"It is absurd to hold that a man ought to be ashamed of being unable to defend himself with his limbs, but not of being unable to defend himself with speech and reason, when the use of rational speech is more distinctive of a human being than the use of his limbs."

- Aristotle, Rhetoric

INTRODUCTION

Though “Freshman Composition” is a course taught at most every institution of higher learning in this country, San Diego State University takes an unusual approach. Here, the department of Rhetoric & Writing Studies is separate from the department of English & Comparative Literature, because we believe that the construction and analysis of argument is both vital and separate from traditional literary analysis. In other words, this class is important, and will probably help you achieve success no matter what you intend to do with your life. So it wouldn’t hurt to pay attention.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

1. **RWS 100 Course Reader.** This will be listed under either “Rhetoric & Writing Studies” or “Chris Werry” at the SDSU bookstore.
4. Writing materials. Sometimes you will write during class: Hardcopy or electronic versions are acceptable. Often, you will write at home, and be expected to bring your writing for discussion: Again, analog and digital are both fine. (Please note the tech use policy later in this document.)
5. Internet access, specifically SDSU’s Blackboard site. While I accept that not everyone has their own computer, and I certainly understand that modern technology does not always work properly at all times, SDSU has a number of very large computer labs. Students who cannot reach Blackboard at home will be expected to do so from the labs.
ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

Essays: For this course, you will write three formal essays of four to eight pages in length, plus a final reflection. Most papers will require at least one rough draft for peer editing and/or conferencing with me. Failure to provide a functional draft at the time it is required will result in a penalty to the final grade of the paper.

Blackboard Assignments: A short assignment will be due on Blackboard before almost every class. In fact, unless a paper is due, one of the following items will be. Although this seems arduous, please note that these assignments are very short; they exist primarily to allow me to keep tabs on the concerns of the class.

- **Journals**: You will write a number of short pieces describing your reactions to the readings and to the class in general. The topic of each journal will be announced in class, to be turned in during the next session.
- **Blog/Forum Posts**: From time to time, it may be beneficial to make posts that are visible to the class, instead of private between the student and professor. This may entail a follow-up assignment to read and reply to postings by classmates. Such assignments will be noted before the writing period; entries intended for private journals will not be summarily made public.
- **Quizzes**: On occasion, there will be short quizzes to check that the readings are being completed. They will be very straightforward. If you do the readings and pay attention in class you should have no trouble with them.

Participation & Attendance: You are expected to attend class and participate! Absence and tardiness will result in grade penalties. Active participants will arrive prepared, pay attention, and get involved with class activities. We will engage in both small and large group discussions, as well as peer review, workshops, and conferencing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 1: Constructing an Account (Describe and analyze an author’s argument, claims, project, support and rhetorical strategies.)</td>
<td>135 (22.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 2: Gathering Information and Managing Sources (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 understanding of an argument.)</td>
<td>135 (22.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 3: Explaining Rhetorical Strategies (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.)</td>
<td>135 (22.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Reflection</td>
<td>75 (12.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackboard Assignments</td>
<td>60 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation &amp; Attendance</td>
<td>60 (10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>600 (100%)</strong></td>
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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Attendance: There is no substitute for attending class. Since this is a discussion-oriented course, your attendance is crucial, and key to successfully completing assignments. Regular attendance will greatly elevate your chances of performing well. Simply showing up for class, however, will not be enough. I expect this class to be the site of lively intellectual activity, discussion, debate, and critical but respectful exchange. Accordingly, timely arrival is crucial. Each instance of tardiness will result in one point being deducted from your participation score.

Absence: If you miss a class, you will be expected to find out what you missed from another student. Time will be provided during the first class session to exchange contact information with your classmates. If you were not able to attend the first class session, you will want to make contact with other students before or after subsequent classes. I will not respond to requests that amount to “did we do anything important today?” Further, each missed class will result in two points being deducted from your participation score.

Essay Submission: Papers should be in MLA format. All essays will be submitted via TurnItIn, a software suite designed to detect plagiarism, and must be submitted before the start of class on the day they are due. Students who are unwilling to use TurnItIn must submit notice of such, in writing, before September 18th. Late assignments will not be accepted! Students are encouraged to become familiar with the TurnItIn submission process early in the semester. For documented extenuating circumstances, late work may be accepted up to one week following the printed deadline.

Course Tutoring, ESL, and Writing Help: RWS tutors are available to help you with your writing. Tutors are located in the tutoring room in the Love Library Dome. Contact the department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies at (619) 594-6515 for more info on drop-in tutoring hours. Some help is available for ESL writers (if you need significant ESL help, you can transfer to LING 100, which specializes in this). I am committed to helping you develop as a writer. If you have questions or would like additional assistance with class concepts or projects, please drop in at any time during my office hours or make an appointment to speak with me.

Technology Use: Your active participation is required in this course. As such, our classroom will be a “cell-free zone.” Please turn off your cell phones, iPods, and similar electronic equipment when you come to class. I understand that laptops and tablets are useful in a classroom setting, and has no objection to their use. However, students who wish to use such devices are expected to sit in the back of the classroom so they do not distract those students who choose to use more conventional means of note-taking.

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. Please note that professors are required by university policy to report plagiarism even on a first offense. Please note also that I, personally, actively detest plagiarism and am exceedingly unlikely to be sympathetic to any excuses that might be offered.

