Rhetoric and Writing Studies 305  
Writing in Various Settings  
Fall 2013 T/Th

Instructor: Beth Sherman  
Office Hours:  Tuesday 3:30-4:40 PM  
Office:  Adams Humanities 3108  
Wednesday 5:45-6:45 PM  
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Course information is also available through Blackboard

Prerequisites  
Satisfies Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement for students who have completed 60 units, passed the Writing Proficiency Assessment with a score of 8 or better or earned credit in RWS 280 or 281, and completed the General Education requirement in Composition and Critical Thinking.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES (Why we’re here)  
While earlier Rhetoric and Writing courses you have taken are likely to have focused mainly on academic writing, RWS 305 is concerned with writing both in and outside of the Academic community. A goal of this course is that you will learn to identify and analyze the styles and conventions of a variety of kinds of texts. My goal for the course is that you will discover that the study of Rhetoric will serve you not only as you finish your undergraduate education, but in most everything you do.

To achieve this, we will study texts from academic, civic and professional communities, focusing on how writers respond to specific rhetorical situations. These analyses will include consideration of how arguments function in different contexts, and the connectedness of intended audience and writer’s purpose. Writing assignments for this course, in addition to demonstrating understanding of the above, are designed to help you improve your abilities to generate ideas, craft logical arguments, and effectively revise and edit the texts you produce. Additional student learning goals for RWS 305 are listed on the final page of this syllabus. All work for this course is designed to help students achieve these outcomes.

COURSE MATERIALS  
Required Text  
Strongly Suggested:  
A good college level dictionary, a thesaurus.  
Other Materials:  
Lined paper for writing assignments.  
One large bluebook for the end of course in-class essay.

COURSE WORK (How we’ll work to meet the above objectives)  
Developed Writing Projects (600 points – three projects, each worth 200 points.)  
Each major writing project for this course will reflect the discourse community we have studied during that portion of the course and each assignment should be considered as a contribution to an ongoing conversation in that community.  The first assignment will be an exploration of memoir, paying particular attention to the rhetorical situation. The second assignment will focus on the genre of civic writing. The final assignment will be both analysis of and practice in, writing for the workplace. Please see Class Participation below regarding the importance of meeting in-process draft deadlines and attending small group workshops with copies of an acceptable in-process draft. The first two papers may be revised for an improved grade if you have met all draft due dates and attended the small group workshop with a full draft.

Short Rhetorical Analysis Papers (100 points – two papers each worth 50 points)  
Each developed paper will be preceded by a rhetorical analysis of a text in the same genre. No Revisions.

Final (100 points)  
An in-class final will ask you to consider the rhetorical strategies you have used in your writing over the course. (So it’s a good idea to save all your work.)
Reading Responses and Quizzes (100 points- 15-20 points each—the total points possible will equal 115.) Reading responses will be questions that ask you to consider some aspect of the rhetorical situation of a particular assigned text or texts. Quizzes will ask specific short answer questions about information presented in The Harbrace Guide to Writing and/or information presented in class. Quizzes and reading responses are closed book; however, you are welcome and encouraged to bring handwritten notes. These responses are assigned with the intention of supporting class work and discussion and only count for credit when completed in class and you stay the entire class period (unless assigned via Blackboard)—may not be made up or taken early.

Class Participation (100 Points)
Class Participation means being actively engaged with the work of the course. A perfect score of 100 for class participation would mean a student attended every class with all work due for that day. This includes having the course text or other assigned materials in class every day, as well as contributing positively to all class discussions and workshops. But an “A” doesn’t mean perfection. It means most of the time, you meet these standards. The evaluation for class participation is made up of the following: (See the grading section of this syllabus for a specific breakdown.)

  Small Group Workshops
  Students will work in groups throughout the semester. Additionally there will be small group workshops for at least two of the developed writing projects. However, missing a workshop or attending without a developed draft will mean an automatic 20 points off your class participation score. More importantly, you lose the opportunity for feedback before turning in your final work.

  Whole Group Workshops
  There may be a Whole Group workshops during the course. This is a voluntary, extra credit assignment for students who are willing to bring in-process draft copies for the whole class for workshop critique. The greatest benefit to these students is the opportunity to receive feedback from nearly 30 readers, including feedback from the instructor (me). This is also the extra credit offered which can add specific points to your class total. Bringing copies for whole class workshop and writing a reflective response earns 25 points extra credit.

  Letter of Introduction and Topic Proposals
  Uploading the first week of class letter of introduction, using the appropriate format and fulfilling the requirements, on time, will give you your first five points of the semester. Two paper proposal topics will also be required. The purpose of these proposals is to help students choose topics which are appropriate for success with the assignment.

