

Syllabus

RWS 1301

Rhetoric and Composition 1

Spring 2021

Dr. PJ Vierra

CRN 23339 MWF 730

CRN 23347 TR 730

Rhetoric and Writing Studies Program

Department of English

The University of Texas at El Paso

# Schedule

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WEEK	DATES	MODULES
1	January 18 – 24	Module 0: Digital Literacy
2	January 25 – 31	Module 1: Composition Basics Module 0 activities and assignments due
3	February 1 – 17	Module 1: Composition Basics, cont.
4	February 8 – 14	Module 2: Language and Literacy Module 1 activities and assignments due
5	February 15 – 21	Module 2: Language and Literacy, cont.
6	February 22 – 28	Module 2: Language and Literacy, cont.
7	March 1 – 7	Module 3: Rhetorical Knowledge Module 2 activities and assignments due
8	March 8 – 14	Module 3: Rhetorical Knowledge, cont.
X	March 15 – 21	SPRING BREAK
9	March 22 – 28	Module 3: Rhetorical Knowledge, cont.
10	March 29 – April 4	Module 4: Research Module 3 activities and assignments due
11	April 5 – 11	Module 4: Research, cont.
12	April 12 – 18	Module 4: Research, cont.
13	April 19 – 25	Module 5: Digital Rhetoric Module 4 activities and assignments due
14	April 26 – May 2	Module 5: Digital Rhetoric, cont.
15	May 3 – 9	Module 5: Digital Rhetoric, cont.
16	May 10 – 16	Finals Week Module 5 activities and assignments due  MWF730 class: Your final will be Friday, Dec. 11, 7 am – 9:45

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MWF830 class: Your final will be  
Monday, Dec. 7, 10 am – 12:45

TR730 class: Your final will be  
Thursday, Dec. 10, 7 am – 9:45

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# Badges, Assignments, and Due Dates

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MOD	BADGE	ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE
0	Digital Literacy	Expository Reflection	Jan. 25
1	Composition Basics	Essay 1: Composition	Feb. 8
2	Language and Literacy	Essay 2: Language and Literacy	Feb. 28
3	Rhetorical Knowledge	Essay 3: Rhetorical Analysis	March 28
4	Research	Essay 4: Annotated Bibliography	April 18
5	Digital Rhetoric	Visual Argument Product Visual Argument Presentation E-portfolio	Weeks 15 & 16
B	Mastery (Grade level "B")	Earn all badges <i>plus</i> Satisfactory assignment score <i>plus</i> attendance score of 90% or higher	Continuous
A	Exceptional Mastery (Grade level "A")	Earn all badges, plus Mastery Satisfactory assignment score <i>plus</i> attendance score of 90% or higher	Continuous

## GRADE DISTRIBUTION

You need to earn six badges to pass this course.

A	B	C	D	F
Complete all modules	Complete Modules 0 through 5 and Module B	Complete Modules 0 through 5	Complete 3 to 5 modules	Complete fewer than 3 modules completed

## Course Description

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**Rhetoric & Composition 1 (RWS 1301)** is designed to help you reach your academic and professional goals. Course assignments invite you to explore civic, cultural, political, or social concerns through topics that appeal to your sense of civic responsibility as a member

of various communities. By engaging with your course topic through various genres, RWS 1301 encourages you to cultivate rhetorical skills while gaining domain knowledge in an area of special interest to you. The goals of RWS 1301 at UTEP are largely based on the Writing Program Administrators' Outcomes.

