

English 301: Writing Theory and Practice, Fall 2011

Tues and Thurs, 10 AM – 11:15 AM, G2B Oglebay

Instructor: Benjamin Myers

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NOTE: Follow these two instructions when writing emails to me:

(1) Begin the subject line with “ENGL 301”

(2) Complete the subject line with a concise phrase describing your concern.

Example: ENGL 301: question about Rhetorical Analysis essay

Office: 300 Colson Hall (Also try the CLC, G20 Colson)

Office Hours: Tues and Thurs 11:30 PM–12:30 PM; and by appointment

Course Objectives

In this course you will gain an in-depth understanding of what “rhetoric” is and how rhetorical theory has shaped the practice of professional writing and editing. To begin the course, you will explore ancient and contemporary definitions of rhetoric and learn about fundamental rhetorical principles such as *kairos*, the artistic appeals (*logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*), *stasis*, and the common topics and rhetorical commonplaces. At the same time, you will consider how these concepts inform professional writing and editing practices, from the collaborative processes for workplace writing to the complex discourse of scientific communities. Then as the semester progresses, you will put rhetorical theory into practice. In class you will often be asked to work on some rhetorical exercises aimed at developing your abilities in the fundamental elements of persuasive writing and enhancing your writing style (i.e. a *progymnasmata*). Outside of class you will be expected to perform a rhetorical analysis in relation to some professional document(s). Finally, this course will ask that you perform research into a current or future career focusing specifically on some form of organizational communication. You will then develop a research question and subsequent proposal that will help you better understand and improve upon the communication practices of a particular business. As a participant in this course, you should leave as both a wielder of rhetoric (i.e. a rhetor) and a student of rhetoric.

Required Texts

Crowley, Sharon and Debra Hawhee. *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*. 4th ed. New York: Longman, 2008.

Hughes, Michael A. and George F. Hayhoe. *A Research Primer for Technical Communication*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Additional Readings

Additional Readings Available Through Library Database

Allen, Jo. “The Case Against Defining Technical Writing.” *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 4.2 (1990): 68-77.

Barney, Timothy. “Power Lines: The Rhetoric of Maps as Social Change in the Post-Cold War Landscape.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 95.4 (2009): 412-434.

Additional Readings (Cont.)

D'Angelo, Frank. "The Rhetoric of Sentimental Greeting Card Verse." *Rhetoric Review*. 10.2 (1992): 337-345.

Dickinson, Greg. "Joe's Rhetoric Finding Authenticity at Starbucks." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. 32.4 (2002): 5-27.

Mathieu, Paula. "Economic Citizenship and the Rhetoric of Gourmet Coffee." *Rhetoric Review*. 18.1 (1999): 112.127.

Reeves, Carol. "Owning a Virus: The Rhetoric of Scientific Discovery Accounts." *Rhetoric Review*. 10.2 (1992): 321-336.

Attendance

You are expected to attend class every day and to have your textbook and all of your work with you. Failure to bring your work or consistently showing up after class begins will result in an absence. For each absence after two, your overall grade in the course will be docked one full letter.

It is particularly important for you to be prepared for in-class workshops. The more you have written before peer review sessions, the more you will benefit from them. Although your drafts need not be "polished," they should be complete enough for you to receive substantial help from your peers. Under no circumstances will I accept a "final" version of a document unless I have seen a rough draft.

Assignments

In this course, I will try to hold you to the professional standards that prevail in your field. For example, of the requirements listed below, your employer will take some completely for granted, such as promptness, neat appearance, and correct mechanics.

Promptness: In this course, as in the working world, you must turn in your work on time. All projects should be electronically submitted before the class period indicated on the syllabus. Unless you have made arrangements with me in advance: short writing assignments will not be accepted late, and major assignments turned in late will be penalized half of a letter grade for each day the assignment is late.

Appearance: All work should be neatly prepared on a computer, using margins and spacing and design techniques that are conventional for the genre.

Grammar, Spelling, Proofreading: At work, even a single error in spelling, grammar, or proofreading can jeopardize the effectiveness of some communications (depending on the rhetorical situation). Grading will reflect the general intolerance for errors that exists in most professional environments. If you would like special assistance with any of these skills, I can recommend sources for extra help.

Back-up Copies: Distinguish each draft through the use of numbers in the title. I may request a copy of one of your documents so that I can use it as a sample, to illustrate effective and problematic responses to assignments. Unless I completely eliminate any marks that might identify it as yours, I will never use your work in class without your permission.

Revisions: For major assignments, you will receive instructor and peer feedback on your writing at various stages of the writing process. You will be expected to consider the feedback and revise your paper following these interactions.

Expectations

In addition to the requirements outlined above, you are expected to work until the class period has ended; to complete all reading assignments on time; to help your classmates learn through your careful feedback; to choose projects that require significant research and analysis; to spend at least 6 hours per week outside of class for writing and class preparation; to be courteous and considerate.

WVU Writing Center

Please consider taking your ideas and your written work to the WVU Writing Center, where trained peer tutors will consult with writers about any piece of writing at any stage of the writing process. The Writing Center is located in G02 Colson Hall. To schedule an appointment at the Writing Center call 293-5788.

Social Justice

I support West Virginia University's commitment to social justice. As a classroom we will work to create a positive learning environment based on open communication and mutual respect. I welcome your suggestions to help us meet this commitment. Additionally, please be sure to talk with me if you need accommodations for a documented learning disability, hearing or vision problem, or any other documented need that might affect your performance or participation in class. The Office of Disability Services is located at G-30 Mountainlair and the staff there can help you obtain documentation if you need it. Their contact information is: Phone: (304) 293-6700 Voice/TDD: (304) 293-7740 Email: access2@mail.wvu.edu.

