San Diego State University  
Rhetoric and Writing Studies 305W-53: Writing in Different Settings  
Course Syllabus Fall 2012

Instructor: Jason Parker  
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Class Time: MW 3:30 – 4:45 p.m.

Class Location: College Square (CSQ) 204  
Office: Adams Humanities (AH) 3160  
Office Hours: TTh 4 – 6:30 p.m.

Prerequisites:
To enroll in RWS 305W, students must have completed 60 units, completed the Writing Proficiency Assessment with a score of 8 or higher (or earned a C or higher in RWS 280 or 281 or LING 281 if score on the WPA was 7 or lower), and completed General Education requirements in Composition and Critical Thinking.

Texts and Materials:
Required Texts:
1. Rather than use what’s typically called a “Reader,” this course allows students to engage with texts produced in their current or intended field of study. Consequently, a “Reader” will not be used in this section.
2. Articles located at the SDSU Library’s Course Reserves. Paper copies will need to be made. Cost of these materials should not exceed $20.

Optional Text:

Other Materials:
1. Students will be asked to download and print out copies of articles or other materials from Internet web sites or the Electronic Course Reserves. Cost of these materials should not exceed $20 dollars.
2. Materials for completing in-class writing activities and workshops.

Course Description and Student Learning Outcomes:
In RWS 305W students learn to respond not only to academic tasks but also to a wider variety of genres and settings that require diverse research methods and writing styles. The course also asks students to reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of their own writing style(s) within various rhetorical contexts.

Listed below are the learning objectives for RWS 305W:

1. Identify, analyze, and respond in writing to various rhetorical situations. Specifically,
   a. Identify individual discourse communities and find and analyze their characteristic texts, evaluate their credibility and principles, and apply relevant aspects of their information to other contexts and arguments;
   b. Analyze the details of a wide variety of writing situations (textual elements such as tone, evidence, organizational patterns, diction, even visuals) according to the author’s purpose as well as the audience’s needs and tastes;
   c. Respond effectively in writing to issues and arguments raised in a variety of disciplinary, popular, and professional texts and/or contexts;
   d. Produce effective arguments from a variety of disciplinary, popular, and professional contexts.

2. Use critical thinking and writing skills to understand the function of reading and writing in cultural, academic, and professional communities.
   a. Actively read texts using a variety of reading strategies such as annotation, visual organizers, questioning, and discussion;
   b. Identify how a writer uses rhetorical strategies in various genres of writing;
   c. Interpret, analyze, and evaluate demanding texts;
   d. Apply critical thinking skills and reading strategies to evaluate their own writing and the writing of fellow students;
   e. Reflect on their own progress as a working writer in relation to critical thinking and reading strategies.

3. Develop awareness of and abilities to use writing processes effectively.
   a. Develop flexible strategies for creating, revising, and editing texts;
   b. Critique their own and others’ texts;
   c. Write with an awareness of audience and purpose.
4. Identify, analyze, and apply the writing conventions of different discourse communities and to write effectively within those communities. Students will learn to
  a. Identify how discourse communities employ particular strategies for conveying, researching, evaluating, and presenting information;
  b. Analyze and choose the appropriate conventions for a range of audience expectations;
  c. Integrate a variety of appropriate sources into their writings in a way that accurately reflects the writer’s meaning and purpose;
  d. Document sources appropriately;
  e. Sustain reasonable correctness in grammar and mechanics to perform well in a variety of writing contexts and professional settings.

5. Realize and reflect upon the values of a liberal arts education, namely, to
  a. Work collaboratively and cooperatively to achieve defined goals;
  b. Respect the diverse points of view that characterize our multi-cultural classroom community;
  c. Critically analyze a variety of texts produced for public and individual readers;
  d. Participate confidently in public discussion on issues of importance to the workplace and the community;
  e. Address issues in writing.

Course Requirements and Policies:

1. Writing Projects (lengths vary). Each of these four assignments will address different components of the rhetorical situation (e.g., the rhetor, audience, and context) and will have different purposes. The Writing Process will be utilized to complete these assignments: completing research and developing a preliminary thesis; composing an initial draft; providing written responses to other students’ and your own drafts and to other students’ critiques of your drafts; establishing a plan for revising the initial draft; revising the initial draft; editing and proofreading the revised before submitting it for grading. In addition, many Writing Projects will require students to complete an Analysis of the Rhetorical Context (ARC), which will be submitted concurrently; more information about the ARC component will be presented later in the semester. These assignments should be submitted on time either electronically or traditionally (i.e., a hard, paper copy) and should follow MLA guidelines for format and style, which are explained in Keys for Writers. One of the four major writing projects will count as the Final Exam for this course!

