

RWS 100: Rhetoric of Written Argument

SDSU- Fall 2015
Dr. Jenny Sheppard

Class Days: T & TH
Class Times: 11:00-11:50
Class Location: SSW 2660
Office Hours: T & TH 9:30-10:30, W 9:30-12:30, & by appt.

Office Hours Location: SH 120B
Section: 90
Email Contact: JSHEPPARD@MAIL.SDSU.EDU
Course Wiki: <HTTPS://SHEPPARDJ.PBWORKS.COM>

Course Overview

In today's university, every discipline values strong writing skills. The ability to communicate clearly, knowledgeably, and persuasively with professors, fellow students, employers, co-workers, and other audiences is essential to your success. In your university courses, you will often be called upon to propose ideas, investigate materials from a variety of sources, and make convincing arguments supporting your perspective. At their core, **all of these practices are rhetorical**, requiring you to adjust your approach based on the rhetorical situation. That is, **your writing is always shaped by your intended audience, your purpose in communicating, the context in which your work will be read, and the genre and structure that is expected by your readers.** Our work will help you understand how other writers negotiate these elements and how you can best account for them in your own communications.

This course is designed to prepare you for the writing you will do throughout your academic experience and as you move into professional and civic life. The theme of our readings and overall course will be digital literacy. Our assignments will help you unpack the issues surrounding this subject, but **the real work of the course is strengthening your writing.** You will develop critical strategies for analyzing, evaluating, and producing written argument. You will learn to make purposeful decisions about your use of sources, rhetorical appeals, and overall compositional structure to develop clear, informed, and persuasive arguments for your readers.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

- Wood, Nancy V. *Essentials of Argument*. (3rd edition). Pearson, 2011.
- Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* (3rd edition) W.W. Norton & Co., 2014.
- Additional readings in PDF format will be provided by me via our **Course Wiki** (*Please print out copies of the assigned readings prior to class.*)

Recommended Texts:

- *The Little Aztec Handbook Style Guide* (Recommended)

Course Wiki:

You can locate our course readings, the syllabus, and a plethora of other helpful resources on the Course Wiki (sheppardj.pbworks.com). To access the Wiki, I will send you an invitation via email. Please make sure I have the correct one so you can locate these necessary documents.

Helpful Resources:

1. The [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) (OWL)
2. **SDSU Writing Center**, located in LLA 1103 in the Love Library (Appointments available at the [Writing Center Online](#)). The Writing Center is a **free resource** where you can find support for the writing assigned for this course. Tutors can help you with your assignments at any stage of the writing process--from brainstorming to revision of in-process drafts. You can expect your session to be collaborative: consider your tutor a writing coach who can offer insight into the specific project you are working on, as well as strategies to help you develop your writing skills overall.

A Note about Office Hours- Use Them

No really, I hold office hours for **you** and I encourage you to talk with me if you need help or have questions or concerns related to class. You'll be required to conference with me about your project drafts twice during the semester, but feel free to stop by in between.

Learning Outcomes

General Education Capacities/Goals & RWS Learning Outcomes

Our Learning Outcomes Reflect the Goals and Capacities of the General Education Program. RWS 100 is one of several courses in the area of general education defined as "Communication and Critical Thinking." Focusing particularly on argument, this course emphasizes four essential general education capacities: the ability to 1) construct, analyze and communicate argument, 2) contextualize phenomena, 3) negotiate differences, and 4) apply theoretical models to the real world. **This course advances general education by helping students understand the general function of writing, speaking, visual texts, and thinking within the context of the university at large, rather than within specific disciplines.** In addition to featuring the basic rules and conventions governing composition and presentation, RWS 100 establishes intellectual frameworks and analytical tools that help students explore, construct, critique, and integrate sophisticated texts.

Within this framework of four general capacities, the course realizes four closely related subsidiary goals. These goals focus on helping students

- 1) **craft well-reasoned arguments for specific audiences;**
- 2) **analyze a variety of texts commonly encountered in the academic setting;**
- 3) **situate discourse within social, generic, cultural, and historic contexts; and**
- 4) **assess the relative strengths of arguments and supporting evidence.**

Our student learning outcomes for RWS 100 are closely aligned with these goals and capacities, and reflect the program's overall objective of helping students attain "**essential skills that underlie all university education.**"

Assignment Types: the following four outcomes describe the four main writing projects or "assignment types" for the course. Students will be able to:

1. Describe and analyze an author's argument, claims, project, support and rhetorical strategies.
2. Construct an account of an author's project and argument and carry out small, focused research tasks to find information that helps clarify, illustrate, extend or complicate that argument; use appropriate reference materials, including a dictionary, in order to clarify their understanding of an argument.
3. Analyze and evaluate an author's project and argument and explain rhetorical strategies that this author—and by extension other writers—uses to engage readers in thinking about her argument.
4. Assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of multiple assigned texts, including discussion of rhetorical strategies, supporting evidence, audience, and text structure.

