and a final portfolio. To complete each artifact, you'll turn in several smaller assignments, such as drafts, peer reviews, and final reflections. Below are short descriptions of each artifact and the final portfolio, together with links leading to more details. Some details will be provided later on during the term.

WEEKLY DISCUSSIONS (10%)

You will be expected to post on three occasions each week, with posts due every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. These posts are informal opportunities to process and reflect on assigned materials. They are designed to measure how carefully you've considered the materials and how you support your classmates' responses, too.

ARTIFACT 1 – AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY (20%)

Using Baldwin's own "Autobiographical Notes" as your model, you will introduce yourself to our class. This 500-word essay will be submitted first in an early version, workshopped, commented on, revised, and submitted again in a second version.

ARTIFACT 2 – ESSAY ANALYSIS PODCAST (25%)

Working with a team, you will produce an 8-10-minute podcast that introduces our class to a Baldwin essay of your team's choice. Podcast teams will collaborate on a group contract and work schedule, podcast script and design, production, show notes, and podcast distribution.

ARTIFACT 3 – ARGUMENT ESSAY (30%)

This is your opportunity to make an argumentative claim about a compelling issue relevant to our reading and discussions this term. This 1500-word essay will be submitted first in an early version, workshopped, commented on, revised, and submitted again in a second version.

FINAL PORTFOLIO (15%)

In lieu of a final exam, you will produce a multimodal e-portfolio of the work you have completed this term. The portfolio will demonstrate how you have met specific course outcomes through short interpretive essays, multi-modal illustrations, and a long-form reflective essay. *This assignment is completed by all Georgia Tech ENGL 1101 and 1102 students.*

You are strongly encouraged to prepare for the final portfolio throughout the term, and one of the ways to do this is to **maintain a cumulative file that includes all your assignments, drafts, and final versions**. This file will serve as a basis for you to assess your improvement during the semester and to select samples for your portfolio. Number your drafts as you revise your work (e.g., version 1.0, version 2.0, and so on), and **do not delete your own copies of assignment files** after you submit the assignment.

Late and Missing Assignments

Assignments turned in after the due date **lose 10% of the assignment's value (one letter grade) per day, including weekends and holidays.** You may ask for an extension if the assignment is due more than 72 hours (3 days) later, and the earlier the better. I may not grant the extension. Missing work is counted as a "zero."

Revisions of Assignments

In this class, you will have an opportunity to revise some of your work, often after it has been reviewed by your peers or instructor. When you revise, do not assume that your readers have noted every error on your documents; although they will identify some errors and specific ideas for improvement, it's ultimately up to you to revise carefully and proofread thoroughly--a good habit to get into.

In case of emergency...

While the policies above will apply in most situations, I understand that things happen in our lives that are outside of our control. I'm always willing to make special accommodations when situations require. Please do your best to keep in me the loop and communicate in advance so I can support you.

Assessment

The work you submit for a grade in this class will be evaluated in a variety of ways. Sometimes, your peers and I will assess your work before you submit it for a grade, which gives you an opportunity to make changes. At other times, items you turn in may be assigned credit based on level of completion or a specific point system. Final versions of your primary artifacts will receive written feedback from me, and I may also use feedback charts to communicate with you about your work.

All English 1101 and 1102 courses use the following chart for assigning letter grades.

Letter grade (NB: +/- are only for grading assignments. Georgia Tech does NOT use +/- for course grades.)	Numeric Equivalent in this Class
A+	98-99
A **Superior performance**—rhetorically, aesthetically, and technically—demonstrating advanced understanding and use of the media in particular contexts. An inventive spark and exceptional execution.	94-97
A-	90-93
B+	88-89
B **Above-average, high-quality performance**—rhetorically, aesthetically, and technically.	84-87
B-	80-83
C+	78-79
C **Average (not inferior) performance**. Competent and acceptable—rhetorically, aesthetically, and technically.	74-77
C-	70-73
D+	68-69
D **Below-average performance**. Less than competent — rhetorically, aesthetically, and/or technically.	64-67
D-	60-63
F **Unacceptable performance**. Failure to meet even minimum criteria rhetorically, aesthetically, and/or technically.	1-59
0 (zero) Work not submitted	0

Common Feedback Chart

Below is an assessment rubric designed for general use in ENGL 1101 and 1102 courses.

