

email: andrew.marzoni@lmc.gatech.edu

phone: 404-894-1289

Dr. Andrew Marzoni

Office: Skiles 321

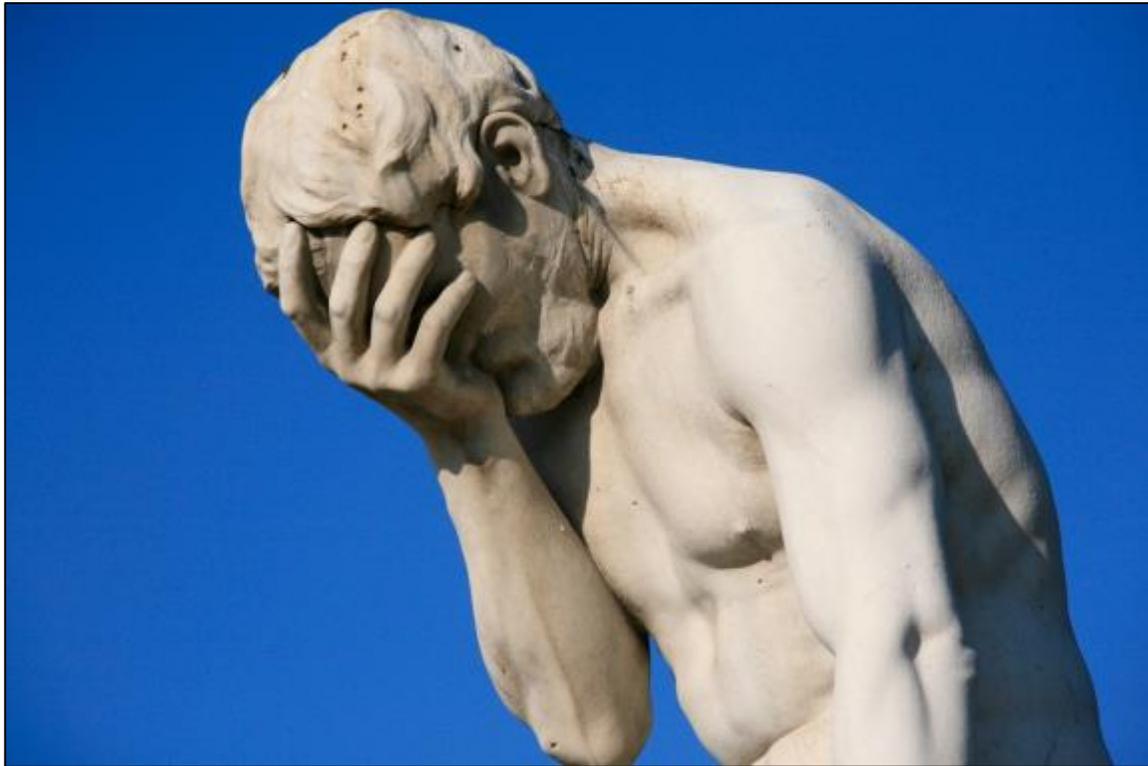
Office Hours: MWF 2:30-3:30pm
(and by appointment)

Section B4: MWF 11:05am Skiles 370

Section J4: MWF 10:05am Skiles 354

Section P2: MWF 1:05pm Hall 106

Failure



English 1101, Fall 2015

Course website: <http://blogs.iac.gatech.edu/engl1101p2>

The intellect of man is forced to choose
Perfection of the life, or of the work,
And if it take the second must refuse
A heavenly mansion, raging in the dark.
When all that story's finished, what's the news?
In luck or out the toil has left its mark:
That old perplexity an empty purse,
Or the day's vanity, the night's remorse.

—William Butler Yeats, "The Choice" (1933)

Writing and Communication Program
School of Literature, Media, and Communication
Georgia Institute of Technology

Description

In his 1965 *Autobiography*, Malcolm X writes, “Children have a lesson adults should learn, to not be ashamed of failing, but to get up and try again. Most of us adults are so afraid, so cautious, so ‘safe,’ and therefore so shrinking and rigid and afraid that it is why so many humans fail. Most middle-aged adults have resigned themselves to failure.”

