Rhetoric and Writing Studies (RWS) 200 - Spring 2016
A SERIES OF ARGUMENTS IN CONTEXT

INSTRUCTOR:  Michael Underwood

OFFICE HOURS:  TTH 12:30–1:30 PM
EXCEPT FOR TH 1/28, 2/25, 3/24, 4/21 & 5/5
(AND BY APPOINTMENT)

OFFICE:  114 Storm Hall West (SHW)

E-MAIL:  UNDERW02@MAIL.SDSU.EDU
PHONE:  594-5776

RWS Office:  141 Storm Hall West (SHW)
PHONE:  594-5915

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND COURSE MATERIAL:
Rereading America 9th edition by Gary Colombo,
Robert Cullen, and Bonnie Lisle, Bedford
St Martin’s
Keys for Writers special edition for SDSU by Ann
Raimes
Notebook/Access to a computer, etc.

PREREQUISITES:
Satisfactory completion of RWS 100 or equivalent. If
you have not met these requirements, you will not receive
credit or a grade for this class. See the SDSU General CATALOG
for more information.

SUMMARY OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
1. Regular and prompt class attendance and
   participation;
2. Reading and rereading assignments;
3. Writing and revision assignment;
4. In class and homework assignments; and
5. Workshops and participation.

"Better reading and writing
leads to better thinking.
Better thinking leads to better
human beings."
Participation and Classroom Etiquette:

Showing up to class is essential. If you are not here, you cannot participate, and attendance is a prerequisite of participation, as is reading and rereading assigned texts. If you do not know what a text is about, you will have a hard time saying something intelligent about it. Participation also includes but is not limited to:

- Bringing course material to class;
- Thinking about the readings and topics;
- Contributing to group work and all class discussion;
- Asking questions about readings and assignments; and
- Completing all course work by the due dates.

While the above contribute to positive participation, some behavior detracts from participation such as absences, tardies; cell phone, laptop, and pad use; inattention and sleeping; and especially rude and disrespectful behavior towards fellow students, the material, and me. Although we have different comfort levels with talking, I expect everyone to interact with class discussions, group activities, etc. If you do not ask questions, I cannot answer them. If you do not discuss what you think assignments and readings are about, I cannot gauge where we need more work. I encourage everyone to express themselves freely; this is not a place for censorship, but I do expect this to be done respectfully. Be aware of your audience and under no circumstances use hateful language. Some ideas may not coincide with yours. If you find yourself offended do not hesitate to discuss the matter with me, yourself offended do not hesitate to discuss the matter with me.

Detailed Course Policies and Other Matters:

Attendance: Showing up is 80% of life and success. This is the one course requirement that takes the least effort. Is it really more difficult to get up, shower, dress, and grab a bit than it is to study statistics, take a chemistry exam, or write a paper?

What if . . . ? Well, yeah, #*%& er stuff happens, though 80% of that can be prevented by good planning. But until then, everyone is allowed 3 absences and a combined total of 3 late arrivals and/or early exits (5 minutes late or leave early) without penalty. After that the number of points deducted from participation equals the number of days absent after 5 the points deducted are doubled, and after 9 the points are multiplied by 3. There are no excused absences, except those defined by university policy.

Late Work: Papers and writing projects turned in after they are collected in class are late and will be docked 5%. An additional 10% will be taken off the paper grade for each day after the first that the assignment is late. Homework and in-class work will not be accepted late. It is your responsibility to get the assignments turned in on time. Do not send any assignments as attachments to e-mail: they will not be accepted.

Office Hours: I encourage you to visit me during my office hours (or by appointment), particularly, if you are having any trouble with the work in this course. Remember: when in doubt or troubled, always talk to instructors!

Voice Mail: When leaving a message please make sure that you speak slowly, clearly, and leave your name and phone number. Voice mail will be checked on days that I am on campus. Written messages may be left in my mailbox, SHW 141.

Assignments: Every assignment (besides in-class activities) must be typed, MLA formatted, 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, one inch margins. The pages must be Stapled, numbered, and include a header with your last name. I do not accept papers submitted online.

