ENG 1101-D351
Prof. Rosen
Fall 2017

Guidelines for Blogging on the OpenLab

Writing–and writing frequently, with intention, and with significant feedback–is a great way to improve communication skills and learn material. Throughout the semester, this writing-intensive course will take advantage of the blogging functionality of the OpenLab. In addition to finding course materials here, this site–which is a blog–will be used both for homework and, since this is a hybrid course, for class activity. That means that although half of your attendance will be based on your physical presence in class on Wednesdays, the other half will be based on your blog work during the earlier part of the week.

Some of you may have heard about the OpenLab before, or may be familiar with its core software, WordPress, through a site on WordPress.com or sites online that are powered by WordPress. You might be more familiar with another blogging platform, such as Blogger or Blogspot, or even blogs in Blackboard. This course will provide you with an opportunity to gain and hone your blogging skills, which can be valuable for you both at City Tech and in your professional endeavors.

To achieve success in this course, you must consistently and actively contribute to our blog through posting reflections on and analysis of the course materials, discussing ideas with your classmates and professor, reading and commenting on what others have posted, and linking to relevant material you have found through everyday experience as well as outside research. Additionally, we will conduct a semester-long glossary project on the site, and will also use the site to submit drafts and formal assignments.

Blog Frequency, Quantity, & Deadlines
Each week, there will be different types of contributions to ensure that you are engaging with the materials and ideas presented in the course and with your classmates:

1. Glossary entries: contribute to our course's glossary by writing one post per week (or more if you choose) in which you find a word that you need to better understand, follow the glossary instructions, and write a post that has the word as the title of the post, Glossary as the category, tags you find relevant, and all the things in the post it's supposed to have. By the end of the semester, you will have learned at least 15 words of your own choosing plus others your classmates have glossed for you (4th definition).
2. Homework assignments in which you reflect on the work of the week: You can think about this post and start writing it on your own, but I will wait to see what the discussion has been, what has not been addressed, etc, and write a post with suggested topics on Monday. In this post, you will choose a passage or passages to focus on so that we're always bringing our discussion back to the text, to the details, and to our analysis of the text.
3. Ongoing discussions: Discussions from the classroom can carry over to our site, and discussions from the site can shape our classroom discussions. We may use the commenting option to reply to an initial blog post or others' comments to it to discuss in a more focused, conversant way issues related to our work for the course
4. Incremental work on Projects: Each project will develop from a series of smaller assignments. As you complete these according to the project assignment's schedule, you will post your work on our site.

In order to give both me and your classmates adequate time to read and comment on your writing, blogged material will be due the day prior to class, at a time to be determined. Since

your writing on the blog count not just for homework but also as vital contributions to your projects and to class discussions, *late blogs will be graded down, and will affect blogging/homework as well as participation grades.*

Unless otherwise noted, blog posts should be approximately 300 words (though some topics may require longer posts). Comments should be substantive, though shorter, depending on their purpose, roughly 100-150 words.

As part of your participation in our course, just as you are expected to read the assigned texts, you are expected to read all blog posts and comments on our site prior to our face-to-face class session. Ideas discussed in posts and comments will shape our discussions, and can become part of our quizzes, exams, and projects.

Blog Formality and Etiquette

Blogging can be understood to have a particular form and genre, with its own set of conventions and characteristics--just like any other mode of writing. This is true when we consider blogs as a form of journalism. Blogs can also be thought of to be a format, like a notebook or a chalkboard, and therefore open to the format of the author's or authors' needs. We will consider these different points of view as we establish the blog writing in this course.

Your posts and comments are considered informal writing assignments. Although the expectations for this kind of daily writing are different from the expectations in the final version of our formal projects, you should proofread all of your writing for coherence and meaning, as well as obvious spelling and grammar mistakes to ensure you are well understood. A simple *not* omitted from a sentence could spark a needless controversy!

Rules for the formality of formal work will be discussed for each project. Even though these will be submitted as posts on the OpenLab, different rules may apply.

Please note that our blog is public, so anything you post (whether a post or comment) is visible to anyone on the web. Think about the type of content you would feel comfortable with your parents, employers, other professors, and friends seeing as representative of your work, and then post accordingly.

Some of the materials we will discuss in this course will be of a sensitive nature. If you do not feel comfortable blogging publicly about them, please meet with me to discuss the available alternative privacy options.

