

RWS 200: Rhetoric of Written Argument

Mixing Mediums with Contemporary Perspectives



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Class Meets: TTh 11:00 – 12:15

Location: SLHS-149 **Section:** 64

Office Hours:

Tuesdays 12:30-1:30 or by appointment

Office: AL 218

- “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)
- “Pop culture shapes our ideas of what is normal and what our dreams can be and what our roles are. Politics, of course, decides how the power and the money in the country is distributed. Both are equally important, and each affects the other” (Gloria Steinem)

What is the Story of this Course?

This is a course in academic writing and reading, emphasizing the rhetorical analysis of arguments in context and various modes of rhetoric, including film, podcasts, television, and online content. Building on RWS 100, this course asks students to continue the work of articulating the argument a text is making and analyzing elements of the argument. You should consider the contexts of arguments and discover what arguments are responding to, both in the sense of what has come before them and in the sense that they are written for an audience in a particular place and time. RWS 200 also teaches students to a) evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of arguments, b) discover ways of “joining the conversation,” and c) reflect on and analyze their own reading and writing strategies.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS:

- *Rereading America: Cultural Contexts for Critical Thinking and Writing* 10th Edition, by Gary Colombo, Robert Cullen and Bonnie Lisle
- SDSU RWS 100 Course Reader (available at SDSU bookstore)
- Composition Journal, small-sized
- Handouts and supplementary readings available on the course wiki and/or Blackboard
- Course wiki, <http://rws200spring2018.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.
- Reliable Printer, Internet, Video Rental/Streaming Access
- Two-pocket Portfolio Folder

HELPFUL RESOURCES:

- *Keys for Writers*, 9th Edition, by Ann Raimes (available at SDSU Bookstore)
- 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 200 STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The following points describe the overall goals for your major writing projects or “assignment types” for the course. By the end of the semester you will be able to:

1. **Analyze** a variety of print and digital texts to articulate relationships between an argument’s elements and the contexts within which the argument was created.
2. **Evaluate** both print and digital arguments through a process of critical inquiry, examining the arguments in their original contexts and in the context of other arguments in order to discover relationships between texts
3. **Locate, evaluate, and synthesize** material from sources related to a public discussion in order to generate and support arguments.
4. **Contribute** an informed argument to an ongoing public discussion by identifying and assessing the rhetorical context for an issue.
5. **Compose** a variety of texts, including elements of digital and/or non-print text, through a multi-stage recursive process.
6. **Employ** conventions of academic writing in rhetorically purposeful ways.

REQUIREMENTS

Writing Projects (60%)

There will be four major writing assignments throughout the semester. Each assignment 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 two-pocket folder on the due date of the final draft. More detailed instructions will be provided with each essay’s prompt.

Major Assignment Sequence

- 1) **Analysis of an Argument in Context** – Analyze and evaluate an author’s argument, claim, project, and assumptions, as well as the rhetorical strategies used to construct the text. Explain how those strategies contribute to the author’s appeals to ethos, pathos, and logos. Evaluate the extent to which those appeals persuade the intended audience and consider how those strategies are based on key assumptions the author makes about that audience. (15%)
- 2) **The “Lens” Assignment** – In this assignment you will use concepts and arguments from one text as a context for understanding and writing about another. The first text will thus provide the “lens” for understanding and evaluating the “target” text. (15%)
- 3) **Critical Synthesis** – You will construct both a prospectus and annotated bibliography in which you will map major points of similarity, difference, contrast, and connection between various texts. You will consider how major positions advanced in these texts relate to each other, and you will evaluate claims representative of these positions. Using a group of texts, identify the contexts within which an argument was made—historical, social, intellectual, generic, political, technological context, etc. Explain ways in which that context shaped the argument. (10%)
- 4) **Contribution Assignment: Advancing an Argument in the Contemporary Context** – Examine an ongoing public discussion (which may have been addressed in the previous paper) through a group of texts. Describe the texts’ arguments and position yourself in relation to them in order to make an argument that enables you to “join the conversation.” to understand and evaluate some of the texts explored in your “critical synthesis” prospectus. You will draw on select texts to construct a context that allows you to “enter the conversation” and advance your own claims. (20%)

Portfolio and Quizzes (25%)

- **Rhetorical Analysis Blog “Portfolio”** - You will compose 4-5 shorter pieces of writing - blog posts involving homework assignments, reflections, and reading responses. Each blog post will be comprised of approx. 250 words in addition to posing 1-2 questions you might have concerning the assigned text. You will also be required to respond to 5 of your peers’ blog posts throughout the semester. 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. And remember, get creative and have fun with your blogs!
- **Quizzes** - Be prepared for quizzes covering assigned texts. There are no makeup quizzes for days in which you are absent.

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 Tuesday, January 22, 2018.

