Rhetoric and Writing Studies RWS 1302

CRN: 25758
Meeting Times: Fridays 10:30am-11:50am
Room: UGLC 234

Instructor: Alejandra Arroyos
Email: aarroyos3@miners.utep.edu
Office: UWC, UTEP Library Room 227
Hours: Mondays/Fridays 12pm-2pm, or by appointment

Course Description

The primary goal of RWS 1302 is to develop students’ critical thinking skills in order to facilitate effective communication in all educational, professional, and social contexts. This effective communication is based on an awareness of and appreciation for discourse communities as well as knowledge specific to subject matter, genre, rhetorical strategy, and writing process.

The class presents an approach to communication that helps students determine the most effective strategies, arrangements, and media to use in different rhetorical contexts. It teaches students a systematic approach for analyzing rhetorical situations and producing a variety of documents and presentations while gaining more confidence and fluency in visual, oral, and written communication. In addition, because communication is central to being an active and engaged member of society, the course also provides a space for informed advocacy.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will:

- Understand a theory of discourse communities;
- Engage as a community of writers who dialogue across texts, argue, and build on each other’s work;
- Draw on existing knowledge bases to create “new” or “transformed” knowledge;
- Develop a knowledge of genres as they are defined and within discourse communities;
- Address the specific, immediate rhetorical situations of individual communicative acts;
- Develop procedural knowledge of the writing task in its various phases.
- Engage reflection about their own learning.

Students will also have the opportunity to strengthen skills sets in the following areas:

- Thinking, reading, and writing critically;
- Formulating research questions and performing primary and secondary research to answer those questions;
• Becoming familiar with the contents of the UTEP Library, in a variety of forms and areas of professional study (e.g. the arts, humanities, sciences, nursing, social sciences, business, engineering, and education);
• Analyzing and synthesizing material from outside sources;
• Developing a sensitivity to the significance of data and how it can be rhetorically applied to various genres;
• Applying research to various genres;
• Mastering documentation within a discipline (APA);
• Learning writing strategies for integrating source material into their own prose (quoted, paraphrased, and summarized material); and
• Writing analytical and argumentative papers appropriate to genres and larger discourse communities.

This course is also designed to promote your overall success, inside and outside the classroom. Our coursework will help you to improve in key areas such as Communication, Confidence, Critical Thinking, Leadership, Problem Solving, Social Responsibility and Teamwork. To find out more about the university’s plan to improve student engagement and learning, visit the UTEP Edge.

Required Texts & Materials

An e-book is available through the UTEP Bookstore.


*Additional readings will also be posted on Blackboard.

Course Assignments
This is only an overview of the assignments we’ll cover in this course. Specific assignment guidelines can be found in the Handbook. I’ll also post further instructions on our Blackboard course content.
**Major Assignments**

- **Assignment #1:** E-Portfolio Blog/Advocacy Website (150 points)  
  Option A: Advocacy Website
- **Assignment #2:** Genre Analysis (100 points)
- **Assignment #3:** Literature Review/Research Report (200 points)
- **Assignment #4:** Advanced Visual Argument (200 Points)  
  Option A: Documentary Film
- **Assignment #5:** Advanced Visual Argument Presentation (50 points)

**Smaller Assignments & Activities**

- Advocacy Website Shell (50 points)
- Topic Proposal for Semester (50 points)
- Research Questions for Literature Review/Research Report (50 points)
- Participation Points (150 points)
  
  Because this is a hybrid class, participation in-class and online is mandatory. The activities included in this category ensure that students learn the material and help them compose effective projects. This will include in-class and online attendance, homework, drafts, discussion boards, assignment reflections, peer reviews, and other work the instructor assigns.

**Grade Distribution (Students can earn a total of 1000 points for the course):**

- 1000-900 = A  
- 899-800 = B  
- 799-700 = C  
- 699-600 = D  
- 599 and below = F

**University and Instructor Policies**

This course is taught as a **hybrid class**—with one face-to-face meeting for lecture and discussion a week, and the rest of the course using Blackboard. It is **vital** for you to regularly check your UTEP email and course content in order to ensure you stay on top of assignment due dates and are aware of important announcements from the instructor.

Students should allocate sufficient time for class projects and work. The general rule for all classes is that students spend two hours working outside of class for each class credit. Because this is a 3-hour class, expect to spend 6 hours doing researching and writing each week, but since the class only meets for 1.5 hours a week, add the additional 1.5 hours to the 6 for a total of 7.5 hours of studying a week.

Because this course will be using Blackboard extensively, it is **strongly recommended** that students have access to Internet from home and are comfortable using a computer. If home access is not possible, arrangements can be made to use a computer regularly on campus in order to complete the work. Student computer labs are often available until midnight, but schedules do vary. A great deal of work will be done online, and not having access to a computer will affect your ability to turn in assignments on time.
Submitting Work:
All work will be submitted through our Blackboard course shell. Since the Blackboard comment and grade function works best with Microsoft Word, please submit all assignments in Microsoft Word following APA format unless directed otherwise. Microsoft Word is available to students at all campus computers and through the Cloud.

