
“well, I just think it would be good if one of us maybe stood up and said a few words, or, so as not to involve the police, at least quietly wrote something down.”
—Billy Collins, from “Passengers” (writers almanac)

- Instructor: James Towner
- My Office Phone: 594-6617, ex 2
- Email: jttowner@mail.sdsu.edu
- Office: SH 106B
- Office hours: Tues & Thurs 10:00-10:50 and by appointment after class; MWF 12-100

Prerequisites: All RWS 305W students must have satisfactory completion of RWS 100 and RWS 200 or the equivalent. RWS 305W students must also have completed the Writing Proficiency Assessment with a score of 8 or 9 or RWS 280 or 281 with a grade of “C” or better.

Texts and Materials:
I have not ordered a textbook for this class. But I recommend:
- Keys for Writers, Raimes, especially Part 6, ‘Style’
- They Say, I Say, by Graff & Birkenstein, for working with sources
- The Call to Write, by Trimbur and The Norton Field Guide to Writing, by Bullock for more discussion and examples of genres
- Also, visit the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) @ http://owlenglish.purdue.edu/ for citation styles and writing help of all kinds. It’s amazing.
- Design ideas from OWL: HATS • OWL on Report and Technical Writing: OWL Ppt On Reports
- Sample IMRD paper: IMRD Paper • Report sections Purdue OWL: OWL Report Sections

Other Necessities:
- Microsoft Word or compatible software
- Internet access
- Access to a computer and the Internet; hopefully you can bring a laptop for in-class work on your writing projects.

My Teaching Philosophy:
I very much enjoy the teaching of rhetoric and seeing students grow in their understanding of rhetoric and academic writing and reading. I will gladly act as coach and mentor, but please be advised that I consider higher education an exercise in self-reliance. I will not, therefore, rescue students from the consequences of their choices. I expect students to familiarize themselves with and do their best to follow our course’s policies and schedule. (adapted from Glen McGlish)

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.

Course Description: 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. This course meets the upper division writing requirements for students who complete the class with a grade of “C” or better.

**Learning Goals for RWS 305W:**

- **Rhetorical Knowledge:** RWS 305W will help students to analyze writing in different contexts by introducing you to the concept of rhetorical situations: the complex interplay among writer, audience, subject, and context. Students will learn how to:
  1. Respond effectively in writing to issues and arguments raised in a variety of disciplinary, popular, and professional texts and/or contexts;
  2. 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;
  3. 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;
  4. Understand the concept of rhetorical situations: the relationship among writer-audience-subject-context;

- **Critical Thinking and Reading:** 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:
  1. 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;
  2. Apply critical reading strategies to a variety of publicly and individually produced texts;
  3. Work with demanding readings and learn to interpret, incorporate, and evaluate these readings;
  4. Use writing as a way to learn – to think about, question, and communicate ideas;
  5. Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power.

- **Writing Process:** RWS 305W will enhance students' abilities to develop writing processes that reflect invention, inquiry, revision, and editing. Students will learn how to:
  1. Develop effective, flexible strategies for generating, revising, and editing texts;
  2. Understand the collaborative and social aspects of the writing process;
  3. Critique their own and others’ texts.

- **Knowledge of Conventions:** RWS 305W will provide students with strategies to analyze the writing conventions of different discourse communities and to begin to write effectively within these communities. Students will learn to:
  1. Identify how different discourse communities employ particular strategies for conveying, researching, and evaluating information;
  2. Analyze and address a range of audience expectations of conventions;
  3. Effectively integrate a variety of appropriate sources into writings;
  4. Practice appropriate means of documenting sources;
  5. 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:
  1. Work cooperatively to achieve mutually defined goals, face-to-face in the classroom and in other settings.
  2. Respect the diverse voices and perspectives that characterize life in a multi-cultural classroom and society;
  3. Critically analyze a variety of publicly and individually produced texts;
  4. Value free expression and participate confidently in public discussion on issues of importance to the workplace and the community;
  5. Show initiative in problem solving situations.
Course Policies:

- **Blackboard & Turnitin:** Please use our Blackboard Website frequently (several times per week and before each class session). Keep abreast of assignment dates. We will use Blackboard and Turnitin for submitting assignments and peer revisions.
  
  Retrieve all assignment schedules, handouts, and other course documents from our Blackboard site.

- **Late Work:** Late submissions may not get you your points. Peer Mark assignments require you to submit drafts on time.
  
  Please complete projects on the assigned dates. Assignments may be accepted with verifiable, mitigating circumstances. Late assignments, if accepted, may be reduced in grade. I reserve the right to allow revisions based on mitigating circumstances.

- **Attendance:** I expect students to prepare as needed and attend classes regularly. Nearly always, those who regularly attend, pass this class.

- **Phones and Tablets:** Please, during class silence and put away phones.

- **Turnitin Policy:**
  
  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. Alternatively, 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.

- **Alternative Arrangements/ Needs:** If you are registered with SDS and require special arrangements to be made in order to accommodate your best learning opportunities, I am happy to work with you in conjunction with SDS. Please let me know of your situation and needs so that we can work together to ensure you have every opportunity to do your best work in this class.

