

RWS 200 Fall 2024



Instructor: Chris Werry SH114C

Course Location: SH 126

Office Hrs: Th 9.00-11.00 ([to schedule](#))

Email: cwerry@sdsu.edu

Schedule SH126 M/W 2.00-3.15

Zoom: [Zoom link](#)

- "Argument is the essence of education and central to democratic culture." Christopher Lasch

- "I can win an argument on any topic, against any opponent. People know this, and steer clear of me at parties. Often, as a sign of their great respect, they don't even invite me." Dave Barry

Course Materials

- 1) Readings, handouts, and online materials are free and available on the [class wiki](#). Note that this is where you will find everything - schedule, assignments, texts, etc. Consult it regularly. Canvas will be used mostly for the discussion board and announcements.
- 2) [Canvas class page](#), [wiki](#), [RWS200 Google Drive](#)
- 3) Digital Textbook [Reading, Writing, and Evaluating Argument](#). Free and open source.
- 4) Subscription to [MyEssayFeedback.ai](#) (\$12 for the semester)

What is the Story of this Course?

The ability to communicate clearly, knowledgeably, and persuasively with professors, employers, clients, and other audiences is essential to success. You will often be called upon to investigate ideas from a variety of sources, demonstrate understanding of complex texts, and make convincing arguments. All of these practices are rhetorical, requiring you to adjust your approach based on audience, purpose, and context. In this course we will explore rhetorical "lenses" for interpreting and analyzing arguments. You will write often and receive feedback from your instructor, your peers, and A.I. writing "coaches."

Students will introduce texts and give brief, informal presentations. At the end of the semester, you should feel that you have read some stimulating arguments, participated in interesting conversations, and done some writing of which you feel proud.

How Class is Organized

Much of our class time involve discussing and analyzing texts. Students will occasionally introduce readings or give short, informal presentations. There will also be some "writing workshops" where you will experiment with A.I. tools and work on drafts and your A.I. reflection journal. You will complete assessed work in these workshops and advance your participation grade, so it's important

to attend them. **At workshops I'll often bring snacks & baked goods for energy and encouragement.**

You Will Use Google Docs/Folders to Write & Submit Work

I have created [Google folders](#) for your work. **It is essential you do most of your writing in these folders using Google docs.** Your reflections, drafts, revisions, and everything completed in class should be done in these folders and composed mostly or entirely in Google docs. Your [Google folder](#) is also where you will compose discussion board posts, hand in drafts, receive feedback, and do peer review. This will allow me to comment on your work and see its development. I have provided an "index" file in your Google folder that you will use to organize and create links to all your work.

How to be Successful

1. It is important you attend most classes. This is a seminar class, not a lecture class. Much assessed work will occur in class, thus steady, sustained effort is key.
2. You will compose drafts, final papers, and homework in the [Google Drive folder](#) made for you. You will create links to this work in an "index file" I have created for you. **Do not save or store any work as PDFs.** I can't comment on them and won't accept work in this format.
3. If you miss class, you are responsible for knowing what was covered and what is due. I recommend exchanging contact info with two of your classmates. Check your email, the course wiki and Canvas regularly.
4. If you are blindsided by a problem that makes it hard to meet a deadline, contact me **before the work is due.**

Writing with Generative A.I.

A.I. is being integrated into the workplace, education, and civic life. We will face the challenge head-on, analyzing arguments about A.I. and its impact on writing and learning. We will test various A.I. writing tools, some of which are new and experimental. This will require a willingness to experiment and improvise. You will be invited to write with A.I., to incorporate it into your composing and reading processes, and (most importantly) to document and reflect on this. We will explore ways of using it for brainstorming, outlining, researching, revising, feedback, and editing.

You must consistently document, acknowledge and reflect on your use of A.I. tools. This means detailing when and how prompts were used, outputs, revisions and adaptations. Remember that AI tools often generate inaccurate or made-up results, so always check output against reliable sources. You must understand and be able to defend A.I.-generated or adapted material. We will discuss this further in class. If you have questions, please contact me.

Student Writing and Assessment

I hope to de-emphasize assessment and focus on your writing by using "contract grading." Thus the "default" grade in this course is a "B." This can be achieved by completing writing tasks on time, participating regularly, and putting in a consistent level of effort. You can of course achieve a higher (or lower) grade. *See the sections below on contract grading and assessment for more details.*

Traditional grading can make students less willing to take risks or make mistakes. It can sometimes lead away from "authentic" writing. This is writing that could (potentially) find an audience beyond the class. I will explain how you can (if you wish) share your work more broadly – in [FLEX](#), SDSU's journal of first year writing, or sites like [Medium.com](#). This could be aspirational – your writing for this class might get you part of the way to such a goal. As we read and discuss texts in class, I encourage you to think about how you might use them as part of a final paper that interests you.

