

English 601: Introduction to Rhetoric and Composition Studies

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 10am—12pm; and by appointment

In this seminar we will survey key texts, current trends, and critical questions in the field of rhetoric and composition studies. Throughout the semester we will assess ancient and present-day theories of rhetoric and writing and their significance for contemporary composition instruction and professional writing practice. We will study several concepts at the core of rhetorical studies, from the “rhetorical situation” and *kairos* to the five rhetorical canons (invention, arrangement, style, memory, delivery). We also will sample thought-provoking work currently being done on disability rhetorics, feminist rhetorics, ethnic rhetorics, visual rhetorics, multimodal rhetorics. Additionally, we will add depth to our common ways of understanding how we compose written texts by reading scholarship that examines the physical practices and mental activities of writing. As we move through these sub-fields, we will attend to different authors’ definitions of “rhetoric” and “composition” and their respective understandings of what constitutes the field of “rhetoric and composition studies.” Throughout the course, we will continually explore the connections between rhetorical theories, writing processes, and pedagogical practices, so you will have significant opportunities to reflect on the ways course readings speak to your own writing practices and the teaching of writing.

Indeed, this entire course has been designed to help you reflect on your own rhetorical practice. A guiding principle of this course is that studying rhetoric and composition theory helps one to develop or refine his or her effectiveness in speaking and writing. Toward those ends, the major writing projects for this course will ask you to pursue a writing-related service opportunity with the WVU Extension Office and then to reflect on how this community-based writing project shapes or was shaped by your understanding of some key rhetorical concept or composition theory. You should leave the course, then, with a “rhetorical toolbox” from which you can draw key theories and concepts as you pursue future work in academic, civic, or professional contexts.

Course Projects:

1. Conversation Starters: one single-spaced page (approx. 500 words) posted to the class discussion list/bulletin board each week by Wednesday, 4 p.m. *Not required during weeks that other writing projects are due.*
2. Exploratory Essay
3. Service-learning project, including letter of inquiry, proposal, progress report, and the primary document
4. Annotated Bibliography
5. Research-Based Project that poses and attempts to answer a research question concerning one rhetorical aspect of your service-learning project and draws on research from beyond the syllabus.

Description of Course Projects:**Conversation Starters (10%)**

A conversation starter is a thoughtful one-page (500-word) response to the week's reading. You'll post your conversation starter on that week's discussion board on our course eCampus page. Your writing can either begin a new line of discussion about the readings or continue a thread started by a classmate. We'll use these statements to guide class discussion, but you can also use them to think through and talk about connections between the readings and your service-learning project or as a means of developing ideas for your final research-based essay. So that everyone has an opportunity to read these conversation starters before our Thursday afternoon meetings, please post your conversation starter by 4 p.m. Wednesday. Then, sometime before Thursday's class, read your colleagues' posts.

Assignment #1: Exploratory Essay (10%)

In this short essay (3-5 pages), please explore an issue related to our course readings. You may want to write about a particular theoretical concept, research site, rhetorical perspective, or historical text that interests you. Now would also be a good time to begin thinking about your final research-based essay, so you may choose to investigate a rhetoric-related development in your service-learning project. The idea here is for you to take up an issue we've addressed thus far and push your analysis and investigation further than we were able to in class discussion or in course readings.

Assignment #2: Service-Learning Project (35%)

Your service-learning project will entail your working with the WVU Extension Service, especially local extension agents and administrative staff at the Monongalia County Extension Office, to produce two fact sheets. These documents will provide information that answers questions citizens frequently call to ask the extension office, such as how to test soil in the fall and what to do about lady bug infestation to how to properly can fruits and vegetables and where people can find more information on local 4-H activities. Your fact sheets will eventually be published on the WVU Extension Service website, where citizens will be able to download the documents at home or extension agents will be able to print the documents and mail them to citizens without Internet access.

To produce these fact sheets, of course, you will need to learn about the specific topics on which you are writing. Perhaps less obvious, you will also need to gain a better understanding of the mission of the WVU Extension Service; the knowledge, attitudes, and interests of the citizens who normally contact their local extension office; and the rhetorical and interpersonal approach that extension agents and administrative staff take when dealing with citizens. You will need to draw on a variety of research skills, from traditional library and database searches to interviewing, site visits, and primary textual analysis, in order to compose your fact sheets in a way that citizens find interesting, engaging, and informative.

