

# RWS 100: Rhetoric of Written Argument

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**Instructor:** Andrea Kade

**Email:** akade@sdsu.edu

**Class Meets:** MWF 10:00 – 10:50

**Location:** EBA 412

**Phone:** 619-594-2015

**Office Hours:** Fridays 11:00 - 12:00, or by appointment

**Office:** SH 116

- *“Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion” (Aristotle)*
- *“Argument is the essence of education...[and] central to democratic culture” (Lasch)*
- *“Universities are houses of argument.” (Norgaard)*

## What is the Story of this Course?

You will practice interpreting, analyzing, evaluating and producing written argument. Why? Because argument is central to academic literacy, critical thinking, professional communication and civic life. You will learn to write and revise papers in which you address complex arguments effectively, use source materials responsibly and make sound decisions about audience, context, structure, and purpose.

## REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS:

- Fall 2016 RWS 100 Course Reader by Chris Werry (available for purchase from CalCopy)
- *Keys for Writers, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*, by Ann Raimes (available at SDSU Bookstore)
- *They Say, I Say, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*, by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein (available at SDSU Bookstore)
- Handouts and supplementary readings available on the course wiki and/or Blackboard
- Course wiki, <https://akade.pbworks.com>. Homework, readings, and an online reader will be available there. You will use the wiki to print them out and bring to class.

## HELPFUL RESOURCES:

- The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>
- SDSU Writing Center, Love Library, Room LA 1103 (next to the Circulation Desk). For more information visit <http://writingcenter.sdsu.edu/>. Appointments can be made online.

## RWS 100 LEARNING OUTCOMES:

### General Education Capacities/Goals & RWS Learning Outcomes

Our Learning Outcomes Reflect the Goals and Capacities of the General Education Program. RWS 100 is one of several courses in the area of general education defined as “Communication and Critical Thinking.” Focusing particularly on argument, this course emphasizes four essential general education capacities: the ability to 1) construct, analyze and communicate argument, 2) contextualize phenomena, 3) negotiate differences, and 4) apply theoretical models to the real world. This course advances general education by helping students understand the general function of writing, speaking, visual texts, and thinking within the context of the university at large, rather than within specific disciplines. In addition to featuring the basic rules and conventions governing composition and presentation, RWS 100 establishes intellectual frameworks and analytical tools that help students explore, construct, critique, and integrate sophisticated texts.

Within this framework of four general capacities, the course realizes four closely related subsidiary goals. These goals focus on helping students

- 1) craft well-reasoned arguments for specific audiences;
- 2) analyze a variety of texts commonly encountered in the academic setting;
- 3) situate discourse within social, generic, cultural, and historic contexts; and
- 4) assess the relative strengths of arguments and supporting evidence.

Our student learning outcomes for RWS 100 are closely aligned with these goals and capacities, and reflect the program's overall objective of helping students attain "essential skills that underlie all university education."

## **REQUIREMENTS**

### **Essays (55%)**

There will be three major essays throughout the semester. Each essay will require one rough draft in order for us to workshop and revise in class. Hard copies are REQUIRED for the first and final drafts of all your essay projects. Your *rough draft, peer review, and final draft hard copies* will be due in a folder on the due date of the final draft. More detailed instructions will be provided with each essay's prompt.

*(PLEASE NOTE: Essay #1 will require a MANDATORY conference with me in order to receive full credit for your paper, any other conferences listed for the second and third essays are appointed at the sole discretion of the student and instructor).*

### **Major Assignment Sequence**

- 1) Describe and analyze an author's argument, claims, project, support and rhetorical strategies (**Thompson**)
- 2) Construct an account of one or more authors' projects and arguments and explain rhetorical strategies that these authors—and by extension other writers—use to engage readers in thinking about their arguments. (**Carr**)
- 3) Construct an account of an author's project and argument and carry out small, focused research tasks to find information that helps clarify, illustrate, extend or complicate that argument; use appropriate reference materials in order to clarify their understanding of an argument. Assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of multiple texts, including discussion of rhetorical strategies, supporting evidence, audience, and text structure. (**Boyd**)

### **Peer Review (10%)**

Before each final draft is due, we will workshop through a constructive peer evaluation of each paper. In each "workshop" you will exchange a hard copy of your first draft with a different partner every time. In order for you to receive full credit on the peer review, you must provide thoughtful and productive feedback for your partner's rough draft.

