ENG 730:
Introduction to Graduate Study in Rhetoric and Composition

Location:

Instructor:
Chris Mays
Email: cmays@unr.edu
Office:
Hours:

Course Description:

This course introduces graduate students to the field(s) of rhetoric and writing studies, and by extension, to the public engagement degree (which is just one possible application of work in this field). Overall, the course will focus on three questions that will set the stage for future participation in the profession:

- What kinds of work happens in rhetoric and writing studies?
- What concerns characterize this work?
- How can I situate my interests within the concerns of the discipline?

In short, we will be getting at the question of what practitioners in "Rhet/Comp" actually *do*, and, where can the expertise gained by the study of this field be put to good use.

To this end, all of our discussions, readings, and assignments will all aim to better equip you to do the varied and important work of rhetoric and writing scholars.

Required Texts (note: alternate editions are acceptable, unless drastically revised):

Kenneth Burke. *Permanence and Change An Anatomy of Purpose* (1935). 3rd ed., U of California P, 1984. ISBN: 9780520041462

Jay Timothy Dolmage *Disability Rhetoric.* Syracuse UP, 2014. ISBN: 978-0815633242

Susan C. Jarratt *Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric Refigured*. Southern Illinois UP, 1998. ISBN: 978-0809322244

Thomas S. Kuhn *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). 4th ed., U of Chicago P, 2012. ISBN: 978-0226458120

Julie Lindquist. *A Place to Stand: Politics and Persuasion in a Working-Class Bar*. Oxford UP, 2002. ISBN: 978-0195140385

Plato *Gorgias* (this is available in many places online, so no need to buy unless you prefer a bound copy)

Eric Darnell Pritchard. *Fashioning Lives: Black Queers and the Politics of Literacy*. Southern Illinois UP, 2017. ISBN: 978-0809335541

Patricia Roberts-Miller *Deliberate Conflict: Argument, Political Theory, and Composition Classes*. Southern Illinois UP, 2007. ISBN: 978-0809327669

Mike Rose *Lives on the Boundary: A Moving Account of the Struggles and Achievements of America's Educationally Underprepared* (1989). Reissue ed., Penguin, 2005. ISBN: 978-0143035466

Stuart Selber *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age*. Southern Illinois UP, 2004. ISBN: 978-0809325511

Mina P. Shaughnessy *Errors and Expectations: A Guide for the Teacher of Basic Writing*. Oxford UP, 1979. ISBN: 978-0195025071

Victor Villanueva. *Bootstraps: From an American Academic of Color*. National Council of Teachers of English, 1993. ISBN: 978-0814103777

Course Assignments:

Emailed question of the week:

On specified weeks (4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14—see daily schedule), prior to class, you will be responsible for sending in one or two questions from the reading. You must send this in ***by midnight on the Sunday before class***. I will use these questions as the basis for part of class discussion.

One-page writing assignment:

The basic premise of this assignment (due prior to week 6—see daily schedule) is that it is not allowed to exceed one page (works cited not included). Specifically, the assignment should be a minimum 10-point font, minimum ½ inch margins (although you are under no obligation to stray from the 12-point/1 inch standard). Such a restriction is meant to engender careful precision in your writing combined with an intense engagement with a text. Evidence of these qualities is required for a satisfactory grade on this assignment. As should be obvious: you can only write in such a way if you have first carefully read and studied the reading to be explicated.

You have two options for the content of these one page assignments:
Option 1: A carefully polished and insightful paper that unpacks (expands and explains) one or two of the main arguments of the assigned text.

Option 2: Again, a carefully polished and insightful paper in which you take a single quotation (length up to you) from the assigned text and unpack (expand and explain the implications of) that quote. If you choose this option, you should use a separate page to reproduce the quote of your choice.

Annotated bibliography (of journals in the field, crossed with your own interests):
An annotated bibliography is simply a list of selected academic texts + a summary; in this case, you are focusing on academic journals instead of books or articles. We'll look at examples of these in class, but in short, in this assignment (due week 8) you should research journals in the various areas in RhetComp, and choose **five** that most conform to what you feel at this point in the course are your particular interests within the field. The annotation should consist of a paragraph (at least a few sentences, no longer than a page) summary of the key themes, topical trends, stylistic/structural features (i.e. how articles tend to be structured, how ideas tend to be discussed), and other rhetorical conventions of the journal, along with a brief explanation of why the journal fits with your interests. The point of this assignment, in addition to improving your research skills and ability to identify rhetorical features of the genre, is to help you start thinking about where your interests might fit in the larger field.

Project ideas/possible applications in your area of future study
This assignment (due week 9), is just as the title states. You should bring in **three** potential project ideas and/or specific applications of RhetComp scholarship in a particular area (or areas) of future study. We will discuss this in class prior to it being due, but in short, this assignment asks you to imagine three specific applications of RhetComp scholarship that you might be interested in pursuing.

