DOC VIERRA'S
INTERGALACTIC RHETORICAL SPECTACULAR
RELATING RHETORIC TO REALITY

P.J. Vierra, Ph.D.

The University of Texas
at El Paso

OFFICE HOURS:
MTWR, noon to 1 p.m.
University Writing Center LIB 227
Sunday, noon – 3:30 p.m. online
via Blackboard Connect

RWS 1302
Spring 2020

Mon. (Online) • Fri. (F2F)
7:30 a.m. – 8:50 a.m.
UGLC 232
CRN 23825

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.

"Perhaps we're overthinking the situation."
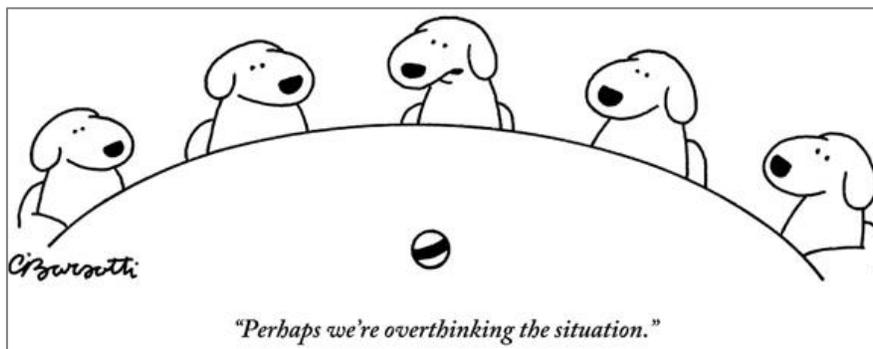
Schedule

Key: WIT – Comer, *Writing in Transit*
          FYC – First-Year Composition Handbook
          Sup – Supplemental readings as assigned

WEEK	TOPIC	READINGS	NOTES
1	Scholarship	WIT Ch. 1 Writing Transfer FYC Ch. 5 Introduction and Assignment #1	
2	Library Research Techniques	WIT Ch. 2 Research FYC Ch. 3 Research & Library Techniques FYC Ch. 5 Genre Analysis	Friday's class meets in the University Writing Center, Library 227 #1 E-portfolio shell due
3	Research Topics	WIT Ch. 7 Analysis FYC Ch. 5 Genre Analysis	#2 Topic selection paper due
4	Genres	WIT Ch. 2 Writing as a Process FYC Ch. 5 Drafting	#3 Genre analysis outline due
5	Research Questions	WIT Ch. 3 Posing Meaningful Questions	#4 Genre analysis essay due
6	Conversations with Sources	WIT Ch. 4 Reading FYC Ch. 2 Revision	
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	
	Spring Break		
9	Annotated Bibliographies	WIT Ch. 12 Citing Sources FYC Ch. 5 Literature Review	
10	Revising and Redrafting	FYC Ch. 5 Literature review drafting	#5 Research proposal/annotated bibliography due
11	Arguments	WIT Ch. 10 Designing Arguments	
12	Digital Rhetoric	WIT Ch. 8 Framing Arguments FYC Ch. 5 Doc Film Assignment FYC Ch. 6 Sharing the Grade	#6 Literature review/annotated bibliography due #7 Advanced visual argument outline due
13	Collaboration	WIT Ch. 9 Constructing Arguments FYC Ch. 5 Presenting	
14	Rhetoric in Review, Part 1		
15	Rhetoric in Review, Part 2		#8 Advanced visual argument (doc film) due
16	Finals Week Friday, May 15, 7:30 a.m. University Writing Center, Library 227		#9 Advanced visual argument presentation #10 E-portfolio due

Major Assignments and Due Dates

	ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE	POINTS
#1	**E-Portfolio Set-Up** Update and submit your e-portfolio from RWS 1301. Or, using a website builder or other presentation app, create an e-portfolio shell to exhibit major assignments and reflections on rhetoric from the semester.	Class 3 Jan. 31	25
#2	**Topic Selection Paper** Using preliminary research, compose a report that includes a description the topic, subject, and issue related to the semester research project and a bibliography.	Class 5 Feb 7	50
#3	**Genre Analysis Outline** Complete the Genre Analysis Outline found on p. 235 of the RWS handbook.	Class 7 Feb. 14	20
#4	**Genre Analysis Essay** Compare and contrast two sources of different genres.	Class 9 Feb. 21	100
#5	**Research Proposal/Annotated Bibliography Paper** Using ten research topic sources, prepare a research proposal and annotated bibliography of the research topic.	Class 17a Mar. 30	50
#6	**Literature Review/Primary Research Report** Using the annotated bibliography, compose a research report and literature review of the research topic.	Class 21a Apr. 13	200
#7	**Advanced Visual Argument Outline Activity** Using presentation software, create a visual argument of your Primary Research Report.	Class 23 Apr. 17	30
#8	**Advanced Visual Argument (Documentary Video)** Working with your project team, construct a visual argument using digital media.	Class 29 May 8	200
#9	**Advanced Visual Argument Presentation** Working with your project team, use presentation software to present your research findings, along with a discussion of the challenges of producing a visual argument.	Finals week May 15	50
#10	**E-Portfolio** Using the e-portfolio, present the projects from the semester, incorporating thoughtful academic reflections for each.	Finals week May 15	75
#11	**Class and Online Participation** Using Blackboard and the comp book, complete the class activities as assigned.	Ongoing	100
#12	**Attendance** Four tardies equal one missed class.	Ongoing	100
	TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE:		1,000

Grade Distribution

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

1,000 – 900	899 – 800	799 – 700	699 – 600	599 and below
= A	= B	= C	= D	= F

Course Description

The primary goal of RWS 1302 is to develop your critical thinking skills. Critical thinking facilitates effective communication in all educational, professional, and social contexts. Effective communication is based on an awareness of and appreciation for discourse communities. Effective communication is also based on knowledge specific to subject matter, genre, rhetorical strategy, and writing process.

