



# RWS 100: Rhetoric of Written Argument

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**Section:** 53  
**Class Days:** MWF  
**Class Time:** 11:00-11:50  
**Class Location:** SSW 2500

## RHETORIC IS...

*"the art of ruling the minds of men." - Plato*

*"the faculty of observing, in any given case, the available means of persuasion." - Aristotle*

*"reason well dressed and argument put in order." - Jeremy Collier*

*"the art, practice, and study of human communication." - Andrea Lunsford*

## WHAT IS THIS COURSE ABOUT?

Rhetoric is everywhere! RWS 100 will assist you in identifying it, understanding its purpose, and analyzing its effectiveness. In this course, you will examine and produce written argument, as it is central to academic literacy, critical thinking, professional communication, and civic life. You will learn to write and revise essays in which you address complex arguments effectively, use source materials responsibly, and make sound decisions about purpose, audience, context, and structure. Ultimately, this course is designed to help you undertake future academic writing projects, and it is meant to encourage you to use key rhetorical concepts as modes of inquiry and invention as you navigate through both academic and everyday discourse.

## REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS

- "Fall 2016 RWS 100 Course Reader" by Chris Werry (available for purchase at CalCopy).
- *Keys for Writers*, 7th edition, by Ann Raimos (available for purchase at SDSU Bookstore).
- *They Say I Say*, 3rd edition, by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein (available for purchase at SDSU Bookstore).
- Internet access for Blackboard, email, and other online content.
- Printer access to print hard copies of materials and assignments.
- Pen and paper for in-class notes, writings, and activities.
- 3 folders to collect documents for each writing process portfolio.

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

- The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL); for more information, visit [owl.english.purdue.edu](http://owl.english.purdue.edu).
- The SDSU Writing Center, located in the library dome, LLA 1103; for hours and more information, visit [writingcenter.sdsu.edu](http://writingcenter.sdsu.edu) (appointments can be made online).

## REQUIREMENTS

### PARTICIPATION (180 points)

This course largely depends on you to regularly contribute your insights. This can only be achieved by coming to class prepared for in-class discussions, activities, and assignments. The participation grade includes:

- **In-Class Activities:** These smaller assignments are meant to encourage class engagement. I will not always collect these, but completion is necessary for participation. This includes effort invested in individual, group, and class projects and discussions.
- **In-Class Writings:** These involve various brief, casual writing assignments, which I will usually collect.
- **Reading Assignments:** We will study each major text with in-class readings. Although we will read each text in class, it would be beneficial for you to thoroughly review the texts during your own time as well. To be fully engaged in the course, you must be familiar with the texts we are working with. Please bring a hard copy of the text the day it is up for discussion.
- **Homework Assignments:** Occasionally, you may be assigned work to do outside of class. I will usually collect these the following class day.

Any collected participation assignments will be graded on a pass(+)/fail(-) scale. This means you will receive full credit if you complete the assignment adequately, and you will receive no credit if you fail to do so. Ideally, these assignments will be building blocks, in some form or another, for your longer essays. As such, you may find them to be helpful resources, so saving them is suggested.

### ESSAYS\* (460 points)

You will write three major essays throughout the semester, ranging from six to eight pages. Each essay will require an outline or proposal, two rough drafts that will be workshopped and revised, and one final draft. More specific instructions will be provided with each essay's prompt. All essays are due in class on the date specified; they must be typed, stapled, and adhere to MLA formatting. The essays are as follows:

1. **Analyzing an Argument** (140 points)
2. **Analyzing and Evaluating Rhetorical Strategies** (150 points)
3. **Researching, Synthesizing, and "Joining the Conversation"** (170 points)

### OUTLINES & PROPOSAL\* (120 points)

For Essays 1 and 2, you will create a preliminary outline. This prewriting assignment will allow you to gather your thoughts before you begin writing. These outlines will be workshopped in class. For further instructions, see "Guide to Formal Outlining" on Blackboard. For Essay 3, you will create a proposal. Proposing your purpose, research, and sources before you construct an argument gives you a chance to think through your project and play with ideas. You will receive a proposal prompt with further instructions later in the semester.

## PEER REVIEWS\* (120 points)

Prior to each final draft, you will participate in an in-class peer review workshop, where you will exchange first drafts with a classmate and workshop one another's essays. There are three essays, so you will conduct three peer reviews.

