

## English 601: Introduction to Rhetoric & Composition

Course Guidelines | Fall 2011 | Thursdays, 4:00-6:50 in G10 Colson | Dr. Brian Ballentine

### General Information

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**Instructor:** Ballentine

**URL:** [community.wvu.edu/~bdb026/601](http://community.wvu.edu/~bdb026/601)

**E-mail:** [brian.ballentine@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:brian.ballentine@mail.wvu.edu)

**Office:** 211 Colson

**Hours:** T 10:00 – 12:00

W 10:00 – 12:00, and by appt.

### Required Texts

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**RT:** Bizzell, Patricia, and Herzberg, Bruce, eds. (2001). *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

**CRT:** Lucaites, John Louis, Condit, Celeste Michelle, and Caudill, Sally, eds. (1989). *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader*. NY: Guilford Press.

In this course, we will pursue answers to the question: What can rhetoric be? To do so, we will survey key texts, current trends and specializations, and critical questions in the field of rhetoric and composition studies as well as the related or sub-disciplines of professional and technical writing. Existing answers to our question range widely. If we adhere to the ideas of Kenneth Burke, for example, then the powers of rhetoric have application everywhere – even literature is to be approached as persuasion and symbolic action. That same ubiquity, claims Dilip Gaonkar, renders rhetoric powerless. Simply put, if rhetoric is everything then it is also nothing and non-useful. In addition to studying the answers of others, I am equally (if not more) interested in each of you answering that question for yourselves - especially your articulation of an answer in relation to your own program of study (MA in Literature, MFA, MA in Professional Writing & Editing, Ph.D.).

As part of our journey, 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 a range of thought-provoking work currently being done on/in areas of “specialization” where rhetoric is paired with another field or discipline. For example, articles relating to the rhetoric of science and the rhetoric of medicine are on our reading list. As we move through these specializations or sub-fields, we will attend to different authors’ definitions of “rhetoric” and their respective understandings of what constitutes an appropriate application of rhetoric and rhetorical theory. 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. In an effort to understand how programs and program coordinators around the country have attempted to answer our course’s question, we will also read and report on English and rhetoric and writing programs. The goal is to at once see their (program administrators and working professionals) answers to what rhetoric can be as well as educate (professionalize) ourselves.

## Course Projects

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The entire course has been designed to help you reflect on your own rhetorical practice regardless of your specific English discipline. A guiding principle of this course is that studying rhetorical theory helps one to develop or refine his or her effectiveness in research, speaking, and writing. There are six major components to the course:

1. Conversation Starters and Weekly Discussion: One single-spaced page (approx. 400-500 words) brought to class each week to prompt discussion and raise issues. *Not required during weeks that other writing projects are due or when you give individual presentations.*
2. Exploratory Essay
3. Presentation #1 – Program Profile Presentation
4. Presentation #2 – Article/Chapter Presentation
5. Annotated Bibliography
6. Research Paper that researches and supports an argument for your answer to the question: “What can rhetoric be?”

## Descriptions of Course Projects

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### *Conversation Starters & Weekly Discussion (10%)*

Expectations for reading – both inside and outside of a ‘text’ – will be high. That is, our reading list only scratches the surface of the classical period. And yet, many of our contemporary pieces – including some these newer ‘specializations’ – rely heavily on that classical tradition for their frameworks and arguments. As graduate students, I expect you to be curious and ambitious. *The Rhetorical Tradition* is a good place to start for exploring references to other works on rhetoric. I will provide guidance for discussion, but most of the responsibility here will be yours.

To prepare and enrich our discussions, I ask that you come to every class meeting with a single-spaced page (400-500 words) response to the relevant texts (or just one of them) that engages it/them in some way: summarizes a key point, connects it to something you have read or experienced elsewhere, analyzes how a particular argument is made, criticizes that argument, locates a problem of some kind in the text, asks a question that might be pursued later in more depth, or makes some other kind of intervention not listed here. I will collect these responses at the end of class each week and read but not grade them. Please do not write more than a page and do not treat this as a formal paper – it’s meant to prepare discussion and jump-start our collective engagement with the texts.

### *Exploratory Essay (15%)*

In this short essay (3-5 pages plus citations), please explore an issue related to our course readings. You may want to write about a particular theoretical concept, rhetoric program or pedagogical stance, rhetorical perspective, or classical/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 do preliminary research toward your answer to “what can rhetoric be?” The idea here is for you to take up an issue we have addressed thus far and push your analysis and investigation further than we were able to in class discussion or in course readings.

