

ENGL 245

Writing and Communities: Fall 2026

Instructor: Folasade John

ACE: ACE 1

Office Hours: by [appointment online](#)

Email: fjohn3@huskers.unl.edu

Format: Fully asynchronous online

Course Description:

In this course we will explore writing as a social practice. We will look at and define community: our families, friends, home lives, online networks and professional groups. We will use our writing to understand who belongs to which communities, what belonging means, how we share values, and how we create new knowledge in community with one another.

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Analyze and write critically about the social dynamics of different communities
- Conduct research using interviews and field observations.
- Produce at least 30 pages of polished prose over 3 major projects.
- Use revision to tailor your writing to specific audiences and purposes.
- Provide feedback to your peers.
- Reflect on your own growth as a writer.

ACE Outcomes:

This course is certified as an Achievement Centered General Education (ACE) Outcome 1 course. This means ENGL 245 will help you meet the following general education outcome:

ACE 1: "Write texts, in various forms, with an identified purpose, that respond to particular audience needs, incorporate research or existing knowledge, and use applicable documentation and appropriate conventions of form and structure."

To achieve this, we will move through three major projects where you'll identify a specific audience, conduct real-world research, and apply professional formatting (MLA). By the end of the term, your writing may be used to assess the course's overall effectiveness in helping students achieve this ACE requirement. Please let me know if you have any questions about this.

Course Policies

Add/ Drop/Withdrawal Dates:

- August 31 (Mon.) Last day to drop a full semester course and receive 100% refund
- September 18 (Fri.) Last day to drop a class and receive a partial refund
- October 16 (Fri.) Last day to change a course registration to or from "Pass/No Pass"
- November 13 (Fri.) Last day to withdraw from one or more courses

Grading Policies:

Grade Breakdown

Components of Final Grade
Other Work and Low-Stakes Writing – 40%
Major Writing Project 1 – 20%*
Major Writing Project 2 – 20%*
Major Writing Project 2 – 20%*

*In order to receive a passing grade for the course you must complete ALL of the major course projects and drafts.

Grading Scale

A: 90–100	B: 80–89	C: 70–79	D: 60–69	F: 0–59
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Grading Contract:

As long as work has been submitted that fulfills all of the requirements of the assignment, work will receive at least a B grade. Work which demonstrates higher quality and/or demonstrates risk-taking in considering or implementing new ideas will be awarded an A.

This is meant to ease the worry over grading for you! As long as you sincerely attempt the assignment you will get at least a B and may likely get an A depending on your work.

Late Work and Extensions:

The following grade reductions apply to late work:

TIME ELAPSED SINCE ASSIGNMENT DUE	GRADE REDUCTION
UP TO 24 HRS	10%
24-48 HRS	20%
48-72 HRS	30%
BEYOND 72 HRS	Not Graded

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism Policy:

Academic honesty is essential to the existence and integrity of an academic institution. Any writing turned in for this class must be your own original independent work, and any information, language, or ideas drawn from other sources must be cited appropriately in MLA format. Turning in someone else's work or using someone else's language as if it is your own will result in a failing grade and/or additional disciplinary action by the university.

For more information on UNL's plagiarism policies, see this website:

<http://unl.libguides.com/plagiarism>

Artificial Intelligence, Departmental Policy:

The English Department believes the ability to imagine the world other than it is, imaginative reasoning, it's the core of what we do. We argue that generative AI severs the production of language from the production of knowledge, disrupts the imaginative reasoning process, and reduces opportunities for authentic learning.

Artificial Intelligence, Course Policy:

Submitting work which is not your own is not only harmful to your learning, but also an Academic Integrity violation. This includes writing generated using AI, including ChatGPT, Claude, Grammarly, Prezi, or any other “artificial intelligence” platform or LLM.

In this course, using AI in ANY capacity is not permitted. It places too high of a burden on me to investigate and evaluate possible AI usage instead of focusing on the educational aspects of the course. Using generative AI for any part of the writing process (including summaries, cleaning up grammar, creating outlines, or paraphrasing) will result in a zero for the assignment.

SO, WHAT YOU SHOULD DO INSTEAD... Reach out to me if you're having trouble. Using AI isn't worth it! I am not expecting perfect work. I just want you to do the work. Even an incomplete grade is better than a zero.

Email Policy:

When sending me an email, be sure to include your topic followed by your name and class number with section in the subject line. Make sure to be specific about your requests. This is to help me respond to you as quickly as I can, since I receive many emails every day.

