RWS 305W SYLLABUS  Fall 2014

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COURSE MATERIALS are available at KB Books on College Ave:
Renner. RWS Course Reader.

I will provide supplemental information on Blackboard and email. Please check your email for this class several times a week. I’ll expect you to print and bring to class anything that you receive up to 24 hours before class.

OFFICE HOURS: Regular office hours will be on M 6-6:45, T 5:30-6:30, and by appointment.

Writing in Various Settings:
In RWS 305W students learn to respond not just to academic tasks but a wider variety of genres and settings that require diverse research methods and writing styles. The course also contains a metacognitive component in which students learn to reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of their own writing style(s) within rhetorical contexts.

Prerequisites
A qualifying score on the Writing Proficiency Assessment (WPA), or a grade of C or higher in RWS 280 or 281, and completion of general education requirements in composition and critical thinking.

NOTE: Needing to take 280 and/or 305W is not an indicator that you failed the WPA, or are a failure as a writer. A 10 on the WPA (the score necessary to avoid further writing classes) enables you to test out of the regular writing program at SDSU. It’s difficult to achieve, as it involves writing at a very high level, staying on topic, elaborating on your arguments, understanding the reading, knowing and employing rhetorical vocabulary, editing and proofreading well, and managing to do all that during that particular test on the day that you took it. Many very strong writers could use further work in one or more of those elements.

WHEN TO COME TO OFFICE HOURS: If your question requires a quick answer, emailing is fine. If your issue is more complicated—a personal problem that will likely affect your performance in the class, concerns about your grade, questions about the course—see me during office hours. You can also just stop by to chat or suck up. Just kidding. Sort of.
For all of your classes, though, coming to office hours is a way to make a large university experience much more personal.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Conferences: All students will meet with me at least once during a scheduled meeting. Class will be canceled for two weeks during the semester to enable all students to meet with me. I will schedule conferences during some of my office hours as well.
Missing a scheduled conference counts as an absence.

Absence policy: Students who miss more than the equivalent of two weeks of class may assume that they will not pass the class. There is no differentiation between “excused” or “unexcused” absences. In-class work, including journals and quizzes, cannot be made up.

Assignments: Please submit typed hard copies of all work done outside of class on the date that it is due. If you revise a paper that was initiated in class, please type it.
No credit will be given for late papers. If you are absent, you can email your work so that I know you did it on time, but I won’t grade or comment on emailed papers. Just bring the hard copy to my office hours (preferred) or to the following class period.
**Grades:** Most students can take this course for either credit or a letter grade. Take the class for credit if you tend to obsess about grades but don’t have the time, inclination, or interest to do well in this class. If you work full-time or are a nursing student, credit can be a godsend. Credit counts as the “C or better” needed to pass this class. (Change of grade option deadline is September 8 at 11:59 p.m.)

Journals, most quizzes, and smaller assignments are usually worth 10 points; assignments such as the Letter of Recommendation, Personal Statement, Reading Response, In-class essay, and Peer Review are 20-30 points, and each draft of the Dialogue Essay is 60 points. Class participation is 20% of your final grade. The total number of points in this class is approximately 500 points.

Some assignments, especially those done in class, will not be graded, but rather will be checked off and counted as a part of your class participation score. Some journals will not be collected. Please hold on to them to be submitted at the end of the semester with all work done in class in your Final Portfolio.

- Sit in front, don’t use computer or text, and try to participate at least twice each class period
- Learn how to become interested in assignments and ideas that aren’t naturally fascinating to you
- Be aware of what is due when (an updated calendar will be posted every three weeks)
- Don’t obsess about every point. (Focusing on learning often results in a higher grade, not to mention a better general experience in the class.)
- If you’re having trouble with any particular part of the class, see me before you get too frustrated
- Be in class. Most of your work can be revised if you attend class and submit it on time
- Come to office hours at least twice.
- Write more than you think you need to. In this class, you typically achieve the deep thoughts that you are aiming at by means of writing more. If the assignment says, for example, “6-8+ pages,” 6 pages is the bare minimum for credit, while A students should aim at more than 8 pages.
- Take notes. Keep ALL WORK. You’ll be submitting it all in your Final Portfolio

