

**Writing 100D: Practical Rhetoric**  
Spring 2008

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Hours: M-F - 10:30. – 11:20 a.m.  
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**Content and approach**

As its title is meant to suggest, this section will focus on rhetoric as a way of thinking, of reading, and of writing. We will emphasize practical (as opposed to theoretical) rhetoric; that is to say that we will practice it – in many senses of “practice.” Your study and practice of rhetoric in this class will help you not only in this class but also throughout your college career and beyond, as I think you will come to see for yourself.

In addition to the outcomes listed in the Guidelines for Writing 100 document, here are the learning outcomes I see as specific to WRIT100D:

(Thinking)

- understand rhetoric as a way of knowing
- see how aspects of personal identity are rhetorical
- see how symbolic deployment works to signify personal identity
- analyze texts (literary and cultural)
- apply ideas from *Rhetoric: A User's Guide* to contemporary life

(Writing)

- analyze the rhetorical strategies of pieces of writing done by yourself and others
- analyze the rhetorical features of personal identity
- analyze texts (literary and cultural)
- produce at least one piece of persuasive writing

As means to these ends, WRIT100D will involve the following assignments and projects:

- significant and careful reading
- journals or learning logs
- four essay projects
- a semester portfolio

The writing projects will be developed both through your individual work in and out of class and through small group workshops in class. Two of these projects will involve research and formal documentation. Portfolios are semester-long projects; in effect, you will be working on or toward your portfolio as you work on each writing project. But your portfolio will also include journal entries and some additional reflective writing in the form of a cover letter to your teacher that introduces and discusses your portfolio. In all your formal writing—individual projects and final portfolios—the most important qualities you are to learn and demonstrate are *completeness*, *commitment* to your writing, and *attention to the writing process*.

Many of our class meetings will be workshops, in which you will be both giver and receiver of advice about writing. In workshops, writers will help other writers. This approach should gain you greater *awareness and control* over your own writing, greater sensitivity to writing problems and their solutions, and a heightened sense of the power of the writing process.

## Responsibility and attendance

For the workshops and discussions to benefit you, your regular and prompt attendance is crucial. Please be in your seat with your day's work in front of you ready to start at 11:30 a.m. each day. You are responsible for all material assigned or covered in any class you miss, whether the absence is excused or not. Whenever possible, contact me in advance if you are going to miss class

## Grades and requirements

To try to keep the attention on your writing, I prefer to use a grade contract for WRIT100D. This means that a minimum semester grade is achieved by doing all assigned work in the class and doing it on time. It also means that I will not assign letter grades to any of your work – until the end of the semester. In order to earn at least a B for the semester you must:

1. Maintain your journal or learning log by writing in it regularly, if not daily.
2. Complete, on time, all (4) **essay projects**. Each of these projects will include, at a minimum
  - some prewriting committed to paper
  - a first or rough draft of an essay
  - at least two significantly and substantively (or deeply or globally) revised drafts, one of which is to be prepared “clean” for editing
  - a neat and correctly formatted final draft
  - a piece of reflective writing
  - some further writing in response to your final draft reader’s evaluation.

The preliminary drafts in each project will normally be accompanied by notes and reviewers’ comments. All components of each project must be ready at the beginning of class as assigned. \*

3. Participate actively and constructively in class discussions.
4. Participate actively and constructively in small-group workshop sessions.
5. Have at least one reviewing session with a Writing Center tutor.
6. Complete, on time, all tutorials and exercises from *The Bedford Handbook*, 7th ed.
7. Attend a bibliographic instruction session in Reeves Library.
8. Satisfactorily complete, on time, a research exercise.
9. Earn at least a B- on the final portfolio.
10. Miss no more than 3 class meetings, unexcused, and no more than 5 total, excused and unexcused. (“Excused” means your absence from class is accounted for in writing by a responsible authority.) Each unexcused absences beyond 3 will cost your semester grade 1/3 letter.

\* Each writing project will be evaluated quantitatively in terms of the following point system:

Assigned journal entries:	5 points each	Workshop participation:	10 points each
“Prewriting” or experimenting:	5 points each	Absence from any workshop:	-5 points each
First drafts:	10 points	Writing Center visits:	5 points each
Revised drafts:	10 points for first 5 points for each successive	Lateness with any assigned writing prior to final drafts:	-2 points/day
Clean-for-editing drafts:	5 points each copy	Lateness with any final draft:	-3 points/day
Final drafts:	10 points		

## Books

Hacker, Diana. *The Bedford Handbook for Writers*, 7th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006.  
(*BH* in assignment schedule)

Ramage, John D. *Rhetoric: A User's Guide*. New York: Pearson Longman, 2006. (*RUG* in assignment schedule)

## Other materials

*RP* in the assignment schedule means the class *Readings Packet*, a handout containing about a dozen examples of rhetorical practice: pieces of writing that try to argue or persuade. Please bring this packet to class every time a reading assignment from it is made.

