Rhetoric and Writing Studies RWS 1302
CRN: 22582
Friday 7:30am in UGLC Room 234

Instructor Information
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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 9am to 11am, Fridays from 10:30am-12:30pm in Worrell Hall 106

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 1 and RWS 1302—Rhetoric and Composition 2. These courses are intended to help students develop and reflect upon their rhetorical and writing knowledge including awareness of social and racial justice, and the implications of their language choices when they write, based on the understanding that language is never neutral. 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.

The FYC program reminds students that the primary purpose of these classes are 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
And we are…

The First-Year Composition Program is geographically and discursively situated in the US-Mexico borderland and offers a binational and transnational experience through culture, language, and knowledge. We are committed both to learning from students and to building our program in a way that honors what they bring with them into the classroom and encourages them to make their voices heard in the university and beyond. Our vision is to collectively journey toward the practice of self-reflexivity, listening carefully and empathically to the ideas and experiences that challenge our thinking, and to engage various rhetorical practices and genres of traditional and non-traditional writing. The program's curriculum design encourages students to imagine the possibilities of speaking, listening, and being heard through different literacies and compositions. We invite students to explore topics from local, global, and disciplinary contexts that matter to them while learning effective writing skills and being mindful of their own situations and audiences.

RWS 1301 & 1302 Learning Outcomes

1) Students will reflect on and critically analyze their own language experiences.
2) Students will synthesize information about racial and ethnic biases and other social justice issues and confront these issues in their writing.
3) Students will demonstrate engagement with multiple media sources through their projects, including, but not limited to, digital resources.
4) Students will identify relevant research sources and opportunities from their lived experiences, their campus interactions, and their engagement within their communities.
5) Students will apply knowledge from local communities to research broader social issues demonstrating their critical awareness.

Rhetoric & Composition 2 (RWS 1302) Course Description

Rhetoric & Composition 2 (RWS 1302) aims to develop further students’ rhetorical and critical thinking skills in order to facilitate effective written communication in educational, professional, and social contexts. Effective communication is based on awareness of and appreciation for diverse language practices as well as knowledge specific to subject matter, genre, rhetorical strategy, racial and social justice, and writing processes.

The curriculum consists of these 5 modules:
1. **Community Engagement Proposal**: Students will explore issues and concerns in their communities (home, place of worship, civic, work, school) and will identify a problem connected with the community that they wish to study. Students will explain how their own interests, goals, and values align with the organization or agency’s mission. This paper will take the form of a proposal or memo.

2. **Community Genre Analysis**: Students will identify two distinct texts in different genres (written, visual, and/or oral) created by their organization or related to their selected issue. Students will write an explanatory genre analysis of the two texts and how they operate rhetorically. Students will engage in peer review activities during the writing process.

3. **Local Fieldwork**: Students will identify a social, political, or ethical issue related to their local community or partnering agency. As part of this assignment, students will generate research questions pertaining to the topic and their inquiry. Local research may include field observations, consulting local and primary sources, collecting surveys, and conducting interviews.

4. **Broader Community Study**: The broader community study will build upon students’ local research, extending it into a broader inquiry. Students have the option to change their focus. This project will incorporate secondary research in order to examine the societal impact of their chosen issue. This includes developing a larger list of sources and creating an evaluative annotated bibliography.

5. **Multimodal Community Product/Tool**: Students will create a multimodal product or tool based on the needs of their community partner, organization, or a topic they are exploring. This can be an individual or group assignment to be completed with classmates focused on a similar topic. The goal of this project is to synthesize the research and writing students have done and present it to their classmates and/or chosen community.

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**Required Texts & Materials**
ISBN: 978-1-324-04510-6

Available at the UTEP Bookstore.

An e-book available through the UTEP Bookstore.

