

Boston University
College of General Studies
Team A
Office Hours: M 12-1, T 2-3, Th 9-10,
F 12-1, and by appointment

Professor Gillian Pierce
Office 221-A
Telephone: 353-4787
email: gpierce@bu.edu

Rhetoric 101: English Composition and Argument

Course Description:

Rhetoric 101 is designed to develop your close reading, critical thinking and expository writing skills. Assignments for this course will challenge you to develop reasoned and thoughtful responses to provocative and often difficult texts, using the elements of academic writing: thesis, evidence, analysis, structure, counterargument, sources, and style. The course will also provide practice in the mechanics of writing, and review of key grammatical points.

Our focus this semester will be on the essay form. Ever since Montaigne, who named his short prose writings "essais" (from the French verb "essayer," meaning to try or attempt), this genre has been characterized by innovation in form and diction. The essay is a "trying out" of forms and ideas, very often combining the voice of personal experience with evidence of a more academic kind. Most of the writing you do during your career at Boston University will necessarily be academic; the essays we read and write this semester will, I hope, help you begin to locate and develop your own unique voice within that academic discourse.

Required Texts and Materials:

Bartholomae, Donald and Petrosky, Anthony. Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers. 9th Edition. Boston: Bedford 2008.

Brittenham, Rebecca and Hoeller, Hildegard. Key Words for Academic Writers. New York: Pearson Education, 2004.

Lunsford, Andrea. The St. Martin's Handbook. 7th Edition. Boston: Bedford St, Martin's, 2011.

A folder for collecting drafts and prewriting exercises for each assignment.

An electronic portfolio.

Course Requirements and Policies:

Writing assignments: There will be four writing assignments for this course, each of which will demand several stages of writing – from brainstorming to final editing for style and grammar. You will complete at least several drafts of each assignment, and will submit all draft material along with your final version of each essay. The grade you receive will reflect not only the quality of the final product and how well you have met the criteria of a given assignment, but also (and perhaps more importantly) how seriously you have taken the revision process. This is not a cosmetic or superficial process of correcting typographical or grammatical errors. You will often be challenged to re-think the assumptions of your preliminary drafts and to restructure your essay completely, if necessary.

All writing assignments should be typed or word-processed and submitted in hard copy, using a plain font (such as Times New Roman), one-inch margins, double spacing, and 12-point type.

Note that deadlines for turning in rough and final drafts are firm, and that you will be penalized for turning work in late. Essays will be graded down one half-grade for each day the paper is late.

Electronic Portfolios: You will create and maintain an electronic portfolio of your work this semester using software provided by Digication. I will periodically assign work to be added to the portfolio and ask you to reflect on your progress as a writer at various stages. Additionally, I will ask you to keep a log of reading notes and reflections in your electronic portfolio to help you keep track of your development as a reader. Beyond these minimum requirements, I encourage you to use the portfolio as a way to record your academic and creative achievements throughout the semester. Each time you turn in written work, you should also add an electronic copy to the e-portfolio.

Attendance: Class attendance is mandatory, and is essential to your success in Rhetoric 101, as is active participation in class discussion and activities. More than three absences will lower your final grade by one letter grade for each additional absence, and excessive absences will result in a failing grade.

Classroom Etiquette: Please arrive on time for class, ready to participate in the day's activities. Have the course materials you need for the day out of your book bag and open to relevant assignments before class begins, so that we can make the best possible use of class time. Cell phones (and other technological distractions) should be turned off and put away before class begins.

Class Participation: I expect you to come to class having completed all reading and writing assignments and prepared to participate. Your contributions should be informed not only by your preparation outside of class, but also by thoughtful consideration of the contributions of others. If you are someone who has difficulty speaking up in class, it

may help you to prepare a list of comments that you wish to make ahead of time. Usually students find that once they have entered the dialogue, continued participation is easier. If, on the other hand, participation in class comes easily to you, pay attention to the quality of your comments and be sure that you are not dominating the conversation. Since Rhetoric 101 is designed to help you develop your oral as well as written skills, a significant portion of your final grade is based on class participation. Do not neglect this aspect of the course.

Presentations: You will be asked to participate in several oral presentations over the course of the semester and will lead class discussion at least once. These presentations will provide you with valuable practice in presenting your ideas orally in both impromptu and more formal situations. Discussion leaders will be evaluated based in part on how well they are able to engage others in a productive, insightful discussion of a topic or assignment.

Plagiarism: Never try to represent another person's words, ideas, or opinions as your own. Such academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and can result in your dismissal from Boston University. Please refer to the Student Handbook of the College of General Studies for a detailed policy statement on plagiarism. We will spend a good deal of class time discussing when and how to properly document sources.