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:

- **Reading and In-Class Reflection Journal:** We will study each major text with in-class readings. It will be up to you to thoroughly analyze and become familiar with them, in order to be fully engaged in the discussions. Periodically, we will begin class with a reflective writing assignment, which you will keep in a composition journal. I will occasionally collect these journals throughout the semester so please bring them to class every day. Please also 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

Project 1: Analyzing an Argument	15%
Project 2: “Lens” Assignment	15%
Project 3: Critical Synthesis	10%
Project 4: Contribution Assignment	20%
Portfolio Blog/Quizzes	25%
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%

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING SCHEDULE

NOTE: 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	Assignments (TBA: see BB or wiki)
Week 1 TH 01/18	Syllabus; overview of the course. Introductions.	
Week 2 T 01/23 TH 01/25	Applying PACES (project, argument, claims, evidence, strategies) to short texts. Review of Paces; Charting a text; building an argument map	
Week 3 T 01/30 TH 02/01	Introduction to Writing Project #1 and primary text Charting and analyzing text; identifying claims, evidence and strategies.	
Week 4 T 02/06 TH 02/08	Evaluation of argument. Drafting introduction and body paragraphs; LIBRARY DAY! (Will be at Conference)	
Week 5 T 02/13 TH 02/15	Drafting body paragraphs/conclusion; Evaluating claims/evidence. Peer workshop (Bring 2 copies of rough draft to class)	
Week 6 T 02/20 TH 02/22	Conferencing - NO CLASS; meet in office Conferencing - NO CLASS; meet in office	
Week 7 T 02/27 TH 03/01	Final Draft Essay #1 Due! Introduction to "Lens" project; Using one text as a lens on another; evaluating texts.	
Week 8 T 03/06 TH 03/08	Analyzing target text; charting Drafting body paragraphs/discuss additional sources	
Week 9 T 03/13 TH 03/15	Peer Review Workshop: (Bring 2 copies of rough draft to class) Conferencing - NO CLASS; meet in office	
Week 10 T 03/20 TH 03/22	Conferencing - NO CLASS; meet in office Final Draft of Essay #2 Due! Intro to Critical Synthesis Project. Finding an "angle" on the issue to guide synthesis; working on multiple sources	

Week 11 T 03/27 TH 03/29	NO CLASSES! SPRING BREAK!	SPRING BREAK!
Week 12 T 04/03 TH 04/05	Synthesizing texts and mapping relationships; Drafting annotated bibliography/prospectus	
Week 13 T 04/10 TH 04/12	CRITICAL SYNTHESIS DUE! Introduction to Writing Project #4 Going from synthesis to contribution; situating and researching your argument	
Week 14 T 04/17 TH 04/19	Building your claims, finding support and creating space for your contribution; Drafting Introduction and body paragraphs	
Week 15 T 04/24 TH 04/26	Conferences - NO CLASS; meet in office Conferences - NO CLASS; meet in office	
Week 16 T 05/01 TH 05/03	Peer Review Workshop: Rough Draft Due (bring 1 hard copy to class) Class Party and Final Discussion! FINAL PAPER DUE!	

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. **Up to 4 absences are allowed without affecting your participation grade, on your fifth absence you will forfeit ALL your participation points, regardless of work completed. Further absences will negatively impact your grade.**

Class will begin each day promptly. Any student, who shows up more than 10 minutes late, will be marked as an absence.

Extra Credit: There will be a few opportunities for extra credit in this course, which will be posted to our class wiki and/or announced in-class. To receive extra points, you must have 4 absences or less at the end of the term. **For each extra credit completed, you will receive 1 point added to your overall grade. A maximum of 3 points will be allowed.**

Etiquette: Since this is a discussion-based class, I believe all 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.

Also, please put “RWS 200” in the subject heading when sending me an email. I will respond to most emails within 24 hours during the school week. It may take longer to reply on the weekends.

Essays: All essays are due in class in the form of a hard copy on the date specified and must also be

uploaded to TURNITIN prior to class. **All essays are to be typed, stapled and adhere to MLA format and must be in a 12-pt font Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1 inch margins with a Works Cited page.** Late assignments will not be accepted. For documented extenuating circumstances, late work may be accepted at a deadline set by the instructor, but no later than 5 days after the due date.

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, <http://rws200spring2018.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: Electronics: Your active participation is required in this course. As such, our classroom will be a **"cell-free/laptop free zone."** Any use of a mobile phone/laptop/tablet for any reason (unless expressly cleared by me) will not be tolerated. However, I do encourage the use of digital media devices such as e-readers (**Kindle Paperwhite and Nooks ONLY**) I have found them to be an invaluable tool, especially when used in conjunction with audiobooks. Please note: Not all course texts will be available for download on e-readers or audiobooks, so you may need to purchase a hard copy. 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 from any social media, web surfing, listening to music or texting, I will mark you absent and all classwork will receive a zero.

PLEASE NOTE: Students must obtain permission from your instructor to record a class lecture or discussion and that without prior permission students can be reported for misconduct.

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: 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/>.

Students 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).

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: _____

Syllabus Contract

I have thoroughly read the entire syllabus for RWS 200 Fall 2017 Semester and understand all the requirements for this course.

Print Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____