There is much talk in our culture of “success” and “excellence,” but when it comes to “failure,” we tend to say little else than that it should be avoided at all costs. What *is* failure, though? Is it not to some extent a requisite step on the path to success, making it—paradoxically—an instance of excellence?

This writing and communication course will approach questions such as these and consider the many faces of failure to appear in contemporary American literature, film, television, popular music, and digital culture. We will actively participate in and contribute to this discourse in the effort of developing effective strategies of WOVEN (written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal) communication, interrogating the concept of failure so as to ultimately overcome it in our own communication practices.

Objectives

The Writing & Communication Program has common goals that apply to every course we teach:

- The goal of classes in the Writing and Communication Program is for students to develop competence in all communication modalities (written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal) and to understand how effective communication balances multiple modalities thoughtfully and synergistically.
- The goal in every project should help students develop deep understanding of the genre on which the project focuses and the rhetorical processes involved in creating examples of that genre.
- The goal for every student should be to create purposeful, audience-directed artifacts that present well-supported arguments using appropriate conventions of written, oral, visual, and/or nonverbal communication, regardless of the mode and medium.

In addition to these common objectives, students will:

- Develop individual processes of multimodal communication
- Develop and hone critical thinking skills
- Learn to approach all texts (visual, written, digital, etc.) through a critical lens

Required Texts

- *WOVENText* (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2015)
ISBN: 9781457697135
- Sheila Heti, *How Should a Person Be?* (Picador, 2012)
ISBN: 9781250032447
- Harvey Pekar, *The New American Splendor Anthology* (Running, 1993)
ISBN: 9780941423649
- C.D. Rose, *The Biographical Dictionary of Literary Failure* (Melville House, 2014)
ISBN: 9781612193786

- Other readings/films/video clips/links/podcasts/etc. will be posted to T-Square

Required Technology

- Laptop (bring to every class) w/ Microsoft Office Suite, Spotify, and Internet access
- Reliable back-up system (it is essential that you back up all of your work for this course, either in the cloud or on an external hard drive—preferably both!)

Summary of Major Units/Projects/Assignments

- **Artifact 1: Analysis of a Failure** 15%
This project will consist of a critical analysis of a Hollywood film that failed spectacularly. Students will be responsible for establishing the criteria upon which such failure is measured, utilizing both written and visual evidence in the development of their arguments. (W and V in WOVEN)
- **Artifact 2: Ugly Art** 20%
Following the example of the characters Margaux and Sholem in Sheila Heti's "novel from life" *How Should A Person Be?*, students will produce a work of art that is intentionally ugly. This may consist of a work of visual art, creative writing, film, performance, or musical composition. Students will document and defend the intentionality of their aesthetic choices in both an oral defense and a written reflection. (W, O, V, E, and/or N in WOVEN)
- **Artifact 3: Biography of a Loser** 25%
Students will work in groups to research and present the biography of a figure from the past who has fallen into obscurity, making a case for why this figure should not be left by the wayside of history. This project will include several steps, including an oral pitch to the class and an annotated bibliography, ultimately producing a video or radio/podcast documentary of their chosen subject (W, O, V, E, and/or N in WOVEN)
- **Portfolio** 15%
In lieu of a final exam, English 1101 requires that you complete a final reflective portfolio due during your section's scheduled final exam time (see course calendar below). The portfolio will include examples of your WOVEN work products, a substantial reflective essay, and brief introductions to each artifact. You will develop your portfolio throughout the semester and complete it during Dead Week.
- **Common First Week Diagnostic Assignment** 5%
Students will produce a short video in response to this year's Project One reading, *Garbology*.
- **Blogs** 10%
Ten total, to be posted on the course website. Writing prompts will be assigned in class and via email.
- **Participation** (including quizzes & in-class assignments) 10%
All quizzes and in-class assignments will be graded on a pass/fail basis. Participation includes regular attendance, active engagement in class, respectful behavior, and continuous completion of reading & viewing assignments. For more information, see the common policies below.

