

WRC 1023: Composition II (Fall 2011)

I admit that reason is a small and feeble flame, a flickering torch by stumblers carried in the star-less night, --
blown and flared by passion's storm, -- and yet, it is the only light. Extinguish that, and nought remains. --
Robert Green Ingersoll

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Office Hours: MWF 7:20-7:50 A.M.; T 11:30-2:00; Or by appointment.

Required Texts:

- Bullock, Richard and Weinberg, Francine. *The Little Seagull Handbook*. Norton. 2011. ISBN: 0393911519.
- Calabrese, Joseph. *Legends, Lore, and Lies*. Boston: Pearson Longman. 2007. ISBN: 0321439244. Cost: 20.71 (new).
- Ramage, John D., John C. Bean, and June Johnson. *Writing Arguments: A Rhetoric with Readings*. 8th ed. New York: Pearson Longman. 2010. ISBN: 0205648363. Cost: \$82.75 (new).
- The Writing Program Student Handbook (current edition). No ISBN. Cost: \$14.0

Required Materials: 5 blue books, stapler, single-subject spiral notebook, single-subject folder (red, blue, orange, green), dictionary.

Goals of the UTSA Core Curriculum:

“Enable students

- To assess the perspectives and accomplishments of the past
- To move to the future with an informed and flexible outlook

Promote

- Intellectual adaptability
- Ethical awareness
- Transfer among diverse modes of thought

Cultivate

- Verbal, numerical, and visual skills that are necessary to analyze and synthesize information
- Construct argument
- Identify and solve problems

Foster

- Understanding of the intellectual and cultural pluralism of modern society as it is reflected in each of the following:
 - Natural Science and Mathematics
 - Behavioral, Cultural, and Social Sciences
 - Language, Literature, and Artistic Expression

Develop

- Critical awareness of the continuities and discontinuities of human thought, history, and culture to help prepare students to meet the demands of change” (UTSA Undergraduate Catalog 8-9)

Core Curriculum Objectives for WRC 1023:

- To demonstrate the writing process
- To demonstrate the ability to evaluate research sources to convey the written message
- To demonstrate the ability to make an effective oral presentation using appropriate visuals/technology

Catalog Description:

Freshman Composition II “focuses on academic writing. Extensive writing practice in the use of logical and organizational patterns and introduction to persuasion in written, oral, and visual form. Develops critical and analytical skills through multidisciplinary and multicultural readings, using extensive library research and documentation.”

Course Description for WRC 1023 Science and Pseudoscience:

My hope is that by the end of this semester, we will come away from this course with a greater understanding of scientific thinking, and we will also begin to see the need for skepticism in our society. In his essay "Intellect," Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote "God offers to every mind its choice between truth and repose. Take which you please - you can never have both. Between these, as a pendulum, man oscillates." Emerson recognizes that the search for truth might reveal uncomfortable facts for the truth-seeker, but we should take Emerson's words to heart. An intellectual will rarely trade truth for simple peace of mind, and as students of argument, neither should we.

Through the course of the semester, we will use our three textbooks to help us strengthen and develop our writing in a variety of ways. First, we must recall and strengthen the conventions of college level writing learned in 1013, which includes but is not limited to studying and adopting MLA format, following the rules of grammar and mechanics, and by understanding and practicing writing different types of essays.

Finally, by constantly writing and revising our work we will enhance our acumen for constructing effective arguments and rhetorical strategies and become comfortable with expressing ourselves with the written word. By studying the various rhetorical strategies for crafting effective arguments, we will strive to find the perfect balance between truth-seeking and persuasion, which will not only allow us to grow as writers, but to grow as intellectuals as well. Writing is a recursive endeavor and must be treated like any other activity or skill. The more you practice writing the better writer you will become.

Class Requirements:

- **Essays / In-Class Essays (10% / 5%):** You will submit four formal essays and two in-class essays during the course of the semester. Please submit all essays before the beginning of the class on the date they are due. I will not accept late papers, and I will not accept papers that do not conform to the stylistic conventions detailed on the assignment prompt. Please proofread all papers carefully. If I am met by five major surface errors on the first page, I will read no further and your paper will receive an F. A checklist will be attached to the assignment prompt of each formal essay. If you fail to complete any of the steps on the checklist, you will be ineligible to submit the final draft for a grade.
- **Response Papers / Pop Quizzes (10%):** In response to the daily readings, I will occasionally ask you to write a one and a half to two page paper responding to the material based on a prompt you receive in class. These response papers should be typed but overall informal. I'm not looking for fully developed essays, but I do want to make sure you are engaging the material and that you understand the grammatical lessons. These will be due at the beginning of class and at no other time. Response papers and pop quizzes will account for 10 % of your final grade.
- **Issue Presentations (5%):** Each student will be assigned to a group, and each group will present an issue to the class and lead discussion on a designated day during the semester.
- **Reading Journal (10%):** In response to the readings from *Legends, Lore, and Lies* and additional readings posted to Blackboard, you will keep a reading journal in a single-subject spiral notebook. Each entry should cover one of the readings from *Legends, Lore, and Lies* or a reading from Blackboard. By the end of the semester, you will have twenty journal entries. The journal entries are simply a completion grade. Please see "Reading Journal" Handout for more details.
- **Final Exam (20 %):** You will also take a final exam in this class. The final is a standardized common exam given to all sections of WRC 1023. Approximately one week before the exam, I will distribute readings for you to highlight and annotate as you prepare to write the exam. You will bring the annotated readings to the exam where you will write a persuasive essay on the issue discussed in the readings. The final exam represents 20% of your final grade.

Class Policies

- Good attendance is a must. You will be allowed three absences, after which I will deduct two points from

your overall average for each day missed. After your sixth absence, you will automatically fail the class. Please, pay close attention to your absences. If you must miss class, please contact one of your colleagues to find out what you missed. I monitor class attendance with a sign-in sheet, quizzes, and response papers. Absences due to emergencies will be dealt with on an individual basis and at my discretion. I consider a sleeping student an absent student, so think twice before napping. If you arrive twenty minutes after class has begun you will be counted absent.

Additionally, you will be considered tardy if you are ten minutes late. Three tardies constitutes one absence. You are responsible for keeping track of your tardies and absences. If you are unable to keep track of them, you will need to make an appointment to see me in my office.

- If you make a D or lower on any paper you must schedule a conference in my office. Don't think of this as some type of punishment, but rather a time for us both to brainstorm and determine how you can improve your writing.
- Dishonesty Policy: UTSA defines dishonesty as: "Scholastic 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, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts." Plagiarism is the most common form of dishonesty I am likely to encounter in this class. If I suspect plagiarism, I will discuss the case with my program director. I will then ask the alleged plagiarist to meet with me to discuss the work in question. Following these talks, I will make the decision about how to handle the case. In extreme instances, the student receives an F (0) for the assignment or the course, and a formal report of the incident is filed in the student's academic record.
- You are required to read the online electronic media waiver and the statements on duplication permission and scholastic responsibility located in the back of your student handbook. You must sign where indicated (on both pages, one is front/back) to show that you have read these agreements. I will collect the signed waivers on September 9th. Do not write your social security number anywhere on these waivers.
- No food during class. I'm okay with a drink, unless you habitually spill it.
- I will not tolerate cell phones in the class. If I find you using your cell phone, and yes, that includes texting/IM'ing, I will ask you to leave.
- Be courteous to your fellow students. At times our discussions may become heated, and when that happens please remember that the bedrock of a successful democracy is the ability to disagree with someone without disliking or insulting them. Concurrently, any behavior that interferes with the learning experience of your colleagues will not be tolerated.

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Grade Weights:

Essay 1 (10%) _____
Essay 2 (10%) _____
Essay 3 (10%) _____
Essay 4 (10%) _____

Grade Scale*:

90-100 pts. = A
80-89 pts. = B
70-79 pts. = C
60-69 pts. = D
0-59 pts. = F

In-Class Essay One (5%) _____

In-Class Essay Two (5%) _____

Issue Presentation (10%) _____

Quizzes/Response Papers (10%) _____

Journals (10%) _____

Final Exam (20%) _____

Total 100% _____

*Please refer to the *Writing Program Student Handbook* for a description of the department's grading standards.

Resources:

Need Additional Help?

- Please, feel free to come by my office during posted hours, or schedule an appointment with me if you need any type of help or you simply need to hear a pep talk. My office hours are listed at the beginning of your syllabus, as is my email address and office phone number. Use them judiciously, and never be afraid to ask for help.

