

English 3385-001  
MWF 11:00-11:50am in TH 119  
Estee Beck, PhD  
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Carlisle Hall, 407  
M: 12:30-2:00 or by appointment  
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Welcome to English 3385! My name is Dr. Estee (or Dr. Beck). I earned a PhD from the Rhetoric and Writing program at Bowling Green State University in 2015. I've been teaching college-level writing for eleven years. I research surveillance and privacy in writing spaces and digital technologies with an eye toward how these topics effect human and machine communication. I also identify as a digital rhetorician. If you'd like to know what that means—then just ask!

The best way to get in touch with me outside of class is through university email. Just make sure to type in my email address in the "to" field. Do not use the auto-populate feature in mavs.uta.edu. Faculty do not have those email extensions and will never receive the email.

You will find me in my office Monday from 12:30-2pm. We can also schedule an appointment outside of this time or we can meet virtually on Google Hangouts or Skype.

### **Prerequisites**

This is an advanced writing class on the topic of research methods and methodologies in rhetoric and composition. As such, I assume each student entering this course has the writing competencies outlined by our University's admissions and State of Texas' guidelines. However, we all have various levels writing mastery (including me). Since this is an intensive writing class, if you are concerned with your level of writing expertise, come and talk with me during my office hours or schedule an appointment for support.

### **Course Overview**

Welcome to a special topics course on research methods for the discipline of rhetoric and composition. If you've signed up for this course, it's my hope you have an interest in field-based empirical research methods and/or rhetoric and composition. During this semester, we are going to accomplish a general survey of empirical research that many scholars in rhetoric and composition use to assess writing. Even if you aren't sure that rhetoric and composition is the discipline for you, together we will learn about ethics in human subjects research, the basics of quantitative (numbers) and qualitative (words) methods.

While other classes may have a stronger connection with your future academic pursuits and career goals, few offer enduring value with collecting data ethically so that research does not risk harm or infringe upon personal rights. Learning about privacy, confidentiality, informed consent, and voluntary participation will guide you to strive for honesty and clarity with future human subjects research. In this class, we will learn about these procedures and pitfalls while developing ethical practices and strengthening writing about research.

### **Rights of the Learning Community**

You and I have the right to a safe learning environment.

This can take many forms. For many here, you work full- or part-time and balance a full course load. This can be overwhelming and can breed stress which may or may not effect learning and collaborating with each other. For others, the social and cultural registers of today's political events—including microaggressions and outright discriminatory actions and comments—can lead to diminished learning capacity. In this class, no oppressive cultures or actions will be tolerated. At any time, if you should feel

unsafe or unwelcome in this classroom (or in the University as a whole), I encourage you to approach me with what's happening.

You have the right to a useful education.

The purpose of education is to enrich the overall well-being of each person. Higher education extends far beyond the economic benefits that so often pervades cultural discourse surrounding reasons to attend college. However, if at any time, I present, propose or talk about a concept, application or action that feels distant to you, I encourage you to speak up for you and your fellow students. It is entirely possible I may lose sight of the realities you face and your needs for a useful education.

You have the right to accessible learning.

In addition to honoring all of the required accessibility guidelines set forth by the University, I promise to make all materials as available as possible. If you have or suspect a disability, I encourage you to communicate with the Office of Disability Services. We will work in concert to make the material in this class accessible.

You have the right to propose alternative coursework.

This may seem like a strange thing for a professor to write. But, I acknowledge this space is as much yours as it is mine. If you and your classmates decide at any time that the coursework is irrelevant or that your time is being wasted, or you prefer different learning/teaching styles, you should discuss and propose an alternative course of action. Do not wait until the end of the semester and record feedback on student surveys about items that were irrelevant. It's too late. I will honor any reasonable consensus from peers and redirect the course material to appropriately match the realities of students.

Negotiation and speaking to perceived authority figures are two of the most difficult democratic skills to develop, but I hope during our time, we can learn from one another, and you each feel empowered to take control of your education in this class.

