Course Overview
Welcome to college-level composition. In this course we will be exploring a variety of texts, granting as much weight to form as to content. What we mine from this exploration you will then use to craft vehicles for your own thoughts and ideas, using the texts that we read as platforms for the essays that you will be writing in conversation with those texts. In the arena of the written word, you will sharpen your critical thinking skills and discover within new tools and modes of analysis that will serve you as well inside the halls of academia as they will in the world at large.

Course Objectives
A successful completion of this course means that you will be able to:

- Critically read, analyze, interpret, and respond to a diverse range of texts, and synthesize the results in your own writing
- Write formal, persuasive, and coherent response papers and essays with strong theses
- Identify a thesis, whether explicit or implied
- Practice using conventionally correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- Edit and revise, taking into careful consideration peer and instructor critiques
- Purposefully incorporate and integrate textual evidence into your writing using MLA documentation

Required Texts
1. Americanah. Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche
2. Course Packet: Online at ***
4. A good dictionary (recommended)

Course Work for the Semester

- **Essays:** For this class, you will write three take-home essays. The first will be 750-1000 words, and the next two will each be 1000-1250 words. For each essay you will turn in one draft before the final draft. Essays must be double-spaced, in 12-point, Times New Roman (or similar) font, and formatted with one-inch margins. You will also write one in-class essay incorporating two texts that we will have read in this course. For the first and the third essays we will have peer response sessions in which I expect you to participate with respect and genuine attentiveness. Also, for the third take-home essay only, you will be turning in an outline, which we will discuss down the line.

- **Journal:** This is the lowest stakes writing that you will be doing in this class, but it is a frequent and vital component. With each text that we read you must write at least one page responding to or reflecting on some aspect of that text. This will be the primary fuel in our group discussions. Your journal will also be where you do all in-class writing, with the exception of the in-class essay. Your journal will be collected and I will be evaluating it not for the quality of the writing, but for evidence that you have approached this component of the class with sincerity and thoughtfulness. Your journal should be a spiral or composition notebook.

- **Summaries:** Two take-home written summaries of 250-500 words each. There may be additional in-class summary exercises.

- **Other assignments/class work:** With any one of the three take-home essays, you must include a paper of approximately one-page in which you reflect on the experience and
process of writing that particular essay. At the end of the course you will also write a paper, again approximately one-page, in which you reflect on the experience of taking this class as a whole. Neither of these need to be a very formal piece of writing. You will also do one brief take-home reverse outlining assignment. Additionally, there will be frequent in-class exercises including grammar and punctuation exercises.

Submission Guidelines

With the exception of the journal and the in-class essay, all written work that you submit must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman (or similar) font, double-spaced, and formatted with one-inch margins.

Course Requirements and Policies

- **Attendance and Punctuality**: You, your peers, and I will all reap the rewards if we are all present at every class. Doubt not the value of what you have to gain, but also of what you have to contribute to this course with your presence. You and your fellow students are the true substance of this course and I hope and expect everyone to do their best to be present not only physically, but mindfully as well. That said, I understand that extenuating circumstances arise and you may be absent up to three times without penalty; the next two absences will each lower your final grade by half a letter. If you are absent more than 5 times, you will not pass the class. As Hunter S. Thompson says, “If something is worth doing, it is worth doing right.” As such, if you are going to come class at all, I expect you to come on time. **Two late arrivals equal one absence, arriving more than 20 minutes late counts as an absence, and a pattern of lateness will have harsh consequences on your final grade.**

- **Non-attendance Because of Religious Beliefs**: Please read the information in the Brooklyn College Bulletin (http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/off_registrar/141024_2014-15_Undergraduate_Bulletin.pdf) regarding nonattendance because of religious beliefs.

- **PLEASE NOTE**: **Cellphones must be silenced and put away during class.** The use of cellphones and other electronics is not permitted in the classroom. If there are emergency circumstances that require you to pay attention to your phone, please tell me before the start of class.

- **Late Work**: You are expected to do all required readings and to submit all assignments on time. **No assignments will be accepted via email, unless discussed with me prior to the due date with good reason.** This class moves at a very fast rate, but the large assignments are meant to build on the smaller assignments, which means that if you keep up with the day to day, the major assignments will be far less time consuming. I will accept one late paper, but the grade will be lowered by 20% and **I must receive the paper within one week.** I will not accept papers that are over a week late. If you turn a first draft in late, I will still return it to you with feedback as rapidly as possible, but your revision time will not be extended.

- **Plagiarism**: Plagiarism is not tolerated at Brooklyn College and especially will not be tolerated in this class. If you are caught handing in work that you have plagiarized from any source, you will fail the assignment in question, possibly the entire class, and may be subject to disciplinary action by the college. Here is the College's statement on plagiarism:

  - "The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what
constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for implementing that policy can be found at this site: http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies.”

- Student Bereavement Policy:
  http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/about/initiatives/policies/bereavement.php

**A Note on Reading**

I neither expect nor require that everyone in this class necessarily agrees with or likes all of the texts that we read throughout. That is ok. What I do expect and require is that you actively engage with each of the texts that we read. If you like it, say why, and if you don’t, say why. If you agree with a text, or even just certain points in a text, craft an argument for why that text or those certain points are right. If you disagree with a text or certain points in a text, craft an argument for why you disagree. With each text, examine why it succeeds or fails, why the text works for what the author has set out to accomplish with it, or why it falls short. We are interested in the ideas in these writings, and those ideas will be given plenty of discussion, but we are also interested in the mechanics of these texts—in the craft of the written word—and we will be giving equal consideration to both form and content.