Outcomes across the semester: the following points describe outcomes to work on throughout the 16 weeks of the semester. Students will be able to:

5. describe elements of an argument--claims, methods of development, kinds of evidence, persuasive appeals; annotate the work that is done by each section of a written argument;
6. use all aspects of the writing process--including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading;
7. choose effective structures for their writing, acknowledging that different purposes, contexts and audiences call for different structures; understand the relationship between a text's ideas and its structure;
8. identify devices an author has used to create cohesion or to carry the reader through the text; use metadiscourse to signal the project of a paper, and guide a reader from one idea to the next in their writing;
9. effectively select material from written arguments, contextualize it, and comment on it in their writing;
10. determine when and where a source was published, who wrote it and whether it was reprinted or edited; understand that texts are written in and respond to particular contexts, communities or cultures; examine the vocabulary choices a writer makes and how they are related to context, community or culture, audience or purpose;
11. respond in writing to ideas drawn from various cultures and disciplines, using the activity of writing to clarify and improve their understanding of an argument;
12. analyze and assess the relative strengths of arguments and supporting evidence
13. analyze and assess arguments made by visual texts; incorporate visual images into their documents;
14. craft well-reasoned arguments for specific audiences
15. edit their writing for the grammar and usage conventions appropriate to each writing situation;
16. assign significance to the arguments that they read;
17. reflect on how they wrote their papers, and revise arguments and findings based on critical reflection.

Attendance, Participation, and Professional Etiquette

This course is run as a **seminar and you are expected to be present and engaged for all class sessions** (except in the case of illness, emergency, or official university-related activity). Learning in a seminar format depends upon **preparation and active participation** by the students as well as the professor. Therefore, it is very important that you not only **read assigned texts** but that you also **think critically about the arguments, concepts, and potential applications of the materials we study**. To do well in this course, you will need to **read all assigned material prior to class**, respond to assigned writing prompts, and engage in thoughtful, critical dialog with your classmates. Although this does not mean speaking up and contributing deep insights during every class session, it does mean arriving on time, being prepared, asking questions, and being attentive to the activities at hand. **More than four absences will negatively affect your participation grade. More than six absences may lead to failure of the course. Being here is key to your success!**

In order to explore a breadth of perspectives on rhetoric, we will need to rely on the work and resources each of us brings to this experience. Throughout the semester, we will discuss readings, share collected materials and reading responses, and provide feedback on drafts of one another's work. Your sustained engagement in this process will create a rich learning environment for yourself and your classmates and will help to construct a network of support for your intellectual and professional development.

My goal is to create a comfortable, inviting environment for all students so learning can take place. To this end, **I expect professional and respectful behavior in class**. Please be mindful of your behavior, language, and tone in all interactions with classmates and me. Behavior that detracts from the culture of respect and professionalism a class such as this requires will not be tolerated. **Please do not text or talk on cell phones, use computers for reasons outside of our classwork, or engage in any other behavior that distracts from our work.**

Since this is a rhetoric class, I ask that you are **purposeful** in what you say and how you say it in all forms of communication. When contacting each other or me through email, please use an appropriate subject line, greeting, and closing. Also, please be respectful (consider your *ethos*) when asking a question, making a request, or addressing a concern. That is, I ask that you use appropriate rhetorical strategies when communicating. For example:

An acceptable email:

Good afternoon, Jenny,

I have a question regarding my grade. You may recall that I submitted my proposal on Tuesday, September 3rd, but I received a 0 for the assignment. Can you please double check the accuracy of this grade? If this grade is accurate, I would appreciate feedback so I can be sure to improve my work in the future.

Thank you for your time,

Matt

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An unacceptable email:

why did i receive a 0 on my assignment?

IF YOU ARE ABSENT you are still responsible for knowing what was covered in class, what the homework is, and when it is due.

Please exchange phone numbers and/or emails with at least two of your classmates. In addition, check the course wiki regularly. If you miss class, contact a fellow student for information, or come see me during office hours. If you still have questions feel free to email me.

Late Work

With the exception of in-class activities (which cannot be made-up), I will accept late work **only if prior arrangements have been made**. Please contact me via email or office hours if a situation arises. Late work will receive a lowered grade if turned in within one week of the original due date. Work turned in later than one week past the original due date will be given an automatic grade of F. All four major projects must be completed to pass this class.

Course Assessment and Grading

I will provide specific instructions, grading criteria, and a rubric for each of the major projects, but the table below provides an overview of the categories I use for responding and grading. Grades for major assignment components, as well as your final course grade, will be determined using a point system aligned with a standard letter grade scale: A, B, C, D, and F. Since this is a class about rhetoric, argument, and use of sources, the grading criteria will focus, in part, on how well your work addresses the specific prompt and rhetorical practices covered for each unit.