  Rhetorical Worksheets
  Each Writing Project will include an optional worksheet to be completed before (and during) the project process and turned in with the in-process workshop draft. (No late work accepted.)

  Workplace Interview mini-presentations
  A short report on your findings from the workplace interview project. These presentations are informal and evaluated based on the information presented.

Absences – the absence policy is listed below. Needless to say, it’s difficult to be considered as participating in class when one isn’t present.

COURSE POLICIES
Revisions
Revising is an important part of this course because it is an essential part of the writing process. However, due to the fast pace of summer session, it may only be possible to revise the first paper. Revisions are allowed and encouraged, as long as you have been present at class workshops and have met all required due dates. Revising for an improved grade means significant change (re-visioning, not editing). If you choose to revise an essay, you must make an appointment to see me before you begin (no later than November 25th). Only one revision will be considered at a time.
Absences

This class is interactive. Particularly because we are exploring a variety of genres, class discussions benefit from the broad variety of experiences everyone brings to the room. Your involvement also helps me understand when we need to go more deeply into a topic (and the reverse). For these reasons and more, I count on students being actively engaged as students. This includes having done the work outside of class that is necessary to be engaged with class activities.

- You may miss four classes without penalty. Missing more than five class meetings, for any reason, will lower your class participation grade 25 points for each absence. Missing no more than one class counts positively toward Class Participation. (Note: also see “small group workshops” regarding absences.)
- IMPORTANT: I frequently hand out reading materials, give assignments, and make changes to the course calendar in class. You are responsible for this information when you are absent. It’s a good idea to make a friend in here right away, so you have someone to contact if you have to miss class.

Coming to class late and/or leaving early. Because late arrivals and early departures can be disruptive, I appreciate your being in class at the start of class and staying through the entire period. Missing a significant portion of a class meeting will be counted as an absence.

In-class Technology

Laptops and tablets are great to have in class for note taking, online readings, and especially, looking up information during class discussions. However, it’s easy to become distracted. As an experiment this semester, I am allowing the use of all technology during class time. However, if your use of a device is distracting to other students or to me, I will ask you to stop for the day. If it happens more than once, I’ll ask you to stop using it in class for the semester.

Late or Missed Work

Work is considered on time when turned in at the beginning of class on the day it is due.

- Developed Writing Projects: fifteen (15) points off for each class meeting past the due date. No work will be accepted, for any reason, after the last day of class.
- Rhetorical Analysis Papers: ten (10) points off for each class meeting past the due date.
- In-Class Reading Responses/Quizzes: these assignments may not be made up outside of class.

Extra Credit

Extra Credit is offered to those students doing C or better work in the course and meeting attendance requirements. These assignments are evaluated Credit/No Credit. Except for Workshops (see Extra Credit on Blackboard), these assignments do not add specific points to your overall point total but receiving satisfactory or better evaluations on the majority of these assignments can raise a final course grade by a third (for instance, from a B to a B+). Most extra credit for this course will involve outside research. Outside research assignments will always require a brief presentation to the class about your findings. Extra Credit is always optional.

Turnitin

Major course papers will be uploaded to Turnitin via Blackboard. Turnitin is a program which allows me to give evaluative feedback (written comments and a rubric score). It also provides an originality report which shows any text which has come from a published source. Of course, outside sources appropriately quoted and cited are an essential part of academic writing. It’s only when outside sources are presented without quotations or citations that work is considered plagiarism. (Specific instructions for uploading work will be given out separately.)

Instructions for submitting papers and then looking at comments once they are graded will be presented in class. Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. You may submit your papers in such a way that no identifying information about you is included. Another option is that you may request, in writing, that your papers not be submitted to Turnitin.com. However, if you choose this option you will be required to provide documentation to substantiate that the papers are your original work and do not include any plagiarized material.
A few notes about plagiarism:
(From SDSU Policy File IV-D-3) “Plagiarism shall be defined as the act of incorporating ideas, words, or specific substance of another, whether purchased, borrowed, or otherwise obtained, and submitting same to the University as one’s own work to fulfill academic requirements without giving credit to the appropriate source. Plagiarism shall include but not be limited to (a) submitting work, either in part or in whole, completed by another; (b) omitting footnotes for ideas, statements, facts, or conclusions that belong to another; (c) omitting quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, sentence, or part thereof; (d) close and lengthy paraphrasing of the writings of another; …(f) submitting as one’s own work papers purchased from research companies.”