Discussion Board Work (150 pts)

Your [discussion board](#) posts will help prepare for class discussions writing projects. Posts are due by 11.30 the night before class. For Monday classes, that means Sunday 11.30, and for Wednesday classes, Tuesday 11.30.

1. You will compose two kinds of post:
 - a. Primary posts. These are developed, thoughtful pieces of writing that are around 300 words (more is fine). They should be spellchecked and clear, but don't need to be polished.
 - b. Responses: you will sometimes be asked to respond to two or more peers' primary posts.
2. For discussion board posts, you should compose them first in Google docs, in your [Google folder](#), then copy to the discussion board. It is important that you post in both places.
3. [This rubric for discussion board posts](#) explains how I will evaluate them.

A.I. Reflection Journal (150 pts)

Reflect regularly on your use of A.I. both inside and outside class. Use [Google Drive folder](#) for this. Note when you use A.I., what you used it for, keep copies of the prompts you use, the results, and document experiences/thoughts. Reflect on the relative effectiveness of different tools and strategies. Include prompts and outputs in Google doc files organized by date and include the dates in the file names.

Some of your A.I. Reflection Journal work can be assembled on writing workshop days. You are welcome to reflect on experiences in other classes or the workplace. Installments of your A.I. Reflection Journal are due on the following dates:

A.I. Reflection Journal part 1	Sept 30
A.I. Reflection Journal part 2	Nov 11
A.I. Reflection Journal part 3	Dec 15

Four Main Writing Assignments (650 points)

Assignment 1	09/18 (part 1) and 09/30 (part 2)
Assignment 2	10/14
Assignment 3	11/11
Assignment 4	12/15

Assessed Work

Assignment 1 Part 1: A.I. Group Presentation (rubric) Part 2: Rhetorical Analysis	09/18 09/30	100 100
Assignment 2	10/14	150
Assignment 3	11/11	150
Assignment 4 Final Paper	12/13	150
A.I. Reflection Journal	09/13, 11/11, 12/13	150
Discussion Board Posts (Assessment rubric for posts)		150
Participation, discussion, presentations, in class writing		50
Total		1000

Important Due Dates

Sept 18 & 23	Assignment 1 Part 1: (Presentations) Rubric for presenting
Sept 30	Assignment 1 Part 2 & A.I. Reflection Journal Part 1
Oct 14	Assignment 2
Nov 11	Assignment 3 & A.I. Reflection Journal Part 2
Dec 09 and 11	Student Presentations (Brief & Informal)
Dec 13	Assignment 4 & A.I. Reflection Journal Final

Contract Grading Rubric

Conditions for a B

- Complete approx. 80% discussion board posts/homework at a “[satisfactory](#)” level.
- Complete all major papers, and the AI reflection journal, demonstrating effort and adherence to guidelines.
- Attend and participate in most class activities, including presentations and group work.

Conditions for an A

- Complete 90% of homework and discussion board posts at an “[exemplary](#)” level.
- Attend and participate in most class activities, including presentations and group work.
- Complete the major papers and AI reflection journal, demonstrating preparation, effort, and consistently strong writing.
- Attend conferences to discuss your writing.

Note: if you do not submit work that meets the conditions for a B you can achieve a lower grade.

Grade Distributions

A	93-100%
A-	90-92
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	60-66%
F	Below 60%

RWS 200 Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes for RWS 200 reflect the goals described in SDSU's GE Program and advance the program's objective of helping students attain "essential skills that underlie all university education." By the end of RWS 200 students should be able to:

- Analyze a variety of print and digital texts to articulate relationships between an argument's elements and the contexts within which the argument was created.
- Analyze rhetorics of global and structurally marginalized communities, with particular attention to the ways rhetoric creates, enforces, and disrupts power relationships historically and contemporarily.
- Evaluate both print and digital arguments through a process of critical inquiry, examining the arguments in their original contexts and in the context of other arguments in order to discover relationships between texts.
- Locate, evaluate, and synthesize material from sources related to a public discussion in order to generate and support arguments.
- Contribute an informed argument to an ongoing public discussion by identifying and assessing the rhetorical context for an issue.
- Compose a variety of texts, including elements of digital and/or non-print text, through a multi-stage recursive process.
- Employ conventions of academic writing in rhetorically purposeful ways.

