

RWS 1301: Rhetoric and Composition I

CRN: 22845 MWF 12:30-1:20 PM

Instructor Information

Name: Javier Cortez

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Office Hours: My office hours are a combination of in-person and online via Zoom. There is a recurring link on our Blackboard page that you can use for my Zoom office hours. If you cannot meet during those times, in person or online, do not hesitate to reach out through email!

In-Person Hours: Thursdays 12:00 to 1:00 pm

In-Person Location: University Writing Center (UTEP Library Room 227).

Zoom Hours: By Appointment

Zoom Location: Anywhere with Wi-Fi!

Program Overview

At UTEP, the **First-Year Composition (FYC) program** in the English department offers two first-year courses that are typically taken as a sequence, RWS 1301—Rhetoric and Composition I and RWS 1302—Rhetoric and Composition 2. These courses are intended to help students develop and reflect upon their rhetorical and writing knowledge including awareness of social and racial justice, and the implications of their language choices when they write, based on the understanding that language is never neutral. Therefore, we teach writing as a complex activity through which students are given guidance and often collaborate. Drawing on the rich scholarship of Rhetoric and Writing Studies, we have designed our courses to help students address the challenges of 21st century composing. In these courses, students are empowered to determine the most effective strategies, arrangements, and media to use in different rhetorical contexts.

The FYC program reminds students that the primary purpose of these classes is the learning and practice of writing. The Conference on College Composition and Communication together with the Council of Writing Program Administrators state:

Writing classes teach writing: Principally, writing classes foreground writing itself as a complex, distributed activity premised upon sociality and community formation, processes and materials, flexibility, and ethical communication. Writing classes may involve participants in purposeful interpersonal interactions (discussions and conversations), writing-related activities (peer review,

studying features in model texts), and interpreting texts (making meaning individually or together with others); however, the activity of writing itself continues to be central to what a writing class sponsors. CCCC and CWPA Joint Statement in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

RWS 1301 & 1302 Learning Outcomes

- 1) Students will reflect on and critically analyze their own language experiences.
- 2) Students will synthesize information about racial and ethnic biases and other social justice issues and confront these issues in their writing.
- 3) Students will demonstrate engagement with multiple media sources through their projects, including, but not limited to, digital resources.
- 4) Students will identify relevant research sources and opportunities from their lived experiences, their campus interactions, and their engagement within their communities.
- 5) Students will apply knowledge from local communities to research broader social issues demonstrating their critical awareness.

At the end of these FYC courses, students will be able to:

Critical thinking and reading

- Think, read, and write analytically and reflectively
- Address specific, immediate rhetorical situations and their effects on individuals and communities
- Read a diverse range of texts and apply these texts to different audiences, contexts, and situations.

Composing practices

- Read and compose in several genres to understand how genre conversations shape and are shaped by readers' and writers' practices and purposes
- Develop composing processes appropriate to writing style, audience, and assignment
- Use composing processes and tools as a means to discover and reconsider ideas, generate writing, and make meaning
- Engage with a community of writers who dialogue across texts, argue, and build on each other's work
- Develop writing projects through multiple drafts by learning flexible strategies for reading, drafting, reviewing, collaborating, revising, rewriting, rereading, and editing
- Give, receive, and act on productive feedback from peers and instructors to work in progress

Research

- Learn to formulate research questions, methods for research, and analyze and synthesize material
- Develop 21st century technological literacies and modalities needed for researching and composing
- Locate and evaluate primary and secondary materials, such as: surveys, interviews, observations, case studies, journal articles and essays, books, scholarly and professionally established and maintained databases and archives, and informal electronic networks and internet sources.
- Learn writing strategies for integrating source material into your own prose (quoted, paraphrased, and summarized material)
- Apply research to various genres and cite sources in American Psychological Association Style (APA) or Modern Language Association Style (MLA)

Assessment

- Use reflective learning strategies to self-assess and understand one's processes and products
- Collaborate
- Integrate and act on critical feedback from peers and instructors
- Understand and examine critically the reasons behind writing conventions in fields and disciplines

Rhetoric & Composition I (RWS 1301) Course Description

Rhetoric & Composition I (RWS 1301) is designed to help students in all disciplines reach their academic and professional goals as writers. Course assignments invite students to explore cultural, political, linguistic, racial, and social issues through topics that appeal to their interests and sense of civic responsibility as members of various academic and non-academic communities.

The curriculum consists of these 5 modules:

MODULE 1 – Taking Inventory

- Exploring texts
- Experimenting with multimedia
- Collaborative project on studying texts, authorship, and the idea of composition

MODULE 2 – Autoethnographic Study of Self and Language Experiences

- Language and literacy—relationship to home and language
- Looking back on your linguistic identities
- How do linguistic and cultural experiences affect your ideas about what it means to write in college?