NB: Detailed assignment instructions for each assignment will be posted on the course website and T-Square. All assignments due at 8:00 am unless otherwise noted. See calendar, below, for due dates.

Policies

The Writing & Communication Program has standard policies for English 1101 which you should familiarize yourself with [here](#). These include:

- Georgia Tech General Education Outcomes for English 1101 and English 1102
- Learning outcomes for English 1101 and English 1102
- Evaluation Equivalencies
- Evaluation Rubric
- Course Completion
- Attendance
- Dean of Students and Counseling Center
- Participation in Class
- Non-Discrimination
- Communication Center
- Accommodations
- Academic Misconduct
- Syllabus Modifications
- Dead Week for English 1101/English 1102
- Multimodal Reflection Portfolio and Mahara

You are required to acknowledge that you have read, understood, and intend to comply with these policies.

In addition to these policies, I have my own policies for this course in particular, including:

- **Late Assignments**
I am willing to grant extensions requested by email no less than twenty-four hours prior to an assignment's due date. Otherwise, late assignments will not be accepted.
- **Missing and Missed Assignments**
Except for absences officially exempted by the Institute or exceptional and unanticipated situations, I do not allow students to make up missed quizzes, presentations, or in-class assignments. Missing work is counted as a "zero."
- **Revision of Assignments**
Revision will constitute a significant part of our class, and play a role in each major assignment. In some cases, I may request that students engage in additional revision, beyond the requirements of the peer review process, in which case you will be notified and instructed accordingly.
- **Peer Review**
Early in the semester, students will be divided into small peer review groups which will meet both in and outside of class throughout the semester to review, critique, and comment on drafts of each major project. Students will utilize the evaluation rubric (in the common policies) to help improve their peers' work in advance of final submission. Further details will be forthcoming.

- **Workload**

Students should expect an average of 100 pages of reading or 6 hours of viewing/listening time (or some combination of the two) outside of class. Reading/viewing/listening loads will be significantly lighter in weeks when major assignments are the primary concern.

- **Costs**

Aside from the required texts, costs for this course should be minimal, as most assignments will be turned in electronically. With that said, occasional printing or other materials (poster board, art supplies, etc.) may be necessary on an ad hoc basis, so be prepared.

- **Mature Themes**

Occasionally, course materials and class discussions will deal with issues of sexuality, drug use, and violence. In such cases, I expect students to be respectful, and to approach both the material and your classmates with the utmost maturity. If students are at any point uncomfortable with these issues, I encourage you to come talk to me as soon as possible.

- **Conferences and Office Hours**

I will regularly hold office hours every week at the time and place listed at the top of this syllabus. Appointments can be scheduled via email in advance, and walk-in appointments are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. If you need to meet with me outside of my regular office hours, this will be accommodated to the best of my ability. Occasionally, I will require students to meet with me in my office individually and in groups—sign-up sheets will be distributed in advance. I encourage students to visit my office hours as frequently as you like: whether it be to discuss course materials, project ideas, revision, or just to shoot the breeze.

About Me

I am a Marion L. Brittain Postdoctoral Fellow in the Writing & Communication Program at Georgia Tech. I received my Ph.D. in English from the University of Minnesota in 2015, having written a dissertation titled, “In the American Vein: 1945-1975.” Previously, I received a B.A. in English from the University of San Diego, and an M.A. in English & American Literature from New York University. My research interests include contemporary American literature, film, popular music, digital humanities, and continental philosophy. I have written essays and reviews for a number of academic books, journals, websites, and newspapers on topics as wide-ranging as The Rolling Stones, Surrealism, Quentin Tarantino, and Shakespeare.

When I’m not teaching, reading, and writing, you’ll most likely find me playing with my band, Shouts & Murmurs, and my cats, Monkey & Nietzsche (pictured at right). Before calling Atlanta my home, I lived in San Diego, France, New York, Minneapolis, and (most recently) New Orleans. Technically, I’m Dr. Marzoni, but you can call me Andrew.



