University of Louisiana at Lafayette

ENGL 102-201-20232: Writing & Research about Culture

Fall 2024

Meeting times: TR 11-12:15

Classroom: HL Griffin Hall (HLG) 130

Instructor: Nicholas Mennona Marino, MA (ABD)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course will cover research-based writing. Students will learn how to find scholarly sources, conduct a research question, formulate that question into a thesis, and provide evidence from both the sources and themselves to support that thesis. Students will also learn to view composition as not only concerned with alphanumeric, printed texts.

In English 102, students should learn basics of argument and academic writing including:

* how to recognize an argument and explain what makes an argument different from a text whose purpose is solely to inform
* the difference between a strong argument and a weak argument (evidence, credibility, logical fallacies, etc.)
* how to craft an arguable claim and reason of appropriate scope
* general academic norms and ethics involving intellectual property and (MLA) citation
* a basic knowledge of classical rhetoric which helps explain why courses like English 101 and 102 remain required throughout the US
* an understanding that the shifting expectations for literacy in the 21st century has led to less importance placed on the traditional typewritten essay, and instead an emphasis on multimodal texts that may or may not be digital

The assignments in English 102 focus on meeting the following goals:

* Develop a writing project and multimodal composition project through multiple drafts
* Connecting ancient ideas about rhetoric with modern exigencies, texts, and audiences
* Learn to give and to act on productive feedback to works in progress
* Develop facility in responding to a variety of situations and contexts calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium, and/or structure
* Locate and evaluate (for credibility, sufficiency, accuracy, timeliness, bias, and so on), including journal articles and essays, books, scholarly and professionally established and maintained databases or archives, and informal electronic networks and internet sources
* Use strategies – such as interpretation, synthesis, and critique – to compose texts that integrate the writer’s ideas with those from appropriate sources
* Practice applying citation conventions systematically in their own work

TEXTBOOKS

This course has no required textbooks, although the BRA assignment (see below) will require students to purchase a new item (any sort of consumer good).

Course readings will be provided from the instructor digitally via book scans or through URLs posted on Moodle. Course readings will be drawn from topics such as:

* Classical rhetoric
* Visual rhetoric
* Multimodal composition

Students will read excerpts from the following books:

Apollodorus. *The Library of Greek Mythology*. Translated by Robin Hard. Oxford University Press, 2008.

Aristotle. *The Art of Rhetoric*. Translated by Hugh Lawson-Tancred, Penguin, 2004.

*Isocrates I*. Translated by David C. Mirhady and Yun Lee Too. University of Texas Press, 2000.

Kress, Gunther, and Theo Van Leeuwen. *Multimodal Discourse*. Hodder, 2001.

*Language is a Mighty Lord: A Gorgias Reader*. Edited by Andrew J. Patrick. Riposte, 2012.

Sontag, Susan. *At the Same Time: Essays and Speeches*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.

The instructor also recommends purchasing this short and readable introduction to rhetoric:

Keith, William M., and Christian O. Lundberg. *The Essential Guide to Rhetoric*. Bedford/St. Martins, 2008.

Students must turn in the consent form from this book (though alternatively it will be uploaded to Moodle to be printed)

University of Louisiana at Lafayette. *Freshman Guide to Writing*. 7th Edition. Fountainhead Press, 2016.

Note: The classical rhetoric reading assignments and multimodal reading assignments are for students’ benefit in their writing. Students will *not* be quizzed on the absorption of the material. Students may be asked to cite these readings and or notes from the lectures on them in their essays and in one of the extra credit assignment options. Students should *always* prioritize completing their essays on time over keeping up with the course readings. The course readings will be available on the course Moodle page.

To maximize efficiency, it is important that students read assignment prompts before the day that they will be discussed in class so class time can be spent on answering questions about the prompt. To make up for the lost class time the instructor will try to provide online resources via Moodle throughout the semester.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN

Your grade will consist of 3 essays, 1 multimodal composition project with a written explanation of the project, and 1 portfolio assignment (including a reflection on your work throughout the semester), as well as your participation and attendance grade. Extra credit will be offered to count towards your participation and attendance grade. You will receive assignment prompts for each assignment. You will choose the topic that you want to write about for each essay. The essay assignments must be at least 1500 words or else they will be penalized for lack of length. You will receive feedback on your writing from your instructor and your peers. You will have the option to choose whether you want your work to be used for pedagogical or research purposes (whether anonymously or not). Part of the participation grade comes from student willingness to share freewriting responses.

The assignment sequence and grade breakdown is:

Visual Rhetorical Analysis essay (VRA) 15%

You will choose two visual texts to analyze and identify the rhetorical devices present that add onto the text’s argument. Your visual texts must include at least one image and at least one television commercial that is available for free online, at *YouTube* or elsewhere.