MODULE 3 – Remixing the Self Study

- Adapting to another audience—audience analysis
- Examining an alternative genre—genre analysis
- Composing in a new medium
- Rhetorical analysis

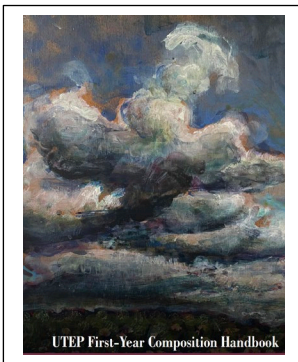
MODULE 4 – Social Issue Investigation

- Identifying an issue of personal and social concern
- Interrogating assumptions, biases, and representations through topic research
- Report with annotated bibliography for future study

MODULE 5 – Visual Argument

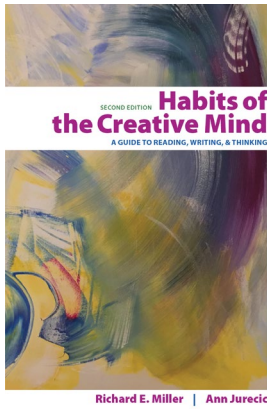
- Creating infographic, PSA, or alternative visual project
- Presentation of infographics and PSAs

Required Texts & Materials



UTEP First-Year Composition Handbook, Fall 2022 edition

An e-book available through the UTEP Bookstore.



Miller, R. E., & Jurecic, A. (2020). *Habits of the Creative Mind: A Guide to Reading, Writing, & Thinking* (2nd ed.) Available at the UTEP Bookstore.

Additional required readings may also be posted on Blackboard.

Course Assignments and Grading

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

150 Points: **MODULE 1 – Taking Inventory**

150 Points: **MODULE 2 – Autoethnographic Study of Self and Language Experience**

150 Points: **MODULE 3 – Remixing the Self Study**

150 Points: **MODULE 4 – Social Issue Investigation**

150 Points: **MODULE 5 – Visual Argument**

***The Final 250 points will be assessed and given at the end of the semester.**

POINTS/PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN BY ASSIGNMENT/ASSESSMENT

100 Points: **Class Facilitation**– 10%

150 Points: **Habits Discussion Board Posts** – 15%

350 Points: **Major Assignments (5 in total)** – 35%

150 Points: Attendance – 15%

250 Points: Labor Assessment – 25%

Grading

As shown above, one can earn up to 150 points in each learning module, which will be split between your class facilitation, discussion board posts, and one major assignment in each module. Before the due date of most of the major assignments, we will spend some time revising a draft of that major assignment, which is meant to encourage the recursive nature of the writing process. If you don't know what recursive means, that is ok! We will discuss the notion of recursivity in depth throughout the semester!

As far as what I evaluate, I primarily look at the content of your writing, rather than how much you write. I want your submissions to be substantial, well thought out, and engaging with the prompt or purpose of the assignment. I'm going to forgo "word count" requirements because I would prefer that you write in a way that seems fulfilling to yourself (and the assignment), rather than to meet an arbitrary number of words. That said, the writing in this course should convey effort and be reflective of the time you spent completing it. **Do not take a lack of a word count requirement as a means of submitting incomplete work.**

Additionally, I won't be grading your grammar or "academic language." I'm mainly concerned with how well you can express your ideas and thoughts through your writing in whichever way you're most comfortable doing. That said, I will provide grammatical tips, suggestions, and corrections if necessary, but these will be purely constructive and are not meant to count against your grade. **You will not be rewarded or penalized for your grammatical and syntactical proficiency or lack thereof; this is not a grammar course.** Upon grading your assignments, I will try to provide an end comment that consists of feedback in response to your written work. If you would like to discuss your grades, you are welcome to visit during my office hours to do just that. **Lastly, be prepared to revise and submit multiple drafts of work in this class.**

Assignment Breakdown

Class Facilitations

Each week, a group with a minimum of three, will lead a class discussion on the corresponding chapter reading assigned that week. These discussions are called facilitations. You can think of this assignment as a presentation or a conversation with your fellow classmates. This assignment requires you to have a strong command of the chapter content, which in turn means that you need to read the chapter multiple times. Our class facilitations are centered around Habits of the Creative Mind. More directions on this assignment will follow in class.