For example:

Subject: [The topic you are writing about YOURNAME ENGL###: SECTION #]

Body:

Instructor John,

[What you're writing about. If it is an assignment, include the assignment name. If you are requesting an extension, propose a date for completion. If it is about an absence, include the specific numerical date.]

**[Best, Sincerely, or another sign off],
Your Name**

Emails that do not follow this format might be deleted or sent to the wrong folder. I will generally respond to emails within 48 hours. If you haven't received an email after that timeframe, feel free to send another email. Should the topic be urgent and require a quicker reply, please include the word URGENT in your subject so I can respond to you sooner.

Please note that I do not commonly check email between 6 pm and 8 am and

response time will be slowed over the weekends--so keep that in mind when asking about time-sensitive issues.

Many questions can be answered by consulting this syllabus, so please read carefully. I will also communicate with you through CANVAS announcements, so please check CANVAS regularly.

Inclusivity:

Every student in this classroom, regardless of personal history or identity categories, is a valued member of this group. You have the right to determine your own identity, to be called by whatever name you wish, and to be referred to by whatever pronouns you wish. If you find that there are barriers to your inclusion, please contact me privately.

University-wide Policies:

Students are responsible for knowing the university policies and resources found on this page (<https://go.unl.edu/coursepolicies>).

Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments for this course must be written and submitted directly in Google Docs. You will submit one document with a new tab for each assignment.

Students should not write their assignments in another program (e.g., Microsoft Word) and then copy and paste the content into Google Docs. Should you require the use of voice to text/dictation technology, this must be documented with an accommodations form in order to be accepted for the course. Do not delete tabs in your document, as the instructor will not be able to verify that writing existed once it is deleted. Copy pasting from deleted tabs will be treated the same as any other external source.

Students must grant the instructor **Editor** permissions on the Google Doc they submit. This allows the instructor to provide detailed feedback, make suggestions, and track revisions effectively.

This format must be followed for the entire duration of the course. Failure to comply with this requirement, including granting Editor access, may result in point deductions or the need to resubmit the assignment in the correct format.

Please ensure you are comfortable with using Google Docs for all your written assignments. If you have any questions or technical difficulties, reach out to me as soon as possible.

Course Requirements

Required Materials:

All course readings will be available on Canvas.

Assignment Submission Formatting

All work turned in must adhere to the following format. Work submitted that does not adhere to this formatting will not receive credit.

- Computer typed and submitted on Canvas as a Google Docs link
 - The assignment must be entirely created in Google Docs, not started somewhere else.
 - It must be shared with editing permissions enabled. [Here is a tutorial showing how to do this.](#)
- Double-spaced (entire document) 12-point font, Time New Roman only
- 1" margins on all sides (top, bottom, left, right)
- Indent first lines of paragraphs 1/2" from the left margin
- Header that numbers your pages on the upper right-hand corner
- All assignments should have a title that corresponds to the assignment
- Your paper heading should be on the first page of your assignment. Below is an example of how all your assignments should be submitted:

Last Name Pg. #

Student Name

Instructor John

English XXX, Section XXX

Date Submitted

(Unique Title which is not the assignment name)

This is the beginning of my fabulous essay that I know you will love because I have put a lot of time and effort into this essay. I have put time and effort into this essay because I care

about what I am writing about. I care about my writing because I am genuinely engaged in the topic I have chosen.

Course Assignments (Tentative)

Note that I may use homework as an example assignment in class. Write a note at the top of your assignment if there is a particular reason you would like an assignment not to be shared.

These are just broad outlines. More information will be given in class and posted to CANVAS.

General Work

Author's Notes: Each major assignment will be accompanied by an approximately 250-word author's note. The author's note allows you to reflect on your writing process. It also allows you to direct the type of feedback you'd most like to receive from me and your peers.

Class Work: Throughout the class we will engage in several shorter, lower stakes activities and assignments to support your learning throughout the semester. These may be short quizzes, writing responses, peer workshops, or drafts. These will be graded for completion. This is so that you can practice these new skills without worrying about being penalized by a low grade. Submissions that fulfill the assignment requirements will receive a full complete grade. Should a submission not fulfill the requirements, there may be a partial grade.

Major Assignment List

WRITING ASSIGNMENT	OVERVIEW
Writing from Community	Exploring a space (physical or virtual) and analyzing how that environment reflects the values of its community.
Writing About Community	Conducting interviews and analyzing artifacts to explain how a specific discourse community operates.
Writing for Community	Creating a multimodal text (website, newsletter, podcast, handbook, etc.) designed to benefit or advocate for a specific community.

Course Schedule (Tentative)

Note: This is tentative and there will be changes. I will notify you of the changes in class and via CANVAS announcements. If there is a discrepancy between this schedule and CANVAS, the most up-to-date schedule is likely on CANVAS.

