

The UTD First Year Experience

Rhet 1101

Critical Thinking and Oral Communication

Syllabus - Section: 015 Pre-Health

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Office Hours & Location: JO 4.800 drop-in 1:00-2:00 MWF and 12:00-1:00 F, or by appointment

Course Description: This course is designed to help new first year students gain an understanding of the University of Texas at Dallas and the issues they may encounter while transitioning to college life. Topics addressed include, but are not limited to, the services and resources available to students on the UTD campus, discovering individual learning styles and the implications for college success, elements and opportunities for effective public speaking, the importance of working in groups and understanding one's leadership tendencies, managing time efficiently, and the significance of getting out of one's "comfort zone" in order to grow as a student and an individual.

Required Materials:

- UTD Student Planner & Guide
- Cohen, Harlan, (2005). *The Naked Roommate*, Sourcebooks, Inc. Naperville.
- DiTiberio, John, K. & Hammer, Allen, L. (1993). *Introduction to Type in College*, CPP, Inc. Palo Alto.
- UTD student email account

Course Objectives:

- To connect you with the UTD campus community through department presentations, campus involvement, and interactions with peers.
- To help you discover your personal learning style and ways to use that knowledge to achieve greater success and enjoyment in your classes.
- To present tips, tactics, and techniques for more effective learning, emphasizing time management strategies, and critical thinking.
- To enhance your communication skills through opportunities for both oral and written expression.

Coursework & Grading Philosophy

- Rhet 1101 is a required course for all incoming freshmen as it has been effective in raising GPA's, retention from the freshman to sophomore year, and overall student satisfaction and success.
- UTD is a selective admissions institution with one of the highest average Freshman class SAT scores in the state, therefore performance and participation in Rhet 1101 is expected to reflect the caliber of students and academic standards of the university as a whole.
- The course objectives for Rhet 1101 represent goals which are fundamental to student success both inside and outside of the college classroom.

Course Requirements and Grading

- Class Attendance 250 points
- Weekly Blogs 50 points
- Academic Autobiography 100 points
- Oral Presentation: Expert Testimony 100 points
- Group Project & Presentation 150 points
- Campus Event Attendance 600 points
- Quizzes 100 points
- Final Exam 150 points

Total 1500 points

1500	A+	1155 – 1199	C+
1395 – 1499	A	1095 – 1154	C
1350 – 1394	A-	1050 – 1094	C-
1305 – 1349	B+	1005 – 1049	D+
1245 – 1304	B	945 – 1004	D
1200 – 1244	B-	900 - 944	D-
		Below 900	F

***Rhet 1101 is a requirement for graduation. If you drop the course or fail it, you must take Study Skills (DRDG 0v94) in the Spring. It will be recoded as Rhet 1101 in order to give you credit for the course and enable you to replace your low grade or W.**

Class Policies

- Cell phones must be turned off or to vibrate and are not to be answered or used for text messaging during class time.
- Unless otherwise noted, laptops are NOT necessary for taking notes in class and should not be opened at any time.
- Food and drink should be kept to a minimum and put away once class begins.

- Arriving late is disruptive to class activities and may affect your attendance and participation grade. If you have a legitimate reason for being late, please inform your instructor ahead of time or immediately after class.

Class Attendance

This is a discussion-based class that involves collaborative learning and interactive exercises in order to explore a variety of topics relative to your transition to college life and The University of Texas at Dallas. Therefore, it is critical that you come to class to take part in the activities and contribute to the class dynamics.

For an excused absence, you must adhere to the following:

- All students participating on UTD competitive teams (athletic and intellectual) must bring an official Intercollegiate Competition Memo signed by John Jackson **prior** to any sanctioned absences. Students must inform the instructor of the impending absence **at least 2 weeks prior** to the absence. If this does not occur, it is at the instructor's discretion to excuse or not excuse the absence.
- Any anticipated absence arranged through Disability Services must be shared with the instructor **at least 2 weeks prior** to the absence. If this does not occur, it is at the instructor's discretion to excuse or not excuse the absence.
- Students observing a holy day must inform the instructor **before** the class day to be missed

Weekly Blogs

Your instructor will periodically post questions or scenarios for you to respond to with your thoughts, ideas, and concerns.

