Syllabus: RWS 305W,
Writing in Various Settings, Fall 2016

"You learn to write by writing. It's a truism, but what makes it a truism is that it’s true. The only way to learn to write is to force yourself to produce number of words on a regular basis.

“All writing is ultimately a question of solving a problem” (Zinsser 49).

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Prerequisites: All RWS 305W students must have satisfactory completion of RWS 100 and RWS 200 or the equivalent. RWS 305W students must also have completed the Writing Proficiency Assessment with a score of 8 or 9, or have completed RWS 280 or 281 with a grade of “C” or better.

Texts and Materials:
I have not ordered a textbook for this class. But I recommend:
• Keys for Writers, by Anne Raimes, especially Part 6, ‘Style’
• They Say, I Say, by Graff & Birkenstein, for working with sources
• The Call to Write, by John Trimbur. For more examples of writing genres see The Norton Field Guide to Writing, by Richard Bullock
• The SDSU Writing Center, as well as offering free writing advice, has many handouts on writing: http://writingcenter.sdsu.edu/resources.html.
• Also, I highly recommend and will use in class the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL), link: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/. The Purdue OWL covers nearly all rhetorical concerns. It's amazing.
• For Design ideas see Purdue OWL link: HATS • OWL on Report and Technical Writing: OWL Power Point On Reports
• See the Purdue OWL on Reports at link: OWL Report Sections

Other Necessities you must have to complete this course:
• Pages or Microsoft Word or compatible software • Internet access  • Access to a computer and the Internet; hopefully you can bring a laptop for in-class work on your writing projects.

My Teaching Philosophy: I enjoy teaching writing and rhetoric and seeing you, students, grow as writers and students of rhetoric. And although this class is required and based on a dubious test, practicing our writing is only good for us. So, I hope you will strive to grow as a writer.

In my view growth primarily happens through experience; we learn to write by writing. Hence, this class emphasizes experience: reading and especially writing.

Note that as you work through our many assignments, I will gladly coach and mentor you. But further note: you must keep up with assignments. Do your best to follow our course’s policies and schedule. Please let me know or your needs. I will accommodate reasonable requests.

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. Your cooperation is appreciated.
**Course Description:** In RWS 305W students learn to respond not just to academic tasks but a wider variety of genres and settings that require diverse research methods and writing styles. The course also contains a metacognitive component in which students learn to reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of their own writing style(s) within rhetorical contexts. This course meets the upper division writing requirements for students who complete the class with a grade of “C” or better.

**Learning Goals for RWS 305W:**

**Rhetorical Knowledge:** RWS 305W will help students identify, analyze, and respond in writing to various rhetorical situations. Students will learn how to

- Identify individual discourse communities and find and analyze their characteristic texts, evaluate their credibility and principles, and apply relevant aspects of their information to other contexts and arguments;
- Analyze the details of a wide variety of writing situations (textual elements such as tone, evidence, organizational patterns, diction, even visuals) according to the author’s purpose as well as the audience’s needs and tastes;
- Respond effectively in writing to issues and arguments raised in a variety of disciplinary, popular, and professional texts and/or contexts;
- Produce effective arguments from a variety of disciplinary, popular, and professional contexts.

**Critical Thinking and Reading:** RWS 305W will provide students with strategies to understand the function of reading and writing in cultural, academic, and professional communities. Students will learn how to:

- Actively read texts using a variety of reading strategies such as annotation, visual organizers, questioning, and discussion;
- Identify how a writer uses rhetorical strategies in various genres of writing;
- Interpret, analyze, and evaluate demanding texts;
- Apply critical thinking skills and reading strategies to evaluate their own writing and the writing of fellow students’;
- Reflect on their own progress as a working writer in relation to critical thinking and reading strategies.

**Writing Process:** RWS 305W will strengthen students’ awareness of and abilities to use writing processes effectively. Students will learn how to:

- Develop flexible strategies for creating, revising, and editing texts;
- Critique their own and others’ texts;
- Write with an awareness of audience and purpose;

**Knowledge of Conventions:** will provide students with strategies to identify, analyze, and apply the writing conventions of different discourse communities and to write effectively within those communities. Students will learn to:

- Identify how discourse communities employ particular strategies for conveying, researching, evaluating, and presenting information;
- Analyze and choose the appropriate conventions for a range of audience expectations;
- Integrate a variety of appropriate sources into their writings in a way that accurately reflects the writer’s meaning and purpose;
- Document sources appropriately;
- Sustain reasonable correctness in grammar and mechanics to perform well in a variety of writing contexts and professional settings;