You should have a notebook dedicated to your WRIT100D journal alone. Always bring it to class. At the same time, I strongly encourage you to do all your written work on a computer; the campuswide network has word processing applications that you may access from various sites on campus, and anyone who wishes a short demonstration session may arrange one with me. If you do work in the electronic environment, of course, store your work on a diskette, cd, or flashdrive or in your own folder on the X drive on the campus network.

Clean-for-editing drafts and final drafts of all essays are to be "typed" or printed out from an electronic word-processing application. A copy of all final drafts are to be submitted via Blackboard (see below).

WRIT100D has a Blackboard site, accessible from the campus network both on- and off-campus. We will use this for group work on essay projects and the glossary project, for course information, for email communication and other purposes. A separate handout will get you started on enrolling in the Blackboard site.

## Your teacher's role and responsibility

The Guidelines document mentions that the primary role of all WRIT100 teachers is or should be that of facilitator. That is certainly the way I see myself in this class: I am here mostly to help you write better, to help you write – and think – in ways that will prove helpful to you as you move on in your college career. That is one reason for my approach of deferred grades, contract grading, portfolios, and reflective writing. Ultimately, I cannot avoid the role of “judge” or grade-giver, but I see that as an official role in the academic world, nothing more. I want to help you improve. If you think you are a “weak writer,” I want to help you gain confidence; if you think of yourself as a “strong writer,” I want to help you get even stronger. Everything that I have control over in this class is done with helping students learn and write.

**Assignment schedule** (Boldface indicates assigned work due)

Week I M 1/14 - F 1/18	Course introduction: journals, essay projects, portfolios, rhetoric <b>Questionnaires; “biopoem”</b> <i>BH</i> “How to Use This Book and Its Web Site,” <b>Tutorials 1, 2 &amp; 4</b> (pp. xxv-xxxiii) Essay by Gibbons ( <i>RP</i> )
Week II T 1/22 – F 1/25	<i>BH</i> , Sections 1 & 2: <b>writing as process</b> <i>BH</i> Section 3: <b>writing as process, continued</b>
Week III M 1/28 - F 2/1	<i>RUG</i> Chapter 1: Introduction: The Way of Rhetoric; Fly-Tox ad ( <i>RP</i> ) <i>RUG</i> Chapter 2: Rhetoric and Identity; essay by Hill ( <i>RP</i> ) essays by Ortiz Cofer and Staples ( <i>RP</i> )
Week IV M 2/4 - F 2/8	<b>First draft of essay</b> <b>First essay workshops</b>
Week V M 2/11– F 2/15	<b>FIRST ESSAY PROJECT FOLDER DUE</b> <i>RUG</i> Chapter 3: Rhetoric and Persuasion I: An Introduction to Argument and the Rhetorical Situation; essays by Magbouleh, Henry, and Bird ( <i>RP</i> ) <i>BH</i> Section 50 and <b>Reeves Library online research tutorial</b> Transcript of 2008 SOUA by George W. Bush (find online) Reeves Library bibliographic instruction session
Week VI M 2/18 - F 2/22	<i>BH</i> Section 51 and <b>exercises in evaluating sources</b> <b>Research exercise</b> <i>BH</i> Section 52 and <b>exercises in avoiding plagiarism; Tutorial 5</b> (p. xxxiv) Sign-up for midterm conferences <i>RUG</i> Chapter 4: Rhetoric and Persuasion II; essays by Sullivan and Swift ( <i>RP</i> )
Week VII M 2/25 - F 2/29 (midterm)	<i>BH</i> Sections 54-58 and <b>exercises in research and documentation</b> <b>Prewriting, First draft of second essay</b> <b>Midterm conferences</b> (Tuesday-Thursday) <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Conferences will take place in Zinzendorf 304; class will not meet Wednesday, 27February.

Spring break  
Sa 3/1 - Su 3/9

Week VIII                      **Second essay workshops**  
M 3/10 - F 3/16

Week IX                         **SECOND ESSAY PROJECT FOLDER DUE**  
M 3/17 - R 3/20

Easter break  
F 3/21 – M 3/24

Week X                         **Third essay workshops**  
T 3/25 - F 3/28

Week XI                        **THIRD ESSAY PROJECT FOLDER DUE** \*\*\*  
M 3/31- F 4/4  
*RUG* Chapter 5: Rhetoric and Interpretation  
*RUG* Chapter 6: Rhetoric and Everyday Life  
Essay by Kellner (handout)

Week XII                      **Fourth essay workshops**  
M 4/7 - F 4/11

Week XIII                     **FOURTH ESSAY PROJECT FOLDER DUE** \*\*\*  
M 4/14 – F 4/18  
Sign-up for portfolio conferences

Week XIV                      Conferences (Tuesday-Thursday) ⊗  
M 4/21 – F 4/25

Finals Week                   **SEMESTER PORTFOLIOS DUE**  
M 4/28 – Sa 5/3

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\*\*\* Approximately half the class will have their final drafts read by a tutor in the Writing Center.