Monkey (left) and Nietzsche (right)

Calendar*All readings & assignments due on the day listed, unless otherwise noted.*

Week 1	Common first week	Introductions
Monday, August 17	Introductions, syllabus & technology	
Wednesday, August 19	Discuss blogs, diagnostic assignment Discuss reading	Read syllabus & common policies; Sign, print, and return statement of understanding; Post introduction to blog comment stream; Read excerpts from Edward Humes, <i>Garbology</i> , pdf on T-Square
Friday, August 21	Class activity	Blog #1 due
Week 2	Theories of failure	Critical concepts
Monday, August 24	Reflection Discuss WOVEN	Read <i>WOVENText</i> , Chapters 1 & 2 Diagnostic assignment due
Wednesday, August 26	Discuss reading	Read Malcolm Gladwell, “The Art of Failure” (2000); Zadie Smith, “Fail Better” (2007), links on T-Square
Friday, August 28	Discuss reading, portfolio	Read excerpts from Scott A. Sandage, <i>Born Losers: A History of Failure in America</i> (2005), pdf on T-Square Blog #2 due noon Sunday
Week 3	Failures of writing & failures to write	Synergy & genre
Monday, August 31	Communication Center tour	Read <i>WOVENText</i> , Chapters 3 & 4
Wednesday, September 2	Discuss reading, “Analysis of a Failure” assignment	Read Janet Malcolm, “Forty-One False Starts” (1994), link on T-Square
Friday, September 4	Discuss reading	Read <i>WOVENText</i> , pp. 658-70; Read Chapter 1 of Kurt Vonnegut, <i>Slaughterhouse-five</i> (1969), pdf on T-Square Blog #3 due noon Sunday

Week 4	Cinematic failures I	Writing about film
Monday, September 7	Labor Day	No class
Wednesday, September 9	Discuss reading, film	Read <i>WOVENText</i> , pp. 534-48, 658-62; Read Tom Bissell, “Cinema Crudit�” (2010); watch <i>The Room</i> , dir. Tommy Wiseau (2003), link on T-Square
Friday, September 11	Discuss film, peer review process	Watch <i>Jodorowsky’s Dune</i> , dir. Frank Pavich (2013), link on T-Square Blog #4 due noon Sunday
Week 5	Cinematic failures II	Assessment & revision
Monday, September 14	Peer review Discuss reading	Read <i>WOVENText</i> , Chapter 7 “Analysis of a Failure” rough draft due
Wednesday, September 16	Discuss reading, film	Read <i>WOVENText</i> , Chapter 21; Watch <i>Adaptation</i> , dir. Spike Jonze (2002), link on T-Square
Friday, September 18	Library tour	“Analysis of a Failure” final draft due
Week 6	Ugly art I	Aesthetics I
Monday, September 21	Reflection Discuss reading, “Ugly Art” assignment	Read <i>WOVENText</i> , pp. 503-30, 698-701
Wednesday, September 23	Discuss reading	Read Sheila Heti, <i>How Should a Person Be?</i> (2012), pp. TBD
Friday, September 25	Discuss reading	Read <i>How Should a Person Be?</i> , pp. TBD Blog #5 due noon Sunday
Week 7	Ugly art II	Aesthetics II
Monday, September 28	Discuss reading	Read <i>How Should a Person Be?</i> , pp. TBD
Wednesday, September 30	Discuss reading	Read <i>How Should a Person Be?</i> , pp. TBD