The specifics of this project, including the project deadline and dates for a site visit to the Monongalia County Extension Office, are still being clarified with Professor Ann Bailey Berry,

Associate Director of the WVU Extension Service. I will make these details available to you as soon as there are set in place.

Assignment #3: Annotated Bibliography (10%)

Your annotated bibliography will help you prepare to write your final reflective essay. To complete your annotated bibliography, you will research and write about 6 sources that help you to reflect on the service-learning document itself or the process through which you produced this text and to extend your knowledge of the rhetorical theory or practice you will investigate in your final essay. Your annotated bibliography should follow the example below. In each annotation you should (1) cite the text of your choice in perfect MLA format; (2) summarize the text or article; and (3) discuss how the text will help you to compose your reflective essay.

Example:

Hawhee, Debra. "Composition History and the *Harbrace College Handbook*." *College Composition and Communication* 50 (1999): 504-23.

In this essay, Hawhee analyzes how composition handbooks in general and the *Harbrace College Handbook* in particular serve two important institutional functions, namely, to "write the discipline" by effectively defining what the proper subject matter of composition classrooms should be and by shaping the subjectivities of both composition teachers and writers. Specifically, I will use Hawhee's analysis of how the *Harbrace College Handbook* divides levels of usage into four categories (formal, colloquial, dialectical, and illiterate) and how the *Handbook's* response to error is not a response to the error on the page but instead focuses on the error in the student. This analysis will help me to talk about twentieth-century conceptions of mechanical correctness within the broader context of composition materials and the discursive roles they help to create for students.

Assignment #4: The Research-Based Essay (35%)

You will use this essay (8-12 pages) to connect your service-learning experience to some aspect of rhetoric and composition theory and then to extend your exploration of this topic. While you certainly will want to discuss the text you composed as your service-learning project and describe the process through which you produced it, the analytical component should be the primary focus of this essay. That is, you should do more than simply describe your service-learning project; instead, use it as a jumping-off point for analyzing in greater depth some aspect of your production of that service-learning text.

Consider this example: For your service-learning project, you consult a non-profit organization interested in increasing policymakers' awareness of a problem affecting youth in the local community. You work with the organization to compose a letter to policymakers that seeks to insert this issue into future debates about funding or law-making decisions. As you composed the letter, you struggled to create persuasive pathos appeals that could engage your audiences' values and beliefs without making them feel as if they were being manipulated. You could use your final research-based reflective essay to try to answer questions such as these: "What are appropriate uses for pathos appeals in professional writing?" or "How can rhetoric and composition students learn to compose effective pathos appeals?" Your research, then, would

survey the work of scholars exploring theories of pathos appeals in rhetorical history or the use of rhetorical appeals in professional writing or composition pedagogy. You would compose an essay that uses these various scholarly voices, as well as your reflection on your own service-learning project, to compose an answer to your critical question.

Or consider another example: You consulted with WVU's Office of Disability Services to bring all of the university's web pages into compliance with Section 508 of the Disabilities Act, which requires that agencies and organizations receiving federal funds make their electronic and information technology accessible to people with disabilities. Your service-learning project entails your composing "alt tags," or text descriptions of visual elements, for several images on WVU web pages that make these pages accessible to a broader range of users. You do research on the technical basics of creating "alt tags" in order to complete the project successfully, but you want to learn more about the theory behind Universal Design. In particular, your experience leaves you wondering how professional and technical writing instructors—indeed, all composition instructors—could incorporate the concept of Universal Design into their curriculum. You use your research-based essay to explore where rhetorical theories do and do not press rhetors to envision their audience in broadly inclusive ways, and you work to develop strategies for teaching students to create texts that are accessible to all potential users.

Your paper will be long enough to merit sub/headings, so I've provided some provisional ones for you:

I. Title

II. Introduction

A. Introduction of the Problem or Critical Question

Here's where you provide an overview, maybe a brief description of a problem that arose or an interesting development that occurred during your service-learning project, or perhaps a very brief discursive look at a particular question or concern that scholars have been trying to answer. Eventually, you want to designate your own critical question.

B. Background of the Problem or Critical Question

In this sub-section section you provide the history or background of your problem/critical question. It's a nice place for you to show off, once again, your reading and your knowledge. You'll move rather quickly into the next sub-section.

