Course Description: This course is designed to challenge and develop students’ rhetorical analysis and writing skills. Through the examination of a variety of persuasive texts, students will be required to move beyond the formulaic approach to the traditional essay to more sophisticated styles of writing. Since this process requires students to become more critical readers and thinkers, students must also further develop their reading and writing skills while working with rhetorical elements from several different kinds of texts and sources to analyze, evaluate, and assimilate them into their own writing.

RWS 100 Student Learning Outcomes

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. Evaluate 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.

Texts & Materials:

* Practical Argument (2nd edition) by Laurie G. Kirszner & Stephen R. Mandell (required)
* Keys for Writers (6th Edition) by Ann Raimes (Optional - Purchase this only if you have no grammar
  handbook. This may be used as an out-of-class reference text.)

Access to a computer for Blackboard: http://blackboard.sdsu.
College Dictionary (optional but strongly suggested)

Course Assignments and Requirements: The assignments for this class and their respective points for grading
are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>25pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Exercises (6@5)</td>
<td>30pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Workshops (4@20pts)</td>
<td>80pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Essays (3@40pts)</td>
<td>120pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative Group Project</td>
<td>45pts.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grp Introduction</td>
<td>10pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Essay</td>
<td>25pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grp Conclusion</td>
<td>5pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grp Works Cited Page</td>
<td>5pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: If the assignment is worth more points, it carries a higher percentage of the student's final grade. This means that receiving full credit for in-class work that is worth fewer points does not mean students are maintaining an A in the class. It simply means they are getting full credit for those assignments.

FORMAL ESSAYS:
The written prompts for each essay will be posted on Blackboard and will include connections to the Student
Learning Outcomes as listed above. The essay prompts will follow various in-class activities designed to prepare
students for the rhetorical analysis required in each of the essay assignments. These will include 1) critical reading
of texts to facilitate class discussion, 2) small group exercises to help students work more closely with the
rhetorical elements of the texts, and 3) small group peer-editing to provide feedback to students before essays are
presented to the instructor for comments and grades.

NOTE: Students will be required to complete one mandatory revision of Essay #1 and Essay #2 after the
peer-editing Workshops and submit the revision to the Revision Drop Box on Blackboard. To help
students identify and address individual writing problems, I will briefly review these revised drafts of Essay
#1 and #2 and provide comments, suggestions for improvement, and a grade range (a grade range is NOT a
final grade). If students are satisfied with this grade range, they need to notify the instructor. Then the
grade range becomes the final grade, and no other revisions are necessary. However, students who want to
do a second revision on Essay #1 and #2 may do so, and then submit the final draft to the Final Drop Box
for a letter grade only and no further comments. **Due to the large class size, I cannot provide further
comments on the final drafts, and there will be no additional revisions for assignments #3 or #4.**
Because the final letter grade for each assignment is final, I strongly suggest that students utilize the office
hours to discuss problems or concerns before the final essays are due. These due dates will be identified on
the Course Calendar.

**INFORMAL WRITING**

**Homework assignments:** These will vary depending on the focus of each section and the prompt. They might
include and/or require that students do outside research, draft introductions and thesis statements, and create outlines
to help organize their points. They will also include answering questions on the Reading & Study Guide to
facilitate large group discussions or small group exercises.

**In-Class Work:** The in-class exercises, as well as attendance and class participation points, encourage students to
take an active role in class. Being prepared for these exercises is critical to participation in the class discussions.
Most of these exercises will be done in small groups and may require homework to prepare for them.

**Workshop comments:** Worth a total of 80 points, informal written comments will be made during small group
peer-editing workshops where students will peer-edit their groups’ texts. Students **must** come prepared for these
workshops with their completed essay (one hard copy only). If students do not have a completed essay, have only a
partial essay or an un-typed essay, they will not be allowed to participate in the workshop process. **NO
EXCEPTIONS.** Points will be given for the quality of students’ comments on at least two of their groups’ papers.
Comments on two papers is the minimum. If students want to do only two and get out of class early, no problem. If
students want to stay and do comments on a third paper, I will give them extra points up to the maximum possible
(20 pts). I will also hand out criteria for each workshop to help students focus their comments; this can also be used
as a checklist for their own essays. After each workshop, students must remember to turn in to me their **original
hard copy draft** (with the workshop comments) and then submit an electronic copy of their **revised draft** to the
Revised Drop Box on the due date. If I do not receive the original hard-copy draft with the group comments from a
student, these workshop points will be deducted from that student’s grade. For **final drafts**, students will need to
submit an electronic copy to the Final Drop Box on Blackboard. Check the Course Calendar for specific due dates.

For conferences with me regarding revisions, please bring in a hard copy of your revision attempt.

**Regarding Grades:** Grades are not personal. Whether students agree or disagree with positions or concepts in the
readings is not relevant to their grade. Grades also do not reflect on the students’ character or personality. Graded
material, class participation, and the final course grade will be determined by the student’s performance in the class
which will be reflected in their total points. The grading criteria for this department and for the University’s Upper
Division Writing Exam (the WPA) provide a benchmark for how I grade in this class. Included on Blackboard
under Course Documents is a standard rubric that provides more details about the comments found on the formal
essays. The rubric is fairly self-explanatory. However, for more detailed information regarding specific problem
areas, I strongly suggest meeting with me to discuss these and/or any comments on the essays not fully understood.