Additional required readings listed on our Course Calendar and posted within our Blackboard Modules. Trouble purchasing your texts? Consider applying for an emergency book loan from UTEP. Check it out here: [https://loans.utep.edu/](https://loans.utep.edu/)

All students must have access to the internet to complete and submit assignments. The university has laptops and WiFi hotspots available for students. Students can get the forms to apply for these at [https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/learningremotely.html](https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/learningremotely.html)
All students must have access to Microsoft Office Suite: If you don’t already have this, you can download it for free via these instructions: Link not working? Copy this into your browser: https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/ServiceCatalog/SOFTWARE_PAGES/soft_microsoftoffice365.html

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**Course Assignments and Grading**

**Grade Distribution (Students can earn a total of 1000 points for the course):**

- 1000-900 = A
- 899-800 = B
- 799-700 = C
- 699-600 = D
- 599 or below = F

**Module 1:** Community Engagement Proposal  
**Module 2:** Community Genre Analysis  
**Module 3:** Local Fieldwork  
**Module 4:** Broader Community Study  
**Module 5:** Multimodal Community Product/Tool

**Grading** Grades are administered using grading rubrics attached to each assignment in Blackboard. Be sure to check grading rubrics prior to submitting work to ensure you meet assignment guidelines. Once your work is graded, be sure to check the grading rubric again to see how your points were allotted and determine where you did well and where you could use improvement. Also look for written comments on your work (drafts especially) to see how you can improve for final drafts and future assignments.

**Submitting Work:** All work will be submitted through the Bb course shell for this class. Since Bb comment and grade function works best with Microsoft Word, please submit all assignments in Microsoft Word following APA or MLA format unless directed otherwise. Be sure to name each submitted assignment with your name and the title of the assignment.

**Late Work:** This course utilizes a one week rolling deadline for all assignments. Because you have a full week to do assignments, only assignments worth more than 20 points may be submitted late. These higher-stakes assignments (21 points or more), may be submitted up to 24 hours past the original deadline, but will take an automatic letter grade deduction. You may use this 24-hour window at any point without prior approval. If you need to submit work worth 21 points or more outside of the 24 hour late window, you must secure permission from the professor before the original due date has passed. No late submissions are allowed for small-stakes assignments (those assignments worth 20 points or less).

**Participation Grade:** Students are expected to be active participants in the classroom and in their own learning process. 100pts (or 10% of your overall course grade) is accounted for through notes taken during lecture times and submitted by the end of the lecture period. There will also be in-class activities worth points. If class is missed, these points are forfeited and cannot be made up. Please
note that you are only entitled to one unexcused absence this semester. If you miss a second class, your overall grade will drop by one letter, and you will be dropped from the course after a third absence. Please see the department mandated attendance policy in the University and Program Policies section of this syllabus for further detail.

Course Delivery

While most classes are held face-to-face, there are a few sections that are designated as online. Those classes may meet synchronously or asynchronously through Blackboard. Whether face-to-face or online, the course is designed to engage students through discussions with your classmates and instructor using Blackboard (Bb). In order to succeed in the course, you will need to have regular use of the internet and a stable connection regardless of whether your class meets face-to-face or online. If you don’t have a computer or reliable internet at home, the university can help you with resources: Technology Support - UTEP. Please speak with your instructor immediately if you will need assistance. We want you to have the opportunity to succeed in class without concern about access. There are also computers available for you to use in the library and other labs on campus.

Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the Help Desk as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students.

Students can prepare by taking the Blackboard Student Orientation (https://www.utep.edu/extendeduniversity/cid/student-resources/blackboard-orientation.html)

Classroom Etiquette: Debate, critical inquiry, and intellectual diversity are essential elements to higher education and a process of learning. There is the potential during this course for controversial and sensitive topics to be discussed during small group or whole class interaction (whether face-to-face or online), and to surface through discussion board postings. You are expected to demonstrate respect and courtesy for your peers and instructor when they express differing arguments, viewpoints, and/or experiences. Sexist, racist, homophobic, or other hateful speech will not be permitted. Angry displays, whether in writing, online postings, or in class discussions will be handled as disruptions to the wellbeing of the class and responded to as negative participation.

