syl•la•bus

/ˈsɪləbəs/

Etymology: modern Latin *syllabus*, usually referred to an alleged Greek *σύλλαβος*.

a. The subjects of a series of lectures, etc.; a compendium, abstract, summary, epitome.

b. A statement of the subjects covered by a course of instruction or by an examination, in a school, college, etc.; a program of study.
Major Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 E-Portfolio Website Shell</td>
<td>50 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a website builder, construct an e-portfolio to exhibit major projects from the semester.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 Topic Selection Paper</td>
<td>50 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using preliminary research, compose a report describing the topic, subject, and issue related to the semester research project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 Rhetorical Analysis Paper</td>
<td>100 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using a scholarly source, evaluate the rhetorical stylings of an author.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4 Discourse Community Ethnography/Map</td>
<td>100 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Swale’s definition of a discourse community, apply his theory to this class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5 Annotated Bibliography Paper</td>
<td>100 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After evaluating research topic sources, summarize the claims of at least ten (10) scholarly sources and two (2) primary sources.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6 Global Issues Report</td>
<td>100 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the annotated bibliography, analyze the problem affecting a community and prepare a formal report presenting the information in an organized, coherent manner, making a claim justified by evidence and reasoning.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>#7 Visual Argument (Global Issues Report)</td>
<td>50 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>#8 Visual Argument (PSA)</td>
<td>100 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with your project team, construct a visual argument using digital media.</td>
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<tr>
<td>#9 Visual Argument (PSA) Presentation</td>
<td>50 pts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working with your project team, present your findings while discussing the challenges of producing a visual argument.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>#10 E-Portfolio Website</td>
<td>50 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the e-portfolio, present the projects from the semester, incorporating thoughtful academic reflections for each.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>#11 Class and Online Participation</td>
<td>150 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Blackboard and the comp book, complete the daily class activities as assigned.</td>
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<tr>
<td>#12 Attendance</td>
<td>100 pts.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Total Points Possible:** 1,000 pts.

Grade Distribution

Assignments and participation combined total 1,000 points for the course. You will need 700 points (70%) to pass this course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,000 – 900</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>899 – 800</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>799 – 700</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>699 – 600</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>599 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About this Course

Course Description

The goal of RWS 1301 is to develop your critical thinking skills. Critical thinking enables effective communication in all educational, professional, and social contexts. Effective communication is based on an awareness of and appreciation for discourse communities. This involves understanding subject matter, genre, rhetorical strategy, and writing process.

This course prepares you for the writing that you will do throughout your university experience and in professional and civic environments. It does this by providing a curriculum that empowers you to determine the most effective approaches, arrangements, and media to use in different rhetorical contexts.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Understand a theory of discourse communities.
- Engage as a community of writers who dialogue across texts, argue, and build on the work of your peers and others.
- Draw on existing knowledge bases to create “new” or “transformed” knowledge.
- Develop a knowledge of genres as they are defined and adopted 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 in reflection about your own learning.

This course is designed to promote your overall success, both 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 learn more, visit the UTEP Edge.
Required Texts and Materials

Textbooks

Yes, you will need to purchase textbooks for this class. You will not be able to complete the writing assignments without them.

No cash? No problem!
Simply visit loan.utep.edu for an emergency book loan.

Required Text

Bullock, R., Daly Goggin, M. (2019)
The Norton Field Guide to Writing with Readings (5th ed.)
ISBN: 978-0-393-65578-0
Available through the bookstore. You may purchase or rent a copy from an online source; however, should your textbook not arrive by the first day of class, you are still responsible for completing assigned readings.
A copy of this textbook is also available for reading in the University Writing Center.

Required Text

Bossie, R., & LaPrade, P., ed. (2019)
The First-Year Composition Handbook (19th ed.)
An e-book available through the bookstore.

