WRTG 1250: Advanced First-Year Writing and Rhetoric
Spring 2015, Section 011

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Class Time: MWF 2-2:50
Classroom: DUAN G2B60

Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?
-Mary Oliver, poet, from “The Summer Day”

A liberal education is not something any of us ever achieve; it is not a state. Rather, it is a way of living in the face of our own ignorance, a way of groping toward wisdom in full recognition of our own folly... [it] nurtures human freedom in the service of human community...
-William Cronon, historian, from “Ten Qualities of a Liberally Educated Person”

Description

An introduction to college-level academic writing, WRTG 1250 is an advanced version of WRTG 1150 intended for more experienced writers, and meets the same goals at a more challenging level, including more complex reading and writing assignments. We emphasize the planning, writing, revising, and analyzing of texts in a variety of composition genres; developing critical thinking skills; and acquiring working knowledge of the rhetorical practices that communicate, argue, persuade, and shape our collective cultural experience. Influenced by experience, knowledge, curiosity, opinions, imagination, and research, students will investigate topics of academic importance, social relevance, and personal interest. We will also read, interpret, and respond to texts that other writers, including peers, have written. This course aims to prepare students for the writing situations that they will encounter in their academic, public, and personal journeys beyond our classroom.

Objectives

The following six goals express CU’s Program for Writing and Rhetoric's (PWR) commitment to preparing students for the kinds of reading and writing that they will perform in other classes. These goals fulfill the course criteria that the Colorado Commission on Higher Education specifies for similar writing classes in all our state colleges and universities. As listed in our textbook, Knowing Words, these course goals are:

1) To develop rhetorical knowledge, analyzing and making informed choices about purpose, audiences, and context as you read and compose texts.

We will define a rhetorical situation and analyze it in a variety of texts—we’ll ask questions about the relationships between the text, writer, audience, and context, and how these relationships shaped the writer’s choices. Students apply rhetorical knowledge by writing in different genres and for different audiences, adapting the voice, tone, format and structure of your writing to meet the needs of the audience. We’ll also discuss the ethical use of rhetoric; for instance, what constitutes fair and unfair use of persuasive techniques, and what styles of arguments advance democratic debate or merely confuse or limit discourse?
2) To analyze texts in a variety of genres, understanding how content, style, structure, and format vary across a range of reading and writing situations.

We’ll look at how the concept of “genre” can help us as readers and writers better understand the expectations for how writers should compose or interpret a text; for instance, why does an academic essay look and sound different than an editorial in a local newspaper? Various assignments ask students to read critically, to recognize the rhetorical strategies an author has chosen, both in format and content, that invite the audience to interpret the text in a particular way.

3) To refine and reflect on your writing process, using multiple strategies to generate ideas, draft, revise, and edit your writing across a variety of genres.

Students will use a variety of strategies to navigate the recursive stages of writing and help refine their writing process, including invention, researching, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading. We will devote class time to small- and large-group writing workshops in which students read and critique each other’s work, and the instructor will introduce editing and revision practices.

4) To develop information literacy, making critical choices as you identify a specific research need, locate and evaluate information and sources, and draw connections among your own and others’ ideas in your writing.

This course introduces the research technologies available at CU (online databases, electronic books and journals, bibliographic software, interlibrary transfers, etc.) through class lectures, readings, a library seminar, and an online tutorial (RIOT). We will discuss and practice how to evaluate sources for accuracy, relevance, credibility, reliability, and bias by utilizing research and examining the source’s rhetoric and rhetorical situation.

5) To construct effective and ethical arguments, using appropriate reasoning and evidence to support positions while responding to multiple points of view.

Understanding the components of effective and ethical arguments will help students present ideas in a way that invites their audience to listen and enter the conversation. We will define the elements and techniques of argument and persuasion and connect them with critical thinking; examine how arguments go awry with fallacies; learn how bias can pervade and impede critical thinking and study types of bias and how to overcome them; outline and analyze our own and others' arguments; learn how to evaluate the sources that arguments use as evidence; integrate summary, paraphrasing, and quotation of sources into written arguments with proper acknowledgment while avoiding plagiarism; and identify strategies for constructing arguments in different genres.

