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

**Summer 2014 Policy Statement and Syllabus**

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**Course Information:** Section 001; Mo,Tu,We,Th 10:30-12:30; Preston Hall 200

**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:** Please note that this class is **extremely** writing intensive. You will be working on at least one paper—and more often two—throughout the entire five weeks. **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.
* In order to have as much class time as in a long semester, we will not have breaks in the middle of class. Of course you should feel free to step out if you need to use the restroom.
* Absences result in a zero participation grade for that day; with only 20 class meetings—and with participation accounting for 20% of the course grade—even a single absence is harmful.
* **Three unexcused absences** will lower your overall semester grade by a full letter.
* **Four 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.

**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 Summer 2014, the Writing Center’s hours are 9 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. 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.

**June 2** Review course policy statement and syllabus; introductions; “Introducing Argument”; “Identifying Central Claims; “Rhetorical Analysis Questions.”

**For next class: read Ch. 1, Ch. 7, Ch. 9 in *They Say/I Say*; Benedikt, “If You Send Your Kid to Private School, You Are a Bad Person.”**

**June 3** Discuss assigned reading; in-class rhetorical analysis of Mead.

**Assign Rhetorical Analysis.**

**June 4** “Rhetoric vs. Philosophy.”

**For next class: first submission of Rhetorical Analysis due; read Preface, Introduction in *They Say/I Say*.**

**June 5 First submission of Rhetorical Analysis due.**

“Introducing a Rhetorical Theory of Texts.”

**For next class: read Ch. 10 in *They Say/I Say*.**

**June 9** Feedback on first submission returned, discuss first submissions, grading criteria, grading rubric; discuss assigned reading, “Revision.”

**June 10** “What Is Composition?”

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

**June 11** Continue “What Is Composition?”

**Assign Synthesis Argument**.

**June 12** “Best Practices for Constructing Writing Assignments”; “Best Practices for Instructor Review.”

**By Saturday, June 14 at 10:00 p.m.: topic proposal for Synthesis Essay due.**

**For next class: final submission of Rhetorical Analysis due; read Ch. 2, Ch. 3, Ch. 5 in *They Say/I Say*.**

**June 16 Final submission of Rhetorical Analysis due.**

Discuss assigned reading; “Incorporating Sources Effectively”; “Evaluating Proofs.”

**June 17** “Rhetorical Chairs.”

**June 18** Pass back graded papers; review model paper.

**Assign Researched Argument**

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

**June 19 First submission of Synthesis Essay due.**

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

**By Saturday, June 21 at 10:00 p.m.: topic proposal for Researched Argument due.**

**June 23** Feedback on first submission returned; discuss first submissions, grading criteria, grading rubric; continue “Problems and Possibilities of Standard English.”

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

**June 24** “The Warrant.”

**June 25** Catch-up day.

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

**June 26 First submission of Researched Argument due.**

“Peer Review.”

**For next class: final submission of Synthesis Essay due; peer review of Researched Argument due.**

**June 30 Final submission of Synthesis Essay due.**

**Peer review of Researched Argument due.**

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

**July 1** “Rhetoric vs. Philosophy Revisited.”

**July 2** Pass back graded papers; review model paper.

**July 3** Catch-up day; review for final exam; course evaluations.

**For next class: final submission of Researched Argument due; final exam.**

**July 7 Final submission of Researched Argument due; final exam.**