RWS 100-73: The Rhetoric of Written Argument  
Fall 2015 Course Syllabus

Contact Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professor:</th>
<th>Patty Hiebert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:phiebert@mail.sdsu.edu">phiebert@mail.sdsu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office:</td>
<td>Storm Hall (SH) 116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Hours:</td>
<td>11:30-12:30 Tuesdays &amp; Thursdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Mailbox:</td>
<td>Storm Hall West (STW) 141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule ID:</th>
<th>23014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Days:</td>
<td>Tuesdays &amp; Thursdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Time:</td>
<td>8:00- 9:15 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room Number:</td>
<td>AH 2103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Description

RWS 100 is a course in academic reading and writing that focuses on rhetorical analysis. This course asks students to consider texts as pieces of rhetoric and to provide a written analysis that considers the moves that an author chooses to use in order to persuade a specific audience. Hence, this course asks students to approach writing and reading as critical inquiry, and this ultimately helps students undertake university-level writing projects. Students learn to use sources in their writing and make appropriate decisions about structure, cohesion, and rhetorical conventions. RWS 100 teaches students how to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of arguments, use texts in conversation with other texts, engage in “the bigger conversation” themselves, and reflect on and analyze their own reading and writing strategies.

Required Texts


- Course readings will be made available on Blackboard; they must be printed out and brought to class.

Optional Texts

Also Required

- Access to a computer, printer and paper. All outside work must be typed and readings on Blackboard must be printed for annotations and brought to class. Keep handy reams of paper, ink cartridges, and/or print card amply supplied with a deposit.
- Mechanical pencil and paper for in-class writings.
- Pens – at least two different colors.
- Highlighter.
- 1-1.5” binder to compile work, readings, and handouts for each unit in progress – to be readily available for in-class work.
- 2- folders with inside pockets for submission of final papers.
- Stapler (all multi-page assignments must be stapled).
- Hole punch for any work that needs to be in binder such as annotated readings, working drafts, notes, grade sheet, etc.

What is Rhetoric and Argument?

“Let rhetoric be defined as an ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion” (Aristotle On Rhetoric 37).

“Wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. And wherever there is ‘meaning,’ there is ‘persuasion’” (Kenneth Burke Rhetoric of Motives 172).

“Argumentation is intended to act upon an audience, to modify an audience’s convictions or dispositions through discourse, and it tries to gain a meeting of the minds instead of imposing its will through constraint or conditioning” (Chaïm Perelman The Realm of Rhetoric 11).

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.

**Graded Course Requirements and Activities (also see Grading Criteria chart)**

- **Participation:** Participation is important to your final grade. Participation includes being physically as well as mentally present in class and being prepared and engaged (see the chart “Grading Criteria” for details of how points for participation are earned and how your grade may be impacted). Much of the course involves in-class discussion and as such, depends on you to regularly contribute your insights. Attendance and positive contribution to class activities are essential to succeed in this class. Since this is a discussion-based class, it is vital that you listen and speak respectfully to others at all times. I encourage you to express your opinions, of course – they will help inspire good discussions –however, your words and actions must ensure an atmosphere of civility. “Day-to-day Class Participation” is worth 5% of your grade and points are
allocated on a curve. While 5% may not seem like much, your dedication to participation will also be reflected in your overall work because it is an essential component to your learning and success in this class.

- **In-class Work and Quizzes:** A category closely linked to participation yet in its own category for grading purposes is “In-class Work and Quizzes.” In order to receive points in this category, your work must be completed inside the class. This work may take the form of a quiz or an individual or group written response or group activity. These in-class assignments may or may not be announced prior to the day of the work, so it is important for you to come prepared to every class. Each work will be worth ten points, and the top five works will be used for grading. This category is worth 5% of your grade.