Brand Rhetorical Analysis Essay (BRA) 20%

You will choose a brand to research and write an essay discussing how the brand draws on rhetoric to promote itself. You must document evidence from both online and in real life sources pertaining to the brand you chose through purchasing a new product from the brand.

Research Essay (RE) 20%

This is an argument-based assignment in which you will formulate a thesis and provide evidence supporting it. Your evidence must come from at least 2 scholarly sources as well as your own ideas, examples, and experiences.

Multimodal Project and Statement of Design Choices (MMPSDC) 25%

This is an argument-based assignment consisting of two parts: a multimodal composition and a document of no less than three full pages that explains the rationale, rhetorical motifs, choices, limitations, and potential usages of the multimodal composition. The rationale document must be a typewritten document. The multimodal composition project cannot just be a typewritten essay. It must use multiple modes and mediums. A *YouTube* video with sound, for example, uses visual and aural modes and the medium of video (though it could use even more modes and mediums depending on what is in the video). The assignment prompt will provide examples of multimodal projects. Multimodal projects need not be digital and do not require computers to be made. The multimodal project should include some typewritten or spoken words but there is no minimum requirement for the number of words for the project itself.

Portfolio and Reflection Essay (PR) 10%

A reflection on how you have improved as a writer throughout the semester, which parts of the course contributed the most to that improvement, and which pieces of writing you are most proud of. You are encouraged to include screenshots or links to your multimodal composition if applicable. Submit all your assignments with the reflection essay (500 words minimum) as the first pages of the file.

Participation and Attendance 10%

This includes not just attending class but willingness to participate in class discussions and share your in-class freewriting assignments.

GRADING SCALE

A: 90-100 B: 80-89 C: 70-79 D: 60-69 F: 0-59

ASSIGNMENT TOPICS

Students in this course may write about their own topics, with the following restrictions. Students must select a different topic or text to write about for each writing assignment. It is up to the instructor’s discretion to determine whether the topics of each essay are different enough to be original works. The instructor will provide feedback on the drafts of these assignments, including whether the student must choose a different topic that they have not written about before for this course. Students must write about topics that are issues or matters up for debate with differing views on each side in interpreting them. Not all topics that are issues are necessarily scholarly. Students must be particularly selective in choosing a topic for the scholarly source essay.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The ULL English department allows students to miss up to 10% of class meetings without penalty. This course will meet 27 times this semester, with 26 class meetings and 1 mandatory midterm conference, held in the instructor’s office from 7-11 October 2024. Missing the conference counts as an absence. Students can miss up to 2 absences without penalty. The instructor excuses absences only if they are documented. More than 2 absences directly affects a student’s participation and attendance grade. Solid participation, when a student does show up to class, can counteract this, as can the optional extra credit assignment offered at the end of term. Missing excessive class time usually has an impact on a student’s grade beyond participation and attendance, as missing class means missing valuable time to work on one’s writing.

Students may be excused from class for attending job related events so long as they are sponsored by the university and advertised on Handshake.

PLAGIARISM POLICY

Students that plagiarize in this class will automatically fail the assignment in question, except for minor citation issues that do not show an intent to deceive. Further plagiarism puts students at risk of automatically failing the course. The decision to fail the student for a second violation of plagiarism lies with the instructor and the severity of the offenses. Students are encouraged to check citation resources like the Purdue Online Writing Lab website (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>), instructor materials on essay writing, and their textbooks. Students who are unclear about plagiarism should contact the instructor with any issues that they have in understanding it, specifically in terms of MLA style.   
  
FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette makes accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) office at 337-482-5252 or [ods@louisiana.edu](mailto:ods@louisiana.edu) during the first week of classes. ODS will assist you with an accommodation plan. The university also has a Supported Education Program (SEP, <http://disability.louisiana.edu/SEP.html>), which provides free confidential help on campus for students with psychological disabilities (Bipolar Disorder, Depression, Anxiety, etc.). Please contact Kim A. Warren, MSW, PhD, LCSW, Supported Education Advisor, at 482-5252 or at [kimawarren@louisiana.edu](mailto:kimawarren@louisiana.edu). She is located in the Conference Center, Room 126.

OFFICE HOURS

It is important to take advantage of office hours. Your professors and instructors are busy people with responsibilities that span beyond the courses they teach. However, they must set aside 2 office hours each week per class section. During this time, students take priority for their teachers’ attention. No appointment is necessary for office hours. If you cannot attend the office hours listed for your section, please email me and we can arrange a different time to meet. All office hour meetings will be held in my office in HLG 341. Please come prepared with questions that you have about the course, the course readings, or your writing. If you have a question about something university related but not necessarily related to this class, I may still be able to help or direct you to who can help resolve your issue. Asking for help in college is not a sign of weakness but a sign of initiative to succeed, so take advantage of office hours! I am paid to hold office hours and I have no problem “earning” that money.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

The use of technology is permitted in class so long as it does not cause a distraction to other students. Students may be asked to access the internet in class via laptop or mobile device. Students who do not have access to the internet through a laptop or mobile device will not be penalized but may have to rely on their classmates or the instructor to access the internet in class.

