Rhetoric and Writing Studies RWS 1301
CRN: 12162

Instructor Information

Name: Jon Nehls
Email: jsnehls@utep.edu
Phone: (915) 747-6253
Office Hours: Hedspeth Hall 222, Thursday from 8:30 to 10:30 am and 1:30 to 2:30 pm

Program Overview

At UTEP, the **First-Year Composition (FYC) program** in the English department offers two first-year courses that are typically taken as a sequence, RWS 1301—Rhetoric and Composition I and RWS 1302—Rhetoric and Composition II. These courses are intended to help students develop and reflect upon their rhetorical and writing knowledge including awareness of social and racial justice, and the implications of their language choices when they write, based on the understanding that language is never neutral. Therefore, we teach writing as a complex activity through which students are given guidance and often collaborate. Drawing on the rich scholarship of Rhetoric and Writing Studies, we have designed our courses to help students address the challenges of 21st century composing. In these courses, students are empowered to determine the most effective strategies, arrangements, and media to use in different rhetorical contexts.

The FYC program reminds students that the primary purpose of these classes are the learning and practice of writing. The Conference on College Composition and Communication together with the Council of Writing Program Administrators state:

> *Writing classes teach writing: Principally, writing classes foreground writing itself as a complex, distributed activity premised upon sociality and community formation, processes and materials, flexibility, and ethical communication. Writing classes may involve participants in purposeful interpersonal interactions (discussions and conversations), writing-related activities (peer review, studying features in model texts), and interpreting texts (making meaning individually or together with others); however, the activity of writing itself continues to be central to what a writing class sponsors.*
>   CCCC and CWPA Joint Statement in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

● *And we are…*

The First-Year Composition Program is geographically and discursively situated in the US-Mexico borderland and offers a binational and transnational experience through culture, language, and knowledge. We are committed both to learning from students and to building our program in a way that honors what they bring with them into the classroom and encourages them to make their voices heard in the university and beyond. Our vision is to collectively journey toward the practice of self-reflexivity, listening carefully and empathically to the ideas and experiences that challenge our thinking, and to engage various rhetorical practices and genres of traditional and non-traditional writing. The program's

curriculum design encourages students to imagine the possibilities of speaking, listening, and being heard through different literacies and compositions. We invite students to explore topics from local, global, and disciplinary contexts that matter to them while learning effective writing skills and being mindful of their own situations and audiences.

RWS 1301 & 1302 Learning Outcomes

1) Students will reflect on and critically analyze their own language experiences.
2) Students will synthesize information about racial and ethnic biases and other social justice issues and confront these issues in their writing.
3) Students will demonstrate engagement with multiple media sources through their projects, including, but not limited to, digital resources.
4) Students will identify relevant research sources and opportunities from their lived experiences, their campus interactions, and their engagement within their communities.
5) Students will apply knowledge from local communities to research broader social issues demonstrating their critical awareness.

Rhetoric & Composition 1 (RWS 1301) Course Description

Rhetoric & Composition 1 (RWS 1301) is designed to help students in all disciplines reach their academic and professional goals as writers. Course assignments invite students to explore cultural, political, linguistic, racial, and social issues through topics that appeal to their interests and sense of civic responsibility as members of various academic and non-academic communities.

The curriculum consists of these 5 modules.

MODULE 1 – Taking Inventory

- Exploring texts
- Experimenting with multimedia
- Collaborative project on studying texts, authorship, and the idea of composition

MODULE 2 – Autoethnographic Study of Self and Language Experiences

- Language and literacy – relationship to home and language
- Looking back on your linguistic identities
- How do linguistic and cultural experiences affect your ideas about what it means to write in college?

MODULE 3 – Remixing the Self Study

- Adapting to another audience—audience analysis
- Examining an alternative genre –genre analysis
- Composing in a new medium
- Rhetorical analysis

MODULE 4 – Social Issue Investigation

- Identifying an issue of personal and social concern
- Interrogating assumptions, biases, and representations through topic research
- Report with annotated bibliography for future study

MODULE 5 – Visual argument

- Creating infographic, PSA, or alternative visual project
- Presentation of infographics and PSAs

Required Texts & Materials

UTEP First-Year Composition Handbook, 2024-2025 edition. An e-book available through the Redshelf.com
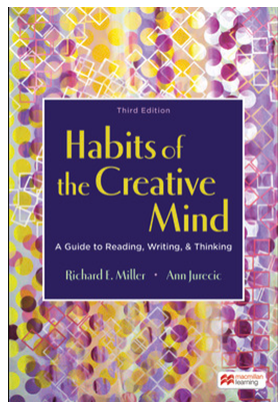
Miller, R. E., & Jurecic, A. (2023). Habits of the Creative Mind: A Guide to Reading, Writing, & Thinking (3rd ed.) Available at the UTEP Bookstore.
Additional required readings may also be posted on Blackboard.