How Did You Do? General Grading Rubric			
	Excelling A-B	Acceptable B-C	Emerging C-F
ANALYSIS	Demonstrates advanced ability to analyze, critique, and respond to texts and/or rhetorical situations	Demonstrates ability to analyze, critique, and respond to texts and/or rhetorical situations	Does not demonstrate the ability to analyze, critique, and respond to texts and/or rhetorical situations
APPLICATION OF CONCEPTS	Demonstrates advanced ability to apply theoretical, critical and/or technical concepts	Demonstrates ability to apply theoretical, critical and/or technical concepts	Does not demonstrate the ability to apply theoretical, critical and/or technical concepts
CRITICAL THINKING	Demonstrates an exceptional ability to think critically and logically	Demonstrates ability to think critically and logically	Does not demonstrate the ability to think critically and logically
WRITING	Demonstrates an ability to conceptualize, plan, and draft written texts of superior quality	Demonstrates ability to conceptualize, plan, and draft written texts	Does not demonstrate the developing ability to conceptualize, plan, and draft written texts
RESEARCH	Demonstrates the ability to conduct appropriate academic research beyond expectations for a first-year writing course	Demonstrates ability to conduct appropriate academic and/or professional research	Does not demonstrate the ability to conduct appropriate academic and/or professional research
DOCUMENTATION	Demonstrates a flawless use of either MLA or APA citation documentation	Demonstrates ability to use either MLA or APA citation documentation	Does not use or uses inappropriately/ incorrectly either MLA or APA citation documentation

Assignments and Points

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

1. Describe and analyze an author's project, argument, claims, evidence, support and rhetorical strategies (**Thompson**)
2. Construct an account of an author's project and argument and carry out small, focused research tasks to find information that helps clarify, illustrate, extend or complicate that argument; use appropriate reference materials, including a dictionary, in order to clarify their understanding of an argument (**Boyd**)
3. Construct an account of one or more authors' projects and arguments and explain rhetorical strategies that these authors—and by extension other writers—use to engage readers in thinking about their arguments. (**Carr**)
4. Assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of multiple texts, including discussion of rhetorical strategies, supporting evidence, audience, and text structure. (**texts Carr and tba**)

ASSIGNMENTS	%
Assignment 1: Constructing an Account of an Argument	15
Assignment 2: Gathering Information and Managing Sources	20
Assignment 3: Explaining Rhetorical Strategies	20
Assignment 4: Evaluating & Comparing Multiple Texts	20
Blackboard discussion posts/homework	15
Participation	10
Total	100

Grade	%
A	93-100%
A-	90-92
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	60-66%
F	Below 60%

Students with Disabilities

Every attempt will be made to offer reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities in this course. Students with disabilities who may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to notify the instructor privately and to contact Student Disability Services (SDS) as soon as possible. SDS staff are available in the Capulli Center in Suite 3101 or by phone at (619) 594-6473 (voice) or (619) 594-2929 (TTD/TTY).

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Counseling

There are many events and situations that put additional stress on being a student. SDSU has an excellent center for Counseling & Psychological Services that is open to students Monday through Friday from 8am-4:30pm. To set up an initial consultation, call (619) 594-5220. For immediate or emergency help, you are welcome to use San Diego's free 24-hour counseling access line at (800) 479-3339. C&PS on campus also has a "Center for Well-Being" with multiple stations for relaxation if you are feeling stressed during the semester. C&PS is located in the Capulli Center, Room 4401.

Academic Honesty

All work in this course must be original. Plagiarism will result in serious consequences ranging from grade reduction to failure in the class to expulsion from the college. For more information on the university cheating and plagiarism policy, please visit: <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/senate/policy/pfacademics.html>. SDSU's library also has an excellent tutorial on how to avoid plagiarism.

Discrimination and Harassment

SDSU complies with all federal and state laws regarding discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender and gender identity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, marital status, medical status, veteran status, and disability. Further, the expectation for our classroom is that it is a safe, collegial space where differences of background and perspective are treated with consideration and respect. Disagreement on some issues is expected as part of the learning process, but should always be expressed within a framework of collegiality.

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change based on student needs and other circumstances. Please check it regularly to stay up-to-date.