Regardless of the material, it is foundational in this course that we respect each other, our ideas, and our expression of those ideas. Although we do not need to always agree–how boring would that be?–we do need to demonstrate professionalism and collegiality. Rather than condemn or criticize, we can critique and question, keeping communication open. If you have difficulty with this, or you feel uncomfortable when others have difficulty with this, please do not hesitate to speak with me to strategize an approach.

Blog Grading

Although I will be reading and assessing your blogs regularly, I will not necessarily give you a response or grade on every post or comment. Instead, I will periodically grade your posts, and will provide feedback in the form of comments that are not necessarily evaluative, but rather

are geared toward pushing you to further explore a topic. I will use a tool that allows me to privately grade a post or comment so that only its author and I can read the grade and feedback. Please feel free to meet with me in office hours to get individualized comments on your blogging and to discuss ways to improve or get more from your blogging.

Simply skimming a reading and jotting down a few words about it does not mean that you have satisfactorily fulfilled a blog post. Similarly, only using spelling/grammar check on your computer does not count as revision or proofreading. You will be graded on the quality of your engagement with the material and the effectiveness of your presentation of your ideas. Missing blogs and incredibly short, general, or sloppy blogs will be given no credit, which will negatively affect your overall course grade.

Please be aware that all blogs are time-stamped automatically, and that data will be taken into account in your grade. Grades for blogs will be determined by the following rubric. I encourage you to use this rubric as you consider what you need to include and avoid in your blogging:

Blog Post Grade	Grade Criteria
3 Excellent	The post meets or exceeds the required length (300 for posts, 100-150 for comments), was submitted on time, and follows all guidelines for blogging in general and for the particular post, if there were additional instructions. The post shows a clear understanding of the text by moving beyond summary to critical engagement and response in the context of the overall themes of the course. It extends our discussion through excellent analysis, and offers compelling, insightful, and developed claims and evidence. The post is structured logically and coherently, with multiple paragraphs, each with one fully developed main idea and topic sentences that reflect that focus. While multiple ideas may be discussed, there is a unifying theme or argument, showing how all the various points fit together. The post is virtually error free, at the sentence-level, having been carefully proofread/edited. Texts/ideas are cited completely/correctly (in MLA style)
2 Satisfactory	The post or comment is the required length and on-topic. It has some good points and potential, but it does not push these ideas further to show why/how they are significant in the context of their overall response, and the overall themes of the course. This might mean too much summary or not enough analysis when required. The blog post is structured relatively well, but may have some ideas jumbled together, sentence-level errors, and/or incorrect (or missing) citations that interfere with its clarity or persuasiveness.
1 Unsatisfactory	The post or comment is submitted on time but is underdeveloped, either because it does not meet the minimum length requirement, or does not engage critically or completely with the prompt. It presents a great deal of summary of the texts' ideas, or the ideas of others expressed in class or on the blog, rather than offering new insights, or only responds tangentially, superficially, or generally. It is not structured effectively, with many ideas jumbled together, no clear argument, ineffective use of or missing evidence, summary, paraphrase, or citation. There are many sentence-level errors.
0 No credit	The post or comment was either not submitted, submitted after the deadline, very short, off-topic, or doesn't follow the assignment instructions.

Identifying your work for your readers

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Blog Titles

Much like you would when you write an email, your post should have a concise title that reflects the subject of your post. It should not include information that will be available as part of the data of the post–your display name, the date, and if you use the appropriate category (see below), the assignment you're responding to. It should also not be generic, such as *My reflection,* but should instead indicate the insightful content of your post.

Categories and Tags

Much like a table of contents and an index, categories and tags, respectively, help authors organize their writing so readers can find what they want when they want it. I have created categories that correspond to the work we do for this course. All of us will create tags that reflect the specific ideas or techniques in the given post. We will make substantial use of the categories and tags on our site. If your work is not categorized properly, classmates may not find it to comment on it, and I will not be able to find it easily and therefore will not grade it. If you have questions, please ask!

Using Outside Sources

It is very easy to take advantage of the materials on the Internet and link to them, embed them, or attach them, depending on their format. Please do this, and do it responsibly! If you include materials in your post or attached to it, you must indicate your source (for this course, we will use the MLA citation format). Citations are less necessary with links if the source is clear when a reader clicks the link. When you do share materials in your post or attached to it, make sure you have permission to do so. Use materials that are either no longer under copyright, or use materials with a Creative Commons license that allows reuse. Linking is less dynamic than adding an image to your post, but it might be the safer option if you're not sure you have permission to reuse it.

Adapted in part from Prof. Jill Belli's blogging guidelines