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## Final Portfolios

All the writing you do this semester will develop toward the portfolio you submit at the end of the term. You may be amazed by how much you'll have written by December, but you also should be proud of your accomplishments as a writer in this course. You'll be hearing more about this as the semester goes on, but for now here's a preview. A portfolio is

- a **collection** that involves
- **selection** and
- **reflection**.

Within covers, your portfolio should **collect**:

1. All writing--prewriting and drafts--that was part of your folder for each of four essay projects completed in the semester.
2. Evaluative comments written by whoever read the final draft of each project and your written responses to these evaluative comments.
3. Your categorization, analysis, and corrections of surface errors identified by your final-draft reader for all writing projects.

In assembling your final portfolio, you will also **select**:

1. Two essays from the original four to further revise and edit, considering the evaluation that your final-draft reader provided, as well as your own developing sense of what and how to revise in each paper. These revisions will include any intermediate drafts etc. that you do in preparing your final portfolio.
2. The best of your journal entries – other than entries that become part of essay projects as listed under “collect,” above.

As you will see when you complete each writing project, you will be asked to reflect on your writing process and development for that project. In preparing your final portfolio, you will also be asked to **reflect** on:

1. Your writing process and development over the entire semester, as demonstrated by your portfolio and especially by your revisions of two of four papers.
2. Your journal writing: what you did in writing journal entries and what your journal indicates about you as a writer and a student.

Portfolios will be graded on the criteria of **completeness**, evidence of your **commitment** to your writing, **attention to the writing process**, and the **quality of the revised final essays**.

(At least one model portfolio is on reserve in Reeves Library for WRIT100D.)

## **Journals/Learning logs**

An important part of your work and learning in this course will be the keeping of a journal, or learning log, throughout the semester. Here are some of the characteristics of a writing journal.\*

### Sequence

One use of a journal is to capture your thoughts regularly and sequentially, if not necessarily daily. Over time, the entries make a cumulative record of your progress. *Date* each entry, so that as time goes on you can compare later ideas to earlier ones and be able to track change, growth, etc. At the end of the semester, you will thus have a record or log of your learning.

### Audience

Journal writing is done to help writers, not readers. A journal is a place to *explore* what's important or what you're thinking, not to communicate information or thoughts to someone else. Accordingly, you have a good deal of freedom to write whatever and however you want. I will occasionally ask to see entries, but I won't always read everything you write.

### Language and freedom

Because journal writing is oriented to the writer rather than to a reader, many considerations of "correctness" that matter more to readers are not important. Conventions of spelling, punctuation, diction, capitalization etc. should not get in the way of your *fluency* in writing in your journal. Nor should logic or completely formed thinking prevent you from trying out ideas or writing styles.

### Journals vs. diaries or notebooks

A diary is a place where, like a journal, you write more or less daily, but a diary is much more about personal matters or observations about daily life. A writing journal should focus on *writing*. Class notes more nearly record what an instructor says, whereas a journal is to record what *you* say and think.

### Journals in the writing class

In the context of WRIT100D, the journal is assigned to help you discover, explore, advance, critique, and reflect on your writing and your writing process. It is also a place to record and respond to what you are learning from the assigned readings. Use your journal in these ways. You can start on or plan an essay in your journal, without the risk of a reader's judgment right away. Similarly, you can try out new ideas and approaches in this low-risk environment. You can discover thoughts and ideas in the very act of writing. You can vent frustration about what's going on with your reading, writing, or the class. You can ask questions and not have to worry about answering them. In fact, an attitude of open-ended questioning is important to learning in virtually all subjects and in college in general.

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\* Adapted from Toby Fulwiler, *The Working Writer*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007.

### Material considerations

Buy a notebook with neatly detachable pages and dedicate it to your writing journal alone. Bring it to class every day and otherwise keep it with your books for WRIT100D. Try writing in it at different times and in different places in order to see the effects of time, place, setting on how you write. This seems to mean that you have to write in your journal *by hand*, and indeed you will do that much of the time. But it doesn't mean that you can't write on a computer – desktop or laptop – and print out what you write and put the hard copy into your notebook. If you are more comfortable doing all your writing on a keyboard, that's OK; just be sure to save what you write, make hard copies, and keep those copies together in a folder or clip.

### Care and safety

Your journal will not be graded *per se*, and much of the writing in it will be informal and maybe not especially “correct.” But that doesn't mean your journal is not important. It is; in fact, it is *crucial* to your learning in this course. So keep it in your care: don't lose it!

JW will typically assign several journal entries as we read and work toward each of the four major writing projects in WRIT100D. You will be asked to include these with each project folder when it is submitted. For your final portfolio, you will be expected to include *all* journal entries you (will) have written by the end of the semester. It would be good if everyone got in the habit of journaling often, frequently, regularly -- *self-*assigning this work.