- **Student athletes:** If you are a student athlete with away games scheduled during the semester, please let me know by the end of the first week of class and present me with a copy of your team travel scheduled. I am aware of your multiple obligations as student athletes, and we will make appropriate scheduling arrangements – this may include turning assignments in early. I am also aware that there are other groups identified by the University Senate as having these scheduling requirements and will make similar arrangements if you identify yourselves and your needs early in the semester.

- **Plagiarism:** Cheating on homework or class work, or work containing Plagiarism will be given 0 points. A second offense will result in a Course Grade of F or N/C and be reported to Student Affairs. NOTE: Turning in work previously done by you or others for other classes will be considered cheating. Using work written by others and revised as your own is cheating and plagiarism. See SDSU General Catalogue, p. 449 for full description of plagiarism.

  **All material from sources must be cited appropriately for genre and rhetorical situation.**
  
  **REMEMBER:** All directly borrowed words and phrases must be inside quotation marks AND cited appropriately in the text of your work.

  Refer to page 432 of the General Catalogue for the potential consequences of plagiarism, which may include failing the course and/or possible expulsion from the university.
Late or Missing Work:
I realize that “life can get in the way” of our goals and responsibilities. And thus, under certain mitigating circumstances (such as your own serious illness, or the serious illness or a death in the family, or an natural disasters) I will accept late papers. And generally if you have attended regularly I will give everyone one chance to hand in late one of the Short Writing assignments—without penalty.

However, we need to discuss your mitigating circumstances before I will accept your work. So please let me know when you are having trouble meeting the obligations of our course. I want to help you succeed but need your help to help you. In most cases I will at least accept your late work; although, depending on circumstances the grade may be reduced. Remember: Missing assignments receive 0 points.

In-class Presence:
Our class is a community; we work together to build and make that community prosper. Thus, each of us is expected to share in the community building by carefully preparing for, and attending to, our community work. In-class presence may include discussion, group work, brainstorming, reading, reports, peer revisions, and research.

• To earn an A or 90-100% class participants will ENTHUSIASTICALLY and THOUGHTFULLY contribute to questions, peer revision sessions, and class work, and miss two or fewer classes.
• To earn a B or 79-89 % class participants will STRONGLY contribute to class in the all or most above ways, and miss three or fewer classes.
• To earn a C or 69-76% class participants will BASICALLY contribute to class in the some of the above ways, and miss four or more classes.
• To earn a D or 59-66% class participants will have missed more than four class meetings and contributed WEAKLY to our class.
• To earn an F or 50-56% class participants will have contributed VERY WEAKLY and or disrupted the class, or missed more than five classes.

If you leave early, without prior arrangements, you will be counted absent.

Course Work: Drafts are Required; Revision drafts are optional but you may need the points.
Professional Discourse assignments:

a. A 1400-1600 word Report with 6 minimum sources on a subject from, if possible your intended profession. In your report you explain a problem, controversy, or question. Your report will look like reports/papers in your field. Or you may choose a topic-suitable media style (Newsletter, Fact Sheet, an on-line format such as Storify). I will expect visual elements such as headings, charts, or tables. You will organize as reports are organized in your field. Your writing style will work for your intended readers—from your field or as defined in your Proposal (see below). You will develop credibility and community with your readers. You will cite all information (ideas, data) and you will use quotation marks around all borrowed words and phrases.

In short, you will identify an issue, a problem, a controversy in your field/major or for a current specific audience. Then, you will research that issue, take notes, and present that researched information, clarifying and analyzing the issue for your intended audience. The Report has several parts:

i. Proposal—about 200-300 words describing your topic, audience, intention, and the value of report to your readers. NOTE: YOU MUST CONFERENCE WITH ME ON THIS BEFORE CONTINUING.

ii. Introduction—about 2 pages with Bibliography—an alphabetical list of 6 or more sources in suitable format (APA, MLA, Chicago).

iii. Exploration draft (required)

iv. Draft in full (required)

v. REVISED Draft (optional)
b. **A Business letter** DRAFT (required) and Revised draft (optional): Based on your report, write a one-page, single-spaced business **letter** to a powerful individual, calling them to act on the subject of your report.

**Civic Discourse, Draft (required):**

- **A commentary** that argues for a specific action or line of thought regarding a problem, controversy, or question for an audience who does not agree with you (roughly 900 words).
- **Memoir:** you may choose something more like a memoir, that implicitly argues a point your readers would find useful or interesting (up to 1400 words).
- **Open Letter,** suitable for general audience of a blog, website, or newspaper (roughly 800-900 words).

**Note:**
Each major writing project earns points for Draft and Revised Drafts. I will conference with you on the PROPOSAL of your Report. You then write the Draft, and then you will revise and resubmit a Revised draft for more points, incorporating suggestions to improve your writing.

**Course Grade:**

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<th>Course Work and Point Value</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Discourse:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction &amp; Bibliography</td>
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**Course Total:** 1000