Preparation for the week will be expected to be completed to be able to discuss the readings/videos during class that week.

Weeks	Topics/Activities	Preparation for the week	Major Assignments Due
W1-4	The Power of Place	- Fieldwork and looking at places as “texts” which can be read	- Writing from Community
W5-9	Understanding the Community	- Interviews and analysis	- Writing about Community
W10-14	Writing for Change	- Public rhetoric, identifying community needs, genre and audience	- Writing for Community
W15-16	Reflection	- Final revisions	- Final Course Portfolio

Resources and Support

The Writing Center:

The Writing Center can provide you with meaningful support as you write for this class as well as every course in which you enroll. Trained undergraduate and graduate peer consultants are available to talk with you about all forms of communication. You are welcome to bring in everything from lab reports, presentations, and research papers to cover letters, application essays, and graduate theses and dissertations. Writing Center Consultants can work with you at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming and organizing your ideas through polishing a final draft.

There are **three** ways you can connect with a Consultant: **Online** (a real-time, video conversation), **eTutoring** (email feedback), and **in person**. To learn more about online options and view video tutorials, visit <https://www.unl.edu/writing/online-writing-center-services>.

Sign up for an appointment any time by visiting unl.mywconline.com. For other information about the Writing Center, please visit unl.edu/writing.

Accommodation statement:

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on your disability (e.g. physical disability, learning disability, ADHD, chronic health issue, mental health condition, complications with a pregnancy, long Covid, temporary injury, or other condition), please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options privately. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). If you are eligible for services and register with their office, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so they can be implemented in a timely manner. SSD contact information: 117 Louise Pound Hall.; 402-472-3787

Mental Health Resources:

UNL offers a variety of options to students to aid in dealing with stress and adversity. Counseling and Psychological & Services is a multidisciplinary team of psychologists and counselors that works collaboratively to help you explore your feelings and thoughts and learn helpful ways to improve your mental, psychological and emotional well-being when issues arise. CAPS can be reached at [402-472-7450](tel:402-472-7450).

Big Red Resilience & Well-Being provides one-on-one coaching to any student who wants to enhance their well-being. Trained well-being coaches help students create and be grateful for positive experiences, practice resilience and self-compassion, and find support as they need it. BRRWB can be reached at [402-472-8770](tel:402-472-8770)

On the UNO campus, the Counseling and Psychological Services
Links to an external site.

(CAPS) office can be reached at [402-554-2409](tel:402-554-2409). The UNO Wellness Center
Links to an external site.

provides a variety of wellness resources and can be reached by calling [402-554-](tel:402-554-)

2539.

Writing Lincoln Initiative:

The Writing Lincoln Initiative (WLI) is a collaboration between UNL students and community volunteers who partner with writers of all ages and backgrounds to provide a friendly and supportive space for writing in Lincoln. If you're interested in helping sponsor literacy learning in the community by joining WLI, please contact them via email at writinglincoln360@gmail.com or visit their website at wirtinglincoln.org. They're always looking for new volunteers to help in whatever way they can.

Basic Needs Security:

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect your academic progress, is urged to contact the Office of Student Affairs by emailing studentaffairs@unl.edu, calling 402-472-3755, or stopping by their office in person.

Furthermore, please notify your instructor if you are comfortable in doing so. An online guide of resources here at UNL can be found at <http://pantry.unl.edu/welcome#donate>. Students (and others) not in need of such support should also visit this webpage to learn opportunities for donating goods, materials, or time.

Counseling & Psychological Services :

402-472-5000 | <https://health.unl.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services-caps>

The Women's Center :

| 402-472-2597 | womens-center.unl.edu/welcome

The University Health Center :

402-472-5000 | <https://health.unl.edu/>

The LGBTQA+ Resource Center:

402-472-1652 | <https://lgbtqa.unl.edu/welcome>

English as a Second Language Support:

402-472-1884 | <https://www.unl.edu/piesl/esl-support-lab>

Student Money Management Center:

402-472-9093 | <https://www.unl.edu/smmc/>

Suicide Prevention Hotline:

1-800-273-TALK | <https://health.unl.edu/caps/prevention>

Victim Advocates:

402-472-2598 | <https://womens-center.unl.edu/victim-resources>

Office of Academic Support and Intercultural Services:

The Gaughan Multicultural Center continues the tradition of past UNL Culture Centers, providing a home away from home for underrepresented students, while welcoming all UNL students, faculty, staff, alumni and guests. Contact them at 402-471-5500 or the center at 1505 S.St.