

ENGL 301 Writing Theory and Practice

Course Information

Spring 2023
CRN 17252
TR 1:00-2:15 p.m.
G06 Colson Hall

Instructor Information

Dr. Doug Phillips
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Virtual Office Hours

Mondays, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
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Course Description

While much of the PWE curriculum emphasizes the practice and products of professional communication, this course invites you to the theoretical discussion addressing *why* we practice and produce what we do and *how* we can improve on those practices and products in a deliberate, systematic way. To these ends, you will engage in rhetorical analyses of professional 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.

Course Goals

By the end of the semester, you will be able to

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

Required Materials

- Longaker, Mark Garrett and Jeffrey Walker. *Rhetorical Analysis: A brief guide for writers*. Pearson, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-205-56570-2.
- Reliable access to internet, email, and eCampus

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 exam.

1. Learning Rhetorical “Traditions” and Foundations (20%)

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 write one brief rhetorical analysis and craft a more extensive rhetorical commentary on a visual public artifact.

2. Using Rhetoric and Writing to Understand Our Lives Today (15%)

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. From there, you will begin to develop a lens through which to analyze a social or professional issue important to you.

3. Investigating Writing and Rhetoric through Field Research (35%)

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.

4. Short Writing (20%)

Your success – indeed, *all* of our successes – in this course depends on how well we can engage with the content and one another throughout the term. Toward that end, you can demonstrate your level of engagement with the course in a variety of ways, including by completing reading responses or other short writing activities (300-500 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. 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.

5. Participation (10%)

This course relies on a strong community where everyone participates, so your participation will be evaluated using the following rubric:

- A: You are prepared for every class, bring all materials, and contribute to discussion every day. You have insightful and relevant contributions, and you go above and beyond an average engagement with the day's readings/activity. You respond to your peers' comments and questions, ask questions of your own, and help facilitate dialogue.
- B: You are prepared for every class period and contribute to most class discussions; you usually have the course materials. Comments are relevant and insightful and demonstrate a careful reading of the texts assigned. You respond to other's comments regularly and you take an active role in class activities.
- C: You are typically prepared for class and contribute to class discussion approximately half of the time; you bring the course materials about half of the time. Sometimes your contributions are off topic or prevent dialogue from moving forward. During group work, you take on a quiet role.
- D: You rarely comment or add insight to class discussion; you rarely bring the course materials. You are not prepared for class, which is reflected by class discussion and/or low response scores. You may show little interest in the material and are off task during class (reading non-relevant material, sending text messages, sleeping, etc.). You may have missed as many as four classes.
- F: You arrive late to class, are unprepared for class discussion/activities, distract others, intentionally offend others, fail to follow the classroom policies and procedures and/or have missed 5 or more classes.

Learning Unit	Assignment	Due Date	Points Possible	Grade Weight
1	Rhetorical analysis 1 (compare/contrast: kairos & argumentation)	Feb. 7	50	10%
	Rhetorical analysis 2 (visual artifact)	Feb. 16	50	10%
2	Research proposal	Mar. 23	25	5%
	Annotated bibliography	Mar. 30	50	10%
3	Discourse community research report	Apr. 27	100	20%
	Discourse community member one-pager	Apr. 27	50	10%
	Course reflection memo	Apr. 27	25	5%
n/a	Short writes/reading responses	various	8 @10 each	20%
n/a	Participation	Every day	50	10%
			480	100%

Attendance

You can miss three (3) classes without penalty. Beginning with your fourth absence, you will receive a grade of zero (o) for participation. Each additional absence may lower your final course grade by one full letter grade.

Days of Note

Jan 13 – last day to add/drop without a ‘W’

Jan 16 – MKL, Jr. Day (univ. closed)

Mar 3 – Mid-term grades due

Mar 11-19 – Spring recess

Apr 7 – Spring holiday (univ. closed)

Apr 14 – Last day to drop/withdraw from univ.

Calendar & Schedule of Work

The schedule of work is subject to change based on class needs. I'll communicate any changes to you in class and will update the course eCampus site, as well as amend this schedule.