Friday, October 2	Discuss reading	Read <i>How Should a Person Be?</i> , pp. TBD “Ugly Art” artist’s statement due Blog #6 due noon Sunday
Week 8	Ugly art III	Oral presentation
Monday, October 5	Discuss reading	Read <i>How Should a Person Be?</i> pp. TBD
Wednesday, October 7	Discuss reading	Read A.D. Jameson, “What we talk about when we talk about the New Sincerity” (2012), parts 1 & 2, links on T-Square
Friday, October 9	Discuss reading	Read <i>WOVENText</i> , Chapters 10, 11 & 12
Week 9	Presentation & critique	Analysis
Monday, October 12	Fall break	No class
Wednesday, October 14	Presentation & critique	Read <i>WOVENText</i> , Chapter 5
Friday, October 16	Presentation & critique	“Ugly Art” artifact and reflection due
Week 10	Anatomy of a loser	Collaboration
Monday, October 19	Reflection Discuss reading, “Biography of a Loser” assignment	Read <i>WOVENText</i> , Chapters 8 & 9
Wednesday, October 21	Discuss reading	Read Harvey Pekar, <i>The New American Splendor Anthology</i> (1993), pp. TBD
Friday, October 23	Discuss reading	Read <i>The New American Splendor Anthology</i> (1993), pp. TBD) Blog #7 due noon Sunday
Week 11	Identity of a loser	Research I
Monday, October 26	Discuss reading	Read <i>WOVENText</i> , Chapter 17
Wednesday, October 28	Discuss viewing/listening	Watch <i>Seinfeld</i> (Season 8, Episode 22), link on T-Square; Listen to Episodes 111 & 112 of <i>WTF with Marc Maron</i> (Louis C.K. parts 1 & 2) on T-Square

Friday, October 30	Pitches Discuss records	Listen to Bob Dylan, <i>Blood on the Tracks</i> (1975), Beck, <i>Mellow Gold</i> (1994) and <i>Sea Change</i> (2002), Spotify links on T-Square
Week 12	Biography of a loser	Research II
Monday, November 2	Discuss reading	Read <i>WOVENText</i> , Chapter 19
Wednesday, November 4	Discuss reading	Read C.D. Rose, <i>The Biographical Dictionary of Literary Failure</i> (2014), pp. TBD
Friday, November 6	Discuss reading	Read <i>The Biographical Dictionary of Literary Failure</i> , pp. TBD Blog #8 due noon Sunday
Week 13	Documentary I	Production
Monday, November 9	Discuss reading	Read Jill Lepore, “Joe Gould’s Teeth,” pdf on T-Square “Biography of a Loser” annotated bibliography due
Wednesday, November 11	Discuss reading In-class work time	Read <i>WOVENText</i> , Chapter 16
Friday, November 13	Discuss reading In-class work time	Read <i>WOVENText</i> , Chapter 20 Blog #9 due noon Sunday
Week 14	Documentary II	Revision
Monday, November 16	Group conferences	No class
Wednesday, November 18	Group conferences	No class
Friday, November 20	Screenings & presentations	“Biography of a Loser” artifact due Blog #10 due noon Sunday
Week 15	Portfolio	Reflection I
Monday, November 23	Screenings & presentations	
Wednesday, November 25	Official class break	No class
Friday, November 27	Thanksgiving	No class
Week 16	Dead week	Reflection II
Monday, November 30	In-class work time	
Wednesday, December 2	In-class work time	

email: andrew.marzoni@lmc.gatech.edu

phone: 404-894-1289

Friday, December 4	In-class work time	
Week 17	Final exams	Completion
Monday, December 7	Office hours	No class
Wednesday, December 9	Office hours	No class Portfolio due

Final grades will be submitted to the registrar by Monday, December 14.

Statement of Understanding

Please read, print, sign, and return these statements to Dr. Marzoni.

I affirm that I have read the entire syllabus and Common Policies site for English 1101 and understand the information and responsibilities specified.

print full name

legible signature

date

Please read carefully and check all that apply.

I give my instructor, Andrew Marzoni, permission to use copies of the work I do for this course, English 1101, as examples in presentations and in print and electronic publications.

I do not want my work used as examples in any situations.

If you give permission for your work to be used, please indicate how you want to be acknowledged:

Please acknowledge me by name.

Please use my work, but do not acknowledge me by name.

The following information enables me to contact you if your work is used.

print full name

legible signature

date

permanent home address

campus address

cell and home phones

school and home email addresses