



English 301 Writing Theory & Practice

T/R 11:30am–12:45pm
G18 Colson Hall

Instructor: Dr. Jill Woods
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209 Colson Hall

COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR INSTRUCTOR

WVU Email

Please contact me via email (jhiggin7@mix.wvu.edu OR Jill.Woods@mail.wvu.edu), and I will respond within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on the weekend. The “email” link on the left-hand side of our eCampus course site will take you to my or your course colleagues’ Mix addresses should you need them (e.g., for group work). Practice good, clear writing by being sure to include an informative subject line, beginning with the course number (e.g., ENGL 301-001: *Question about deadline for DB#2*).

Office Hours

I will hold in-person (1-2pm in Colson 209) and online (2-2:30pm) office hours on **Tuesdays and Thursdays**. If you’d like to meet outside these times, just email me to set something up. The link for regular, virtual office hours is on eCampus.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND SUPPLIES

You must have the required textbook for this course. You will have assigned readings almost every class period.

- Longaker, Mark Garrett and Jeffrey Walker. *Rhetorical Analysis: A Brief Guide for Writers*. Pearson. 2011. ISBN: 978-0-205-56570-2
- A working MIX address and access to WVU eCampus
- Additional material placed on eCampus
- Additional material located by you via the Internet and WVU Libraries research tools

OVERVIEW

While much of your professional writing and editing curriculum emphasizes the practice and products of organizational communication, this course invites you to the theoretical discussion addressing why we practice and produce what we do and how we can improve upon these practices and products in a deliberate, systematic way. To these ends, you will engage in rhetorical analysis of professional documents; review quantitative and qualitative research methods commonly used by writing professionals; and “invent” a reflection-in-action research agenda that allows you to unify both theory and application.

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

- Define rhetoric, including concepts such as kairos, techne, and praxis.
- Identify key rhetorical concepts in your own and others’ writing.
- Recognize and evaluate how rhetorical concepts inform professional communication practices.
- Identify various research methods relevant to professional communication.
- Research and analyze a current issue in professional communication to identify a relevant research topic.
- Prepare a professional literature review and research agenda to improve upon the communication practices of a particular business.

These goals align with the outcomes of SpeakWrite certified courses. *That means this class is committed to helping you communicate your knowledge effectively as you keep four key components in mind: purpose, audience, conventions, and trouble spots (or PACT for short).*



Purpose: What exactly do I want to happen?

Audience: Who is reading, listening, or viewing?

Conventions: What is expected in this context?

Trouble: What could get in the way of my goals?

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

You will be evaluated on the following course assignments:

8 Quizzes & Midterm Exam (30%, 150 pts. total): The quizzes (15 pts each) and exam (45 pts) ensure that you are reading the required material, help you remember what you read, and help you prepare for analytical writing assignments. Read carefully – take notes and ask questions in class. The quizzes are open-book, open-note. Quiz and exam dates are indicated on the course schedule and cannot be made up; missed quizzes (due to absence or tardiness) will be recorded as a zero. There are eight scheduled quizzes, *one of which (lowest score) will be dropped.*

15 Discussion Board Posts (30%, 150 pts. total): Discussion Board (DB) posts (10 pts. each) are writing exercises that include reflective writing, assignments from your textbook, class presentations, or short analyses. You will find prompts on the DB section of our eCampus course site. **All postings are due before the start of class** on the due date specified in the course schedule unless otherwise noted in class/email. Many of these posts will be used as the base for in-class discussions and activities. I focus on content when grading: strive to demonstrate that you are *actively* reading and engaging with the materials.

Annotated Bibliography, Literature Review, & Research Proposal (30%, 150 pts. total): These are related assignments. The annotated bibliography (50 pts.) provides you with the foundation for your literature review and research proposal (100 pts.). The literature review allows you to investigate an area of interest in your field (via secondary research) so you can identify and persuade your audience of necessary areas for future (primary) research. More details to come in the second half of the term.

Participation (10%, 50 pts. total): Participation includes coming to class prepared and on time, bringing all necessary materials, actively taking part in class discussions, asking questions, contributing your knowledge and insights in whatever form is appropriate, and striving to make all your contributions excellent on a daily basis. It also includes doing the reading and writing for each class *before* coming to class. Just showing up is not participating. (See assessment criteria below.)

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Writing: When grading each of your assignments, I will ask one overriding question: *Does this document do its job successfully?* The “job,” or purpose, of each document will be explained in assignment prompts and in class and assessed on this scale:

- **A – Superior:** The work is of near professional quality. The document meets or exceeds all the objectives of the assignment. The content is mature, thorough, and well suited for the audience. The style is clear and accurate. The information is well organized and designed so that it is accessible and highly readable. The mechanics and grammar are correct. It meets all goals.
- **B – Good:** The document meets the objectives of the assignment, but it needs improvement in some way. Style may

COURSE GRADE

Course grades will be calculated by points earned through completed work:

A-/A/A+ = 90–100% (450-500 points)

B-/B/B+ = 80–89% (400-449 points)

C-/C/C+ = 70–79% (350-399 points)

D-/D/D+ = 60–69% (300-349 points)

F = 0-59.4% (0–299 points)

(Percentages rounded up at 0.5; +/- added for bottom/top ranges [e.g., 89.5–90.4% = A-; 99.5–100% = A+])

need to be adjusted; the writer may have missed easily correctable errors in grammar, format, or content; the document may need to develop one or two points. Overall, however, the document generally meets its goals of audience and purpose.