All major assignments will be due Monday nights at midnight. Weekly assignments such as discussion boards or reflection posts will be due Wednesday nights at midnight. Be sure to keep an eye out for any upcoming submission dates or changes to the schedule.

Late Work:
It is important to submit work before deadlines for full credit and feedback. However, you will have one chance to turn in an assignment late without deductions. Late work must be turned in within a week following the official due date. Each day that the assignment is late after this window will result in a letter grade reduction until you reach a 50% on the assignment, after that the grade will automatically be a 50%. This means that the first day you turn it in late the maximum grade you can receive is a B, the following a C, and so on. Also, because it is due during the last week of the semester, the Advocacy Website must be completed on time. Additionally, it will not be possible to make up in-class activities such as peer review sessions and group discussions.

Extra Credit:
You have the opportunity to earn a maximum of five points for every major assignment you take into the UWC for a tutoring session (max. of 20 points over the whole semester). If you go, make sure to ask your consultant for proof that you attended the tutoring session. Please note, however, that it is not the consultant's job to revise and edit your paper, instead they are there to help you identify possible mistakes in your paper and guide you through the revising and editing process.

Classroom Etiquette:
Electronic devices can be very helpful in the classroom whether a smartphone, tablet, or computer. However, if their use does not contribute to the conversation or tasks in the classroom then I have the right to ask you to put it away or turn it off—even if it is a personal device.

Debate, critical inquiry, and intellectual diversity are essential elements to higher education and a process of learning. There is the potential during this course for controversial and sensitive topics to be discussed during small group or whole class interaction, and to surface through our social media activity. You are expected to demonstrate the utmost respect and courtesy for your peers with differing arguments, viewpoints, and/or experiences. Sexist, racist, homophobic, or other hateful speech will not be tolerated.
As a general rule: always consider audience—in class and online. Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading any postings. When reacting to someone else’s message (verbal or written), address the ideas, not the person and post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face to face situation. Additionally, Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for classmates and the professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space. If students wish to do so, they have the ethical obligation to first request the permission of the writer(s).

**Attendance:**
According to The University of Texas at El Paso’s catalog: “The student is expected to attend all classes and laboratory sessions and attendance is mandatory for all freshman-level courses” (1XXX). It is the responsibility of the student to inform each instructor of extended absences. (For further information regarding excused absences refer to UTEP’s Catalog *Curriculum and Classroom Policies*.

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to participate in discussions and workshops. The class discussions will help you learn to improve your writing, often through the discussion of a sample student project (sometimes yours, sometimes one written by a classmate). Since this class only meets once a week, if you are absent from more than two classes (worth two weeks of work), this will lower your grade with major point deductions from your overall grade. I will not be dropping you from the course; however, it is your responsibility to drop the course if you know you cannot meet the course and attendance requirements.

**Academic Integrity:**
The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Instructors are required to report the suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. If you have further questions visit the Office of Dean of Students.

**Accommodations:**
Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we’ll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. I also encourage you to visit the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) in
room 106, Union East Building or contact them at 747-5148 or cass@utep.edu. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met. There are also a range of resources on campus, including the University Writing Center, Counseling Center, Military Student Success Center and Academic Advising Center.

**University Writing Center:**
UTEP's University Writing Center (UWC) offers free writing tutoring assistance for all UTEP students. The tutors are undergraduate and graduate students who can help with all parts of a writing assignment, including prewriting, organizing, revising, and editing. They can also help to understand any writing assignment and help work on comprehending difficult textbook material. Note: To facilitate revision, I encourage you to visit the writing center at least one day before the assignment is due.

**Military Student:**
If you are a military student (veteran, dependent, active) please visit the [Military Student Success Center](#). I also recognize the complexities of being a student veteran. If you are a student veteran, please inform me if you need special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, complications with GI Bill disbursement, and other unforeseen military and veteran-related developments can complicate your academic life. If you make me aware of a complication, I will do everything I can to assist you or put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you.

**Important Dates for the Semester:**
- Jan. 21st: Spring classes start
- Feb. 5th: Spring census date (last day to register)
- Mar. 16th-20th: Spring break
- Mar. 21st: Midterm grades are due
- Mar. 27th: Cesar Chavez Holiday (no classes)
- April 3rd: Spring drop date
- April 10th: Spring study day (no classes)
- May 7th: Last day of classes
- May 8th: Dead day (no classes)
- May 11th-18th: Finals week
- May 21st: Final grades are posted

Please make note of office hours and email and reach out to me if you need to. I look forward to guiding your learning this semester!

*Syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.*