

Rhetoric and Writing Studies

Undergraduate Courses Offered

Fall 2021

Lower Division Courses

RWS 220: Rhetoric of Written Arguments & the Tutoring of Writing—Professor Kerford

Sec 01: MFW 11:00 – 11:50 am

This class focuses on critical thinking, reading, and writing by exploring theories and practices related to learning to write and the tutoring of writing. It is open to any students interested in learning how to consult with peers about writing. It satisfies SDSU's Critical Thinking requirement under the Communication and Critical Thinking area of General Education and is equivalent to RWS 200.

RWS 290: Business Writing and Rhetoric—multiple sections

RWS 290 Business Writing and Rhetoric builds on the rhetorical models that students discover and practice in earlier 100- and 200-level courses, such as attention to audience, purpose, presentation, persuasion, research, and language. RWS 290 offers students the opportunity to discover, analyze, practice, and evaluate the forms of communication they will encounter in their professional lives (i.e., memos, resumes, recommendation reports, presentations). As emerging writing professionals, they will also reflect on the effectiveness of their own styles within rhetorical contexts. RWS 290 is a prerequisite for all business pre-majors.

Upper Division course (Intended for Undergraduates)

RWS 390W: Writing in Business Settings—Professor Anaya

Sec 01: T 5:30 – 6:45 pm, Sec 02: MWF 9:00 – 9:50 am, Sec 03: TTh 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

As an intermediate writing course dedicated to business majors, RWS 390W Writing in Business Settings offers students the opportunity to develop, master, and evaluate the writing and communication skills they will be expected to use in their professional lives (i.e., professional writing genres, information design, data analysis, presentations). In other words, they respond to academic tasks and practice writing in a wider variety of genres than in earlier writing courses such as RWS 100, 200, and 290. Each project requires research methods and communication styles specific to their disciplines within business. As writing professionals, they will also be asked to reflect on the effectiveness of their own styles within rhetorical contexts. Our goal is to aid their success both as students and as working professionals once they graduate. RWS 390W satisfies the university's upper division writing requirement.

RWS 392W: Writing for Engineers—Professor Fielden

Sec 01: Online, Asynchronous, Sec 02: Online, Asynchronous

Successful completion of RWS 392W satisfies the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) for students who have met the course prerequisites. Building on the rhetorical model that students are introduced to in Rhetoric and Writing Studies 100 and 200, Rhetoric and Writing Studies 392W is designed to help upper-level students develop the communication skills needed for successful professional careers as engineers. By focusing on the rhetorical demands of communication within the context of engineering, this class will help students learn practical strategies for developing content and utilizing appropriate genres to serve multiple audiences. This course will also focus on the design and arrangement of documents as an aide to usability. Throughout this course, students will examine the complex communicative nature of the engineering workplace.

RWS 411: Digital Rhetorics—Professor Werry

Sec 01: 3:30 – 6:10 pm

RWS 411 examines digital media from a rhetorical perspective. It asks how digital tools, texts, and platforms are used to persuade, publish, produce change, build community, construct identity, and intervene in political struggles. We will consider what it means to be literate in the age of Facebook and YouTube, and how we can think critically about the cultural and cognitive consequences of the digital shift. A rhetorical perspective means we will carefully analyze the language authors use to make claims about old and new media literacies. It also means we will critically investigate definitions of new media literacy, along with claims about the role new media is playing in social and cultural life. Lastly, we will examine—and practice using—tools that can support key new media literacies.

RWS 498 Seminar: Writing and Research—Professor Valentine

Sec 01: W 4:00 – 6:40 pm

In “Have Rhetoric, Will Travel,” Stuart Brown states, “Rhetoric, I am only just realizing, is the compass by which to follow . . . stories, our own as well as others. It is a gift I do not fully appreciate, still touched with the wonder of it. I have followed rhetoric to many places. I suspect it will take me to many more.” This seminar is designed as a capstone course which asks you to look back on the work you have accomplished as a rhetoric and writing major and to look forward to how what you have learned and experienced in your time at college may inform your future. The course projects will engage you in reflective writing as you reflect on where you have been and where you are going with attention to how rhetoric and writing informs that journey. Projects will also involve analysis as you explore your work with rhetoric and writing studies, present on an aspect of your college experience, and provide constructive peer feedback to other students.

Upper Division Courses (Also Acceptable for Advanced Degrees)

RWS 500W: Advanced Writing Strategies—Professor Salas

Sec 02: 11:00 am – 12:15 pm (Salas)

The course explores key rhetorical concepts to provide students with the tools to think and write analytically about a variety of texts, including written, spoken and visual texts. The course focus is on rhetoric in common places to help students understand how arguments are made in the public sphere and how they might respond to those arguments in deliberative, persuasive ways. The course also focuses on analyzing arguments as a way to develop advanced writing strategies with the goal of becoming a lifelong learner of writing and rhetoric.

