

# Rhetoric & Composition II

## Description

Welcome to Rhetoric & Composition II. This is a writing class; before we get into the course policies, I want to address what I mean by writing.

All too often, college-level writing classes focus only on academic and alphabetic writing: students write essays that demonstrate how they have absorbed information from a course. While you will write in some common academic genres this semester, it's not the only thing you'll do. You'll also learn to compose with visuals. This definition of writing recognizes how the ways we communicate change.

If we examine different time periods, cultures, and communities, we see that people used different tools to achieve their communication goals. For example, in ancient Greece people wrote on wax-coated tablets with a stylus made of bone. They also delivered speeches in the Assembly, and these speeches addressed legal, political, and ceremonial questions. They helped shape people's political lives.

Put another way, as technology changes so do ways of communicating with others. These changes help redefine what constitutes good writing and what kind of writing is possible. Today, with the proliferation of digital media, new forms of communication and writing methods have reorganized our world and caused us to rethink how we participate in civic and social life—how we engage with one another and what we define as effective communication.

Communicating in the university, the workplace, and various contexts does not always rely on a pen and paper, a word processor, or even words. Generally, we don't gather for speeches. Often times, we don't even watch them while they're beamed live via satellite onto our flat screen TVs. Instead, we watch them on YouTube. We distribute them in status updates on Facebook. New media for writing and distributing communications, such as email, blogs, vlogs, social networking sites, etc., and new devices to screen these compositions have become commonplace (PCs, video game consoles, smartphones, handheld computers, e-readers, etc.). Furthermore, many of these communications rely on visual and interactive design elements, such as photos, charts, videos, etc. For the modern citizen as for the modern college graduate, learning to write well can no longer be defined as reading and writing only alphabetic texts, i.e., books, essays, and research papers. Therefore, one of our major goals for this course is to further develop alphabetic and visual literacy through analyzing and writing in various media.

In this approach to writing, we work on skills that are transferable among media. We focus on developing rhetorical skills. Because composing effectively goes hand in hand with critical reading, we also emphasize reading comprehension. However, course readings are not limited to alphabetic texts, e.g., our textbook. These readings include websites, blogs, films, videos, videocasts, podcasts, etc.

My approach for this class expands what "writing" means to include digital forms because writing is not a solitary act. Whether in the form of a blog, a video clip posted to YouTube, a chat window in an online video game, or in an essay written for a college course, writing plays a social function. Sometimes, it helps us work through ideas about the world or think about someone else's arguments in order to understand how their ideas and opinions affect our own. Sometimes, we use it to affect others. In either case, writing allows us to achieve real-world goals in collaboration with other people.

To that end, this course devotes particular attention to group work and hands-on learning because writing is a collaborative process that changes shape based on our interactions with one another, and it develops over time and in different contexts. While you will each be graded individually throughout the course, the caliber of your work will relate to how effectively you give and respond to constructive criticism from your classmates.

Finally, work for this course relies on sophisticated literacy skills that you have already begun to develop and will continue to develop over the course of the semester and throughout your time at St. Edward's. These skills are obviously an asset in all areas of life, whether in school, at work, or in other situations outside the university. The overarching goal of this class is the sustained development of such skills.

## Dr. Don Unger



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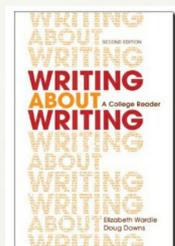


Sorin Hall, room 118  
Tues 11 am-12:30 pm  
Fri 10-11:30 am

## Textbook & Materials

Writing about Writing: A College Reader, 2nd ed.  
by Elizabeth Wardle & Doug Downs  
ISBN: 1457636948

A dedicated notebook where you keep  
notes on readings and class activities



# Objectives

Student learning objectives are one way that the university and St. Edward's faculty measure what you should know, do, and value at the end of a given course. Rhetoric & Composition II is designed to help you develop competencies in the following areas:

## RHETORIC

You will be able to

- evaluate arguments and use sources in your writing.
- shape your writing to suit particular rhetorical situations.

