Rhetoric and Writing Studies 200:
Rhetoric of Written Arguments In Context
SDSU - Spring 2016

Instructor: Jacob Hubbard
Email: jacob.hubbard88@yahoo.com
Times: MWF 12:00pm – 12:50pm
Classroom: GMCS 328
Section: 37
Office: Storm Hall 116
Mailbox: Storm Hall West 141
Office Hours: Mon. and Wed. 2:00pm – 3:00pm or by appointment

Course Description
Welcome to RWS 200, or The Rhetoric of Written Arguments in Context. This is a continuation of RWS 100, but with an emphasis on rhetorical analysis of the context surrounding an argument. Arguments do not occur in vacuums; the culture, time period, and previously existing texts all contribute to how a writer crafts an argument. This course will focus on how context influences arguments. Rhetorical analysis in RWS 200 will emphasize how texts are written in a specific time and for a specific audience, as well as how the text functions as a response to previous writings. In addition, this course will build off the concepts taught in RWS 100 to help prepare you for more challenging upper division writing assignments, as well as beyond the walls of the university.

For the purpose of this course, context is a term that refers to the following:

- The roots of an idea
- The time and place in which a writer is writing and the particular audience addressed
- The variety of texts available on a particular topic
- The current moment in which one is reading a text—one’s own social/cultural/historical context

In RWS 200, students will write rhetorical analyses on the context surrounding arguments, looking within the text and to outside research to discuss how context influences arguments.

Prerequisites
Satisfaction of the SDSU writing competency requirement (see University Catalog) and completion of RWS 100 is required in order to be eligible to take this course.

Texts and Materials
- Essentials of Argument 3rd Edition by Nancy V. Wood
- RWS 200 Course Reader
- Keys for Writers Revised 7th Edition by Ann Raimes (optional)
- Pens, Pencils, Paper, and Folders
- Access to Blackboard/SDSU Library Database
Useful Resources

- The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): https://owl.english.purdue.edu/
- Grammar Comics: http://theoatmeal.com/tag/grammar
- SDSU Writing Center, located in Love Library, open M-TH 9:00am – 5:00pm; F 9:00am – 2:00pm
  Website: http://writingcenter.sdsu.edu/

General Education Capacities/Goals & RWS Learning Outcomes

Our Learning Outcomes Reflect the Goals and Capacities of the General Education Program. RWS 200 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 200 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 200 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.

Dropping

If you decide to drop this course, it will be your responsibility as a student to do so. Be sure to follow procedures in order to drop, should you need to do so. I will not drop the course for you if you decide you will no longer be attending. Class participants who stop coming will receive a grade based on the work submitted.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations, 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 me with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. I thank you in advance for your cooperation.

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. I am committed to helping you succeed in the course as an instructor. 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 REQUIREMENTS

Essays
For this course, you will write four formal essays varying in length (usually 4 to 8 pages, depending on the assignment). They are to be double-spaced, in 12-sized Times New Roman or Arial font, stapled, and in MLA format. Points will be deducted if they do not meet these requirements. In addition, you will turn in each essay with a rough draft, feedback from at least 2 of your peers and an informal reflection paper collected in a folder. This will mean that if you do not turn in a rough draft on the due date, you cannot expect to get a grade higher than a C.

Exercise Portfolio
Throughout the course, you will have in-class writing assignments you will be putting together in a portfolio and turning in for a grade at the end of the semester. You will compose a number of informal, shorter texts - homework, in-class free writing, reflections, reading responses, peer reviews, and so on. The purpose of this exercise is to not only to help you organize your work, but also to create a body of work that will help you reflect on your growth as a writer. I will also periodically check on your portfolios throughout the semester and make comments as necessary. Most of the time you will not know in advance when these in class writing assignments will occur, and will most likely miss points if you are not here on the day of the in class writing assignment. Bring your portfolio with you to class everyday and do not forget to date all entries. This portfolio will count as 15% of your overall course grade.
Blackboard and Blackboard Discussion Posts
We will also be using Blackboard for this course. I will announce updates, post homework assignments, and upload additional course readings/handouts on Blackboard for you to bring to class, so be sure to check it regularly. Additionally, you will also be required to post and respond to 5 Discussion posts throughout the semester. Discussion posts will vary in topic and are designed to help you think about and explore various contexts for major assignments. Each discussion post will be due by 11:59pm on specified due dates and will be calculated into your overall portfolio grade (not counting the student introduction posts, which will go toward your participation grade).

Homework
All homework is to be typewritten in 12-size Times New Roman or Arial font, double-spaced, and on average 1-2 pages in length, unless stated otherwise. I will NOT accept handwritten homework. While I won’t require your work to be in proper MLA format, I encourage you to use the homework to practice it since you will be using MLA the most while taking almost any course in the humanities, including this one. All homework prompts will be posted on Blackboard a week before the deadline. All homework, unless stated otherwise, will be due on Friday. At the end of the semester, they will be included in your portfolio (as well as calculated into your overall portfolio grade) with the lowest homework score grade dropped. Extra credit homework may be offered throughout the semester as well.