The minimum consequence for plagiarism in this course is a score of zero on the assignment. SDSU policy requires the reporting of any academic dishonesty to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities. Needless to say, the best policy is to always turn in only your own work. As noted above, I may use Turnitin.com as a teaching tool, but I may also use it as a means of determining plagiarism if I have specific concerns about submitted work.

GRADING
Students must earn a grade of C (75% of total points for the class) in order to meet the SDSU Upper Division Writing Requirement. Students receiving grades of C-, D+, D, or D- will receive three units, but will not have satisfied the Upper Division Writing Requirement. Therefore students receiving these grades will be required to take RWS 305 again.

Total points possible for this course = 1000.

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A Note about Blackboard Gradebook
What you see on Blackboard is what I have in my gradebook. If a score is missing and the work has been passed back, you need to show me the graded work in order to have your score counted. Any ungraded work submitted after grades have been posted is subject to Late Work policies.

Class Participation Breakdown
For an “A” – 90-100 points
- Receive full credit for the Rhetorical Considerations worksheets for first two developed writing projects, both Topic Proposals, and the Workplace Writing Interview mini-presentation. (Full Credit includes meeting all deadlines and requirements.)
- Attend both formal small group workshops with assigned copies of full drafts.
- Strong work during informal small group workshops.
- Be fully engaged with class activities during class time. (Note: I may notice and keep track of times when students are not engaged with class work, but not bring this to your attention.)
- Have all course materials (especially assigned readings, both from the book and assigned online) at every class meeting.
- Miss no more than two class meetings.

For a “B” – 80-89 points
- Receive full credit for the Workplace Writing Project Topic Proposal, and the Workplace Writing Interview mini-presentation. (Credit includes meeting all deadlines and requirements.)
- Attend both formal small group workshops with assigned copies of full drafts.
- Solid work during informal small group workshops.
- Be fully engaged with class activities during class time. (Note: I may notice and keep track of times when students are not engaged with class work, but not bring this to your attention.)
- Have all course materials (especially assigned readings, both from the book and assigned online) at most class meetings.
- Miss no more than three class meetings.
For a "C" – 75-79%

- Receive credit for the Workplace Writing Project Topic Proposal, and the Workplace Writing Interview mini-presentation.
- Attend both formal small group workshops with assigned copies of full drafts. (Please note: there is a formal point consequence for missing the formal small workshops.)
- Solid work during informal small group workshops.
- Be engaged with class activities during class time most of the time. (Note: I may notice and keep track of times when students are not engaged with class work, but not bring this to your attention.)
- Attendance: note that there is a formal point consequence for missing more than three class meetings.

Learning Goals for RWS 305W

Rhetorical Knowledge

Students will learn how to

- Respond effectively in writing to issues and arguments raised in a variety of disciplinary, popular, and professional texts and/or contexts
- 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
- 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
- Understand the concept of rhetorical situations: the relationship among writer-audience-subject-context

Critical Thinking and Reading

Students will learn how to

- Use “language about language” that enables a writer to reflect on the use of rhetorical strategies as well as strengths, difficulties, and progress as a working writer
- Apply critical reading strategies to a variety of publicly and individually produced texts
- Work with demanding readings and learn to interpret, incorporate, and evaluate these readings
- Use writing as a way to learn—to think about, question, and communicate ideas
- Understand the relationships among language, knowledge and power

Writing Processes

RWS 305W will enhance students’ abilities to develop writing processes that reflect invention, inquiry, revision, and editing. Students will learn how to

- Develop successful, flexible strategies for generating, revising, and editing texts
- Understand the collaborative and social aspects of the writing process
- Critique their own and others’ texts

Knowledge of Conventions

Students will learn to

- Understand the ways various discourse communities use different strategies for conveying information, researching information, and evaluating and analyzing information
- Analyze audience expectations about conventions and address them in critical ways
- Effectively integrate a variety of sources into their writings
- Practice appropriate means of documenting their sources
- Sustain reasonable correctness in grammar and mechanics to perform well in a variety of writing contexts and professional settings

Attitudes, Values, and Preparation for Life Beyond the University

RWS 305W reflects the values of a liberal arts education, namely,
● Working cooperatively with others to achieve mutually defined goals, face-to-face in the classroom and in other settings
● Respecting the diverse voices and perspectives that characterize life in a multi-cultural classroom and society
● Applying critical reading strategies to a variety of publicly and individually produced texts
● Valuing free expression and the ability to participate confidently in public discussion on issues of importance to the workplace and the community
● Showing initiative in problem solving situations