### **Portfolio/Weekly Rhetorical Analysis Blog (20%)**

You will compose a number of shorter pieces of writing - blog posts involving homework assignments, reflections, and reading responses. Altogether, this is your "portfolio," which is used to encourage rhetorical analysis through a contemporary medium and help you draft key elements of the major papers. **All of this work should be published on your blog no later than Friday before 10 am, when class begins.**

Please use <http://wordpress.com/>. It is fairly fast and easy to set up a blog. See the “Wordpress Help” handout in the wiki and please email me the link to your blog by Friday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Participation (15%)**

Participation is important to your final grade. Much of the course involves in-class discussion and, as such, requires you to regularly contribute your insights. This can only be achieved by coming to class prepared. Since this is a discussion-based class, it is vital that you listen and speak respectfully to others. I also encourage you to express your opinions – they will help inspire good discussions. The participation grade will make up 15% of your grade and includes:

- **In-Class Writings:** These involve various, brief casual writing assignments, which I will usually collect.
- **Reading Assignments:** We will study each major text with in-class readings. Although we will read each text in class, it will be up to you to thoroughly analyze and become familiar with them, in order to be fully engaged in the discussions. **Please bring a hard copy of the text the day it is up for discussion.**
- **In-Class Activities:** These smaller assignments are meant to encourage classroom dialogue. I will not always collect these, but completion is necessary for participation. This includes effort invested in individual, group, and class projects and discussions.

**IF YOU ARE ABSENT** you are ultimately responsible for knowing what was covered in class, what the homework is, and when it is due. Please exchange phone numbers and/or emails with at least two of your classmates. In addition, check the course wiki and Blackboard regularly. If you miss class, contact a fellow student for more information.

Grading Breakdown:

Essay #1 Boyd: Analyzing an Argument	15%
Essay #2 Carr: Analyzing and Evaluating Rhetorical Strategies	20%
Essay #3 Thompson: Researching, Synthesizing and “Joining the Conversation”	20%
Peer Reviews	10%
Portfolio “Blog”	20%
Participation	15%
Total	100%

Grade	%
A	93-100%
A-	90-92
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	60-66%

F	Below 60%
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## COURSE OUTLINE AND READING SCHEDULE

Please note that the following schedule is approximate, as dates and topics may shift as the semester continues. Please refer to the wiki and Blackboard for current information regarding your assignment due dates. All readings are to be completed outside of class before the class discussion date.

Week/dates	Schedule
<b>Week 1</b> M 08/29 W 08/31 F 09/02	Syllabus; overview of the course. Introductions Key Terms: read pgs. 1-7 in course reader (CR), and 1-15 in <i>They Say</i> . Situating texts: examining the rhetorical situation Rhetoric, rhetorical analysis and close reading
<b>Week 2</b> M 09/05 <b>No Class</b> (Labor Day) W 09/07 F 09/09	Applying PACES (project, argument, claims, evidence, strategies) to short texts. Charting a text; building an argument map Introduction to the first project & Thompson
<b>Week 3</b> M 09/12 W 09/14 F 09/16	Discussion of Thompson Charting and discussing Thompson Identifying claims and evidence ; the language of analysis
<b>Week 4</b> M 09/19 W 09/21 F 09/23	Thompson & digital literacy Digital literacy cont. Drafting Thompson paper
<b>Week 5</b> M 09/26 W 09/28 F 09/30	Introduction and body paragraphs Evaluating claims and evidence Drafting continued <b>Rough draft of paper 1 due (bring 2 copies to class); peer workshop</b>
<b>Week 6</b> M 10/03 W 10/05 F 10/07	Conferencing (meet with professor) Conferencing Conferencing
<b>Week 7</b> M 10/10 W 10/12 F 10/14	<b>Final Draft Essay #1 Due;</b> Discussion of Carr Analyzing rhetorical strategies Writing about rhetorical appeals; ethos, pathos, logos
<b>Week 8</b> M 10/17 W 10/19 F 10/21	Analyzing Carr and evaluating responses to Carr's argument Team debate (challenging, supporting and revising Carr) Drafting the Carr paper
<b>Week 9</b> M 10/24 W 10/26 F 10/28	<b>Rough Draft of paper 2 due (bring 2 copies to class); peer workshop</b> Conferencing (meet with professor) Conferencing
<b>Week 10</b>	

