

**English 1020-054: Research and Argumentative Writing**

Peck Hall 325 | MW | 2:20 – 3:45 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Eric Detweiler

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Mon. &amp; Wed. 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., Tues. 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., and by appointment

**Course Description**

ENGL 1020 is the second of MTSU's two General Education English courses. It emphasizes analytic and argumentative writing as well as locating, organizing, and using library resource materials in that writing. A minimum grade of C- is required for credit. Prerequisite: ENGL 1010.

In this particular section of ENGL 1020, we'll be researching, reading, arguing, and writing about the future. Unlike many kinds of vocational and technical education, a university education isn't just about preparing you for the job you'll find right after you graduate. It's also about preparing you for and helping you learn to shape the world we might all face ten, twenty, or fifty years down the line. That's a world where jobs and systems we take for granted won't exist anymore and jobs and systems we can't imagine might have taken their place. But people, businesses, governments, and even universities themselves aren't always good at planning for the more distant future. We pay a lot of attention to short-term problems and solutions, but these can distract from and even intensify the problems that might arise in 2050 or 2100.

To approach these longer-term problems, we'll be using the principles of deliberative rhetoric. Deliberative rhetoric, which has been around for a very long time, is a framework for inventing and arguing about future possibilities. We'll use it to think, research, and write about the future of work, the environment, technology, and more.

**Course Text**

Lunsford, Andrea A., and John J. Ruskiewicz. *Everything's an Argument for Middle Tennessee State University*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2019.

Make sure to get a copy of the specific edition of *Everything's an Argument* required for this course. The actual material in most of the versions you can buy online is different from the MTSU version.

All other course texts will be available as PDFs on D2L and/or via links in the course calendar at the end of this syllabus. The day we discuss a reading in class, you're responsible for bringing a copy with you. Digital versions on tablets or laptops are fine, as are printed hard copies. In general, I would discourage you from using smartphones to pull up readings in class because their small screens can make readings hard to

navigate and engage with. However, if for some reason a phone is the best option for you, that's alright.

If it isn't feasible for you to get a copy of *Everything's an Argument*, Walker Library has a few copies available through the Library Textbook Program. These copies can be checked out from the Library Reserves Desk for use in the library for three hours at a time. You are welcome to use these copies to access the readings, though keep in mind that you will need some version of the readings that you can refer to during class discussions.

### Learning Objectives

The learning objectives for this course are as follows:

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Description</i>
Composing Processes	Conduct secondary research; demonstrate recursive relationships between reading, writing, research, and reflection.
Reading	Interpret and respond to complex ideas in sources; identify and contribute to critical conversations.
Rhetorical Knowledge	Identify and address appropriate audiences and contexts; demonstrate flexibility and awareness of effective delivery within different genres.
Integrative Thinking	Identify connections between coursework and other academic and external contexts.
Information Literacy	Locate sources and analyze their relevance and credibility; demonstrate rhetorical understanding of source attribution.

### Grading

We'll be using a portfolio-based grading system called the Learning Record (LR). We'll talk a lot about this system throughout the semester, especially during the first few weeks. Basically, I'll provide feedback on individual assignments, but not numerical or letter grades. Then, at midterm and during finals, you'll turn in written arguments for the grade you deserve based on the body of work you've done in the course, the grading criteria below, and a few other variables that will be introduced during the second day of class. Here are the grading criteria:

A	Represents outstanding participation in all course activities, <b><i>perfect or near perfect attendance</i></b> (typically a maximum of two absences), and <b><i>all assigned work completed on time</i></b> . Also represents <b><i>very high quality</i></b> in all work produced for the course. LR provides evidence of significant development across all five learning objectives. The LR at this level demonstrates activity that <b><i>goes significantly beyond the required course work</i></b> in one or more objectives.
B	Represents excellent participation in all course activities, near perfect attendance (typically three absences or less), and <b><i>all assigned work completed on time</i></b> .