2. Other Written Work. A portion of the writing that you do (e.g. responses to readings and quick writes) will be completed in class. However, you will also have a variety of assignments to be done out of class (e.g. responses posted on Blackboard’s discussion boards and critical analyses of texts and homework). These assignments also should be submitted on time in an appropriate format and should follow MLA guidelines for format and style. Although I typically ask for hard copies of assignments, there may be occasions on which you will be asked to submit homework or other assignments electronically, either by e-mail or through Blackboard.

3. Attendance. Attendance. No more than three absences are allowed during the semester. Additional absences will diminish students’ overall final grade by 1.5 % per absence. Students who arrive fewer than five minutes late will be considered tardy; each tardy constitutes one-half absence. Students more than five minutes late will be considered absent.

4. Preparation. Please read the assigned material and complete any written work before coming to class. Since many articles and outside materials for certain writing assignments are intended for different audiences, being fully prepared may mean reading some essays or articles more than once to assure that you are ready for discussion. An absence from the previous class does not excuse you from being prepared for class. It is your responsibility to find out what you missed from another student.

5. Participation/Group Work. Although demonstrations and lectures are regular features of this course, much of the work we complete will require students’ participation in discussions and workshops. Frequently, I will separate students into small groups for discussion and collaborative learning activities. I expect that you will always be respectful of your fellow students and that you will inform me if you feel that there is a problem with your group dynamic.

6. Due Dates. All writing assignments (the four major writing projects as well as short writing assignments) must be submitted the date they are due and/or at the beginning of the class period. Reading assignments must also be completed before the due dates, as many in-class writing assignments will be based upon the assigned readings, and productive class discussions will depend upon careful readings and annotations of each article.

7. Extension. Things happen. Occasionally, your computer experiences the blue screen of death and swallows six weeks of work that hasn’t been backed up. Perhaps a local sports team suddenly catches fire and you are compelled to follow them throughout the playoffs. However life interferes in our academics, it inevitably will, so one time this semester, for one of the first three major writing projects, you may turn in the final draft of the writing project up to one class session late. This extension does not apply to any other minor writing assignments, nor does it apply to the Final Exam.

8. Revision of a Writing Project. Although students will revise writing projects as part of the writing process, sometimes after submitting a project for final grading, students are not satisfied with their work and/or the grade received. Consequently, students are permitted to conduct a post-final grading revision of only one of the first two Writing Projects and submit it for re-grading if the following conditions are met: (1) a complete final draft of the writing project...
was submitted on time and (2) the grade for the final draft was C+ or lower. The revision is due during the final week of the semester; however, this revision can be completed before this deadline. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with the instructor to discuss recommendations and strategies for revising a writing project. The average of the grades for the final draft and the revised draft will constitute the grade received. Because of end-of-term time constraints, students do not have the option to revise Writing Project 3 or the Final.

9. **Cheating and Plagiarism.** Cheating shall be defined as the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work by the use of dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means. Plagiarism shall be defined as the act of incorporating ideas, words, or specific substance of another, whether purchased, borrowed, or otherwise obtained, and submitting the same to the University as one’s own work to fulfill academic requirements without giving credit to the appropriate source. In your writing you must give credit through quotation marks, footnotes, and complete citations if you use someone else’s ideas or works. The minimum consequence for cheating and/or plagiarism in this course is a score of zero on the assignment. More significant consequences, including reporting the cheating and/or plagiarism to the appropriate University offices, may be imposed. Needless to say, the best policy is to always turn in only your own work. If you have questions concerning plagiarism and citing sources, please ask me directly.

10. **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.** In accordance with University policy, students with verified disabilities should discuss with me within the first two weeks of class any sanctioned academic adjustments required for successful completion of this course. Written verification of the disability may be required. For more information about services available to students with disabilities, please contact SDS at (619) 594-6473.

11. **Policy on Absence for Religious Observation and University Events.** By the end of the second week of classes, students should notify the instructor of an affected course of planned absences for religious observances. Instructors shall reasonably accommodate students who notify them in advance of planned absences for religious observances. Similar accommodations can be provided for students involved in University activities including intercollegiate athletics. Within the first two weeks of class, student athletes are responsible for notifying instructors of required absences for participation in events. Instructors shall reasonably accommodate students’ required absences from class.

12. **Blackboard.** Blackboard is a course content and management system hosted on the Internet. Your instructor uses Blackboard for several different purposes:
   - Post important course information and documents (like this syllabus);
   - Make announcements;
   - Provide copies of prompts for writing assignments;
   - List homework assignments and host discussion boards;
   - Inform students about their grades;
   - Communicate with students via e-mail and other media.