Writing Assignments must follow the format, grammar, and punctuation guidelines as explained in Keys for Writers. Most writing assignments will use the MLA format and look like the sample in Keys section 13. Always title your assignments and center the title. Your last name and page number in the upper right corner can be added automatically by using the header feature in most word processing applications. When using quotations and the ideas of others refer to Part 3 “MLA Documentation” in Keys for Writers. Failure to follow instructions and assignment guidelines will lower your assignments grade.

If you bore me, I shall take my revenge.”
J. R. R. Tolkien

“We read so that we know we’re not alone” (C. S. Lewis).
Special Arrangements: If you are registered with Disable Students Services and require special arrangements to be made in order to accommodate your learning needs, please let me know of your situation so that we can work together to ensure you have the opportunity to your best work.

Technology Policy: Make sure your phone is on SILENT, not on vibrate, but on SILENT. If your phone doesn’t have a silent setting, turn it OFF. Do not engage in texting in my class. Do not use iPods or any other musical devices in class. This includes have only one earphone in. Lap tops are not allowed. I realize some students may want to use lap tops to take notes, but unless you personally convince me that this is absolutely necessary, you will have to use pen and paper.

E-mail guidelines: It is certainly appropriate to contact this instructor through e-mail about serious and emergency situations, important issues regarding the course, or a question that can be addressed with a quick, short response. Do not use to let your instructor know that you are going to be absent that day in class for whatever reason (see attendance), ask a question for which you can find the information or that requires a time-consuming lengthy response, ask what we did in class that day (get that information from another student, or call or visit the instructor during office hours), ask your instructor to review or provide feedback on writing assignments using e-mail (I will be happy to go over any of your work in person during office hours and by appointment), or send any assignment as an attachment. As- signments sent as attachments won’t be accepted and will be considered late.” Also, I do not always check or respond to e-mail several times a day or every day.

Plagiarism: According to the policy file, “Plagiarism shall be defined as the act of incorporating ideas, words, or specific substance of another, whether purchased, borrowed, or otherwise obtained, and submitting same to the University as one’s own work to fulfill academic requirements without giving credit to the appropriate source. Plagiarism shall include but not be limited to (a) submitting work, either in part or in whole, completed by another; (b) omitting footnotes for ideas, statements, facts, or conclusions that belong to another; (c) omitting quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, sentence, or part thereof; (d) close and lengthy paraphrasing of the writings of another; (e) submitting another person’s artistic works, such as musical compositions, photographs, paintings, drawings, or sculptures; and (f) submitting as one’s own work papers purchased from research companies.” Refer to page 432 of the General Catalog for the potential consequences of plagiarism which will result in an “F” on the assignment may include failing the course and/or possible expulsion from the university.

**LETTER GRADES GIVEN ON PAPERS CORRESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING PERCENTAGES AS PER SDSU’S POLICY III–D–1:**

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<thead>
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**Course Grading Policy**

Students final grades in this course are determined by adding the total points that you earn on each assignment and dividing the total points for the course.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<td>Paper 1</td>
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<td>Paper 2</td>
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<td>Paper 3</td>
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<td>Paper 4</td>
<td>200</td>
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Points for homework and in-class work varies.

*“You are entitled to your own opinion, but you are not entitled to your own facts.”*
General Education Capacities/Goals and 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; 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.”

The following four outcomes describe the four major writing projects of “assignment types” for the course. Students will be able to:

1. Discern elements of context embedded in arguments, the clues that show what the argument is responding to – both in the sense of what has come before it and the sense that it is written for an audience in a particular time and place; examine a writer’s language in relation to audience, context, and community;
2. Use concepts and arguments from one text as a context for understanding, evaluating and writing about another;
3. Given the common concerns of two or more arguments, discuss how the claims of these arguments modify, complicate, or qualify one another; consider how major 4. cont. positions advanced in these texts relate to each other and evaluate the persuasiveness of these positions.
4. Consider your contemporary life as the context within which you are reading a group of arguments; position yourself in relation to ongoing research and discussion in order to make an argument and “join the conversation.” Evaluate source texts so as to create a space for an original contribution.