## WRITING MEDITATION\* (120 points)

Following each peer review, you will use the feedback you receive to produce a second draft. You will then workshop this draft in class by way of an independent writing meditation. This contemplative writing practice asks you to meditate with the focus of the writing task at hand, which may allow you to become aware of your thoughts about your writing and be receptive to your own feedback.

## \*WRITING PROCESS PORTFOLIOS

To receive full credit on the entire writing process, you will need to submit a hard copy of:

1. Your outline or proposal and its workshop worksheet.
2. Your peer review rough draft and its workshop worksheet.
3. Your writing meditation rough draft and its workshop worksheet.
4. Your final draft.

These seven documents must all be **submitted in a folder on the day the final draft is due.**

## GRADING BREAKDOWN

Requirements	Points
Participation	180
Essay 1	140
Essay 2	150
Essay 3	170
Outlines/Proposal	120
Peer Reviews	120
Writing Meditations	120
Total	1,000

## GRADING SCALE

Grade	Points
A	940-1,000
A-	900-939
B+	870-899
B	830-869
B-	800-829
C+	770-799
C	730-769
C-	700-729
D+	670-699
D	630-669
D-	600-629
F	0-599

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

GENERAL EDUCATION 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. They are the ability to:

1. Construct, analyze, and communicate argument.
2. Contextualize phenomena.
3. Negotiate differences.
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.
4. Assess the relative strengths of arguments and supporting evidence.

ESSAY OUTCOMES: The following outcomes describe the three main writing projects for the course. Students will be able to:

1. Describe and analyze an author's project, argument, claims, supporting evidence, and rhetorical strategies.
2. Construct an account of one or more authors' projects and arguments. Explain and evaluate rhetorical strategies that these authors—and by extension other writers—use to engage readers in thinking about their arguments.
3. 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 in order to clarify their understanding of an argument. Assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of multiple texts, including discussion of rhetorical strategies, supporting evidence, audience, and text structure.

SEMESTER OUTCOMES: The following points describe outcomes to work on throughout the semester. Students will be able to:

1. Describe elements of an argument—claims, methods of development, kinds of evidence, persuasive appeals—and annotate the work that is done by each section of a written argument.
2. Use all aspects of the writing process—including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading.
3. Choose effective writing structures, acknowledging that different purposes, contexts, and audiences call for different structures, and understanding the relationship between a text's ideas and its structure.
4. Identify devices an author has used to create cohesion or to carry the reader through the text; use metadiscourse in their own writing to signal the project of a paper and guide a reader from one idea to the next.
5. Effectively select material from written arguments, contextualize it, and comment on it in their writing.
6. 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, cultures, audiences, or purposes.
7. Respond to ideas drawn from various cultures and disciplines, using the activity of writing to clarify and improve their understanding of an argument.
8. Analyze and assess the relative strengths of arguments and supporting evidence.
9. Analyze and assess arguments made by visual texts; incorporate visual images into their documents.
10. Craft well-reasoned arguments for specific audiences.
11. Edit their writing for the grammar and usage conventions appropriate to each writing situation.
12. Assign significance to the arguments they read.
13. Reflect on how they wrote their papers, and revise arguments and findings based on critical reflection.

## POLICIES

**ETIQUETTE:** Since this is a discussion-based class, it is vital that you listen and speak respectfully to others at all times. I encourage you to express your opinions, of course, as they will help inspire good discussions. However, keep in mind that good discussion is built on a thoughtful sharing of ideas, not harsh reactions. We will be looking at many arguments this semester that will present views of opinions which you may or may not agree with. Remember, this class is focused on the argument rather than the opinion or idea expressed by the author. Whether you agree or disagree with the author is not at issue. Rather, our job as rhetoricians is to analyze and discuss how the argument is working or not working. Furthermore, please keep in mind that I will choose the texts we study in class based on their rhetorical contributions, not because I agree or disagree with the issue.

**ATTENDANCE:** There is no substitute for attending class—the nature of the assignments in this course, as well as their grading breakdown, makes attendance vital to receiving a passing grade. As such, regular attendance will greatly elevate your chances of performing well. Simply showing up for class, however, is not sufficient. I expect the class to be the site of lively, intellectual activity and and critical, respectful exchange. **If you are absent**, you are still responsible for knowing what was covered in class, what the homework is, and when it is due. You may find this information on Blackboard, but I suggest you exchange contact information with at least two of your classmates.

