



# English 301 – Writing Theory & Practice

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Spring 2013: T/R 2:30am – 3:45pm

G18 Colson Hall

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**Office:** 209 Colson Hall

**Office Hours:** T/R Noon-2 pm & by appointment

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## REQUIRED TEXTS AND SUPPLIES

You must have the required textbooks 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
- Hayhoe, George F. and Michael A. Hughes. *A Research Primer for Technical Communication: Methods, Exemplars, and Analyses*. 2008. ISBN: 0-8058-6335-4
- Any additional material placed on eCampus, given out in class, or emailed to you.
- A functional MIX email account and access to eCampus.

## OVERVIEW

Writing Theory and Practice is a course designed specifically for Professional Writing and Editing (PWE) students with two specific goals in mind. By the end of this course, you should possess a deeper understanding of: (1) What rhetoric is (“an ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion” [Aristotle]); and (2) How rhetoric intersects with the field of professional writing.

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 proposal that allows you to unify both theory and application.

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

- Describe and discuss what rhetoric is, including concepts such as kairos, rhetorical piteis, stasis, techne, and praxis
- Identify key rhetorical concepts in your own and others’ writing
- Recognize and evaluate how rhetorical concepts inform professional writing practices
- Identify various research methods relevant to organizational communication
- Analyze a current issue in organizational communication to identify a relevant research topic
- Prepare a professional research proposal to improve upon the communication practices of a particular business

## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

To achieve the course goals outlined above, you will be writing reflective and analytical texts, participating in class discussions and projects, and otherwise demonstrating your knowledge of rhetorical concepts and how they are, could, or should be used in professional communication practice. You will be

evaluated on the following course assignments:

- Quizzes & Exam** – 30%
- Regular Writing Exercises** – 30%
- Literature Review** – 10%
- Research Proposal** – 20%
- Class Participation** – 10%

**Quizzes & Exam:** The quizzes and exam ensure that you are reading the required material, help you remember what you read, and help you prepare for analytical writing assignments. If you read *carefully*, you should pass these tests. 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 seven quizzes in all, one of which will be dropped (lowest score).

**Regular Writing Exercises:** These writing exercises (WEs) include reflective writing, assignments from your textbooks, or alternative writing assignments as explained on our eCampus course site. You will submit all of these assignments to our eCampus course site unless otherwise directed by me. **All writing exercises are due by noon on the due date specified in the course schedule.** (Note that this is PRIOR to our class start time.) Many of these writing assignments will be used as the base for in-class discussions and activities. While some of these are less formal assignments, note that they ARE graded on quality. (Not on polish but on content.) They should demonstrate that you are *actively* reading course materials and not just going through the motions.

There are 17 scheduled WE assignments, two of which will be dropped (lowest score). Note that WE#14-WE#17 are not eligible to be dropped; these are preparatory writing for your major writing assignments.

**Literature Review & Research Proposal:** These are related assignments. The literature review allows you to investigate an area of interest in your field and zero in on a primary research study you would like to conduct. You will propose conducting this primary research in your final research proposal. These assignments will be discussed in more detail in the second half 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. Just showing up is not participating. If necessary, participation also includes unannounced quizzes.

## GRADES

**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 – particularly the formal writing assignments such as the literature review and research proposal – will be explained in assignment instructions and in class and will be 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 attractive; the mechanics and grammar are correct. It is assured of success and of winning praise.

**B – Good:** The document meets the objectives of the assignment, but it needs improvement in style, or it contains easily correctable errors in grammar, format, or content, or its content is superficial. It is likely to succeed.

**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 is inadequately developed; or it contains numerous or major errors. It is not likely to succeed without major revision.

**F – Unacceptable:** The document does not have enough information, does something other than the assignment required, or it contains major errors or excessive errors. It fails to do its “job.”

Even the reflective and less formal writing exercises (WEs) have a “job” to do; while mechanics becomes less important in accomplishing writing goals in eCampus discussion board posts and prewriting activities, standards of content, detail, development, and clarity still weigh heavily.

**Participation:** In addition to the explanation of participation above, 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

**Preparedness:** You are expected to work until the class period has ended; to complete all reading and writing assignments on time; to help your classmates learn by your participation in class discussions and group activities; to spend at least six hours per week out of class for research, writing, and class preparation; and to be courteous and considerate.

**Professionalism:** In this course, I will hold you to the professional standards that prevail both throughout the university and within the field of professional writing and editing.

**Promptness.** As in the working world, you must turn in your work on time. All WE writing assignments must be uploaded to eCampus by noon on their respective due dates. Major assignments (e.g., literature review and proposal) are due by the beginning of class on their respective due dates. Assignments turned in late will be lowered one full letter grade (e.g., A becomes a B, B becomes a C, and so on) for each day the assignment is late unless you have made arrangements with me in advance.

**Development.** In all the writing you do for this course, strive to compose “substantive” writing. You should make your argument and your purpose clear to readers and, where appropriate,

provide convincing evidence, concrete details, and relevant examples.

