

RWS 200: Rhetoric of Written Arguments in Context

Spring Semester 2017

Class Meets: AHS 2103: T/TH 8:00-9:15
AHS 2111: T/TH 9:30-10:45

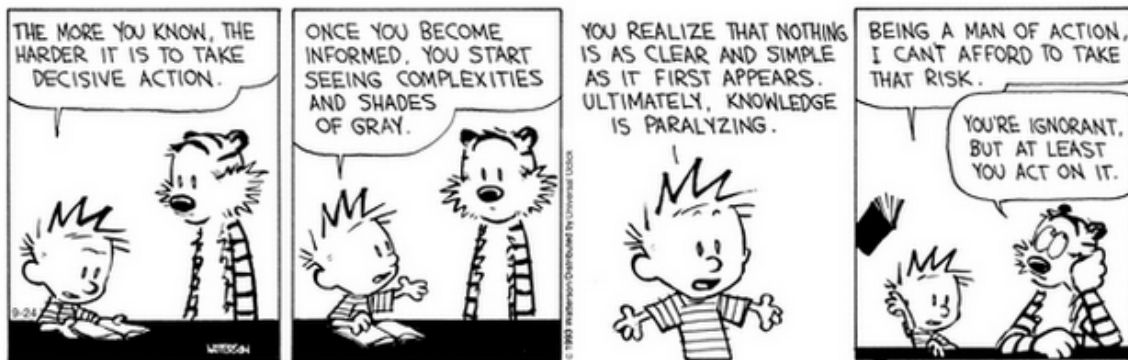
Instructor: Scott M. Bruner

Email: scottmbruner@gmail.com

Office: Lower Level of the Library

Office Hours: T/TH 1:30-3:00 (or by appointment)

“Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion. This is not a function of any other art.” - Aristotle



Watterson, Bill. *There's Treasure Everywhere: A Calvin and Hobbes Collection*. Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1996. Print.

Course Description:

RWS 200 is a course in academic writing and reading, emphasizing the rhetorical analysis of arguments in context. Building on RWS 100, the course asks students to continue the work of articulating the argument a text is making and analyzing elements of the argument. The course asks students to consider the contexts of arguments and to discover what arguments are responding to, both in the sense of what has come before them and in the sense that they are written for an audience in a particular place and time. RWS200 also teaches students to a) evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of arguments, b) discover ways of “joining the conversation,” and c) reflect on and analyze their own reading and writing strategies.

RWS 200 Learning Outcomes

The following four outcomes describe the four major writing projects or “assignment types” for the course. You will be able to:

1. Discern elements of context embedded in arguments, the clues that show what the argument is responding to – both in the sense of what has come before it and the sense that it is written for an audience in a particular time

- and place; examine a writer's language in relation to audience, context, and community;
2. Use concepts and arguments from one text as a context for understanding and writing about another;
 3. Given the common concerns of two or more arguments, discuss how the claims of these arguments modify, complicate, or qualify one another;
 4. Consider your contemporary, current life as the context within which you are reading a group of arguments; position yourself in relation to ongoing research and discussion in order to make an argument, drawing on available key terms, concepts of frameworks of analysis to help shape the argument.

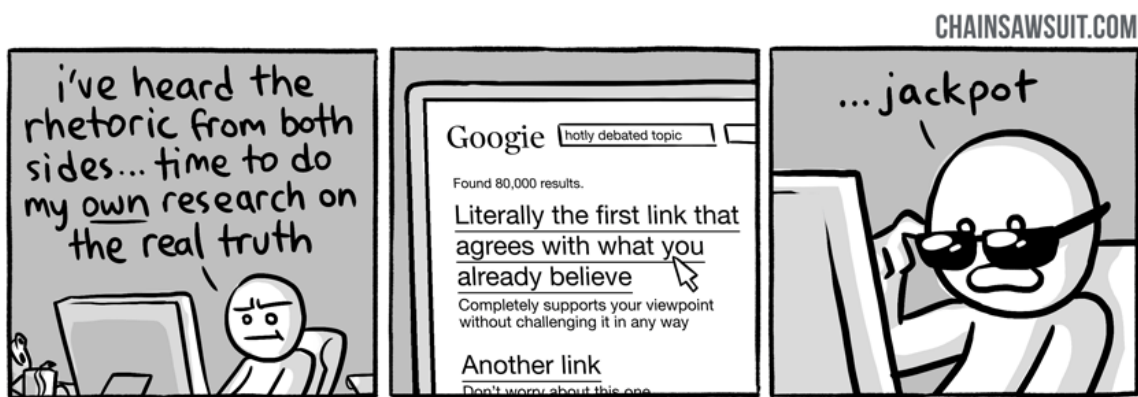
The following points describe outcomes to work on throughout the semester:

5. Building on the work done in RWS 100, you will be able to articulate what argument a text is making, describe the work that is done by each section of the argument, describe elements of the argument such as claims, methods of development, kinds of evidence, persuasive appeals, translate an argument into your own words;
6. Understand and incorporate all aspects of the writing process – including prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading;
7. Articulate what key terms, definitions, concepts, statements of a problem or issue are established by a text;
8. Investigate and articulate how an argument is positioned – based on certain kinds of assumptions, located in a way of thinking and representing issues from a point of view;
9. Work with multiple sources in a paper, deciding what to include and what to exclude, choosing an effective structure, and creating significant relationships among sources;
10. Craft a cohesive paper, and use effective metadiscourse to guide a reader through it;
11. Describe your own papers and reflect on how you wrote them; differentiate between the content of your texts and the language and rhetorical strategies you employ;
12. Revise your own work effectively, re-reading previous work and re-envisioning it in the light of reflection, feedback, further reading, and new sources of information;
13. Edit your writing for the grammar and usage conventions appropriate to the project.

Texts & Materials:

- 1) Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* (3rd edition) W.W. Norton & Co., 2015.

- 2) RWS200 Course Reader. Purchase from CalCopy, located at 5187 College Ave (across the bridge, next to Dominos). The RWS100 Course Reader is listed under the name "Bruner." Please make sure you buy the **Spring 2017** RWS200 reader, and that you do not buy it online or from the Aztec bookstore. If you buy a different version it will be unusable, and you won't be able to get your money back. An online edition is available on the course wiki; however, when we review certain sections, you'll need a **hardcopy** to review.
- 3) Ann Raimés and Susan K. Miller's *Keys for Writers* (7th edition)
- 4) *The Complete Maus: A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman
- 5) The Course Wiki: <https://sbruner.pbworks.com>. All homework, readings, and an online version of the reader are available there. You can use the wiki to print them out and bring to class.



Helpful Resources:

1. The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>
2. SDSU Writing Center, Love Library, Room LA 1103 (next to the Circulation Desk).

For more information visit <http://writingcenter.sdsu.edu/>. Appointments can be made online.

Assignments and Grading:

Evaluation:

Participation	10% (100pts)
Weekly Blog Posts	25% (250pts)
Peer Review	10% (100pts)
Assignment 1	10% (100pts)
Assignment 2	10% (100pts)
Assignment 3	15% (150pts)
Assignment 4	20% (200pts)

Total Points Possible = 1000pts

935 - 1000 = A
900 - 934 = A-
865 - 899 = B+
835 - 864 = B
800 - 834 = B-
765 - 799 = C+
735 - 764 = C
700 - 734 = C-
665 - 699 = D+
635 - 664 = D
600 - 634 = D-
Below 600 = F



Participation (100pts):

You will be expected to participate in class discussions and be an active participant in the topics we discuss. In order to take full advantage of the class, you are expected to attend every session of the class (but you can miss up to 3 classes without it affecting your grade). After three unexcused and/or unexplained absences (unless you cannot explain it due to the paranormal) your participation grade will suffer by 30 points for any additional absences. There will also be routine quizzes on rhetorical terms and concepts. Considering how dynamic this class is, it's best to show up, and if you can't, make sure you have a classmate who can provide the material we covered.

Weekly Blog Posts (250pts):

Each week you will be required to post a short writing assignment on your personal wordpress blog; These assignments might include a rhetorical analysis of an assigned text, a short argumentative post, or possibly a response to the week's readings. You will receive a score between 0-3 for each blog (0 means you did not complete it, 3 means you provided a thoughtful blog post which demonstrated critical thought and analysis.) Your two lowest scores will be dropped at the end of the semester. Your blog posts are due **Monday by 9:00 a.m.**

Essays (550pts): There will be four major assignments that you will write throughout the semester. **The papers will range from 4-5 pages (1-inch margins, 12pt font, double-spaced, and in MLA format).** Each essay will require one rough draft in order for us to workshop and revise. Hard copies are **REQUIRED** for first drafts. Your final drafts will be posted to your blog.