Resources

Writing & Tutoring

1. SDSU Writing Center, Love Library, Room LA 1103 (next to the Circulation Desk).
For more information visit <http://writingcenter.sdsu.edu/>. Appointments can be made online.
2. The Excelsior Online Writing Lab site, <https://owl.excelsior.edu/>
3. The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Disabled students: every attempt will be made to offer reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities in this course. Students with disabilities who may need accommodation in this class are encouraged to notify the instructor privately and to contact the Student Ability Success Center as soon as possible. SASC staff are available in the Capulli Center in Suite 3101 or by phone at (619) 594-6473 (voice) or (619) 594-2929 (TTD/TTY). If you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the Student Ability Success Center. Please note that accommodation is not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter.

Counseling: there are many events and situations that put additional stress on being a student. SDSU has an excellent center for Counseling & Psychological Services that is open to students Monday through Friday from 8am-4:30pm. To set up an initial consultation, call (619) 594-5220. For immediate or emergency help, you are welcome to use San Diego's free 24-hour counseling access line at (800) 479-3339. C&PS on campus also has a "Center for Well-Being" with multiple stations for relaxation if you are feeling stressed during the semester. C&PS is located in the Capulli Center, Room 4401.

Student Success Ability Center: https://newscenter.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/sds/

The Economic Crisis Response Team, or ECRT, is a group of staff, administrators, students, and faculty from across campus working together to ensure that students experiencing food or housing insecurity, or other immediate, unforeseen financial crises are connected with short-term and long-term aid quickly and without stigmatization: <https://sa.sdsu.edu/ecrt>

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The [Black Resource Center](#) strives to promote Black Excellence and to provide a safe and welcoming environment where students, staff, and faculty of the African diaspora can congregate, collaborate, and cultivate a unified community. The BRC promotes intellectual exploration and academic achievement through educational, scholarship, and research initiatives; professional and career development strategies; and leadership and service opportunities. Contact (619) 594-3502.

The [Native Resource Center](#) provides transformational experience for Native students, including academic support and research opportunities, engaged faculty and administrative mentors, Internships and career assistance, seminars, workshops, field trips and study abroad experiences, culturally responsive leadership development, peer to peer mentoring, traditional tribal gatherings, scholarship opportunities, community graduation ceremony. (619) 594-3188.

The [Asian Pacific Islander Desi America Resource Center \(APIDA\)](#) strives to increase the visibility and voice of APIDA students and enable the academic success of APIDA students through the promotion of academic engagement and retention effort.

The Latinx Resources Center supports Latinx students throughout their journey at SDSU to thrive academically, socially, and mentally, with a commitment to intersectionality, equity as well as social and racial justice. ysanchezgarcia@sdsu.edu
<https://diversity.sdsu.edu/cultural-centers/latinx-resource>

The Veteran's Center is committed to supporting military, military veterans, military spouses, and dependent children in the areas of higher education in outreach/admission, GI Bill benefits, academic success, graduation, and a career.

The Pride Center creates, sustains, and strengthens an open, inclusive, safe, and affirming gathering space and campus environment for persons of all sexual and gender identities and their allies.

Project Rebound is a special admissions and support program for students impacted by the justice system, or transitioning out of prisons and jails. Project Rebound provides continuing students an opportunity to “give back” by collaborating on outreach, public education, and holistic justice solutions.

The Women's Resource Center strives to provide a vibrant, brave, and inclusive space that educates, empowers, and advocates for women's rights. The Women's Resource Center (WRC) career staff and student leaders engage students in discourse and programs that help create a campus culture rooted in gender justice. The WRC partners and collaborates with faculty, staff, alumni, and community members, linking San Diego State University with the larger San Diego community.

The Undocumented Resource Center is open to all undocumented students (including those with mixed-status families), faculty/staff, and allies as well as the community at large. We strongly advocate for creating a sense of community. The Undocumented Resource Area (URA) services are developed to improve persistence and graduation as well as offer a safe space where students can connect with one another and their allies. [See the web site.](#)

Athletics: Student athletes have demanding, dynamic schedules. That being said, student athletes are still required to complete their work in order to pass this class. Regular and effective communication is essential.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT: For millennia, the Kumeyaay people have been a part of this land. This land has nourished, healed, protected and embraced them for many generations in a relationship of balance and harmony. As members of the San Diego State community, we acknowledge this legacy. We promote this balance and harmony. We find inspiration from this land; the land of the Kumeyaay.