**LATE WORK:** Managing your time to meet deadlines is an essential skill in both the academic and professional world. Work is due in class on the stated due date. **Outlines** and **rough drafts** may be submitted one class day late for half-credit; after that, they will no longer be accepted. **Final essays** (excluding the fourth essay, since it is due on the final day of the semester) may be submitted up to two class days late, with a penalty of a 25-point deduction each class day it is late. However, **participation assignments** will not be accepted late, and **in-class activities** and **workshops** can not be made up.

**PROBLEMS:** If you run into any problems concerning attendance or late work, please talk to me about it as soon as possible so we may work out a solution (this will most likely require that you submit work early, and solutions involving missed classes are more difficult to arrange and less likely to occur). Within reason, issues may be worked out if you approach me in a timely manner.

**BLACKBOARD:** Your success in this course relies heavily on checking Blackboard, as well as your email listed with the university, regularly. This is how I will communicate with you regarding assignments and updates. Additionally, you must access Blackboard to view or print course texts and materials.

**OFFICE HOURS:** I hold office hours entirely for you, so do not be afraid to come to them. Please feel free to stop by my office if you have any questions or concerns. If you cannot attend my designated office hours, we can try to work out an appointment when we are both available.

EMAIL: I encourage you to email me with any questions or concerns you may have. Although this is the digital age, I am not available to answer emails at all hours, so please allow 24 hours for me to respond. If you have last-minute questions or concerns, you may email me, but I cannot guarantee a response before the next day. If you would like me to look at an essay rough draft, please wait until conference dates to do so, rather than emailing it to me.

WRITING HELP: I am committed to helping you develop as a writer. If you would like assistance with your rough drafts, you are welcome to schedule a conference with me (though this is not required). I will pass around a conference sign-up sheet for each essay. Additionally, the SDSU Writing Center has many knowledgeable tutors available to help you with your writing, at any stage, throughout the semester.

ELECTRONICS: Please turn off and put away your cell phones, iPods, laptops, and similar electronic devices when you come to class. On occasion, if we need a device to help with class work, I will let you know. Otherwise, if you are using electronic devices while in class, I will mark you absent, as it is both disrespectful to the speaker and distracting to those who are listening.

PLAGIARISM: As I am sure you have heard before, your academic work should be original. Plagiarism will result in serious consequences ranging from grade reduction to failure in the class to expulsion from the university. If you are unsure if you are plagiarizing, SDSU's library has an excellent tutorial on how to avoid plagiarism, which you can view here: <http://library.sdsu.edu/guides/tutorial.php?id=28>. For more information on the university cheating and plagiarism policy, please visit [www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/senate/policy/pfacademics.html](http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/dept/senate/policy/pfacademics.html).

DISABLED STUDENTS: 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 (SDS). To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact SDS 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 SDS. SDS staff are available in the Capulli Center, Suite 3101, or by phone at (619)594-6473 (voice) or (619)594-2929 (TTD/TTY).

STUDENT-ATHLETES: Student-athletes have demanding, dynamic schedules. As your instructor, I am committed to helping you succeed in the course. To do so, regular and effective communication is needed. While exceptions will not be made for attendance or assignment deadlines, I am happy to work with all student-athletes in conjunction with Student-Athlete Support Services (SASS) to help you excel in this course. For more information on SASS' academic advising and tutoring services, please call (619)594-4743.

## USE OF STUDENT WORK

You are invited to participate in a research study, entitled “How Students Experience Academic Writing: Mindfulness in the Composition Classroom,” conducted by Pietera Pincock (your instructor) from the Department of RWS at SDSU. The aim of this study is to explore the effects particular teaching methods have on undergraduate students who are taking developmental writing courses. You have been selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a student of my section of RWS 100 for this Fall 2016 semester, and your participation may help me to achieve this goal.

If you choose to participate, your class experience and workload will be no different than if you were a non-participant. This is because all research activities are already combined with the coursework, so you will not be doing any additional work outside of the work you will already be doing for this class. As such, all research activities will be done in class, by way of written in-class reflections that you will complete several times throughout the semester. As a participating student, you will complete these reflections in class as you would as a non-participating student.

