

Rhetoric and Writing Studies RWS 1302: Community Engagement and Leadership (CEL)*

Instructor/Course Information

Name:	Veronica Cruz
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Office Hours:	Mondays-Thursdays 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm (online); Fridays 10:00 am – 11:30 am at the UTEP Library (front lobby near coffee shop). I am also available at other days/times by appointment.
CRN:	23135
Class Location:	UGLC 232
Class Day/Time:	Fridays, 12:00 pm – 1:20 pm

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 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

Community Engagement Component/RWS 1302 Course Description

***The “CEL” designation** for this course stands for “Community Engagement & Leadership” and is part of a new certificate program in the College of Liberal Arts. The purpose of this CEL course is to strengthen students’ understanding of their role in society as engaged citizens and to build the knowledge and competencies that will enable them to become socially responsible and participating community leaders. Accordingly, course assignments and assessments are developed in line with the CEL program mission in Liberal Arts, as well as within the broader framework and mission of UTEP’s “Edge Advantages” goals.

Rhetoric & Composition 2 (RWS 1302) CEL* aims to develop your critical thinking skills in order to facilitate effective communication in all educational, professional, and social contexts. This effective communication is based on awareness of and appreciation for discourse communities as well as knowledge specific to subject matter, genre, rhetorical strategy, and writing process. The class presents an approach to communication that helps students determine the most effective strategies, arrangements, and media to use in different rhetorical contexts. In addition, because communication is central to being an active and engaged member of society, the course also provides a space for informed advocacy.

This course requires a minimum of 20 direct or indirect community-engagement exploration/research hours that address a real community need or concern. Students are encouraged to reflect on how their experiences working with a local organization/agency fulfill the course learning objectives and enhance their own beliefs about civic responsibility.

Students are asked to choose a social issue that they can advocate for. The social issue should connect to the local as well as the broader communities. Students will engage with the issue through research, class activities, lectures, and projects. Students are encouraged to participate in a minimum of 5 volunteer hours. Volunteering can be done virtually or in person.

RWS 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.

At the end of these FYC courses, students 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.
- Narrow the gap between academic knowledge and action and what students can contribute to their communities through interaction with and commitment to the needs of community partners.

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.
- Engage in collaborative writing activities between students and community partners to address community concerns.

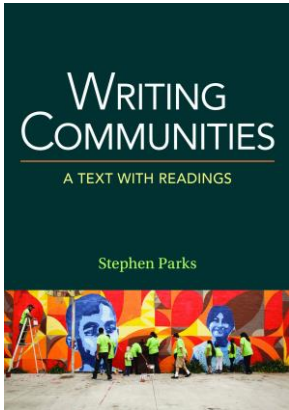
Research

- 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: surveys, interviews, 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).
- Use research to connect to local communities in order to understand and take action on important issues.

Assessment

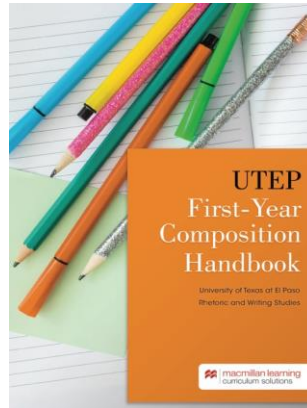
- Use reflective learning strategies to self-assess and understand one's processes and products.
- Collaborate.
- Integrate and act on critical feedback from peers and your instructor.
- Understand and examine critically the reasons behind writing conventions in fields and disciplines.

Required Texts & Materials



Parks, S. (2017) *Writing Communities: A Text with Readings*.
Bedford/St. Martins.

This is available at the UTEP
Bookstore.



UTEP First-Year Composition Handbook

An e-book is available through the
UTEP Bookstore.

Additional required readings may also be posted on Blackboard.

Course Assignments and Grading

This section consists of an overview of assignments. Further instructions are posted on the Blackboard course content. The assignments and activities in this course are aimed to develop students' agility, motivation, and confidence as writers and members of communities in academia and across public spaces.

The curriculum consists of the following assignments:

Community Engagement Proposal (50 pts.): Students will first review the list of community-based organizations provided at the beginning of the semester. Students will then identify an issue and raise awareness for that issue. In the proposal, students will highlight the organization's goals, values, and missions and explain why they selected the organization. Additionally, students will define the issue that the organization advocates for and show how this issue aligns with their personal interests/views. This assignment will take the form of a memo.

Community Genre Analysis (100 pts.): Students will identify two distinct texts in different genres (written, visual, and/or oral) created by the organization and related to their selected issue. Genres may include, but are not limited to: monthly newsletters, Facebook page, website, brochures, posters, podcasts, infographics, etc. Students will write an explanatory genre analysis of the two texts and how they operate rhetorically. Students should conclude with recommendations of additional genres the agency might use to bring awareness to the issue they selected. Students will engage in peer review activities during the writing process.

Local Field Work (100 pts.): Students will conduct primary and secondary research focusing on the issue the local agencies/organizations address. As part of the assignment, students will conduct interviews, surveys and/or observe the agency's activities among the population they serve. This can be an individual or group assignment to be completed with classmates focused on a similar topic/issue.

Broader Community Study (100 pts.): For this assignment students will identify at least 2 (two) organizations/institutions at a regional or national level that address the issue students selected to advocate for. For each of the organizations/institutions, compose a short paragraph that provides an overview of the agency including its target population, goals/mission, issue/need it is addressing, rationale for selecting this agency, and a clear connection to the local agency/issue. Most importantly, students must highlight best practices and insights that provide unique approaches in meeting their populations' needs, and the quality of their outreach through various modes of communication, such as news media, social media, newsletters, podcasts, commercials, infographics, pamphlets, etc. Research from this examination should yield information that can serve to enhance and help raise awareness on the selected issue. This can be an individual or group assignment to be completed with classmates focused on a similar topic/issue.