**Rhetorical Strategy.** Throughout this course, you will be learning various rhetorical theories and techniques for persuading your audiences, from creating effective *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* appeals to creating a specific sentence-level style and tone. Your formal writing projects should reflect your efforts to apply these theories through your planning, drafting, and revising process.

**Appearance.** All work should be neatly prepared on a computer, using spacing and design techniques that are conventional for the genre. Whether it is a discussion board posting, a literature review, or a proposal, your communication should exhibit appropriate format.

**Grammar, Spelling, Proofreading.** At work, even a single error in spelling, grammar, or proofreading can jeopardize the effectiveness of some communications. Grading will reflect the great seriousness with which these matters are frequently viewed in the working world.

**Attendance:** You are expected to attend class every day. You should also have the appropriate textbook and all of your current work with you. An occasional absence is perhaps understandable, but habitual absence is inexcusable. *Each student is allowed up to two absences. Upon a third unexcused absence, you will receive an F for “Class Participation,” and I reserve the right to lower your final grade by a full letter grade (e.g., A becomes a B, B becomes a C, and so on) for each subsequent absence.* Thus, students who miss 5 or more classes will fail the course. Arriving late will also impede your success in class.

**Three late arrivals will be counted as an absence; if you are 15+ minutes late you will be recorded as absent.**

I will follow the WVU Faculty Senate’s policy on “excused absences” such that legitimate reasons for missing a class include regularly scheduled, University-approved curricular and extracurricular activities (such as field trips, debate trips, and athletic contests); medical illness; and religious observances.

**Conferences:** Please meet with me when you have questions about an assignment, when you would like to try out some ideas before a document is due, when you have questions about a comment, or when you want to know where you stand in the course. You should also see me to get help with particular writing-related problems or to resolve differences about grades. Finally, I am open to your suggestions for improving the course, so please discuss with me your ideas about how the course is going. If you cannot make my scheduled office hours and would like to meet with me, we can work together to find a convenient time for conferencing.

**Classroom Behavior:** Our classroom is a community, and I expect professional, courteous behavior. This class will discuss a variety of opinions and ideas that you may or may not agree with or find interesting. Respect everyone and come to class curious, not hostile or indifferent. Turn off your electronic devices (including cell phones) before coming to class; there is to be absolutely no text messaging during class. All laptops, e-readers and music devices should remain in your bag unless being used for class activities. Treat your classmates as you wish to be treated; for example, try not to interrupt while others are speaking. Failure to observe these policies will result in an **F** in participation for the semester and possible removal from the class session.

**Email and eCampus Submission:** In most cases, assignments require eCampus submission posted to the Discussion Board or as attached document (.doc, .docx, or .rtf) files through the eCampus “Assignments” tool. Students must meet deadlines. If I cannot open the document, it will be considered late. Assignments are not accepted via WVU or MIX email unless the assignment calls for it or if you make *prior arrangements with me*.

When communicating via email (at school, at work, etc.) it is important to practice professional, courteous writing. Do so by honoring the conventions of the genre. Emails (in all communication other than that with a casual correspondent) should have a salutation (i.e. hello, dear, etc. and the addressee's name) and a signature (i.e. thank you, regards, etc. and your name), and be written using full sentences and proper grammar (*not* text-speak). Communicating with your professors via email is professional correspondence; please treat it as such.

**Plagiarism/Cheating:** Academic dishonesty is wholly unacceptable and will be dealt with accordingly. Students are expected to be familiar with the sections on Academic Integrity in the University Student Conduct Code. If you have any questions about when and how to document sources, or any other question that will help you avoid unintentional plagiarism, please talk to me. You are expected to submit your own original work. When you recycle your own past work or submit essentially the same paper in more than one class, you are self-plagiarizing. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses that will result in failure of the assignment and/or the course. Plagiarism cases will *always* be filed with the university. If you have questions about plagiarism/cheating or source documentation, please visit my office.

You can also get assistance through the **WVU Writing Center** located in G02 Colson Hall. Call 304-293-5788 to schedule an appointment or stop by to see if a tutor is available.

Web address: [http://english.wvu.edu/centers\\_and\\_projects/wcenter/writing\\_center\\_home](http://english.wvu.edu/centers_and_projects/wcenter/writing_center_home)

**Social Justice:** I am committed to a classroom that strives to use inclusive language, minimize assumptions, emphasize respect of difference, honor privacy, and employ topics that allow but do not require exploration of gender, sex, sexuality, race, nationality, ability, class and so on. These topics make for productive, thoughtful, but sometimes tough discussions. If for any reason you find yourself feeling uncomfortable or offended (so much so that you cannot critically respond to the work) come and talk to me. I maintain an open door policy regarding such issues. My only request is that we participate in honest inquiry and respectful, informed debate. I will do my best to ensure that this classroom is a space where everyone feels comfortable and respected. Finally, if you have a conflict between a religious holiday and a graded assignment, please contact me in advance so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

**Disability and Accommodation:** If you have a disability that could affect your progress in this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services ([www.wvu.edu/~socjust/disability/](http://www.wvu.edu/~socjust/disability/)). ODS can be contacted at G30 Mountainlair, by phone at (304)293-6700 voice/TDD (304)293-7740, or email at [access2@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:access2@mail.wvu.edu). We can arrange to accommodate your learning style based on ODS recommendations. Please notify me at the semester's beginning of your learning needs.

