
Rhetoric and Writing Studies RWS 1301

CRN: 11697

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Name: Veronica Cruz (She/Her)

Email: vrcruz2@utep.edu

Office Hours:

- MWF 9:00 am – 10:00 am f2f at the UTEP Library
 - TR 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm online via Zoom
 - Meetings outside these times can be made by appointment. Zoom meetings available.
-

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 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

FYC AT UTEP – WHO 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 1 (RWS 1301) COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Rhetoric & Composition 1 (RWS 1301) is designed to help students in all disciplines reach their academic and professional goals as writers. Course assignments invite students to explore cultural, political, linguistic, racial, and social issues through topics that appeal to their interests and sense of civic responsibility as members of various academic and non-academic communities.

The curriculum consists of these 5 modules:

MODULE 1 – Taking Inventory

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

MODULE 2 – Autoethnographic Study of Self and Language Experiences

- Language and literacy—relationship to home and language
- Looking back on your linguistic identities
- How do linguistic and cultural experiences affect your ideas about what it means to write in college?

MODULE 3 – 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 – Social Issue Investigation

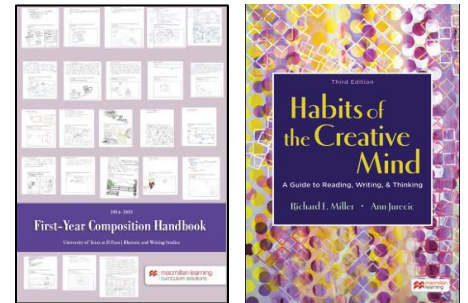
- Identifying an issue of personal and social concern
- Interrogating assumptions, biases, and representations through topic research
- Creating a brief report for future study

MODULE 5 – Visual Argument

- Creating infographic, PSA, or alternative visual project
- Presenting an infographic, PSA, or alternative visual project

REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS:

1. UTEP First-Year Composition Handbook, 2024-2025 edition. An e-book available through the UTEP Bookstore.
2. Miller, R. E., & Jurecic, A. (2023). *Habits of the Creative Mind: A Guide to Reading, Writing, & Thinking* (3rd ed.) Available at the UTEP Bookstore.
3. Additional required readings may also be posted on Blackboard.



Technology:

This course will make extensive use of basic technological tools. Please make sure you have:

- A device with which you can access the Blackboard website. Preferably, a computer. Phones are not recommended for daily Blackboard use.
- Stable internet connection.
- A word processor. Preferably, Microsoft Word. Remember, having a UTEP email grants you access to many applicants. Word is one of them!

If you have limited access to any of these tools, do not despair! Refer to the Course Delivery section in this syllabus for more information.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING:

Grade Distribution:

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

Major Module Assignments (650 pts total): Each of the 5 Modules will have a Major Module Assignment and a corresponding Report. You'll promptly receive information about each at least 2 weeks before the due date. Below is a list of how the grades are distributed among each module assignment:

- Module 1 (100 pts)
- Module 2 (100 pts)
- Module 3 (100 pts)
- Module 4 (100 pts)
- Module 5 (250 pts)

Discussion Posts (100 pts): You will use Blackboard discussion boards to contribute your knowledge and understanding of concepts found in the course textbook. You will go deeper and think critically about specific concepts, and how they relate to your previous personal experiences outside the classroom. Be respectful of each other when reading and responding to posts. Students should be able to freely express their points of view, values, and beliefs.

Reading Synthesis (100 pts.): There are two reading synthesis that are worth 50 points each (100 points for both). For these, you will select one article from the Suggested Reading list and write a synthesis about three concepts you learned in the articles.

Scaffolding Assignments (150 pts): Throughout the semester, I'll assign different small quizzes and assignments for you to complete and upload to Blackboard.

Attendance and etiquette/netiquette: For more information about attendance and etiquette/netiquette, refer to the next section of the syllabus.

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. 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 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 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>)

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.