	Also represents <b><i>consistently high quality</i></b> in coursework. Evidence of marked development across the five learning objectives.
C	Represents good participation in all course activities, a maximum of four absences (unless otherwise discussed and confirmed with the instructor), and all assigned work completed. Also represents generally good quality overall in coursework. Evidence of some development across the five learning objectives.
F	Represents minimal participation in course activities, poor attendance, serious gaps in assigned work completed, or very low quality in course work. Evidence of development is not available.

I can't overstate the importance of you familiarizing yourself with these criteria. Note that the "significantly" in the "A" category doesn't just mean doing everything required for the course really well. It means doing *more*. Taking thorough reading notes on every reading we cover this semester, for instance, does not necessarily constitute going "significantly beyond the required course work." You will have to demonstrate that you've applied or extended what you've learned in a way that goes beyond what the course requires and that what you've done has resulted in demonstrable learning. Typically, something that counts as going "significantly beyond" requires around 9-12 hours of work.

### Coursework

The work in this course will be made up of two major threads: First, assignments connected to the Learning Record. Second, assignments connected to the argumentative and research goals of the course. Here are the major assignments:

<i>The Learning Record</i>	<i>Argumentative and Research Assignments</i>
Statement of Goals Midterm Self-Evaluation Final Self-Evaluation	Research Summaries (4) Topic Proposal (2 drafts) Analysis (2 drafts) Argument (2 drafts)

You'll receive more detailed descriptions of all of those assignments and how I'll respond to them as the semester unfolds. The deadlines for all of them are included in the course calendar at the end of this syllabus. There is one other key piece of required coursework:

- **Reading Notes (12):** Reading will be a big part of the work in this course. There are a lot of assigned readings, but most of them are pretty short. As you'll see in the course calendar, there are 17 days where there's an asterisk (\*) next to the date. On each of those days, I will check everyone's notes on the day's readings near the beginning of class. With *Everything's an Argument*, "notes" could include substantial highlighting, underlining, and writing in the margins (keeping marginal notes on post-its is fine if you're renting the book). In the case of PDFs and online readings, you can print them out and write on them or

annotate them using a program like Adobe Reader. You're also welcome to take handwritten reading notes in a notebook. If you're taking marginal notes in physical or digital copies of readings, you should have substantial writing or markup on almost every page (not just a random underline or star here and there). If you're taking notes in a notebook, you should have about one line of notes per page of reading. In cases where you're assigned a podcast episode, you should have about a line of notes per minute of audio (all the podcast episodes we'll listen to have transcripts, so you can also use those transcripts to take notes). To get full credit for reading notes, you need to have them on 12 occasions. With 17 possible, that means you have 5 free passes. There is no penalty for using those free passes, though you're obviously welcome to take reading notes all 17 times. If you are absent on a day that reading notes are due, you can send them to me as an email attachment. As long as I get them by the beginning of class, I'll give you credit. On the second day of class, we will discuss and practice taking reading notes in more detail. There is a required reading that day, but you do not need to take notes in advance. Just bring a copy of the reading with you for practice.

In addition to reading notes and the major writing assignments, coursework will include short writing assignments, in-class activities, and other homework.

### Grading

The grading scale for this course is as follows. You need at least a C- to pass.

A: 90-100	C+: 77-79	D: 63-66
B+: 87-89	C: 73-76	D-: 60-62
B: 83-86	C-: 70-72	F: 59 and under
B-: 80-82	D+: 67-69	N*
*A grade of "N" is for students who are taking English 1020 for the first time and complete the course without meeting the minimum standards for at least a C-level grade. An "N" requires that you retake the course, but does not affect your GPA.		

### Late Work

Because reading notes, research summaries, topic proposals, and other homework will contribute to what we do in class the day they're due, you need to turn that work in on time if you want to argue for an A or B in the class (as long as you do all the required work, you can still argue for a C even if you turn some things in late). I will give you one no-questions-asked, two-day extension on either a research summary or a draft of the topic proposal. As for the major assignments: Deadlines are an important part of the drafting process, but I will also give you one no-questions-asked, two-day extension on one of the major Learning Record assignments *or* a draft of the Analysis or Argument assignment. There is no penalty for using these extensions. Everything else should be turned in the day it is due.