[http://wpacouncil.org/aws/CWPA/pt/sd/news\\_article/243055/\\_PARENT/layout\\_details/false](http://wpacouncil.org/aws/CWPA/pt/sd/news_article/243055/_PARENT/layout_details/false)

You will use writing to inquire into different rhetorical situations, and you will create different types and genres of composition (not limited to academic essays). The curriculum consists of these six modules:

**MODULE 0** – Digital Literacy: Mastering your tools

- Using technology for scholarly purposes

**MODULE 1** – Taking Inventory: Practicing the fundamentals of composition

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

**MODULE 2** – Language and Literacy: Autoethnographic study of self and language experiences

- Discovering the relationship between literacy, home, and language
- Looking back on your linguistic identities
- Examining how linguistic and cultural experiences affect ideas about what it means to write in college

**MODULE 3** – Rhetorical Analysis: 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** – Research: Investigating social issues

- Identifying an issue of personal and social concern

- Interrogating assumptions, biases, and representations through topic research
- Composing a report with annotated bibliography for future study

## **MODULE 5** – Digital Rhetoric: Making visual arguments

- Creating infographic, videos, or alternative visual project
- Presenting of infographics and videos

# Learning Objectives

*At the end of this course, you 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: 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

## 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 II. These courses are intended to help students develop their rhetorical and writing knowledge and skills within these five knowledge domains: writing process knowledge, subject matter knowledge, rhetorical knowledge, genre knowledge, and discourse community knowledge. 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.

As of fall 2020, all sections of RWS 1301 and 1302 transitioned to online delivery. Regardless of the delivery system, 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

## Required Texts and Materials

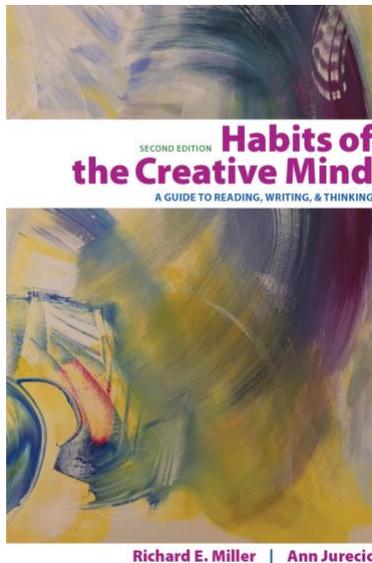
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No cash? No problem!

Simply visit the Student Business Services for help with purchasing your textbooks.

<https://loans.utep.edu/launch.aspx>

### Required Texts



Miller, R. E., & Jurecic, A. (2020). *Habits of the Creative Mind: A Guide to Reading, Writing, & Thinking* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Boston: Bedford/St. Martin.

Available through the UTEP Bookstore.

### Required Materials

In addition to the above textbooks, you will need:

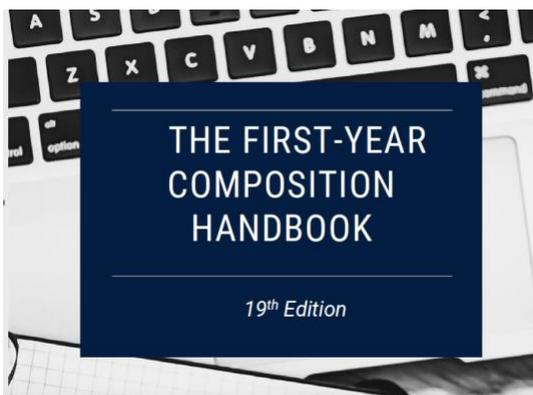
- RefWorks account. For your free account, go to RefWorks and log in using your UTEP email address and credentials.

<https://refworks.proquest.com/>

- Microsoft OneDrive account. For your free account and app, go to [my.utep.edu](https://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, contact tech support.  
<https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport>
- Microsoft Word, Office 365 version. For your free app; go here and select Microsoft Office 365 NOT *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.  
[https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/SOFT\\_AllSoftware.html](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/SOFT_AllSoftware.html)
- Laptop computer. 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 and OneDrive. You can request the loan of a laptop through tech support. Supplies are limited, so act quickly.  
[https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/TSCenter/tsc\\_eqcheckout.html](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/TSCenter/tsc_eqcheckout.html)
- Hi-speed internet connection. Your internet connection (cable, DSL, wi-fi, etc.) needs to be capable of a link speed of 2 mbps, upload and download. To verify your link speed, click here. If your link speed below these specs, contact tech support. You can request the loan of a wi-fi hotspot. Supplies are limited, so act quickly.  
<https://www.att.com/support/speedtest>  
[https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/TSCenter/tsc\\_eqcheckout.html](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/TSCenter/tsc_eqcheckout.html)

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

## Optional Texts



Bossie, R., & LaPrade, P. (2019). *The First-Year Composition Handbook*, 19<sup>th</sup> ed.