## COMPOSITION

You will be able to

- use a variety of strategies to generate ideas, create a first draft, revise ideas, and organize and edit paragraphs and sentences.
- give peers constructive feedback on their writing.

## RESEARCH

You will be able to

- formulate an appropriate research question, use library resources to do research, and evaluate sources.

## CRITICAL READING

You will be able to

- evaluate an arguments' logic, evidence, and reasoning.

## MORAL REASONING & CIVIL DISCOURSE

You will be able to

- identify the underlying values of arguments.
- discuss others' viewpoints respectfully and accurately.

# Assignments & Grading

There are four major assignments in the course:

1. Literacy Narrative
2. Research Proposal & Annotated Bibliography
3. Research Project
4. Remediating Your Research Project

In Project 1 you will write an essay where you describe and analyze an event or person that influenced your literate development.

In Project 2 you will use library and web research to develop a research question related to a discourse community in Austin. You will produce a research proposal and annotated bibliography detailing how you intend to answer your research question.

In Project 3 you will use this proposal to developed a paper that answers your research question for an academic audience.

Finally, in Project 4 you will rework your paper for a specific, public audience. In Project 4 we will move away from academic writing and alphabetic text. In other words, you will develop a photo essay, podcast, video, or other multimedia composition rather than a scholastic essay.

Project 1: Literacy Narrative	100
Project 2: Research Proposal & Annotated Bibliography	100
Project 3: Research Project	100
Project 4: Remediating Your Research Project	100
Homework & Participation	
Class Participation	25
Notebook	30
Quizzes	25
Peer Evaluations	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>

Table 1. Graded assignments and point values.

Each project is worth 100 points. Additionally, you need to keep a notebook where you take notes about the readings and class discussions. Your notebook, class participation, and pop quizzes are worth a total of 100 points.

**ProTip:**  
*I'll check your notebooks every Monday, and you'll need it in class regularly, so always bring it to class.*



Your points for each major assignment and your homework/participation grade can be translated into a percentage out of 100 with a corresponding letter grade. All grades will be determined using the scale show in Table 2. To ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any stage. For example, a B- will be inclusive of all scores of 80.000 through 83.999.

Additionally, I provide a rubric with the assignment sheets for each major assignment so that you know, in advance, what I will look for when grading your assignments.

A+	4.0	100—97
A	4.0	96—94
A-	3.67	93—90
B+	3.33	89—87
B	3.0	86—84
B-	2.67	83—80
C+	2.33	79—77
C	2.0	76—70
NP*	1.0	69—60
F	0.0	59—0

Table 2. Letter grades, GPA, and percentage equivalents.

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# Evaluating Your Performance

Below I've listed the general standards that you should use when evaluating your performance in class.

## A

The student is always prepared for class, having done the readings and brought the appropriate materials. The student participates frequently and thoughtfully in discussions, both orally and electronically, making the kinds of comments or asking the kinds of questions that lead to deeper understanding or that open appropriate new roads for exploration. The student makes detailed, insightful, clear, and accurate contributions to peer response activities, both written and oral. The student uses class time wisely and productively—working with partners, writing or revising documents, consulting with the professor.

## B

The student is always prepared for class, having done the readings and brought the appropriate materials. The student participates frequently in class, both orally and electronically, making the kinds of comments or asking the kinds of questions that lead to deeper understanding or that open important new topics. Or, if the student participates relatively infrequently, he/she makes contributions that are especially valuable. The student makes generous, detailed, and clear contributions to peer response activities, though these may be less insightful than those made by A students. Or the student may make insightful comments that are sketchy, rather than generous and detailed. The student uses unstructured time productively in most cases. However, he/she may be less clearly a self starter than the student who earns an A for participation.

## C

The student is prepared for class, having done the readings and brought the appropriate materials. They may be fairly passive in class, seldom taking part in discussion, though they do attentively follow discussions and react to what others in the class have said. C students perform peer response work willingly, but often does not offer commentary that is generous, detailed, and insightful. Students put unstructured time to adequate use, although they don't fully demonstrate the same level of initiative as other students.