If you anticipate a problem meeting a deadline, let me know at least 48 hours in advance. No guarantees, but I am more likely to be flexible if I know you are planning ahead.

**Attendance**

If you miss class more than four times, it is unlikely you will pass this course. Any time you are absent, you are responsible for getting in touch with me to find out what you missed. If you arrive after I take roll or leave class early, you'll be marked tardy (if you're late, check with me after class to make sure I've got you on the roll). Tardiness counts as half an absence. As for the four absences you are allowed, you do not need to provide me with an excuse or explanation. Just be sure you get in touch to find out what you missed.

As with late work, if you think you'll have any issues with this attendance policy, let me know in advance. Again, no guarantees, but I know emergencies and health issues do come up, and I am more likely to be flexible if I know you're planning ahead.

**Students with Disabilities**

Middle Tennessee State University is committed to campus access in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any student interested in reasonable accommodations can consult the [Disability & Access Center \(DAC\) website](#) and/or contact the DAC for assistance at (615) 898-2783 or [dacemail@mtsu.edu](mailto:dacemail@mtsu.edu).

If I can provide or assist with any accessibility needs related specifically to this course, let me know. I would be glad to help.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is complicated. Here is the academic integrity statement from MTSU's Lower Division office:

"Learning to use source material responsibly will be a focus of this class. In your compositions and presentations, you must give credit for text, ideas, and images that did not originate with you. Your handbook distinguishes between unintentional and intentional plagiarism. Unintentionally failing to attribute researched material, or misuse of sources, is a 'teaching moment'; intentional plagiarism—such as downloading a paper, having someone else write your essay, or cutting-and-pasting with no acknowledgement of the source—is a form of academic misconduct.

"I am required to report all instances of academic misconduct to the Provost's Office. See the MTSU student handbook for an explanation as well as the possible consequences of engaging in academic misconduct. In this class, sanctions range from a mandatory rewrite for partial credit to an F in the course.

The Provost's Office may impose additional sanctions such as probation or suspension. To avoid such penalties, always do your own work, and ask for help when you are using source material. You can get help in class, during my office hours, at the University Writing Center, from a librarian, or online at Purdue's Online Writing Lab (OWL)."

Now here's a strange thing: I copied and pasted that statement from somewhere else. It's not plagiarism because I told you where it's from (even though the statement uses the word "I," which would suggest that I wrote it myself if it weren't for the fact that I told you I didn't). Here's a stranger thing: part of the "Students with Disabilities" section on the previous page is copied and pasted from somewhere else, which I didn't tell you till now. In fact, some words are meant to be copied without citation.

So anyway, plagiarism is complicated, and we'll have a few conversations about it over the course of the semester. Here are a couple tips: (1) If you think that you might be using another person's words or ideas without giving enough credit to that person, talk to me about it before the assignment is due. There is no penalty for asking in advance whether or not you're plagiarizing. (2) If it's the night before a deadline and you have no idea what to write, don't panic and just copy and paste someone else's words. It's better to turn in nothing than to turn in something plagiarized, though neither is a good option. Better to talk with me a week before the deadline so that the moment of panic never arrives.

I won't accept plagiarized papers. I reserve the right to offer the chance to redo an assignment if I determine the plagiarism wasn't done on purpose. I'll try to do my part by creating course-specific assignments that are hard to plagiarize. Also, I'll only assign papers that I believe will contribute to your development as a thinker and writer, which is to say I genuinely think you'll be missing out on important skills and experiences if you do decide to plagiarize instead of writing any of them yourself.

### **University Writing Center**

The University Writing Center is in room 362 of the James E. Walker Library and on the web at [www.mtsu.edu/uwc](http://www.mtsu.edu/uwc). The UWC offers students valuable one-on-one assistance with their writing. You can make an appointment for a conference by calling (615) 904-8237. Online writing assistance is also available. Visit the UWC website for hours and more information.

Seriously: the UWC is great.

