

Instructor: Professor Erin Brock Carlson

Email: erin.carlson@mail.wvu.edu

Class Time: Tuesdays, 4:00-6:50 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

Rhetoric and Composition (or Composition and Rhetoric, or Writing Studies) is, according to Janice Lauer, a “dappled discipline.” That is, the field has a very different lineage than a more traditionally humanities field like Literature or History, emerging in the 1970s as scholars realized they were teaching something they hadn’t had theoretical training in: writing. Since then, the field has grown exponentially, now having its own graduate and undergraduate programs, conferences, and journals. But this history is complex, intertwined with the open admissions movement, turf wars with other disciplines, student retention and agency, and labor politics (not to mention the difficulties of pinning down a definition of “rhetoric”!) To be frank: this class has a lot of territory to cover, and in my ideal world, it would be a sequence of several courses. So, we will focus on the connections between our different areas of study (rhetorical history and theory, the development of writing as a discipline, contemporary scholarship in the field, and research methods) and how they all intersect to help us understand how we make and share meaning in the world—how we share stories.

To be totally honest, I struggled quite a bit with how to organize this class. Initially, we sped through the field of rhetoric and composition and the history of rhetorical thought, to then spend most of the semester reading in different subfields. But the more I looked at our schedule, the more I realized that the arbitrary separations I was making between fields really wasn’t going to help us grasp *what* this field is all about, and *how* we might put its lessons into practice; so, I scrapped it. Now, it’s organized thematically, each week being a mixture of old (some ancient!) texts, brand new, 2021 texts, and everywhere in between. Throughout it all, we will consider the following questions: What does this teach us about rhetoric? How might this make us better teachers and writers? How do research questions and methods shape our field, and how does your work fit into the field at large? When might we use this knowledge to intervene in our communities to do good?

At the end of this course, you will possess:

- Familiarity with major debates in the field of rhetoric and composition, as well as its many, many subfields;

- Basic understanding of rhetorical history from classical to contemporary, including varying definitions of rhetoric (and how they might be used in our work, now);
- Knowledge of research methods used in writing studies and their underlying methodologies;
- Practical experience with a range of research methods and tools that can aid your work as a writing teacher and researcher; and
- Practice developing original scholarly arguments, including identifying conference and publication venues; doing secondary and primary research; and drafting academic texts.

Required Texts

There is one required text for this class that we will be using throughout the course: *Rebecca Walton and Godwin Agboka, Equipping Technical Communicators for Social Justice Work (978-1-64642-094-0)*. We have [unlimited access to this text](#) through the library (Thank you, Humanities Librarian Lynne Stahl who got this ordered within a week of classes starting)! If you would like to have a paperback copy, it costs \$31.95 [straight from the publisher](#) with options for ebooks or rentals. You can also get it through Amazon. All other readings will be available through the library or PDFs I share with you.

Course Tools

We will be using Google Classroom as a headquarters for our class ([click this link](#) or enter this code to join: `rkeiimq`). 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 will introduce other optional technologies that are free to use throughout the semester.

Assignment Overviews

Below are brief overviews of each major assignment. I will provide more in-depth instructions in class.

Reading Responses and Dialectic Notebook (20%)

You will engage with our readings every week, but in two different modes. One week you will post a reading response (approx. 500 words) in which you critically engage one of the texts read for that day as well as at least one additional text of your own choice (from that week, from a previous week, or from your own research). The following week, you will contribute 10 – 15 entries to our collaborative double entry notebook about the readings in a shared GoogleDoc. An entry might be a quote/paraphrase of a text (left side of notebook), a response to a quote/paraphrase (right side of notebook), or a response to a peer's response (a comment in the margin).

Discussion Questions (5%)

Part of building our scholarly community comes from being vulnerable enough to ask questions and work through them together. While I will guide you through, you will be responsible for coming up with 3-5 meaty discussion questions (or better yet, some sort of applied activity) for your assigned day. You will sign up for two days, total.

Rhetorical Concept Essay (10%)

In the first part of class, you will select a rhetorical concept of interest to you (most likely from Western classical rhetoric), and then find 3-5 articles within the field that use that concept. You will then write an essay that provides an explanation of the concept and its importance to the field, an overview of how other scholars have utilized the concept, and your reflection on why this concept might be important.

Research Methods Activities (25%)

Throughout the semester, we will experiment (no pun intended) with different research methods, such as interviewing, research memos, coding, and more. Some weeks, you will be tasked with completing some sort of small research task, which we will discuss in class. You will share results with me, and you will write up an informal reflection towards the end of class that shares what you learned about research methods in our field.

Final Project (40%)

Because I want this course to help you consider how research and research methods in Rhetoric, Composition, and Professional Writing might support your ongoing work, whatever that might be, our final project asks you to take up a question related to these fields at large. Your final project can take a number of different forms, but my goal is for you to either 1) start thinking through a theoretical issue important to the field in a meaningful, new way; 2) create something that can be utilized in your work as a writer, teacher, or researcher; 3) practice using the research approaches we've discussed in class (or perhaps some combo of these). The most traditional choice would be a conference-length paper (10-12 pages), but I'm open to other ideas. You are allowed to work collaboratively, if you wish.