Course Assignments and Grading

Assignment #1 Literacy Narrative (100 points)
Assignment #2: Choosing a Topic for the Semester (as part of the participation points)
Assignment #3: Rhetorical and Visual Analysis paper (100 points)
Assignment #4: Annotated Bibliography (100 points)
Assignment #5: Global Issues Report (100 pts)
Assignment #6: Public Service Announcement: (150 points)

Class Participation, Minor Assignments, Attendance (250 points): 100 points of your participation grade will come from attendance and participation in class discussion and activities, with the remaining 100 points coming from participation in assignments and peer review.

Reading Journal (100 points)
Typically once a week you will write a journal entry of 150-300 words in response to writing prompts related to readings. These responses will not be graded based on content, but on apparent effort; you will receive credit if you make your post before midnight Sunday the week for which it is assigned. This assignment is an attempt to get you writing and thinking about the process of writing without worrying about evaluation.

Grade Distribution—Students can earn a total of 1000 points for the course

1000-900 = A   *899-800* **= B**   **799 -700 = C**   **699-600 = D**   *599* **and below = F**

Course Delivery

While most classes will be held face-to-face on campus. There are a few sections that are designated as online. Those classes may meet synchronously while others may meet asynchronously through Blackboard. Whether face-to-face or online, the course is designed to engage students through discussions with your classmates and instructor using Blackboard (Bb). In order to succeed in the course, you will need to have regular use of the internet and a stable connection regardless of whether your class meets face-to-face or online. Although you can use the Blackboard App on your phone, it is highly recommended that you compose your work for class, and perform class activities, via a computer. If you don't have a computer or reliable internet at home, the university can help you with resources: ***Technology Support - UTEP***. Please speak with your instructor immediately if you will need assistance. We want you to have the opportunity to succeed in class without concern about access. There are also computers available for you to use in the library on campus.

Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the Help Desk as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students.

Students can prepare by taking the Blackboard Student Orientation
(https://www.utep.edu/extendeduniversity/cid/student-resources/blackboard-orientation.html

Submitting Work

All work will be submitted through the Bb course shell for this class. Since Bb comment and grade function works best with Microsoft Word, or as a pdf, please submit all assignments in Microsoft Word following APA format unless directed otherwise. Be sure to name each submitted assignment with your name and the title of the assignment.

Late Work

- Assignments will be due at midnight on the date they are assigned. All due dates can be found on the class calendar in Blackboard
- Students who fail to submit assignments on time will not receive feedback on performance.
- Be sure to submit all major assignments in order to pass this class.

Late work will be accepted based on the following chart:

Late Work Timeline	Deductions	Type of Assignment	Late Work Rule
1 Day	10%	Major Papers, Readings, Drafts, Homework	Accepted
2-7 Days	20%	Major Papers, Readings, Drafts, Homework	Accepted
1-2 Weeks	30%	Major Papers	Accepted
2 Weeks or more	50%	Major Papers	Accepted

Extra Credit

Throughout the semester there will be a number of extra credit opportunities available. Each extra credit submission will be worth 10 points, for a total of 50 points by the end of the course, or 5% of the total grade. Extra credit can be earned by attending cultural events, workshops, and lectures on the UTEP campus, and in the El Paso, Las Cruces and Juárez communities. Extra credit can also be earned by submitting work for revision at the University Writing Center.

Participation

Participation is a major component of this class, but how you participate is (in part) up to you. In-class discussions, contributions to discussion boards, and correspondence with me will all be factored into participation. Respect for the classroom space -- helping to create an environment where other students can learn -- will be considered, as well.

Classroom Etiquette

Debate, critical inquiry, and intellectual diversity are essential elements to higher education and a process of learning. There is the potential during this course for controversial and sensitive topics to

be discussed during small group or whole class interaction (whether face-to-face or online), and to surface through discussion board postings. You are expected to demonstrate respect and courtesy for your peers and instructor when they express differing arguments, viewpoints, and/or experiences. Sexist, racist, homophobic, or other hateful speech will not be permitted. Angry displays, whether in writing, online postings, or in class discussions will be handled as disruptions to the wellbeing of the class and responded to as negative participation.