Habits Discussion Board Posts

A discussion board post on Habits of the Creative Mind is due every Thursday, along with an assigned chapter from the book. **Each weekly Habits discussion board is only open from Monday at 10 am to Sunday at 11:59**

pm. You will not have the ability to submit a post outside of that window of time. The rationale for this pocket of time is to force you to engage with your classmates and discuss the readings. A quick response to your classmates' days after the fact or 20 minutes before class is a pointless exercise that we will not be practicing in this class. With that, make sure you set time aside to engage with your classmates in that time span. Furthermore, I expect effort. Be expansive, ask questions, think critically, and challenge your classmates (in a respectful manner).

Major Assignments

During the course, you will complete five major assignments/projects, each of which will be worth the same number of points in relation to your overall grade. I've chosen this method of grading to enforce the importance of each assignment you will complete throughout the course, making sure that one project isn't worth more than another. More importantly, I want to eliminate any notion that this class has a hierarchy of assignments, which implies that some tasks are more important than others. **Everything we do in class is essential.**

Attendance

This section is expanded further down the syllabus in my Participation Policy and FYC Class attendance Policy sections. Although attendance only makes up for 15 percent of your grade, **attending class is crucial to passing.**

Labor Assessment & Non-Graded Assignments

Over this semester, I will assign in-class writing and homework that will not be graded. Most of this work will be used as a scaffolding for major assignments, while the rest will pertain to in-class activities related to assigned readings. As stated, these assignments will not be graded; it's simply your choice to do them. That said, when your labor is assessed at the end of the semester, guess what will factor into that 250-point allotment? You guessed right, those non-graded assignments. To be clear, your Labor Assessment is a comprehensive examination of your effort throughout the semester. I will consider everything you have done in the class and not just non-graded assignments.

"What is a Labor Assessment and how does it work?"

Labor simply translates to effort. If you put forth a continuous and concerted effort throughout this semester, you will earn the 200 points allocated to the Labor Assessment. In RWS 1301, you will find an emphasis put on process-oriented writing that embraces the recursive nature of writing, i.e., multiple drafting and submissions. That said, as college students and adults, you have the freedom to put forth as much effort as you want or don't want. If you look at the grading breakdown on the previous page, you will find that the Labor Assessment accounts for 20 percent of your grade. So, in theory, if you complete every assignment and meet the required attendance policy, at the very least, you will get a B. That said, if you make no effort to engage past the bare minimum of discussion board posts, class discussions, and multiple drafting, you will earn zero points on your

labor assessment. So, the choice is yours: meet the course requirements and possibly **GET** a B or put forth a continuous and concerted effort, and you will **EARN** an A.

“How does it differ from attendance?”

Attending class does not equate to effort. You are required to come to class and participate. **That is not negotiable if you want to succeed in this class.** Further down the syllabus, an attendance policy will outline the parameters of tardiness, excused and unexcused absences, and how they will affect your standing in this course.

Course Delivery

While most classes are held face-to-face, there are a few sections that are designated as online. Those classes may meet synchronously or asynchronously through Blackboard. Whether face-to-face or online, the course is designed to engage students through discussions with your classmates and instructor using Blackboard (Bb). In order to succeed in the course, you will need to have regular use of the internet and a stable connection regardless of whether your class meets face-to-face or online. Although you can use the Blackboard App on your phone, it is highly recommended that you compose your work for class, and perform class activities, via a computer. If you don't have a computer or reliable internet at home, the university can help you with resources: [Technology Support - UTEP](#). Please speak with your instructor immediately if you will need assistance. We want you to have the opportunity to succeed in class without concern about access. There are also computers available for you to use in the library on campus.

Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the [Help Desk](#) as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students.

Students can prepare by taking the Blackboard Student Orientation (<https://www.utep.edu/extendeduniversity/cid/student-resources/blackboard-orientation.html>)

Submitting Work: All work will be submitted through the Bb course shell for this class. Since Bb comment and grade function works best with Microsoft Word, please submit all assignments in Microsoft Word following APA or MLA format unless directed otherwise. Be sure to name each submitted assignment with your name and the title of the assignment.

Late Work Policy: **Late work is not accepted in this class without due notice.** If you feel that there is a possibility you will not be able to submit your work on time, please let me know! I'm flexible and reasonable, but you need to advocate for yourself, ideally before the fact and not after. Obviously, life happens, and some

emergencies do not allow being proactive about missing class and late work. That said, please do not conflate actual emergencies with poor time management on your part. If you are honest and proactive, we won't have a problem this semester. Again, I am flexible and reasonable.

Participation Policy: Your participation is measured by three key components.