**Attitudes, Values, and Preparation for Life Beyond the University:** RWS 305W reflects the values of a liberal arts education, namely:
• Work collaboratively and cooperatively to achieve defined goals;
• Respect the diverse points of view that characterize our multi-cultural classroom community;
• Critically analyze a variety of texts produced for public and individual readers;
• Participate confidently in public discussion on issues of importance to the workplace and the community;
• Address issues in writing;

Definitions:
• **Discourse Community:** “A site or social group defined by special kinds of speech and writing, the boundaries and character of which are determined by the communicative practices as well as the social sentiments, shared norms, and cultural values of the members” (from the Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition: Communication from Ancient Times to the Information Age, p. 194).
• **Genre:** “A type of spoken or written discourse, recognized as conventional by members of an intellectual community, that draws together certain substantive and stylistic features in response to a recurrent rhetorical situation” (from, the Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition: Communication from Ancient Times to the Information Age, p. 279).
• **Plagiarism:** All ideas, words, and information from sources must be cited appropriately for genre, discourse community, and rhetorical situation. All directly borrowed words and phrases must be inside quotation marks AND cited appropriately in the text of your work. For a full description of plagiarism, see the SDSU General Catalogue, p. 449. Also, see p. 432 of the General Catalogue for the potential consequences of plagiarism, which may include failing the course and/or possible expulsion from the university.

Course Policies:
• **Blackboard & Turnitin:** Please use our Blackboard Website frequently (several times per week and before each class session). Keep abreast of assignment dates. We will use of Blackboard and Turnitin for submitting assignments and peer revisions. Retrieve all assignment schedules, handouts, and other course documents from our Blackboard site.
• **Late Work:** Late submissions may not get you your points. Peer Mark assignments require you to submit drafts on time. Please complete projects on the assigned dates. Assignments may be accepted with verifiable, mitigating circumstances. Late assignments, if accepted, may be reduced in grade. NOTE: I reserve the right to allow revisions based on mitigating circumstances.
• **Attendance:** I expect students to prepare as needed and attend classes regularly. Nearly always, those who regularly attend, pass this class.
• **Cheating:** Cheating on class work, or work containing Plagiarism will be given 0 points. A second offense will result in a Course Grade of F or N/C and be reported to Student Affairs. NOTE: Turning in work previously done by you or others for other classes will be considered cheating. Using work written by others and revised as your own is cheating and plagiarism.
• **Turnitin Policy:** 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. Alternatively, 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.
• **Alternative Arrangements/ Needs:** If you are registered with SDS and require special arrangements to be made in order to accommodate your best learning opportunities, I am happy to work with you in conjunction with SDS. Please let me know of your situation and
needs so that we can work together to ensure you have every opportunity to do your best work in this class.

- **Student athletes:** If you are a student athlete with away games scheduled during the semester, please let me know by the end of the first week of class and present me with a copy of your team travel schedule. I am aware of your multiple obligations as student athletes, and we will make appropriate scheduling arrangements—this may include turning assignments in early. I am also aware that there are other groups identified by the University Senate as having these scheduling requirements and will make similar arrangements if you identify yourselves and your needs early in the semester.

- **Late or Missing Work:** I realize that “life can get in the way” of our goals and responsibilities. And thus, under certain mitigating circumstances (such as your or family medical issues, a death in the family, or an natural disasters), I will accept late assignments and allow make-ups for in class work. However, we need to discuss your mitigating circumstances before I will accept your work. **So please let me know when you are having trouble meeting the obligations of our course.** I want you to succeed but need your help to help you. The grade may be reduced. **NO make-up or late work accepted if more than 3 weeks late.**

- **Waitlist Policy:** This course admits students through the university-wide waitlist policy. Students will be admitted to the class only if the class has not reached its enrollment level; no students will be admitted past the enrollment cap for this course. Students can be admitted during the first ten days of class.

  The waitlist is a good tool for you as students; it also brings a number of responsibilities. First, students who are admitted through the waitlist process are responsible for attending class as soon as they are notified of their admission.

  Second, once you are admitted you are responsible for contacting me immediately to let me know that you have been added from the waitlist, for checking Blackboard and reading any documents that have been posted (including the syllabus and any readings), and for turning in any work that has already been assigned as soon as is reasonable – please talk to me and we will reach a mutual agreement as to how long that will be, but you should expect it to be a very short period of time, likely by the next class after you first attend. You should be aware that any upcoming work is due at the same time as the rest of the class; this may mean that you will need to catch up very quickly.