C. Response to the Problem or to the Critical Question

And I mean "response" loosely. You'll move from the background of the problem to your so-called response or solution to your critical question, which will feature your thesis statement.

III. Body of the Text (This section will be the most extensive part of your research essay. You will need to think of appropriate headings and maybe even subheadings for this section.)

In this section, you'll want to introduce the sections/features of your argument, the basic assertions you are making that support your overall thesis statement. For each major assertion/development, you'll probably want a separate subheading. Examine any journal essay or book chapter we read this semester and you'll see how this is done.

IV. Conclusion

It can be hard to get away from or to close down your research. So an often-successful way to do this is to think about your conclusion in three sections (which rarely merit separate subheadings):

- (1) the conclusions you can draw (clear cut, obvious) from your research;
- (2) the inferences you can draw (neither so clear cut or obvious, but given your knowledge of the subject, you feel pretty confident drawing them); and
- (3) the implications of your research in terms of further research; professional writing practice; or theoretical, pedagogical, or curricular applications; and so on.

In other words, think of conclusions, inferences, and implications in this section.

V. Bibliography

Begins on a new page in perfect MLA style. NO annotations on this final bibliography.

Course Schedule:

Note: All readings are available as PDFs on the course eCampus page, which is accessible via the following address: <<https://ecampus.wvu.edu/>>.

Abbreviations of journal titles that appear in the schedule of course readings:

CCC: College Composition and Communication

JBTC: Journal of Business and Technical Communication

QJS: Quarterly Journal of Speech

TCQ: Technical Communication Quarterly

Class #1—August 27: Examining the Rhetorical Situation for English 601

Bizzell, Patricia, and Bruce Herzberg. "General Introduction." *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. 2nd ed. Ed. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001. 1-16.

Walker, Jeffrey. "What Difference a Definition Makes, or, William Dean Howells and the Sophist's Shoes." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 36 (Spring 2006): 143-54.

Bitzer, Lloyd. "The Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968): 1-14.

Class #2—September 3: Kairos

Kinneavy, James. "Kairos: A Neglected Concept in Classical Rhetoric." *Rhetoric and Praxis: The Contribution of Classical Rhetoric to Practical Reasoning*. Ed. Jean Dietz Moss. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic U of America P, 1986. 79-105.

Doherty, Mick. "Kairos: Layers of Meaning." *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*. 1996. <<http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/layers/start.html>>.

Rickert, Thomas. "Invention in the Wild: On Locating Kairos in Space-Time." *The Locations of Composition*. Ed. Christopher J. Keller and Christian R. Weisser. Albany: State U of New York P, 2007. 71-89.

Scott, J. Blake. "Kairos as Indeterminate Risk Management: The Pharmaceutical Industry's Response to Bioterrorism." *QJS* 92.2 (2006): 115-43.

Class #3—September 10: The Canons of Rhetoric: Invention

Ede, Lisa, Cheryl Glenn, and Andrea Lunsford. "Border Crossings: Intersections of Rhetoric and Feminism." *Rhetorica* 13.4 (Autumn 1995): 401-41.

Fleming, David. "Becoming Rhetorical: An Education in the Topics." *The Realms of Rhetoric: The Prospects for Rhetoric Education*. Ed. Joseph Petraglia and Deepika Bahri. Albany: State U of New York P, 2003. 93-116.

Winsor, Dorothy. "Invention and Writing in Technical Work." *Written Communication* 11.2 (1994): 227-50.

Simmons, W. Michele, and Jeffrey T. Grabill. "Toward a Civic Rhetoric for Technologically and Scientifically Complex Places: Invention, Performance, and Participation." *CCC* 58.3 (2007): 419-448.

Class #4—September 17: The Canons of Rhetoric: Arrangement

Miller, Carolyn. "Genre as Social Action." *QJS* 70 (1984): 151-67.

Rude, Carolyn. "The Report for Decision Making: Genre and Inquiry." *JBTC* 9.2 (1995): 170-205.

Dunmire, Patricia. "Genre as Temporally Situated Social Action: A Study of Temporality and Genre Activity." *Written Communication* 17 (2000): 93-138.

Elbow, Peter. "The Music of Form: Rethinking Organization in Writing." *CCC* 57.4 (2006): 620-66.

Class #5—September 24: The Canons of Rhetoric: Style

Cicero, From *Orator*. Bizzell and Herzberg, *The Rhetorical Tradition* 339-343.