# Course Schedule

This course schedule – like all writing – is open to revision. You will be notified of any changes in class and/or via our WVU eCampus course site. Otherwise, note that reading and writing assignments are DUE the day they are listed on the schedule. (Remember that WE assignments are due by NOON.)

**NOTE:** *Rhetorical Analysis: A Brief Guide for Writers* is abbreviated as RA; *A Research Primer for Technical Communication: Methods, Exemplars, and Analyses* is abbreviated as ARP.

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Introductions to Each Other, the Course &amp; Rhetoric</b>
T – 1/15	<b>In Class:</b> Introductions & Syllabus Review
R– 1/17	<b>Read:</b> RA Ch. 1; Foss, Foss & Trapp, <i>Perspectives on the Study of Rhetoric</i> (eCampus) <b>Due:</b> WE#1
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Kairos &amp; the Rhetorical Situation (WHEN)</b>
T – 1/22	<b>Read:</b> RA Ch. 2, Appendices A, B & C <i>Quiz (RA Ch. 2)</i> <b>Due:</b> WE#2
R– 1/24	<b>Read:</b> Chalice Randazzo, <i>Positioning resumes and cover letters as reflective-reflexive process</i> (eCampus) <b>Due:</b> WE#3
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Argument (Pisteis, Topics, Stases) (WHAT)</b>
T – 1/29	<b>Read:</b> RA Ch. 3 <b>Due:</b> WE#4 <i>Quiz (RA Ch. 3)</i>
R– 1/31	<b>Due:</b> WE#5
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Structure &amp; Form (WHY)</b>
T – 2/5	<b>Read:</b> RA Ch. 4 <b>Due:</b> WE#6 <i>Quiz (RA Ch. 4)</i>
R– 2/7	<b>Due:</b> WE#7
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Style (HOW)</b>
T – 2/12	<b>Read:</b> RA Ch. 5 <b>Due:</b> WE#8 <i>Quiz (RA Ch. 5)</i>
R– 2/14	<b>Due:</b> WE#9
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Style Cont. (Figures of Speech/Thought) and Review</b>
T – 2/19	<b>Read:</b> <i>The Canons of Rhetoric</i> , (eCampus) <b>Due:</b> WE#10
R– 2/21	<b>Due:</b> WE#11

<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Rhetoric &amp; Professional Writing (WHERE)</b>
T – 2/26	<b>Exam on Rhetoric</b>
R– 2/28	<b>Read:</b> Carolyn Miller, <i>What’s practical about technical writing?</i> (eCampus); Lester Faigley, <i>Nonacademic writing: The social perspective</i> (eCampus) <b>Due:</b> WE#12
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Professional Writing &amp; Research</b>
T – 3/5	<b>Read:</b> Susan Harkness Regli, <i>Whose ideas? The technical writer’s expertise in inventio</i> (eCampus); Daryl Slack, James Miller, & Doak, <i>The Technical communicator as author: Meaning, power, authority</i> (eCampus) <b>Due:</b> WE#13
R– 3/7	<b>Read:</b> ARP Ch. 1-2 <i>Quiz (ARP Ch. 1-2)</i>
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Secondary Research (Literature Review)</b>
T – 3/12	<b>Read:</b> ARP Ch. 3 & 7 <i>Quiz (ARP Ch. 3)</i>
R– 3/14	<b>Workshop</b>
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Secondary Research (Literature Review)</b>
T – 3/19	<b>Read:</b> Your own reading <b>Due:</b> WE#14
R– 3/21	Literature Review DRAFT for peer review
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Spring Recess</b>
T – 3/25-3/29	<b>No class! Take a break!</b> (After finishing that literature review, of course.)
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Primary Research (Quantitative)</b>
T – 4/2	<b>Due:</b> Literature Review <b>Read:</b> ARP Ch.4 & 8 <i>Quiz (ARP Ch. 4)</i>
R– 4/4	<b>Read:</b> ARP Ch. 6 <b>Due:</b> WE#15
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Primary Research (Qualitative)</b>
T – 4/9	<b>Read:</b> ARP Ch.5 & 9 <i>Quiz (ARP Ch. 5)</i>
R – 4/11	<b>Read:</b> Tiffany Craft Portewig, <i>The role of rhetorical invention for visuals: A qualitative study of technical communicators in the workplace</i> (eCampus) <b>Due:</b> WE#16
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Research Proposal</b>
T – 4/16	<b>Read:</b> Geraldine Hynes, <i>Improving employees’ interpersonal communication competencies: A qualitative study</i> (eCampus) <b>Due:</b> WE#17
R– 4/18	Proposal Review and Workshop

<b>Week 15</b>	<b>Research Proposal Presentations</b>
T – 4/23	Research Proposal Presentations
R– 4/25	Research Proposal Presentations
<b>Week 16</b>	<b>Research Proposal Presentations</b>
T – 4/30	Research Proposal Presentations
R– 5/2	Proposal Awards <b>Due:</b> Final Reflections & eSEIs