

ENG 383, Public & Persuasive Writing

Department of English & Journalism, Western Illinois University
Simpkins 114, MWF, 2:00 to 2:50 pm
Bradley Dilger, Assistant Professor of English

Introduction

In this class, we'll learn the skills needed to prepare a wide variety of persuasive texts—spoken, written, and graphical. We will study the principles of classical rhetoric, as expressed in the principal course textbook, *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*. We are not studying classical rhetoric for its own sake, so we won't read the original works of Aristotle, Cicero, and other important rhetors. Instead, we'll learn the principles of classical rhetoric, and some of the differences of contemporary American rhetoric, in order to become better at writing publicly and persuasively.

The local, state, and national elections occurring this semester should provide us with a rich body of material to analyze. We will also draw upon publications such as the *Western Courier*, materials produced by WIU, and other texts you come across in your daily life. We will consider the content and form of the writing and graphic design of these works.

The course has two prerequisites: ENG 180 and ENG 280. If you have not earned credit for both of these courses, speak with me immediately.

Texts

- Crowley & Hawhee: *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*, 3/e. (ARCS)
- Williams: *The Non-Designer's Design Book*, 2/e. (NDB)
- Course web site: <http://faculty.wiu.edu/CB-Dilger/f04/383/>

Contacting me

Web: <http://faculty.wiu.edu/CB-Dilger/>
Email: cb-dilger@wiu.edu
Mailbox: Simpkins 122, M-F 8 am to 4:30 pm
Office: Simpkins 217, 309.298.2212 (hours TBD)
Home: 309.836.1454 (before 10 pm; please leave a message)

Assignments

There are two major individual assignments in the course. Drafts will be required for each one. A detailed description of the portfolio assignment is attached; I'll hand out one for the final project at midterm. For now, here are brief summaries:

Writing portfolio. Four small persuasive writing assignments: an open letter, a short persuasive talk, a book jacket, and a political leaflet, flyer, or brochure. Due October 15.

A cohesive writing project. Three to five related works which you plan and design. You will work with your classmates and me to determine the specific texts to complete (essays, speeches, advertisements, scripts, web sites, etc.). Due December 10.

Other assignments

Rhetorical exercises will be due most weeks during the semester. These short assignments, most less than two pages in length, will be modeled on the exercises found in the last two chapters of *ARCS* and the quizzes in *NDB*. See the attached handout for more information.

Weekly reading quizzes, given most Wednesdays or Fridays, will help me identify (and reward!) the students who are keeping up with the reading. They will help you better understand the most important elements of the assigned material.

Frequent **group work and discussion** will help you learn the course content.

We will conclude the course with a comprehensive **final examination**, December 13 at 3:00 pm.

Schedule

Please refer to the course web site for a detailed, up-to-date schedule.

wk	dates	readings	assignments
1	Aug 23, 25, 27	Syllabus; <i>ARCS</i> & <i>NDB</i> front & back matter	none
2	Aug 30, Sep 1, 3	<i>ARCS</i> 1; <i>NDB</i> 1	RX A
3	Sep 8, 10	<i>ARCS</i> 2	RX B
4	Sep 13, 15, 17	<i>ARCS</i> 3; <i>NDB</i> 2-5	RX C
5	Sep 20, 22, 24	<i>ARCS</i> 4	RX D
6	Sep 27, 29, Oct 1	<i>ARCS</i> 5-6	RX E; draft portfolio due 10/1
7	Oct 4, 6, 8	<i>ARCS</i> 7-8	RX F
8	Oct 11, 13, 15	TBD: review	Writing portfolio due 10/15
9	Oct 18, 20	<i>ARCS</i> 9-10	RX G
10	Oct 25, 27, 29	<i>ARCS</i> 11	RX H
11	Nov 1, 3	<i>ARCS</i> 12-13	RX I
12	Nov 8, 10, 12	<i>NDB</i> 8-10	RX J
13	Nov 15, 17, 19	TBD: review	RX K; draft project due 11/19
14	Nov 29, Dec 1, 3		RX L
15	Dec 6, 8	none	Final project due 12/10
16	Dec 13		Final examination 12/13

Policies

Attendance & class participation

Please be on time and attend as many classes as possible. I will lower your class participation grade if you miss more than two classes. If you must miss a class, ask another student for notes, and come to my office hours if you have questions about the activities you missed.