*Annotated Bibliography (15%)*

Your annotated bibliography will help you prepare to write your final research paper. To complete your annotated bibliography, you will research and write about 8-10 sources that help you to advance your argument(s) for what rhetoric can be. Articles in our course reading list come from many, but not all, of the major journals serving rhetoric and composition. If you are having trouble with your research, please let me know so we can expand your journal list. Your annotated bibliography should follow the example below. In each annotation you should (1) cite the text of your choice in perfect MLA or APA format; (2) summarize the text or article; and (3) discuss how the text will help you to compose your final paper.

*MLA Format:*

Author(s). "Title of Article." *Title of Journal* Volume.Issue (Year): pages. Medium of publication.

*Example:*

Hawhee, Debra. "Composition History and the *Harbrace College Handbook*." *College Composition and Communication* 50.3 (1999): 504-23. Print.

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.

*Presentation #1 – Program Profile Presentation (10%)*

Each week we will have two presentations from two different students – both approximately 20-30 minutes. The first presentation will be a Program Profile. One of the best ways to understand how others are answering the question "What can rhetoric be?" is to examine other English departments and their curriculum (or, other departments if writing and rhetoric studies is located outside of a university's English department). Two of our readings for "Week 2" of our course are designed to demonstrate both *why* so much is at stake regarding curriculum development and to *model* the type of information you should consider including in your presentations. The piece by Yeats and Thompson contains a huge number of programs but feel free to report on others especially if you wish to profile, say, an MFA program.

*Presentation #2 – Article/Chapter Presentation (10%)*

Your second presentation, also in lieu of your weekly half-page response, will require an approximately 20-30 minute talk introducing one of the week's readings. Typically, I will not specify which reading you should focus on and it will quite often be the case that it makes sense to reference other readings from that (or previous) weeks. Otherwise, you may structure this presentation any way you see fit. A good way to begin is to prepare a summary-response for us and then move on to lead a discussion on it, raise issues with it, or ask us to work through some problem you've located with the author's argument. No secondary readings are required for this assignment, though I'm happy to suggest other supplemental pieces (of course you may locate others on your own). Regardless, I am happy to assist as you plan this presentation.

*The Research Paper (40%)*

The possibilities for approaching, researching, and answering the question, “What can rhetoric be?” are deliberately broad. Again, this research-based paper (8-12 pages plus citations) should be seen as an opportunity for you to explore applications of/for rhetoric that suit your academic and/or professional pursuits.

For example, perhaps our readings on the rhetoric of science are of interest to you. You may want to research ways in which rhetoric may work to shape public policy or legislation (plenty of contested subjects to pick from here in West Virginia from mountain top mining to ‘fracking’ for natural gas). Your own rhetorical analysis of written documents or speeches informing, shaping, or refuting our “knowledge” regarding one of these subjects would be an interesting approach to the paper.

Another example could be that, given all of our discussion on rhetoric and writing within and outside of English departments, you may want to broaden the possibilities (or impossibilities) for rhetoric within the university. Given your own pursuits, what do you see as the future of rhetoric and writing studies within the academy? Of course, all of your arguments will require research-backed claims but there is a lot of room to theorize what rhetoric could be in relation to, say, an MFA program or an engineering department.

Your paper will be long enough to merit sub/headings – some possibilities include:

**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/question that that you see in relation to rhetoric and rhetorical studies. You may want to provide a very brief discursive look at a particular question or concern that scholars have been trying to answer or a brief overview of a contested definition of rhetoric. 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 or APA style. No annotations on this final bibliography.

## Course Schedule

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Note: All PDFs are on the ENGL 601 page, which is accessible via the following address:  
<http://community.wvu.edu/~bdb026/601>

Citations/abbreviations for books:

**RT:** Bizzell, Patricia, and Herzberg, Bruce, eds. (2001). *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

**CRT:** Lucaites, John Louis, Condit, Celeste Michelle, and Caudill, Sally, eds. (1989). *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader*. NY: Guilford Press.

### Week 1 August 25<sup>th</sup> – Intro to Course and Colleagues

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General introductions and discussion - syllabus plus course goals.

### Week 2 September 1<sup>st</sup> – Intro to Sophistic Rhetoric and Rhet/Comp Program Dilemmas

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RT: “General Introduction” 1-16 and “Introduction” 19-41

CRT: “Introduction” 1-18  
 “What Can a ‘Rhetoric’ Be?” 19-23

Poulakos, J. “Toward a Sophistic Definition of Rhetoric” 25-34

PDF: Carlo, Rosanne and Jamagin Enos, Theresa. (2011). Back-Tracking and forward gazing: Marking the dimensions of graduate core curricula in rhetoric and composition. *Rhetoric Review*, 30(2), 208-227.