### **Learning Outcomes**

By the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

- recall the basic definitions of terms in empirical research with accuracy when prompted by any person interested in your knowledge of the topic;
- describe research methods in written reports when conducting empirical research in future courses and/or on the job;
- create valid empirical research frameworks in an accepted ethical manner when conducting informed research;
- discriminate among the research tools and methods available that align with objectives, budgets, and timelines during empirical research projects;
- examine the variables of collected data in a research study based on the data presented; and,
- support empirical research through organization, structure, and accuracy of writing in commonly accepted discourse(s) for the communities receiving the research.

### **Required Materials**

- Applied Communication Research Methods by Michael P. Boyle and Mike Schmierbach
- Becoming a Writing Researcher by Ann Blakeslee and Cathy Fleischer
- PDFs of readings I provide on BlackBoard
- A paper-bound journal for research / writing utensil / access to computing technology

### **Activities and Projects**

There is a mixture of informal, semi-formal, and formal activities and projects in this class. Some are written and some are participation in class discussion/activities.

### *Informal Activities:*

In-class activities and discussions are vital to learning and reinforcing how you come to understand the material. These will routinely occur throughout the semester and will not be graded.

### *Semi-formal Activities:*

Submitting answers to reading questions, submitting questions on notecards, and research journaling will help you engage with the material. Worth 30% of the final course grade.

### *Formal Activities:*

- Field-work Processing & Results: You will conduct a brief observation in the field and report on your results either via a three-minute oral presentation or a three-page paper. I will provide a holistic rubric for both forms. This is worth 10% of the final course grade. Due September 25.
- Micro-study Proposal: You will write a three to five-page micro-study proposal on something you want to research using empirical methods. This is worth 20% of the final course grade. Due November 6th for peer review and November 10<sup>th</sup> for final submission.
- IRB Protocols & Consent Forms: You will fill out IRB protocols and consent forms after writing your micro-study proposal. This is worth 10% of the final course grade. Due November 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Micro-Study: You will conduct a micro-study and write a five to seven page findings report on the study and its results. This is worth 30% of the final course grade. Due December 8<sup>th</sup>.

### **Grading**

As an employee of the university, it's my duty to assess your activities and projects. With this expressed, your grade does not determine or measure your learning ability or how you pursued the learning outcomes of the course. A grade is merely a diagnostic snapshot of what you can produce under guidelines and time constraints.

Authentic learning—the kind that goes beyond rote and short-term memory storage—is not something that I can impart to you. You do this for yourself. Authentic learning is painful (those moments of frustration and/or feeling the limits are modes of authentic learning) and requires deep personal engagement with material. It comes from within yourself and in conversation with communities. Only you can assess how well you learned the material in this course.

For all informal work (in-class activities, discussions), you will receive acknowledgement of work completed. You will not receive participation points, but rather you will receive verbal and/or written encouragement from me throughout the semester on your informal work performance.

For all semi-formal work (answering reading questions, submitting reading questions on notecards, journaling) you will receive a check +, check, check – or in the case of non-completion, no marks. Sometimes you will receive written feedback, and sometimes you will not. All of these will be added up at the end of the semester and are worth 30% of the course grade.

For all formal work (essays, reports, any public speaking performance), you will receive a formal grade on the A-F scale (A = 90-100%, B = 80-89%, C = 70-79%, D = 60-69%, F = 0-59%) on the work at the end of the semester. This means I record grades on the project in my grade book, but do not pass the grades back to you during the semester. You will receive written feedback. You may request the grade on the project during my office hours. All of these are worth 70% of the course grade.

You might wonder why this is the policy. I want to encourage you to move away from the pursuit of chasing grades or just settling for what's easy. I want you to work in space where learning is the currency of value—not the final

grade on a project. What really matters is how you learn the material and the feedback you receive along the way. Not the grade.

At the end of the semester, you will receive the cumulative letter grade. However, if at any time you want to know your grade on a project, then make an appointment to see me during office hours.

Each project is based on a percentage of the course grade, with 100 points being the distribution for percentages.