Grading: I will calculate your final grade for this class based on the following percentages:

Essays: 60% (essay #1: 10%; essay #2: 15%; essay #3: 15%; essay #4: 20%)
Class Participation: 20%
Electronic Portfolio: 10%
Oral presentation: 10%

Schedule of Assignments

Week One: September 6-9

Course Introduction

“Essay” and “Reading” (Key Words pp. 68-72 and 132-137).

Discussion of note-taking

Read “Introduction” to Ways of Reading

Week Two: September 12-16

For Monday: Richard Miller, “Dark Night of the Soul” (in *Ways of Reading*)

For Tuesday: Visit www.bedfordstmartins.com/smhandbook and find the Exercise Central exercises. Complete Diagnostic Test A online for today.

“Argument,” “Audience” and “Thesis” (*Key Words* pp. 9-14, 25-30, and 176-180)

Thursday/Friday readings in *Ways of Reading*: Richard Miller, “Dark Night of the Soul”

Writing: 3-page analysis of Miller reading (due 9/19)

Week Three: September 19-23

For Monday: Richard Rodriguez, “The Achievement of Desire” (in *Ways of Reading*)

For Tuesday: Visit www.bedfordstmartins.com/smhandbook and complete Exercise Central online exercises for “The Top Twenty”

“Paragraphs” and “Voice” (*Key Words* pp. 114-118 and 187-191)

WOR readings: Richard Rodriguez, “The Achievement of Desire”

Writing: Brief response to Rodriguez: bring a hard copy to class and post on your e-portfolio

Week Four: September 26-30

For Monday: Richard Rodriguez, “The Achievement of Desire”

For Tuesday: “Revision” and “Introductions” (*Key Words* pp. 143-149 and 99-106)

WOR readings: Judith Butler, “Beside Oneself”

Writing: Draft for peer review (9/29 or 9/30)

Week Five: October 3-7

For Monday: Judith Butler, “Beside Oneself”

For Tuesday: “Metaphors” and “Interpretation” (*Key Words* pp. 110-114 and 94-99)

WOR readings: Walker Percy, “Loss of the Creature”

Writing: Instructor draft due

Week Six: October 10-14

No Class Monday, October 10 (Columbus Day –Observed)

For Tuesday: “Editing” (*Key Words* pp. 63-68)

WOR readings: Walker Percy, “Loss of the Creature” and Plato “Allegory of the Cave.”

Second essay due, final draft (thesis driven argument analyzing a single work emphasizing close analysis of selected passage (4-5 pages) due 10/8

Week Seven: October 17-21

St. Martin's Handbook readings on visual argument

Midterm activity: Agnès Varda, *The Gleaners and I*

For Thursday/Friday: brief response to film to be completed in e-portfolios

Week Eight: October 24-28

For Monday: Susan Griffin, "Our Secret" (in *Ways of Reading*)

For Tuesday: "Free writing" and "Brainstorming" (*Key Words* pp. 87-90 and 30-32)

WOR readings: Susan Griffin, "Our Secret"

Writing: First draft of third essay (peer review) (10/21 or 10/22)

Week Nine: October 31-November 4

For Monday: Susan Griffin, "Our Secret"

For Tuesday: "Evidence" and "Claims" (*Key Words* pp. 77-81 and 38-42)

WOR readings: Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone"

Writing: Instructor draft of third essay due 10/29

Week Ten: November 7-11

For Monday: Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone" (in *Ways of Reading*)

For Tuesday: "Conclusions" and "Titles" (*Key Words* pp. 42-45 and 180-183)

WOR readings: Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone"

Third essay due: thesis-driven argument analyzing a single work (5-7 pp.)

Week Eleven: November 14-18

For Monday: Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone"

For Tuesday: "Workshop" (*Key Words* pp. 191-194)

WOR Readings: Berger, "Ways of Seeing"

Week Twelve: November 21-25

For Monday: Berger, "Ways of Seeing" (in *Ways of Reading*)

For Tuesday: "Transitions" and "Synthesis" (*Key Words* pp. 183-187 and 172-176)

WOR readings: Berger "Ways of Seeing"

Writing: peer review draft of fourth paper due

Week Thirteen: November 28-December 2

For Monday: Paulo Freire, "The Banking Concept of Education" (in *Ways of Reading*)

For Tuesday: "Research" and "Quotation" (*Key Words* pp. 137-143, 130-132)

Writing due: Instructor draft of fourth essay due 12/2

Week Fourteen: December 5 – December 9

For Monday: “The Banking Concept of Education”

For Tuesday: Exercise Central “Diagnostic B”

WOR reading: “The Banking Concept of Education”

Writing due: e-portfolio self-assessment

Week Fifteen: December 12

Final discussion and wrap-up; self-evaluation

Essay #4 due: Thesis-based argument synthesizing several works (5-7 pages)