

Instructor: Professor Erin Brock Carlson

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Class Time: Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

Class Location: Colson G18

Office Location: Colson 337

Zoom Link for Virtual Meetings: [\[link\]](#)

Office Hours: Thursdays, 9:30-11:30 a.m. and by appointment

Weekly Class Schedule: [\[link to schedule\]](#)



Overview

While much of your professional writing and editing curriculum emphasizes the practice and products of professional communication, this course invites you to the theoretical discussion of *why* we write, and communicate, and design, and how we can improve upon these practices in a deliberate, systematic way. To these ends, you will engage in rhetorical analysis of a variety of documents, learn about rhetorical thought and how that influences our writing practices today, and immerse yourself in current research about concerns related to our field. ENGL 301 is all about more carefully considering the choices we make when we write—for ourselves, for our jobs, and for our communities.

Course Goals and Means

By the end of the semester, students who earn a passing grade in the course (C- or above) will have demonstrated their ability to:

- **Define** rhetoric, including concepts such as *kairos*, *techne*, and *praxis*
- **Apply** key rhetorical concepts in your own writing and discover them in others' writing
- **Evaluate** how rhetorical concepts inform professional writing practices
- **Describe** research methods and approaches relevant to professional writing
- **Research** and **analyze** current issues in rhetoric and professional writing
- **Articulate** how rhetorical thought applies to everyday life

Required Materials

There are two textbooks for this class, in addition to readings I will provide to you:

- *Rhetorical Analysis: A Brief Guide for Writers*, Longaker & Walker (ISBN 978-0-205-56570-2). It's about \$25 used from the campus bookstore, and it's a good text.
- *Field Rhetoric: Ethnography, Ecology, and Engagement in the Places of Persuasion*, Rai & Druschke (ISBN 978-0-8173-1995-3). [We have unlimited access to it through the library, just click this link.](#)

We will be using Google Classroom as a headquarters for our class ([click this link](#) or enter this code to join: [ybpo74n](#)). Classroom has a mobile app version. In the event that we migrate online, given the uncertainties of the fall semester, we will use Zoom for synchronous meetings, and I might introduce other optional technologies that are free to use throughout the semester.

Major Units & Assignments

Each unit is made up of several components, including shorter writing assignments and the final product. Everything we do in this class will help you with putting together your final project, so missing major components does lower your overall unit grade. English 301 does not have a final examination.

1. Learning Rhetorical “Traditions” and Foundations 25%

This first segment of the class is dedicated to histories of rhetorical thought and key rhetorical terms, including ancient Greek and Roman traditions (which have largely shaped the study of rhetoric). We will look at argumentation and persuasion strategies that were codified throughout history, including in more recent times. You will create an infographic about a rhetorical fallacy of your choosing, write two brief rhetorical analyses, and craft a more extensive rhetorical commentary on a *visual* public artifact.

2. Using Rhetoric and Writing to Understand Our Lives, Today 25%

After we get the basics down, we'll investigate different ways that rhetoric and writing have been used as frames for inquiry in contemporary scholarship. We will read recent scholarly articles in areas such as public writing, technical communication, cultural rhetorics, and more. You will write one extended response paper that incorporates your thoughts on multiple readings and connections to earlier content in the course.

3. Investigating Writing and Rhetoric through Field Research 30%

For your final project, you will take what we've discussed all semester and identify 1) a site of public writing that you'd like to research and 2) a question related to writing in this space that you'd like to pursue. You'll write a brief proposal explaining this question and its importance, and then do some background research. You will collect at least 5 peer-reviewed sources that relate to your site or question, and then spend several weeks doing field research. You will then write-up a formal report for your findings, as well as a one-pager designed to explain what you found to someone involved in your site of writing.

Informal Writing 20%

Obviously, we're working under imperfect circumstances with the uncertainties of the semester, but our success depends on how well we can engage with the content and one another throughout the term. To that end, you can demonstrate your level of engagement with the course in a variety of ways, including by completing reading responses (250-300 words), being present for in-class writing or quizzes, *and* participating in discussions with thoughtful and reflective contributions.

