

English 301: Argument and Analysis

Spring 2017

Dr. Jane Fife

Office: 129 Cherry Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 11:30-12:30 & by appointment.

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Catalogue Description:

A survey of major theories of argument and analysis with special attention to writing effective argumentative and analytical essays.

Course Goals and Objectives:

Aristotle called rhetoric the study of the “available means of persuasion.” This course focuses on theories of argument or persuasive writing. This course is designed to strengthen students’ critical reading, rhetorical analysis and writing abilities (analytical and persuasive). We will analyze course readings and selected visual texts in order to understand their writers’ rhetorical choices. Writing assignments also engage students in rhetorical analysis and choosing rhetorical, stylistic, and organizational techniques that fit with their audience and purpose. By the end of the course, students should be able to recognize and evaluate the rhetorical choices of published texts/images and of their own texts and to craft essays that meet their own rhetorical goals.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, a student should be able to:

- Compose effective persuasive texts (written or multi-modal)
- Compose effective analytical texts (written or multi-modal)
- Apply rhetorical knowledge to the analysis of persuasive and other written or multi-modal texts
- Compose visual or multi-modal persuasive or analytical texts for a particular audience and rhetorical purpose
- Develop proofreading and editing skills to achieve clarity and effective sentence structure

Textbooks and Required Materials:

Longaker, Matt and Jeffrey Walker. *Rhetorical Analysis*. Pearson.

Other readings and handouts available via Blackboard.

Grades:

To make it easy for you to keep up with your standing in the course, the assignments have point values that add up to 1000 and correspond with this scale. You need to reach the point values listed below to earn the associated grade; I don’t “round up” based on percentages. In other words, 795 is still a C.

900 to 1000 = A; 800 to 899 = B; 700 to 799 = C; 600 to 699 = D; Below 600 = F

Course Requirements and Point Values:

Major Essays/Arguments--

1) Rhetorical Analysis of Textual Argument: Drawing on key rhetorical concepts from our text and other readings, you will write an essay analyzing the rhetorical strategies and features of a written argument from several options. Essay will be *about 3 pages, 900 words*.

Rhetorical analysis essay-- 200 points or 20% of the course grade.

2) Common Ground and Stasis Analysis of Divisive Topic: Drawing on course readings, you will analyze several related arguments on a public issue (from options given in class) to recommend the best potential for building common ground and stasis that could achieve persuasive success among usually divided audiences. Your analysis will be around 4-5 pages, 1200-1500 words.

Common ground analysis --200 pts /20% course grade.

3) Audience reception analysis essay: You will apply the insights from our readings and discussions of rhetoric and alternative argument forms to explore the reception of straight vs. satirical arguments by real readers and discuss why you think the arguments' varied tactics had the effects they did on the audience. Your essay will be *about 4 pages, 1200 words*. **200 points or 20% of course grade.**

4) Argument:

Drawing on the techniques of rhetoric and theories of argument from our text and discussed in class, craft an argument for a real audience that you target at a particular publication venue. You need to match your purpose/ effects you want to have on the audience with an assessment of that audience and rhetorical techniques that you think will have the desired effect. You may choose a conventional argument, a satire, or several other specified genres. Your argument should be accompanied by a rhetorical commentary that explains your rhetorical goals and strategies as well as your assumptions about the audience. Your argument and rhetorical commentary should reflect strong insight into concepts of rhetoric and argument. This assignment is really two essays in one package: the argument where you put into practice what you've learned in previous units and the rhetorical commentary where you spell all this knowledge out in an insightful analysis of your own argument, showcasing your rhetorical analysis skills. The length of your argument will be determined largely by the expectations of the genre and publication venue you've chosen. Your rhetorical commentary should be 3 pages, 900 words.