Class Participation
You are expected to attend class and participate. Active participators will arrive on time prepared, pay attention, and get involved in class activities. We will engage in small group and large class discussion, as well as peer review and workshops. If you miss more than 4 classes, your participation grade will suffer as a result. I do not make a distinction between excused and unexcused absence, so if you are absent, you are absent. If you have to miss class for any reason, you are still responsible for knowing what material is covered. In addition, if I see a consistent pattern of lateness, that will hurt your participation grade as well.

Grading Policy
All course work will be evaluated and graded based on content. While effort is certainly appreciated (and definitely encouraged), your success in this course will strictly depend on the work you produce. In plain English, I am looking for the quality of your work and not necessarily the effort you put in.
**Breakdown of Grades**
Your final class grade will reflect the following coursework:

- 15% Project 1: Giving an Account and Evaluating an Argument in its Context
- 20% Project 2: Using One Text as a “Lens” for Another
- 20% Project 3: Analyzing the Context of a Set of Arguments
- 25% Project 4: Entering the Conversation
- 15% Exercise portfolio: In-class work, homework, Blackboard Discussion posts, rough drafts, peer review, and miscellaneous writing assignments with final class reflection
- 5% Class Participation

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Conduct**
In this class we will occasionally address sensitive or controversial topics. This class should be a safe space during those discussions. Everyone is encouraged to voice his or her opinions about the topics we discuss. To make this work we need to be very conscious about how we voice our opinions, taking into consideration that some individuals will not share our perspectives. Though I doubt this will be a problem, I still want to remind you that your peers deserve both your attention and respect; insults, bullying, or any threatening language/actions will not be tolerated.

**Electronics**
Because this class is expected to run like a seminar, I have a strict “no cellphones” policy. Please turn off your cell phones and/or similar electronic equipment when you come to class. Being on your phone during class is not only a distraction to me and your fellow students, but will effect your learning as well. If you are expecting an important call, please let me know at the beginning of class, put your phone on vibrate, and take your call outside. If you on your cell phone either calling or texting during class time, I will kindly ask you to leave for the day and mark you absent. I will allow laptops, but if they become a distraction I will unfortunately discontinue that use in the classroom.

**Cheating & Plagiarism**
In this course, plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will result, at my discretion, in awarding zero (0) points for the related assignment with no chance for resubmission of that assignment. SDSU penalties for academic dishonesty, including suspension from the university, might also apply. I have strong doubts that plagiarism will be a problem in this course; nevertheless, it cannot be stressed enough how seriously I take plagiarism, so if you are ever in doubt about how to use or document others' ideas, please ask me. You will be required to read and sign an agreement on plagiarism, so please make sure to have this agreement read, signed, and turned in to me. In other words, save yourself the headache and do not plagiarize! For more information on SDSU’s cheating and plagiarism policy, please see:
Tutoring
If at any point during the semester you are struggling with this class, please do not be afraid or ashamed to seek help. I am here to help you succeed at SDSU to the best of my abilities, but you must let me know what ways I can help you. If you have any questions about the material, need additional assistance on the course work, or just want to brainstorm/share ideas/talk, I highly encourage you to come visit me during my office hours or to schedule an appointment. My contact information is available both on this syllabus and on Blackboard so please feel free to contact me at anytime (and I do check my email regularly). I will get back to you as soon as possible, but I only ask that you allow me at least 24 hours to respond before following up. In addition, please feel free to take advantage of the writing center at the Love Library as well if you are struggling.

No Late Work Policy
I understand life gets in the way and that you may (or may not) have work in other classes you are taking; nevertheless, because your assignments throughout the course will be built on previous assignments, I will not accept late work. However, if there are mitigating circumstances that prevent you from turning in work on time (e.g., death in the family, a severe illness, etc.), please let me know and we can work something out. If you have a religious obligation; if you have jury duty; or you must attend extremely important matters that prevent you from turning in work on time, I require that you let me know within a reasonable amount of time before the deadline so we can make arrangements. If it is a case of a last minute, legitimate, unplanned emergency, such as a car accident; life or death situation; medical emergency; or any other kind of urgent situation, please notify me as soon as possible. In this class, communication is important! If something comes up, or something beyond your control has unexpectedly prevented you from turning in work on time, you must talk to me immediately! Only under these circumstances will I accept late work.

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Please note that this schedule is tentative and subject to change at a moment’s notice. Always check Blackboard for any and all updates. In addition, you are expected to come to class having done all the assigned readings.

