Hello. My name is Alexandra Dimakos. I will be your instructor for English 103 and I love writing!

Please be aware that this is not a course syllabus. I will pass out the syllabus during our first class meeting and post it on our Blackboard course site on the first day of class (August 26). The syllabus will provide all necessary course information. The following information is to help you understand the scope and perspective of the course and to give you a better sense if this class is right for you.

VERY IMPORTANT: To avoid being dropped from the course as a “no show”, you MUST show up to class on Tuesday, August 25 at 12:30pm. If you do not show up to class, I will drop you immediately. No exceptions.

Course Information: This course is a hybrid class meaning you will complete assignments online via Blackboard and during our Tuesday face-to-face class meetings. These face-to-face meetings will take place from 12:30pm to 1:50pm each Tuesday during the fall 2015 semester. Your attendance at the first class meeting and all other class meetings is very important in order to pass the course successfully. Vacation plans, transportation issues, work commitments, or other personal responsibilities that inhibit you from attending in-person class sessions will negatively impact your grade.

The Blackboard course site cannot be accessed until the first day of the course (August 25). On the 25th, I will make the site available at 8:00am PST – Pacific Standard Time. This course requires a great deal of discipline, organization, reading, and writing online and in-person participation several days a week (and by “several,” I mean “3-4 days a week”).

Course Description: English 103 is a 3-unit course which examines the principles of critical thinking as applied to writing and reading arguments on complex issues. This class focuses on close textual analysis, argumentative/persuasive writing, and logical reasoning

Late Work Policies: No late work is accepted. However, there is one exception to this rule. I will accept final drafts of essays 24 hours after the deadline, but they will receive point deduction. Specific point deductions for late final drafts will be outlined in the syllabus. Final drafts are the only assignments I will accept late.

Using Technology: I understand that technology can be unpredictable (as is life!), but the best approach would be to not wait until the last minute (or even the last hour) to finish an assignment and definitely have a backup plan (or three…or five) in case your wi-fi decides it doesn’t feel like connecting or there’s a technological apocalypse of sorts. Make sure you have access to a working printer that has black ink. Remember there is a TLC lab on the Valencia campus that includes computer and printer access. Please check their hours of operation.

If you are unfamiliar with using Blackboard, complete the following steps:
1. Go to [http://www.canyons.edu/BBTutorial](http://www.canyons.edu/BBTutorial) to view a multimedia tutorial about how to access Blackboard 9. This is not the orientation, but it will give you a chance to get used to how Blackboard 9 works. **If you’re a Blackboard 9 aficionado (a.k.a. you’ve used Blackboard 9 before for some other class), you can skip this step.**

2. Once you’re familiar with Blackboard 9, go to [http://bb9.canyons.edu](http://bb9.canyons.edu) and enter your Username and Password. Remember, the class will not be available until 8:00am on the August 26th; therefore, if you try to log in before then, you will not be able to see the class yet.

3. Once you log in and access the course, you will find links to the Syllabus, Discussion Boards and Weekly Course Work for Week 1.

**Getting Help:** If you have any trouble logging in, you can visit the TLC (located in the College of the Canyons Library at the Valencia campus or Room 306 at the Canyon Country Campus) for assistance – go to [https://www.canyons.edu/offices/tlc/](https://www.canyons.edu/offices/tlc/) for hours and contact information.

You may also contact Blackboard technical support at (661) 362-3344 or bbsupport@canyons.edu (M-TH 9:15am- 6:45pm: please allow up to 24 business hours for an email response).