1. **Your attendance:** more specifically, showing up on time for class. If you are constantly late, your attendance and participation grade will fairly reflect that. Show up on time and be ready to work. Your attendance and participation will be factored into your end-of-semester Labor Assessment.
2. **Your preparedness:** RWS 1301 is a reading and writing-intensive course that is easy to succeed in if you do the necessary work outside of class. Make sure you read your assigned readings before class and not 20 minutes before class.
3. **Your engagement:** Class discussions are an essential component of this class. You are expected to engage in fruitful conversation with your classmates, whether in groups or full class discussions.

Classroom Etiquette: Debate, critical inquiry, and intellectual diversity are essential elements to higher education and the 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 (whether face-to-face or online), and to surface through discussion board postings. You are expected to demonstrate respect and courtesy for your peers and instructor when they express differing arguments, viewpoints, and/or experiences. Sexist, racist, homophobic, or other hateful speech will not be permitted. Angry displays, whether in writing, online postings, or in class discussions will be handled as disruptions to the wellbeing of the class and responded to as negative participation.

University and Program Policies

FYC Class Attendance Policy: According to UTEP's [Curriculum and Classroom Policies](#):

The student is expected to attend all classes and laboratory sessions. It is the responsibility of the student to inform each instructor of extended absences. When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor can drop the student from the class with a grade of W before the course-drop deadline or with a grade of F after the course-drop deadline.

Please consult UTEP's [Curriculum and Classroom Policies](#) for more information regarding Excused Absences for University-Recognized Activities, Absence for Religious Holy Days, and Military Leave.

Attendance is mandatory for all freshman-level courses. Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to participate in discussions and workshops. In addition, the First-Year Composition Program has developed the following policies that should be adhered to strictly by all instructors:

For Face-to-Face Classes: Students are entitled to a single week of unexplained absences without penalty (for example, 3 classes missed in a three-times-a-week class, 2 classes missed in twice-a-week class, 1 class missed in a once-a-week class).

After 2 total weeks of absence (not necessarily consecutive classes) the student's grade is lowered by a full letter (A becomes B, etc.).

After 3 total weeks of absence (not necessarily consecutive), the student is automatically dropped from class.

Missing a scheduled conference with the instructor constitutes an absence.

For Hybrid Classes: The attendance policy for hybrid courses aligns with the structure for face-to-face courses with each missed weekly class meeting constituting absence from a week of class.

The program recommends that the student contact the instructor to discuss the attendance policy and how it applies in cases in which it is not possible to attend a weekly class meeting, while continuing to maintain robust participation in class activities. [see also online courses]

For Online Classes: In an online class, attendance is measured by participation in class activities. The attendance policy for online courses aligns with the structure for face-to-face courses, with each missed week of class activities constituting absence from a week of class.

The instructor can measure participation through various pathways, such as completion of scaffolded activities and discussion posts, and responding to other students' posts and feedback. We also recommend measuring course activity by using the Course Reports feature on Blackboard, particularly the Course Activity Overview.

When it becomes evident that it is not possible to participate in class, the program recommends that the student contact the instructor to discuss the attendance policy and how it applies, before resuming robust participation in class activities.

Drop Policy: If you cannot complete this course for whatever reason, please contact your instructor. Your instructor can help you with the drop process and you can contact the Registrar's Office. If you do not drop, you are at risk of being dropped by the instructor and possibly receiving an "F" for the course.

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 Affairs. Visit the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](#) page for more information on Academic integrity.

Accommodations: UTEP is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the [UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) (CASS). Students are encouraged to visit CASS in room 106, Union East Building or contact them at 747-5148 or cass@utep.edu.

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. Go to [University Writing Center - UTEP](#) to make an appointment with a writing center consultant.

Military Students: 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.

Course Support Resources

Title IX	915-747-8358	Institutional Compliance
Dean of Students	915-747-5648	Dean of Students
UTEP Health & Wellness Center	915-747-5624	https://www.utep.edu/chs/shc/ studenthealth@utep.edu

UTEP Police Department	915-747-5611	https://www.utep.edu/police/police@utep.edu
Counseling and Psychological Services	915-747-5302	https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/caps@utep.edu

Academic Calendar Spring 2023

- Jan 17th** Spring classes begin
- Jan 17th-20th** Late Registration (Fees are incurred)
- Feb 1st** Spring Census Day
Note: This is the last day to register for classes. Payments are due by 5:00 pm.
- Mar 13th-17th** Spring Break
- Mar 30th** Spring Drop/Withdrawal Deadline
Note: Student-initiated drops are permitted after this date, but the student is not guaranteed a grade of W. The faculty member of record will issue a grade of either W or F.
- Mar 31st** Cesar Chavez Holiday - No classes
- Apr 7th** Spring Study Day
- May 4th** Spring – Last day of classes
- May 5th** Dead day
- May 8-12th** Spring Final Exams