An e-book available through the UTEP Bookstore. ISBN: 978-1-7326112-1-4.

# Course Delivery

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## Distance Learning

All RWS courses until further notice will be delivered online, using distance learning practices.

Technical difficulties are a thing of the past! UTEP has invested over a million dollars in technology that it will provide you at no cost, including laptops, wi-fi hotspots, and apps. All you have to do is ask.

The course consists of live, online lectures (synchronous classes), prerecorded online lectures (asynchronous classes), instructional videos, and activities.

**Synchronous classes** take place at the scheduled meeting time for the course as established by the registrar's office. Each synchronous class will be available up to thirty minutes before the scheduled start of class. The bonus warmup activity is available during that window.

- Blackboard takes attendance. It automatically records when you log in and log out of each synchronous class session.
- When you log into class, have your cameras on and mics muted.
- As cameras must be on at the start of class and when you are called on, make sure that your background is appropriate for the class and that you are in a quiet environment appropriate for scholarly learning.
- When the first lecture or activity begins, you may turn off your camera.
- When called on, turn on your camera and mic.
- As the best learning is interactive learning, I typically call on a student at random every five (5) minutes to discuss the lecture or activity. You may be asked to share your work with the rest of the class through screenshare. Be prepared!
- If your technology does not allow you to participate, either because of mic or camera malfunction, poor internet connection, or an incompatible app, you will be marked Absent for the class. Immediately following class, contact tech support to resolve the issue. Once the tech issue is resolved, the absence will be removed.

Every online synchronous class session is recorded. Feel free to review the class at any time to better understand a concept or practice a demo. Please be aware of applicable copyright laws that apply to all course content, including live lectures. Ownership of lectures and any accompanying course materials belong to the instructor and may not be redistributed physically or digitally, including reposting online, without the express, written consent of the instructor. In other words, the recorded lectures are for personal use only; you may not share them with others.

**Asynchronous classes, instructional videos, and activities** are available 24/7. You may access the lecture any time outside of the scheduled class session.

**This course utilizes Blackboard**, a learning management system (LMS). Through Blackboard, I will present twice-weekly lectures and activities online live. I will also 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**

Use your UTEP email ID and password to access Bb through Single Sign On (SSO). 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 the help desk.

<https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/>

If you are not familiar with Blackboard, UTEP has many resources to help you grasp the basics. Visit Blackboard for UTEP Students.

[https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/BB\\_Students.html](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/BB_Students.html)

## **Academic Technology**

This course makes heavy use of technology and multimedia. To test your computer and internet connection, click here. <https://www.att.com/support/speedtest/>

The idea upload speed is 20 MBPS. If your upload speed is below 20 MBPS, or if you believe that your computer is not optimized for accessing this course, UTEP will assist you at no cost to bring your technology up to standards. Click here to set up an appointment.

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/ComputerHealthCheckup@minersutep.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/s/RzGMzBO5ukG5Z1B030H0WA2>

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.

NOTE: During the present pandemic, access may be restricted.

For a list of campus computer labs, visit

[https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/COMP\\_ComputerPrintingLabs.html](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/COMP_ComputerPrintingLabs.html)

WARNING: Technology problems are not accepted as 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 technical issues. Expect to be inconvenienced at some point by network issues, a hung computer, or a misbehaving app. By being prepared ahead of time, you can go to your Plan B.

## **Submitting Assignments**

All work will be submitted through both Blackboard and OneDrive.

Throughout the writing assignment drafting process, you must maintain a working draft of the assignment in your personal RWS 1301 folder on OneDrive. The working draft is assessed regularly as a recital. If you do not create and revise a draft of every writing assignment, you cannot pass the class.

All major writing assignments must be submitted through Blackboard. Each badge module contains a directory for the respective writing assignment for that module. You will find a link within to turn in the assignment.