6) Understand and apply language conventions, including grammar, spelling, punctuation and format.

Major assignments ask students to use style and tone appropriate for a general academic or public audience, which includes correct grammar and precise diction. We will practice writing effective phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that eliminate repetition and connote meaning, and spend time learning to edit and proofread to confer those qualities to a piece of writing. Varied assignments help students to adapt their style for the rhetorical situation at hand.
Instructor’s Teaching Philosophy

Writing and rhetoric classes, and the critical thinking skills that they help develop, create personal, professional, and social value. I aspire that our course translates for students into career success and civic lives more engaged, more demanding of clear communication, and less susceptible to manipulation by persuasive texts. As for the learning community that I envision, I respect an ideal espoused by educator Paulo Freire, who, in Pedagogy of the Heart, urges teachers and students to create “an atmosphere in the classroom where teaching, learning, and studying are serious acts, but also ones that generate happiness.”

Philosophy professor Robert Todd Carroll, in his textbook Becoming a Critical Thinker, states that “once one commits oneself to a lifelong search for the most reasonable beliefs and actions, and one learns how to conduct that search properly, self-confidence and self-respect begin to flourish.” Critical thinking is inherent to leadership, and Carroll writes that it likely aids people in the “control of situations where decisions need to be made or problems solved.” We can learn critical thinking systematically, and we aim our practice of analyzing and building arguments to expedite the process of effective reasoning and of skillfully assembling papers.

Texts

Articles will be posted on our D2L site or emailed to students.
Optional Writing Guides: The Elements of Style by Strunk and White; Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace by Williams and Colomb; They Say, I Say, by Graff and Birkenstein; The Craft of Research by Booth and Colomb.

Content Delivery and Technology

The instructor delivers content by lectures, seminar discussions, peer-review workshops, group activities, online sources, videos, guest speakers, and by encouraging attendance at community-learning opportunities such as the CU Bioneers Conference (autumn), the CU Conference on World Affairs (spring), and the many events and speakers in the CU/Boulder area. Technology in the classroom includes online sources, databases, search engines, email, video, Word, PowerPoint, Keynote, and CU’s D2L online learning program.

Assignments

Narrative Essay: 10%

With this assignment, students practice the writing process from invention to revision; hone conventions from sentence construction to grammar; apply genre analysis in choosing between the essay forms of literacy narrative, ethnographically-themed narrative, or the nature essay. 4 pages.
Article Summary and Argument Analysis: 15%

Students utilize quoting, paraphrasing, and summary of relevant articles without plagiarizing; to analyze complex arguments and evaluate sources; apply critical thinking and understand bias and fallacies; construct arguments; and hone language and mechanics skills in the peer review and editing process. 3 pages.

Rhetorical Analysis 10%

Working in groups, students analyze the how a selected text constructs arguments and persuasion, and students apply critical thinking to determine the accuracy of truth claims in their chosen piece. Groups prepare and present oral presentations with slides and text. 3 pages.

Research Paper: 30%

A course capstone project in which students practice the writing process by using invention strategies and assembling bibliographies, outlines, and drafts; demonstrate information literacy by utilizing library databases and selecting primary and secondary sources; demonstrate rhetorical awareness by providing a diversity of perspectives applicable to issues and synthesized solutions; practice presentation skills; develop an appropriate thesis and support it with an organized argument structure; use language, tone, and source citations appropriate to the genre and style guidelines that the student select; and apply course-specific concepts in their analyses. 10 pages.

Other Assignments: 25%

These shorter assignments stress critical reading skills, writing practice, argument analysis, genre awareness, and content comprehension appropriate to the course. Includes Writer's Notebook of reading and video responses. 5 pages

Class Participation: 5%

Students practice and demonstrate communication and interpersonal skills appropriate to professional environments.