- **Homework:** Homework will be assigned, and much of it will be used to help you in the process of writing your “big” papers. Homework assignments are designed to enhance the classroom learning environment and for you to practice using the terms and concepts required in the writing of your unit papers. Homework must be printed and must be in MLA format. Multiple pages must be stapled. Handwritten work will NOT be accepted unless instructed otherwise. Homework must be turned in on the day it is due in class, and there will be no make-ups or late work accepted. Each work will be worth up to ten points each, and the top five assignments will be used for grading. Homework is worth 5% of your grade.

- **Final Working Drafts:** Each unit requires a complete final working draft (aka rough draft) to be submitted. To be clear, a final working draft is a well thought out draft that is complete and submitted like a formal analytical paper. It will be typed/printed in MLA format with a works cited page. Your working draft will have an invitation, introduction, thesis/project statement, developed analyses paragraphs, and a conclusion. It will be your best first attempt at writing the unit paper. First working drafts will be submitted online to Turn-it-in AND you will need to have a hard copy on the day of your conference with me. Final working drafts are worth up to fifteen points each, and they are worth 6% of your grade.

- **Final Working Draft Conference:** Each unit requires at least one conference with me. Before you meet with me, you will submit your final working draft online to Turn-it-in, AND you will also need to bring to your conference a hard copy draft (printed on paper – NO electronic versions) that you can mark up with notes. In addition, you will provide focused questions regarding your paper to guide our discussion on how improvements could be made. Expect to be an active participant in this conference – this is essential to earning points. You should come prepared with annotated readings and other pertinent materials, a hard copy of your paper to mark up, and questions. Each conference is worth up to ten points, and is worth 4% of your grade.

- **First Draft & Peer Reviews:** Each unit requires a first draft for peer reviews. The first draft is a draft that you would be proud to turn in as a final draft if needed – in other words, this draft should look and read like a final draft. It should NOT simply be another copy of your final working (rough) draft: It should be markedly changed and improved. You will print two of these drafts to bring to class, and you will also post it online to Turn-it-in for me to review. YOU MUST HAVE TWO PRINTED FIRST DRAFTS IN CLASS ON THE DAY OF PEER REVIEWS TO PARTICIPATE!! Each student will exchange their first draft with two peer classmates in order to receive feedback from them. Peer reviews given are worth up to ten points each, and the points will be awarded to the peer reviewer.
In addition, students will receive up to five points for first drafts submitted online to Turn-it-in. Note: In order to receive points for any peer reviews you have completed, you must submit your final draft in a folder with copies of your peer reviewed first drafts. Each unit’s first draft and peer review activity is worth up to 25 points and is worth 10% of your grade.

- **Analysis Papers:** You will write four major analysis papers that will range in approximately five to ten pages in length for this course. Papers will require at least one final working draft (rough draft), one first draft (peer reviewed draft), and one final draft. Papers in all stages must be typed and printed, use MLA format, and be stapled. The final paper will be submitted in a pocketed folder along with previous drafts and peer reviews as well as pertinent readings as required. The unit one paper is worth 125 points, and subsequent unit papers are worth 175 points. These papers total 65% of your grade.

**Grade points for semester are distributed as follows:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day-to-day participation</td>
<td>=5%</td>
<td>= 50 points possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class work &amp; quizzes</td>
<td>=5%</td>
<td>= 50 points possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework assignments</td>
<td>=5%</td>
<td>= 50 points possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final working/rough drafts</td>
<td>=6%</td>
<td>= 60 points possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit conferences</td>
<td>=4%</td>
<td>= 40 points possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Drafts &amp; Peer Reviews</td>
<td>=10%</td>
<td>= 100 points possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final unit papers</td>
<td>= 65%</td>
<td>= 650 points possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total distribution of points</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>= 1,000 points possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** See Grading Criteria chart for assignment point breakdown

**Grading Rubric for points earned is as follows:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>930 to 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>900 to 929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>830 to 869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>800 to 829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>770 to 799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>730 to 769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>700 to 729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>670 to 699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>630 to 669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>600 to 629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** See Grading Criteria chart for assignment point breakdown