Week 1  
Wednesday: January 20  
Introductions; going over the syllabus; understanding rhetoric in context  
*Read pages 3-26 of Essentials of Argument for next class*

Friday: January 22  
Review of RWS 100 key concepts/terms/PACES  
**Blackboard Introduction Posts due by 11:59pm**  
*Read about context in course reader for next class*

Week 2  
Monday: January 25  
Giving an account of short texts with PACES;  
Identifying conversations in various contexts  
*Read pages of 27-41 of Essentials of Argument for next class*

Wednesday: January 27  
The Rhetorical Situation and Context  
**Blackboard Discussion Post #1 due 11:59pm**  
*Read pages 95-108 of Essentials of Argument for next class*
Friday: January 29
Understanding Claims, Grounds, and Warrants in Argument; The Toulmin Model; Discussion of Project 1

**Homework #1 Due**

**Week 3**

Monday: February 1
Doing an account of an argument in its context
*Read Henry David Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” for next class meeting*
[Note: Last day to drop classes is February 2nd at 11:59pm]

Wednesday: February 3
Discussion of Henry David Thoreau's “Civil Disobedience”
*Bring an annotated copy of Henry David Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience” for next class*

**Blackboard Discussion Post #2 due 11:59pm**

Friday: February 5
Discussion of Henry David Thoreau's “Civil Disobedience” (cont.)

**Homework #2 Due**

**Week 4**

Monday: February 8
*First Draft of Project 1 Due; Workshop*

Wednesday: February 10
Workshop (cont.)

Friday: February 12
Workshop (cont.)

**No Homework Due**

**Week 5**

Monday: February 15
**Final Draft of Project 1 Due:** Examining an argument through a particular lens
*Read Wayne LaPierre’s Speech in the Aftermath of Sandy Hook for next class*

Wednesday: February 17
Discussion of Wayne LaPierre’s Speech in the Aftermath of Sandy Hook
*Read Patricia Roberts-Miller’s “Democracy, Demagoguery, and Critical Rhetoric” for next class*

Friday: February 19
Introduction to the Rhetoric of Demagoguery; Discussion of Project 2

**Homework #3 Due**
*Read pages 154-160 of Essentials of Argument for next class*

**Week 6**

Monday: February 22
Logical fallacies; Evaluating arguments through various lenses
*Read Kim Jung-Un's 2014 New Year Address for next class*
Wednesday: February 24
Understanding demagogic rhetoric in various contexts
**Blackboard Discussion Post #3 due 11:59pm**

Friday: February 26
Examining Wayne LaPierre's Speech in the Aftermath of Sandy Hook through the lens of demagoguery
**Homework #4 Due**

**Week 7**

Monday: February 29
*First Draft of Project 2 due; Workshop*

Wednesday: March 2
Workshop (cont.)

Friday: March 4
Workshop (cont.)
**No Homework Due**
*Read pages 193-218 of Essentials of Argument for next class*

**Week 8**

Monday: March 7
**Final Draft of Project 2 Due;** Introduction to Visual Rhetoric; Doing contextual analyses of visual arguments; Discussion of Project 3
*Read Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail” for next class*

Wednesday: March 9
Discussion of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail”
*Read Barack Obama’s “A More Perfect Union” for next class*

Friday: March 11
Discussion of Barack Obama’s “A More Perfect Union”
**Homework #5 Due**
*Watch Spike Lee’s Do the Right Thing for next class*

**Week 9**

Monday: March 14
Discussion of Spike Lee's *Do the Right Thing*
**Blackboard Discussion Post #4 due 11:59pm**

Wednesday: March 16
Synthesizing and mapping the contexts of a set of arguments

Friday: March 18
Conducting a Literature Review
**Homework #6 Due**

**Week 10**

Monday: March 21
*First Draft of Project 3 due; Workshop*
Wednesday: March 23
Workshop (cont.)

Friday: March 25
Workshop (cont.)
No Homework Due

Week 11  
**Spring Break – No Classes (Have fun!)**

Week 12

**Monday: April 4**
Final Draft of Project 3 Due; Entering the conversation of a given topic;
Establishing context; Discussion of Project 4
Read pages 219-236 of Essentials of Argument for next class

**Wednesday: April 6**
Introduction to the Rogerian Argument; Overview of Project 4 topics;
Defining the problem/question
Read pages 237-251 of Essentials of Argument for next class

**Friday: April 8**
Review of academic research; Writing the research paper
Homework #7 Due

Week 13

**Monday: April 11**
Creating a space for your argument; writing a research proposal
Blackboard Discussion Post #5 Due 11:59pm

**Wednesday: April 13**
Situation your argument and establishing its significance; Contextualizing your argument; Adding to the conversation

**Friday: April 15**
Building claims and finding support
Research Project Proposal Due

Week 14

**Monday: April 18**
Mapping, synthesizing, and evaluating sources; crafting a nuanced argument
Bring 3 copies of rough draft of annotated bibliography to
next class to workshop

**Wednesday: April 20**
The Annotated Bibliography

**Friday: April 22**
Drafting the research paper
Annotated Bibliography Due
Week 15
Monday: April 25
First Draft of Project 4 Due; Workshop

Wednesday: April 27
Workshop (cont.)

Friday: April 29
Workshop (cont.)

Week 16
Monday: May 2
No class – Open Office Hours

Wednesday: May 4
Final Draft of Project 4 due; Review for Final

Friday: May 6
No Class

Final
Wednesday: May 11
Exercise Portfolio w/ Final Reflection Due