

**Class Days**: T & TH

**Class Times**: 11:00-12:15

**Class Location**: COM 205

**Section**: 73

**Office Hours**: M 3-4, T & W 2-3:30, & by appt.   
**Location**: SH 120B

**Email Contact**: jsheppard@mail.sdsu.edu

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 investigate ideas from a variety of sources, demonstrate your understanding of complex influences and motivations, 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 and critical thinking you will do throughout your academic experience and as you move into professional and civic life. Our readings will consider several controversial issues, including debates around for-profit universities, the rhetoric of demagogues, and online civility/incivility, but our focus is less about the content of the issues themselves than it is about the way arguments and perspectives are constructed for particular contexts. That is, our discussions and assignments will help you learn to unpack the variety of rhetorical approaches and strategies writers use to contribute to "the conversation" surrounding these subjects. T**he real work of the course, is strengthening your writing**, not engaging in debate about which perspective is the "correct" one. 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 particular readers, purposes, and contexts.

## Course Materials

**Required Texts**:

* Required readings will be available in PDF format via Blackboard (*You must bring either a print or digital copy of the assigned readings to class for discussion.*)

**Recommended Texts:**

* Ann Raimes' *A Key for Writers* (7th edition)

## Helpful Resources:

1. **SDSU Writing Center**, located in LLA 1103 in the Love Library (Appointments available at the [Writing Center Online](https://writingcenter.sdsu.edu/)). 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.
2. The [Purdue Online Writing Lab](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/) (OWL)

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

The following outcomes describe the four major writing projects or "assignment types" for the course. By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

1. Discern elements of context embedded in arguments, the clues that show what the argument is responding to – both in the sense of what has come before it and the sense that it is written for an audience in a particular time and place; examine a writer's language in relation to audience, context, and community;
2. Use concepts and arguments from one text as a context for understanding and writing about another;
3. Given the common concerns of two or more arguments, discuss how the claims of these arguments modify, complicate, or qualify one another;
4. Consider your contemporary, current life as the context within which you are reading a group of arguments; position yourself in relation to ongoing research and discussion in order to make an argument, drawing on available key terms, concepts of frameworks of analysis to help shape the argument.

The following points describe outcomes to work on throughout the semester:

1. Building on the work done in RWS 100, you will be able to articulate what argument a text is making, describe the work that is done by each section of the argument, describe elements of the argument such as claims, methods of development, kinds of evidence, persuasive appeals, translate an argument into your own words;
2. Understand and incorporate all aspects of the writing process – including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading;
3. Articulate what key terms, definitions, concepts, statements of a problem or issue are established by a text;
4. Investigate and articulate how an argument is positioned – based on certain kinds of assumptions, located in a way of thinking and representing issues from a point of view;
5. Work with multiple sources in a paper, deciding what to include and what to exclude, choosing an effective structure, and creating significant relationships among sources;
6. Craft a cohesive paper, and use effective metadiscourse to guide a reader through it;
7. Describe your own papers and reflect on how you wrote them; differentiate between the content of your texts and the language and rhetorical strategies you employ;
8. Revise your own work effectively, re-reading previous work and re-envisioning it in the light of reflection, feedback, further reading, and new sources of information;
9. Edit your writing for the grammar and usage conventions appropriate to the project

## Attendance, Participation, and Professional Etiquette

This is a discussion-based course rather than one focused on a professor-driven lecture. **This means 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 discussion 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. You can miss up to three classes, for whatever reason, without penalty. 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. This participation will also make up 10% of your final grade.  
  
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 use your computer/tablet/phone for reasons other than classwork during our time 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  
RWS 250

***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, I will set up a class Facebook group so that you can interact with one another more easily outside of class.

Problems  
Please get in touch with me immediately if you experience unforeseen circumstances that will affect your performance in the course. My goal is to help you succeed no matter your situation, but we need to communicate to make that happen.  
  
  
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 to negotiate an alternative due date. Late work will receive a lower grade. Only in exceptional circumstances will I accept work more than two weeks past the original due date. All three 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.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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. **Assignment 1:** Analysis of an Argument in Context**- 20%**
2. **Assignment 2:** Using One Text As A "Lens" On Another- **20%**
3. **Assignment 3:** Advancing Your Argument in a Contemporary Context- **25%**

**Smaller Assignments**

1. Blackboard discussion posts, reading responses, and other homework- **25%**
2. Participation- **10%**

| Grade Scale | % |
| --- | --- |
| 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](http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/senate/%20policy/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