**Additional Requirements for Success**

- **Time Commitment:** Because deep reading, contemplative thinking, and good writing take time, you should plan to spend a minimum of two to three hours out of class to every hour in class (2.5 hrs x 3 = 7.5 hours per week outside of class to complete homework and study). While time commitment does not guarantee a positive outcome, the lack thereof will almost certainly guarantee a negative result. Managing your time is vital to succeed in any new endeavor, but good analytical writing takes a great deal of time and space: it is important to pace yourself in this class and not wait until the last minute to get your work done. A good constant pace allows for pondering, contemplation, and idea generation. Do yourself a favor and get into a scheduled routine to spend time with the materials in this class.

- **Printing:** You will need to print out a great deal of material including readings, PowerPoint slides, homework, and papers. This means you will need to always have paper and ink cartridges on hand or a print-card with money on it! Be prepared and print in advance as the labs can get busy, and/or your printer may run out of paper or ink. Not having your work printed and not being prepared with printed readings ready to annotate could result in missed learning and points!! Be prepared and get used to printing everything out for this class.
- **Notebook:** You will need to keep your work in progress, printouts of readings and handouts, as well as your notes in a binder which you should bring to class. You will be able to use these things for in-class activities and assignments.
- **Presentations & Verbal Responses:** You will occasionally be asked to give a brief presentation in class, either individually or as part of a group or you may be called upon to answer questions regarding the materials we have been studying. Oral presentations or responses, while uncomfortable for some, are a wonderful forum for active learning to take place. Preparation is essential for success, so come to class prepared to participate if called upon to do so.
- **Preparation for Each Class:** Always check your emails and BlackBoard for assignments, instructions, and notifications the days that follow class and before class. I will be using BlackBoard and email to communicate with you often. In addition, check Course Documents for PDFs of readings made available. PowerPoint slides will be updated after each class.
- **Contact Information:** It is your responsibility to keep me updated with any changes to your contact information. If it changes, and I am not informed, you may miss out on important information required to succeed in this class.

**Course Policies**

- **Attendance:** There is no substitute for attending class. Since this is a discussion-oriented course, your attendance is crucial, and it is key to receiving credit for participation, in-class work, quizzes, and homework. In addition, regular attendance will greatly elevate your chances of performing well. Simply showing up for class, however, will not be enough: You must be present mentally as well as physically. Dosing, chatting, using electronics, and focusing on activities outside of class, are all examples of distracted behavior that will result in a "missed class" despite the fact you may be occupying a desk. In addition, tardiness or leaving early may result in a "missed class." For more information on how this could impact your grade, see Grading Criteria for how points are allocated. I expect the class to be the site of lively intellectual activity, discussion, debate and critical, respectful exchange and your attentiveness is essential.

Note: class participation, in-class work, quizzes, and homework will only receive credit when accomplished and turned in at the time and date due in class. The reason for this is because these activities are pertinent to work being done in class on a particular date. Therefore, there will be no opportunity to make up the work once the date has past. See Grading Criteria for how points are allocated for Day-to-Day Class Participation, In-class work & Quizzes, Homework, and Peer Reviews to see how attendance may impact your grade.

If you are absent you are still responsible for knowing what was covered in class, what the homework is, and when it is due. I suggest you exchange phone numbers and/or emails with at least two of your classmates. In addition, check the course BlackBoard site and read your email regularly.

- **Homework:** Homework is due in class on the due date and must be typed/printed in MLA format and multiple pages stapled in order to be accepted. Homework cannot be made up!
- **Final Unit Paper Due Dates and Late Submission Policy:** All final unit papers are due as a hard copy in class on the date specified unless otherwise noted. In addition, final papers must be submitted online through Turn-It-In before class on the day the paper is due. If papers are not submitted online, they will receive an automatic ½ grade deduction.
In the event of an emergency, arrangements may be made to turn the paper in late. In the case of such special circumstances, late work may be accepted up to one week following the original deadline. If this is the case, late hard-copy submissions will receive one full grade deduction per class missed and will not be accepted later than one week after the due date. However, you must notify me as soon as possible prior to the paper’s due date.