A note on reading responses: As an upper level course, this class involves a substantial amount of reading, and of course, discussion about the readings and their many applications to our everyday

lives. You are responsible for keeping up with **all** of the readings in the class. I expect you to write at least 300 words in these responses, and I offer questions to get you started, but feel free to talk about ideas from the reading that interest you. The most important thing to remember about reading responses is that you **should use them to illustrate that you read**: whatever approach you take, you should be directly referencing the text, showing off your understanding of the concepts central to the readings.

Grading

Specific criteria and rubrics for each major assignment will be provided; however, all of the writing you produce in this course should meet the requirements of the specific project, be well-informed and thoughtful, be respectful of audience, be grammatically and stylistically sound, and be rhetorically effective for its intended purpose.

In compliance with relevant privacy laws (FERPA), I must discuss grades with you in confidence. This means I cannot email grades to you; please set up a meeting where we can discuss virtually. **I post grades on GoogleClassroom regularly, so you can keep track of them there.**

letter grade	range	letter grade	range	letter grade	range
A+	100-98%	B-	82-80%	D	67-63%
A	97-93%	C+	79-78%	D-	62-60%
A-	92-90%	C	77-73%	F	59-0%
B+	89-88%	C-	72-70%		
B	87-83%	D+	69-68%		

Revision policy

If you are unsatisfied with your grade on a major assignment, you may revise it for a higher grade; but, you must correspond with me about those revisions and write a brief memo that explains your changes. (After all, this is what would happen in a professional environment.)

Course Policies

Engagement and participation

This classroom will be run like a work environment, meaning that you will have a fair amount of freedom. With that freedom comes the expectation that you will be not only physically present, but mentally present, and ready to work in class. I also expect you to use technology (computers, phones, etc.) with care and consideration for others. Attendance is strongly encouraged: if you aren't in class, you simply won't learn, and you will **not** be able to make up activities missed in class.

Late work and technological difficulties

I set deadlines for a reason – to help you be better students and to help me be a better teacher. This class is modeled after real work environments, where deadlines matter. That being said, in professional environments, you may ask for an extension. An approved extension will not affect your grade, but do not over use this professional courtesy. Additionally, if you submit an assignment late, you will not get the same amount of written feedback. If you do not ask for an extension **before** the due date, your late work will not be accepted, and you will receive a zero for that assignment.

Academic integrity

Dishonesty is not accepted in our class, and will definitely not be accepted in the workplace. For more information visit the WVU [Academic Standards Policy](#). All academic honesty violations will result in a failing grade of 1% for the assignment and likely, the course. If you have any questions about this, please come and talk to me before an assignment is due.

Accommodations and accessibility

I strive to make my courses as accessible and accommodating to all persons as I can. If you require any specific accommodations, please send me an email within the first week of the term in order to discuss any necessary adjustments. I want you to succeed and I will work with you to ensure that you do! For more information, consult the [Office of Accessibility Services](#).

Professional conduct and inclusion

Always feel free to email me if you have questions or concerns; I don't often check my email after 7 p.m., so if you email me after this time, you probably won't get a response until the next day.

I take seriously the need to provide a respectful and supportive environment in our classroom. You are expected to behave professionally in class and out of class (this includes while corresponding through email), and to treat everyone in our community with kindness and respect. **Everyone** is encouraged to take an active part in class discussions and activities; honest and respectful dialogue is expected, especially when discussing potentially challenging topics. I have a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination and harassment in all forms.

COVID-19 and community health

WVU is committed to maintaining a safe learning environment for all students, faculty, and staff. In our face-to-face class, we will be adhering to public health guidelines and guidance by the University. **Do not attend class if you feel sick.** While in class, students will sit in assigned seats when applicable and wear the required PPE, as the situation calls for. My commitment to keeping all of us safe leads me to **request that you wear a mask in class**, given that there are a number of people in our community who are high-risk or in contact with high-risk individuals, as current guidance from the CDC and WVU suggests that both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals should wear masks indoors. I will have disposable masks available for you at the front of the classroom.

