

Rhetoric 101

Boston University
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Office 509-A, Phone 617-353-6108
Team A
E-mail: jregan@bu.edu

John Regan, Ph.D.

Reading and writing are complementary acts that remain unfinished until completed by their reciprocals. The last thing I do when I write a text is to read it, and the act that completes my response to a text I am reading is my written response to it. Moreover, my writing is unfinished until it is read by others as well, whose responses may become known to me, engendering new textualities. We have an endless web here, of growth, and change, and interaction, learning and forgetting, dialogue and dialectic. Our task as teachers is to introduce students to this web, to make it real and visible for them, insofar as we can, and to encourage them to cast their own strands of thought and text into this network so that they will feel its power and understand both how to use it and how to protect themselves from its abuses.

Robert Scholes, Textual

Power

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Course Description: Rhetoric 101 will give you the opportunity to practice critical thinking through reading, writing, and speaking about academically challenging texts. Through this course you will improve your skills in reading comprehension, critical thinking, argument analysis, thesis development, organization, revision, and self-editing. Special emphasis will be placed on preparing you for a range of college writing assignments beyond your first year. This course is designed to prepare you for the type of writing that will most often encounter at Boston University—academic writing. You might want to think about academic writing as an on-going conversation that you have just entered. Just as in a conversation you need to listen for a little while before you are able to participate in any coherent sense, to write academically you first need to read and reflect on the issue at hand. Academic writing does not take place in a vacuum. Successful writing for this course—and for the vast majority of courses in your academic future—will depend on how well you situate your own ideas in relation to those of other writers.

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Required Materials

Barnet Sylvan and Bedau, Hugo. Current Issues and Enduring Questions. 9th Edition 2011. Bedford/St Martin's.

Lunsford, Andrea. The Saint Martin's Handbook. Bedford/St. Martin's 2008.

Course Requirements and Grading

The requirements and their respective weights in terms of your final grade are: Writing Projects (80%), E-Portfolio Short Responses (10%), and Class Participation/Class Work (10%).

Writing Projects:

You are required to complete four major Writing Projects: each are worth 20% of your final grade. One major assignment will include video and will be formatted using Digication e-portfolio software. Each writing project will include several steps (pre-writing, planning, drafting, revising, and editing,) and often two or more drafts (such as peer, instructor, and final). A major factor in your success is how you negotiate my suggestions for revision. Don't view revision as a chore in which you have to correct your "mistakes," but an opportunity to push yourself further. Be engaged and eager to revise. Think of revision as your reader asking for more, often a signal that your work has engaged your audience. In fact, the very best student writers are most often those who revise the most aggressively, often discarding weak paragraphs and substantially rearranging and reworking their remaining material.

All drafts should conform to the manuscript conventions as specified on the "Writing at the CGS" web site with one exception--I really prefer 12-point font. And don't use any "fancy" fonts; I reserve the right to make you reprint your paper if I have difficulty reading it. Stick to standard fonts such as Courier, Times New Roman, or Ariel. Please submit all work in hard copy form; do not e-mail work to me without prior authorization. Please save all drafts and final versions on a computer. Although I've handled thousands of student papers over the years and rarely misplace a paper, I sleep well at night because I operate under the assumption that you have a copy of your work. Late instructor or final drafts are penalized one-third of a letter grade for each calendar day late; please note, the late meter stops running when the paper is in my hands. Furthermore, while I do accept late instructor or final drafts, peer drafts CANNOT be late and those who do not have peer drafts will not get credit for that day's peer exercises.

E-Portfolio Short Responses: Periodically throughout the semester you will be assigned to add short response essays to your Digication e-portfolio. All students must maintain an e-portfolio at the College of General Studies, and I will show you how to set up and maintain your e-portfolio.

Class Participation and Class Work: Class participation and class work consists of your performance in discussions, exercises, reading quizzes, etc. Class work cannot be made up, and failure to attend a class will result in no credit for that day's class work. Discussions of the readings are an important pre-writing activity, and you will be assessed on the quality and quantity of your participation. In addition, you will evaluate assigned peers on their level of participation of discussion. I expect you to be considerate classmate who participates actively, respects the views of your peers, and perhaps encourage those who are more reticent. Another in-class requirement is peer review; during peer review workshops not only will your draft undergo a review designed to improve it, but as a reviewer you will get a deeper sense of what the assignment requires. Finally, reading quizzes may be given periodically and may or may not be announced.

Attendance: Attendance is crucial to your success in Rhetoric 101. Therefore, you are allowed three unexcused absences per term. More than three absences will lower your final grade by 1/3 a letter grade (for example, four absences reduces a C+ to a C, four

absences means a C-.) If in the unlikely event that you miss a class, you are responsible for all assignments that are due for that class and the homework for the following class. Please remember that since in-class work cannot be made up, you will lose credit for that day's in-class work. .