The breakdown of the final project is as follows:

- Proposal and Update, 10%
- Annotated Bibliography, 10%
- Draft, 5%
- Final, 25%

Digital Archiving:

Please obtain a USB drive that you will dedicate to collecting the writing, designing, editing, and revising done in this course. Please bring this drive to each class. As you work on your assignments both in and out of class, keep (within reason) progressive versions of all your notes, drafts, outlines, peer reviews, and research materials. Organize and label the documents as you go and it will benefit both of us.

Note: Technology will fail you at some point in the semester. Corrupt files, lost USB drives, or unsaved work are not reasons for work not coming in on time. PLEASE back-up your work.

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, or as needed throughout the course. For more information, consult the [Office of Accessibility Services](#).

Community:

I take seriously the need to provide a respectful and supportive environment in our course—a space that I think can be transformative for all of us. You are expected to treat everyone in our community with kindness and respect. 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, mental health, 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](#), located here in Colson Hall. (On a personal note: I was a writing center consultant during my BA and MA, and wouldn't have been able to write my dissertation without visiting the writing center each week, from prospectus to final edits. It's a wonderful space and I encourage you to take advantage of it.)

Being a graduate student is really hard, and it's often a big adjustment from whatever you were doing in your previous life. WVU does have resources available on campus, and most are available 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. Crisis services are also available 24/7/365: you can text "WVU" to 741741 for support from a trained Crisis Counselor.

However, I do want to acknowledge that the stressors of being a graduate student, instructor, and scholar are different from the pressures that most undergraduate students face. The mental health of graduate students is [deeply overlooked](#), so I want to encourage you to be cognizant of your own wellness and to advocate for yourself in every space, including this class. I am a resource to help you work through the difficulties of balancing these different roles.

Further, any student who faces challenges securing their food, housing, 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.

English 601: Studies in Composition and Rhetoric Schedule

Readings and writing should be ready to discuss and submit at the start of each class meeting, unless otherwise noted. Note: This schedule is subject to change, based on the needs of the class. Edits will be directly applied in this document, so be sure to check this regularly. **Previous weeks moved to bottom of document.**

Week 2: Introductions

Tuesday, August 24

Reading	Boyle, "Something like a reading ethics" Booth, "How Many Rhetorics" (PDF) Walton & Agboka, "Introduction" (PDF)
Writing	
In-Class	Syllabus and Schedule Introductions

Week 3: (A) Discipline

Tuesday, August 31

Reading	Booth, "A Condensed History of Rhetorical Studies" (PDF) The Rhetorical Tradition, Era Summaries (PDF) Interview with Janice Lauer, "Dappled Discipline at 30" Jones, Moore, & Walton, "Disrupting the Past to Disrupt the Future" Crowley, "Composition Is Not Rhetoric"
Writing	Dialectic Notebook Sign up for Rhetorical Concept Essay
In-Class	Discussion Questions (Name) Methods Activity: Textual Analysis

Week 4: Frames

Tuesday, September 7

Reading	Royster, "Disciplinary Landscaping or Contemporary Challenges..." Shah, "'What Is It That's Going On Here?': Community Partner Frames for Engagement" Powell et. al, "Our Story Begins Here: Constellating Cultural Rhetorics" Mao, "Studying the Chinese Rhetorical Tradition in the Present: Re-presenting..." Itchuaqiyaq, "Iñupiat Iļiyqusiāt: An Indigenist Ethics Approach..." (2, <i>ETCSJW</i>)
Writing	Reading Response
In-Class	Discussion Questions: Devin Methods Activity: Designing Research that Answers Questions

Week 5: Time

Tuesday, September 14

Reading	Heraclitus, Excerpts (PDF) Kinneavy, "Kairos in Classical and Modern Rhetorical Theory" (PDF)
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	Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation” Heidegger, [Brief] Excerpt from <i>On Time and Being</i> (PDF) Carlson, “Visual PAR Methods...” (5, <i>ETCSJW</i>)
Writing	Dialectic Notebook
In-Class	Discussion Questions: Emma Methods Activity: Visual Methods and Coding Visual Data

Week 6: Creation

Tuesday, September 21

Reading	5 Canons Thing [this is like 2 paragraphs long] Bacon, Excerpts from <i>The Advancement of Learning</i> (PDF) Simmons & Grabill, “Toward a Civic Rhetoric” Hopton, “Tarot of Tech” (8, <i>ETCSJW</i>) Choose 1: Van Kooten, “Singer, Writer: A Choric Exploration” Rose & Cardinal, “Purpose and Participation: Heuristics for Planning...” (4, <i>ETCSJW</i>)
Writing	Reading Response
In-Class	Discussion Questions: Mel Methods Activity: Generating Interview Questions