Overall, I grade on holistically, focusing on content and form: how accurately students respond to the prompt, state
and develop their points, as well as how they present and organize these points on the page. My comments on the
rough drafts will try to identify and give suggestions for as many of the problem areas as possible that I see as a
hindrance to clarity and cohesion. However, due to large class size, I will not be able to comment on all individual
writing problems. For example, those students with serious grammatical, mechanical, or reading comprehension
problems will need to seek help outside of class. Two potential sources for help are the University Writing Center
and the Drop In Tutoring provided by the RWS Department. When using these tutors, be sure to bring a copy of the
prompt and the Writing Strategy (if one has been provided) along with your essay. Details about these services will
be provided later when dates and times have been established. I would suggest using these services. However, the Athletics Dept., EOP, and SDS may also be able to provide additional tutoring for grammar/mechanical errors for those who qualify.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance and class participation: These are required. In order to participate, students must be present. Excessive absences will affect your participation grade and other in-class requirements. For example, being absent on a Workshop day will cost you points that will be difficult to make up. Most in-class exercises will be done in small groups and cannot be made up. Leaving early after role has been taken will result in an absence. If you need to leave early, let me know ahead of class, and please sit by the door. Keep in mind, however, that I will note this on the attendance record. If students choose to attend class, I expect their full attention for the entire class.

Tardy Policy: If a student arrives to class after role has been taken, it is the responsibility of that student to inform the instructor after class that they were tardy. Otherwise, they will be recorded as absent. Once the classroom is vacated, what is on the attendance record stays there. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Late work: If a student cannot be in class and requires arrangements for late work, please see me during office hours or contact me via email. However, if students just miss class, do not contact me to find out what was missed or to get caught up. Students must contact a fellow student for that information. Students will be able to communicate with fellow students via email through Blackboard. Please keep in mind that an “excused” absence does not guarantee the right to turn in or make-up late or missing work. The instructor reserves the right to discern what situations warrant accepting late or make-up work. Consistently late work will affect a student’s overall grade. For athletes, during the first two weeks of the semester, the Athletic Dept. must present the instructor with a schedule of away games, and athletes must make arrangements for late or make-up work in advance.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade for the course. Technology is available to instructors through the University to check the authenticity of student’s papers. If someone else’s words, phrases, ideas or concepts are used, they MUST be given credit. Otherwise, it is plagiarism, and I will fail students for it. Please be forewarned that papers may be randomly checked. In addition, the following statement has been prepared by the CSU General Counsel and has been approved by the Center for Student’s Rights and Responsibilities at SDSU.

“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. Another option is that 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.”

The University now also requires that a report of such offenses be officially filed. What this means is that, like a DUI, it stays on your academic record. Please see the University catalogue for official University policy.

Digital Drop Box: I will require that students submit an electronic copy of the revision draft and final draft of essays #1 and #2 via the Drop Box on Blackboard by the due dates. (For Assignments #3 and #4, only the revision draft should be submitted). These due dates will be noted on the Course Calendar. Final letter grades for each essay will not be given until the electronic copy is received on Blackboard. Per the staff at ITS (Instructional Technology
Support), to submit an electronic copy to the Blackboard Drop Box, students must save the document in Word Doc or Rich Text Format (RTF) format. BE SURE to title the files essay1 or essay2. Do NOT use any symbols or extra spaces. Using Firefox as your browser is also recommended by the ITS staff. More detailed instructions will be posted on Blackboard under Course Docs. If you have any problems, or if you try to submit more than one copy of each essay, please contact me ASAP.

**Format:** All formal essays MUST be typed in a standard font, 10-12 point, double-spaced, with 1” margins on all sides. Do NOT use padding to try and hide a short essay. It doesn’t work. Essays must follow MLA guidelines for format, grammar, and punctuation as outlined in all current grammar books, most of which are now available online.

**Conduct:** Some materials covered in the readings may deal with controversial issues. Out of respect for each class member, students are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous and civilized manner when discussing or critiquing cultures, nationalities, religions, race, gender, sexual preferences and political affiliations. This does not mean that students cannot disagree. However, the manner in which opposing views are presented speaks volumes about the ethos of a speaker or writer, as well as how an audience perceives the opposing view. As a rule, logic and reason will always trump an emotional response.

**Regarding cell phones, personal electronics and classroom conduct:** Personal electronics must be turned off and put away. The only exception will be if students are taking notes during lectures and discussions. On the other hand, I have no problem with students using a smart phone to do research during the in-class exercises or to take a photo of information generated on the board during class. Do not leave the classroom to answer a phone call, or text messages during class. This is rude and unprofessional conduct. Since higher education is designed in part to ready students for the work world, professional behavior befitting this goal is expected. Those people with special needs should notify the instructor ahead of class of these special circumstances; these should be rare. If there are any medical reasons for why you need to leave class, please let me know and have the necessary documentation. If you must leave early for any reason, please advise me ahead of time and sit by the door. Again, these interruptions in class should be rare.

**Special Needs:** If students require special needs in meeting the requirements of this course, please see me during office hours to make the proper arrangements. These arrangements are never a problem, but I need to be aware of them ahead of time in order to facilitate them. In addition, students must be registered and have the proper documentation from Services for Disabled Students (SDS) for these kinds of needs. Please keep in mind that all conversations and arrangements of this nature will be kept in strict confidentiality.

**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 I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

NOTE: It is my personal goal that all students pass this class (with at least a C) and move on in their academic study. To this end, I am available and willing to work with students to help them succeed in this class, especially those who are experiencing difficulties. So, please do not hesitate to see me. Waiting for things to get better usually doesn’t work, and the longer one waits the worse the problem becomes. I am available during office hours and by email to help in any way I can. These office hours are yours – USE THEM.

**Course calendar to come.**

NOTE: The course calendar is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. These kinds of changes are rare and will always be made in the students’ advantage.