The Writing and Communication Program at Georgia Tech emphasizes three critical concepts: communication is rhetorical, communication involves a process, and communication is multimodal. You probably already know a considerable amount about these concepts, but English 1101 and English 1102 help you build on what you already know by encouraging you to explore your ideas about communication and to use these concepts in ways that focus on their relationships to society, science, and technology. You learn how to use rhetorical strategies in ways that create professional, expert-like communication and to consider variations in both modes and media. This approach provides you with the communication strategies necessary to excel in a 21st-century world.

Critical Concept One: Communication Is Rhetorical

Rhetoric is about being persuasive with a well-crafted and specific argument—specific to the context, specific to the purpose, and specific to the audience—using the tools available to you. Whether in Ancient Greece or 21st-century Atlanta, persuasion involves constructing a logical and credible argument to convince an audience that your position or point of view is appropriate. How can you argue persuasively? Since Ancient Greece, three appeals have been considered requirements for a good argument:

» One appeal, ethos, is based on your own reputation and credibility as a writer, speaker, or designer.

» A second appeal, logos, is based on the logic and coherence of your argument.

» A third appeal, pathos, is based on the emotions, beliefs, and values you evoke.
Some people say that "everything's an argument"! Explain the ways that this is a defensible position.

Understand

You'll be reminded of these appeals in various ways throughout this textbook. They should become so familiar to you that you automatically think of them whenever you are creating or critiquing a communication artifact.

These three appeals all work together to support the arguments of your artifacts.

An argument—a position or stance supported with logically organized, credible, convincing evidence—can be made by individuals as well as groups, in a variety of cultures, modes, and media. An argument needs to persuade; being persuasive is challenging and involves making strategic decisions about rhetorical elements.

Is it an argument?

Consider how frequently communication involves creating an argument, whether implied or explicit. Consider how the following examples are arguments:

- Stop sign
- Advertisement
- Political campaign speech
- Editorial cartoon
- Software installation instructions
- Global warming documentary
- Broadway performance
- Fact sheet describing solar panels for residential or commercial buildings
- Proposal to fund a stem cell research project
- Technical report analyzing the safety of a new prescription medication

To create successful arguments, you need to ask questions about rhetorical elements (similar to those you explored in relation to Persepolis in the introduction to this part of WOVENText), beginning with audience. Who are my audiences? What prior knowledge does a particular audience have? Knowing who your audiences are and having some sense of each group's prior knowledge enables you to adapt many aspects of your work to serve your audiences' needs. Based on your audience awareness, you might adjust aspects including the nature of the argument, complexity of the content, organization of the information, formality of the diction, types of supporting evidence, and visual design.

Questions about other rhetorical elements are equally important to consider: What are the contexts in which readers, listeners, and viewers will use my document (or presentation or visual)? What purposes do I have? And what purposes do my audiences have? What argument am I making? What's the most compelling evidence I can use, given the attitudes and needs of my audiences? What's the most effective way to organize the information? What visuals will work, given the audiences and purposes? How does the design influence the ways that audiences access, understand, and use the information? What language conventions should I use? What visual conventions should I use? As you write a paper, prepare a presentation, or design a visual—by yourself or with collaborators—you need to ask and answer questions such as these.
Critical Concept Two: Communication Involves a Process

Although all processes are idiosyncratic, most effective processes also have commonalities. You have probably already learned about basic processes (e.g., planning, drafting, revising), but in English 1101 and English 1102 you will explore a broad variety of processes, so that you can decide which ones work best for you when completing various communication tasks. Your goal should be to develop a repertoire of processes from which you can select each time you approach a new situation. This section introduces two of the many considerations affecting your processes: decision making and affordances.

Decision making. All of your processes involve decision making that is either strategic or tactical:

» Strategic decisions in communication are important to your overall purpose, so they typically take a long-term, big-picture view of the situation. One strategic decision frequently affects multiple aspects of the situation. For example, changing the audience for an artifact necessarily changes the nature of the argument, the organization of information, the kinds of persuasive examples, and the kinds of visuals you select.

» Tactical decisions in communication are short-term decisions that address immediate concerns. Tactical decisions are often localized decisions. Could the topic sentence be clarified? Is “receive” spelled correctly? Does “well-insulated” need a hyphen? Will adding a transitional phrase be sufficient to strengthen the coherence between the paragraphs?

Simply put, in English 1101 and English 1102 you learn to engage in processes that are strategically and tactically sound.

