RWS 100

The Rhetoric of Written Argument

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.

“The duty and office of rhetoric is to apply reason to imagination for the better moving of the will.”

--Sir Francis Bacon
attendance
əˈtendəns/noun.
The action or state of going regularly to or being present at a place or event.

“My RWS attendance was very irregular, leading to my D+”

Class Policies and Other Important Information

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You are expected to attend all scheduled classes and roll will be taken each day. Attendance, however, will not be considered mandatory.

However, group work, reading quizzes, homework assignments and the like will occur without notice and cannot, for any reason, be made up. If you are not in class a day a “pointed” assignment is given, you will forfeit those points.

Also, no distinction will be made between excused or unexcused absences. Sleeping in or great surf are the same as a migraine, a sore throat, or a visit to the doctor. Doctor’s notes will not be accepted (except in the case of a prolonged, serious illness, in which case your best option may be dropping the course and trying again another semester).

Furthermore, “I wasn’t here that day” is never an acceptable excuse for missed work. Again, any in-class assignments missed due to absence cannot be made up.

Finally, it is your responsibility to make up for missed days. This does not include asking the instructor “Did we do anything important in class today?”

Make friends with a few classmates for the purpose of exchanging missed information, and refer frequently to Blackboard. (Should the instructor need to miss class, all efforts will be made to send an email to the students by 10:00 PM the night before the absence. Don’t get too excited. This does not happen often.)

REWRITES/REVATIONS

You may rewrite any outside-of-class assignment as often as you like, until the final deadline. The deadline is the deadline. It is not a zombie-line. Essays do not regain new life after they have been submitted. So make sure the essay you submit for a grade is the best draft you have.

Your instructor will happily go over drafts with you during office hours or any other mutually agreed upon time. He will not review any drafts without the student present, which means you must see the instructor in person before the assignment due date if you wish feedback on your writing.

When seeing the instructor, you must bring a paper copy of your draft to the meeting. The instructor WILL NOT READ ESSAYS on laptops, tablets, smartphones on any other electronic device. If you arrive at your
conference without a paper copy of your essay, you will be asked to return at another time with the proper paper copy.

Finally, seeing the instructor for advice prior to submission in no way guarantees an “A” grade. Improvements in one area of writing often have the effect of revealing problems in other areas—just as replacing shabby carpeting may reveal the less-than-stellar quality of the furniture. Universal improvements—or improvements of all aspects of writing are generally needed for an “exceptional” grade.

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**THE ASSIGNMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Mini Essay</td>
<td>25 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes/Homework, etc.</td>
<td>250 Points (Total)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 “Paragraph” Assignments</td>
<td>100 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Major Essays</td>
<td>450 Points (Total)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Sentence Structure Quizzes</td>
<td>75 Points (Total)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>100 Points</td>
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**TOTAL** 1000 Points

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**LATE WORK**

Due to the volume of work, the number of assignments, the increased enrollment, and the pace of the class, late work will not be accepted. No exceptions will be made. Work may be turned in prior to the due date, but never after.

Most work will be submitted on paper, in class, at the beginning of the class. Any attempt to submit after that date and/or time will be denied.

**Unsolicited emailed submissions will not be accepted,** nor will hard copies of assignments mysteriously dropped in the instructor’s mailbox or on his desk. The dates of reading and/or vocabulary quizzes will not be announced. You must be in class to take the quiz. *Missed reading quizzes can not be made up, not matter what the reason or excuse.*

Finally, away games do not extend or excuse deadlines. If you want your work to count, submit it BEFORE the deadline.

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**EMAIL ETIQUETTE**

The email address is not intended as an alternative to attending class, nor is it a substitute for submitting work in class—**unsolicited emailed submissions of work will be considered spam.**

If you do miss a class, do not email the instructor to ask for a recitation of that day’s lectures. See attendance policy.

Also, when emailing, make sure to identify yourself, your class, and your class time. *I will not respond to blind emails.* Do not expect a response from emails sent after 6:00 PM regarding the next day’s class, and don’t always expect a response. Queries that can be answered by reading the syllabus, accessing Blackboard, or that are the responsibility of the student ("How many absences do I have?" “What is my grade so far?”) are generally left unanswered. Think about how you could answer the question first (Blackboard is always a good start) before asking
“when is this due?” or “what is my grade at this point?” or similar questions.

Also, consider your “email ethos.” Is “DrunkToker@whateverdude.com” really how you want your instructors, employers, clergy, mothers, etc. to think of you? An email address using your real name is professional, obvious, and more likely to be responded to.