ASSIGNMENT 1: *Articulating and Evaluating How an Argument Persuades a Specific Audience*

Building on RWS 100, this assignment asks you to articulate the argument of Johann Hari's "The Likely Cause of Addiction Has Been Discovered, and It Is Not What You Think" and to analyze and describe its elements. Next, it asks you to discern elements of context embedded in the argument—the clues that suggest what the

argument is responding to, both in the sense of what has been written before it and in the sense that it is written for an audience in a particular time and place—and to evaluate how effectively the argument persuades this audience within this specific context. **(Due 2/14)**

ASSIGNMENT 2: *Using One Text as a “Lens” on Another*

In Patricia Roberts Miller’s short text (“Characteristics of Demagoguery”) and her longer article (“Democracy, Demagoguery, and Critical Rhetoric”) she outlines “standards for good public discourse” that support democratic decision making and reasoned debate. She contrasts this with forms of persuasion that are flawed, manipulative, appeal to fear or popular prejudice, and close down debate. In short, she presents a set of criteria for evaluating arguments. In this assignment, you will use concepts and arguments from a frame or “lens” text—specifically, Patricia Roberts Miller’s writings—to analyze and evaluate a text of your instructor and your own choosing. **(Due 3/7)**

ASSIGNMENT 3: *Analyzing the Context in Which a Set of Arguments are Made*

In the recent presidential elections a huge number of news stories were generated outside mainstream media, circulated via platforms such as Facebook, and criticized for being deceptive and untrue. “Fake news” spread more quickly during the last three months of the election than “regular” news from traditional outlets. Some scholars, and some political figures, have argued that this represents a serious new threat to our democracy, while others argue the issue is overblown. An important debate is emerging over how “fake news” should be defined, how much of a problem it is, what causes it, what its effects are, and what solutions (if any) ought to be implemented. In this assignment you will map major points of similarity, difference, contrast and connection between texts that address these questions. You will consider how major positions advanced in these texts relate to each other, and you will evaluate claims representative of these positions. **(Due 4/6)**

ASSIGNMENT 4: *Advancing an Argument in the Contemporary Context*

In this assignment you will draw on your current life as the context from which to understand and evaluate some of the texts explored in assignment 3. You will draw on select texts to construct a context that allows you to “enter the conversation” and advance your own claims. As in assignment 3, the topic will be fake news and its implications. **(Due 5/4)**

Peer Review Workshops (100pts): Before each final draft is due, we will work through constructive peer evaluations for each paper. In each **Peer Review Workshop**, you will exchange first drafts with your fellow classmates. There are four projects; likewise, we will have four peer reviews. In order to receive full credit, you will give thoughtful and productive feedback to your peer. You will also bring **full drafts** of your paper (not just an outline or notes) so that your partner has a physical form of your text to work with during the workshop. Hard copies are required for all Peer Review Workshops.

Course Policies:

Late Work: Every assignment handed in late will lose 3% of its grade for every day past the due date. No assignment will be accepted more than 4 days past the due date. Blog posts are not accepted late, and must be posted by the Monday deadline.

Respect: I expect our class to consist of lively discussions and productive workshops. With this in mind, we are working together to create a safe social space. I encourage you to both speak and listen openly and *respectfully*.

Digital Devices: No digital devices are allowed, including cell phones and laptops.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious issue and will not be tolerated in this class. Consequences for providing unoriginal work can range from losing a grade to being expelled. Make sure that when you do cite other folks' work, you are citing it (and or quoting it correctly). If you want more information about what constitutes plagiarism, visit SDSU's "Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities" website:
http://go.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/srr/cheating-plagiarism.aspx.

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

Student-Athletes: I am committed to helping each student in our class reach their potential during the semester. If you are a student-athlete, you will be required to complete all course work, although I do respect the demands upon your schedule. I will be happy to find a way to work with your schedule in conjunction with Student-Athlete Support Services (SASS). For more information on SASS' academic advising and tutoring services, please call (619) 594-4743.

Important SDSU Student Resources:

Academic Advising Center: (619) 594-6668
Counseling and Psychological Services: (619) 594-5220
Student Disability Services: (619) 594-6473
Student Health Services: (619) 594-5281
Public Safety : (619) 594-1991

Public Safety Escorts: (619) 594-6659

Use of Student Work: I may occasionally share student writing in class. For example, it may be useful to show an example of a strong introduction, or discuss ways of revising a conclusion. Please let me know if you would prefer not to have your work shared (you can send me an email).

