**English 4370: Rhetoric and Composition for Secondary School Teachers**

**Spring 2014 Policy Statement and Syllabus**

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**Course Information:** Section 001; T,Th 12:30-1:50; Preston Hall 103

**Course Description:** This course is required for students pursuing an English degree with Secondary Teacher Certification and students seeking Mid-Level English Language Arts Certification, so these students are the primary audience. However, the course is designed to appeal to any student interested in the history, theory, and practice of reading and writing instruction.

We’ll frame the course with some of the historical and epistemological issues involved in the study of rhetoric, paying particular attention to the quarrel between rhetoric and philosophy that spans virtually the entire history of Western thought. In many ways, this dispute remains with us today and determines the type of language instruction predominant in public education.

As we delve into rhetorical theory as manifested in the classroom, we’ll consider questions like: What is “rhetoric,” “composition,” and “rhetoric and composition?” Why do we teach reading and writing differently from the way it was taught 50 or 100 years ago? Why is reading and writing taught so differently in college and in high school, and what, if anything, should we do to improve alignment between the two?

This is a content course, not a pedagogy course, but we *will* examine writing instruction as itself a research field. You’ll learn what pedagogical practices are supported by recent scholarship in rhetoric and composition, and as you do so, you’ll occupy the dual role of student and teacher-in-training. For example, you’ll learn how to teach analytic reading skills as you practice these skills. You’ll learn how to teach argument as inquiry as you produce written arguments that engage timely issues. I’ll include you in the process of composing writing assignments that you then complete. We’ll talk about how to comment on and grade student writing as I give you feedback on your writing. We’ll consider the best ways to teach grammar and mechanics as you sharpen your command of Standard Written English.

**Student Learning Outcomes: By the end of ENGL 4370, students should be able to:**

* Apply knowledge of the history and theory of rhetoric in the English Language Arts (ELA) classroom.
* Apply knowledge of composition studies in the ELA classroom.
* Apply knowledge of research and best practices in composing writing assignments for the ELA classroom.
* Use knowledge of the rhetorical situation—writer, purpose, subject, genre, audience—to analyze and construct texts, and impart this knowledge in the ELA classroom.
* Practice writing as a recursive process that can lead to substantive changes in ideas, structure, and supporting evidence through multiple revisions.
* Apply knowledge of research and best practices in teaching a process approach to composition in the ELA classroom.
* Apply knowledge of research and best practices in responding to student writing.
* Apply knowledge of research and best practices in assessing student writing.
* Control such surface features of writing as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling, and impart this knowledge in the ELA classroom.

**Required Materials:**

* Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 2010.
* An UTA email address that **YOU CHECK DAILY**.

**Assignments:**

Paper 1 – Rhetorical Analysis (3-4 pp.) **15%**  
Paper 2 – Synthesis Argument (4-5 pp.) **20%**  
Paper 3 – Researched Argument (4-6 pp.) **25%**  
Class Participation **20%**

Final Exam **20%**

**Grades:** **All major essay projects must be completed to pass the course.** If you fail to complete an essay project, you will fail the course, regardless of your average.

The paper assignments are designed for the high school classroom, but they require higher-order thinking and thus can accommodate varying levels of sophistication. Your versions of these papers undoubtedly will be more advanced than your high school students’, but the experience of writing them will prepare you to teach them (or modified versions of them).

Good writing always involves drafting and redrafting, and this is particularly true when writing for a public audience because you must respond to feedback from your readers. Your papers will not reach their full potential unless you begin them well in advance of the due date, allow your ideas to incubate, and respond actively to my and your peers’ comments. For your 2nd and 3rd papers, you will be required to submit a topic proposal prior to drafting. For all your papers, you will be required to make a first submission of each of the assigned papers. **A first submission is not in any way a rough draft**; it is more like a piece you first submit for publication, prior to receiving a reviewer’s comments. You should believe that your first submission is ready to go to press–only then can feedback be advanced enough to get your final submission in top form (and get you the kind of grade you want). If your first submission is not solid, meaning you haven’t put forth a good faith effort to cover all aspects of the assignment, it will be returned to you and counted late. **Late submission of a topic proposal, first submission, or final submission will result in a full letter grade penalty on that assignment for each day it is late.**

Class participation counts for as much of your grade as a major paper assignment for two main reasons. First, your own experiences in classes that taught reading and writing will form part of our course content, the specific cases to which we will apply theoretical knowledge. We need to hear from everyone in order to get the most representative sample of teaching practices. Second, although this is a content-based course, it’s not one in which you sit back and ingest knowledge, facts, and information passively. Rather, you’ll be acquiring skills in critical thinking and public discourse, and our classroom is the place where you’ll practice these skills. Our classroom atmosphere will be informal and lively, we’ll know each others’ names, and vigorous, respectful discussion will take place on a daily basis. You must overcome any shyness you feel about speaking in front of others, and the sooner you start talking, the more quickly you’ll begin to feel comfortable.

The final exam is comprehensive and is intended to ensure that you have retained the key principles from the 20 or so lectures I’ll be giving over the course of the semester. Despite how it may sound on its face, the final should not be difficult so long as you attend every class and follow our discussions closely. I will distribute notes for each of the lectures, and exam questions will be taken directly from those notes.