## NP

The student is sometimes unprepared for class, not having done the readings or brought the appropriate materials. The student is inattentive (not following the discussion or taking part in it), disinterested, and/or disrespectful (reading the paper, texting, offering little if any commentary on peers' work). The student rarely uses unstructured time in a productive fashion.

## F

The student's participation is described by the criteria listed above for NP. However, several of the criteria apply rather than a few, or the degree of the student's lack of preparation, lack of engagement, or disruption may be so great as to warrant an F rather than a NP.

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# Course Policies

## Attendance & Participation

You are expected to attend every meeting of the classes for which you are enrolled. Because much of the instruction in this class takes place in the classroom, attendance will be recorded every day via Canvas. If you are not in the classroom when roll is taken, you are late; if you are marked as late three times, it will count as one absence. I will excuse three absences—for sickness, travel, or any other reason—over the semester; any additional absence will lower your final grade by 10 points per absence and may result in your being dropped from the course with a WA. In addition, you may not "make up" missed class work or quizzes, and homework turned in late will be subject to a grade deduction.

Participation includes being prepared for class, that is having done the readings and taken notes, as well as contributing to class discussions and activities. In class, you will complete much of your daily work in small groups. I expect you to fulfill your portion of the group work and interact courteously with your peers. Most of our class sessions will be conducted in discussion/workshop format, and many of these workshops cannot be "re-created" outside of class, so attendance and active participation are essential to your success. Remember, homework and participation counts for 20% of your grade, and much of that work is done in class or serves as the basis for class work.

### ***ProTip: The tldr Version***

- 1. Absent is absent: there is no difference in excused or unexcused.**
- 2. In-class assignments or activities, including daily or weekly quizzes, cannot be made up.**
- 3. If you "disappear" (stop attending) but do not officially drop the course, you will likely earn a WA or an F.**
- 4. If you have a legitimate reason to leave early or arrive late, please talk to me in advance.**

I recommend that you save absences for when you are sick or have an emergency. If you find that an unavoidable problem prevents you from attending class, please discuss the problem with me as soon as possible. If you plan to be absent for a religious or holy day, please plan with me in advance

### ***ProTip: How to Deal with an Absence***

- 1. Email/upload any work due that day in class.**
- 2. Email a classmate for notes & changes to assignments so you are prepared the next day.**
- 3. Echeck the syllabus and course website, and complete the work assigned in class.**

## Late Work

I deduct 10 points for each day your final projects are late unless you make arrangements with me prior to the due date. Problems can arise, but the key to their successful resolution is communication. Keep me informed; avoid simply not turning in projects or assignments.

## Academic Integrity

The Student Handbook states, "St. Edward's University expects academic honesty from all members of the community, and it is our policy that academic integrity be fostered to the highest degree possible. Consequently, all work submitted for grading in a course must be created as a result of your own thought and effort. Representing work as your own when it is not a result of such thought and effort is a violation of our code of academic integrity. Whenever it is established that academic dishonesty has occurred, the course instructor shall impose a penalty upon the offending individual(s). It is recognized that some offenses are more egregious than others and that, therefore, a range of penalties should be available. Whenever possible, it would also be important to try to determine the intent of the offender, since the error could be a result of careless work rather than an intent to deceive. The maximum penalty for a first offense is failure in the course, and if that penalty is imposed, the student does not have the option of withdrawing from the course. In cases of mitigating circumstance, the instructor has the option of assigning a lesser penalty."

The St. Edward's University Undergraduate Bulletin and the Student Handbook state that a student who is dishonest in any work may receive the maximum penalty of an F for that course. SEU does not allow students to withdraw from a course where an F in the course for academic dishonesty has been imposed. Students caught committing academic dishonesty in this course will be subject to the full range of penalties as described in the bulletin and handbook.

At St. Edward's, plagiarism includes turning in as your own work any drafts, papers, journals, or homework that incorporates any ideas or actual writing done by others (or from the internet) without acknowledging the source you used. The availability of documents and information on the internet has made it increasingly tempting to plagiarize, so please maintain a rigorous sense of academic honesty.