- **Single Free Pass for Late Unit Paper Submission:** Students will be given one “free pass” if so needed. The “free pass” allows students to submit a final unit paper up to one week past the original due date without penalty. Students must inform instructor that the “free pass” will be used or the grade deduction policy will be implemented. Note that five extra credit points will be added to the final unit paper score for those who have turned in ALL papers on time.

- **BlackBoard:** Plan on accessing BlackBoard routinely to review or print materials to bring to class. I will send out global emails when an announcement or material has been posted. Please check Blackboard regularly.

- **Electronics & Disruptions in Class:** Your active participation is required in this course. As such, our classroom will be a “cell-free zone.” Please turn off your cell phones, iPods, and similar electronic equipment when you come to class. Because we will be interacting in group discussion often, the use of laptops will also be distracting. Students who would like to use laptops are encouraged to discuss the specific need with the instructor in advance. If you are in class listening to music or texting, I will mark you absent. Continued distracted behavior and or disruptions will result in dismissal from class.

- **Plagiarism:** All work in this course must be original. Plagiarism will result in serious consequences ranging from grade reduction to failure in the class to expulsion from the college. For more information on the university cheating and plagiarism policy, please visit: [http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/senate/policy/pfacademics.html](http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/senate/policy/pfacademics.html). SDSU’s library also has an excellent tutorial on how to avoid plagiarism.

- **Turn-it-in Policy:** Turn-it-in (integrated with BlackBoard) will be used in this course for submission of unit papers. Students in this course agree that papers are 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. Students may submit their papers in such a way that no identifying information about them is included. Another option is that a student may request, in writing, that his/her papers not be submitted to Turnitin.com. However, this option requires the student to provide documentation to substantiate that the papers are the original work of the student and do not include any plagiarized material.

- **Respect:** Since this is a discussion-based class, it is vital that you listen and speak respectfully to others at all times. I encourage you to express your opinions, of course – they will help inspire good discussions. However, be mindful of conducting and participating in discourse of civility.

- **Problems:** If you run into problems or emergencies, talk to me as soon as possible.

### Course Assistance Services

- **Office hours:** I encourage all students to attend office hours, especially if you have any questions or concerns about reading, writing, rhetoric, or the structure or requirements of the course. Office hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays on days when class is being held from 11:30-12:30 on a first come first serve basis. If you are not able to make it during this time, you may contact me to set up a meeting by appointment. I pride myself on being accessible, and
students have commented on numerous occasions that their meetings with me have made the difference in their success in this class.

- **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. SDS staff are available in the Capulli Center in Suite 3101 or by phone at (619) 594-6473 (voice) or (619) 594-2929 (TTD/TTY).

- **Counseling:** There are many events and situations that put additional stress on being a student. SDSU has an excellent center for Counseling & Psychological Services that is open to students Monday through Friday from 8am-4:30pm. To set up an initial consultation, call (619) 594-5220. For immediate or emergency help, you are welcome to use San Diego’s free 24-hour counseling access line at (800) 479-3339. C&PS on campus also has a “Center for Well-Being” with multiple stations for relaxation if you are feeling stressed during the semester. C&PS is located in the Capulli Center, Room 4401.

- **Student-athletes:** Student-athletes have demanding, dynamic schedules. As an instructor, I am committed to helping you succeed in the course. To do so, regular and effective communication is needed. While exceptions will not be made for attendance, assignment deadlines, or exams, I’m happy to work with all student-athletes in conjunction with Student-Athlete Support Services (SASS) to help you excel in this course. For more information on SASS’ academic advising and tutoring services, please call (619) 594-4743.
Classmate Contact Info
Please write down the email address and/or phone number of three of your classmates. If you miss class, or can’t remember what was assigned for homework, contact your classmates before asking me.
NAME:________________________________CONTACT:____________________________
NAME:________________________________CONTACT:____________________________
NAME:________________________________CONTACT:____________________________