Academic Honesty: This course strictly adheres to the policy on academic honesty as stated in the Student Handbook of the College of General Studies catalog; please consult pages 15-21 a detailed policy statement. The bottom line is DO YOUR OWN WORK and DON'T TRY TO PASS OFF ANOTHER'S WORDS OR IDEAS AS YOUR OWN. We'll discuss the two types of plagiarism--accidental and intentional--and I'll show you how to avoid accidental plagiarism. As the Student Handbook makes clear, intentional plagiarism—knowingly trying to pass off someone else's words or ideas as your own—is a serious transgression.

Classroom Etiquette: You are expected to arrive to class **on time** and **prepared to work**. During my teaching career my students have consistently impressed me with their dedication and attentiveness, and I see no reason why this class should behave have any differently.

Office Hours: Once my schedule for team and departmental meetings is confirmed, I will notify you of my office hours for the semester. My office is 509A, right next door to the 509 classroom that we will meet in on Thursdays or Fridays. What I do know at this point is that I am not on campus on Weds, my professional research and development day. If you can't meet with me during regular office hours, please see me and I'll schedule a more convenient time for you. I am more than willing to come in early to meet with you.

A Note Regarding the Course Syllabus: I have arranged the syllabus via what we will do each week, not each day. I do not break it down by day because of inherent nature of this course; often one section will probe more deeply into the material than another and I encourage such discussions because ultimately it leads to better, more substantial papers. Conversely, I can “cover” material more quickly in docile sections, but mere “coverage” is not what I'm after—comprehension and synthesis are. In any event, I assure you that all major concepts will be addressed. Moreover, at the end of every class session, I will post on the board what is due for the next class session, and I often will tell you exactly what needs to be done for the next few class session.

Syllabus

September 2 and 3: Introduction to the Course. Writing Assessment Criteria: Organization, Development, and Sentence-Level.

Week of September 6: No class Monday Sept 6. Tuesday Writing Lab: Arrive having read Keen (p. 68) and page 71 in CIEQ. Diagnostic and e-portfolio set-up instruction. First E-Port Short Response Assigned. Purpose, Audience, and Tone. Thursday/Friday:

Writing Project #1 "What is Happiness?" begins: Read Chapter 34 in CIEQ (all selections from 983-1012) and Bloom (677).

Week of September 13: Continue Discussion of Chapter 34 readings. Topics for Writing project #1 distributed. Peer Draft of Writing Project #1 Due; Peer Review of Writing Project #1. Tuesday Writing Lab: 20 Common Errors.

Week of September 20: Instructor Draft of Writing Project #1 Due. Read . Writing Lab: Semi-Colons, Colons, and Dashes. Second short e-port assignment assigned.

Week of September 27: Instructor Draft of Writing Project #1 Returned; Writing Lab: Review of Material from Chapters 1, 2, and 3. Logos, Ethos, and Pathos. Read Chapter 4 Visual Rhetoric from CIEQ.

Week of October 4. Final of Writing Project #1 Due. Begin E-Port Version of WP#1. Introduction to Writing Project #2: The Rhetoric of Political Campaign Commercials. Read assigned selections from Chapters 1, 2,3 and 4 from CIEQ. Review select political ads. Discussion of visual rhetoric. Writing Lab: Sentence length and Structure. Analyzing and Evaluating Logos, Ethos, and Pathos in Campaign Rhetoric.

Week of October 11: No classes Monday Oct. 11. Follow Monday schedule on Tues. Oct. 12. Read Logical Fallacies section of CIEQ. Writing Lab: Sentence Length and Variety.

Week of October 18: Instructor Draft of WP#2 Due. "Surprise" Film Week and E-Portfolio Response to Film. Project #2 Returned.

Week of Oct 25: Complete Writing Project #2. *Updated syllabus for the second half of the course distributed.* Read Ephron (167). Begin Writing Project #3: The Rhetoric of Gay Marriage. Read Stoddard (721), Schiffrin (724), Goodman (727), Jacoby (729) and Cartoon Portfolio (732) from CIEU.
Read CQ Researcher article (to be distributed) and select documents from the Human Rights Campaign and National Organization for Marriage.

Week of November 1: Continue Writing Project #3. Writing Lab: TBA

Weeks of November 8, 15, and 22: Continue and Complete Writing Project #3. Writing Lab Activities: TBA

Week of Nov. 29: Begin Writing Project #4: Argument Analysis. Writing Lab: TBA.

Week of Dec 6: Writing Project #4 is due for All Sections on Friday, Dec.10, our last class session. There is no final exam for this course.

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