M 10/31 W 11/02 F 11/04	<b>Final draft of paper 2 due;</b> Rhetoric of Halloween: Past and Present Introduction to unit 2 & Boyd; digital literacy and “digital natives” Discussing Boyd & charting sections of the text Mapping claims and evidence
<b>Week 11</b> M 11/07 W 11/09 F 11/11 <b>No Class (Veteran’s Day)</b>	Putting Boyd in conversation w. Thompson/Carr; mapping connections; synthesizing, analyzing, evaluating sources
<b>Week 12</b> M 11/14 W 11/16 F 11/18	The “politics of search” and (re)search literacy Building claims, finding support, creating a space for your contribution; drafting the introduction and body paragraphs
<b>Week 13</b> M 11/21 W 11/23 <b>No Class (Thanksgiving)</b> F 11/25 <b>No Class (Thanksgiving)</b>	<b>Prospectus and annotated bibliography due</b>
<b>Week 14</b> M 11/28 W 11/30 F 12/02	Building your argument and entering the conversation Refining and strengthening your argument Handling rebuttals and evaluation
<b>Week 15</b> M 12/05 W 12/07 F 12/09	<b>Rough Draft Due (bring 3 copies to class);</b> peer review Conferences Conferences
<b>Week 16</b> M 12/12 W 12/14	Student presentations/Extra Credit Due Last Class <b>FINAL PAPER DUE</b>

## POLICIES & PROCEDURES

**Attendance:** There is no substitute for attending class—the nature of the assignments in this course, as well as their grading breakdown, makes attendance vital to receiving a passing grade. That being said, I understand that emergencies may arise. If you cannot attend class, please send me an email beforehand explaining your circumstances. **Up to 3 absences are allowed without affecting your participation grade. Further absences will negatively impact your grade.**

Class will begin each day promptly, as we only meet for 50 minutes each session. Any student, who shows up more than 10 minutes late, will be marked as an absence.

**Etiquette:** Since this is a discussion-based class, I believe all my students must listen and speak respectfully to each other at all times. I expect our class to be an environment where lively, productive debate can occur, but we must work together to create a safe social space.

**Essays:** All essays are due as a hard copy in class on the date specified. All essays must be typed and adhere to MLA format and must be stapled. Late assignments will not be accepted. For documented extenuating circumstances, late work may be accepted up to one week following the printed deadline.

**Late Work:** Managing your time to meet deadlines is an essential skill in both the academic and professional world. All work should be turned in on its appropriate due date. In-class assignments are just that, in class.

**The Course wiki:** In the first week you will receive an email inviting you to join the class wiki, <https://akade.pbworks.com>. Please accept the invitation and set up a password for yourself (your username will be your email address). Check the wiki regularly. You'll sometimes need it to print materials to bring to class.

**Electronics:** Your active participation is required in this course. As such, our classroom will be a “cell-free zone.” Any use of a mobile phone for any reason (unless expressly cleared by me) will not be tolerated. Please turn off your cell phones, iPods, and similar electronic equipment when you come to class. Because we will be interacting in group discussion often, the use of laptops will also be distracting. If laptops/phones are relevant to the activity we are engaged in I'll let you know. If you are in class reading facebook, listening to music or texting, I will mark you absent.

**Plagiarism:** All work in this course must be original. Plagiarism will result in serious consequences ranging from grade reduction to failure in the class to expulsion from the college. For more information on the university cheating and plagiarism policy, please visit: <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/senate/policy/pfacademics.html>. SDSU's library also has an excellent tutorial on how to avoid plagiarism.

**Problems:** If you run into problems or emergencies, talk to me as soon as possible

**Office Hours:** I encourage all students to attend office hours, but especially if you have any questions or concerns about reading, writing, the course or college in general. Please make an appointment with me in advance via email or after class. Please bring all of your pre-writing, drafts, and final drafts of your essays with comments to office hours. It will assist me in answering any questions you may have on the assignments.

