

Rhetoric and Writing Studies

RWS 1302

CRN:15979

Meeting Time/Day: Thursday 4:30-5:50

Place: UGLC 232

Instructor Information: Marco Rodriguez

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Office and Hours: Tuesday: 1:30 – 2:50pm, Thursday: 1:00 – 4:30pm, and 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 then 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:

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- 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:

- Think, read, and write critically;
- Formulate research questions and perform primary and secondary research to answer those questions;
- Become 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);
- Analyze and synthesize material from outside sources;
- Develop a sensitivity to the significance of data and how it can be rhetorically applied to various genres; and,
- Apply research to various genres;
- Master documentation within a discipline (APA);
- learn writing strategies for integrating source material into your own prose (quoted, paraphrased, and summarized material); write 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:



Comer, D. K. (2015). *Writing in Transit*. Southlake, TX: Fountainhead Press.
ISBN:978-1-59871-803-4. Available through the UTEP Bookstore.

Bossie, R., & LaPrade, P. (2019). *The First-Year Composition Handbook*.
This e-book is available through the UTEP Bookstore.

Additional readings may also be posted on Blackboard.

The next section consists of an overview of assignments. The icons relate to relevant UTEPEdge learning outcomes. Specific assignment guidelines can be found in the *Handbook*. Further instructions are posted on the Blackboard course content.

Course Assignments:

Genre Analysis: Students will identify two texts on the same subject, but in different genres, to write a comparative analysis. This will be submitted to, and graded by, the instructor. **100 pts.**



Literature Review / Primary Research Report: Students will conduct primary and secondary research on a social, political, or ethical issue to become well-informed experts on the issue. Students will then write a literature review of these sources to summarize and synthesize the arguments and ideas of the research sources. This will be submitted (rough and final drafts) to, and graded by, the instructor. **200 pts.**



Advanced Visual Argument: 200 pts.

Option1: Documentary Film



E-Portfolio Reflection Website/Blog: Students will create, design, and maintain an academic profile in the form of an e-portfolio website that includes reflections on their course work, major assignments and composing processes.

Option 2: Extended Professional E-Portfolio **100 pts.**



Class Presentation: Students will present their visual argument to the class. The instructor will grade this presentation. **50 pts.**



Participation and Attendance: Because this is a hybrid class, participation in-class **and** online is mandatory. These points will be determined and distributed by the instructor. **25 pts.**

Discussion Posts & Peer Review (online): You will reflect on readings and key concepts by responding to a discussion question before class in a 250 word (minimum) response. These responses will serve as a springboard for our discussions of assigned readings. You will also complete peer review and other group tasks online. **180 pts**

Activities: You will complete activities as assigned; these activities will serve as scaffolding for major assignments. **145 pts**



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 designed to engage you through discussions in class and Bb. I hope you actively participate in this course because I have found it is the best way to engage you in learning.

Course Delivery:

This course is taught as a **hybrid class**--with one face-to-face meeting for lecture and discussion, and the rest of the course utilizing a management system such as Blackboard, a Wiki, or a class website depending on the instructor. It is vital for you to regularly check your UTEP email and course content. Students should allocate sufficient time for the 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.

This course is technology enhanced, and all of the supplementary material for the class will be delivered via Blackboard. 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 such as ATLAS (<http://issweb.utep.edu/>) 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 Bb course shell. Since Bb 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.

Due Dates for Major Assignments: All major assignments will be due on Sunday nights at midnight.

Late Work: Generally, online courses are great for people who have very busy schedules and cannot attend traditional face to face classes. I do not normally accept late work for this reason; I'm busy, you're busy, be mindful of due dates. However, I do understand that life happens and because of this, any student can appeal for their work to be accepted by emailing me their appeal. Successful appeals are subject to penalties and/or additional requirements.

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.
- 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 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 meets twice a week, **if you are absent from more than two classes** (= two weeks), **you may be dropped from the course**. Missing a scheduled conference with the instructor constitutes an absence.

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. Visit the [Office of Dean of Students](#) Instructors are required to report the suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Affairs.

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 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 12 hours before the assignment is due.

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.

Important Dates for this Semester:

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Aug 26	First day of class
Aug 26-30	Late Registration
Sept 2	Labor Day-No classes
Sept 11	Census Day – Drop students who have not come to class
	Freshmen mid-term grades due
Nov 1	Drop Date-last day to drop students with a W
Nov 28-29	Thanksgiving holiday
Dec 5	Last day of classes
Dec 6	Dead Day (day between last class day and start of finals, no class)
Dec 9-13	Final Exams. Check the UTEP finals week calendar for your course.
Dec 19	Final grades are posted.

Visit <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/registrar/Academic%20Calendars/academic-calendar.html> for other important dates.

Please make note of office hours and email, and reach out to me if you need to. I look forward to helping you become better writers this semester!