

ENGL 301

Engl 301: Writing Theory & Practice

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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 of why we practice and produce what we do, and how we can improve upon these practices and products in a deliberate, systematic way.

Goals/Outcomes

By the end of the course you should 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 rhet. concepts inform professional writing practices
- Identify various research methods relevant to organizational communication
- Analyze & research a current issue in organizational communication
- Prepare a professional research proposal to improve the communication practices of a particular business

Requirements (also see eCampus)

You will be evaluated on the following assignments (all detailed on eCampus).

- Quizzes and Midterm Exam—30 % (150 pts. total)
- Regular Postings to the Discussion Board (DB) – 30% (150 pts. total)
- Literature Review – 10% (50 pts. total)
- Collaborative Research Proposal & Presentation– 20% (100 pts. total)
- Class Participation – 10% (50 pts. total)

Evaluation (more details on the New eCampus)

I will be looking for evidence that you have achieved the course goals, with particular attention to the quality and rhetorical effectiveness of your written documents. I will also evaluate your mastery of research, format, and grammar/style conventions, and your overall participation. You will find more specific criteria on our eCampus page.

Policies

- **Attendance:** absolutely necessary and expected. Quizzes cannot be made up. Two absences allowed; each additional absence lowers your final grade up to 50 pts.
- **Late work:** not accepted; talk to me if you have an unusual circumstance.
- **Academic Integrity:** expected. Talk to me if you have questions. Also see http://studentlife.wvu.edu/office_of_student_conduct/student_conduct_code
- **Emergencies:** Please contact the Dean of Student Life to help you contact *all* your professors. I will work with you to make up 10% of the work or 20% of class meetings. If an emergency requires you to miss more than this, please re-take the class when you can be present to do your best work.
- **Social justice and inclusivity:** We will work together to create a positive learning environment based on clear communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. For more on WVU's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>.
- **Professional Etiquette.** Etiquette is really all about making people feel respected and appreciated. In class & in meetings, please focus on faces, not phones/e-mail.

Required Texts

Longaker, Mark Garrett and Jeffrey Walker. *Rhetorical Analysis: A Brief Guide for Writers*. Pearson. 2011. ISBN: 978-0-205-56570-2

Hayhoe, George F. and Michael A. Hughes. *A Research Primer for Technical Communication: Methods, Exemplars, and Analyses*. 2008. ISBN: 0-8058-6335-4

Articles on eCampus as assigned

Deadlines

Note: Please add your presentation date

Every Week:

Reading Quizzes and/or Writing Exercises; please note specific dates

February 25: Mid-Term Exam

March 20

Literature Review draft

March 27

Final Revision of Lit Review

April 15

Collaborative Research Proposal Draft

April 22 (& 24 if needed)

Collaborative Research Presentations.

April 24 (last class): Final Work

Final Research Proposal and Reflection Due

Assignment Overview

- **Eight Quizzes & Mid-term Exam (30%; 150 points):** The quizzes and exam help you remember what you read and prepare you 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. Each quiz is worth 15 points; the midterm exam is worth 30 points.
- **15 Regular Discussion Board Postings (30 %; 150 points):** The discussion board postings include reflective writing, assignments from your textbooks, or short analyses. You will find the prompts on the Discussion Board section of our eCampus course site. **All postings are due before the start of class** on the due date specified in the course schedule. Many of these posts will be used as the base for in-class discussions and activities. Please note that I focus on content when grading: strive to demonstrate that you are *actively* reading and engaging with the materials. Each post is worth 10 points.
- **Literature Review (10%; 50 points):** The lit review allows you to investigate an area of interest in your field and design a primary research study you would like to conduct. You will propose this primary research in your final research proposal. These assignments will be discussed in more detail in the second half of class.
- **Collaborative Research Proposal and Presentation (20%; 100 points):** Working with one partner, your proposal will contain an introduction containing topic background and a statement of the research problem; a review of the relevant literature (drawn from the lit rev assignment); a conceptual or theoretical framework; your methodology; a conclusion summarizing the potential use of your research findings (including a call to action for the audience). You and your partner will explain your projects in a brief (5-7 minute) presentation during the last week of class.
- **Participation:** 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 and remembering to post to the discussion board *before* the start of class.

Writing Criteria. Effective communication relies on clear prose that attends to issue of purpose, audience, context, and expectations. (PACE is a useful acronym.) When I evaluate your writing, I will always look first at the quality of your ideas, but exceptional writing must also demonstrate quality of expression. My criteria include the following:

- **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 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 Criteria

This course relies on a strong community where everyone participates, so I want to be clear about my expectations and standards.

- **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 texts, sleeping, etc.).
- **F:** You arrive late to class, are unprepared for class discussion/activities, distract others or disrupt productive work; you often fail to follow the classroom policies and procedures and/or have missed 5 or more classes.