Assignment for an imaginary undergraduate rhetoric or writing class (+ a write-up about the assignment)
This assignment (ideas due week 10, final draft due week 11) will have you taking a specific rhetoric and/or writing class designed for undergraduates (examples to choose from will be provided) and coming up with one specific assignment for this class. Your assignment must stipulate (and fulfill) at least two stated student learning outcomes (that you invent), and should have detailed instructions for students. In addition, you should provide a one page single-spaced write-up in which you connect your learning outcomes to the broader theme of the course (related to an issue/question in rhetoric or writing studies), and explain how the assignment fulfills its learning outcomes.

Proposal (academic conference proposal or public project grant proposal)
This assignment (drafts due prior to week 13—see daily schedule) will ask you to review the proposal genre, and to come up with one of your own. If you choose an academic conference proposal, you should find a professional conference matching your interests, review past themes of the conference, and come up with a unique proposal suitable for the conference and one of these themes. If you choose a public project grant proposal, you should review funding opportunities for similar projects, and come up with a proposal that fits a particular funding organization's goals and stipulations.

Conference paper or long public project proposal
Depending on what route you chose in the proposal assignment, for this assignment (drafts due week 16—see daily schedule) you will either write a conference paper (suitable for a 15-minute presentation), or write a longer and more detailed/in-depth explanation of your proposed public project (length equivalent to the length of the academic option). Both options entail that you use appropriate sources, and that your finished work be polished and persuasive for its intended audience.

Facilitation of a scholarly article of your choosing
For this assignment, you will be responsible for bringing in a scholarly article (or a link to one) during week 14, so that the class can read it by week 15. During week 15, you will be responsible for facilitating a discussion of the article for approximately 30 minutes. For this facilitation you are free to bring in exercises, handouts, relevant other artifacts/texts, or anything else that might assist your facilitation (you are not required to bring in anything, however).

Reading Engagement:
Each week, you should have marked or otherwise notated several passages from the reading due that you find particularly interesting, relevant, important, confusing, or questionable. Most weeks, these selections will help you find ways "in" to the text in discussion, and thus will help complexify (and at times start) these class discussions.

Grade Percentage Breakdown:

Emailed question of the week	5%
Project ideas/applications	5%
Facilitation	5%
Annotated bibliography	10%
One-page writing assignment	15%
Assignment + write-up	15%
Proposal	15%
Conference paper/longer project proposal	30%

Grading Info/Scale:

In a graduate seminar, a "B" or higher is considered a satisfactory grade; a grade of "A" is reserved for an outstanding performance.

Assignment grades may be assessed that fall between letters (i.e. so-called "slash" grades). For example, a grade of "A-/B+" may be assessed, and would fall on the border of an "A" and a "B"; this grade would translate in percentages to 90%. Final course grades will not use these in between "slash" grades, and will adhere to the standard model that incorporates either standalone letter grades, pluses, or minuses.

Specifically, the final course grading scale will follow the standard UNR model. As stated in the catalog: "'A' the highest grade, [and] is given for work of exceptional quality. Each credit earned with a grade of 'A' carries 4.0 grade points." In terms of percentages: A=93-100%; A-=90-92%; B+=88-89%; B=83-87%; B-=80-82%; C+=78-79%; C=73-77%; C-=70-72%; D+=68-69%; D=63-67%; D-=60-62%; F=59-0%.

Questions about grades? Please see me after class or make an appointment with me to discuss grades, since FERPA stipulations prohibit me from emailing grades to you directly. If you have a dispute about grades that cannot be resolved, it can be taken to the Chair of the English Department. To provide support for any claims you wish to

make about your grades, until you receive a final grade please do not discard any drafts, notes, papers or research materials you produce during the term.

Required Equipment/Technology for Assignments:

You will access readings that are not from the required texts via WebCampus/Canvas Course Reserves, so if you need any help navigating the site please come see me early in the semester. Drafts of projects (as stipulated on the daily schedule), questions of the week, and the final project should be submitted via email by the listed due dates/times, and all other assignments should be submitted in hard copy on the day they are due. Late submissions will be penalized 25% each calendar day past the deadline.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. discuss and apply foundational composition theory and insights from writing research.
2. explain and apply basic principles of grammar, style, and text structure.
3. identify typical academic genres—as well as typical genres for the student's chosen professional field, if applicable—and select those most suitable for a defined purpose and audience.
4. Identify social, political, and historical influences on the formation of genres and publishing practices.
5. choose strategies that result in productive writing habits.
6. create a timeline for writing and publishing to meet professional goals during graduate study.
7. produce a polished portfolio containing examples of academic writing and/or other professional writing, as appropriate to the student's program of graduate study.