Example of naming the assignment: VCruz_Module1

Late Work:

All course work you compose should be delivered by the dates written in the calendar. As a college student, it's expected of you to organize your time effectively and be responsible with your assignments and I am more capable of giving feedback when work is turned in

on time. It must be clear that you are responsible for all assignments. Having said this, your well-being and those of the people you love matter the most. Please communicate with me if you ever feel like you won't be able to deliver the assignments on time. If you do this, we can always arrange something. The highest grade late work will receive is a B.

Participation:

Participation can look like a few different things in class. It's answering and asking questions, discussion topics in class, being an active group member, commenting on Blackboard discussions and journal entries. Do not worry if your input is brief or if you're concerned that it won't contribute to the conversation. What matters for the participation is that your thoughts are shared, and you gained from the conversation. If you have any concerns about your participation in class, feel free to contact me.

Classroom Etiquette and Netiquette:

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.**

In consideration of the physical and online space of this class, keep this in mind when posting:

- Audience: This is a college-level course, so all communication should reflect polite consideration of other's ideas. Respect for each other, regardless on different viewpoints, can create interesting lessons, but harassment of inappropriate comments/postings will not be tolerated.
- When reacting to someone's post, address the ideas, not the person.
- Blackboard is not a public internet venue, so all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on these spaces is intended for classmates and me only. Please do not copy documents and past them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.

UNIVERSITY & PROGRAM POLICIES:

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. 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 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.

Incomplete Grade Policy:

Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed more than half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

COVID-19 Accommodations:

UTEP does not have any official policy as of this semester related to COVID-19; however, please approach these issues with considerations of yourself and those around you. The University still has testing sites for COVID-19, and if you test positive and feel you cannot attend class, we can set up a Zoom session so you can still attend class.

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.

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 similar programs, it is necessary to set clear program standards regarding their use in our classes. Specifically, the FYC Program recognizes that language models 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 a clear expectation that all assignment submissions must constitute original pieces of writing composed by the student-author. By this standard, an **acceptable use** of ChatGPT (or a similar program) could take the form of writing an introduction paragraph that openly describes how this language model offered possible approaches to researching a particular topic, with any direct quotes placed in quotation marks.

By contrast, an **unacceptable use** of ChatGPT (or a similar program) could take the form of copying any amount of text from a language model without attribution, i.e. failure to include quotation marks around any directly quoted language, and an in-text citation for any paraphrased or quoted text (including text generated by ChatGPT or another language model).

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 by AI detection programs that our faculty are trained with) 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.

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

ACADEMIC CALENDAR FALL 2024:

Aug. 26 th	Fall classes begin
Aug. 26 th -30 th	Late Registration (Fees are incurred)
Sept. 2 nd	Labor Day holiday – University Closed
Sept. 11 st	Fall Census Day
Oct. 23 rd	Midterm grades are due on Goldmine
Nov. 1 st	Fall Drop/Withdrawal Deadline
Nov. 28 th - 29 th	Thanksgiving holiday – University Closed
Dec. 5 th	Fall – Last Day of classes
Dec. 6 th	Dead day
Dec. 9 th -13 th	Fall Final Exams

COURSE SCHEDULE:

The course schedule is located on Blackboard.

UTEP LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT:

As members of the University of Texas at El Paso community, we acknowledge that we are meeting on unceded Indigenous land. We would like to recognize and pay our respects to the Indigenous people with long ties to the immediate region: Lipan Apache, Mescalero Apache, Piro, Manso, Suma, Jumano, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, Piro/Manso/Tiwa Indian Tribe of the Pueblo of San Juan de Guadalupe, and Tortugas Pueblo. We also acknowledge the nations whose territories include present day Texas: the Carrizo & Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Tonkawa, Comanche, Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, and the peoples of Chihuahua and northern Mexico whom many of our students descend, such as the Rarámuri, Tepehuan, Wixarrika, and Nahuatlaca peoples. Finally, we recognize all of the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories here in Paso del Norte, on Turtle Island. The University of Texas at El Paso honors your history and cultures, and we seek greater

awareness of the myriad ways in which your legacy can guide us in fruitful partnerships and mutually fulfilling relationships.