This course presents an approach to communication that helps you determine the most effective strategies, arrangements, and media to use in different rhetorical situations. It teaches you a systematic approach for analyzing these rhetorical situations and then selecting and producing a variety of documents and presentations to provide a fitting response. These actions allow you to gain 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 provides a space for informed advocacy.

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 by dialoging across texts, arguing claims, and building 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 your own learning

You will also have the opportunity to strengthen skills sets, allowing you to:

- 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

- 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, both inside and outside the classroom, through the UTEP Edge. 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 [click here](#) for help purchasing your textbooks. https://loans.utep.edu/launch.aspx

REQUIRED TEXTS

Comer, D. K. (2016). *Writing in transit*. Southlake, TX: Fountainhead Press. ISBN: 978-1-59871-803-4. Available through the UTEP Bookstore as a print book.

Bossie, R. & LaPrade, P., ed. (2019). *The first-year composition handbook* (19th ed.). ISBN: 978-1-7326112-1-4. Available through the UTEP Bookstore as an e-book.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

In addition to the above textbooks, you will need:

- Composition book (80 sheets, college ruled). Bring to every class.

- RefWorks account. For your free account, go to https://refworks.proquest.com/ and log in using your UTEP email address and credentials.

- Microsoft OneDrive account. For your free account and app, go to my.utep.edu, select OneDrive for Business and log in using your UTEP email address and credentials. Next, download the app to your personal computer. If you encounter difficulties installing the app, visit tech support on the third floor of the University Library.

- Microsoft Word, Office 365 version. For you free app; go to https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/SOFT_AllSoftware.html and select Microsoft Office 365 [DO NOT select Microsoft Office Pro] > Faculty/Staff Log In Here [DO NOT select Student Log In]. If you have difficulties installing, visit tech support on the third floor of the University Library. IMPORTANT NOTE: We will be using the desktop app, not the online version. The online version will not allow you to style your documents as required for this course.

- Laptop computer (optional for classes held in computer labs). Given the specialized assignments of this class, Chromebooks and tablets will not work. Your computer must be able to run the desktop Microsoft Word app.

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

Course Delivery

ONLINE MODULES

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**

TECHNOLOGY

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 Inbox is provided for each assignment on the Class Module page under the week the assignment is due.

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

Throughout the assignment drafting process, you will maintain a working draft in your personal RWS 1302 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. All of your major composition assignments must be written using MS Word app and the OneDrive app. Both apps are provided to you at no cost by the University.

OneDrive provides shared, secure cloud storage for your assignments and activities. With OneDrive, you always have access to your course work. No more transferring files back and forth using thumb drives and emails. OneDrive also allows collaborative revising with me and your peers. By enrolling in this course, you agree to allow me access to your writing assignments and activities on OneDrive. This way, I can work with you throughout the entire writing process by providing timely formative feedback on content and formatting.

See under Required Materials above for information on how to access these resources.

Course Policies

ASSESSMENT

Assignments comprise eighty (80) percent of your final grade. They are submitted through Blackboard.

Additional information for each assignment 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:

> **Exceptional!** – 2 points plus 1 bonus point awarded for demonstrating not only mastery but also insight.

> **Nailed it** – 2 points for mastering the activity

> **Satisfactory** – 1.5 points for adequate progress and suitable effort

> **Needs revision** – 1 point; you may revise and resubmit as many times as needed to a passing score

> **Missing** – Zero points; incomplete or not submitted

Activities count toward your participation grade, which is twenty (20) percent of your final grade. If your activity score falls below seventy (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 seventy 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.

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

Late work is not accepted without prior approval. You can receive an extension if you visit me during office hour visits before the assignment is due. If the due date has passed, you can use a one-time exception, which is known as a Get Out of Jail Free card. You receive one GOJF card per semester. Additional cards are awarded every four weeks for maintaining a ninety (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 before the first class 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.

Complete (2 points) – Draft complete; okay to submit revised final draft for grade

Incomplete (1 point) – Draft incomplete; need to resubmit first draft before submitting final draft

Missing (zero points) – Not available in course folder

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 affects your 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 one-quarter of your final grade is based on participation, it is hard to pass the class without participating.

You can earn bonus activity points by completing the warm-up activity at the beginning of each class. Earn up to two bonus points for each correct answer.

ATTENDANCE

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](#).

Excused absences. Excused absences are only available to students officially representing UTEP at events. If you have questions about absences for illness, bereavement, or other absences, contact the Dean of Students Office at 915-747-5648 or dos@utep.edu with any questions.

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. Activity scores below seventy (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 receive one bonus Get Out of Jail Free card at the end of four weeks and every four weeks thereafter, provided they maintain their perfect attendance score.

Missed classes. You are still responsible for the subjects and activities covered from classes you miss, whether excused or unexcused. Make plans to attend office hours to receive an extension on missed activities. See also **Late Work** above.

Classroom Etiquette

CIVIL DISCOURSE

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.

CLASS DISCUSSIONS

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.

NETIQUETTE

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.

DEVICES

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.

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.

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

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 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.

Student Success

ACCESSIBILITY

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 to past-due activities and assignments.

UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

The University Writing Center (UWC) https://www.utep.edu/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 twelve (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. Click here to learn more. https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/mssc/

COUNSELING CENTER

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

KEEPING IN TOUCH

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.

ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTOR

P.J. Vierra, Ph.D.

Office Hours

Monday to Thursday, 12 noon to 1 p.m., University Writing Center, Library 227

Sunday, online from noon – 3:30 p.m., via Blackboard Connect or OneDrive chat