Multimodal Community Product/Tool (200 pts.): Students will create a multimodal product or tool based on the needs of their community and organization issue being explored. This can be topic/issue. 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.

Community Engagement Reflection Journal (100 pts.): Students will maintain a weekly journal of their experience engaging with their chosen community issue and organization. The journal link can be found on the Homepage, and submitted through the Journal Tool.

Participation in Class (300 pts.): This includes attendance, local fieldwork proposal memo, addressing the findings, discussion postings, peer reviews, and other homework and scaffolded activities. These points will be determined and distributed by me.

Community Engagement Volunteering (50 pts.): Students are encouraged to participate in a minimum of 5 volunteer hours at their local organization. Volunteering can be done virtually or

in person depending on the organization. Students who wish not to volunteer can opt to complete an Annotated Bibliography or Journal Diary assignments.

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: I will assign due dates for all and will provide you with detailed assignment sheets that describe expectations, constraints, and deadlines for each project. You are required to adhere to the terms of my grading policy that is attached to this syllabus.

Course Delivery

In spring 2022, RWS 1302 will be held primarily face-to-face on campus. There are a few sections that are designated as online. Those classes may meet synchronously while others may meet asynchronously through Blackboard. Whether face-to-face, online, or hybrid, 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, hybrid, or fully online. Although you can use the Blackboard App on your phone, it is highly recommended that you compose your work for class, and perform class activities, via a computer. 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 me (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 on campus.

Ensure your UTEP email 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.

Submitting Assignments/Late 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.

Assignment Deadline: For this RWS 1302 section, assignments (with the exception of journal entries) are due on **Fridays by 11:59 am (right before class)**. Only journal entries are due on **Sundays by 11:59 pm**. It is important to submit work before deadlines for full credit and feedback.

Late Work: Assignments submitted on/after Fridays at 12:00 pm will be considered late. The last day I will accept late work is on **Sundays by 11:59 pm**. Any late work will receive an automatic letter grade deduction and no feedback. Assignments submitted on/after Mondays at 12:00 am will not be accepted. There is no such thing as “make-up work” in this class. Please be aware that you are responsible for the assignments you submit.

Regarding discussion posts and journal entries, however, students will not be penalized for submitting discussion posts and journal entries after their respective due dates. The last day to submit all posts and entries is on **Sunday, May 8 by 11:59 pm**.

However, if there are any extenuating circumstances that is preventing you from submitting any assignment or attending class, please do not hesitate to contact me.

University and Program Policy

FYC Class Attendance Policy

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. The class discussions will help students learn to improve their writing, often through the discussion of a sample student project (sometimes the student's, sometimes one written by a classmate).

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 a total of 2 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 courses

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.

For Online courses

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 me. I 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 me 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](#) page for more information on Academic integrity.

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 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 that are trained to assist you.

Course Support Resources

Title IX	915-747-8358	Institutional Compliance
Dean of Students	915-747-5648	Dean of Students
UTEP Health & Wellness Center	915-747-5624	https://www.utep.edu/chs/shc/studenthealth@utep.edu
UTEP Police Department	915-747-5611	https://www.utep.edu/police/police@utep.edu
Counseling and Psychological Services	915-747-5302	https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/caps@utep.edu

Instructor's Policies

- **Attendance during the COVID-19 pandemic:** If you are sick with COVID, stay home until you are fully recovered and have tested negative for COVID. If you are sick with the common cold, stay home as well. Whether you come down with COVID or the regular flu, be sure to contact me at your earliest convenience before you are penalized for missing

assignments and missing class (reminder: two absences results in one letter grade deduction; three absences results to a student being dropped from the course). Also, depending on the reason for your absence, I might ask for proof before excusing any exceeding absences.

- **Online Communication:** Any disruptions online (specifically sexist, racist, homophobic, xenophobic, or other hateful/angry speech) will not be tolerated and the student will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR).
- **Do not submit your assignments via email;** they will NOT be graded. If you absolutely need to email me your assignments, please get my permission first.
- This bears repeating: **Assignments submitted after the late work deadline (Sundays by 11:59 pm) will not be accepted.** Students who submit their assignments weeks/months after that deadline will receive an automatic zero. Make-up work does not exist in this class.
- Plagiarism will not be tolerated in my class. Plagiarizing the first time will result in an automatic zero with an option to redo the assignment. Plagiarizing the second time will result in an automatic zero and student will be reported to OSCCR.
- If there are technological issues with Blackboard, WAIT until Blackboard is up before submitting your assignment. Your assignment will not be counted as late if it is a system-wide problem.
- On average, assignments will be graded within two-three weeks of the due date.
- I will send out an announcement via Blackboard if there are any changes to the calendar or class.
- I recommend checking Blackboard and your UTEP email (or preferred email) account daily.
- Lack of submitting assignments and attending class can result in receiving a failing grade in this course. Again, please contact me immediately if you are having issues submitting required assignments and/or attending class.

Important Dates for Spring 2022 Semester

Jan 17th	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday - University Closed
Jan 18th	Spring classes begin
Jan 18th - 21st	Late Registration (Fees are incurred)
Feb 2nd	Spring Census Day <i>Note: This is the last day to register for classes. If payment is not received by this day, students will be dropped.</i>
Mar 14th - 18th	Spring Break
Mar 25th	Cesar Chavez Holiday - No Classes
Apr 1st	Spring Drop/Withdrawal Deadline <i>Note: Student-initiated drops are permitted after this date, but the student is not guaranteed a grade of W. The faculty member of record will issue a grade of either W or F.</i>
Apr 15th	Spring Study Day
May 5th	Spring - Last day of classes
May 6th	Dead day
May 9-13th	Spring Final Exams