**Quizzes**
Assume that you will be quizzed on all formal and informal reading assignments. Each week you will read a chapter (three “sessions”) in *Word Power Made Easy*, an etymology book designed to increase your vocabulary and knowledge of the English language. You will sometimes have two quizzes: one on vocabulary and the second on assigned reading. You may drop your lowest quiz score at the end of the semester. *

**Grammar/writing/critical thinking presentations:** One oral presentation is required for each student. In order to get credit (30 points), you will need a handout for each student to highlight what you are teaching the class (this can be an outline, summary, list of rules, or quiz). You will need to email your handout and your general plan or Power Point for the presentation to me no later than three days in advance. (The brave and admirable students who do presentations during the first few days of class are exempted from this). See p. 1-2 your *Course Reader* for information.

**SYLLABUS STATEMENT for 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.

Plagiarism (adapted for the SDSU Catalogue):
Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s words, phrases, ideas, or concepts as if they were your own. In your writing you must always give credit through quotation marks, footnotes, and complete citations if you use someone else’s works or ideas. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. If you use material from a printed source without adequate citation or copy another student’s work, you will fail the assignment and most likely fail the entire course. The incident will also be reported to and go on record with the university. You could face academic probation, suspension, or even expulsion from SDSU. See the SDSU General Catalogue for the complete University policy on plagiarism.
STUDENT LEARNING GOALS FOR RWS 305W

In RWS 305W students learn to respond not just to academic tasks but 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 rhetorical contexts.

Rhetorical Knowledge

RWS 305W will help students identify, analyze, and respond in writing to various rhetorical situations. Students will learn how to

- 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
- Respond effectively in writing to issues and arguments raised in a variety of disciplinary, popular, and professional texts and/or contexts
- Produce effective arguments from a variety of disciplinary, popular, and professional contexts

CRITICAL THINKING AND READING STRATEGIES

RWS 305W will provide students with strategies to understand the function of reading and writing in cultural, academic, and professional communities. Students will learn how to

- Actively read texts using a variety of reading strategies such as annotation, visual organizers, questioning, and discussion
- Identify how a writer uses rhetorical strategies in various genres of writing
- Interpret, analyze, and evaluate demanding texts
- Apply critical thinking skills and reading strategies to evaluate their own writing and the writing of fellow students
- Reflect on their own progress as a working writer in relation to critical thinking and reading strategies

Writing Processes

RWS 305W will strengthen students’ awareness of and abilities to use writing processes effectively. Students will learn how to

- Develop flexible strategies for creating, revising, and editing texts
- Critique their own and others’ texts
- Write with an awareness of audience and purpose
Knowledge of Conventions

**RWS 305W** will provide students with strategies to identify, analyze, and apply the writing conventions of different discourse communities and to write effectively within those communities. Students will learn to

- Identify how discourse communities employ particular strategies for conveying, researching, evaluating, and presenting information
- Analyze and choose the appropriate conventions for a range of audience expectations
- Integrate a variety of appropriate sources into their writings in a way that accurately reflects the writer’s meaning and purpose
- Document sources appropriately
- 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, to

- Work collaboratively and cooperatively to achieve defined goals
- Respect the diverse points of view that characterize our multi-cultural classroom community
- Critically analyze a variety of texts produced for public and individual readers
- Participate confidently in public discussion on issues of importance to the workplace and the community
- Address issues in writing

**Definitions**

- **Discourse Community**: “A site or social group defined by special kinds of speech and writing, the boundaries and character of which are determined by the communicative practices as well as the social sentiments, shared norms, and cultural values of the members” (*Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition: Communication from Ancient Times to the Information Age* 194).

- **Genre**: “A type of spoken or written discourse, recognized as conventional by members of an intellectual community, that draws together certain substantive and stylistic features in response to a recurrent rhetorical situation” (*Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition: Communication from Ancient Times to the Information Age* 279).