University and Program Policies

FYC Class Attendance Policy

According to UTEP's [Curriculum and Classroom Policies](#):
The student is expected to attend all classes and laboratory sessions. It is the responsibility of the student to inform each instructor of extended absences. When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor can drop the student from the class with a grade of W before the course-drop deadline or with a grade of F after the course-drop deadline.
Please consult UTEP's [Curriculum and Classroom Policies](#) for more information regarding Excused Absences for University-Recognized Activities, Absence for Religious Holy Days, and Military Leave.

Attendance is mandatory for all freshman-level courses. Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to participate in discussions and workshops. The class discussions will help students learn to improve their writing, often through the discussion of a sample student project (sometimes the student's, sometimes one written by a classmate).

In addition, the First-Year Composition Program has developed the following policies that should be adhered to strictly by all instructors:

For Face-to-Face Classes:
Students are entitled to a single week of unexplained absences without penalty (for example, 3 classes missed in a three-times-a-week class, 2 classes missed in twice-a-week class, 1 class missed in a once-a-week class).

After 2 total weeks of absence (not necessarily consecutive classes) the student's grade is lowered by a full letter (A becomes B, etc.).

After 3 total weeks of absence (not necessarily consecutive), the student is automatically dropped from class.

Missing a scheduled conference with the instructor constitutes an absence.

For Hybrid courses
The attendance policy for hybrid courses aligns with the structure for face-to-face courses with each missed weekly class meeting constituting absence from a week of class.

The program recommends that the student contact the instructor to discuss the attendance policy and how it applies in cases in which it is not possible to attend a weekly class meeting, while continuing to maintain robust participation in class activities. [see also online courses]

For Online courses
In an online class, attendance is measured by participation in class activities. The attendance policy for online courses aligns with the structure for face-to-face courses, with each missed week of class activities constituting absence from a week of class.

The instructor can measure participation through various pathways, such as completion of scaffolded activities and discussion posts, and responding to other students' posts and feedback. We also recommend measuring course activity by using the Course Reports feature on Blackboard, particularly the Course Activity Overview.

When it becomes evident that it is not possible to participate in class, the program recommends that the student contact the instructor to discuss the attendance policy and how it applies, before resuming robust participation in class activities.

Drop Policy
If you cannot complete this course for whatever reason, please contact your instructor. Your instructor can help you with the drop process and you can contact the Registrar's Office. If you do not drop, you are at risk of being dropped by the instructor and possibly receiving an "F" for the course.

Academic Integrity

The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Instructors are required to report the suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Affairs. Visit the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution page for more information on Academic integrity.

The First-Year Composition Program fundamentally trusts its students and strives to create dynamic classroom experiences and writing opportunities rooted in the values of inquiry and critical thinking. We agree deeply with Anna R. Mills' (2023) claim, in the Chronicle of Higher Education, that "writing practice continues to be intensely rewarding for students and central to intellectual growth in college."

Because of the rapid pace of change represented by ChatGPT and similar programs, it is necessary to set clear program standards regarding their use in our classes. Specifically, the FYC Program recognizes that language models hold educational value that can be explored in the classroom, such as narrowing down a topic idea or critically analyzing the quality of an AI-generated text. However, our program maintains a clear expectation that all assignment submissions must constitute original pieces of writing composed by the student-author.

By this standard, an acceptable use of ChatGPT (or a similar program) could take the form of

- writing an introduction paragraph that openly describes how this language model offered possible approaches to researching a particular topic, with any direct quotes placed in quotation marks.

By contrast, an unacceptable use of ChatGPT (or a similar program) could take the form of

- copying any amount of text from a language model without attribution, i.e. failure to include quotation marks around any directly quoted language, and an in-text citation for any paraphrased or quoted text (including text generated by ChatGPT or another language model).

FYC faculty are required to submit any assignment submissions that appear to include unacceptable uses of AI programs (or that are marked for further review by AI detection programs that our faculty are trained with) to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR).

Accommodations

UTEP is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Students are encouraged to visit CASS in room 106, Union East Building or contact them at 747-5148 or cass@utep.edu.

University Writing Center

UTEP's University Writing Center (UWC) offers free writing tutoring assistance for all UTEP students. The tutors are undergraduate and graduate students who can help with all parts of a writing assignment, including prewriting, organizing, revising, and editing. They can also help to understand any writing assignment and help work on comprehending difficult textbook material. Go to *University Writing Center - UTEP* to make an appointment with a writing center consultant.

