

ENC 1102

The Composition of Political Arguments

Course Description

English 1102 is a course in writing, reading, and analysis. Its purpose is to help you become a stronger thinker and communicator so that you can be a more effective member within the communities in which you participate. This course will be one of discovery: of the texts we read, the contexts they reside in, and our own and others' responses to them.

To that end, we will closely examine how analyses of the purpose, context, and audience of any communication situation help you think about the most effective choices (including mechanics) to make in designing any piece of communication, no matter the medium. We will also be exploring—and reflecting upon—the particular composing habits and practices that help you strengthen your abilities.

Building on the reading, research, and writing you did in ENC 1101, you will use rhetorical analysis to develop your abilities to write for varied purposes and audiences. Our focus on rhetoric is particularly important because we will deal specifically with a text's ability to persuade an audience to act or think in a particular way while considering the implications of that persuasion. To accomplish this goal, this course employs selections of non-fiction, pop-culture, current periodicals, and historical documents as objects of analysis and critique.

For our class, you will choose a current social issue that matters to you and about which there is much current discussion. Throughout the semester, you will conduct both traditional and creative research into your issue and then compose letters, opinion pieces, posters, documentary photography books, and a piece in the medium of your choosing to learn how to shape communication in different media for a variety of audiences. By the end of the semester you should be able to thoroughly analyze difficult texts, envision them within a larger contextual framework, and recognize their local and cultural significance.

When you look at the course calendar, notice these main assignments:

- an I-Search paper
- a 5 minute speech on that issue
- a poster about that issue
- a documentary photography book focusing on your issue
- a letter to the editor about your social issue
- a final group project where you work with 2-3 others on documents that advocate for the people affected by your social issue

We will approach each of these assignments through planning and multiple drafts (at least 2, if not 3 or 4).

According to the Gordon rule, you must develop 6000+ words (24 double-spaced, 12 pt. font pages) of polished text in this class. To show that you have accomplished this requirement, at the end of the semester you will turn in a portfolio of a significant representation of your work

throughout the semester. In order for you to be able to create this portfolio, you will need to keep every single piece of work you produce in this class.

Goals for Composition II

As a result of your work in this class, you should:

- Gain experience in analyzing and producing written, visual, and oral communications.
- Learn how to apply rhetorical principles to both the analysis and production of texts in various media. That is, you should be able to use analyses of audience, context, and purpose in developing your own texts and in understanding why others have composed their texts as they have.
- Become more attentive to your composing processes so that you can most effectively develop your own texts.
- Understand how to work both alone and in collaboration with others as you produce texts.
- Gain extensive practice in revising texts you produce.
- Learn how to conduct extensive research into a topic in order to produce different kinds of texts based on that research. You will also learn how to think widely about research; you will spend some time in the library, for sure, but you will also conduct interviews, find visual materials, and develop creative approaches to learning about an issue.
- Use various reflective practices to help you improve as a communicator and critical thinker.

Resources for this Class

each other

Successful communicators compose for other people. They write or sketch things out for themselves, muddle about in ideas for a while, and eventually they realize what their main point is in communicating. At some point in this process, they begin to shape their communications for others. If others are to understand what you compose and be attentive to all your fine points, then you have to think about how you shape your text for the particular people you most want to understand your compositions. In this class, we will try to test your texts with the particular audiences you identify, but we will also test them out with each other. This process requires that in this class we develop respectful and thoughtful ways of listening and attending to each others' communications: I want you to be able to work in the safest of contexts to get feedback on your work in order to make it as effective as possible. Therefore, you will have to get to know others in class and give their work the same respect and attention you would like for your own. You will rarely have this opportunity to take chances and be creative in your communications while receiving this careful feedback.

My hope is that you will all be invested in the course and the ideas we explore and discover. Investment always involves a certain amount of passion, and therefore, there will be a great deal of give and take in our discussions. As I am sure we will not all share the same views, different opinions should be expressed in a manner that facilitates communication. Because writing is often a personal experience, and explores personal situations, it is imperative that we develop an atmosphere of respect and safety in this class. If at any time you are uncomfortable with the class material and/or discussions, let me know. I expect you to 1) come to class prepared and take pride in the work you do, 2) offer support and encouragement to your classmates, 3) listen to others carefully before offering your opinion, and 4) talk to me outside of class if anything that happens during class bothers you. In order to maintain a productive work environment, I expect you to

turn off your cell phone or pager before each class period and refrain from eating, sleeping, reading the newspaper or your personal email, talking outside of group discussion or lectures, and entering the classroom late or leaving early without permission.

me

People who come regularly to office hours usually get better grades in class because they give their work more attention and also are more engaged with it. When you come to office hours, you don't need to make any special preparations: just come with a question or something on which you're working. (And if you can't come during my scheduled office hours, talk to me after class or send me an e-mail to make an appointment.)