Yeats, Dave and Thompson, Isabelle. (2010). Mapping technical and professional communication: A summary and survey of academic locations for programs. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 19(3), 225-261.

### Week 3 September 8<sup>th</sup> – The Sophists pt II & the Habitation (or homelessness) of Rhetoric

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RT: Gorgias, 42-46; Isocrates, 67-79

CRT: Leff, M. “The Habitation of Rhetoric” 52-64

PDF: Harlow, Rachel Martin. (2010). The province of Sophists: An argument for academic homelessness. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 19(3), 318-333.

Walker, Jeffrey. (2006). What difference a definition makes, or, William Dean Howells and the Sophist's shoes. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 36, 143-54.

### Week 4 September 15<sup>th</sup> – Introducing the Rhetorical Situation & Rhetorical ‘Status’

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CRT: “The Character of the Rhetorical Situation” 213-215

Bitzer, L. “The Rhetorical Situation” 217-225

Vatz, R. “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation” 226-231

Biesecker, B. “Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation from within the Thematic of Différance” 232-246

HANDOUT: Savage, Gerald. (2004) Tricksters, fools, and sophists: Technical communication as postmodern rhetoric. In Teresa Kynell-Hunt and Gerald Savage (Eds.) *Power and Legitimacy in Technical Communication Volume II: Strategies for Professional Status*. (pp. 167-193) NY: Baywood.

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**Week 5**      September 22<sup>nd</sup> – **Rhetoric and Epistemology**

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CRT:            “Part 2: Rhetoric and Epistemology” 127-130  
 Scott, R. “On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic” 131-139  
 Farrell, T. “Knowledge, Consensus, and Rhetorical Theory” 140-152  
 Brummett, B. “Some Implications of ‘Process’ or ‘Intersubjectivity:’ Postmodern Rhetoric” 153-175

RT:             Aristotle, “Intro” 169-178; Rhetoric, “Book I” 179-213

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**Week 6**      September 29<sup>th</sup> – **Rhetoric of/and Science and a Humanistic Rationale**

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HANDOUT: Harris, Randy Allen. (1997). Introduction. In Randy Allen Harris, ed. *Landmark Essay on Rhetoric of Science: Case Studies*. (pp. xi-xxx). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

PDF:            Ceccarelli, Leah (2005). A hard look at ourselves: A reception study of the rhetoric of science. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 14(3), 257–265.

Miller, Carolyn. (1979). A humanistic rationale for technical writing. *College English*, 40(6), 610-617.

Wickman, Chad. (2010). Writing material in chemical physics research: The laboratory notebook as locus of technical and textual integration. *Written Communication*, 27(3), 259-292.

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**Week 7**      October 6<sup>th</sup> – **Rhetoric and Health/Medicine**

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PDF:            Graham, S. Scott. (2009). Agency and the rhetoric of medicine: Biomedical brain scans and the ontology of fibromyalgia. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 18(4), 376-404.

Lyne, John. (2001). Contours of intervention: How rhetoric matters to biomedicine. *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 22(1), 3-13.

Segal, Judy Z. (2009). Internet health and the 21st-Century patient: A rhetorical view. *Written Communication*, 26(4), 351-369.

Kim, Loel, Young, Amanda J., Neimeyer, Robert A., Baker, Justin N., and Barfield, Raymond C. (2008). Keeping users at the center: Developing a multimedia interface for informed consent. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 17(3), 335–357.

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**Week 8**      October 13<sup>th</sup> – **Rhetoric and Technology/Digital Devices**

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PDF:            Basgier, Christopher. (2011). The Author-Function, the genre function, and the rhetoric of scholarly webtexts. *Computers and Composition*, 28(2), 145–159.

Zappen, James. (2005). Digital rhetoric: Toward an integrated theory. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 14(3), 319–325.

Warnick, Barbara. (2005). Looking to the Future: Electronic Texts and the Deepening Interface. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 14(3), 327–333.

Carnegie, Teena M. A. (2009). Interface as exordium: The rhetoric of interactivity. *Computers and Composition*, 26(3), 164–173.

**DUE: Exploratory Essay**

**Week 9**      October 20<sup>th</sup> – **Rhetoric and Code/Mark Up + STEM**

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PDF: Walsh, Lynda. (2010). The Common Topoi of STEM Discourse: An Apologia and Methodological Proposal, With Pilot Survey. *Written Communication*, 27, 120-156.