Date	In-Class	What's Due by the Beginning of Class
WEEK 1	Intro to Rhetoric	
T 8/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Syllabus * Overview of course * Introductions 	
TH 8/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discuss reading * Identify and define key terms 	<p>Read- PDF on Wiki: Alexander and Losh- <i>Understanding Rhetoric</i>, ch 1 "Why Rhetoric?"</p> <p>Due: Response to Alexander and Losh</p>
WEEK 2	Unit 1: Claims, Evidence, Strategies	
T 9/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discuss key terms from readings * Apply PACES concepts to Kristof "Do We Have the Courage to Stop This?" (in "Short Texts" section of Wiki pp. 5-6) * Directions for Project 1 	<p>Read pages 1-15 (Introduction) in <i>They Say/I Say</i></p> <p>Read PDF Course Reader in Wiki- part 1 (pp. 3-8)</p>
TH 9/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discuss key terms from readings * Activities from ch 2 * Continue discussing arguments, claims, and understanding the "conversation" using Hari "The Likely Cause of Addiction Has Been Discovered, and It's Not What You Think" (in "Short Texts" section of Wiki pp. 12-16) 	<p>Read <i>Essentials of Argument</i>, ch 2 "The Rhetorical Situation: Understanding Audience and Context"</p>
WEEK 3	Unit 1: Working With Thompson	
T 9/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discuss readings * Ethos, Pathos, Logos 	<p>Read PDF on Wiki: Alexander and Losh- <i>Understanding Rhetoric</i>, ch 2 "Strategic Reading"</p>
TH 9/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discussion of Thompson * Identifying claims and evidence * Charting Thompson 	<p>Read PDF on Wiki- Thompson "Public Thinking"</p> <p>Read in Course Reader PDF "Charting a Text" pp. 12-13</p>
WEEK 4	Unit 1: Continuing w/Thompson, Workshopping	
T 9/15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Drafting continued; Thompson & digital literacy 	<p>Due: Reading response to Thompson "Public Thinking"</p>
TH 9/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Peer review workshop 	<p>Due: Draft of Paper #1 (bring 3 copies to class); peer workshop</p>

WEEK 5	Unit 1: Conferencing	
T 9/22	* Conferencing with instructor	
TH 9/24	* Conferencing with instructor	
WEEK 6	Unit 2: Working With Boyd	
T 9/29	* Using Storify to Explore Topics * Directions for Paper #2	Due: Final Paper 1
TH 10/1	* Discuss Boyd's arguments, support, and rhetorical strategies	Read Boyd PDF (in "Long Texts" section of Wiki)- "Literacy: Are Today's Youth Digital Natives?"
WEEK 7	Unit 2: Finding Sources	
T 10/6	* Continue discussing Boyd, identifying rhetorical strategies, and mapping argument	Due: Reading response to Boyd
TH 10/8	* Research practices	Read <i>Essentials of Argument</i> , ch 3 "Learning More about Issues: Conducting Research"
WEEK 8	Unit 2: Integrating Sources	
T 10/13	* Working with sources in-text-	Read <i>They Say/I Say</i> , ch 1-3 (pp. 19-51)
TH 10/15	* Working with sources * What the Purdue OWL can do for you https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/	Skim <i>Essentials of Argument</i> , Appendix 1 (choose either MLA or APA style)
WEEK 9	Unit 2: Drafting / Workshopping	
T 10/20	* Peer review	Due: Draft Paper #2
TH 10/22	* Revision workshop	Read <i>They Say/I Say</i> , ch 4-5 (pp. 53-77)
WEEK 10	Unit 3: Working With Carr	
T 10/27	* Writing about rhetorical strategies * Directions for Paper #3	Due: Final Paper #2
TH 10/29	* Analyzing and evaluating Carr; ethos, pathos, logos in Carr	Read Carr PDF (in "Long Texts" section of Wiki)- "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" Due: Response to Carr
WEEK 11	Unit 3: Rhetorical Strategies	
T 11/3	* Continue analyzing and mapping Carr	Read <i>Essentials of Argument</i> , ch 7 "The Types of Proof: Supporting the Claim"
TH 11/5	* Development workshop	Read <i>They Say/I Say</i> , ch 4-5 (pp. 53-77)

Due: Outline of Paper #3

WEEK 12	Unit 3: Workshopping/Conferencing	
T 11/10	* Peer review * Directions for Paper #4	Due: Draft Paper #3
TH 11/12	* Conferencing with instructor	
WEEK 13	Unit 4:	
T 11/17	* Conferencing with instructor	
TH 11/19	* In-class mapping of Paper #4 directions	Read <i>They Say/I Say</i> , ch 6-7 (pp. 78-101)
		Due: Final Paper #3
WEEK 14	Unit 4: Evaluating & Comparing Multiple Texts	
T 11/24	* Research day	Read <i>Essentials of Argument</i> , ch 11 "Writing the Researched Position Paper"
TH 11/26	* Class cancelled for Thanksgiving	
WEEK 15	Unit 4:	
T 12/1	* Workshopping	Read <i>They Say/I Say</i> , ch 8-9 (pp. 105-128)
TH 12/3	* Peer review	Due: Draft Paper #4
WEEK 16	Unit 4:	
T 12/8	* Conferencing with instructor	
TH 12/10	* Final semester wrap-up	
FINALS WEEK		
T 12/15 1:00-3:00		Due: Final Paper #4