  Third, you will have missed some amount of class and are responsible for getting that information. You should begin by looking at Blackboard for any materials. You should also ask fellow classmates if you could review their notes from these classes. If you have specific questions after you look at the notes, please see me during office hours. I cannot re-teach entire classes but would be happy to help clarify any areas you don’t feel you understand regarding material that has already been covered in class.
NOTE: To satisfy the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (G.W.A.R.), you must earn a grade of C or CR, 740 points or more. Fewer than 740 points means you have to retake the class.

Course Work. You will earn your grade in many ways.

1) Civic Discourse:
   a. Project 1, This I Believe essay earning for 175 points,
      i. Rough draft earning up to 15 points;
      ii. PeerMarks earning up to 10 points;
      iii. Revised draft earning up to 150 points.

2) Professional Discourse:
   a. Project 2, FACT SHEET, earning up to 200 points, with a 6 minimum sources on a subject from, if possible, your intended profession.
      i. Proposal—earning up to 25 points: about 200 words describing your Rhetorical Situation and listing at least 6 sources;
      ii. Report Rough Draft, earning up to 15 points;
      iii. PeerMarks, earning up to 10 points;
      iv. Revised draft, earning up to 150 points.
   b. Project 3, Business letter, earning up to 150 points: a one-page, single-spaced business letter to a powerful individual, calling them to act on the subject of your report.
      i. Rough Draft, earning up to 15 points,
      ii. PeerMarks, earning up to 10 points,
      iii. Revised draft, earning up to 125 points.
   c. Project 4, Professional letter of introduction and request for meeting, earning up to 150 points:
      i. Rough Draft, earning up to 15 points,
      ii. PeerMarks, earning up to 10 points,
      iii. Revised draft, earning up to 125 points.
   d. Project 5, Resume earning up to 100 points:
      i. Rough Draft, earning up to 15 points,
      ii. PeerMarks, earning up to 10 points,
      iii. Revised draft, earning up to 75 points.

3) Civic Discourse: Project 6 (175 points) Choose either A, or B, or C. (Rough draft earning up to 15 points; PeerMarks earning up to 10 points; Revised draft earning up to 150 points)
   a. Compose a commentary that argues for a specific action or line of thought regarding a problem, controversy, or question for an audience who does not agree with you (roughly 900 words).
   b. Compose an Open Letter, suitable for general audience of a blog, website, or newspaper (roughly 800-900 words).
   c. Memoir (roughly 1400 words)

4) Short Writing assignments (100 points): These will be written in class. Most will earn up to 5 points, some 10 points. And you will compose a Reflection written in class on the last day of class. These will be assessed by the preciseness of doing the task, by the writing clarity and fullness of the assignment.

These assignments and values subject to change. If I change assignments or values, I will inform you in writing.

NOTE: Missing the Short Writing, rough drafts, or PeerMarks may cause you to fail. To complete the PeerMarks assignments, you MUST submit a Rough Draft. PeerMarks assignments are done online, via Blackboard, AND CANNOT BE MADE UP.
Table 1: Course Grade.

*Your Course Grade is earned by the sum of points earned on individual assignments.*

- 940 to 1000 points = a grade of A,
- 900 to 929 points = a grade of A minus,
- 870 to 899 points = a grade of B +,
- 840 to 869 points = a grade of B,
- 800 to 839 points = a grade of B minus,
- 770 to 799 points = a grade of C+,
- 740 to 769 points = a grade of C,
- 700 to 739 points = a grade of C minus,
- 670 to 699 points = a grade of D+,
- 640 to 669 points = a grade of D,
- 600 to 639 points = a grade of D minus,
- 0 to 599 points = a grade of F

Table 2: Point value of Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Work and Point Value</th>
<th>Rough Draft</th>
<th>PeerMarks</th>
<th>Revised Draft</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short Writing</strong> (writing exercises done in class; points vary)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td><strong>This I Believe</strong></td>
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<td>Proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rough Draft</td>
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<td>PeerMarks</td>
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<td>Revised Draft</td>
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<td><strong>Fact File</strong></td>
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<td>Rough Draft</td>
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<tr>
<td>PeerMarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revised Draft</td>
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<td><strong>Letter of Request for Action</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rough Draft</td>
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<td>PeerMarks</td>
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<td>Revised Draft</td>
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<td><strong>Letter of Introduction</strong></td>
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<td>Rough Draft</td>
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<td>PeerMarks</td>
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<td>Revised Draft</td>
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<td><strong>Resume</strong></td>
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<td>Rough Draft</td>
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<td>PeerMarks</td>
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<td>Revised Draft</td>
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<td><strong>Civic Discourse</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Commentary, Memoir OR Open Letter</td>
<td>Rough Draft</td>
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<td>PeerMarks</td>
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