Abbreviations

RA = *Rhetorical Analysis: A brief guide for writers*, Longaker and Walker

SW/RR = Short writing/reading response

Week 1

Tuesday, January 10

/In class: - Syllabus and introductions

/For next class: - Read RA, Ch. 1, "Introduction," pp. 1-6, and Appendices A, B, and C, pp. 251-269
- Read Foss, Foss, and Trapp, "Perspectives on the Study of Rhetoric," 11-19

Thursday, January 12

/In class: - Overview of the history of rhetoric

/For next class: - Read RA, Ch. 2, "Kairos and the Rhetorical Situation," pp. 7-43
- Read Vieregge, "Exigency: What makes my message indispensable to my reader," pp. 175-188

Week 2

Tuesday, January 17

/In class: - Kairos and the rhetorical situation

/For next class: - SW 1: Locate a professional document such as a letter, piece of direct mail, a report, an advertisement, etc. Using the "Questions for Analysis" on RA p. 35-37 as a guide, write an outline for a kairos analysis of that professional document. Your outline should identify the occasion, exigence, historical and cultural context, forum, genre, kairos constraints and opportunities, rhetor, and audience for the piece of discourse. (1-2 pages)

Thursday, January 19

/Due: - SW 1

/In class: - Discuss professional documents

- /For next class:** - Read Jones, "Finding the Good Argument OR Why Bother with Logic," pp. 156-179
- Read Carroll, "Backpacks vs. Briefcases: Steps toward rhetorical analysis," pp. 45-58

Week 3

Tuesday, January 24

- /In class:** - Argumentation
- Rhetorical fallacies

- /For next class:** - SW 2: Locate a professional document. (This can be the same or a different document than the one you used for SW 1.) Isolate one single component in a visual or textual argument made in that document, and identify the ethical, pathetic, and logical proofs in this same element. Address how the appeals work together. (Adapted from RA, p. 49)

Thursday, January 26

- /Due:** - SW 2

- /In class:** - Discuss the structure of arguments

- /For next class:** - Read RA, Ch. 3, pp. 44-95

Week 4

Tuesday, January 31

- /In class:** - Pisteis, topics, and stases
- Review key rhetorical concepts
- Discuss Rhetorical Analysis I

- /For next class:** - Read RA, Ch. 4, "Structure," pp. 102-135
- Read Dirk, "Navigating Genres," pp. 249-262
- SW 3: Find a short text that challenges genre conventions. What genre does it belong to, and how do you know? What action(s) does it support? What does it do that is unexpected or unique?
- Locate two professional texts you plan to use for the Rhetorical Analysis assignment and bring them to next class. You can discuss one of those texts in SW 3 if you want, though you don't need to.

Thursday, February 2

/Due: - SW 3

/In class: - Work on rhetorical analyses

/For next class: - Read RA, Ch. 5, "Style," pp. 136-184
- Read Hulst, "Grammar, Rhetoric, and Style," pp. 86-99

Week 5

Tuesday, February 7

/In class: - Grammar and style

/For next class: - Read Bazerman, "Intertextuality: How texts rely on other texts," pp. 83-96
- SW 4: Using one of the texts you chose for the Extended Rhetorical Analysis paper, describe the intertextual relations you see between it and other texts. Are these merely genre conventions or reference to the audience's presuppositions, or are there more explicit techniques of intertextual representation (see Bazerman, pp. 88-9)?

Thursday, February 9

/Due: - SW 4

/In class: - Intertextuality: locating connections between texts
- How does understanding intertextuality help us "navigate" genres? What are the limits of intertextuality?

/For next class: - Read Blair, "The Rhetoric of Visual Arguments," pp. 41-61
- Read Cohn, "Understanding Visual Rhetoric," pp. 18-39
- Read Gillenwater, "Visual Communication," pp. 15-17

Week 6

Tuesday, February 14

/Due: - Rhetorical Analysis I: Extended Analysis

/In class: - Visual rhetoric

/For next class: - SW 5: Find a professional document that you think is visually interesting. Considering the elements of visual design described by Cohn and Gillenwater, which are most salient and interesting? How do they help the author achieve his/her purpose?

Thursday, February 16

/Due: - SW 5

/In class: - Discuss Rhetorical Analysis 2: Multimodal Artifact

/For next class: - Read Faigley, "Nonacademic Writing: The Socialist Perspective," pp. 47-59
- Read Frost and Eble, "Technical Rhetorics: Making specialized persuasion apparent to public audiences," pp. 1-9
- Read Grabill and Simmons, "Toward a Critical Rhetoric of Risk Communication: Producing citizens and the role of technical communicators," pp. 415-441

Week 7

Tuesday, February 21

/In class: - Technical rhetorics

/For next class: - Read Eubanks, "Poetics and Narrativity: How texts tell stories," pp. 33-56
- SW 6: Find a short text (magazine article, newspaper op-ed, non-profit solicitation letter, etc.) and analyze it. What stories does it tell? Are these retellings of master narratives? What metaphors does it rely on? Why might these stories or metaphors be persuasive to its intended audience in this particular time (kairos)?