Community Learning Write-up: 5%

Students attend and describe practical rhetoric and communication at events in the CU and Boulder communities. Attached to Writer's Notebooks.

Totals: 25 pages 100%

Grading

The instructor will evaluate writing assignments considering the following criteria:

• Conforms to the Assignment: All papers must follow the requirements for that particular assignment, including length, general purpose, and due date.
• **Audience:** The author targets papers to a specific audience and maintains a consistent sense of this reader. For example, if the author intends a paper for a lay audience, it must be free of technical jargon and complexities. For an expert audience, the paper should be more than a broad introduction to the topic. A reader should be able to recognize the intended audience.

• **Organization:** The general format of the paper should be readily apparent. The introduction and context, thesis statement, main points, minor points, and conclusion should come together to form a coherent structure that is easy for the reader to follow. The paper utilizes diagrams and graphs effectively.

• **Internal structure:** The paper flows naturally from sentence to sentence and paragraph to paragraph. The writer constructs paragraphs to be cohesive of meaning and to sequentially build the arguments.

• **Grammar and Mechanics:** Papers should be free of fundamental grammar and sentence-structure errors.

• **Punctuation and Spelling:** Errors are minimal.

• **Use of Language and Word Choice:** The author uses concise, vivid, appropriate, nonsexist/nonracist, thoughtful, and eloquent language.

• **Introductions and Conclusions:** Introductions present the thesis in an engaging and contextual manner and avoid obvious or uninteresting statements. Conclusions are suggestive and revelatory and not simply repetitive.

• **Argument Construction:** Supporting evidence is specific, relevant, and sufficient, and the author represents the positions of others with accuracy. The author confronts counterarguments and alternative explanations appropriately and avoids logical fallacies. The author considers the certainty of his or her conclusions.

• **Thoroughness of Research:** The author presents a diversity of perspectives and integrates primary, secondary, and tertiary sources effectively. The paper consistently follows format guidelines.

### Attendance

Part of your grade and much of your success in this course will rely upon consistent class attendance and participation. The instructor records attendance each day. Every absence after three classes lowers your course grade by a third (e.g., from A to A-). Missing more than six classes may result in a non-passing grade. Two lates equal one absence. If you miss a class, please find out from your classmates what we covered in class. If you are still unclear, email the instructor. Illness and religious holidays are excused absences.

### Paper Format and Deadlines

All papers, including the short response papers, should approximate this format:

• Standard font in size 11 or 12 with appropriate line spacing.

• Your name, the course number and term, the assignment, and the date in separate lines at the upper left of the first page.

• Paper title centered and before the first line of text. Paper titles are not placed in quotation marks, and follow the rules for capitalizing titles.
• When submitting electronically, make sure that your name is in the file name and in the document, and save and send it as a Word.doc file (e.g., Doug_ArgumentAnalysis.docx). Please save your sent email record.
• Late papers will be deducted 25% when turned in one class late, and 50% for two classes late. After that, the paper earns no credit. Each student gets one credit for one day late on one assignment; save this pass and use it when you may most need it.

Classroom Decorum

• Because this class is a small, interactive seminar, students will have ample opportunities to comment, ask questions, and participate in class. We will regularly break into small groups to work on our papers, and we will also explore student work as a class. Please conduct yourself professionally in class, as you would in a workplace. Bringing your unique perspective and your full attention, and preparing for class by doing the readings and assignments, will improve the learning environment for yourself and other students.
• Turn off cell phones before class. Bring your laptop, but only for directly related use. Cruising the Internet, working on other homework, and texting will negatively affect your participation grade.
• Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Please see policies here.
• Please be mindful with your use of synthetic fragrances. Some researchers consider these pervasive synthetic chemicals to be the “new second-hand smoke” while “the U.S. National Academy of Sciences has grouped fragrances with insecticides, heavy metals, and solvents as categories of chemicals that should be given high priority for neurotoxicity testing.” (There’s Lead In Your Lipstick, Gill Deacon) To inquire about the safety testing of your body-care products and to take a precautionary approach, refer to this database.