If you become sick or are required to quarantine during the semester, you should notify me immediately via email. You will work with me to develop a plan to receive the necessary course content, activities, and assessments to complete the course learning outcomes. **I am here to support you however I can.**

Student success and basic needs

WVU has a number of resources and offices dedicated to student success. Of special note, when it comes to writing, is the [Eberly Writing Studio](#) where you can receive personalized help for your projects at any stage: brainstorming, drafting, revising, or editing.

Also, I understand that student success involves more than just succeeding in classes. Any student who faces challenges securing their food, housing, mental health, or other elements of wellbeing, and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the [Student Advocacy Center](#) for support. Please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I may possess and to try and connect you to others who can help, too.

Mental health

College students face many stressful issues that affect one's ability to remember, learn, and perform, and interact socially in and out of the classroom. According to a [2019 survey conducted by the American College Health Association](#), 66.4% of college students felt "overwhelming" anxiety, while 46.2% experienced depression so severe they had difficulty functioning. With the increased stress and isolation of living in a COVID-19 environment, these difficulties have been amplified: [60% of college students surveyed](#) stated that the pandemic has made it more difficult to access mental healthcare.

If you (or a friend) are struggling, I strongly encourage you to seek support. I take your mental health seriously and can help you navigate the resources available to you as a WVU student. Supportive resources are available on campus, and most are at no-charge. [The Carruth Center for Psychological and Psychiatric Services](#) (CCPPS) offers consultations, short-term individual therapy, group therapy, and various mental health-related workshops. Virtual and in-person (outside of pandemic situations) services are available.

- You can text "WVU" to 741741 for support 24/7 from a trained Crisis Counselor or call 304-293-4431.
- You'll find more mental health resources at the CCPPS website at: <https://carruth.wvu.edu/>
- If you're experiencing mental distress, need immediate attention, and would prefer to use a non-university support service, you can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.

ENGL 301: Writing Theory & Practice Schedule

Schedule is subject to change based on class needs. Previous weeks will be moved to bottom of document.

Week 1 (Starts 8/18): Introduction to Writing Theory & Practice

	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read		Syllabus and Schedule
Do		
Notes		

Week 2 (Starts 8/23): Rhetorical Situation and Appeals

	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read	Longaker & Walker, Chp. 1 Longaker & Walker, Chp. 2	Understanding Rhetoric, Chp. 1 (PDF)
Do	Introductory Survey	Reading Response Sign Up for Rhetorical Fallacy
Notes		

Week 3 (Starts 8/30): Rhetorical Argumentation

	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read	Longaker & Walker, Chp. 3 Jones, Finding the Good Argument	Bilton, Don't Fight Flames with Flames
Do	Reading Response	Rhetorical Analysis 1 (Appeals) by 11.59 p.m.
Notes	For Tuesday, please bring the text you picked for RA 1, since we'll do some work in class on prepping you for that essay If you have not yet: Sign Up for Rhetorical Fallacy	

Week 4 (Starts 9/6): Rhetorical Structure(s)

	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read	Longaker & Walker, Chp. 4	Dirk, Navigating Genres
Do	Rhetorical Fallacy Infographics	
Notes	Tuesday, 9/7: Presentations of Fallacy Infographics	

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Week 5 (Starts 9/13): Rhetorical Style

	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read	Longaker & Walker, Chp. 5 Hulst, Grammar, Rhetoric, and Style	Brownlee, Why Comic Sans Works
Do	Reading Response	Rhetorical Analysis 2 (Argumentation)
Notes	For Class on Tuesday, 9/14: Bring the text you'll be writing about for RA2 to class	