**Required Textbooks:** The COC bookstore will have the two books listed below in stock. Although there are other editions of the texts available, **I will be using, referring to, and assigning pages from these books.** If you have a different versions or editions of these books, it may be difficult or impossible for you to complete assignments and follow along in class. The required texts are:

**Required Texts:**

- Any good MLA handbook.
  - **Recommended Handbook:** *Rules for Writers* by Diane Hacker. ISBN: 978-0312664817

**Basic Required Online Skills:**

You will need to have:

- Basic computer literacy, including skills in Internet navigation and basic document creation and handling. At the very least, you should know how to cut and paste, how to copy from one document to another, and how to attach documents to emails.
- Reliable, consistent Internet access with an up-to-date browser. AOL’s browser often does not work well with Blackboard, so if you are an AOL user, you will need to download another browser to use to access this course (Firefox, Internet Explorer, etc.). In case of technical problems with your computer or Internet connection, you might choose to make use of the computer labs on COC’s campus.
- If you are not entirely confident in your computer skills or if anything listed here sounds unfamiliar to you, I highly recommend that you also enroll in Counseling 070 (Distance Learning and Strategies for Success), a one-unit short-term course designed to improve your success in online courses.

Students who do well in hybrid courses tend to share the following qualities:

- They are incredibly self-motivated, consistently meet deadlines and show up to class on time and prepared.
• They are strong, critical readers and communicate clearly and effectively in writing.
• They have strong time management skills.
• They enjoy active, cooperative learning experiences.
• They have reliable access to the Internet (Lack of internet access, poor Internet access or malfunctioning technology – including printers and computer programs – are not acceptable excuses for not completing assignments on time. Remember those back up plans?).
• They have basic computer skills, including the ability to cut/copy and paste between documents, send and download email attachments, and create and save documents in Microsoft Word.

**Course Requirements:** This course meets the IGETC Arts and Humanities requirement for transfer to CSU and UC and therefore requires the same amount of total work hours (including time spent in class) as a regular 16-week face-to-face section.

**Assignments:** Over the course of the class, you should expect to complete anywhere from 2-4 assignments (discussion board responses, activities, in-class group work, peer reviews, etc.) per week in addition to **one 4-6 page essay, two 5-7 page essays, and one 6-8 page essay (a total of 4 essays)**.

**Turnitin.com:** All final drafts of essays MUST be submitted to turnitin.com before they will be considered eligible for grading. If you do not upload your final draft to www.turnitin.com on time on the day that assignment is due, you will receive a point deduction off your final score. Also, you **must** cite our assigned texts when quoting or paraphrasing from them and **any** outside sources (sources you’ve found through your own research that aren’t in our textbook) you use to support any of your claims. When in doubt, ask me.

That’s what I’m here for!

**Expectations:** Please do not take this class because you don’t have time in your schedule to take a “real class.” This is a real college class (we’ll be delving into some real college readings and topics – it may even be fun!) that requires the same time commitment as a class that is 100% face-to-face.

This is not a class where you can complete work far ahead of your classmates or make up work during the last minutes of the semester. Our class wide online discussion boards will be asynchronous, not synchronous, meaning that you can log in at a time of day convenient to you -- even 3 am. (I won’t be on at 3 am. I’ll be sleeping and dreaming of Shakespearean sonnets, interesting essay topics or cupcakes, but you’re welcome to sign on whenever you like). However, there are due dates and deadlines for assignments.

**Make-Ups and Absences:** There are no make-ups and no excused “absences” - even with a doctor’s note. An absence is an absence. If you miss an assignment (either online or in class), you cannot make it up. However, if you have an emergency that prohibits you from attending class or completing assignments, you must email me or speak with me immediately so we can discuss your progress in the course and steps to take to ensure the best possible solution. Your prompt communication is imperative!

If you will not be able to participate in this manner, this is not the course for you.

Please feel free to email me if you have any questions regarding the course. I am diligent about checking my email and will respond to your email within a 24-hour time period. I stop checking emails at 10:00pm and don’t respond to emails sent on Saturday or Sunday until the following Monday.

I look forward to working with all of you and helping you succeed in this course. Did I mention I love writing?

Best wishes and see you in class on August 25th!
Sincerely,
Professor Alexandra Dimakos

Office Location: Valencia Campus – Bonelli 312
E-mail: Alexandra.dimakos@canyons.edu