Thursday, February 23

/Due: - SW 6

/In class: - Storytelling: Master narratives, metaphors

/For next class: - Read Melzer, "Understanding Discourse Communities," pp. 100-115
- Read Bazerman, "Speech Acts, Genres, and Activity Systems: How texts organize activity and people," pp. 309-339

Week 8

Tuesday, February 28

/Due: - Rhetorical Analysis 2: Visual Artifact

/In class: - Discourse communities as sites of investigation
<https://guides.libraries.uc.edu/2089/discourse-community>

/For next class: - SW 7: Identify a discourse community to which you belong or that is particularly interesting to you for personal, professional, or academic reasons. Describe the discourse community (see Melzer, pg. 102) and analyze one textual artifact produced by a member of that community (see Melzer, pg. 107 and pg. III. *Note:* You don't need to answer *all* of the questions Melzer poses; focus instead on the ones you feel are most interesting or relevant.)

Thursday, March 2

/Due: - SW 7

/In class: ~~- Discuss Discourse Community research report: proposal, annotated bibliography, research report, and 1-page memorandum~~

/For next class: ~~- Leavy, "Qualitative Research Design," pp. 124-163~~

*Midterm grades due – Mar 3

Week 9

Tuesday, March 7

/In class: - Discuss Discourse Community research report: proposal, annotated bibliography, research report, and 1-page memorandum

/For next class: - Read Leavy, "Qualitative Research Design," pp. 124-163

Thursday, March 9

/In class: - Ethics in social research
- Qualitative research design

/For next class: - Read Driscoll, "Introduction to Primary Research," pp. 153-174

Week 10: Spring Break

Tuesday, March 14

/No class!

Thursday, March 16

/No class!

Week 11

Tuesday, March 21

- /In class:**
- Developing a research question: What are the goals and characteristics of the discourse community? How do members communicate? What do you notice? What else do you want to know?
 - Conducting primary research: interviews, surveys, observations, and data collection

- /For next class:**
- Complete research proposal
 - Read Denny & Clark, "How to analyze data in a primary research study," pp. 85-109

Thursday, March 23

/Due: - **Research proposal**

- /In class:**
- Annotated bibliography: Locating secondary sources and putting your writing in conversation with others
 - Moving from a topic area/site of inquiry to a larger conversation

- /For next class:**
- Begin data collection and searching for secondary sources
 - Read Mirabelli, "Learning to Serve," pp. 89-113
 - SW 8: What is Mirabelli's research question and where does he state it? What kind of data did he collect to analyze the diner as a discourse community?

Week 12

Tuesday, March 28

/Due: - SW 8

/In class: - Discuss data collection and analysis in Mirabelli

/For next class: - Read MacKinnon, "Becoming a Rhetor: Developing writing ability in a mature, writing intensive organization," pp. 411-422
- Finish Annotated Bibliography

Thursday, March 30

/Due: - Annotated bibliography

/In class: - Discuss data collection and analysis in MacKinnon

/For next class: - Continue to work on data collection
- (For next Thurs): Read Ryan and Bernard, "Techniques to Identify Themes," pp. 85-109

Week 13

Tuesday, April 4

/In class: - No class
- Work on data collection
- I will be in my faculty office (339 Colson Hall) during class time for extra office hours

/For next class: - Bring your data with you to next class (survey results, interview transcripts, sample documents for content analysis)

Thursday, April 6

/In class: - Analyze data: Create coding categories, look for themes

/For next class: - Identify 3-4 categories, codes, or themes in your data
- Bring a preliminary outline or coding schema and your data to next class

Week 14

Tuesday, April 11

- /In class:** - Review structure of the final Research Report and Community Member 1-pager
- Interpreting your data: Review major theoretical concepts from the semester

/For next class: - Finish outline/coding schema, bring to next class along with your data

Thursday, April 13

- /In class:** - Qualitative validity: Do your partners see the same thing(s)? What else seems interesting?

/For next class: - Complete rough draft

Week 15

Tuesday, April 18

/Due: - Discourse Community Research Report rough draft

/In class: - TBD

/For next class: - Complete Community Member 1-pager draft

Thursday, April 20

/Due: - Discourse Community Member 1-pager

/In class: - Discuss course reflection memo

/For next class: - Work on revisions

Week 16

Tuesday, April 25

/In class: - Work on revisions

/For next class: - Complete final Discourse Community Research Report and Community Member 1-pager
- Prepare a brief presentation (~5 mins) about your findings

Thursday, April 27

/Due: - Discourse Community research report & community member 1-page
- Course reflection memo

/In class: - Final presentations
- Course wrap-up & SEIs