- **C – Competent:** The document needs significant improvement in concept, details, development, organization, grammar, or format. It may be formally correct but superficial in content. It stands a chance of succeeding.
- **D – Marginally Acceptable:** The document meets some of the objectives but ignores others. The content may be under-developed, or the document may contain so many errors that they disrupt meaning. The document requires extensive revision to succeed.
- **F – Unacceptable:** The document fails to meet basic goals. It does not have enough information, does something other than the assignment required, or it contains excessive, disruptive errors. A document will also fail if it does not represent the writer's original work.

Participation: 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 period and contribute to class discussion every (or almost every) day; this includes bringing the course materials on a daily basis. You have insightful and relevant contributions and 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 on a regular basis and take on 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 do not display your preparedness for class, which is reflected by class discussion and/or low quiz scores. You may show little interest in the material and are off task during class (reading non-relevant material, sending text messages, sleeping, etc.).
- **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.

COURSE POLICIES

You can access and read institution-level policies here: <https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements>, including policies for adverse weather, sexual misconduct, academic integrity, inclusivity, and campus safety. No incompletes will be provided for this course. Here are additional details for policies particularly relevant to this course:

- **Attendance:** absolutely necessary and expected. Quizzes cannot be made up. Three absences are allowed before your participation grade is affected.
- **Late work:** not accepted; talk to me if you have an unusual circumstance.
- **Professional Etiquette:** Etiquette is really all about making people feel respected and appreciated. In class and in meetings, please focus on each other and our collaborative work, not phones/email.
- **COVID-19 Protocols:** As of the creation of this syllabus, mask wearing and the reporting of positive test results to the University are no longer mandated. Please follow your preferences regarding mask wearing in class but follow [CDC guidelines](#), however, if you test positive: isolate for 5 days and mask for 5 additional days. If your isolation requires you to miss class,

immediately communicate with me for alternative arrangements.

- **Mental Health Services:** WVU offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns that you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus at the Carruth Center for Psychological and Psychiatric Services (CCPPS) website: <https://carruth.wvu.edu/>. If you need crisis services, call the CCPPS main number 24/7: (304) 293-4431.

Course Schedule

Like all writing, our schedule is open to revision. We'll discuss any changes in class or via email/eCampus.
RA = *Rhetorical Analysis: A Brief Guide for Writers*

	Classes	Reading	Writing
Rhetorical Theory & Concepts	Course/Colleague Introductions		
	R-8/18	- Syllabus	
	History of Rhetoric – Foundations		
	T-8/23	- RA Ch. 1 - Foss, Foss & Trapp, <i>Perspectives on the Study of Rhetoric</i> (eCampus)	- DB#1
	R-8/25	- Randazzo, <i>Positioning resumes and cover letters as reflective-reflexive process</i> (eCampus)	
	Kairos & the Rhetorical Situation (WHEN)		
	T-8/30	- RA Ch. 2 - RA Appendices A, B & C	- DB#2 - Quiz 1 (in class)
	R-9/1		- DB#3
	Argument (Pisteis, Topics, Stases) (WHAT)		
	T-9/6	- RA Ch. 3	- DB#4 - Quiz 2
	R-9/8	- Supplementary reading on eCampus	
	T-9/13		- DB#5
	Structure & Form (WHY)		
	R-9/15	- RA Ch. 4	- DB#6 - Quiz 3
	T-9/20	- Supplementary reading on eCampus	- DB#7
	Style (HOW)		
	R-9/22	- RA Ch. 5	- DB#8 - Quiz 4
	T-9/27	- Supplementary reading on eCampus	- DB#9
	R-9/29		- DB#9 (cont.)
	Review & Midterm		
	T-10/4	- Review RA Ch. 1-5	- DB#10
	R-10/6		- Midterm

Rhetoric, Professional Communication, & Research	Rhetoric & Professional Writing (WHERE)		
	T-10/11	– Supplementary reading on eCampus ([1] Rosenberg, Reading Games ; [2] assigned group reading)	– DB#11
	R-10/13		
	T-10/18		– DB#12
	R-10/20	– ARP Ch. 1, 2 – Driscoll, Introduction to Primary Research: Observations, Surveys, and Interviews	– Quiz 5
	Judging Quantitative & Qualitative Research		
	T-10/25	– Supplementary (quant) reading on eCampus	– Quiz 6
	R-10/27	– Supplementary reading on eCampus	– DB#13
	T-11/1	– Supplementary (qual) reading on eCampus	– Quiz 7
	R-11/3		– DB#14
	Secondary (LR) → Primary (Proposal) Research		
	T-11/8 No class	Election Day (Go vote!)	
	T-11/10	– ARP Ch. 3 – Supplementary (LR) reading on eCampus – Developing a Research Question	– Quiz 8 (in class) – DB#15 (in class)
	T-11/15	– Your research	
	R-11/17	– Your research	– AB/Matrix
	Thanksgiving Recess		
	T-11/22	Rest up and rejuvenate for presentations next week!	
	R-11/24		
	T-11/29	– Supplementary (presentation) reading on eCampus	
	R-12/1		– Presentations (Group 1)
	T-12/6		– Presentations (Group 2)
	R-12/8		– Presentations (Group 3) – Final Proposals, Reflections, & eSEIs