**Course Tutoring:** I invite all students to attend office hours with questions on writing or the RWS 100 course. If you would like additional assistance and encouragement, SDSU has a Writing Center with an excellent staff of tutors to assist students in all courses. The Writing Center is located in the Love Library, Room LA 1103, which is in next to the Circulation Desk. For more information about hours and services visit <http://writingcenter.sdsu.edu/>.

**Student with Disabilities:** Every attempt will be made to offer reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities in this course. Students with disabilities who may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to notify the instructor privately and to contact Student Disability Services (SDS) as soon as possible. SDS staff are available in the Capulli Center in Suite 3101 or by phone at (619) 594-6473 (voice) or (619) 594-2929 (TTD/TTY).

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

**Counseling:** There are many events and situations that put additional stress on being a student. SDSU

has an excellent center for Counseling & Psychological Services that is open to students Monday through Friday from 8am-4:30pm. To set up an initial consultation, call (619) 594-5220. For immediate or emergency help, you are welcome to use San Diego's free 24-hour counseling access line at (800) 479-3339. C&PS on campus also has a "Center for Well-Being" with multiple stations for relaxation if you are feeling stressed during the semester. C&PS is located in the Capulli Center, Room 4401.

**Student-athletes:** Student-athletes have demanding, dynamic schedules. As an instructor, I am committed to helping you succeed in the course. To do so, regular and effective communication is needed. While exceptions will not be made for attendance, assignment deadlines, or peer review workshops, I'm happy to work with all student-athletes in conjunction with Student-Athlete Support Services (SASS) to help you excel in this course. For more information on SASS' academic advising and tutoring services, please call (619) 594-4743.

**Use of Student Work:** I may occasionally share student writing in class. For example, it may be useful to show an example of a strong introduction, or discuss ways of revising a conclusion. Please let me know if you would prefer not to have your work shared (you can send me an email).

This semester two professors in the department of Rhetoric & Writing Studies are conducting research on first year students' digital literacy practices. The professors would like RWS100 students to participate in a short online survey. The survey is about digital literacy and is closely connected to the texts and issues you will be discussing in class. (You can use the survey questions in your own writing if you wish.) Your response will be anonymous, no personally identifying information will be gathered, and your instructor will not see the results. Participation is voluntary. As part of this study the researchers would also like to examine a few pieces of the homework students do when writing about the topic of digital literacy on their blogs. This will be made anonymous and will not be shared with your instructor. Participation is voluntary and your instructor will not know if you participated.

The results of this study may benefit future writing instructors and students at SDSU. The anonymous data collected may be used to revise curriculum and incorporate attention to specific digital literacies. It may be used in presentations and published work. Once the semester is over and students' final grades are posted, the researchers are willing to share data from the study if you are interested in the results. If you have any questions about the study please contact the researchers. They are Dr. Chris Werry (cwerry@mail.sdsu.edu) or Dr. Jenny Sheppard (jsheppard@mail.sdsu.edu).

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### **Classmate Contact Info**

Please write down the email address and/or phone number of three of your classmates. If you miss class, or can't remember what was assigned for homework, contact your classmates **before** asking me.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Agreement on Plagiarism**

I understand that teachers are required by SDSU policy to report cases of plagiarism. I understand that I must clearly mark other people's ideas and words within my paper. I understand it is unacceptable to do any of the following:

- Submit an essay written in whole or part by another person, and to present this as if it were my own.
- Download an essay from the internet, then quote or paraphrase from it, in whole or in part, without acknowledging the original source.
- Reproduce the substance of another writer's argument without acknowledging the source.
- Copy another student/person's homework and submit this as the product of my own work.

I understand that the consequences for committing any of the above acts can include failure in the class, a note on my permanent record, and even expulsion from the university. I will not plagiarize or cheat.

**Name (Print Legibly):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**(Signature)** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Use of Student Work**

I may occasionally wish to share sample student writing in class. For example, it may be useful to show an example of a strong introduction, or discuss ways of revising a conclusion. Is it OK to use your writing in this way?

YES

NO

Name: \_\_\_\_\_