Course Policies

Grading

For each of the major assignments, we will develop a grading rubric together as a class. Each rubric explains the important qualities that the assignment should possess and therefore clearly lays out what you need to attend to in the assignment to do well.

In addition to basing your final grade on the individual grades you earn on the major assignments, I will also be attending to your "social practices" in class. Because your learning in this class depends tremendously on your interactions with others (listening to them, responding thoughtfully to them in speaking and writing) as well as on your energetic participation in class discussion and activities leading to the development of your major assignments, these activities will count toward your final grade — which means that class attendance is very important. As such, each major project will receive both a product and a process grade.

Here is a more detailed breakdown on how I will weight grading:

- I-Search paper on your issue 15%
- 5 minute speech on your issue 10%
- a poster about that issue 10%
- a documentary photography book focusing on your issue 15%
- a letter to the editor on a social issue of your choosing 05%
- final group project, including oral presentation 20%
- social practices 25%

Note: you will not receive a final grade in this class until you turn in the final portfolio.

Responsibilities

Be prepared for class. Preparation involves not only reading but also making notes on the reading so you are prepared to discuss issues in depth. Complete assignments, arrive on time, and contribute to classroom discussions and exercises.

Attendance

Attendance in this course is required. While it is understood that emergencies / University-sanctioned activities may arise that result in your missing one or more classes, if you have more than two absences from class, your grade will be affected. For each absence, you will be docked 5 points from your social practices grade. If you miss a class, please do not contact me to find out what you missed. All assignments are listed on the course Calendar; ask another person who is taking the class what you missed. In short: show up prepared to talk, write, and collaborate.

Grades

Your written work is due on the dates indicated in the daily schedule or as indicated in class. If you cannot attend class on the day an assignment is due, make arrangements to have the assignments delivered for you. You may not write your assignments in class unless you are directed to do so. Turn in all assignments, even if you believe they are poorly done. The difference between a failing grade and a zero is that a zero means the assignment was never submitted. Even a failing grade will carry half credit toward your grade for that assignment, so please turn in the assignment.

Late Work

I have tried to shape a class schedule that is challenging while allowing for time to think. Because you will only do yourself damage if you get behind in this class, I will not accept any late work unless you have come to see me beforehand and have solid and documented reasons.

Revision of Your Work

If you are not happy with the product grade you receive on the final version of any project, you can revise the project. I will happily accept revisions up through 15 April 2008. If you plan on revising a project, come see me first to discuss how you might proceed. Product grades may be revised; process grades will not be revised.

Policy on Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses. They are defined by this policy as “knowingly copying another’s work or ideas and calling them one’s own or not giving proper credit or citation.” This policy applies to copying sections or entire papers from printed or electronic sources as well as handing in papers written for other classes or by other students for other classes; it also applies to purchasing academic papers. Plagiarism and cheating are not only dishonest but prohibit you from learning, the reason you are in school. If I notice plagiarism in your writing, you will fail the assignment in question with no chances for revision. Serious cases may result in failing the course. If you ever have any questions about what counts as cheating or plagiarism, please talk with me.

Accommodation Policies

Religious Preference Holiday: Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class due to the observation of a major religious holiday must provide advanced written notice of the date(s).

Accommodation Policy: In my capacity as instructor, I will do everything I can to make fully available the educational resources we use and create in this course. Any student with a disability is encouraged to meet with me privately during the first week of class to discuss accommodations. Students with documented learning and/or physical disabilities in need of accommodation are also encouraged to work with Student Disability Services. Please inform me of any special requirements you may have. All reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate students with regard to note taking, reading assignments and test taking.

Freedom of Speech and Cognitive Liberty

As you will see, classrooms are spaces devoted to free inquiry. This is a rhetorical space, one where composers are response-able to each other: they think and write in response to each other, and not to a preconceived notion of each other. Assume the best in those you study with and be generous with your respect, and you will teach them to respond in kind.

Daily Schedule

I am responsive to the needs of the class as we move through the semester, which means that the daily schedule will change. You will be responsible for checking the daily schedule before beginning your homework for each of our class meetings for any changes or updates. I will post all assignments.