Academic Integrity

Integrity means being truthful, fair, free from deceit, and acting with responsibility. As Heraclitus stated, “Your integrity is your destiny…is the light that guides your way.” The CU website states: "An Honor Code establishes a fundamental social contract within which the University community agrees to live. This contract relies on the conviction that the personal and academic integrity of each individual member strengthens and improves the quality of life for the entire community. The Honor Code is vital to the Building Community Campaign, which is striving to develop a welcoming and supportive climate in which all people are respected and free to express differing ideals and opinions. A sense of mutual trust is critical to achieving such a community."

Plagiarism is the deliberate adoption or reproduction of another person’s ideas or words as one’s own without acknowledgment and is a form of cheating. This course will help students learn how to refer to the work of others properly. Anyone plagiarizing will be reported to the university disciplinary
process and may fail the course. The Honor Code Council handles incidents of misconduct (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273; and at this site).

Students with Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations, submit a letter to me from Disability Services in a timely manner so that the class may address your needs. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/.

Religious Observances

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with course schedules. Please contact instructor in advance if you will miss a class or assignment due to these observances.

Writing Center

Located in Norlin Library E-111, the CU Writing Center is staffed by excellent writing coaches from the Program for Writing and Rhetoric. Consultants there can help you consider writing strategies, develop your ideas, organize your thoughts, and explain grammatical or mechanical matters. This service is free to all CU-Boulder students and will help with any paper you’re writing for a CU class (not just papers for writing classes). Because appointments at the Writing Center are free and effective, they are popular; set up an appointment early in your paper writing process. You may reach the center at (303) 492-1690, via email at wrtghelp@colorado.edu, or on the web at colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.

Sustainability at CU-Boulder

In its report in 2012, "Defining Sustainability in the Curriculum," the University of Colorado at Boulder states that it is "committed to expanding upon its path marking sustainability achievements at the administrative, operational, student action, and academic levels. Universities are the cultivators and generators of knowledge, charged with educating the leaders and decision-makers of tomorrow. As such, they play a crucial role in the creation of sustainable societies."

Information Literacy

As the semester progresses, you’ll complete five library modules. These modules are intended to bring you up to speed on information literacy—to acquaint you with library and set the groundwork for your own research project. They are done outside the classroom and on your own time. I will announce deadlines as the project paper nears. There is also a 6th and 7th module that are not required but are excellent resources for research and reflecting on your research. You can access these tutorials on-line at the D2L site. Scroll down to Program in Writing and Rhetoric and you’ll see RIOT v. 2 Information Literacy and Writing.
**WRTG 1250 SP 15 Daily Schedule**
*(Note: The instructor reserves the right to change this daily schedule, depending on class needs)*

**Week 1**
1/12 Introduction to Class
1/14 Read Cronon, *Only Connect*: Goals of a Liberal Education
1/16 Introduction to writing process and rhetorical situations; creativity discussion; Due via email: Short response to Cronon article

**Week 2**
1/19 No Class: Martin Luther King Day
1/21 Read Martin Luther King, "The World House"; Read “Grammar Guidelines”; Discuss critical reading and effective summarizing; discuss rhetorics of race, writing process, etc.
1/23 Read literacy narratives: Malcolm X, “Prison Studies”; Preston, "Becoming Changing Woman" in *Knowing Words* (KW); Alexie, "Superman and Me"; Tan, “Mother Tongue”; Sampson, "Learning to Read" (KW); introduce Narrative Essay assignment

