Prerequisites:

All RWS 200 students must have satisfactory completion of RWS 100 or the equivalent.

Required Textbooks:

Course Reader (available at Aztec Bookstore)
Lewis, C.S. *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.* (Available at Aztec Bookstore).

Course Description, General Education Capacities/Goals and RWS Learning Outcomes

“*Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.*” Aristotle, Rhetoric

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.”

**Learning Outcomes for RWS 200**

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 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.

The following points describe outcomes to work on throughout the semester:

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.

Course Requirements:

- Four formal essays of five to six pages. First drafts and revisions will be required, and the paper grade will be lowered one full letter grade if there is no first draft included.
- Selected readings from the course reader and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.
- Reading quizzes, homework and in-class work.
- Class participation in small group activities, class discussions, and writing workshops.

Grade Breakdown:

Each paper will receive a letter grade based on the quality of work it contains, as will your final exam paper. The value of the letter grade corresponds to the recommended values in the SDSU catalog (A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, etc.). The journal entry for each paper will also be factored into this grade. Participation will be assigned a letter grade that takes into consideration both your attendance and your level of involvement in class discussions and group work. Your final grade will be determined by weighting those letter grades as follows:

| Essay 1:  | 20% |
| Essay 2:  | 20% |
| Essay 3:  | 20% |
| Essay 4:  | 20% |
| Reading Quizzes: | 10% |
| Participation: | 10% |

Policies:

Late work: You may use one “Get Out of Jail Free” option, which allows you to turn in one of the first three papers one class period late without any penalty. Once the option has been used, no late work will be accepted. Note that the “Get Out of Jail Free” card may not be used with the final paper; it must be turned in on time.

Hard copies: All assignments are due during the class period and must be turned in as hard copies. They must be typed, in MLA format, and stapled.
Graded papers: Papers are generally graded and returned to you within an average of two weeks. At times the turn-around time may be shorter and on occasion it may be longer, depending on the amount of commentary I find it necessary to include on the returned papers. Note that students who use their Get Out of Jail Free option will not have papers returned at the same time as the rest of the class.

Attendance: No more than two absences are allowed without penalty during the semester. Absences beyond this will be reflected in a lower participation grade—clearly, you cannot participate if you have not attended.

Cell phones: Please be sure cell phones are turned off and put away before entering class. Students who are attending to their cell phones during class, or who get up and leave class to answer cell phones, will be marked absent.

E-mail: This course is not taught via e-mail. If you miss class, please come see me during office hours to discuss what you missed. I cannot teach a fifty minute class via e-mail. Also, it is not necessary to notify me if you will be missing class on a particular day, though if something has come up that will result in you missing several classes you will want to let me know. Finally, I do not respond to e-mails at night or on weekends.

Special arrangements: If you are registered with Disabled Students Services and require special arrangements to be made in order to accommodate your learning needs, I am happy to work with you in conjunction with DSS. Please let me know of your situation 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.

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; d.) close and lengthy paraphrasing of the writings of another.” Plagiarism is a breach of academic codes of conduct. Refer to the General Catalog for the potential consequences of plagiarism, which may include failing the course and/or possible expulsion from the university.