Before turning in a writing assignment to Blackboard, it will be necessary to remove and stop track changes and delete comments. If you do manage to submit a paper with track changes and comments, you will need to resubmit the assignment using a Get Out of Jail Free card.

## **Personal Computer**

You will need a laptop or desktop computer for this course. Given the specialized assignments of this class, tablets such as Chromebooks and iPads will not work.

Your computer must be able to run the latest desktop Microsoft Word app, not the browser version.

If your present computer will not work for this course, or you do not own a computer, UTEP will loan you a computer at no cost. Visit this link to arrange your loan.

[https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/TSCenter/tsc\\_eqcheckout.html](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/TSCenter/tsc_eqcheckout.html)

## **Internet Access**

If the locale at which you will access this course lacks adequate internet service, UTEP will loan you a wi-fi hotspot. Visit this link to arrange your loan.

[https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/TSCenter/tsc\\_eqcheckout.html](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/TSCenter/tsc_eqcheckout.html)

## **MS Word**

This course utilizes Microsoft Word (Office 365) as its required word processing app. UTEP provides this app to you at no cost. This app is for your personal computer. (Use of the online version is not permitted, as it does not allow the creation of templates and style presets.)

MS Word is the most popular word processing software in the world. Its use by businesses makes it a de facto industry standard.

Composition consists of two pillars: content and style. Using a single word processor app in this course is far more efficient than having to teach several different approaches. An added bonus is that by the time you complete this course, you will have several style templates that you be able to use in other courses.

For your free copy of MS Word, go to

[https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/SOFT\\_AllSoftware.html](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 encounter difficulties installing the app, contact tech support at <https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport>

## **OneDrive**

All of your major writing assignments must be written using the MS Word app and stored on the OneDrive app. 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.

To activate your UTEP OneDrive account, go to [my.utep.edu](http://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, contact tech support at <https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport>

## **RefWorks**

RefWorks is an online database for storing sources and creating bibliographies.

For your free account, go to

<https://refworks.proquest.com/>

and log in using your UTEP email address and credentials.

## **Helpful Online Sources**

Frequently used web tools for this course include:

- MinerQuest <https://www.utep.edu/library/>
- Oxford English Dictionary <https://0-www-oed-com.lib.utep.edu/>
- Purdue OWL [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)
- UTEP Tech Support/Help Desk <https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/>

## **Online Modules**

This course utilizes Blackboard, a learning management system (LMS). Blackboard provides you 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

<https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/>.

If you are not familiar with Blackboard, UTEP has many resources to help you grasp the basics. Visit the Blackboard tutorials for more.

[https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/BB\\_Students.html](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/BB_Students.html)

## Course Policies

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### MASTERY

This course is about mastery. While I am here to serve as your guide, the journey is all yours.

#### Passing this Course

This is a course that requires effort over ability. You can demonstrate your mastery and pass this course by either (1) obtaining all six module badges or (2) receiving an Exemplary grade on all major assignments. Completing either will earn you a C. Completing both will earn you an A.

#### Badges

The measure of mastery in this course is through acquiring module badges. A course badge is awarded for completing a learning objective module. Each module is made of a combination of lectures (live and recorded), recitals (activities), and one or more graded composition assignments. Most modules are designed to take at least 12 to 24 hours spread over two to three weeks to complete.

**Sequence.** While the work required to complete each module is, for the most part, self-paced, they are sequenced. They must be completed in order. This is necessary as much of the instruction in this course is scaffolded—that is, you will be building on previous work. Completing the modules out of order will be tedious, frustrating, and repetitive.

### COMPONENTS

This course is made up of lectures, recitals, and assignments.

## Lectures

Through the use of lectures, both live and prerecorded, I will introduce you to concepts, demonstrate practices, and kindle discovery.

When practical and allowed by the technology, live lectures will be recorded for later viewing. These lectures will be made available for material review. Keep in mind, it is far from a perfect technology.

## Recitals

Have you noticed how in high school you had to sit in a classroom with a teacher five days per week for nine months in order to pass a single subject? College differs in that you spend only three hours per week for four months to pass a single subject. On average, that is about 120 hours with a teacher in high school versus only 45 hours with a professor in college. Where does the other 75 hours go?