Week 6 (Starts 9/20): Visual Rhetoric

	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read	Cohn, Understanding Visual Rhetoric	iTunes Terms and Conditions, the Graphic Novel Tversky, What Makes a Map Good
Do		
Notes	Start finding a text you want to use for RA3	

Week 7 (Starts 9/27): Identity, Ideology, and Rhetoric

	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read	Longaker & Walker, Chp. 6 Ore, They Call Me Dr. Ore	
Do	Reading Response	Bring draft of RA3 to class (as much as possible)
Notes		

Week 8 (Starts 10/4): Affect and Rhetoric

	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read	Longaker & Walker, Chp. 7 Rickman & Cavallaro, Rhetorics of Blame during COVID-19	
Do	Reading Response	
Notes	No Class on Thursday, 10/7 for Fall Break	

Week 9 (Starts 10/11): Place, Habitus, and Rhetoric

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	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read		Longaker & Walker, Chp. 8 Hoppe, Icon and Identity (Dollywood)
Do	Rhetorical Analysis 3 (Visual)	Reading Response
Notes	No class on Tuesday, 10/12; cancelled on 10/11 by Prof. Carlson	

Week 10 (Starts 10/18): Technology and Rhetoric

	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read	West & Pope, Rubles and Rhetoric	
Do		
Notes	No Class on Thursday, 10/21 as Prof. Carlson will be attending a conference [I suggest working on your Extended Response for Unit 2 in lieu of class time]	

Week 11 (Starts 10/25): Selecting Research Sites and Finding Your Niche

	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read	Melzer, Understanding Discourse Communities	
Do	Reading Response	Ideas for your final project
Notes	Thursday, 10/28: Visit with Humanities Librarian Lynne Stahl, library Room 2036	

Week 12 (Starts 11/1): Orienting Your Research in Scholarly Conversation

	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read	Developing Your Research Question	Rosenberg, Reading Games Pacheco-Vega, Note-taking Practices
Do		Final Project Proposal Extended Response (Unit 2)
Notes	Note: Thursday, I'll be holding informal conferences with each of you during class, so be sure that you're ready to talk through your project idea.	

Week 13 (Starts 11/8): Ethics and Conducting Site-Based Research

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	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read	McGreavy et. al, Belonging to the World (Chp. 6)	Driscoll, Introduction to Primary Research
Do	Reading Response Bring 2 Sources you <i>might</i> use to class	
Notes		

Week 14 (Starts 11/15): Developing Research Strategies

	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read	Depending on your approach, read: Developing Interview Questions OR Developing Survey Questions OR Conducting Observations	
Do	Draft of Research Instrument	Research Matrix
Notes	Thursday 11/18 we will not meet; Dr. Carlson will be available via email if you have questions about your Research Matrix which will be due by 11.59 p.m.	

Week 15 (Starts 11/22): Thanksgiving Break

	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read		
Do		
Notes	Take a break. Or work on your final projects. Whatever u want.	

Week 16 (Starts 11/29): Embedded Research and Writing Reports

	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read		
Do		
Notes	Thursday, 12/2: Work Day, no formal class meeting; Dr. Carlson will be available for individual meetings during class if you'd like to speak w her (email me please)	

Week 17 (Starts 12/6): Polishing and Presenting Projects

ENGL 301: Writing Theory & Practice Schedule

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	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read		
Do	Rough Draft of Formal Report	Rough Draft of One Pager
Notes	Thursday, 12/9: Presentations of one-pagers! If you would like Dr. Carlson to review a draft of either part of your project, please submit it to her by Friday 12/10 at noon.	

Finals Week (Starts 12/13): Reflecting on Writing Theory and Practice (and Beyond!)

	By Tuesday, 11:30 a.m.	By Thursday, 11:30 a.m.
Read		
Do		Submit by 11.59 p.m.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Final Formal Report ● Final One Pager ● Course Reflection Memo (Please) Complete SEI for this course!
Notes		