Gender and Pronoun Reference

It is no longer customary to use the masculine pronoun for cases of indefinite pronoun reference, for example, "When a professor grades papers, he is often swayed by a student's degree of effort." Instead, style books recommend changing pronouns to the plural form, for example, "When professors grade papers, they are often swayed by a student's degree of effort." Some call this practice "gender-fair language." Others just call it good sense. Regardless of the reason, it is required in this course, so bring your gender-bender sentences to class so we can figure them out together.

Information Management

All of your work in this class must be available to be posted electronically. Please back up everything you write for this course. Information technologies carry a trace of instability, so it is always good to have redundancy in your writing process: make copies and put them in different places! If you need more information about backing up, please see me or talk with your classmates.

Computer Labs

To find a place to work on campus, consult Campus Computing.

Contacting Me

The quickest and most reliable way to reach me is through e-mail (jmccrack@stpt.usf.edu). I check it often. You can also call my office at 873-4740. If you do leave a message, please leave a number where I can reach you.

Tentative Class Schedule

Date	What you should have completed for class	What's happening in class	Homework for the following class
Week 1			
Tuesday, 1/8	You	Introduction to class; Course policies; Technology survey; Draft literacy autobiography narrative	Read Chapters 1-4 in <i>Soul of a Citizen</i> ; Response to syllabus; Read intro & chapter 1 of cda (pp. 1-30); Complete literacy autobiography; What's Gordon's Rule?; Online scavenger hunt; Letter to a friend
Week 2			

Date	What you should have completed for class	What's happening in class	Homework for the following class
Tuesday, 1/15	Response to syllabus Read intro & chapter 1 of cda (pp. 1-30) Read Chapters 1-4 <i>Soul of a Citizen</i> Literacy narrative Letter to a friend	Discuss reading; Feedback on letters and literacy narratives	Read chapters 2 & 5 in cda; Attend Civic engagement fair on Wednesday, 17 January; Choose social issue; Inquiry chart questions
Week 3			
Tuesday, 1/22	Chapters 5-8 in <i>Soul of A Citizen</i> Chapter 2 of cda (pp. 33-54)	Online Scavenger Hunt; Discussion of readings; I-Search	Read Chapters 9-12 in <i>Soul of A Citizen</i> Read chapter 6, on research, of cda Inquiry charts
Week 4			
Tuesday, 1/29	Chapters 9-12 in <i>Soul of A Citizen</i> Chapter 6, on research, of cda	Discussion of Readings I-Search	Draft I-Search Paper Read chapters 4 & in cda
Week 5			
Tuesday, 2/5	First Full Draft I-Search Chapter 8 in cda on Oral Communication	Peer Review I-Search Develop Design Plan for Speeches	Draft Speech
Week 6			
Tuesday, 2/12	Practice speeches	Peer review of speeches	Presentation copy of speech
Week 7			
Tuesday, 2/19	Speeches	Presentation of speeches to class; feedback on speeches	Reflection on your oral presentation; Design Plan for poster;

Date	What you should have completed for class	What's happening in class	Homework for the following class
			Read cda chapters 9-10; Midterm
Week 8			
Tuesday, 2/26	cda chapters 9-10; Design Plan for poster And fill out Midterm assessment (print and complete)	Discussion of readings; Drafting of Poster	Complete Draft of Poster for review Read cda chapter 11 Design plan for documentary photography book
Week 9			
Tuesday, 3/4	Poster Design plan for doc photo book	Peer review of posters	Photo book
Week 10			
Spring Break!			
Week 11			
Tuesday, 3/18	Complete draft of photo book	Peer Review of photo books	Read cda chapter 13 Draft letter to the editor
Week 12			
Tuesday, 3/25	Letter to the Editor	Peer Review of letters to the editor	Reread chapters 3 & 4 in cda Design plan for group projects
Week 13			
Tuesday, 4/1	Design plan for final projects due, including schedule	What are your intentions now with the final argumentative research paper?	Revise argumentative paper (section 4 of I-Search)
Week 14			
Tuesday, 4/8	Group Project work	Progress report on final group projects	Group Project work
Week 15 Tuesday, 4/15	Revised I-Search Paper (Final argumentative section) due Portfolio materials Draft of portfolio letter due	Portfolio work	Group Project work; Portfolios

Date	What you should have completed for class	What's happening in class	Homework for the following class
Week 16 Tuesday, 4/22	Group presentations of final projects	Group presentations and feedback	Portfolios due by Monday, 4/30 at 12:00 noon
Finals Week			