University and Program Policies

FYC Class Attendance Policy:
Attendance for this course is taken using OneTap Attendance Tracking. This program will be available to students from the time the professor arrives (typically 10 minutes before the start of class) until 15 minutes into the start of class. Students will need to sign into the system within this time frame to be counted as present for the day. Arriving to class more than 15 minutes late will constitute an absence.
According to UTEP’s *Curriculum and Classroom Policies*:
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.

Attendance is mandatory for all freshman-level courses. Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to participate in discussions and workshops. In addition, the First-Year Composition Program has developed the following policies that should be adhered to strictly by all instructors:

**For Face-to-Face Classes:** 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.

**For Hybrid Classes:** The attendance policy for hybrid courses aligns with the structure for face-to-face courses with each missed weekly class meeting constituting absence from a week of class.

The program recommends that the student contact the instructor to discuss the attendance policy and how it applies in cases in which it is not possible to attend a weekly class meeting, while continuing to maintain robust participation in class activities. [see also online courses]

**For Online Classes:** 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. We also recommend measuring course activity by using the Course Reports feature on Blackboard, particularly the Course Activity Overview.
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 ahead of the course drop deadline. Your instructor can help you with the drop process or 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.

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Instructors are required to report the suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Affairs. Visit the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](https://example.com) page for more information on Academic integrity.

The First-Year Composition Program fundamentally trusts its students and strives to create dynamic classroom experiences and writing opportunities rooted in the values of inquiry and critical thinking. We agree deeply with Anna R. Mills’ (2023) claim, in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, that “writing practice continues to be intensely rewarding for students and central to intellectual growth in college.”

Because of the rapid pace of change represented by ChatGPT and other Artificial Intelligence (AI) programs, it is necessary to set clear program standards regarding their use in our classes. Specifically, the FYC Program recognizes that Large Language Models (LLMs) are part of our contemporary culture and hold educational value that can be explored in the classroom, such as narrowing down a topic idea or critically analyzing the quality of an AI-generated text. However, our program maintains an expectation that all assignment submissions must constitute original pieces of writing composed by the student-author only.

By this standard, an **appropriate use** of ChatGPT (or any AI-powered program) could take the form of:
- writing an introduction paragraph that openly describes how this AI tool offered possible approaches to researching a particular topic, with any direct quotes placed in quotation marks and cited in-text and in a final references page.

By contrast, an **inappropriate use** of ChatGPT (or any AI-powered program) could take the form of:
- copying any amount of text from an AI tool and claiming it as your original composition without acknowledging its source. This includes failure to cite and place quotation marks around any directly quoted language.
FYC faculty are required to submit any assignment submissions that appear to include unacceptable uses of AI programs (or that are marked for further review) to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR).

**Accommodations:** UTEP is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Students are encouraged to visit CASS in room 106, Union East Building or contact them at 747-5148 or cass@utep.edu.

**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. Go to University Writing Center - UTEP to make an appointment with a writing center consultant.

**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.

**Student Pregnancy and Parenting Nondiscrimination Policy:** The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support
Services at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

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<td>Title IX</td>
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<td>Dean of Students</td>
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<td>UTEP Health &amp; Wellness Center</td>
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<td>UTEP Police Department</td>
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<td>Counseling and Psychological Services</td>
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**Academic Calendar Spring 2024**

- **Jan 16th**: Spring classes begin
- **Jan 16th-19th**: Late Registration (Fees are incurred)
- **Jan 31st**: Spring Census Day
- **Mar 11th-15th**: Spring Break
- **Mar 20th**: Freshman midterm grades are due
- **Mar 28th**: Spring Drop/Withdrawal Deadline
- **Mar 29th**: Cesar Chavez Holiday - No classes; Spring Study Day
- **May 2nd**: Spring – Last day of classes

**Course Schedule**

Our Course Calendar is available in a separate document in our Blackboard shell. Be sure to refer to this document often, as it is the only place to see the required readings for each week, and provides a brief overview of what to expect in class.