Week 7: Audience

Tuesday, September 28

Reading	Isocrates, Excerpt of “Antidosis” (PDF) Emerson, Excerpt of “Eloquence” in <i>The Complete Works</i> (PDF) Kynard, “Stank 2.0 and the Counterpoetics of of Black Language” Gouge, “Improving Patient Discharge Communication” Gonzales et al., “Narratives from the Margins...” (1, <i>ETCSJW</i>)
Writing	Dialectic Notebook
In-Class	Discussion Questions: Emma Methods Activity: Generating Interview Questions (continued)

Week 8: Emotion

Tuesday, October 5

Reading	Blair, Excerpt from Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres Ahmed, Introduction to The Cultural Politics of Emotion + one chapter of your choice Daniel, “Burning Out: Writing and the Self in an Era of Productivity” Pick one of the following: Carr, “In Support of Failure” Gelms, “Social Media Research and the Methodological Problem of Harassment”
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	Shivener, “Pressurized Rhetorical Bodies: Student Athletes...”
Writing	[No RR this week]
In-Class	Discussion Questions: Stone

Week 9: Knowledge

Tuesday, October 12

Reading	Aristotle, excerpts from <i>The Rhetoric</i> (Book 1; Parts 1-4) Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question” Gollihue & Xiong-Gum, “Dataweaving: Textiles as Data-Visualization” Legg & Strantz, “I’m Surprised That This Hasn’t Happened Before’...” (3, <i>ETCSJW</i>)
Writing	Dialectic Notebook Rhetorical Concept Essay
In-Class	Discussion Questions: Taylor Share Your Findings: Rhetorical Concept Essay

Week 10: Body

Tuesday, October 19

Reading	Quintilian, excerpts from Book 11, Institutio Oratoria (Lines 1-3; 14-29; 72-87; 137-149) Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa” Dolmage, “Metis, Mêtis, Mestiza, Medusa: Rhetorical Bodies...” Denny & Towle, “Braving the Waters of Class...” Harper, “Social Activism in 280 Characters or Less...” (7, <i>ETCSJW</i>) [optional]
Writing	Reading Response
In-Class	Discussion Questions: Nibal Methods Activity: Coding Data I

Week 11: Public

Tuesday, October 26

Reading	Warner, “Publics and Counterpublics” Sheridan et al., excerpt from <i>The Available Means of Persuasion</i> (PDF) Cox, “Working Closets: Mapping Queer Professional Discourse” (PDF) Sánchez, Dorpenyo, Sano-Franchini, “Election Technologies as a Tool...” (10, <i>ETCSJW</i>)
Writing	Dialectic Notebook
In-Class	Discussion Questions: Stone & Mel Methods Activity: Research Memoing

Week 12: Planning Projects

Tuesday, November 2

Reading	
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Writing	
In-Class	No in class meeting; set up meeting with Erin about final project and come with an idea of what you'd like to do, along with connections to things we've read so that I can help guide you to other areas/research

Week 13: Place

Tuesday, November 9

Reading	Auge, Places and Nonplaces (PDF) Edwards, "Digital Rhetoric on a Damaged Planet" Faris, "How to Be Gay with Locative Media" Hannah et al., "Legal Resource Mapping as Methodology" (6, <i>ETCSJW</i>)
Writing	Dialectic Notebook
In-Class	Special Guest: Humanities Librarian Lynne Stahl (we'll walk over to library together at 4.30, but will meet in regular classroom to do some housekeeping) Discussion Questions: Devin and Andrew

Week 14: Consensus

Tuesday, November 16

Reading	Ratcliffe, "Rhetorical Listening" Fledderjohann, "Functions of Everyday Enargeia..." Grant-Davie, " <i>Kategorias and Apologias as Heuristics for Social...</i> " (12, <i>ETCSJW</i>) [Catch up from Place week too, with discussion]
Writing	Dialectic Notebook Lite™ Annotated Bibliography + Update
In-Class	Discussion Questions: Nibal and Taylor Methods Activity: Crafting Literature Reviews

Week 15: Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday, November 23

Take a break. Or work on your final projects. But probably just take a break.	
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Week 16: Process

Tuesday, November 30

Reading	
Writing	
In-Class	We will not meet today, based on ~the public will~. Work on your projects and be ready to discuss and conclude next week!

Week 17: Process & Conclusions

Tuesday, December 7

Reading	Palmeri, Excerpt from <i>Remixing Composition: A History of...</i> (PDF) Lane, "Plotting an Interstitial Design Process: Design Thinking..." (11, <i>ETCSJW</i>) Walton & Agboka, "Afterword" (<i>ETCSJW</i>)
Writing	Methods Reflection Memo Discussion Questions: Andrew
In-Class	Happy Fun Conclusion Activity Round Robin Talks on Final Projects Party Time

Finals Week

Final Projects due to me anytime, Wednesday 12/15 via Classroom
(Please also submit methods reflection memo too if you haven't already)