**A Note on Discussions**

It is my hope and expectation that we will be having many lively, in-depth discussions regarding the texts that we have read and about which we will write. In the course of these discussions, different opinions and opposing arguments may arise. It is my requirement that participation in classroom discussion is respectful, reasoned and logical to the best of your abilities, and embraces the knowledge that is born of the dialectic—that is, a method of examining and discussing opposing ideas in order to find the truth. As you craft arguments around the texts, I welcome passionate defenses of those arguments, but any rhetoric that is hateful, bigoted, and vitriolic not only creates a threatening atmosphere that suppresses the growth of knowledge, it is also unreasoned, will absolutely not be tolerated, and could lead to a diminished grade and failure of the course.

**Grading**

C- is the lowest possible passing grade for the course. English Department policy states that a student with a final grade below a C- receive an N/C (no credit); the student may take the course up to three times. An F grade will be given in the case of too many absences or failure to complete assignments. A grade of NC may be given if the student’s work is not at a passing level, but the student has good attendance and has completed all assignments. Students receiving an F or an NC grade must retake English 1010; students may take English 1010 up to three times.
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How your grade for the class is determined:

**Essays: 60% of your grade**
Essay 1 – 10%  Essay 2 – 15%
Essay 3 - 15%  In-class Essay- 10%
Summaries-10%

**Final Exam:** 20% of your final grade.

**Journal and Other Assignments:** 10% of your final grade

**Participation and Effort:** 10% of your final grade

**Resources**

**Office Hours:** I encourage you to use my office hours so that we can discuss your work and any questions you have. I am also happy to find another time to meet with you if you are unable to come to my office hours.

**Help with Writing:** The Learning Center (1300 Boylan) has writing tutors available to help you with your writing on both a drop-in and ongoing basis.

**Students with Disabilities:** In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at 718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the Center for Student Disability Services, please provide me with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with me.

**CUNY Citizenship Now:** If you have questions about immigration status or DACA for yourself or for someone else, please visit the website of CUNY Citizenship Now:
http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/citizenship-now/
“CUNY Citizenship Now! provides free, high quality, and confidential immigration law services to help individuals and families on their path to U.S. citizenship. Our attorneys and paralegals offer one-on-one
consultations to assess participants’ eligibility for legal benefits and assist them in applying when qualified."

Class Schedule

(Please note: Class schedule is subject to change)

Week One

Mon. Aug. 27  
In Class:
- Introductions
- Syllabus overview
- First Journal Free-write

Wed. Aug. 29  
Reading Due: First third of Americanah

Week Two

Mon. Sept. 3  
***No Class***

Wed. Sept. 5  
Reading Due: Second third of Americanah

Week Three

Mon. Sept. 10  
***No Class***

Wed. Sept. 12  
Reading Due: Last third of Americanah

Assignment Due: First Draft of Essay 1: Personal Narrative (Bring Two Copies for Peer Discussion)

Week Four

Mon. Sept. 17  
Reading Due: Rachel Carson: “The Obligation to Endure”
Cormac Cullinan: “If Nature Had Rights”

Wed. Sept. 19  
***No Class***
Week Five
Mon. Sept. 24  
Reading Due: Errol Morris: “Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire”  
Susan Sontag: “Regarding the Pain of Others”

Wed. Sept. 26  
Assignment Due: Final Draft of Essay 1

Week Six
Mon. Oct. 1  
Reading Due: Akiba Solomon: “Thugs, Students, Rioters, Fans: Media’s Subtle Racism in Unrest Coverage”  
Brent Staples: “Confederate Memorials as Instruments of Racial Terror”

Wed. Oct. 3  
Reading Due: David Foster Wallace: “Consider the Lobster”

Assignment Due: Summary 1

Week Seven
Mon. Oct. 8  
***No Classes***

Wed. Oct. 10  
Reading Due: Edwidge Danticat: “Another Country”  
Anthony Appiah: “The Case for Contamination”

Week Eight
Mon. Oct. 15  
Reading Due: Mona Eltahawy: “Twitterholics Anonymous”  
Sherry Turkle: “Stop Googling. Let’s Talk”

Wed. Oct. 17  
Assignment Due: First Draft of Essay 2: Argument

Week Nine
Mon. Oct. 22  
Reading Due: Jonathan Swift: “A Modest Proposal”  
Martin Luther King Jr.: “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

Wed. Oct. 24  
Assignment Due: Summary 2
Week Ten

Mon. Oct. 29
Reading Due: George Saunders: “The Brain-dead Megaphone”

Wed. Oct. 31
Assignment Due: Final Draft of Essay 2

Week Eleven

Mon. Nov. 5
Reading Due: George Orwell: “Politics and the English Language”

Wed. Nov. 7
Reading Due: Matthew Crawford: “The Case for Working with Your Hands”

Week Twelve

Mon. Nov. 12
Reading Due: Jean Anyon: “Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work”

Wed. Nov. 14
Reading Due: Gloria Anzaldúa: “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”

Week Thirteen

Mon. Nov. 19
Reading Due: John Taylor Gatto: “Against School: How Public Education Cripples our Kids and Why”

Wed. Nov. 21
Assignment Due: Outline for Essay 3

Week Fourteen

Mon. Nov. 26
Reading Due: Manuel Munoz: “Leave Your Name at the Border”

Wed. Nov. 28
Assignment Due: First Draft of Essay Three: Compare and Contrast (Bring two copies for peer discussion)
**Week Fifteen**

Mon. Dec. 3  
**Assignment Due:** In-class Essay (Be prepared to compare/contrast two related texts of your choosing—we will discuss this further)

Wed. Dec. 5  
*Final Exam Prep*

**Week Sixteen**

Mon. Dec. 10  
**Assignment Due:** Final Draft of Essay 3

Wed. Dec 12  
**Assignment Due:** Class Reflection

*Final Exam Prep/Group discussion*