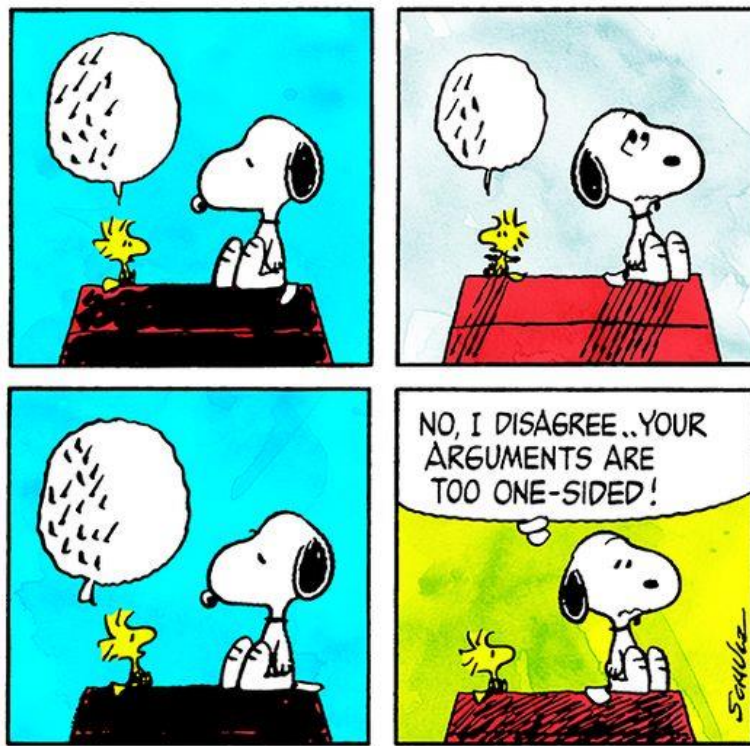
Course Outline and Reading Schedule

Please note that the following schedule is approximate, as dates and topics may shift as the semester continues. **Please refer to the wiki for current information regarding your assignment due dates and current readings.** All readings are to be completed outside of class before the class discussion date.

Week	Date	Reading
Week 1	Thurs 1/19	Introduction to the Course, Review the Syllabus
Unit #1: Argument Analysis		
Week 2	Tues 1/24	Review Rhetorical Lexicon & Vocabulary <i>Introduction to Maus</i>
	Thurs 1/26	Review Rhetorical Analysis Concepts & Strategies <i>Paper #1 Prompt</i>
Week 3	Tues 1/31	Discussion of Hari's Text; PACES Review <i>Rhetorical Lexicon/Concept Quiz</i>
	Thurs 2/2	How to Construct Paper #1 Workshop
Week 4	Tues 2/7	Understanding the Specific Audience
	Thurs 2/9	Peer Review Essay #1
Week 5	Tues 2/14	Essay #1 Due
Unit #2: Using One Text as a "Lens" on Another		

	Thurs 2/16	Discuss Roberts-Miller text <i>Essay #2 Prompt</i>
Week 6	Tues 2/21	Demagoguery Discussion; Rhetorical Strategies Charting & Outlining a Text
	Thurs 2/23	Connections between Rhetorical Texts (What does “lens” mean?)
Week 7	Tues 2/28	Rhetorical Fallacies (& How to Identify) <i>How to Construct Paper #2</i>
	Thurs 3/2	Peer Review Essay #2
Week 8	Tues 3/7	Essay #2 Due
Unit #3: Analyzing the Context in Which a Set of Arguments are Made		
	Thurs 3/9	Discuss “fake news” texts
Week 9	Tues 3/14	Discuss Maus and Meaning of <u>Context</u> Prompt Essay #3
	Thurs 3/16	Discuss Maus
Week 10	Tues 3/21	Instructor Conferences
	Thurs 3/23	Instructor Conferences
Week 11	Tues 3/28	<i>Spring Break</i>
	Thurs 3/30	<i>Spring Break</i>
Week 12	Tues 4/4	Instructor Conferences
	Thurs 4/6	Essay #3 Due
Unit #4: Using One Text as a “Lens” on Another		

Week 13	Tues 4/11	How to construct a final essay proposal Final Essay prompt
	Thurs 4/13	<i>They Say/I Say</i> and Joining the Conversation
Week 14	Tues 4/18	Constructing your Final Paper Workshop Final Essay Proposals Due (Blog)
	Thurs 4/20	How to Conduct Research, Blog Reviews <i>Final Class discussion; Class Review</i>
Week 15	Tues 4/25	Paper #3 Feedback
	Thurs 4/27	Peer Review Final Paper
Week 16	Tues 5/2	Instructor Conferences
	Thurs 5/4	Final Paper Due!



Agreement on Plagiarism

I understand that teachers are required by SDSU policy to report cases of plagiarism. I understand that I must clearly mark other people's ideas and words within my paper. I understand it is unacceptable to do any of the following:

- Submit an essay written in whole or part by another person, and to present this as if it were my own.
- Download an essay from the internet, then quote or paraphrase from it, in whole or in part, without acknowledging the original source.
- Reproduce the substance of another writer's argument without acknowledging the source.
- Copy another student/person's homework and submit this as the product of my own work.
- Repurpose any past work you have written for a class other than RWS 100-47.

I understand that the consequences for committing any of the above acts can include failure in the class, a note on my permanent record, and even expulsion from the university. I will not plagiarize or cheat.

Name (Print Legibly): _____

Date _____

(Signature) _____

Use of Student Work

I may occasionally wish to share sample student writing in class. For example, it may be useful to show an example of a strong introduction, or discuss ways of revising a conclusion. Is it OK to use your writing in this way?

YES

NO