HANDOUT: Bogost, Ian. (2007). Procedural rhetoric. In *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Powers of Video Games*. (pp. 1-63). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Dilger, Bradley and Rice, Jeff. (2010). Introduction: Making a vocabulary for <HTML>. In Bradley Dilger and Jeff Rice, eds. *From A to <A> Keywords for Markup*. (pp. xi-xxiv). Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota UP.

Arroyo, Sarah. (2010). <b></b> Exploring rhetorical convergences in transmedia writing. In Bradley Dilger and Jeff Rice, eds. *From A to <A> Keywords for Markup*. (pp. 21-32). Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota UP.

**Week 10**      October 27<sup>th</sup> – **Rhetoric Attacked – Gaonkar, Ramus & Plato + Comp/Rhet**

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RT: Plato, “Intro” 80-86; “Gorgias” 87-138.  
Peter Ramus, “Intro” 674-680; from “Arguments in Rhetoric against Quintilian” 681-697

CRT: Dilip Gaonkar, “Rhetoric and Its Double: Reflections of the Rhetorical Turn in the Human Sciences” 194-212

ONLINE: Coleman, Lisa L. and Goodman, Lorien. (2003). Rhetoric/Composition: Intersections/Impasses/Differends. *Enculturation*, 5(1).  
[http://enculturation.gmu.edu/5\\_1/intro.html](http://enculturation.gmu.edu/5_1/intro.html)

Crowley, Sharon. (2003). Composition is not rhetoric. *Enculturation*, 5(1).  
[http://enculturation.gmu.edu/5\\_1/crowley.html](http://enculturation.gmu.edu/5_1/crowley.html)

**Week 11**      November 3<sup>rd</sup> – **Rhetoric Revived**

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RT: Chaïm Perelman, “Introduction” and “The New Rhetoric: A Theory of Practical Reasoning” 1384-1409.

CRT: Maurice Charland, “Rehabilitating Rhetoric: Confronting Blind Spots in Discourse and Social Theory” 464-473



PDF: Perelman, Chaïm. The new rhetoric and the rhetoricians: Remembrances and comments. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 70(2), 188-196.

Spigelman, Candace and Grobman, Laurie (2006). Why we chose rhetoric: Necessity, ethics, and the (re)making of a professional writing program. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 20(1), 48-64.

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**Week 12** November 10<sup>th</sup> – **Kairos and the Cannon of Invention**

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

PDF: Scott, J. Blake. (2006). *Kairos as indeterminate risk management: The pharmaceutical industry's response to bioterrorism. Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 92(2), 115-43.

Todd, Jeff. (2000). Burkean invention in technical invention. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 30(1), 81-96.

Simmons, W. Michele, and Grabill, Jeffrey T. (2007). Toward a civic rhetoric for technologically and scientifically complex places: Invention, performance, and participation. *College Composition and Communication*, 58(3), 419-448.

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**Week 13** November 17<sup>th</sup> – **Cannons – Arrangement & Style**

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RT: Cicero, From *Orator*. 339-343.  
Erasmus, From *Copia: Foundations of the Abundant Style*, 581-627.

PDF: Miller, Carolyn. (1984). Genre as social action. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 70(2), 151-67.

Carillo, Ellen C. (2010): (Re)figuring composition through stylistic study. *Rhetoric Review*, 29(4), 379-394.

HANDOUT: Rude, Carolyn. (1995). The report for decision making: Genre and inquiry. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 9(2), 170-205.

**DUE: Annotated Bibliography**

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**Week 14** November 24<sup>th</sup> – **Thanksgiving**

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**No class**

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**Week 15** December 1<sup>st</sup> – **Cannons – Memory & Delivery**

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PDF: Porter, James E. (2009). Recovering delivery for digital rhetoric. *Computers and Composition*, 26(4), 207-224.

Van Ittersum, Derek. (2009). Distributing memory: Rhetorical work in digital environments. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 18(3), 259-280.

Whittemore, Stewart. (2008). Metadata and memory: Lessons from the canon of *Memoria* for the design of content management systems. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 17(1), 88-109.

Rude, Carolyn D. (2004). Toward an expanded concept of rhetorical delivery: The uses of reports in public policy debates. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 13(3), 271-288.

**DUE:            Research Paper Drafts**

**Week 16        December 8<sup>th</sup> – Course Conclusion & Research Paper Discussion**

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**DUE:            Final Papers**