Affordances. Your instructor will ask you to complete projects that “consider the affordance of the medium.” What does this mean? Dr. Janet Murray, an expert in digital media, explains in her blog, Inventing the Medium, that affordance refers to “functional properties of objects or environments—the properties that allow particular uses. For example, a blackboard affords writing and erasing; a low, flat, supported surface 30 inches square affords sitting.”

When you are planning a project, you need to consider (1) characteristics of the mode (e.g., written, oral, visual) as well as (2) affordances of the medium for dissemination (e.g., book, newspaper, radio, television, or Web site). Each has particular properties and advantages, letting you do certain things easily and effectively. You need to match the particular mode and medium to your rhetorical intentions—that is, the content, context, purpose, and audience of your project.
To help you consider the affordances of a medium for designing digital projects, Dr. Murray developed a planning tool, an affordances grid you can sketch as you develop and analyze your digital projects. The grid considers four affordances of digital media—spatial, encyclopedic, procedural, and participatory (each defined in the sample grid)—that are important to consider:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spatial affordances</th>
<th>Encyclopedic affordances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attention to location and place</td>
<td>attention to collection(s) of information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedural affordances</th>
<th>Participatory affordances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>attention to executable rules, to instructions</td>
<td>attention to interaction and manipulation of the represented world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You add your own planning notes to the affordances grid to help you determine what categories of affordances you’re addressing in your digital project. The affordances may not be mutually exclusive. You can see how the grid works with examples from a digital project about skateboarding. If you wanted to create a Web site about skateboarding, your affordances grid might look like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spatial affordances</th>
<th>Encyclopedic affordances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning notes that consider location and space: Include Google map of local skateboard stores. Local, regional, and national skateboarding competitions. Laws against skateboarding in various locations.</td>
<td>Planning notes that consider collections of information: Create archive of skateboard designs. Collect safety instructions about skateboarding (parents, professional skateboarders), identify equipment for different levels of experience and/or expertise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedural affordances</th>
<th>Participatory affordances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

This grid works well when considering the affordances of digital media; other media may have different affordances. Make sure that the medium you select for a project can do what you want it to do. Or, phrased the opposite way, make sure what you create is conveyed in an appropriate medium. Every medium has particular affordances; learn the capabilities of media that intrigue you and also learn the media that will enable you to communicate ideas that matter.

A planning grid is just one way to define affordances and think about the modes and media of your projects. You’ll find your projects are more effective and less stressful to create if you institute deliberate planning steps for accomplishing your rhetorical goals when you get to your final draft.
Communication Is Multimodal

You may think that the communication courses you take at Georgia Tech are simply variations of the writing courses you’ve already taken, but writing is just one part of what you need to master. You need to become competent in all modes of communication, not just writing, as you can see in the examples presented below.

The Tower is Georgia Tech’s undergraduate research journal. Search <The Tower Georgia Tech> for access to current and back issues.

Georgia Tech It Gets Better is a 20-minute YouTube video of interview clips about diversity on campus. Search <Georgia Tech It Gets Better> to watch.

This video with Dr. Hugh Crawford shows the interaction that can happen in writing and literature. Search <Hugh Crawford on Literature at Georgia Tech> at vimeo.com to watch.

Every day, every hour, the Georgia Tech whistle is a nonverbal reminder of the Institute’s history and traditions. Search <Georgia Tech whistle living history> to read more.

Whether people are working individually or collaboratively, domestically or internationally, a WOVEN approach emphasizes ways to create and integrate ideas in multiple modes and in multiple media.

- **Modes** are means of representation—that is, the manner you choose to express your ideas, whether written, oral, visual, or nonverbal.

- **Media** are means of dissemination, whether in a face-to-face presentation, a print document, or a digital artifact

A WOVEN approach does not isolate or segregate modes and media; instead, it focuses on how these different modes are woven together in our daily lives and in the work world. This section helps you understand more about the individual modes and media. Chapter 3 focuses on the interactions among these modes.

W—You need to be a good writer. Being an excellent writer would be even better. **Written communication** involves creating artifacts that inform, persuade, and/or entertain audiences using alphanumeric characters. As you develop experience as a writer, you will become more and more skillful in using rhetorical elements to help you make informed, strategic decisions about composing for particular purposes and audiences.