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **This schedule is subject to change based on student needs and other circumstances**. Please check it regularly to stay up-to-date. | | |
| **WEEK 1** | **Intro to Rhetoric** | | |
| TH 1/21 | * Syllabus * Overview of course * Introductions |
| **WEEK 2** |  | | |
| T 1/26 | * **Read:** Lunsford- "Everything Is an Argument" (pp. 3-27) * **Write:** Syllabus response * Key terms and concepts * Discuss reading * In-class writing based on Lunsford chapter | | |
| TH 1/28 | * **Read**: Miller-Cochran, Stamper, & Cochran's "Reading and Writing Rhetorically" (pp. 20-36) * **Read**: Lunsford "Rhetorical Analysis" (pp. 87-118) * Apply concepts to short texts * Introduction to paper 1 | | |
| **WEEK 3** |  | | |
| T 2/2 | * Watch *College Inc*. * Discuss stakeholders and rhetorical strategies in *College Inc.* | | |
| TH 2/4 | * **Write**: Response to *College Inc*. * **Read**: Fischer's "One Thing I Know: Compared to What?" * **Read**: Bleich's "California's Higher-education Debacle * **Read**: Nasiripour’s “Sallie Mae Cheated Soldiers on Federal Student Loans, Government Investigators Find” * **Read**: Hollister Petraeus’s “For-Profit Colleges, Vulnerable G.I.s” * Examiningclaims in context**;** strategies, strengths and weaknesses | | |
| **WEEK 4** |  | | |
| T 2/9 | * **Read:** Carey's “Why Do You Think They’re Called For-Profit Colleges?” * **Read:** NEA Higher Education Advocate "No Justice? No Peace!" * **Read:** Surowiecki's "[The Rise and Fall of For-Profit Universities](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/11/02/the-rise-and-fall-of-for-profit-schools" \t "new)" * **Write**: A list of at least 10 contextual concerns or sub-issues raised about higher education and for-profit universities based on the three readings * Discuss readings and map contextual influences as a class (i.e. low-income students, student loan debt burdens, inequality in access to education, etc.) using lists completed for homework * Discuss how context and the rhetorical situation influences arguments and persuasive strategies in Carey, the NEA article, and Surowiecki * Look at "[How to Regulate For-Profit Colleges](http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2011/06/05/how-to-regulate-for-profit-colleges)" article and responses for additional arguments and perspectives | | |
| TH 2/11 | * **Due:** Find, cite, and summarize at least two credible sources from 2010 or later relevant to issues of For-Profit Universities * Discuss new sources and continue mapping contexts, issues, and perspectives * Review works cited and in-text citations in MLA format * Look at Purdue OWL site * Discuss and draft introductions and essay outlines | | |
| **WEEK 5** |  | | |
| T 2/16 | * Due: Rough draft of paper #1 * **Due**: Online peer-review- see directions on Blackboard and review drafts of two peer's papers | | |
| TH 2/18 | * **Class cancelled for conferencing – meet professor outside of class to discuss draft** | | |
| **WEEK 6** |  | | |
| T 2/23 | * **Class cancelled for conferencing – meet professor outside of class to discuss draft** | | |
| TH 2/25 | * Due: Final Paper #1 * Introduction to paper #2 * LaPierre and the rhetoric of demagoguery | | |
| **WEEK 7** |  | | |
| T 3/1 | * **Read**: Roberts-Miller "Characteristics of Demagoguery" * **Due:** Response to Roberts-Miller | | |
| TH 3/3 | * Using one text as a lens on another**;** finding and evaluating texts of contemporary demagogues | | |
| **WEEK 8** |  | | |
| T 3/8 | * Drafting introduction and body paragraphs; template phrases | | |
| TH 3/10 | * Due: *Draft* Paper #2 * **Due**: Online peer-review- see directions on Blackboard and review drafts of two peer's papers | | |
| **WEEK 9** |  | | |
| T 3/15 | * **Class cancelled for conferencing – meet professor outside of class to discuss draft** | | |
| TH 3/17 | * **Class cancelled for conferencing – meet professor outside of class to discuss draft** | | |
| **WEEK 10** |  | | |
| T 3/22 | * Introduce Project #3 * Brainstorming topics * Genre analysis and looking for samples | | |
| TH 3/24 | * Due: *Final* Paper #2 * Meet with team for project #3 brainstorming and planning | | |
| **SPRING BREAK** | | | |
| **M 3/28-F 4/1** | **Class Cancelled- Enjoy your break!** | | |
| **WEEK 11** |  | | |
| T 4/5 | * **Due**: Reading assignment TBA * **Write**: Annotated Bibliography * Look at possible project technologies | | |
| TH 4/7 | * **Due**: Reading assignment TBA * **Due**: Written team project plan- one per group | | |
| **WEEK 12** |  | | |
| T 4/12 | * TBA | | |
| TH 4/14 | * TBA | | |
| **WEEK 13** |  | | |
| T 4/19 | * Due: *Draft* Project #3 * Peer review of project drafts | | |
| TH 4/21 | * **Class cancelled for conferencing – meet professor outside of class to discuss draft** | | |
| **WEEK 14** |  | | |
| T 4/26 | * **Class cancelled for conferencing – meet professor outside of class to discuss draft** | | |
| TH 4/28 | * Presentation advice * Workshop and revision time for project #3- bring all materials to work with team | | |
| **WEEK 15** |  | | |
| T 5/3 | * Project #3 team presentations | | |
| TH 5/5 | * Project #3 team presentations | | |
| **FINALS WEEK** |  | | |
| T 5/10 10:30 am | * **Due: *Final* Project #3 and Written Reflection** | | |