Students should familiarize themselves with the technology resources available at the Dupré library and elsewhere on campus since this course includes a multimodal assignment (though that assignment does not require the use of a computer except for composing the statement of design choices essay).

The instructor may use AI for generating ideas for certain assignments. Students may use AI technology for the same purpose of generating ideas, but students should not rely on AI completely to write their assignments.

DRAFT FEEDBACK

The instructor will provide final draft feedback on Moodle. Students that desire rough draft feedback for their assignments must meet with the instructor during office hours or else at a different time if they are unavailable during the instructor’s office hours. Rough draft feedback will be provided by peer review in class for each assignment. Students may be able to receive first draft feedback in class from the instructor on peer review days. Students may use email to contact the instructor with questions about assignments, but the instructor will not provide draft feedback by email. Students must provide either a digital or printed copy of their work for peer review days.

While rough drafts are not graded, the lack of a rough draft for a given assignment entails a penalty of 5% off the final draft grade of the assignment.

LATE WORK POLICY

Late assignments will be penalized by 2 points per calendar day, so an assignment turned in up to 24 hours late will only receive a 98, from 24 to 48 hours late a 96, over 48 hours late 94, etc. Students can see how late their assignments were turned in (or not) via Moodle. All final drafts will be due by 23:59, to be submitted on Moodle (see schedule below). The instructor may waive this penalty in the case of documented emergencies.

EXTRA CREDIT

Students will have the opportunity to present their MMPSDC during the final week of classes (2-6 December 2024). The project must be substantially finished by the time of the presentation. Successful completion of extra credit will be worth 5 percentage points towards a student’s overall grade (from a 76/C to an 81/B).

CLASSROOM CONDUCT POLICY

The instructor is not responsible for making sure that students learn but is responsible for maintaining an environment in which students can learn. The instructor reserves the right to remove from the classroom students that cause a disruption that threatens this environment.

ULL WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center is a free service located on the first floor of the library (not room 107 in Griffin Hall as before). The Writing Center consultants are experienced writers and students who pride themselves on creating a comfortable environment for every phase of your writing project. From thesis statements, to research planning, document design, to just getting started, the Writing Center staff works to help you become more focused, organized, and confident with your work. In addition to providing the latest style manuals and handbooks, the Writing Center also operates a computer lab, located next door in Griffin Hall, room 108. Both of these services are free, student-operated, and devoted to helping you be a more successful and productive student. Walk-ins are accepted, but scheduling an appointment in advance (482-5224) is recommended. Students who are more than ten minutes late to an appointment must reschedule.

CAMPUS SAFETY INFORMATION

Joseph Pons, Director of the Office of Environmental Health and Safety, has asked that in accordance with the UL Lafayette’s Environmental Health and Safety Procedures, to please include the following information on in all syllabi:  
  
1.      University Police are the first responders for all emergencies on campus.  Dial 911 or 482-6447 to report any emergency.  
2.      The Emergency Information Floor Plan is posted in the hallways for every building.  This document includes evacuation routes and other important information.  Please familiarize yourself with this document.  
3.      In the event that the building fire alarm is sounded, please exit the building immediately and notify University Police. Do not use the building elevator - look for the illuminated Exit Signs to direct you to safety.  
4.      During times of emergency, information may be available on the University's Emergency Hotline - 482-2222. This number is printed on the back of your ID card.  
5.      The University utilizes a text message service to notify its students and employees of campus wide emergencies.  To subscribe to this service, log on to [www.ul.mobilecampus.com](http://www.ul.mobilecampus.com) .  
6.      If you have a special medical condition that might render you incapacitated during class, please make this known to your instructor as soon as possible, including any emergency contact information for your next of kin or similar.

CLASS SCHEDULE FOR MWF

Note: The instructor reserves the right to move assignment deadlines forward in time.

Note: Because of the inevitability of a course schedule not reflecting the hectic reality of teaching a class, this course schedule is subject to change and does not include required readings that will be posted to Moodle. Students are expected to read the assigned readings before each class. Students should check their Moodle page for this course in order to stay updated on which readings are due when.