**Week 3**
1/26 Read narrative essays: Sanders, “Mountain Music”; Fox, “Finding Pretty (KW); Cofer, "One More Lesson"; Williams, "The Clan of One-Breasted Women"
1/28 Read narrative/ethnography essays: Liipfert, "Cultural Chameleon" (KW); Nathan, "My Freshman Year"; Simmons, "Odd Girl Out"; discuss conventions and narrative strategies; analyze ethnographies and profiles
1/30 Read ethnography/profile essays: Nye, “Long Overdue”; Chelminksy, "Turning Point"; Bess, "The Rules" (KW); discuss style and conventions; work on longer narrative essays; discuss and practice intros and conclusions

**Week 4**
2/4 Read student samples of Narrative Essay I-III; work on style and grammar; assign Wordiness Exercise
2/6 Read “Grammar Guidelines" and other D2L articles on style and conventions (TBA); sentence-level style and grammar exercises; Due: Wordiness Exercise

**Week 5**
2/9 Due: Draft of Narrative Essay for peer reviews (bring laptops; don’t email draft to Doug)
2/11 Due: Narrative Essay; Begin discussion on argument, persuasion, logical fallacies, and unfair emotional appeals; group exercise: rhetorical analysis of political speech videos
2/13 Read “Argument: Drill Arctic,” “Argument: Don’t Drill Arctic”; outlining and analyzing arguments and persuasion

**Week 6**
2/16 Read: Carroll, "Critical Thinking" (pgs 1-6, 17-19, 22-23, browse rest for general meaning); Kahan, "Fixing the Communications Failure"; Discuss critical thinking and bias
2/18 Discuss quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing; do Plagiarism Exercise in class
2/20 Introduce Argument Analysis paper

**Week 7**
2/23 Read: articles for Argument Analysis paper
2/25 Work on Argument Analysis paper; handling counterarguments and evaluating evidence
2/27 Work on Argument Analysis paper

**Week 8**
3/2 Due: Draft of Argument Analysis Paper (bring on laptops)
3/4 Due: Argument Analysis; begin discussion of sustainability
3/6 Read Carson, “The Obligation to Endure”; discuss sustainability

**Week 9**
3/9 Continue sustainability discussion
3/11 Read “Better World Handbook” for research topic ideas; assign Research Paper
3/13 Read and analyze sample Student Research Papers I-II; Narrowing thesis, finding sources, organizing content

**Week 10**
3/16 Read Research Papers: Neligh, “Corporate Power and Market Failures” (KW); Franklin, “America’s Obsession with Celebrities and Celebrity News” (KW); and Lindsey, “Harry Potter and Christianity” (KW); Browse: McDonald, “Happily Horrified” (KW); Kahlo, “Makeover Feminism” (KW); Williamson, “The Use of Technology in Barack Obama’s 2008 Campaign”
3/18 Due: Proposals for Research Papers
3/20 Begin RIOT tutorial

**Week 11: Spring Break**

**Week 12**
3/30 Library Visit
4/1 Due: Annotated Bibliography for Research Paper; building Research Papers
4/3 Introduce Rhetorical Analysis Group Project; practice rhetorical analysis of various texts

**Week 13**
4/6 Read Moyer, “How Much Is Left?” and Langley, “A Rhetorical Analysis of ‘How Much is Left?’” (KW); Field Trip: Conference on World Affairs; Work on Group Projects
4/8 Presentations of Rhetorical Analysis Group Project
4/10 Presentations of Rhetorical Analysis Group Project

**Week 14**
4/13 Work on Research Paper; finish Group Projects if necessary
4/15 Due: Introduction and Outlines of Research Paper; work on Research Paper; conventions for citing sources
4/17 Work on Research Papers; review academic and public argument genres

**Week 15**
4/20 Due: Draft of Issue Recommendation/Public Argument section of Research Paper; review course; work on Research Paper
4/22 Presentations of Research Papers
4/24 Presentations of Research Papers

**Week 16**
4/27 Presentations of Research Papers
4/29 Presentations of Research Papers
5/1 Presentations of Research Papers; wrapping up
Due: Writer’s Notebooks and Research Papers (Exact dates/times TBA)