Attendance and General Participation:

Per university policy: "It is the personal responsibility of the student to consult with the instructor regarding absence from class. Students are responsible for material covered in class, and it is the student's responsibility to arrange for the completion of all missed classroom work." UNR's full official attendance policy can be found here: http://www.unr.edu/administrative-manual/3000-3999-students/3020-class-absence-policy

It should be noted that missing any classes will have a substantial influence on your grade, as the work we do in class is crucial to receiving the maximum possible grade. Please be forewarned that you cannot achieve an A in this course without prompt attendance to and active participation in all seminar sessions.

UNR Statement on Academic Dishonesty:

"Sanctions for violations of university academic standards for academic dishonesty may include academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic sanctions for both undergraduate and graduate students may include: filing a final grade of 'F,' reducing the student's final course grade one or two full grade points; giving a reduced grade or zero on the coursework; or requiring the student to retake or resubmit the coursework." For more details, see the University of Nevada, Reno General Catalog (https://www.unr.edu/administrative-manual/6000-6999-curricula-teaching-research/instruction-research-procedures/6502-academic-standards)

Audio and Video Recording:

Surreptitious or covert videotaping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may be given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

Disability Services Information:

Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with the Disability Resource Center (Pennington Student Achievement Center, Suite 230) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations. As well, all students are more than welcome to drop by during office hours or schedule an appointment to ask questions, continue discussion of these (or any other) issues, or to offer comments.

Course Schedule (readings subject to change—with notice):

Week 1, August 26th:
Introduction

Syllabus discussion/introductions

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Chapter 1 of *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*
Plato "Gorgias" (beginning through section 466a3)

Week 2, September 2nd:

Labor Day Holiday – No Class

Week 3, September 9th:

Rhetoric Society of Europe Conference – No Class

Week 4, September 16th:
Rhetoric: Key Themes

S. Jarratt *Rereading the Sophists*

Question(s) due the night before class.

Week 5, September 23rd:
Writing/Composition Pedagogy: Key Themes

M. Shaughnessy *Errors and Expectations*
J. Williams "The Phenomenology of Error"
Students' Right to Their Own Language
G. Smitherman's retrospective on SRtTOL
(articles available on Webcampus)

Question(s) due the night before class.

Week 6, September 30th:
Rhetoric and Writing, Continued

P. Roberts-Miller *Deliberate Conflict*

One-pager first draft due the Friday before class (the 27th) by midnight, via email to all class members. We will workshop drafts in the second half of class.

Final (emailed) draft due by Friday, Oct 4th at midnight.

Week 7, October 7th:
Work about the Field

M. Rose *Lives on the Boundary*

Question(s) due the night before class.

Discuss the variety of journals in the field (last hour of class)

Week 8, October 14th:
Rhetoric and Society

T. Kuhn *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (selected sections)
K. Burke *Permanence and Change* (selected sections)
ARCS Chapter 5 (available on Webcampus)

Question(s) (from either/both Kuhn and Burke) due the night before class.

Discuss possible areas of future study (last hour of class)

Annotated journal bibliography crossed with your interests due

Week 9, October 21st:
Work about the Field

V. Villannueva *Bootstraps*

Question(s) due the night before class.

Project ideas/possible applications (three) in your area of future study due—discuss in last hour of class.

Week 10, October 28th:
Writing Studies/Digital Writing

S. Selber *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age*

Question(s) due the night before class.

Bring in assignment ideas, discuss assignment assignment + write-up in last hour

Week 11, November 4th:
Rhetoric, Disability Studies, Embodiment

J. Dolmage *Disability Rhetoric*

Question(s) due the night before class.

Last hour: talk about conference proposal genre/samples, also talk about public project proposal possibilities as conference papers.

Assignment + Write-up due

Week 12, November 11th:

Veterans Day Holiday – No Class

Week 13, November 18th:
The Public Work of Writing and Rhetoric

E. D. Pritchard. *Fashioning Lives: Black Queers and the Politics of Literacy*

Question(s) due the night before class.

Conference proposal (on either academic subject or public project) first draft due the Friday before class (the 15th) by midnight, via email to all class members—we will discuss drafts in part 2 of class

Week 14, November 25th:
Rhetoric in the World/Workplace

J. Lindquist *A Place to Stand*

Question(s) due the night before class.

Final conference proposal due—discuss in last hour how to translate proposal into conference papers/longer proposals, the draft of which is due in two weeks

Everyone bring an article for next week

Week 15, December 2nd:
Rhetoric and Writing Studies: Applications and Articles

Articles brought in by class

Each person facilitates a 30-min discussion of their article. Have questions/activities/pres/etc. ready.

Week 16, December 9th:

Conference paper first draft due the Friday before class (the 6th) by midnight, via email to all class members

We will workshop in class

Final version will be due via email at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 16th