Please check Blackboard a few times each week for new information about our class. One additional important thing concerning the instructor’s use of Blackboard: it is designed to complement and enhance student-instructor relations, not replace real-life interactions between students or between students and their instructor. Some students believe that Blackboard has eliminated certain in-class activities, especially taking notes during class. It is important to realize that lecture materials will not be posted on Blackboard; also know that lecture materials are generally outlines and are expanded upon by instructors and students during class meetings. If you do not take notes during class, you will miss important information.

You may reach blackboard at [https://blackboard.sdsu.edu](https://blackboard.sdsu.edu). (And yes, the preceding URL is currently the URL for Blackboard 9.1.) You will need your Red ID and password to log on.

13. **E-mail policies.** Please have you current and most regularly checked e-mail address on WebPortal, for when I e-mail students from Blackboard, the program uses this address. Also, when you send the instructor an e-mail, please identify the course and section number in the “Subject” heading. Finally, unless requested, assignments should not be e-mailed to the instruction unless prior arrangements are made.

14. **Classroom Etiquette.** Informed disagreement over ideas and issues is one of the hallmarks of the academic world. Couple this with the multitudinous components that comprise our individual identities (class, gender, race/ethnicity, religion and spirituality, culture, social values, and political ideologies for starters) and it is easy to understand how disagreement can emerge within the classroom, whether actual or virtual. Nonetheless, critical discussions in our course should be conducted in a courteous and respectful manner.

15. **Electronic Devices.** Smartphones and other electronic devices should be silenced before class meetings begin. Although laptops and smart technology certainly have a place in the classroom, please acknowledge that such devices can distract other members of the course and can be the cause of distracted participation in your own self. Consequently, the instructor reserves the right to ask students who use electronic devices to stow them for the duration of class or use them within specific areas of the classroom.

16. **Changes to the Course Syllabus.** The course syllabus is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. Any changes will be announced during class, and a revised version of the course syllabus will be posted on Blackboard.
Grading and Assignments:
According to the SDSU Catalog, “In order that the assignment of grades truly reflects the student’s achievement in courses, the integrity of the academic program, and the integrity of departments or schools and instructors, grades shall genuinely distinguish between high and low levels of achievement.... Instructors shall use all grades from A through F to distinguish among levels of academic accomplishment. The grade for average undergraduate achievement shall be C.

“Undergraduate grades shall be: A, outstanding achievement—an excellent essay going above and beyond the assignment requirements. It is thoughtful, intelligent, and original; B praise-worthy performance—a very good essay going above and beyond the assignment requirements; C satisfactory performance, the most common undergraduate grade—an essay that fulfills the assignment requirements; D, minimally passing—a vague and/or poorly written essay that may also demonstrate a lack of understanding of the reading and/or assignment; and F, failing—an essay that is seriously flawed, showing a serious lack of understanding of the reading and the assignment.”

Assignments that are not submitted on time and activities requiring in-class participation that are missed receive scores of 0.

Grading Breakdown:
Homework/Class Activities (includes reading responses, critical and reflective writings, blogs, workshops, etc.) 20%
Writing Project #1 (Writing in the Academic Context) 20%
Writing Project #2 (Writing in the Local Context) 20%
Writing Project #3 (Visual Rhetoric in the Professional Context) 25%
Writing Project #4 (Final Exam) 15%
Total (out of 500 points) 100%

It should be noted that activities leading to successful submissions for Writing Projects 1-3, e.g., timely completion and submission of drafts and active participation in workshops, will account for a portion of grades for those projects.

Due Dates for Writing Projects:
The due dates for the three major writing projects will be announced at a later date.

Course Schedule:
A more complete Course Schedule will be posted on Blackboard during the second week and will be updated throughout the semester. Please regularly check the Course Documents and Assignments buttons on Blackboard for schedule and assignment updates. Also, the prompt for Writing Project 1 will be distributed via Blackboard during the second week of the semester; please download a copy.

Important Dates for Fall 2012 Semester:
- August 27—Fall Semester Begins at SDSU
- September 3—Holiday, Labor Day
- September 10—Last day to drop Fall 2012 classes
- September 12—Last day to add Fall 2012 classes or change grading basis
- November 12—Holiday, Veteran’s Day
- November 22 & 23—Holiday, Thanksgiving Weekend
- December 7—Last day of classes before Final Exams begin
- December 8-15—Final Exams
- December 12 (Wednesday)—Our Final Exam! The Final lasts from 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.