### **Office Hours**

I open my office to you as an extension of the classroom, including any virtual meetings or individual tutoring sessions with academic writing. There's no shame or embarrassment in asking for help. However, it is common to feel anxious about approaching one's teacher outside of class.

I promise to respect you and earn your trust through compassionate listening and understanding. As a teacher, I know there is a power-relation between us. While I can do my best to reduce this relation, I hope you think of me as an imperfect and vulnerable person (who may make silly mistakes, but I will own up to them), just like you.

### **Policies I am Required to State Verbatim Per the University:**

#### **Attendance**

At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required but attendance is a critical indicator in student success. Each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, I take attendance. For any absence over three missed classes, you can select from the following options: a two-page essay with .5 margins single spaced on a topic of my choice for each additional absence or a deduction of 2% from the final course grade for each additional absence.

While UT Arlington does not require instructors to take attendance in their courses, the U.S. Department of Education requires that the University have a mechanism in place to mark when Federal Student Aid recipients "begin attendance in a course." UT Arlington instructors will report when students begin attendance in a course as part of the final grading process. Specifically, when assigning a student a grade of F, faculty report the last date a student attended their class based on evidence such as a test, participation in a class project or presentation, or an engagement online via Blackboard. This date is reported to the Department of Education for federal financial aid recipients

#### **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://web.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Disability Accommodations:** UT 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), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. 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 disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions

(Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting: The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD) [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or calling 817-272-3364. 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).

Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS) [www.uta.edu/caps/](http://www.uta.edu/caps/) or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit [uta.edu/eos](http://uta.edu/eos).

### **Title IX Policy**

The University of Texas at Arlington ("University") is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. For information regarding Title IX, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX) or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or [jmhood@uta.edu](mailto:jmhood@uta.edu).

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code in their courses by having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System Regents' Rule 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) 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. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>.

### **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>.

### **Campus Carry**

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

### **Student Feedback Survey**

At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” are directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students’ anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

### **Final Review Week**

For semester-long courses, 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.

### **Emergency Exit Procedures**

Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located to the left of the room entrance, and then south (or right). When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

### **Student Support Services**

UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.

The IDEAS Center (2nd Floor of Central Library) offers free tutoring to all students with a focus on transfer students, sophomores, veterans and others undergoing a transition to UT Arlington. To schedule an appointment with a peer tutor or mentor email [IDEAS@uta.edu](mailto:IDEAS@uta.edu) or call (817) 272-6593.

The English Writing Center (411LIBR): The Writing Center Offers free tutoring in 20-, 40-, or 60-minute face-to-face and online sessions to all UTA students on any phase of their UTA coursework. Our hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mon.-Thurs., 9 am-3 pm Fri. and Noon-6 pm Sat. and Sun. Register and make appointments online at <http://uta.mywconline.com>. Classroom Visits, workshops, and specialized services for graduate students are also available. Please see [www.uta.edu/owl](http://www.uta.edu/owl) for detailed information on all our programs and services.

The Library’s 2nd floor Academic Plaza offers students a central hub of support services, including IDEAS Center, University Advising Services, Transfer UTA and various college/school advising hours. Services are available during the library’s hours of operation. <http://library.uta.edu/academic-plaza>

## **Schedule**

This is subject to change based on the learning needs and conditions of all in this class. As of the first day of class, here are the major deadlines:

August 28: Covino & Joliffée's What is Rhetoric PDF

August 28 through the end of term: Semi-formal activities from readings will be due at dates specified in the four-week schedule distributed in class.

August 30: Doug Down's What is FYC PDF

September 1: Stuart Greene's Argument as Conversation PDF

September 6: Lucille McCarthy's A Stranger in a Strange Land PDF

September 8: Must have textbooks in hand on this day

September 8 through the end of term: Excerpts or whole chapters from the two course textbooks

September 25: Three-minute oral presentation or three-page paper due

November 6: First draft of proposal and IRB documents due

November 10: Final draft of proposal and IRB documents due

December 8: Final report due