Erasmus, From *Copia: Foundations of the Abundant Style*. Bizzell and Herzberg, *The Rhetorical Tradition* 581-627.

Smitherman, Geneva. "'How I Got Ovu': African World View and Afro-American Oral Tradition." From *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America*. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1977. 73-100.

Kallendorf, Craig, and Carol Kallendorf. "The Figures of Speech, *Ethos*, and Aristotle: Notes Toward a Rhetoric of Business Communication." *Journal of Business Communication* 22.1 (1985): 35-50.

Connors, Robert J. "The Erasure of the Sentence." *CCC* 52.1 (2000): 96-128.

Class #6—October 1: The Canons of Rhetoric: Memory

Crowley, Sharon. "Modern Rhetoric and Memory." *Rhetorical Memory and Delivery: Classical Concepts for Contemporary Composition and Communication*. Ed. John Frederick Reynolds. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1993. 31-44.

Whittemore, Stewart. "Metadata and Memory: Lessons from the Canon of *Memoria* for the Design of Content Management Systems." *TCQ* 17.1 (2008): 88-109.

Prior, Paul, Janine Solberg, Patrick Berry, Hannah Bellward, Bill Chewning, Karen J. Lunsford, Liz Rohan, Kevin Roozen, Mary P. Sheridan-Rabideau, Jody Shipka, Derek Van Ittersum, and Joyce R. Walker. "Re-Situating and Re-Mediating the Canons: A Cultural-Historical Remapping of Rhetorical Activity." *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy* 11.3 (Summer 2007). <<http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/11.3/binder.html?topoi/prior-et-al/index.html>>. *Please note*: While we will read this entire multimedia piece, focus in particular on Derek Van Ittersum's contribution, "Data-Palace: Modern Memory Work in Digital Environments."

Class #7—October 8: The Canons of Rhetoric: Delivery

Austin, Gilbert. From *Chironomia*. Bizzell and Herzberg, *The Rhetorical Tradition* 889-97.

Martin Jacobi, "The Canon of Delivery in Rhetorical Theory: Selections, Commentary, and Advice." *Delivering College Composition: The Fifth Canon*. Ed. Kathleen Blake Yancey. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2006. 17-29.

- Newman, Sara. "Gestural Enthymemes: Delivering Movement in 18th- and 19th-Century Medical Images." *Written Communication* 26.3 (2009): 273-94.
- Buchanan, Lindal. "Regendering Delivery: The Fifth Canon and the Maternal Rhetoric." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* (Fall 2002): 51-73.
- Rude, Carolyn D. "Toward an Expanded Concept of Rhetorical Delivery: The Uses of Reports in Public Policy Debates." *TCQ* 13.3 (2004): 271-288.

Class #8—October 15: Understanding Writing as Material Practice

- Trimbur, John. "Delivering the Message: Typography and the Materiality of Writing." *Rhetoric and Composition as Intellectual Work*. Ed Gary A. Olson. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2002. 188-202.
- Hass, Christina, and Stephen P. Witte. "Writing as Embodied Practice: The Case of Engineering Standards." *JBTC* 15.4 (2001): 413-57.
- Canagarajah, A. Suresh. "The Problem" and "Publishing Requirements and Material Constraints." *A Geopolitics of Academic Writing*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2002. 1-7, 157-82.
- Devitt, Amy J., Anis Bawarshi, and Mary Jo Reiff. "Materiality and Genre in the Study of Discourse Communities." *College English* 65.5 (2003): 541-58.

Assignment #1: Exploratory Essay due.

Class #9—October 22: Understanding Writing as Human Activity

- All four readings come from the following edited collection: *Writing Selves/Writing Societies: Research from Activity Perspectives*. Ed. Charles Bazerman and David Russell. Fort Collins, CO: The WAC Clearinghouse, 2002. The entire collection is available online at the following address: <http://wac.colostate.edu/books/selves_societies/>.
- Charles Bazerman and David Russell, "Introduction."
- Graham Smart, "A Central Bank's 'Communications Strategy': The Interplay of Activity, Discourse Genres, and Technology in a Time of Organizational Change."
- Clay Spinuzzi, "Compound Mediation in Software Development: Using Genre Ecologies to Study Textual Artifacts."
- Jean Ketter and Judy Hunter, "Creating a Writer's Identity on the Boundaries of Two Communities of Practice."