Scale	Basic	Beginning	Developing	Competent	Mature	Exemplary
Rhetorical Awareness Response to situation, including purpose, audience, register, and context	Overlooks two or more aspects of the situation or assignment, and thus does not fulfill the task	Overlooks at least one aspect of the situation or assignment and thus compromises effectiveness	Attempts to respond to all aspects of the situation or assignment, but the attempt is incomplete	Addresses the situation or assignment in a complete but perfunctory or predictable way	Addresses the situation completely, with unexpected insight	Addresses the situation in a sophisticated manner that could advance professional discourse on the topic
Stance Argument, significance and implications ("so what" factor)	Involves an unspecified or confusing argument; significance is not evident	Makes an overly general argument; significance is difficult to discern, or not appropriate to the rhetorical situation	Makes a simplistic or implicit argument, or multiple arguments that have no clear connection to one another; gestures towards significance, but does not fully develop it	Makes an explicit and straightforward argument that does not oversimplify the problem or question; explores at least one implication of the argument in depth	Makes a complex, unified argument that clearly articulates a position or stance; explores multiple implications of the argument	Offers an inventive, expert-like argument that clearly articulates a sophisticated position/stance; explores multiple implications of the argument in a compelling manner
Development of Ideas Evidence, analysis, and substance	Claims requiring support are not backed by necessary evidence; lacks analysis of major pieces of evidence; content is not substantive	Evidence and/or analysis is weak or contradictory; does not account for important evidence that could support or disprove the argument	Evidence provides minimal but necessary support to each point; attempted analysis is not sufficient to prove the argument	Evidence and analysis are substantive; they support the argument and related claims, but are mostly predictable	Evidence fully supports and proves the argument and all related claims; evidence is always paired with compelling analysis	Evidence and analysis are precise, nuanced, fully developed, and work together to enhance the argument,
Organization Structure and coherence, including elements such as introductions and conclusions as well as logical connections between points	Lacks unity in constituent parts; fails to create coherence among constituent parts; contains major argumentative holes or fallacies	Uses insufficient unifying statements; uses few effective connections; some logical moves necessary to prove the argument are absent	Uses some effective unifying claims, but a few are unclear; inconsistently makes connections between points and the argument; employs simplistic organization	States unifying claims with supporting points that relate clearly to the overall argument and employs an effective but mechanical scheme	Asserts and sustains a claim that develops logically and progressively; adapts typical organizational schemes for the context; achieves substantive coherence	Artifact is organized to achieve maximum coherence and momentum; connections are sophisticated and complex when required
Conventions Expectations for grammar, mechanics, style, citation	Involves errors that risk making the overall message distorted or incomprehensible	Involves a major pattern of errors	Involves some distracting errors	Meets expectations, with minor errors	Meets expectations in a virtually flawless manner	Exceeds expectations and manipulates conventions to advance the argument
Design for Medium Features that use affordances of the genre to enhance factors such as usability and comprehensibility	Lacks features necessary or significant for the genre; uses features that conflict with or ignore the argument	Omits some important features; distracting inconsistencies in features; uses features that don't support argument	Uses features that support the argument, but some match imprecisely with content; involves minor omissions or inconsistencies	Supports the argument with features that are generally suited to genre and content	Promotes engagement and supports the argument with features that efficiently use affordances	Persuades with careful, seamless integration of features and content and with innovative use of affordances

Common Policies

In addition to the policies spelled out in this Getting Started module, Georgia Tech's Writing and Communication Program has common, program-wide policies on the topics listed below. Access the full text of these policies at: https://sites.gatech.edu/wcppolicies/engl-1101-and-1102-common-policies-summer-2021/

1. Georgia Tech General Education Outcomes for English 1101 and English 1102
2. Learning Outcomes for English 1101 and English 1102
3. Evaluation Equivalencies
4. Common Feedback Chart
5. Course Completion
6. Engagement and Participation
7. Required Textbooks
8. Dean of Students and Counseling Center
9. Statement Regarding Insecurity
10. Campus Carry
11. Safety
12. Student Support Resources
13. Non–Discrimination and Inclusion
14. Naugle Communication Center
15. Accommodations
16. Academic Misconduct
17. Syllabus Modifications
18. Final Instructional Class Days and Reading Periods
19. Multimodal Reflection Portfolio
20. Multimodal Portfolio Submission Policies
21. Technical Support

COURSE SCHEDULE

All assignments are due by 10pm Eastern Time on the date specified unless otherwise noted as an exception (exceptions are highlighted in <mark>yellow</mark> below).