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. Building on the work done in RWS 100, you will be able to articulate what argument a text is making, describe the work that is done by each section of the argument, describe elements of the argument such as claims, methods of development, kinds of evidence, persuasive appeals, and translate an argument into your own words;
6. Articulate what key terms, definitions, concepts, statements of a problem or issue are established by a text;
7. Investigate and articulate how an argument is positioned – based on certain kinds of assumptions, located in a way of thinking and representing issues from a point of view;
8. Work with multiple sources in a paper, deciding what to include and what to exclude, choosing an effective structure, and creating significant relationships among sources;
9. Evaluate the relationships among multiple positions (including strengths and weakness) with respect to audience, avoiding simplistic judgments and demonstrating, where appropriate, how the preponderance of the evidence supports specific positions over others.
10. Understand and incorporate all aspects of the writing process – including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading;
11. Craft a cohesive paper, and use effective metadiscourse to guide a reader through it;
12. Describe your own papers and reflect on how you wrote them; differentiate between the content of your texts and the language and rhetorical strategies you employ;
13. Revise your own work effectively, re-reading previous work and re-envisioning it in the light of reflection, feedback, further reading, and new sources of information;
14. Edit your writing for the grammar and usage conventions appropriate to the project.
GENERAL GRADING CRITERIA:

The grading in this course is evaluative. If you have questions about your grade, read the assignment criteria, my comments, and the following criteria, and if you have further questions about your grade, schedule an out of class meeting for further discussion. An individual’s grades will not be discussed before or during class. Writing assignments are graded on focus, development, assignment parameters, flow, and mechanics. See below for the detailed criteria:

A. **Outstanding writing.**
Your paper contains a well-developed, critical, and specific thesis. The paper itself jolts the reader, persuades, and holds interest without losing one in unimportant and extraneous distractions that have nothing to do with proving the thesis. The flow of the essay is smooth, coherent, and concise. Your paragraphs are well-developed, unified, and transition well from the previous paragraph. (The standard convention is that each paragraph begins with a topic sentence that contains a mini-thesis for that paragraph.). Your essay exhibits sentence variety and maturity. There are only insignificant mechanical errors, if any. Documentation is error free and follows assigned specifications.

B. **Good writing.**
Your paper contains a well-developed, critical, and specific thesis. The flow of the essay is smooth, coherent, and concise. Fluent, clear, logical, mature vocabulary. Your essay exhibits sentence variety and maturity. The writing enhances the message, which means that the manner in which you convey your message actually helps you to assert your argument. No major mechanical errors. Documentation is basically error free and follows assigned specifications.

C. **Satisfactory writing.**
Your paper has an under-developed thesis. The writing will convey your meaning, however it is not crystal clear. The paper is not sufficiently advanced to enhance your meaning, nor is it so fault-ridden or unclear that it will totally detract the reader from what you have to say. In other words, the reader would probably say, “I know what this paper is trying to say, but . . . .” A satisfactory essay will sometimes distract the reader from your main point by poor organization, mechanical errors, and any nonessential and extraneous information. Documentation is inaccurate and does not follow assigned specifications. Summarizes instead of analysis.

D. **Poor writing.** Your paper has a severely under-developed thesis or no apparent thesis at all. There are numerous errors in mechanics, logic, sentence structure, and/or organization. Your argument and ideas are not successfully communicated. The writing interferes with your message in such a way that the essay is confusing and unintelligible. Documentation is inaccurate and does not follow specifications.

F. Failing papers will be discussed on an individual basis.

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- Paper 1: 100 points
- Paper 2: 110 points
- Paper 3: 120 points
- Paper 4: 130 points
- Participation: 100 points

Points for homework and in-class work varies.

“There is only one good, knowledge, and one evil, ingnorane.” --Socrates
“There is only one good, knowledge, and one evil, ignorance.” --Socrates

“We read so that we know we’re not alone” (C. S. Lewis).

“You are entitled to your own opinion, but you are not entitled to your own facts.”

“Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.” --Blaise Pascal

“The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing.”

--Albert Einstein

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(C. S. Lewis).