Plan to participate actively in class activities and discussions. Bring your textbooks, notes, and writing materials to class daily. Read all the material assigned and come to class ready to discuss it.

If you aren't speaking in every class, you aren't participating enough. You don't need to say something profound to make a contribution—your questions are valuable too.

I'll evaluate your class participation at midterm (10/18) and the end of the semester (12/13).

Ethical conduct

We will discuss the ethical dimensions of communication this semester. I want every student to show respect for other students. I hope for honest, enthusiastic, opinionated discussion of ideas and communication, without rudeness or antagonism.

I also expect academic honesty. Plagiarism (use of another's ideas, data, and statements with little or no acknowledgment), collusion (unauthorized or undocumented collaboration), or re-submission (presenting an assignment previously completed for course credit) are not permissible. These types of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Services in accordance with WIU's Academic Dishonesty Policy.

Feedback

I always shape courses through student suggestions—I'm willing to change almost anything about the course to help you learn more effectively. To that end, I will ask you to evaluate the class at midterm and the end of the semester. But I encourage you to speak up before that if you enjoy a class or benefit from an assignment. On the other hand, if something doesn't work well, I'd also like to know—your feedback will help me be a better teacher.

If you prefer to remain anonymous, put a printed note in my mailbox, or contact me through Ellen Poulter, adviser for the Department of English & Journalism, or your academic adviser.

Grading

You earn points for each completed assignment. Since there are 1,000 points in the semester, and the grading scale I use is based on powers of 10, it's easy to figure out where you stand at any time, or to determine the percentage of your grade represented by a given assignment.

Please keep track of your grades and keep all graded assignments.

assignment	points	grade	points
Portfolio	200	A	900-1000
Project	300	B	800-899
Rhetorical exercises	150	C	700-799
Class participation	150	D	600-699
Quizzes	100	F	599 or fewer
Final examination	100		
Total points	1000		

Help

I want to help you achieve success in this class and all your studies at Western. I hope you'll come to my office hours at least once this semester—for help with our class, advice about other classes in English & Journalism, or just to touch base. Stop by any time you are in Simpkins Hall—I'm there quite often, and if the door is open, I'm happy to see you.

If you have a concern which you think others might share, please bring it up in class discussions, before or after class, or by sending an email to our class list. Students with special learning needs requiring pedagogical accommodation should speak with me as soon as possible.

Late work

Late work is allowed only under extreme circumstances, and only with prior permission. If you can't attend class the day an assignment is due, email it to me, or turn it in early. To request an extension on an assignment, speak with me *at least two days in advance*.

Course grades of “incomplete” will only be given in the case of documented medical emergency (e. g. your arm fell off, and your doctor can prove it).

Privacy

There is no need to put your social security number or WIU ID number on any work turned in to me; your printed name will suffice.

By law (20 USC § 1232g, commonly called the “Buckley Amendment”), educational records must be kept confidential. Therefore, I will only discuss your progress in the course with you in my office, where your privacy can be ensured, and I will not post grades in public.

We will be using computers at WIU and in other locations. Should you ever suspect your privacy has been compromised in any way because of a computer system used in the course, contact me immediately by telephone.

WIU brings you the following announcements

In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Support Services at 298-2515 for additional services.

It is the responsibility of the student to comply with the prerequisites/corequisites for a course that he/she plans to take. Instructors who place the appropriate information on the syllabus and emphasize it during the first three class periods may exclude a student from the class who does not meet the prerequisites/corequisites by sending a note to the student with a copy to the registrar within the first two weeks of the term.

Tips for success

You've probably heard these before, but they are worth repeating:

- **Check the class web site weekly**—I'll post assignments, schedule changes, and additional resources there. You can also download copies of course handouts, should you misplace them.
- **Take notes**—not only in class, but as you read the textbooks. This is simply the best way to learn the material—highlighting just doesn't cut it.
- **Participate actively.** Read the material, attend class, come to office hours, and get me involved—especially if you are having problems in the course.
- **Get started on assignments early.** Writing and design take time. Your best quality work will never be achieved without repeated drafting.
- **Visit the University Writing Center.** UWC consultants are much more than “grammar nurses.” They can read a draft of your project and give you feedback about it. Visit UWC in Simpkins 341 to learn more.