Critical Concept Three: Communication Is Multimodal
Assignments Focusing on Written Communication

In written communication, you are expected to conform to conventions of Standard American English. Even if no one says “Check your genre expectations, grammar, mechanics, and spelling,” the assumption is that you always check, regardless of the mode and medium. Following are typical written activities and assignments you can expect:

- Emails, letters, other correspondence
- Journals, diaries, blogs
- Editorials
- Persuasive and reflective essays
- Analytical essays, reviews
- Academic research papers
- Technical reports
- Proposals
- Instructions
- Narratives in the forms of scripts and short stories

Notice that this list includes documents that can be either print or digital.

A WOVEN approach in no way de-emphasizes the importance of written communication. Instead, WOVEN communication emphasizes the crucial role that writing plays in other modes as well. Digital composing, for example, relies heavily on traditional approaches to writing, but with important differences because writing on a keyboard and reading on a screen are different from writing and reading on paper. Ultimately, a strong foundation in writing is vital to supporting other types of composing, as well as in virtually every career path. Both English 1101 and English 1102 include a variety of written activities and assignments. These courses stress the importance of planning, researching, drafting, organizing, revising, editing, and publishing your writing. As you would in more traditional writing courses, you read in conjunction with writing, using the writing of others both as models and as evidence in your own documents.

O — You need to be a competent speaker, capable of contributing to conversations and discussions and giving individual and team presentations. Your competence in these areas requires various kinds of collaboration: participating in, facilitating, and sometimes leading groups and teams. Oral communication involves creating artifacts to inform, persuade, and entertain audiences using spoken language, which may be transitory (e.g., a face-to-face conversation) or recorded (e.g., a political speech that is videotaped). From telephone conversations to team presentations, oral communication is important in your everyday interactions — in personal relationships, in academic activities, and in the workplace. As with writing, the preparation and practice of oral presentations mean you need to be responsive to rhetorical elements.

“Standard American English” (SAE), a term linguists use, is problematic because North America includes Canada and Mexico. A more accurate term might be “Standard U.S. English.” Since the United States is linguistically diverse, what counts as “standard” is open to discussion, though many people use the term “broadcast English.” Refer to Chapter 16 for further discussion.

Read. The flip side of writing is the receptive competence, reading; you need to be able to interpret and use the texts others write.
Assignments Focusing on Oral Communication

Oral communication forces you to think about the dialect you choose to use, which influences audience perceptions of your capability and credibility. These are typical oral activities and assignments you can expect:

- Everyday conversations
- Telephone or other distance interaction
- Recorded messages
- Public presentations (e.g., conferences, community meetings)
- Oral instructions and/or demonstrations
- Interviews
- Discussions at meetings (face-to-face or distance)
- Workplace presentations (e.g., weekly status reports, quarterly summaries)
- Client presentations (e.g., marketing/sales, project progress)
- Oral arguments (trials), testimony at public hearings, depositions

(For more on assumptions about language and about languages and dialects, see Chapter 16.)

Oral presentations, group activities, and class discussions are the most common methods of practicing oral communication in first-year writing and communication courses. Presentations are used both informally, with discussions of responses to daily assignments, and formally, with presentations in front of the class, to help you gain confidence and experience. You may also conduct interviews, create podcasts, shoot videos with audio elements, and record voice-overs for PowerPoints and Prezis.

As part of these oral communication activities, you can strengthen your ability to present information logically and clearly, as well as develop an effective style that may incorporate humor and audience interaction. The conversations you have in class help you learn how to be a productive member of both small and large groups, how to present your positions persuasively, and how to discourage unproductive conflict and encourage productive engagement.

Visual communication uses images to inform, persuade, and entertain audiences. Understanding various ways to interpret and create images is an important part of your first-year writing and communication experience. The same rhetorical concerns that influence your strategic decisions in writing a report or preparing an oral presentation also shape the visuals you create.

Critical Concept Three: Communication Is Multimodal
Transform. A critical aspect of using digital media is taking advantage of the ability to transform—that is, reshape—ideas and information by changing genre, scale, medium, scope, etc. (see Chapter 3). Conduct an online search for <global digital communication> to locate and read a few reports about international texting and social networking.

Assignments Focusing on Visual Communication

Visual communication encourages you to decide which ideas and information are more effectively presented visually. These are typical visual activities and assignments you can expect:

» Posters
» Advertisements, both print and digital
» Flyers/brochures
» Data displays (e.g., tables, graphs)
» Charts/diagrams
» Photographs
» Drawings
» Transparencies and PowerPoint presentations
» Videos (e.g., workplace training, YouTube satires)
» Web sites

Electronic communication is a rapidly expanding field that encompasses a huge array of practices and possibilities. Consider this list (which is by no means inclusive) and know that each category can be subdivided. Decide what interests you and what will likely be useful to you personally, academically, and professionally.