Week 1, Wednesday, June 23 – Friday, June 25
Thursday, June 24: Deadline to avoid class cancellation by 4pm Eastern Time
Thursday, June 24: Deadline to drop courses without a "W" grade (incoming summer first-year students only)

Objectives	- Understand course policies, assignments, schedule, and Canvas functions - Gain familiarity with the concept of WOVEN communication modes and identify a mode to focus on this term - Introduce yourself and start getting to know our class community - Meet Baldwin and begin building awareness of his approach to writing - Identify the structural components of Baldwin's autobiographical essay
Assignments	**Readings and Materials:** o Read the Canvas modules, "Before You Begin" and "Getting Started" o *WOVENText*, Part 1: "Becoming a WOVEN Communicator at Georgia Tech," pp. 1-34 o Baldwin, *Collected Essays*: "Autobiographical Notes," pp. 5-9 o All other materials and readings for this week are included or linked within the W1 module **Deliverables:** 1. W1 Discussion (due **Wednesday 6/23**, **Thursday 6/24**, and **Friday 6/25**) 2. A1 Draft Introduction and Outline, due **Friday 6/25.** After the due date has passed, Canvas will automatically assign peer review partners. Peer reviews are due in W2, on **Monday, 6/28**. If you can't find your peer review partners, e-mail me right away.

Week 2, Monday, June 28 – Friday, July 2	
Objectives	• Explore constructive peer review editing habits, acting as listener and learner • Identify the affordances of podcasting as a genre • Understand the expectations of the A2 Essay Analysis Podcast • Be able to operate Audacity and produce a short recording of yourself • Connect with your A2 group members, prepare your podcast, and begin producing it • Schedule and attend a podcast group conference with Dr. LeRud • Continue exploring Baldwin's life and context

Assignments	**Readings and Materials:**
	
	 o *WOVENText* :
	  - p. 177, "Peer Reviewing Multimodal Projects" *(Note: plan to read this before completing your A1 peer reviews for Monday, 6/28)*
	  - pp. 206-209, "What Is a Podcast?" and "Scripting"
	  - pp. 100-118, "Chapter 7: Working with Collaborators"
	  - pp. 185-187, "Why Are Self-Reflection & Self-Assessment about Communication Processes & Artifacts Important?" *(Note: you can save this to read before submitting your A1 Reflection for Friday, 7/1)*
	 o A Baldwin essay of your group's choosing
	 o Download Audacity for free from this link: https://www.audacityteam.org/
	 o If you don't already have a preferred podcast listening app, you may also need to sign up for a free Spotify account at https://www.spotify.com/
	 o All other materials and readings for this week are included or linked within this module, including…
	  - three Baldwin podcasts (*Throughline*, "James Baldwin's Shadow"; *Radicals in Conversation,* "James Baldwin's Radical Politics"; and *James Baldwin's America*, "This Is James Baldwin's America"
	
	Deliverables:
	I recommend that you start this week by connecting with your podcast group as soon as possible.
	
	1. A1 Introduction and Outline Peer Reviews, due **Monday, 6/28,**
	2. A2 Demo Tape, due Tuesday, **6/29.**
	3. A1 Autobiographical Essay, **due Wednesday, 6/30**.
	4. Coordinate with your group to complete the A2 Group Contract and Proposal, **due Wednesday, 6/30** (NOTE: turn it in early for priority scheduling!)
	5. W2 Discussion (**Wednesday 6/30**, **Thursday 7/1**, and **Friday 7/2**)
	6. Schedule and attend an A2 group conference with me on **Wednesday, 6/30, Thursday 7/1,** or **Friday 7/2.**
	7. A1 Reflection, due **Friday, 7/1.**
	8. A2 Draft Script by **Friday 7/1.**

