Syllabus RWS 100 Section 76

“Rhetoric refers to the study and uses of written, spoken and visual language. It investigates how language is used to organize and maintain social groups, construct meanings and identities, coordinate behavior, persuade, position, perform, produce change, mediate power, and create knowledge.” (Werry)

Instructor: Janel Spencer
Email: spencer@rohan.sdsu.edu
Office: SH 116
Office Hours: Tue 9:30 am – 10:30 am (and by appointment)
Class Meets: Tue/Thurs 8:00 am – 9:15 am in COM 206
Office Mailbox: in RWS main office – SHW 141
Prerequisites: All RWS 100 students must have satisfactorily completed the Lower Division Writing Competency Requirement.

TEXTS AND MATERIALS:
1) Essentials of Argument by Nancy V. Wood (3rd edition)
2) They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing by Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. (3rd edition)
4) Access to a computer, printer, and paper. Work will be posted to individual class blogs and/or printed and readings must be printed and brought to class.
5) Pen and paper for in-class writing.

USEFUL RESOURCES
1. The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): https://owl.english.purdue.edu/
2. SDSU Writing Center, located in PSFA-116, open M-F 9.00 – 5.00 http://writingcenter.sdsu.edu/

REQUIREMENTS
ESSAYS: You will write four formal essays of four to eight pages in length for this course, plus give a class presentation and build an online portfolio. All papers will require several rough drafts and the first three papers will require conferencing (meeting) with me.

PORTFOLIO: The writing you post on your blog for the class will make up your class portfolio. This will include homework, rough drafts, final drafts, and other writing assignments/projects. You will need to set up a WordPress Blog (http://wordpress.com/) for the class.

PRESENTATIONS: You will be asked to give one or more presentations to the class, either individually or as part of a group.

ATTENDANCE: Your “bellwork” or beginning of the class writing will count for attendance. These assignments can’t be made up except in the case of an emergency or if prior arrangement with me has been made.
**CLASS PARTICIPATION:** Come to class prepared, attentive, and get involved in class discussion and activities. We will engage in both small group and large class discussion activities, as well as peer review, workshops and conferencing. Our goal is to create a class environment that fosters lively intellectual activity, discussion, debate and critical, respectful exchange.

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**MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS**

1) Describe and analyze an author’s argument, claims, project, support and rhetorical strategies. (Thompson)

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 in order to clarify your understanding of an argument. (Carey)

3) Construct an account of one or more authors’ projects and arguments and explain rhetorical strategies that these authors—and by extension other writers—use to engage readers in thinking about their arguments. (Carr)

4) Assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of multiple texts. This assignment asks students to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of multiple assigned texts, including discussion of rhetorical strategies, supporting evidence, audience, and text structure. (texts tba)

**POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

**Attendance:** Since this is a discussion-oriented course, your attendance is crucial, and key to succeeding in the class.

**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 a few of your classmates. In addition, check Blackboard and the course wiki regularly.

**Essays:** All essays and drafts as specified are due in hard copy in class on the due date. Essays must also be uploaded to Turnitin and onto your class blog as specified. Essays must be typed and adhere to MLA format. Late assignments will not be accepted. For documented extenuating circumstances, late work may be accepted up to one week following the printed deadline.

**Rewrite:** You will be allowed one re-write of an essay (previously submitted) to be turned in before or in concurrence with the final paper and portfolio.
**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).

**Conferences:** You are required to meet with me for your first three essays. Each conference will take approximately ten minutes, but if you feel you need more time, please let me know. To make the most of your and my time, please come ready with specific questions.

**Electronics:** Please use electronics respectfully/considerately and only to work on class material. If I see otherwise, I will ask you to put it away and may mark you absent for the day. If it becomes a problem, I will take away the privilege to use electronics in my class.

**Blackboard** ([http://blackboard.sdsu.edu/](http://blackboard.sdsu.edu/)): Please refer to Blackboard for announcements and make sure your email on Blackboard is current. We will also be using Blackboard for Turnitin for the essays.

**Wiki** ([www.jspencer.pbworks.com](http://www.jspencer.pbworks.com)): The wiki is a main online website for our class; please refer to it for the syllabus, course readings, and many other resources.

**WordPress Blog** ([http://wordpress.com/](http://wordpress.com/)): You will be asked to create a blog and follow your classmates’ blogs for this class. Please be respectful and professional on your own blog and on others’, keeping in mind your audience and that a blog is public writing.

**Facebook Group (RWS 100 JSpencer):** The Facebook group ([https://www.facebook.com/groups/1477568222539254/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1477568222539254/)) is another possible online space for further class discussion. Feel free to post appropriate videos/articles for respectful/honest discussion between classmates.

**Respect:** Since this is a discussion-based class, it is vital that you listen and speak respectfully to each other at all times. Since the class also offers a multitude of online platforms to further your opportunity for discussion, I ask that you to apply this rule to your conversations with your classmates and me inside and outside of the classroom, across all media.

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

**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.

**Disabled students:** Every attempt will be made to offer reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities in this course. Students with disabilities who may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to notify the instructor privately and to contact Student Disability Services (SDS) as soon as possible. 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 8 am - 4:30 pm. 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 Capuli 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.

**COURSE OUTLINE AND READING SCHEDULE**
Please note that the following schedule is approximate, as dates and topics may shift as the semester continues. Please refer to Blackboard for current information regarding your assignment due dates.

**Week 1**
Set up blog  
Introduction to Rhetoric

**Week 2**
Introduction to Thompson & Essay 1

**Week 3**
Building Essay  
*Rough Draft 1 due September 10*  
Revision

**Week 4**
Classes cancelled for conferences (bring Rough Draft 2)

**Week 5**
*Rough Draft 3 due September 22*  
Workshop (bring 3 copies of paper to class)  
MLA Format

**Week 6**
*Essay 1 due September 29*  
Introduction to Carey & Essay 2  
Research

**Week 7**
*Rough Draft 1 due October 8*  
Workshop (bring 3 copies of paper to class)

**Week 8**
Classes cancelled for conferences (bring Rough Draft 2)

**Week 9**
*Essay 2 Due October 20*  
Presentations  
Introduction to the third project  
Carr and rhetorical strategies

**Week 10**
How to identify and analyze strategies; locating claims and strategies in Carr  
How to write about strategies  
Draft introduction and body paragraphs

**Week 11**
*Rough Draft 1 due November 5*  
Workshop

**Week 12**
Classes cancelled for conferencing (bring Rough Draft 2)

**Week 13**
*Essay #3 due November 17*
Analyzing and Evaluating; identifying strengths and weaknesses

**Week 14**  
Rough Draft 1 due November 24

**Week 15**  
Rough Draft 2 due December 3  
Workshop (bring 3 copies to class)

**Week 16**  
Final essay due December 8  
Presentations

**FINAL CLASS**  Portfolio and portfolio reflection due at this time
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. use all aspects of the writing process--including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading;
7. 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;
8. 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;
9. effectively select material from written arguments, contextualize it, and comment on it in their writing;
10. 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;
11. 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;
12. analyze and assess the relative strengths of arguments and supporting evidence
13. analyze and assess arguments made by visual texts; incorporate visual images into their documents;
14. craft well-reasoned arguments for specific audiences
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.