» Mobile technologies
» Apps and tools
» Hardware
» Coding
» Telecommunications
» Internet
» Intranets
» Organizational strategies (e.g., branding, internal communication)
» Research (subject of study, method of dissemination)
» Online publications
» Social networking and online communities
» Entertainment (e.g., online gaming, integration of animation and live action)
Assignments Focusing on **Electronic Communication**

Electronic communication has affordances specific to the digital world, affected by access to and familiarity with technology. These affordances are typical electronic/digital activities and assignments you can expect:

- Email
- E-resources
- Online journals
- Blogs
- Web sites
- Multimedia animation
- Digital slideshows
- Podcasting and Web videos
- Videoconferencing
- Wikis

- **Ethics** (e.g., manipulation, taboos, stereotypes)
- **Accessibility** (e.g., digital divide, physical limitations)
- **Big data**
- **Publications** (e.g., e-books, journals, newspapers)
- **Interactive installations** (e.g., iKiosks, art and science museums)
- **Educational options** (e.g., MOOCs, LMSs)

Changing the medium changes the message. Electronic communication is a major part of your English 1101 and English 1102 courses in four broad ways:

1. **Using T-Square, Georgia Tech's electronic course management system**
2. **Using your laptop computer, tablet, and/or smartphone as a communication tool and perhaps also as an object of study**
3. **Learning about electronic communication and its cultural influences**
4. **Using electronic communication as part of your own processes—for example, engaging in online peer editing or electronic publication**

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You need to understand and appropriately use nonverbal communication (e.g., facial expression, eye contact, body language, vocal expression, spatial distances, clothing) in ways that convey your credibility and cultural sensitivity. **Nonverbal communication** comprises any communication that doesn’t emphasize words. It may include **kinesics** (gestures and body movements), **oculesics** (eye behavior such as eye contact), **paralanguage** (vocal information, such as volume, pace, pitch, tone and inflection), **vocalizations** (e.g., “shhhhh” and “uh-huh”), **proxemics** (spaces between people who are interacting), **haptics** (touch), **chronemics** (use, structure, and orientation related to time), posture, and clothing.

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The word *medium* is singular, and the word *media* is plural. Thus, you write/say, “medium is . . . ” and “media are . . . .” Conduct an online search for *The Medium Is STILL the Message—Five Key Ideas* to read more about Marshall McLuhan and his famous (and often misinterpreted) line, “The medium is the message.” #Remember #Understand

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**Critical Concept Three: Communication Is Multimodal**
Assignments Focusing on Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is almost always incorporated as part of other communication tasks. These are typical activities and assignments in which attention to nonverbal communication is especially important:

**Oral Presentations**
- Radio broadcast, in which case the voice, silence, and sound effects are the primary cues to interpretation
- Oral presentation with no hand gestures or with stylized hand gestures (like 19th-century orators)

**Interviews**
- Simulated interview (perhaps for a summer internship) showing how body language, movement, and posture can convey your attitude
- Telephone interview with varying pause times to assess changes in audience response

**Team or Small-Group Interaction**
- Generation of phrases and sentences whose meaning changes dramatically depending on the vocal characteristics (e.g., emphasis, pauses, pacing, tone)
- Small-group interaction with selected people using different kinds of eye contact (e.g., complete avoidance, intense gaze) to assess the response of both speaker(s) and members of the group

When you are engaged in teamwork and class discussions you will see nonverbal communication. You should regularly ask yourself how and why you react to certain nonverbal cues, especially in group interaction. Nonverbal communication, which is powerfully influenced by culture, can either reinforce or contradict a verbal or visual message. Some experts believe that people can more easily distort verbal or visual messages than they can nonverbal messages. This textbook presents two models for understanding nonverbal communication: the presentation model (Chapters 10-12) and the performance model (Chapter 16).

The WOVEN approach to communication encourages you to craft effective arguments multimodally with focused attention to and reflection on rhetoric and process. Understanding the roles these three critical concepts play in communication positions you as a strategic communicator. While this chapter serves to outline the key qualities of each mode, the next chapter provides you with examples of WOVEN modes working synergistically to create compelling and purposeful artifacts.