The hours go into homework, or as we call it in college, *studying*.

In this class, studying is demonstrated through the completion of *recitals*. This tried-and-true method of scholarship dates back to the origins of Cambridge and Oxford universities over eight centuries ago.

Recitals consist of all activities that you do, apart from lectures. This is also known as your personal study time. Personal study time can be done on your own, with your peers, or with a tutor. In this course, recitals consist of activities that include selected readings, compositions, quizzes, postings, and research.

Recitals are turned in within their respective class modules. These formative assessments in turn become building blocks for each major writing assignment. Complete the recitals and you have written a paper.

Activities associated with recitals do not receive a grade, per se. Instead, a “you-either-completed-it-or-you-did-not-complete-it” assessment is given.

**Complete** – Mastered recital activity

**Needs revising** – Did not quite meet the learning outcome. Revise and resubmit for full credit; otherwise, it will be marked Incomplete.

**Incomplete** – Attempted but missing too many elements to be scored. Revise and resubmit for full credit.

**Missing** – Zero points; not submitted

## Assignments

Assignments demonstrate your mastery of each learning module. You receive full credit for the module once you have completed the respective assignment. Your assignment grade will also determine whether you receive a C or an A in the course. All assignments must go through multiple drafts before that will be accepted for grading. You may also revise a paper for a higher grade using a Get Out of Jail Free card until you receive the grade you desire.

All assignments must be submitted through Blackboard for grading. All assignments must also be submitted clean—that is, all comments and track changes removed before submitting. Any assignment submitted that is not clean will be marked late and you will have to resubmit using a Get Out of Jail Free card.

## DUE DATES

Due dates are necessary to ensure satisfactory progress during the course. It is also necessary in order for me to balance my workload through the semester. They also provide me with the work product I need to assess your progress and provide feedback.

### Late Work

Late work is not accepted without prior approval. You can receive an extension by attending office hour *before* the assignment is due. If the due date has passed, you can receive a one-time exception using your Get Out of Jail Free (GOJF) card. You receive one GOJF card per semester. Additional cards are awarded periodically for perfect attendance, badges earned, or bonus work.

Extensions to due dates 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.

## BONUS WORK

Each student receives one Get Out of Jail Free card at the beginning of the semester. Additional cards can be earned throughout the semester every three weeks for one of the following:

- Attendance. 100% attendance OR > 90% attendance plus high bonus score
- Satisfactory badge progress OR 90 percent badge progress plus high bonus score

GOJF cards represent satisfactory progress in class.

## FIRST DRAFTS

Revise, revise, revise!

Your writing on major assignments will be constantly evaluated during throughout the composition process. Periodically, you will receive comments on your draft assignments through OneDrive and Blackboard. These comments will

- ensure satisfactory progress and that the project meets the requirements of the assignment, and

- address the “big issues,” focusing your attention on the most important elements of the assignment. The comments WILL NOT necessarily focus on grammar and mechanics—so it is always a good idea to have your papers reviewed by tutors, peers, and the Writing Center as well.

### **Collaborative Formative Assessment (CFA)**

If you are reading this sentence, send me a picture of a dragon by email before the second 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 Complete in order to submit a final draft for an assignment grade.

Complete – Draft complete; okay to submit revised final draft for grade

In progress – Satisfactory progress

Revisions needed – Missing one or more required elements; revise and notify your instructor when ready.

Incomplete – Not enough elements complete to assess. You will need to use a GOJF card to submit.

Missing – Not available in course folder. You will need to use a GOJF card to submit.

If you do not receive a Complete before the revised final draft is due, your assignment will be marked late. See Late Work above.

## **LECTURE ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **FYC Class Attendance Policy**

According to the class attendance policy posted in UTEP’s catalog,

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. 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](mailto:dos@utep.edu) with any questions.

<http://catalog.utep.edu/undergrad/academic-regulations/#curriculumandclassroompoliciestext>

**Attendance is mandatory for all freshman-level courses.** You are expected to attend all class meetings and to participate in discussions and workshops. The class discussions will help you improve your writing, often through the demonstration of concepts or by guided practice.