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| DATE | READINGS DUE/ACTIVITIES | ASSIGNMENTS DUE |
| T 27 August | Review syllabus  Rhetoric hypothetical game  Class introductions  Discuss in-class freewriting assignments  Discuss peer review method using Yik Yak screenshots  Discuss Handshake, Campus Cupboard, Career Closet |  |
| R 29 August | Read Apollodorus excerpt from the *Library of Greek Mythology* Epitome Sections 3, 4, 5 (Moodle)  Discuss Apollodorus |  |
| F 30 August | NO CLASS – Drop/Add deadline |  |
| T 3 September | Read Gorgias of Leontini’s “Encomium of Helen” (Moodle)  Read Isocrates’s “Encomium of Helen” (Moodle)  Discuss Gorgias  Discuss Isocrates |  |
| R 5 September | Read Isocrates’s “Against the Sophists” (Moodle)  Discuss Isocrates | 102 Standard Release form (see *Freshman Guide to Writing* p. 71, Moodle). |
| T 10 September | Read Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* Chapters 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.20, 2.22 (Moodle)  Discuss Aristotle |  |
| R 12 September | NO CLASS – Campus closed due to weather |  |
| T 17 September | Discuss Aristotle  Lecture on the rhetorical appeals, rhetoric as a substitute for truth, solipsism, types of speeches, sophists vs. philosophers, connotation and denotation, Proto-Indo-European languages, the ancient Greek world, ancient Greek city-states, the Trojan War, Hesiod, Homer, the “invention” of rhetoric, the beginnings of Greek philosophy, approaches to teaching composition, totalitarianism vs. representative government, rhetoric’s role in a representative government, syllogism vs. enthymeme, categories of rhetorical speeches/texts, importance of rhetoric in the law, importance of rhetoric in a democracy, Cicero’s rhetorical canons, Bitzer’s the rhetorical situation, Kairos, ethos as credibility for rhetor and audience |  |
| R 19 September | Read VRA assignment prompt (Moodle)  Read Sontag “Photography: A Little Summa” (Moodle)  Review VRA assignment prompt  Discuss Sontag  Practice analyzing images and commercials |  |
| T 24 September | Practice analyzing images and commercials |  |
| R 26 September | Discuss how to cite images and commercials in MLA format  VRA peer review  Midterm conference signup | VRA rough draft |
| T 1 October | Read BRA assignment prompt (Moodle)  VRA peer review  Review BRA assignment prompt  Discuss strategies for researching brands  Discuss instructor provided examples of print rhetoric from various brands  Midterm conference signup |  |
| R 3 October | NO CLASS – Fall Break | VRA final draft |
| T 8 October | NO CLASS – Midterm conferences in HLG 341 |  |
| R 10 October | NO CLASS – Midterm conferences in HLG 341 |  |
| T 15 October | Discuss strategies for researching brands  Discuss instructor provided examples of print rhetoric from various brands |  |
| R 17 October | Discuss instructor provided examples of print rhetoric from various brands  BRA peer review | BRA rough draft |
| T 22 October | BRA peer review |  |
| R 24 October | Read RE, PR assignment prompts (Moodle)  Review RE, PR assignment prompts | BRA final draft |
| T 29 October | Discuss strategies for finding scholarly sources online  Discuss anatomy of an academic article through instructor provided examples  Discuss MLA citation format for quoting and paraphrasing |  |
| R 31 October | RE peer review | RE rough draft |
| T 5 November | RE peer review |  |
| R 7 November | Read MMPSDC assignment prompt  Review MMPSDC assignment prompt  View clip from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* episode “Masks” about multimodality  Watch clip from *Frasier* episode about discourses  Watch clip from *Love Actually* about modes  View previous student multimodal projects on instructor website  Course withdrawal deadline | RE final draft |
| T 12 November | Watch Kress *YouTube* Interview “What is a mode?” (Moodle)  Watch Kress *YouTube* Interview “How do people choose between modes?” (Moodle)  Watch Kress *YouTube* Interview “Why adopt a multimodal approach?” (Moodle)  Read *Multimodal Discourse* Chapter 1 (Moodle)  Lecture on Kress and Van Leeuwen |  |
| R 14 November | Read *Multimodal Discourse* Chapters 2, 3 (Moodle)  Lecture on Kress and Van Leeuwen |  |
| T 19 November | Use foreign fashion magazines to find examples of multimodal texts  In small groups, present findings on most persuasive texts from the magazines |  |
| R 21 November | Use foreign fashion magazines to find examples of multimodal texts  In small groups, present findings on most persuasive texts from the magazines |  |
| T 26 November | MMPSDC peer review | MMPSDC rough draft |
| R 28 November | NO CLASS – Thanksgiving |  |
| T 3 December | MMPSDC presentations (extra credit) |  |
| R 5 December | MMPSDC presentations (extra credit) | MMPSDC final draft (non-digital projects) |
| M 9 December | NO CLASS | MMPSDC final draft (essay)  PR final draft |
| M 16 December | NO CLASS – Instructor grades due to be posted by 12:00 |  |