Required Materials

In addition to the above textbooks, you will need the following items:

- Laptop computer
- Composition book (80 sheets, college ruled). Bring to every class.
- RefWorks account (free; go to the Citation Guides page on the UTEP library’s website).
- Microsoft OneDrive account (free; visit onedrive.utep.edu). If you have difficulties installing, visit tech support on the third floor of the University Library.
- Microsoft Word, Office 365 version (free; access through you’re my.utep.edu account: click “gear” icon > Settings > Software). If you
have difficulties installing, visit tech support on the third floor of the University Library).

- Weebly account (free; sign up for an education account at www.weebly.com).

Additional readings (no cost) will be posted on Blackboard.

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Course Delivery

This course utilizes Blackboard, a learning management system (LMS). Through Blackboard, I will provide you with permanent access to the syllabus, supplemental reading materials, activities, e-mail, and discussion groups. Since Blackboard is an integral part of the course, it is vital that you check in daily and participate consistently.

Instructions for Accessing Your Course Online

You must have a UTEP email ID and password before you can access Bb. UTEP automatically generated an e-mail ID for you when you were officially admitted to the university. Any questions or problems can be directed to the Helpdesk at 915-747-4357, or by visiting helpdesk.utep.edu.

If you are not familiar with Blackboard, UTEP has many resources to help you grasp the basics. Visit https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/BB_Students.html

This course makes heavy use of technology and multimedia. It is strongly recommended that you have access to the 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 to complete the work. Student computer labs are often available until midnight, but schedules do vary.

For a list of campus computer labs, visit https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/COMP_ComputerPrintingLabs.html

Technology problems are not an excuse for turning in work late or not at all. You need to get into the habit of completing assignments for this course well before the due date to allow time for dealing with technology problems. Expect that, at some time, the network will be down, your computer will go on the fritz, or some other small catastrophe will occur. If you are prepared ahead of time, you can go to Plan B.
A limited number of laptops are available for loan at no charge to UTEP students. Visit 
https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/TSCenter/TechnologySupportCenter.html#S05 for more details.

Submitting Assignments

All work will be submitted through Blackboard. An assignment inbox is provided on the homepage.

Daily activities are submitted through the Blackboard class module containing the activity.

Throughout the composition drafting process, you will maintain a working draft in your personal RWS 1301 folder on OneDrive. While not graded, the working draft is assessed weekly as part of your class participation grade.

MS Word and OneDrive

This course utilizes Microsoft Word (Office 365) and OneDrive as an integral part of meeting learning objectives. All of your major composition assignments must be written using Word and the OneDrive app. Both apps are provided to you at no cost by the University.

OneDrive provides a shared, secure cloud for you not only to store your writing assignments but also to allow collaborative revising with me, your instructor. By enrolling in this course, you agree to allow me access to your writing assignments on OneDrive. Using OneDrive allows me to work with you throughout the entire writing process by providing timely formative feedback on composition, ranging from formatting to formulating arguments.

Image: The New Yorker
Course Policies

Assessment

Major writing assignments comprise 70 percent of your final grade. They are submitted through the Assignment Inbox in Blackboard.

Additional information for each project is available in the FYC handbook or as provided by me. Each project will be assessed by a grading rubric. Look for these rubrics in the FYC handbook.

Activities are turned in within their respective class modules. These are formative assessments that are the building blocks for each writing assignment. Activities include expository reflections, readings, discussion board postings, and quizzes.

Activities do not receive a grade, per se; instead, they receive a complete/did not complete assessment:

- 3 – Exceptional; one bonus point awarded
- 2 – Met requirement of activity
- 1 – Needs revision; revise and resubmit for full credit
- 0 – Incomplete or not submitted

Activities count toward your participation grade, which is 25 percent of your final grade for the class. If your activity score falls below 70 percent, you may be dropped from the class for lack of participation or be required to attend office hours until the score rises above 70 percent.

Due Dates

Activities are due the day of class or as posted in the course schedule. For many activities, you will not be able to start a new activity in Blackboard until the previous activity has been completed.

Major writing assignments are due as posted in the course schedule. Each composition project has a first draft that must be completed before the final draft will be accepted. See First Drafts below.

Late Work

Extensions for late work are granted through office visits or the use of a one-time exception, known as a Get Out of Jail Free card. You receive one card per semester. Bonus cards are awarded every four weeks for maintaining a 90 percent activity score or for perfect attendance.

Extensions are granted by the University for certain excused absences or through accommodations. I will be notified by the appropriate office when such extensions are warranted.
First Drafts

Revise, revise, revise!

As mentioned above, we use the collaborative revision method in this class. Your writing will be constantly evaluated during throughout the writing process. Each week, you will receive comments on your draft assignments through OneDrive and Blackboard. These comments will

- ensure the project is on the right track and that it meets the requirements of the assignment, and
- comment on the “big issues.” You will receive comments based on the most important elements of the assignment. Addressing these concerns should help you succeed. The comments will NOT necessarily focus on grammar and such—so it is a good idea to get additional help from instructors and the Writing Center for this.

Cloud-Based Formative Assessment

If you are reading this sentence, send me a picture of a dragon by email to receive a valuable bonus. From time-to-time, you will submit your drafts through Blackboard. Your drafts do not receive a grade, per se; they will receive activity credits. You must receive an activity score of 2 in order to submit a final draft for an assignment grade.

2 – First draft complete; okay to submit revised final draft for grade
1 – First draft incomplete; need to resubmit first draft before submitting final draft
0 – Did not turn in a first draft

If you do not clear the 0 or 1 before the revised final draft is due, your final draft will be counted as late. See Late Work above.

Participation

Your attendance is determined by participation both in class and online. You must be prepared, participate in online discussions, and attend the face-to-face classes consistently to understand and incorporate the rhetorical strategies and processes used to complete the projects.

Set up a dedicated time each day outside of class to complete daily activities. Not completing an online activity counts against your participation grade.

Certain activities will require you to compose responses to online discussion board postings made by fellow students. You will need to make a minimum of two postings to receive credit for the activity.

If your activity score falls below 70 percent, you may be dropped from the class for lack of participation. Since 25 percent of your final grade is based on participation, it is hard to pass the class without participating.
You can earn bonus activity points by playing **Trivia Challenge** at the beginning of class. Earn up to two bonus points for correctly identifying and sourcing the answer to a UTEP trivia question.

According to the catalog of The University of Texas at El Paso:

> The student is expected to attend all classes and laboratory sessions and attendance is mandatory for all freshman-level courses [which includes RWS1301]. It is the responsibility of the student to inform each instructor of extended absences.

Missing four or more classes places you at risk of being dropped from the class. For further information regarding excused absences refer to UTEP's Catalog **Curriculum and Classroom Policies**.

**Tardies.** Early is on time; on time is late; late is inexcusable. Don’t be late to class. Attendance is taken in every class.

**Activity Score.** Every class will have a set of activities associated with it. Each activity is assessed as completed/not completed. Activity scores below 70 percent may result in you being dropped from the class for lack of participation.

**Name Cards.** The use of name cards in this class does much more than just help me pronounce names or allow classmates to get to know you. They are also used to mark attendance. They are a daily reminder of college success, which is persistence.

**Perfect Attendance.** Students with perfect attendance (no absences or tardies) receive one bonus Get Out of Jail Free card every four weeks.

You are free to withdraw this class at any point prior to the drop deadline. Drops, however, are expensive. You will have to take the class again. If you are receiving financial aid, you may lose it. Furthermore, there is a maximum number of drops that you are allowed during your undergraduate studies.

If you feel you need to withdraw from the class, speak to me first. There are ways to avoid this blemish on your record. Also, please note that there is a point in the academic calendar after which you must be given a grade of F for dropping the class. Don’t let a F or W mar your transcript or lighten your purse. Talk to your instructors.
An important aspect of your university studies is the opportunity to work as part of a group. Teamwork in the classroom can be an effective and powerful way to learn and is also highly relevant to the workplace.

You will be randomly assigned to a research team for the semester. Each team will work on a common research topic. Toward the end of the semester, you will be assigned to a new final project team.

Membership to a team is based on unanimity. Any member who does not pull his or her weight can be voted off the team by a unanimous vote of the remaining members. Students voted off teams are responsible for completing all assigned projects themselves.

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 discussions, or which may surface through our social media activity. You are expected to demonstrate the utmost respect and courtesy for your peers with differing arguments, viewpoints, and experiences. Sexist, racist, homophobic, or other hateful speech toward others will not be tolerated.

Here are some ground rules to facilitate class discussion.

- Address fellow students using the names found on their name cards.
- Demonstrate mutual respect and respect all viewpoints
- Speak from experience. Respect the experiences of others.
- Direct your comments to your classmate, not to your instructor.
- When responding to a comment, begin by articulating the other person’s viewpoint.
Civil discourse is an important component of every democracy. This includes our online community.

- Always consider your audience. Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading your postings.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and the instructor at all times. Harassing or inappropriate postings will not be tolerated.
- When reacting to someone else’s message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.
- Since Blackboard is not a public internet venue, all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Postings to this online space are intended for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or social media site. If students wish to do so, they have the ethical obligation to first request the permission of the writer or writers.

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, or are a distraction, then I have the duty and obligation to ask you to put them away or turn them off.

The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In all matters of intellectual pursuit, UTEP faculty and students must strive to achieve excellence based on the quality of work produced by the individual. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are
expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty is an affront to the pursuit of knowledge and jeopardizes the quality of the degree awarded to all graduates of UTEP. It is imperative, therefore, that the members of this academic community understand the regulations pertaining to academic integrity and that all faculty insist on adherence to these standards.

Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. 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. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP), and available in the Office of the Dean of Students and on the homepage of the Dean of Students at www.utep.edu/dos, may result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, to a failing grade on the work in question, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension or dismissal, among others.

To view UTEP’s academic regulations, visit http://catalog.utep.edu/undergrad/academic-regulations/

The University requires all members of its community to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies.

Accommodations

Your success in this class is important to me. 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).

There are also a range of resources on campus, including the Writing Center, Counseling Center, Military Student Success Center and Academic Advising Center.
The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, sensory, cognitive, systemic, learning, and psychiatric disabilities. If you suspect that you have a disability and are in need of an accommodation, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148 or cass@utep.edu. The CASS is located in Union East Building, room 106. Students are responsible for presenting the instructor any CASS accommodation letters and instructions.

Please note that CASS accommodations are not retroactive.

The 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 you understand any writing assignment and provide help on comprehending difficult textbook material.

To facilitate revision, I encourage you to visit the writing center at least 12 hours before the assignment is due.

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.

The University Counseling Center provides free, confidential services in Spanish and English to all currently enrolled UTEP students. Services include career counseling to help you clarify their academic or career goals and overcome obstacles to learning and decision making. The Center also provides personal counseling to address issues that can affect your ability to perform optimally in academic and professional endeavors. In addition, the University Counseling Center provides educational workshops, outreach programs, and self-help resources on everything from stress and time management to self-esteem and relationship issues.

Hours of operations are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with extended hours (open until 7:00 p.m.) during the fall and spring semesters on Mondays and Tuesdays. They can be reached at 915-747-5302 or www.utep.edu/counsel
Your Instructor

I can be reached by email at pjvierra@utep.edu. When writing me, please use your UTEP email account. Include the class day and time that we meet. DO NOT include your student ID number.

My face-to-face office hours take place in the University Writing Center, Library 227. I do have online office hours each Sunday. Log into Blackboard to access.

For technical support, your first call should be to UTEP’s Technology Support Center (TSC) Help Desk at 915-747-4357 or www.utep.edu/technologysupport. You can also visit TSC on the third floor of the University Library.

P.J. Vierra, Ph.D.

Office Hours:
- Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
  University Writing Center, Library 227
- Sunday, online from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.
  via Blackboard Connect or OneDrive chat

pjvierra@utep.edu
Course Schedule and Topics Covered

See Blackboard