### **Inclement Weather**

MTSU does not usually close because of inclement weather, but students are allowed to use their own discretion when snow and icy conditions exist and will be given the opportunity to make up missed classes should they decide not to attend. To determine

if classes are cancelled, listen to area radio and television stations or visit <http://www.mtsunews.com/weather/>.

### **Email**

MTMail will be the official way that I pass on information about this course. I won't send you email every day, but check your MTMail daily to make sure you don't miss important updates from the university, me, or your other teachers. I do not check D2L email regularly, so don't plan on contacting me that way. Use the address at the top of this syllabus: [eric.detweiler@mtsu.edu](mailto:eric.detweiler@mtsu.edu). You can find more information on MTMail here: <http://mtsu.edu/email/index.php>.

### **Technology**

We are fortunate to be in a room equipped with computers. We will use those computers often, and in many cases it will be fine if you use a personal laptop or tablet instead.

As for phones, there may be some times when it will make sense for us to use them. In general, though, they aren't a good fit for the sort of work we do in this class. Frankly, I don't have a problem with phones in the classroom, but I can usually tell the difference between a student who's on Instagram or playing *Fortnite* and a student who's looking at a reading or doing some quick research. If you're on your phone doing things unrelated to the course, expect me to pull you aside after class. If you're someone who is prone to distraction when you have your phone on you, I encourage you to get in the habit of using other technologies that will help you stay more focused on what's happening in class.

### **Lottery Statement**

Do you have a lottery scholarship? To retain the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted hours and a cumulative TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. A grade of C, D, F, FA, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. If you drop this class, withdraw, or if you stop attending this class, you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship, and you will not be able to regain eligibility at a later time.

## Course Schedule

Reading assignments are in bold. Writing assignments are in bold and all caps. All assignments are due on the day they're listed on the calendar. All major writing assignments will be submitted via D2L dropboxes and, with a couple exceptions that we'll discuss in class, are due by the beginning of class.

Bring a digital or printed copy of readings with you on the day they're assigned. On days when I'll be checking reading notes, there's an asterisk (\*) after the date. As stated above, to get full credit, you must have notes on at least 12 of those 17 days. With the exception of readings from *Everything's an Argument*, an easily printable and downloadable version of each reading is available in the Content section of D2L. There are also links to those readings in the calendar below. In many cases, the links include media that aren't in the D2L versions, so I'd at least recommend glancing at the linked versions. In a few cases, I've assigned podcast episodes. Since those are audio files instead of printable text, they are only available using the links below. All assigned podcast episodes have transcripts.

I hope this will be an enjoyable course, but it will also be a challenging and carefully coordinated one, so I intend for us to stick to the following schedule fairly closely. Unforeseen circumstances and delays do arise, so I reserve the right to revise our schedule as necessary. I will not do so without advance notice and, in most cases, discussion. If at any point during the semester you have concerns about the schedule, feel free to bring them to my attention. Do not assume any day is unimportant. If you miss a day of class, contact me to see what you missed.

Week 1	Jan. 22	Introduction to the Class and the Syllabus
Week 2		Introduction to the Learning Record Discuss Statement of Goals
	Jan. 27	<b><i>Everything's an Argument</i>, M-1 – M-20</b>
	Jan. 29*	<b><i>Everything's an Argument</i>, M-21 – M-35 and 1 – 15</b>
Week 3		Discuss Midterm Self-Evaluation <b>STATEMENT OF GOALS</b> <b>George Dvorsky, "<a href="#">New Report on Emerging AI Risks Paints a Grim Future</a>"</b> <b>Baobao Zhang, "<a href="#">It's 2043. We Need a New American Dream for the A.I. Revolution</a>"</b>
	Feb. 3*	
	Feb. 5*	Discuss Topic Proposal <b><i>Everything's an Argument</i> 15 – 19</b> <b>Wired Staff, "<a href="#">Here's What the World Will Look Like in 2030 ... Right?</a>"</b> <b>Sara Zhang, "<a href="#">Why Scientific American's Predictions from 10 Years Ago Were So Wrong</a>"</b> <b><i>Freakonomics</i>, "<a href="#">How to Be Less Terrible at Predicting the Future</a>" (Podcast Episode)</b>