Week 3, Tuesday, July 6 – Friday, July 9 *Monday, July 5 - Official School Holiday: Independence Day (classes do not meet)*	
Objectives	• Focus on Baldwin's essay style by looking closely at some examples, curated by your classmates • Round Two podcasters: complete your podcast for distribution next week • Reflect and report back on your learning experience in this class so far for the anonymous, ungraded Midterm Survey

Assignments	**Readings and Materials:**
	
	    o Baldwin, *Collected Essays*: selections TBA (selected by Round One podcasters)
	    o All other materials and reading for this week, including Round One podcasts, are linked within the W3 module
	
	Deliverables:
	
	1. Round One podcasters: A2 Podcast and Show Notes due by **Tuesday 7/6 at <mark>10am EDT</mark>.**
	2. W3 discussion, due as usual on **Wednesday 7/7, Thursday 7/8, and Friday 7/9.**
	3. Round One podcasters: individually complete the A2 Reflection, due **Friday, 7/9.**
	4. Midterm Survey by **Friday, 7/9.**

Week 4, Monday, July 12 – Friday, July 16 _Saturday, July 18 - Deadline for changing grade mode from letter/grade to pass/fail (and vice versa_ _Saturday, July 18, 4pm – Last day to withdraw from a single course or from school with "W" grades_	
Objectives	- Focus on Baldwin's essay style by looking closely at some examples, curated by your classmates - Conclude the A2 Essay Analysis Podcast assignment by reflecting on the project overall - Understand the expectations of A3 Argument Essay and begin planning your approach - Compare Baldwin's argument essay style to your own, identifying useful components of Baldwin's to integrate into your writing - Begin to shape your argument essay structure with a thesis responsive to key issues of this course
Assignments	**Readings and Materials:** - Baldwin, _Collected Essays_: selections TBA (selected by Round One podcasters) - All other materials and reading for this week, including Round One podcasts, are linked within the W4 module **Deliverables:** 1. Round Two podcasters: turn in the A2 Podcast and Show Notes by **Monday, 7/12 at <mark>10am EST</mark>.** 2. W4 discussion board, due as usual on **Wednesday 7/14, Thursday 7/15,** and **Friday 7/16.** 3. Round Two podcasters: individually complete the A2 Reflection, due **Friday, 7/16.** 4. A3 Introduction and Outline by **Friday, 7/16.** After the due date has passed, Canvas will automatically assign peer review partners. Peer reviews are due next week, **Monday, 7/19**.

Week 5, Monday, July 19 – Friday, July 23	
Objectives	• Continue exploring Baldwin's argument essay style and technique, comparing to your own • Practice constructive peer review editing, as a listener and learner • Plan an essay revision process and execute your plan • Finish drafting your essay • Explore and practice essay proof-reading techniques
Assignments	**Readings and Materials:** o Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (*Collected* Essays, pp. 291-347) o *WOVENText*, pp. 173, "A Checklist for Final Drafts" o All other readings and materials are included in the W5 module **Deliverables:** 1. A3 Introduction and Outline Peer Reviews, due **Monday, 7/19** 2. A3 Revision Plan, due **Wednesday, 7/21** 3. W5 Discussion (due as usual on **Wednesday 7/21, Thursday 7/22,** and **Friday 7/23**)

Week 6, Monday, July 26 – Friday, July 30	
Tuesday, July 27 – Last day of classes *Wednesday, July 28 – Reading period (no classes and no exams all day)* *Thursday, July 29 – Finals Begin after 2:40pm*	
Objectives	• Finalize all remaining Artifact assignments (0, 1, 2, and 3) and review completed work in preparation for the Final Portfolio • Begin preparing your Final Portfolio

Assignments	**Readings and Materials:**
	
	    o *WOVENText*, pp. 32-34, "Building Your Communication Portfolio"
	    o All other readings and materials are included in the W6 module
	
	Deliverables:
	
	1. A3 Argument Essay, due **Monday, 7/26**.
	2. A3 Reflection, due **Tuesday, 7/27.**
	3. Final Portfolio, due **Friday, 7/30.**
	
	   No W6 Discussion to give you time to focus on the Final Portfolio