Schedule of Work Due (subject to very slight changes)	
Th – 1/9	In Class: Introductions & Syllabus Review
Wk 1	Introductions to Each Other, the Course & Rhetoric
T – 1/14	In Class: Reading like a Rhetor/Writer Due: DISCUSSION BOARD #1: self-introduction
R – 1/16	Read: <i>Rhetorical Analysis</i> Ch. 1; Foss, Foss & Trapp, <i>Perspectives on the Study of Rhetoric</i> (eCampus)
Wk 2	Kairos & the Rhetorical Situation (WHEN)
T – 1/21	Read: <i>Rhetorical Analysis</i> Ch. 2, Appendices A, B & C <i>Quiz 1 (RA Ch. 2)</i> Due: DISCUSSION BOARD #2: Response to RA Ch. 2
R – 1/23	Read: Chalice Randazzo, <i>Positioning resumes and cover letters as reflective-reflexive process</i> (eCampus) Due: DISCUSSION BOARD #3: Kairos Analysis of Professional Document (RA p. 35 as guide)
Wk 3	Argument (Pisteis, Topics, Stases) (WHAT)
T – 1/28	Read: <i>Rhetorical Analysis</i> Ch. 3 Due: DISCUSSION BOARD #4: Ethical, pathetic, & logical proofs (RA , p. 49 as guide) <i>Quiz 2(RA Ch. 3)</i>
R – 1/30	Due: DISCUSSION BOARD #5: Toulmin Analysis (RA p. 55 as guide)
Wk 4	Structure & Form (WHY)
T 2/4	Read: <i>Rhetorical Analysis</i> Ch. 4 Due: DISCUSSION BOARD #6: Extending your analysis to topics and stasis <i>Quiz 3 (RA Ch. 4)</i>
R – 2/6	Due: DISCUSSION BOARD #7: “classical template” applied to a Professional Organization’s Facebook page (see RA, p. 118; 129-30)
Wk 5	Style (HOW)
T – 2/11	Read: <i>Rhetorical Analysis</i> Ch. 5 Due: DISCUSSION BOARD #8: Stylistic analysis of a non-print text (RA, p. 142 as guide) <i>Quiz 4 (RA Ch. 5)</i>
R – 2/13	Due: DISCUSSION BOARD #9: Style Scavenger Hunt (RA, 178-79 as guide)
Wk 6	Style Cont. (Figures of Speech/Thought) and Review
T – 2/18	Read: <i>The Canons of Rhetoric</i> (eCampus text) Watch: Aristotle’s 5 Canons--YouTube video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hv5S8eBC0iQ) Due: DISCUSSION BOARD #10: Respond to this textual and visual pair. What do we gain from each?
R – 2/20	In Class: Review for midterm; looking ahead to the second half of the class.
Wk 7	Rhetoric & Professional Writing (WHERE)
T – 2/25	Midterm Exam on Rhetoric (RA Ch. 1-5)
R – 2/27	Group Work. Read Assigned articles on eCampus (one assigned per group) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carolyn Miller, <i>What’s practical about technical writing?</i> • Lester Faigley, <i>Nonacademic writing: The social perspective</i> • Susan Harkness Regli, <i>Whose ideas? The technical writer’s expertise in inventio</i> • Chad Wickman, <i>Rhetoric, Technê, and the Art of Scientific Inquiry</i>
Wk 8	Professional Writing & Research
T – 3/4	Due: DISCUSSION BOARD #11 (presentation of article summaries/analysis)
R – 3/6	Read: <i>A Research Primer for Tech Comm (ARP)</i> Ch. 1-2 and <i>Quiz 5 (ARP Ch. 1-2)</i> Due: DISCUSSION BOARD#12: Research Goals & Questions (ex 2.2--ARP p. 34)

Wk 9	Secondary Research (Literature Review)
T – 3/11	NO CLASS – Spring Break
R – 3/13	NO CLASS – Spring Break
Wk 10	Secondary Research (Literature Review)
T – 3/18	Read: <i>A Research Primer for Tech Comm</i> Ch. 3 & 7; also, Univ of North Carolina Lit Review Handout <i>Quiz 6 (ARP Ch. 3)</i>
R – 3/20	Online class (I'm away at a professional conference on Thursday-Saturday, but will be in touch via eCampus and e-mail as needed): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue your own reading • Due: DISCUSSION BOARD #13: Literature Review DRAFT
Wk 11	Literature Review
T – 3/25	Peer Review of Lit Review Drafts; revision/editing workshop
T – 3/27	Due: FINAL Literature Review
Wk 12	Primary Research (Quantitative)
T – 4/1	Read: <i>A Research Primer for Tech Comm</i> Ch.4 & 8; Barton, <i>Why we watch them sing and dance</i> (eCampus) <i>Quiz 7 (ARP Ch. 4)</i>
R – 4/3	Read: <i>A Research Primer for Tech Comm</i> Ch. 6 Hynes, <i>Improving employees' interpersonal communication competencies: A qualitative study</i> (eCampus) Due: DISCUSSION BOARD #14: Describe a quantitative research option for your project
Wk 13	Primary Research (Qualitative)
T – 4/8	Read: <i>A Research Primer for Tech Comm</i> Ch.5 & 9 <i>Quiz 8 (ARP Ch. 5)</i>
R – 4/10	Read: Portewig, <i>The role of rhetorical invention for visuals: A qualitative study of technical communicators in the workplace</i> (eCampus) Due: DISCUSSION BOARD #15: Describe a qualitative research option for your project
Wk 14	Research Proposal
T – 4/15	Due: Draft of Final Proposal Peer Review and Workshop in class
R – 4/17	Presentation Planning Workshop
Wk 15	Research Proposal Presentations
T – 4/22	Research Proposal Presentations
R – 4/24	Time for final Research Proposal Presentations (if needed) In class: Reflections & eSEIs Due: Final Proposal Due,

* RA is an abbreviation for our *Rhetorical Analysis* textbook

* ARP is an abbreviation for *A Research Primer for Technical Communication*

Please Note: On the rare chance that WVU cancels classes, we will typically maintain our schedule by continuing our work via eCampus.