Finally, consider your audience. Even an email sent from a cell phone should clear, well-written, and properly spelled when intended for a professor, employer or other professional. “Will u b in ur office?” shows a lack of concern, effort and respect. Such emails will not receive a response.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Yes, your new iPhone 97S is really cool and we’re all very impressed by it. I like mine, too. But your purpose in class is to learn, and that can’t happen if you’re telling your friends “where you’re at,” or watching videos, listening to MP3 files, playing video games, text messaging, starting a thermo-nuclear war, or doing whatever these devices allow you to do these days. If it has a battery, has been charged, or plugs into a wall, turn it off before class begins.

This policy also applies to lap-top computers and tablets, which prior students have shown to be more of a distraction than a benefit to class. If you want to take notes—always a good idea—take them on paper in class with a pen or pencil and then after class transfer them to the electronic device of your choosing.

If you decided to use your electronic device(s) despite this request, you will marked absent and your class participation grade will be dinged.

Exceptions will not be made. TURN YOUR ELECTRONIC DEVICES OFF (NOT ON SILENT) BEFORE CLASS BEGINS!

**PLAGIARISM**

This is a serious offense and will result, minimally, in a failing assignment grade.

The more severe the violation, the more severe the punishment. Plagiarism includes not citing or otherwise giving credit to outside sources; submitting another person’s work as your own (including other students’ work, essays found on line; or work purchased from essay brokers (who are all going straight to H-E-double hockey sticks)), etc. This can be as little a single sentence not credited to its source. Also, realize that if you found the essay on Google, your instructor can find it there, too.

And finally, obviously cramming an unrelated sentence or two into an essay you wrote for another
class or simply submitting an essay written for a prompt other than one assigned in RWS 305W will be considered plagiarism in this class and will receive 0 (zero) points.

So, in short, always do your own work. Any points lost to plagiarism cannot be made up.

**GRADING**

All work will receive a letter score from A to F, including plusses and minuses.

Evaluation will be based on fulfillment of assignment, quality of detail, originality, effort and accuracy in mechanics and the conventions of the English language. The grading standards and criteria for this class are based on (NOT "based off of" or “based around”) the Writing Proficiency Assessment grading rubric and reflect current accepted and expected writing conventions.

A student’s political, social, religious, etc. views are NOT part of the criteria, nor are the instructor’s. The student’s ability to logically, clearly, accurately fully support his or her views in writing is, however, a large part of the evaluation process.

Each out-of-class writing assignment will include a grading rubric, which will be filled out and returned to you by the instructor after you submit your essay. (The rubric also makes an excellent check-list for you prior to submission.)

Unfortunately, due to time restraints caused by increased enrollments, written comments on essays will be minimal. The instructor is not happy about this, but to ensure your work is returned in a reasonable time, extensive commenting has to be sacrificed. However, the instructor will gladly discuss any grade with you during scheduled office hours or at another mutually agreed upon time.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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 at (619) 594-6473. 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.

**ASKING QUESTIONS**

You can’t expect to learn anything if you don’t ask questions. Please feel free to ask questions during class, especially when prompted. Also, please refrain from waiting after class, huddled around the instructor’s desk, to ask questions that could have, and often should have, been asked during class time. The instructor has other classes and appointments to get to also.

**FOOD, DRINK, GUM**

This is a classroom, not a dining hall, so as a courtesy to me and your classmates, I ask that you not eat in class. Also loud, open mouth gum chewing (and its inevitable cracking sounds), filing your nails, obsessively clicking your pen, talking amongst yourselves, or engaging in any other behavior that might distract others from the learning (or teaching) process are prohibited. Again, the instructor reserves the right to mark absent anyone whose attentions are focused on matters other than class or anyone who disrupts class. Beverages are fine as long as they are consumed carefully and absent of unnecessary noise such as straw squeaking or ice munching. Just as the classroom is not a dining hall, it is also not a barnyard or playground.
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. Analyze and evaluate an author’s project and argument and explain rhetorical strategies that this author—and by extension other writers—uses to engage readers in thinking about her argument.
4. Assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of multiple assigned texts, including discussion of rhetorical strategies, supporting evidence, audience, and text structure.

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:

5. 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;
6. analyze and assess the relative strengths of arguments and supporting evidence
7. use all aspects of the writing process—including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading;
8. 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;
9. 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;
10. effectively select material from written arguments, contextualize it, and comment on it in their writing;
11. 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;
12. craft well-reasoned arguments for specific audiences
13. 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;
14. analyze and assess arguments made by visual texts; incorporate visual images into their documents;
15. edit their writing for the grammar and usage conventions appropriate to each writing situation;
16. assign significance to the arguments that they read;
17. reflect on how they wrote their papers, and revise arguments and findings based on critical reflection.