Class #10—October 29: Writing in Place

- Reynolds, Nedra. "Composition's Imagined Geographies: The Politics of Space in the Frontier, City, and Cyberspace." *CCC* 50.1 (1998): 12-35.
- Hisayasu, Curtis, and Jentery Sayers. "Geolocating Compositional Strategies at the Virtual University." *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*. 12.2 (Spring 2008). <<http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/12.2/binder.html?http://www.jenterysayers.com/soundmovement/abstract/>>.
- Lindgren, Tim, and Derek Owens. "From Site to Screen, From Screen to Site." *The Locations of Composition*. Ed. Christopher J. Keller and Christian R. Weisser. Albany: State U of New York P, 2007. 195-212.

Thatcher, Barry. "Intercultural Rhetoric, Technology Transfer, and Writing in U.S.-Mexico Border *Maquilas*." *TCQ* 15.3 (2006): 383-405.

Class #11—November 5: Writing with the Community

Flower, Linda. "Talking across Difference: Intercultural Rhetoric and the Search for Situated Knowledge." *CCC* 55.1 (2003): 38-68.

Bowdon, Melody. "Technical Communication and the Role of the Public Intellectual: A Community HIV-Prevention Case Study." *TCQ* 13.3. (2004): 325-240.

Diehl, Amy, Jeffrey T. Grabill, William Hart-Davidson, and Vishal Iyer. "Grassroots: Supporting the Knowledge Work of Everyday Life." *TCQ* 17.4 (2008): 413-34.

Coogan, David. "Service Learning and Social Change: The Case for Materialist Rhetoric." *CCC* 57.4 (2006): 667-93.

Class #12—November 12: Rhetorics of the Body

Hawhee, Debra. "Bodily Pedagogies: Rhetoric, Athletics, and the Sophists' Three Rs." *College English* 65:2 (2002): 142-62.

Dolmage, Jay. "The Teacher, The Body." Review Essay. *CCC* 58.2 (2006): 267-77.

Dolmage, Jay. "Mapping Composition: Inviting Disability in the Front Door." *Disability and the Teaching of Writing: A Critical Sourcebook*. Ed. Cynthia Lewiecki-Wilson and Brenda Jo Brueggemann with Jay Dolmage. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008. 14-27.

Palmeri, Jason. "Disability Studies, Cultural Analysis, and the Critical Practice of Technical Communication Pedagogy." *TCQ* 15.1 (2006): 49-65.

Dunn, Patricia A., and Kathleen Dunn De Mers, "Reversing Notions of Disability and Accommodation: Embracing Universal Design in Writing Pedagogy and Web Space." *Kairos* 7.1 (2002). <<http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/7.1/>>.

Assignment #3: Annotated Bibliography due.

Class #13—November 19: Composing Multimodal Rhetorics

Kress, Gunther. "Multimodality." *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*. Ed. Bill Copy and Mary Kalantzis. New York: Routledge, 2000. 182-202.

Hagan, Susan M. "Visual/Verbal Collaboration in Print: Complementary Differences, Necessary Ties, and an Untapped Rhetorical Opportunity." *Written Communication* 24.1 (2007): 49-83.

Graham, S. Scott. "Mode, Medium, and Genre: A Case Study of Decisions in New-Media Design." *JBTC* 22.1 (2008): 65-91.

Selfe, Cynthia L. "Aurality and Multimodal Composing." *CCC* 60.4 (2009): 616-63.

Class #14—December 3: Digital Rhetorics

WIDE Research Center Collective. "Why Teach Digital Writing?" 2005.
<<http://www.technorhetoric.net/10.1/coverweb/wide/index.html>>.

Sheppard, Jennifer. "The Rhetorical Work of Multimedia Production Practices: It's More Than Just Technical Skill." *Computers and Composition* 26.2 (2009): 122-31.

Rice, Jennifer Edbauer. "Rhetoric's Mechanics: Retooling the Equipment of Writing Production." *CCC* 60.2 (2008): 366-87.

Banks, Adam J. "Looking Forward to Look Back: Technology Access and Transformation in African American Rhetoric." *African American Rhetoric(s): Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Ed. Elaine B. Richardson and Ronald L. Jackson II. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2004. 189-203.

Draft workshop: First Draft of Research-based essay due.

Class #15—December 10: Presentations on service-learning projects and research-based essays. Course evaluations.

Assignment #4: Research-based essay due.