Plagiarism

West Virginia University defines academic integrity as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity; respect other students' dignity, rights, and property; and help to create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. For university procedures that I intend to follow when addressing academic dishonesty cases, please consult the current Student Code of Conduct at [<http://www.arc.wvu.edu/rightsa.html>](http://www.arc.wvu.edu/rightsa.html).

Talking over your ideas and getting comments on your writing from friends are NOT acts of plagiarism. Taking someone else's published or unpublished words and calling them your own IS plagiarism: a synonym is academic dishonesty. When plagiarism amounts to an attempt to deceive, it has dire consequences, as spelled out in the university's regulations (WVU Academic Integrity/Dishonesty Policy, available at [<http://www.arc.wvu.edu/admissions/integrity.html>](http://www.arc.wvu.edu/admissions/integrity.html)).

Grades

Short Writing Assignments

I will return your short written assignments within two class periods of their due date. They will be graded: ✓, ✓+, ✓-, or **NC** (No Credit). You will receive NC on any assignment that is not turned in on time or that does not follow the basic guidelines set forth. At the end of the semester I will drop your lowest grade.

Major Writing Assignments

A	<i>Exemplary work.</i> The text demonstrates originality, initiative, and rhetorical skill. The content is mature, thorough, and well-suited for the audience; the style is clear, accurate, and forceful; the information is well-organized and formatted so that it is accessible and attractive; genre conventions are effectively used; mechanics and grammar are correct. The text is well-edited, well-written, well-argued, and well-documented and requires no additional revisions.
B	<i>Good work.</i> The text generally succeeds in meeting its goals in terms of audience, purpose, and rhetorical skill without the need for further major revisions. The text may need some <i>minor</i> improvements in content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics.
C	<i>Satisfactory work.</i> The text is adequate in all respects, but requires some substantial revisions of content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics; it may require further work in more than one area. For instance, central ideas may generally be apparent, but may often lack adequate explanations, rhetorical analysis, or documentation necessary for different audiences and purposes.
D	<i>Unsatisfactory work.</i> The text generally requires extensive revisions of content, presentation, writing style, and/or mechanics. The writer has encountered significant problems meeting goals of audience, purpose, and acquiring command of rhetorical principles.
F	<i>Failing work.</i> The text does not have enough information, does something other than is appropriate for a given situation, or contains major and pervasive problems in terms of content, presentation, or writing style/mechanics that interfere with meaning. A failing grade is also assigned to plagiarized work.

Your final grade will be determined by the grades you receive on written and in-class assignments, according to the following weighting:

- Class Participation 15%
- Short Writes 20%
- Rhetorical Analysis 15%
- Annotated Bibliography 20%
- Research Proposal 30%

Instructions for each assignment will be provided well in advance of the assignment due date.

Schedule of Work*

**While unlikely, the assignments, readings, or deadlines may change due to unforeseen circumstances. Please check your e-mail regularly (daily at a minimum) for possible class related updates.*

Week One

8/23, Tues: AR Ch. 1, Short Write

8/25, Thurs: AR Ch. 2, Short Write

Week Two

8/30, Tues: AR Ch. 3, Short Write

9/1, Thurs: AR Ch. 4, Short Write

Week Three

9/6, Tues: AR Ch. 5, Short Write

9/8, Thurs: AR Ch. 6 & Reeves “Owning a Virus: The Rhetoric of Scientific Discovery Accounts.” Short Write

9/9, Fri: OPTIONAL CONFERENCES

Week Four

9/13, Tues: AR Ch. 7, Short Write

9/15, Thurs: Mathieu “Economic Citizenship and the Rhetoric of Gourmet Coffee.” & Dickinson “Joe’s Rhetoric Finding Authenticity at Starbucks.” Short Write

Week Five

9/20, Tues: AR Ch. 9, Short Write

9/22, Thurs: AR Ch. 10 & Barney “Power Lines: The Rhetoric of Maps as Social Change in the Post-Cold War Landscape.” (OPTIONAL) **NO SHORT WRITE**

Week Six

9/27, Tues: CLASS CANCELED FOR CONFERENCES (BRING DRAFT)

9/29, Thurs: DRAFT FOR PEER REVIEW

Week Seven

10/4, Tues: FINAL DRAFT OF RHETORICAL ANALYSIS DUE, Allen, “The Case Against Defining Technical Writing.” **NO SHORT WRITE**

10/6, Thurs: RPTC Ch. 1 & Ch. 2, Short Write

Week Eight

10/11, Tues: RPTC Ch. 3, Short Write

10/13, Thurs: RPTC Ch. 4, Short Write

Week Nine

10/18, Tues: RPTC Ch. 5, Short Write

10/20, Thurs: RPTC Ch. 6, Short Write

Week Ten

10/25, Tues: RPTC Ch. 7, **NO SHORT WRITE**

10/27, Thurs: RPTC Ch. 8, **NO SHORT WRITE**

10/28, Fri: OPTIONAL CONFERENCES

Week Eleven

11/1, Tues: RPTC Ch. 9, **NO SHORT WRITE**

11/3, Thurs: RPTC Ch. 10, **NO SHORT WRITE**

Week Twelve

11/8, Tues: CLASS CANCELED FOR CONFERENCES (BRING DRAFT)

11/10, Thurs: DRAFT OF ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

Week Thirteen

11/15, Tues: FINAL ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

11/17, Thurs: FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE

Week Fourteen

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week Fifteen

11/29, Tues: SECOND DRAFT OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE

12/1, Thurs: CLASS CANCELED FOR CONFERENCES (BRING DRAFT)

Week Sixteen

12/6, Tues: FOURTH DRAFT OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE

12/8, Thurs: FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE