Syllabus

RWS 1302
Rhetoric and Composition
Critical Writing and Research

Overview and Key Points

The Rhetoric and Writing Studies Undergraduate Program at UTEP requires that the syllabus for its classes be the same. While it does contain much information that is useful, it goes on for 15 pages. You are required to read it in its entirety. However, here is a summary of what I believe is important to your success in this class and in others.

Objective. This class shows you how to use rhetoric to compose critical arguments in writing and in other forms of media, such as video. The class will show you step-by-step how to take a belief and turn it into a justifiable claim, which is the basis for all knowledge.

Textbook. Yes, there is a textbook—two, as a matter of fact. Please purchase them before the end of the week. The instructions for all of the major writing assignments for this class are contained in them. Refer to page 2 of the syllabus.

Attendance. Attendance is required at all classes, both online and face-to-face (F2F). Four (4) absences, which is defined as not completing all of the activities for a given online or F2F class, will result in a drop.

Hybrid Class. This class meets twice per week. On Monday, we gather in a classroom at the same time (F2F synchronous) to discuss concepts and engage in activities based on learning objectives. On Wednesday, we meet online, though not at the same time (online asynchronous). There will be online lectures, discussions, and activities, which are due at 11:30 p.m. that night.

RWS 1302: Rhetoric and Composition

CRN:	15333	INSTRUCTOR:	P.J. Vierra, Ph.D.
TIME/DAYS:	Monday 7:30 am to 8:50 am Wednesday Online	OFFICE LOCATION:	University Writing Center (Library 227)
PLACE:	UGLC 232	OFFICE HOURS:	Friday 12 noon- 1:00 pm
DATES:	Aug. 22 – Dec. 1, 2016		Sunday, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm *or by appointment*
TERM:	Fall 2016	CONTACT INFO:	pjvierra@utep.edu

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.

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 learning management system (LMS) such as Blackboard, a Wiki, or a class website depending on the instructor. Instructors will provide students with permanent access to the syllabus, supplemental reading materials, e-mail, and discussion groups. It is vital that students check and participate in the online environment consistently as it is an integral part of the course. On occasion, students will be asked to meet on the hybrid day to participate in library research, technology workshops, presentations, or other activities their instructor might need them to be physically present for. Please keep this time available for this class. Otherwise, students may miss out on important information.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Understand a theory of discourse communities;
- Engage as a community of writers through 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 in 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,
- As part of a research process, apply research to various genres; receive instruction in the logic and form of 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.

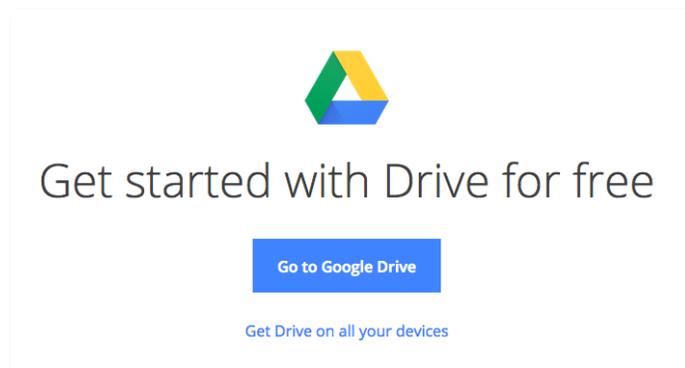### Required Texts & Materials

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1. Comer, D. K. (2015). *Writing in Transit*. Southlake, TX: Fountainhead Press. ISBN:978-1-59871-803-4.
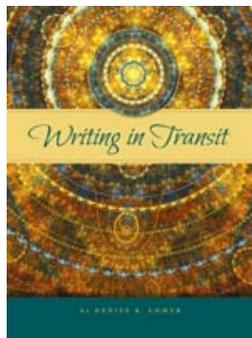
2. Biswas, M. and Crnkovic Padon D. eds. (2016). *The Undergraduate Rhetoric and Writing Studies Handbook*. (An e-book available through the bookstore or through the publisher Follet/VitalSource.

The Undergraduate
Rhetoric and Writing Studies
Handbook
1st Edition
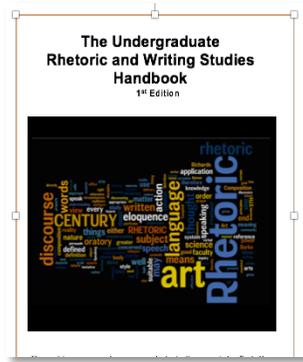
3. Google drive account. It's free.

Get started with Drive for free

Go to Google Drive

Get Drive on all your devices

www.google.com/drive

4. RefWorks account. It's free if you access it through the library website at libraryweb.utep.edu. Click on Research Help|RefWorks.

Creating an RefWorks Account

1. Go to RefWorks through the UTEP Library Databases portal.
2. Make sure your screen says **Login using RefWorks Credentials** "University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP)".
3. Click the **Sign up for an Individual Account** link.
4. Complete the **New User Information** box.
5. Use your **UTEP Email account** *Note:* When creating your Login Name, please do not use the following characters: * Asterisk < >[ ] Brackets = Equal sign + Plus sign " Quotes \ / Slashes , . : ; Comma, Period, Colon, Semicolon
6. Click **Create Account**.

You will receive an email confirmation that has been customized to suit your site's requirements.

After you click on create account, you'll be brought in to your new, empty RefWorks account where you can begin adding your references.

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard or instructions will be provided for accessing them.

In the next section, I provide 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.

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Course Assignments

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This semester, our class will develop video projects to submit to the RWS Showcase at the end of the semester.

The Undergraduate Rhetoric and Writing Studies Program at UTEP uses Blackboard. Submit all assignments through Blackboard for grading.

Additional information for each assignment is available in the *Guide to First-Year Composition* or as provided by me.

#	Assignment	Points
#1	**Topic Proposal for Semester** You will write a proposal to identify the subject/issue/topic they will be working with for the semester.	**20 pts.**
#2	**Genre Analysis Outline** You will complete the genre analysis matrix as an activity assignment to begin work on the Genre Analysis.	**60 pts.**
#3	**Genre Analysis** You will identify two texts on the same subject, but in different genres, to write a comparative analysis.	**100 pts.**
#4	**Research Proposal** You will submit 3-4 research questions for approval and complete the citation analysis matrix as an activity assignment to begin work on the Literature Review/Primary Research Report.	**40 pts.**
#5	**Literature Review / Primary Research Report** You will conduct primary and secondary research on a social, political, or ethical issue to become well-informed experts on the issue. You will then write a literature review of these sources to summarize and synthesize the arguments and ideas of the research sources.	**200 pts.**
#6	**Argumentative/Advocacy Outline for Documentary Film Project** You will submit a draft script and storyboard that presents a persuasive argument on your group's topic.	**30 pts.**
#7	**Class Presentation** Your group will present its documentary script and storyboard to the class.	**50 pts.**

#	Assignment	Points
#8	**Documentary Film Project** Working with a group, you will plan, write, film and edit a documentary film advocating a position on a current issue. You will be provided with opportunities to become more familiar with this software throughout the semester. This will be uploaded to YouTube, and the link copied and pasted on a Word Document.	**200 pts.**
#9	**E-Portfolio Website** You will create, design, and maintain an academic profile in the form of an e-portfolio website that includes the major assignments you worked on this semester.	**100 pts.**
#10	**Participation in Class** Because this is a hybrid class, participation both in-class *and* online is mandatory. The activities included in this category ensure that students learn the material and help them to compose effective projects. This score will include blog entries, attendance, homework, drafts, discussion postings, peer reviews, and other work I assign. It also includes submittals to SafeAssign (see below). Each activity in F2F and online classes is worth 2 participation points. If you received 1 point, you can do the activity over again for full credit. It you received 0 points, it means that you did not attempt to activity and will count as a class absence.	**200 pts.**
	TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE:	**1,000 PTS.**

Grade Distribution. You 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

Course/Instructor Policies

Project Format

All writing assignments must be word processed and saved as a .doc file. They should be in 12 pt. font, have one-inch margins, and be double-spaced. Use a font style that is easily readable like Times New Roman, Arial, or Georgia.

Microsoft Word is available to students at all campus computers and can be purchased at the UTEP Bookstore using a current UTEP ID card at discount. Students may also go to openoffice.org and download a free and compatible version of Word/Office.

Be sure to name each submitted assignment with your first initial, last name, and an abbreviation of the assignment.

For example:

jmartinez rhetanalysis draft.docx

jmartinez rhetanalysis final.docx

First Drafts

Part of the participation grade will include the submission of first drafts. In order to get the most useful feedback, first drafts should be <u>completed projects</u>. They must also be submitted <u>before or on the due date</u>. The first two assignments (genre analysis and literature review/primary research report) both require first draft submissions.

First Draft Feedback

On the rough drafts, students will receive marginal comments as well as comments at the end of the project. The purpose of this feedback is:

1. To be sure that the project is on the right track: that it meets the requirements of the assignment.
2. To comment on the "big issues." Students will receive comments based on the most important elements of the assignment. Addressing these concerns should help students write a more effective project. The comments will NOT focus on grammar and such—so it is a good idea to get additional help from instructors and the Writing Center for this.

Participation/Attendance

Because this is a hybrid course, attendance is determined by class participation <u>both in class and online</u>. Students must be prepared, participate in online discussions, and attend the face-to-face class consistently to understand and incorporate the rhetorical strategies and processes used to complete the projects. Participation is worth 20 percent of the final grade.

Failure to complete all of the activities for a class counts as one (1) absence. See Attendance below.

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, UWC tutors will not hold a tutoring session fewer than 12 hours before the assignment is due.

Technology and RWS 1302

This course makes heavy use of technology and multimedia. It is strongly recommended that students 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 in order to complete the work. Student computer labs such as _ATLAS_ 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 not be an excuse for incomplete or late assignments.

Technology problems are also not an excuse for work that is late or missing. Students 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, computers will go on the fritz, or some other small catastrophe will occur. If students are prepared ahead of time, they can go to plan B.

Instructions for Accessing Your Course Online

Students must have a UTEP email ID and password before they can access Blackboard. UTEP automatically generates an e-mail ID for students when they are officially admitted to the university. Any questions or problems can be directed to the **Helpdesk at 747-5257.**

All the course content will be delivered via Blackboard.

Classroom Etiquette

- No checking email, typing assignments, or surfing the web during class.

- Absolutely no using the printer after class has started. It can be difficult to hear in this room; the printer only makes it that much worse.

- Absolutely no food or drinks in this classroom.

- Turn off cell phone ringers, and please do not text message or listen to iPods/MP3 players during class.

Online "Netiquette":

- Always consider audience. Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading any postings.

- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.

- When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a f2f situation.

- 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. 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 and with a grade of F after the course drop deadline.

> For further information regarding excused absences for university-recognized activities, absences for religious holy days, and military leave refer to UTEP's Catalog Curriculum and Classroom Policies: http://catalog.utep.edu/undergrad/academic-regulations/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). This is part of the work of the course. Thus, you need to be in class on time and with the books and your work.

Please also be aware of the six-course drop limit. According to the Texas Education Code, "all first-year students enrolled for the first time at any Texas public college or university are limited to six drops during their academic career. This includes student and faculty initiated drops and courses dropped at other Texas public institutions. This policy does not apply to courses dropped prior to census day or to complete withdrawals." So, be sure to start your college experience on the right track by attending class regularly.

Failure to complete all of the activities for a class counts as one (1) absence.