Week 4	Feb. 10*	Discuss Research Summaries <b><i>Everything's an Argument</i> 20 – 31</b> Tom Vanderbilt, " <a href="#">Why Futurism Has a Cultural Blind Spot</a> " <b><i>99% Invisible</i>, "<a href="#">Future Screens are Mostly Blue</a>"</b>
	Feb. 12*	<b>TOPIC PROPOSAL (FIRST DRAFT)</b> Jacob Soll, " <a href="#">The Long and Brutal History of Fake News</a> " <b><i>Flash Forward</i>, "<a href="#">Extra! Extra!</a>" (Podcast Episode)</b> <b><i>Everything's an Argument</i> 454 – 463</b>
Week 5	Feb. 17*	<b>RESEARCH SUMMARY 1</b> <b><i>Everything's an Argument</i> 464 – 483</b> Instead of Full-Class Meeting, Individual Conferences about Statement of Goals and Topic Proposal in Peck 327
	Feb. 19*	Adam Vaughan, " <a href="#">Young People Can't Remember How Much More Wildlife There Used to Be</a> " Steve Haruch, " <a href="#">Climate Change isn't Coming to Nashville – It's Already Here. And the Future Might Be Hotter than We Can Handle</a> " Brooke Bolander, " <a href="#">Who Should Live in the Flooded Old New York?</a> "
Week 6	Feb. 24*	Discuss Analysis <b>RESEARCH SUMMARY 2</b> <b><i>Everything's an Argument</i> 79 – 96</b>
	Feb. 26*	<b><i>Everything's an Argument</i> 97 – 117 and 125 – 131</b>
Week 7	Mar. 2*	<b>RESEARCH SUMMARY 3</b> Samuel R. Delany, " <a href="#">Racism and Science Fiction</a> " <b><i>This American Life</i>, "<a href="#">We are in the Future</a>" (Podcast Episode, listen to Prologue and Act One)</b>
	Mar. 4*	<b><i>Everything's an Argument</i> 135 – 163</b> <b>MIDTERM SELF-EVALUATION (due by 11:59 p.m. on Mar. 8)</b>
Week 8	Mar. 9	<b>Spring Break</b>
	Mar. 11	
Week 9	Mar. 16*	Discuss Argument and Final Self-Evaluation <b><i>Everything's an Argument</i> 164 – 179</b> Umair Irfan, Eliza Barclay, and Kavya Sukumar, " <a href="#">Weather 2050</a> "
	Mar. 18	<b>RESEARCH SUMMARY 4</b> Makerspace Visit – Meet on 2nd Floor of Walker Library
Week 10	Mar. 23	<b>ANALYSIS (FIRST DRAFT)</b> Peer Workshop
	Mar. 25	Instead of Full-Class Meeting, Individual Conferences about Midterm Self-Evaluation and Analysis in Peck 327

Week 11	Mar. 30*	<b><i>Everything's an Argument</i> 255 – 272</b>
	Apr. 1	<b>ANALYSIS (SECOND DRAFT)</b>
Week 12		<b>TOPIC PROPOSAL (SECOND DRAFT)</b>
	Apr. 6*	<b><i>Everything's an Argument</i> 286 – 299</b> Mini-Peer Workshop
	Apr. 8*	<b><i>Flash Forward</i>, <a href="#">"The Cement Ban"</a> (Podcast Episode) Eric Holthaus, <a href="#">"In 2030, We Ended the Climate Emergency. Here's How"</a></b>
Week 13	Apr. 13*	<b><i>Everything's an Argument</i> 405 – 421</b>
	Apr. 15	<b>ARGUMENT (FIRST DRAFT)</b> Peer Workshop
Week 14	Apr. 20*	<b><i>Everything's an Argument</i> 321 – 345</b>
	Apr. 22	TBD
Week 15	Apr. 27	TBD
	Apr. 29	<b>ARGUMENT (SECOND DRAFT)</b>
Finals		<b>FINAL SELF-EVALUATION (due by 11:59 p.m. on Wed., May 6)</b>