According to the guidelines established by the UTEP's FYC Program:

**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.

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.

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.

### Participation

Your attendance is further affected by your participation in class. During each class, I will call on students at random to answer questions, comment on a topic, or share work. If you do not respond, you will be marked Absent for the class.

Audio and video technical difficulties that prevent class participation will result in you being marked Absent for the class. The absence will be removed if you correct the issue before the next class. You can do this by contacting tech support and forwarding proof of correction me.

### Tardies

Early is on time; on time is late; late is inexcusable. Don't be late to class. Attendance is taken in every face-to-face and online lecture. Three tardies result in one absence.

## **Missed Classes**

You are still responsible for the subjects and activities covered from classes you miss, whether excused or unexcused. Class lectures are recorded. However, the technology is buggy and does not always work.

If you missed a class, you may receive an excused absence by composing an expository reflection on the material covered in the lecture after watching the recorded lecture or, if not available, reading supplemental material. Whether an absence is excused or not, you are still responsible for completing all recitals and assignments within a module.”

## **Excused Absences**

If you are participating in “university-recognized activity,” such as athletics, I will receive a letter from the Dean of Students. Per the university catalog: “Students who will be absent while representing the University in officially recognized University activities (sports, band, professional conferences, etc.) must notify the Dean of Students not less than ten (10) days prior to the absence. The Dean of Students will provide the student with a letter of excuse for the professors. It is the student’s responsibility to give the letter to the professors prior to the official recognized activity. Students following these procedures will be permitted to make up both assignments and examinations in consultation with faculty.”

## **Classroom Etiquette**

The following guidelines on classroom etiquette applies equally to face-to-face and live online lectures, as well as discussion board postings and group work.

## **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. Civil discourse is an important component of every democracy. This includes our online community.

Here are some ground rules to facilitate class and online discussion:

- Address fellow students using their preferred names and pronouns.
- Demonstrate mutual respect toward all viewpoints. Harassing or inappropriate comments will not be tolerated.
- Speak from experience and respect the experiences of others.
- Direct your comments to your classmate, not your instructor.
- When responding to a comment, try articulating the other person’s viewpoint.

- Always consider your audience, which includes both your instructor and your fellow students.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Speak or 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. Students wishing to repost outside of Blackboard have an ethical and legal obligation to first request permission from the writer or writers.

### **Devices**

If you are reading this sentence, send me a picture of a dragon by email and I will award you a bonus for the course. Electronic devices, whether a smartphone, tablet, or computer, facilitate research and composition. However, if their use does not contribute to the conversation or the task at hand in the classroom, or are a distraction, then I have the duty and obligation to require the class 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 or by you for another class, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give you an unfair advantage 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, 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, click here for the current academic catalog.

<http://catalog.utep.edu/undergrad/academic-regulations>

<https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students-office/>

## Copyright and Fair Use

UTEP requires all members of its community to follow copyright and fair use laws and guidelines. 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

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### 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](mailto: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.

<https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>

### University Writing Center

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 twelve (12) hours before the assignment is due.

<https://www.utep.edu/uwc/>

### Military Students

If you are a military student (veteran, dependent, or active duty) 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. Keeping me informed will better help me and trained university staff assist you. Click here to learn more.

<https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/mssc/>

## Counseling Center

The University Counseling Center (UCC) provides free, confidential services in Spanish and English to all currently enrolled students. Services include career counseling to help you clarify academic or career goals and overcome obstacles to learning and decision making. The UCC also provides personal counseling to address issues that can affect your ability to perform optimally in academic and professional endeavors. In addition, the UCC 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](http://www.utep.edu/counsel)

## Your Instructor

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### Keeping in Touch

I can be reached by email at [pjvierra@utep.edu](mailto: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.

Subject: RWS 1301 MWF730 Question

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](http://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-Friday, 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m.  
via Blackboard Collaborate

Sunday, 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m.  
via Blackboard Collaborate

Office hours are held online through Blackboard Collaborate.