Late Work

Major projects submitted to Blackboard will be due on Fridays at 11:30 p.m. Extensions are granted by office visits or through the use of a one-time exception, known as a Get Out Of Jail Free Card. You receive one card per semester.

Any exceptions other than the above must be approved through the dean of students. No other later assignments will be accepted.

Nature of and Time Spent on Course:

RWS 1302 intends to help students develop a wide variety of strategies for communicating in a variety of media. To succeed in this course requires dedication and focus.

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. However, remember that the class only meets with the instructor and classmates for 1.5 hours a week. Therefore, add the additional 1.5 hours to the 6 for a total of 7.5 hours. During some weeks students may work more; some weeks they may work less. However, keep this average in mind.

Academic Integrity

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.

(*http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=54418*)

Copyright and Fair Use: 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 student 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.

Group Assignments

Group work is a common practice for academic and workplace projects. Group assignments are valuable because they help students work together for a common goal. Students who are not doing their group work can be voted off of their groups and will have to complete the project on their own.

ADA

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 need an accommodation, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148 or *cass@utep.edu*. The CASS is located in Room 106, Union East Bldg. Students are responsible for presenting the instructor any CASS accommodation letters and instructions.

Important Dates	
August 22	First day of class
August 22-25	Late registration
September 5	Labor Day Holiday—University closed
September 7	Census day
TBA	Freshmen mid-term grades due
October 28	Withdraw course drop deadline
November 24-25	Thanksgiving Holiday—University closed
December 1	Last day of classes and complete withdrawal from the University
December 2	Dead day
December 6	Showcase (Tuesday) (during mid-morning-exact times TBA)
December 5-9	Final Exams
December 14	Grades are due in Goldmine

Weekly Schedule (Subject to change)

WIT = *Writing in Transit*. Denise. K. Comer. (2015). Southlake, TX: Fountainhead Press.

RWS = The Undergraduate Rhetoric and Writing Studies Handbook (e-book)

WEEK	TOPIC/ASSIGNMENT	READINGS	NOTES
1	Introduction to Rhetoric Transfer	WIT: Ch. 1 – Writing Transfer RWS Ch. 5 – Introduction and Assignment #1	#1 Topic proposal due
2	Library Research Techniques	WIT: Ch. 2 – Research RWS: Ch. 5 – Genre Analysis RWS Ch. 3 – Research & Library Techniques	#2 Genre analysis outline due
3	Analysis	WIT: Ch. 7 – Analysis RWS: Ch. 5 – Genre Analysis	No class Monday
4	Writing as a Process	WIT: Ch. 2 – Writing as a Process RWS Ch. 5 – Drafting	#3a Genre analysis first draft due
5	Research Questions	WIT: Ch. 3 – Posing Meaningful Questions RWS Ch. 5 – Literature Review	
6	Conversations with Sources	WIT: Ch. 4 – Reading	#3b Genre analysis final draft due
7	Responding to Sources	WIT Ch. 5 – Summary WIT Ch. 6 – Synthesis	#4 Research proposal due
8	Data, Claims, and Warrants	WIT Ch. 11 – Choosing and Integrating Evidence RWS Ch. 5 - Literature review drafting	#5a Literature review first draft due
9	Digital Rhetoric, Part 1	WIT Ch. 12 – Citing Sources RWS Ch. 5 – Doc Film Assignment	
10	Revising and Redrafting	RWS Ch. 2 – Revision RWS Ch. 6 – Sharing the Grade	#5b Literature review final draft due
11	Arguments	WIT Ch. 10 – Designing Arguments RWS Ch. 5 – Presenting	#6 Doc film storyboard due
12	Collaboration	WIT Ch. 8 – Framing Arguments	#7 Doc film class presentation
13	Digital Rhetoric, Part 2	WIT Ch. 9 – Constructing Arguments	
14	Rhetoric in Review, Part 1		#8 Doc film due
15	Rhetoric in Review, Part 2		
16	Finals Week		#9 E-Portfolio due