To be a participant, you must be at least 18 years of age (an adult). If you are currently underage but will be turning 18 during this semester, you are welcome to participate in reflections that fall after your 18th birthday. If you wish to be a participant, you will write “research” at the top of all your in-class reflections, ensuring your work will be used for the study. As these reflections are anonymous, I will not know whether you are a participant or non-participant.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and there are no incentives. Your participation or non-participation will not have any effect on your grade in this course. If you choose to participate, your responses will be anonymous and confidential—that is, documented without any identifying information that is linked to you. Additionally, I will maintain confidentiality by typing out each submitted reflection where “research” has been written across the top. I will then immediately hand these reflections back to you, so your handwriting cannot be traced back to you.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me at [ppincock@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:ppincock@mail.sdsu.edu), or the RWS Department Chair, Dr. Glen McClish, at [gmcclish@mail.sdsu.edu](mailto:gmcclish@mail.sdsu.edu). You may also contact the SDSU Institutional Review Board at (619) 594-6622 to report any problems or concerns related to this study.



## SCHEDULE

Please note that the following schedule is simply an outline of important dates and general activities; it does not include all daily activities and assignments. Dates and topics may shift as the semester continues, but I will always let you know in advance.

Unit	Week	Date	Schedule
Intro	1	8/29 8/31 9/2	Syllabus & course overview; Introductions Introduction to rhetoric; PACES Rhetorical situation; Aristotelian modes of persuasion
1	2	9/5 9/7 9/9	<b>NO CLASS:</b> Labor Day Begin Unit 1; Thompson reflective reading; Discuss Essay 1 prompt Discuss Thompson
1	3	9/12 9/14 9/16	Thompson rhetorical situation close reading Thompson argument & persuasion close reading <b>Due: Essay 1 outline;</b> Outline workshop; Making rhetorical connections
1	4	9/19 9/21 9/23	<b>Due: Essay 1 first rough draft;</b> Peer review workshop <b>Due: Essay 1 second rough draft;</b> Writing meditation workshop Conference with professor (9/22 & 9/23)
1	5	9/26 9/28 9/30	<b>Due: Essay 1 final portfolio;</b> Begin Unit 2; Carr reflective reading; Discuss Essay 2 prompt Discuss Carr; Rhetorical strategies Carr rhetorical situation close reading
1	6	10/3 10/5 10/7	Carr argument & persuasion close reading <b>Due: Essay 2 outline;</b> Outline workshop; Making rhetorical connections <b>NO CLASS:</b> Work on Essay 2
2	7	10/10 10/12 10/14	<b>NO CLASS:</b> Work on Essay 2 Discuss Thompson & Carr <b>Due: Essay 2 first rough draft;</b> Peer review workshop
2	8	10/17 10/19 10/21	<b>Due: Essay 2 second rough draft;</b> Writing meditation workshop Conference with professor (10/18 & 10/19) <b>Due: Essay 2 final portfolio;</b> Begin Unit 3; Boyd reflective reading; Discuss Essay 3 prompt & proposal prompt
2	9	10/24 10/26 10/28	Digital literacy week Digital literacy week Digital literacy week

Unit	Week	Date	Schedule
2	10	10/31 11/2 11/4	Discuss digital literacy week Discuss Boyd Boyd rhetorical situation close reading
2	11	11/7 11/9 11/11	Boyd argument & persuasion close reading Relationships between texts <u>NO CLASS</u> : Veterans Day
3	12	11/14 11/16 11/18	Putting texts in conversation Finding & managing outside sources Joining the conversation
3	13	11/21 11/23 11/25	<b>Due: Essay 3 proposal</b> ; Proposal workshop <u>NO CLASS</u> : Thanksgiving Break <u>NO CLASS</u> : Thanksgiving Break
3	14	11/28 11/30 12/2	Joining the conversation Joining the conversation <b>Due: Essay 3 first rough draft</b> ; Peer review workshop
3	15	12/5  12/7 12/9	<b>Due: Essay 3 second rough draft</b> ; Writing meditation workshop Common writing concepts & issues Conference with professor (12/8 & 12/9)
3	16	12/12 12/14	Class party! <b>Due: Essay 3 final portfolio</b>