**Attendance and Tardiness:** Although the atmosphere in class will be laid back, in order for it to work, you and I must be partners, meaning that we both come to class each day having read closely and prepared to talk. To that end, I expect you to attend **every single class** and to be on time. Specific policies are as follows:

* Arriving to class late is disruptive and disrespectful to me and your classmates. I reserve the right to count tardies as partial absences.
* The latest research indicates that despite college students’ belief that they are good at multitasking, their learning suffers significantly when it is interrupted by digital media. Consequently, the use of cell phones, tablets, or laptops during class is strictly prohibited. The use of any electronic device during class will result in a zero participation grade for that day.
* Absences result in a zero participation grade for that day.
* **Four unexcused absences** will lower your overall semester grade by a full letter.
* **Five unexcused absences** will mean you must drop the course or receive a grade of F.
* Excused absences include official university activities and illness with a physician’s note.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (http://wweb.uta.edu/ses/fao).

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Academic Integrity:** At UT Arlington, academic dishonesty is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any form, including (but not limited to) “cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts” (UT System Regents’ Rule 50101, §2.2). Suspected violations of academic integrity standards will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Student Success Programs:** The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. They include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admissions and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817.272.6107 for more information and appropriate referrals.

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory will be asked to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS) about the course and how it was taught. Instructions on how to access the SFS system will be sent directly to students through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback data is required by state law; student participation in the SFS program is voluntary.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Syllabus and Schedule Changes:** I’ve tried to make this document as complete as possible; however, during the course of the semester I may be required to alter, add, or abandon certain policies/assignments. I reserve the right to make such changes as they become necessary. You will be informed of any changes in writing.

**The Writing Center:** The Writing Center, Room 411 in the Central Library, will assist you with any writing assignment while you are a student at UT-Arlington. During Spring 2014, the Writing Center’s hours are 9 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday; 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Friday; and noon to 4:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday. You may schedule appointments online by following directions available at www.uta.edu/owl/appointments, by calling 817.272.2601, or by visiting the Writing Center. If you come to the Writing Center without an appointment, you will be helped on a first-come, first-served basis as tutors become available. Writing Center tutors are carefully chosen and trained, and they can assist you with any aspect of your writing, from understanding an assignment to revising an early draft to polishing a final draft. However, the Writing Center is not an editing service; tutors will not correct your grammar or rewrite your assignment for you, but they will help you learn to solve your grammatical and organizational problems. I encourage each of you to use the Writing Center.

**January 14** Review course policy statement and syllabus.

**January 16** Introductions, “Rhetoric vs. Philosophy.”

**January 21** Continue “Rhetoric vs. Philosophy”; “Introducing a Rhetorical Theory of Texts.”

**January 22** Continue “Introducing a Rhetorical Theory of Texts.”

**For next class: read Preface, Introduction, Ch. 9 in *They Say/I Say.***

**January 28** Continue “Introducing a Rhetorical Theory of Texts”; discuss reading.

**January 30** “Introducing Argument”; “Rhetorical Analysis Questions.”

**For next class: read Benedikt, “If You Send Your Kids to Private School, You Are a Bad Person.”**

**February 4** In-class rhetorical analysis of Benedikt.

**February 6** “Best Practices for Constructing Writing Assignments,” “What Is Composition?”

**For next class: read Ch. 1, Ch. 7 in *They Say/I Say*.**

**February 11 Assign Rhetorical Analysis.**

**February 13** Continue “What Is Composition?”

**February 18** Continue “What Is Composition?”

**For next class: first submission of Rhetorical Analysis due.**

**February 20 First submission of Rhetorical Analysis due.**

“Best Practices for Instructor Review.”

**February 25** Feedback on first submission returned; discuss first submissions, grading criteria, grading rubric; “Revision.”

**February 27** “Best Practices for “Grading Student Writing”; “Problems and Possibilities of Standard English.”

**For next class: read Ch. 4, Ch. 6 in *They Say/I Say*.**

**March 4 Assign Synthesis Argument.**

**For next class: final submission of Rhetorical Analysis due**

**March 6 Final submission of Rhetorical Analysis due.**

Continue “Problems and Possibilities of Standard English.”

**By Friday, March 7 at 5:00 p.m.: topic proposal for Synthesis Essay due.**

**For next class: read Ch. 2, Ch. 3, Ch. 5 in *They Say/I Say*.**

**March 11, 13** Spring break.

**March 18** Discuss assigned reading; “Incorporating Sources Effectively”; “Evaluating Evidence.”

**For next class: first submission of Synthesis Argument due.**

**March 20 First submission of Synthesis Argument due.**

Pass back graded papers; review model paper; continue “Problems and Possibilities.”

**March 25** Feedback on first submission returned; discuss first submissions, grading criteria, grading rubric; “Rhetorical Chairs.”

**March 27** Continue “Rhetorical Chairs.

**For next class: read Warren, “Taming the Warrant.”**

**April 1** Discuss assigned reading, practice identifying warrants.

**For next class: final submission of Synthesis Argument due.**

**April 3 Final submission of Synthesis Argument due.**

“Discussion Pedagogy.”

**April 8 Assign Researched Argument.**

**April 10** Pass back graded papers; review model paper, continue “Discussion Pedagogy.”

**By Friday, April 11 at 5:00 p.m.: topic proposal for Researched Argument due.**

**April 15** “Expert Reading.”

**April 17 First submission of Researched Argument due.**

“Peer Review.”

**For next class: peer review of Researched Argument due.**

**April 22 Peer review of Researched Argument due.**

Feedback on first submission returned; discuss first submissions, grading criteria, grading rubric.

**April 24** “Rhetoric vs. Philosophy Revisited.”

**April 29** Continue “Rhetoric vs. Philosophy Revisited.”

**For next class: peer review of Researched Argument due.**

**May 1 Final submission of Researched Argument due.**

Continue “Rhetoric vs. Philosophy Revisited.”

**May 8 Final exam, 11:00-1:30.**