Military Students

If you are a military student (veteran, dependent, active) please visit the Military Student Success Center. I also recognize the complexities of being a student veteran. If you are a student veteran, please inform me if you need special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, complications with GI Bill disbursement, and other unforeseen military and veteran-related developments can complicate your academic life. If you make me aware of a complication, I will do everything I can to assist you or put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you.

Student Pregnancy and Parenting Nondiscrimination Policy

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations.

Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

Course Support Resources

Title IX	915-747-8358	*Institutional Compliance*
Dean of Students	915-747-5648	*Dean of Students*
UTEP Health & Wellness Center	915-747-5624	https://www.utep.edu/chs/shc/ studenthealth@utep.edu
UTEP Police Department	915-747-5611	https://www.utep.edu/police/ police@utep.edu
Counseling and Psychological Services	915-747-5302	https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/ caps@utep.edu

Academic Calendar Fall 2024

Aug 26th   Fall classes begin

Aug 26th-30th   Late registration period (fees are incurred)

Sept 2nd   Labor Day holiday - University Closed

Sept 11th   Fall Census Day

Oct 4th   Graduation application deadline for degree conferral

Oct 23rd   Freshman Midterm grades are due

Nov 1st   Fall Drop/Withdrawal deadline

Note: Student-initiated drops are permitted after this date, but the student is not guaranteed a grade of W. The faculty member of record will issue a grade of either W or F.

Nov 28-29th   Thanksgiving Holiday - University Closed

Dec 5th   Fall last day of classes

Course Schedule

Weekly Schedule (Provisional--Subject to change) |

HCM: Habits of the Creative Mind; FYC: The First-Year Composition Handbook

Week	Topic	Readings	Writing
Week 1 Aug 26	Introductions Syllabus Review Blackboard Literacy Narrative	Literacy Narrative Assignment Guidelines FYC: page vi "Indigenous Land Acknowledgement Statement" FYC: Page 111, Sedaris' "Me Talk Pretty One Day" FYC: Page 109, Anzaldua's "How to Tame a Wild Tongue." Tan's "Mother Tongue"	Syllabus Quiz Reading Responses
Week 2 Sep 2	Literacy Narrative Examples	Malcolm X's "Learning to Read" Alexie "SuperMan and Me" HCM Chapter 1 Orienting FYC: pages 56-58.	Reading Responses Reading Journal
Week 3 Sep 9	Writing Process	HCM Chapter 2 Beginning	Drafting the Literacy Narrative

Week	Topic	Readings	Writing
Week 4 Sep 16	Semester Topic/ Rhetorical Analysis	Rhetorical Analysis Assignment Guidelines FYC: pages 139-141. HCM Chapter 3 Paying Attention	Semester Topic Proposal Literacy Narrative Final due
Week 5 Sep 23	Rhetorical Analysis	HCM Chapter 4 Questioning Student Example	Visual Analysis Proposal due
Week 6 Sep 30	Peer-review	HCM Chapter Chapter 5 Exploring	Visual Analysis Rough Draft, Peer-Review, and Visual Analysis Final Draft due
Week 7 Oct 7	Global Issues Report / Annotated Bib	Annotated Bibliography Assignment Guidelines Global Issues Report Assignment Guidelines FYC: Pages 158-161. HCM Chapter Chapter 6 Connecting	Global Issues Proposal due
Week 8 Oct 14	Research Evaluating Sources	Research and Libraries HCM Chapter 7 Working Deliberately	Evaluating Sources
Week 9 Oct 21	Annotated Bibliography	HCM Chapter 8 Reflecting	Annotated Bib Final Draft due

Week	Topic	Readings	Writing
Week 10 Oct 28	APA / Plagiarism (Course drop date 3/28)	Devoss and Rossati, "'It wasn't me, was it?'" Plagiarism and the Web." Student Example HCM Chapter 9 Persisting	Global Issues Report Draft
Week 11 Nov 4	Revision	Global Issues Report Assignment Guidelines HCM Chapter 10 Organizing	Global Issues Rough Draft, Peer-Review and Final Draft Due
Week 12 Nov 11	Public Service Announcement	PSA Assignment Guidelines HCM Chapter 11 Speculating FYC pages 174-178.	PSA Proposal due
Week 13 Nov 18	Visual Rhetoric	I-Movie Tutorial HCM Chapter 12 Playing	Storyboard Due
Week 14 Nov 25	Technology for visual rhetoric	PSA Assignment Guidelines	Public Service Announcement Due
Week 15 Dec 2	Reflection		Semester and Reading Reflection Due
Week 16 Dec 9	All late work due		