Academic Autobiography

You will write a 4 – 6 page paper about your life as a student thus far and considering where you want to go with your major and career, examining your experiences in the context of your learning style.

Oral Presentation: Expert Testimony

You will prepare a 2 – 2½ minute talk about something familiar to you and that you would like to share with the class.

Group Project & Presentation

You will work with a group of your classmates to explore issues related to making a successful transition to college life through *The Naked Roommate* and other sources. Your findings will form the basis of an 8 minute oral presentation to the class.

UTD Campus Exploration

You will attend a variety of 5 on-campus events, two of which must be Pre-Health related. All Pre-Health freshmen are required to attend the HPAC Freshman Orientation on Sept 6, 5:30-7:00 PM, in the Conference Center (1.206).

Quizzes

Following each departmental presentation, you will be given a brief quiz over the material.

Final Exam

Multiple choice, comprehensive exam will evaluate students' understanding of material covered in the course.

Written Assignment Format

All assignments are due **on the specified due date – NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED!!** Also all work must exhibit the following format:

- A coherent essay that addresses all required elements of the assignment.
- Typed, double spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins.
- Students should include their name, section number, and date on all work.
- Papers should be free of typos, spelling, grammatical, and formatting errors.
- Vocabulary should reflect that of a college student, and writing style should be mature and cognizant of the instructor as audience.
- If submitted via email, papers must be sent as an attachment, from your UTD email account, following the above format **and submitted on or before the specified due date.**

Failure to adhere to any of the above will result in:

- A 10 % deduction for incorrect format.
- A 5 % deduction for multiple typos, spelling and grammatical errors.
- A 5 % deduction for poor language use and/or a disrespectful voice in the paper.
- **No points** for work turned in after the specified due date.

The University of Texas at Dallas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 - The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing **authorized documentation** through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at www.utdallas.edu/student/slife/hcsvc.html. Please visit the office of Disability Services in Student Union (1.610) or call at 972.883.2098 to obtain proper paperwork for this class.

Course Schedule

August

- 20 Complete Student Information Sheet, UTDAT, tour resource room & HPAC, begin time management WS
- 22 Human Bingo, PLSI, assign Academic Autobiography
- 27 Time Management
- 29 **DUE: Academic Autobiography**, Risk Threshold Evaluation and activity, Groups begin planning project

September

- 3 **Labor Day: No Class**
- 5 **DUE: Campus Events** (any amount), Counseling Center Presentation
****Meet in Davidson Auditorium (SOM 1.118)****
- 10 **Quiz: Counseling Center**; Scavenger Hunt ****Bring digital cameras if you have them****
- 12 Making an Impression (and Facebook discussion); Know Your Instructor
- 17 Student/Teacher Relationships in the Media
- 19 Soft Skills and Public Speaking for Your Future Health Profession
- 24 **Group Presentation #1** and follow-up discussion
- 26 **DUE: Campus Events (max 2)**, Judicial Affairs Presentation
****Meet in Conference Center Auditorium****

October

- 1 **Quiz: Judicial Affairs**, A look at values: Who's the Scumiest
- 3 Diversity Activity
- 8 **Group Presentation #2** and follow-up discussion
- 10 Library Presentation; **DUE: Campus Events (max 2)**
****Meet in Davidson Auditorium (SOM 1.118)****
- 15 **Quiz: Library**, UTD Website & SIS Exploration ****Bring laptops if you have them****
- 17 Critical Thinking and Group Dynamics: Farmer's Dilemma
- 22 Mars activity, HIV activity
- 24 **Oral Presentations: Expert Testimony**
- 29 **Group Presentation #3** and follow-up discussion
- 31 Science Case Studies

November

- 5 Critical Thinking & Decision Making: Case Studies
- 7 Pre-Health Activity
- 12 **Group Presentation #4** and follow-up discussion
- 14 **DUE: Campus Events (max 1)**, Credit Counseling Presentation
****Meet in Conference Center Auditorium****
- 19 **Quiz: Consumer Credit Counseling, take Final Exam, Last Day of Class**
- 21 **Risk Taking Papers Due before 5:00 p.m.**