RWS 503W: Professional Writing—Professor Ornatowski and Professor Edwards

Sec 01: M 4:00 – 6:40 pm (Ornatowski), Sec 02: W 3:30 – 6:10 pm (Edwards)

In today's workplace, communication is often cited as the highest priority for employers, regardless of field. The ability to communicate clearly, competently, and persuasively with coworkers, clients, and other stakeholders is essential to your success and to that of the organization for which you work. In professional environments, you will often be called upon to propose ideas, solve problems, and collaborate with coworkers. At their core, all of these practices are rhetorical, requiring you to choose the most appropriate genre and approach for your audience. By focusing on the rhetorical demands of communication, this class will help you learn practical strategies for developing content and utilizing appropriate genres to serve multiple audiences. Importantly, this course will also focus on the design and arrangement of documents as an aide to usability and ethos, as well as on the development of communications' textual content. A linked sequence of assignments will help you investigate professional communication practices you will need on the job, to conduct research on an issue of professional interest, and to construct persuasive documents that seek action by convincing others of the value of your ideas and expertise.

RWS 504: Advanced Professional Writing—Professor Sheppard

Sec 01: TTh 2:00 – 3:15 pm

As a professional in any field, you will need to communicate clearly and persuasively, to propose ideas, to solve problems, to educate or inform others, and to collaborate with co-workers. Students in RWS 504 will explore advanced issues and approaches to professional communication. This course will continue to develop your knowledge of genres (e.g. reports,

instructions, memos, usability and design principles) and conventions (e.g., definitions, graphics, page designs) that are used across disciplines. By linking theory to practice, you will learn to interpret and respond to complex workplace situations while using problem-solving strategies.

RWS 506: Writing Internship—Professor Bekins

Sec 01: Arranged Time

The Writing Internship offers an intensive workplace experience in writing and/or editing documents under the joint supervision of an academic instructor and an on-site supervisor. The Writing Internship requires you to work 150 hours in a professional environment, utilizing rhetoric and writing skills to complete project(s) deliverables which will be posted in an online portfolio. During our class time, we will discuss your internship experiences, explore rhetorical frameworks for analyzing and producing texts that circulate across disciplines and writing cultures, and reflect on your experiences. In brief, this is a forum for problem-centered learning and as such, class time will be spent exchanging ideas, sharing information, and discussing problems/solutions. Assignments include—but are not limited to—a learning contract, project log, progress reports, a professional reflection, and a plan. This is a Credit/No Credit course.

RWS 508W: Scientific Writing—Professor Bekins

Sec 01: M 4:00 – 6:40 pm, Sec 02: W 4:00 – 6:40 pm

RWS 508W is designed to help upper-level students develop the writing skills needed for effective scientific communication in both academia and popular culture. The rhetorical nature of scientific communication is explored, as well as how science is communicated to the public. Together we will analyze how empirical research is portrayed across visual and print media (e.g. medical package inserts, science museums and films, IMRAD format within journal articles). Assignments include—but are not limited to—rhetorical analyses, presentations, annotated bibliographies, and research reports. The focus is on writing clearly, concisely, and effectively within the scientific disciplines.

RWS 509: Teaching Composition in Secondary Schools—Professor Bordelon

Sec 01: TTh 9:30 – 10:45 am

This course is designed as an introduction to the theory and practice of teaching writing in middle and high schools. RWS 509 includes a broad range of readings that will introduce you to the major trends in writing pedagogy over the past few decades. The class itself will be structured as a seminar and workshop. It will serve as a living laboratory for you to discover, test out, and discuss your ideas about teaching writing.

RWS 543: Rhetoric of Visual Composing—Professor Sheppard

Sec 01: TTh 11:00 – 12:15 pm

Visual messages are a powerful way to inform, persuade, and educate. Within professional settings, the ability to communicate effectively with supervisors, co-workers, clients, and public audiences through combinations of visual, textual, and technological elements is an invaluable skill. This course takes a rhetorical and professionally oriented approach to analyzing and communicating ideas through visual and multimodal means. Course readings introduce students to research on visual communication, basic design, and layout strategies for print, presentational, and online contexts, as well as the use of images and infographics to convey specialized content. Research and practitioner materials are used as a basis for evaluating the rhetorical choices in the visual communication work of others and for learning how to apply these concepts to visual composing projects common to the workplace. The focus throughout the course is on learning to evaluate and craft texts that integrate effective visual strategies to create user-friendly, informative, and persuasive texts for professional audiences. No prior design experience is required.

RWS 596 Special Topics in Rhetoric and Writing Studies—Professor Salas

Sec 01: 3:30 – 6:10 pm

The focus of the course in Fall of 2021 is Decolonial Rhetoric. Students will be introduced to theories and practices of decolonial rhetorical to critically think about key theoretical debates in decolonial theory and the convergence of this movement into the field of rhetoric and composition. The body of work of decolonial rhetoric is very large. Thus, this course will be neither comprehensive nor exhaustive. Instead, this course will provide a brief introduction to decolonial theory, then move on to the original intersections of rhetoric and postcolonial theory and end with the eventual move to rhetoric and decolonial theory. Concentrating on literacy, story, and composing, the course will then explore applications of decolonial rhetorics in the areas of Indigenous rhetoric and Latina/o rhetorics. All the readings have been chosen carefully, centering Latina/o and Indigenous to North American rhetorical scholarship.