Argument 75 points or 7.5% of course grade

Rhetorical analysis of your argument 75 points or 7.5% of course grade

Total for project: 150 or 15% of course grade

Exams: To motivate you to learn the concepts we are studying, we'll have exams to help you process the material from our textbooks, assigned articles, and class meetings. The exams will have some short answer questions, some mini-essays, some fill-in the blank, or multiple-choice—not necessarily all types on every exam. **100 points or 10% of course grade.**

Participation in Class Discussion and Blog: This class is not a lecture class; it is highly participatory. In order to maximize your learning, you must put forth effort in class and out of class to improve your writing. Thoughtful completion of prompts on the class blog (some to assigned readings and some to answer other questions relevant to the class focus or plan writing activities) should also be a significant contributor to your participation grade; check the class agenda/homework prompt carefully to see what blog participation is required. You will lose 10 participation points for each class you miss. Participation in the in-class discussion is expected from all students: I expect at least two contributions (beyond asking a question) from each person for each class in order for you to earn the possible participation credit—up to 2 points for each discussion-based class meeting.

You may have participation points deducted (regardless of how many you may have earned) by not being fully engaged in the class and distracting others by your use of digital devices: chief examples of this include browsing the internet on your laptop, texting, or checking your texts. Please refrain from looking at your laptop or smart-phone unless I invite you to consult them for comments or resources on the class blog. You will lose 5 points if you engage in these activities (or others) because they take your attention from the class and distract your classmates as well.

Blog 100 points; class discussion 50 points: Total 150 points or 15% of course grade

Class Policies:

Conferences and keeping in touch: I will be available for conferences during my office hours if you would like to come in or reach me by phone. Phone conferences can also be scheduled at a time convenient for us both. My office number is (270) 745-3634.

Late Work:

Polished papers (final drafts) will be docked 10 points per day that they are late, starting with submissions after the essay deadline (*always at the start of class –not at midnight*). *Papers will not be accepted more than one week late. Late homework (blog posts and draft workshop responses) will not receive credit.*

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the representation of someone else's work as your own. This work may include words, images, or design/layout. Flagrant plagiarism is submitting someone else's work as your own with no attempt to appropriately document the borrowed text and usually with minimal changes to the text and just a little--or none-- of the writer's original work added. Plagiarism is still flagrant, however, when smaller chunks of borrowed work are incorporated into original work with no attempts at quoting and adequate documentation--in other words, trying to pass off even a sentence, paragraph, chart, image, etcetera borrowed from another's work as your own. The first instance of what I call "flagrant" plagiarism will result in an "F" in the course. Unintentional plagiarism is the failure to adequately quote and document borrowed work

in the work you submit although some attempt is made to acknowledge the source. This is still plagiarism and therefore unacceptable work--ignorance is not an excuse. Unintentional plagiarism on a document submitted for a grade will result in an unacceptable draft (F) which must be satisfactorily revised within a week in order to pass the course. Versions of all major writing projects that are satisfactorily free of plagiarism must be submitted in order to pass the course.

Changes to the syllabus: Inevitably, we will vary from the course schedule. It is your responsibility to note those changes and be ready for class with the day's assignment, even if you were absent when I announced the change. If you're absent, check the daily agenda and homework announcement on Blackboard. Keep up with the detailed assignments there as well as in each unit's assignment sheet.

Students with Disabilities/ ADA notice:

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in DUC A-200 of the Student Success Center in Downing University Center.

Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Important Dates:

The last day to drop this course with a "W" and the last day to change from credit to audit is March 10.

Course Calendar:

All essays will be submitted via Blackboard by the deadline listed below. Reading and other homework (blog assignments, etc.) will be specified in the daily "class agenda & homework" announcement posted on Blackboard and highlighted at the start of each class. A calendar of blog prompts and reading assignments for each unit will be distributed along with the major assignment instructions at the start of each unit.

2/14: Rhetorical analysis essay due by start of class.

2/28: Exam.

3/21: Common ground analysis due.

4/4: Exam.

4/13: Satirical reception analysis essay due by start of class.

5/2: Arguments due by start of class—via Blackboard and posted to Presentation discussion board.

5/4: Final discussion on satirical effectiveness and 21st century argument.