**Respect:** Since this is a discussion-based class, it is vital that you listen and speak respectfully to others at all times. I encourage you to express your opinions, of course—they will help inspire good discussions. In other words, you are allowed and expected to speak your mind at all times, as long as you can do so without being a jerk.

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

**Email:** I will do my best to respond to email in a timely fashion. That being said, I do not respond to email in the middle of the night, and cannot guarantee a response to a question asked at the last possible minute. You are encouraged to ask questions early.

**Office Hours:** I encourage all students to attend office hours, especially if you have any questions or concerns about reading, writing, rhetoric, or the structure or requirements of the course. Office hours are Thursday from 11:00am to 12:00pm or by appointment.

**Disabled Students:** 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 Calpulli Center in Suite 3101 or by phone at (619) 594-6473 (voice) or (619) 594-2929 (TTD/TTY).

**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 Calpulli 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 exams, 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.
COURSE OUTLINE AND READING SCHEDULE
The following schedule is approximate, as dates and topics may shift as the semester continues. Check Blackboard for current information on due dates.

Week 1  Aug. 28: Syllabus; What is Rhetoric?
         Aug. 30: Key Terms and Concepts

Week 2  Sept. 4: Key Terms and Concepts continued
         Sept. 6: Reading strategies

Week 3  Sept. 11: Begin discussion of Mendelbaum; introduction to the first project
         Sept. 13: Mendelbaum

Week 4  Sept. 18: Mendelbaum
         Sept. 20: Mendelbaum

Week 5  [You will conference for 10 minutes with me outside of class regarding your outline]
         Sept. 25: Conferencing
         Sept. 27: Conferencing

Week 6  Oct. 2: Paper #1 Rough Draft Due; Workshop (bring original plus 3 copies to class)
         Oct. 4: Paper #1 Due; Introduction to the second project

Week 7  Oct. 9: Begin discussion of Pinker
         Oct. 11: Pinker

Week 8  Oct. 16: Pinker
         Oct. 18: Pinker

Week 9  Oct. 23: Pinker
         Oct. 25: Pinker

Week 10 [You will conference for 10 minutes with me outside of class regarding your outline]
         Oct. 30: Conferencing
         Nov. 1: Conferencing

Week 11 Nov. 6: Paper #2 Rough Draft Due; Workshop (bring original plus 3 copies to class)
         Nov. 8: Paper #2 Due; Introduction to the third project
Week 12  
Nov. 13: Food Inc  
Nov. 15: Food Inc  

Week 13  
Nov. 20: Food Inc.  
Nov. 22: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)  

Week 14  
[OPTIONAL conferencing for 10 minutes with me outside of class regarding your rough draft]  
Nov. 27: Food Inc.  
Nov. 29: Food Inc.  

Week 15  
Dec. 04: Paper #3 Rough Draft Due; Workshop (bring original plus 3 copies to class)  
Dec. 06: Paper #3 Due; Wrap Up  

Final Exam  
Thursday, Dec. 16 from 10:30 – 12:30; Critical Reflection Due
**RWS 100 Student 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.”

**Assignment Types:** The following four outcomes describe the four main writing projects or "assignment types" for the course. Students will be able to:

1. describe and analyze an author’s argument, claims, project, support and rhetorical strategies.
2. 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, including a dictionary, in order to clarify their understanding of an argument;
3. construct an account of two 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;
4. construct an account of two authors’ projects and arguments in order to use concepts from one argument as a framework for understanding and writing about another.
Outcomes across the semester: The following points describe outcomes to work on throughout the semester, to be attained over the 15 weeks. Students will be able to:

1. describe elements of an argument—claims, methods of development, kinds of evidence, persuasive appeals; annotate the work that is done by each section of a written argument;
2. use all aspects of the writing process—including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading;
3. choose effective structures for their writing, acknowledging that different purposes, contexts and audiences call for different structures; understand the relationship between a text's ideas and its structure;
4. identify devices an author has used to create cohesion or to carry the reader through the text; use metadiscourse to signal the project of a paper, and guide a reader from one idea to the next in their writing;
5. effectively select material from written arguments, contextualize it, and comment on it in their writing;
6. determine when and where a source was published, who wrote it and whether it was reprinted or edited; understand that texts are written in and respond to particular contexts, communities or cultures; examine the vocabulary choices a writer makes and how they are related to context, community or culture, audience or purpose;
7. respond in writing to ideas drawn from various cultures and disciplines, using the activity of writing to clarify and improve their understanding of an argument;
8. analyze and assess the relative strengths of arguments and supporting evidence
9. analyze and assess arguments made by visual texts; incorporate visual images into their documents;
10. craft well reasoned arguments for specific audiences
11. edit their writing for the grammar and usage conventions appropriate to each writing situation;
12. assign significance to the arguments that they read;
13. reflect on how they wrote their papers, and revise arguments and findings based on critical reflection.
AGREEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

Policy statements and tutorials on plagiarism are provided by SDSU on these web pages:
http://infotutor.sdsu.edu/plagiarism/
http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/conduct1.html

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

Your teacher may occasionally wish to share sample student writing in class. For example, your teacher may wish to show an example of a strong introduction, or discuss ways of revising a conclusion. Student writing will be made anonymous (student names will be removed). Is it acceptable to use your writing in this way?

Yes: _____ No: _____
Signature: ___________________________________________________