## Challenges & Accommodations

If you have a confirmed medical, psychiatric, or learning disability that I need to accommodate in teaching you, please see me right away. I want to help you succeed, so please come see during office hours or make an appointment, preferably during the first week of classes. You will need to prove your disability by submitting certain documents to Student Disability Services in Moody Hall 155. Please note that I cannot accommodate any disability without a "504 letter," nor can I accommodate disabilities retroactively. If you do have a 504 letter to submit, my preference would be for you to come by during my office hours. This will give you and I some privacy, and it will allow me to make a copy of your letter for my files.

Please also remember that a 504 letter entitles you to reasonable accommodations, not to an easier course. You should read the reverse side of the 504 letter for information about your duties and responsibilities. I will ask you to sign the reverse side of the letter.

In addition, if you are under a great deal of stress or you just want someone to talk to confidentially, see the staff in the Health & Counseling Center (Lady Bird Johnson Hall, Suite 100). They can help you develop strategies for personal success and coping with challenges.

Academic Counseling and Exploration (ACE), located in Moody Hall 155, also offers services to help students develop and use effective skills for successful academic performance, including low-cost tutoring for most subjects.

## Technology in the Classroom

Smart phones are unavoidable, but please respect the classroom. If I observe you texting or answering the phone, then I will ask you to leave class. This results in an absence. Please treat the classroom as you would any other space where you are expected to act professionally. There will be some days during the semester where you might need to use your smart phone or other mobile device to look something up. If it pertains to class, that's fine. In general, show up to class on time, be polite, stay on task, and use digital technology smartly and professionally.

Generally, we will not have long-winded lectures in the course where you need to take copious notes, but if we do and you want to take notes, I ask that you stay on task when using technology during class (whether pen and paper, laptop, etc.).

## Communicating with Me & Office Hours

The best way to contact me is by email. Please email me whenever you have questions. I also will email you regularly with reminders, instructions, and late breaking information. Therefore, a requirement of this class is that you check your St. Edward's email & the Canvas course site daily, especially the day before and morning of class. Also, I am happy to meet with you by appointment if you cannot make it to office hours. Email me about setting up an appointment.

If you have an emergency, email me.

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# Student Resources

## Writing Center

I strongly encourage you to use the free services offered by the Writing Center in the Munday Library. The consultants at these centers are trained to help you resolve your own problems so that all your writing reflects what you have learned. For more information about the Writing Center, check out <http://sites.stedwards.edu/writing/>

### **Academic Planning & Support Services (APSS)**

Located in Moody Hall 155, APSS offers services to help students develop and use effective skills for successful academic performance, including low-cost tutoring for most subjects.

### **Help with Computers/SEU Accounts**

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) is located on the third floor of Moody Hall..

### **Counseling Services**

Located in Lady Bird Johnson Hall, Suite 100, Psychological Services offers free psychological counseling for students. Often the staff there can help students identify problems that are getting in the way of their success in the classroom, as well as problems adjusting to campus and independent living.

### **Special Accommodations/Disabilities**

Student Disability Services coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities (medical, learning or psychological). Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should follow the university's accommodation procedure by contacting Student Disability Services [(512) 448-8561 or Moody Hall, room 155].

### **Computer Use & Availability**

Computers are available to you in the labs in the library, Moody Hall, Trustee Hall (ACAD), Ragsdale Center, and St. Ed's residence halls and apartments

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## Calendar Overview

Classes Begin	Mon., Jan. 11
Last Day to Change/Add Classes	Fri., Jan. 15
MLK Day	Mon., Jan. 18
Last Day for Unrecorded Drop	Wed., Jan. 27
Project 1 Due	Sun., Feb. 7
Project 2 Due	Sun., Mar. 6
Spring Break	Mar. 14-18
East Break	Mar. 24-28
Project 3 Due	Sun., Apr. 7
Last Day of Classes	Fri., Apr. 29
Project 4 Due	During Our Final Exam Time

Note: Detailed calendars that list class work and homework will be included with each project assignment sheet.

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***This syllabus is subject to change. Students will be notified on the course Canvas site and/or by email of changes made to the policies or syllabus.***