- WC: The Writing Center is on campus to serve students. Volunteer tutors, including English graduate students and professors, are on site to assist you. The WC is located in JPL 2.01.12.
- TRC: The Tomás Rivera Center for Student Success, a multi-subject tutoring center, is also an excellent resource. Tutors at the English table can assist you with your writing. The TRC is located in MS 1.02.02. [Remember when visiting both the WC and the TRC that *you are an active participant in the improvement of your writing*—do not expect tutors to simply “grade” or “edit” your papers!]
- Support services, including registration assistance and equipment, are available to students with documented disabilities through Disability Services. Contact them at 458-4157 or visit the office in MS 2.03.18 to find out more about these services.

Disclaimer:

This Syllabus is provided for informational purposes regarding the anticipated course content and schedule of this course. It is based upon the most recent information available on the date of its issuance and is as accurate and complete as possible. I reserve the right to make any changes I deem necessary and/or appropriate. I will make my best efforts to communicate any changes in the syllabus in a timely manner. Students are responsible for being aware of these changes.

Week 1: Introductions

Aug W 24 Introduction to course, syllabus and texts
F 26 *Writing Arguments (WA hereafter)* Chapter 1

Week 2: Topic: Reading Arguments

Issue: The Importance of Evidence

M 29 *Blackboard (Bb hereafter)* “How Thinking Goes Wrong”

W 30 *Bb* “The Dragon in my Garage.”

Sept F 2 *WA* Chapter 2; *Legends, Lore, and Lies (LLL hereafter)* “The Burden of Skepticism” 5-16

Week 3: Topic: Writing an Argument

Issue: Science and Pseudoscience

M 5 Labor Day Holiday—No Class

W 7 *WA* Chapter 3; *LLL* “Science and Pseudoscience” 179-82

F 9 *WA* Chapter 4; *Bb* “The Most Precious Thing” / Essay One Rough Draft Due--Submit signed waivers

Week 4: Topic: Writing an Argument

Issue: Science and Pseudoscience continued

M 12 *WA* Chapter 5; *LLL* “The Disaster that Wasn’t” 193-200 / Essay One Due

W 14 *WA* Chapter 6; *LL* “My Favorite Pseudoscience” 200-14

F 16 In-Class Essay #1

Week 5: Topic: Writing an Argument / Analyzing Arguments

Issue: The Media and Public Gullibility

M 19 *WA* Chapter 7; *LLL* “The Media and Public Gullibility” & “Science Indicators 2000” 52-64

W 21 *WA* Chapter 8; *LLL* “Mind over Media” 64-9

F 23 *Bb* “The Ghost in the Machine”

Week 6: Topic: Arguments in Depth: Five Types of Claims

Issue: Media Gullibility continued

M 26 *WA* Chapter 10; *LLL* “That’s Entertainment” 70-75

W 28 *WA* Chapter 11; *Bb* “Obsessed with Reality” / Essay Two Rough Draft Due

F 30 Writing Lab

Week 7: Topic: Arguments in Depth: Five Types of Claims

Issue: Alternative Medicine

Oct M 3 *WA* Chapter 12; *LLL* “Alternative Medicine” 90-2 / Essay Two Due

W 5 *WA* Chapter 13; *LLL* “Homeopathy Finally Gets Some Respect” 123-27

F 7 *Bb* “Homeopathy: A Position Statement by the National Council Against Health Fraud.”

Week 8: Topic: Arguments in Depth: Five Types of Claims
Issue: Alternative Medicines Continued
M 10 In-Class Essay #2
March W 12 *WA* Chapter 14; *LLL* "Magnetic Therapy" 99-111
F 14 *Bb* "Fatal Adjustments"

Week 9: Topic: Fallacies
Issue: Psychics and the Paranormal
M 17 *WA* Appendix 1
W 19 *LLL* "Psychics and the Paranormal" 130-32
F 21 *Bb* "A Magician Among the Spirits"

Week 10: Topic: Applying Rhetorical Techniques
Issue: Psychics and the Paranormal continued
M 24 *LLL* "A Not-So-Psychic Detective" 162-72
W 26 *Bb* "The Turtle Jean Lafitte" 172-76 / Essay Three Rough Draft Due
F 28 Writing Lab

Week 11: Topic: Applying Rhetorical Techniques
Issue: Urban Legends
M 31 *LLL* "Urban Legends" 17-20 / Essay Three Due
Nov W 2 *LLL* "Lights Out" 20-31
F 4 *LLL* "French Follies" 32-9

Week 12: Topic: Applying Rhetorical Techniques
Issue: Urban Legends continued
M 7 *LLL* "Big Lies on Campus" 44-51
W 9 *Bb* "Emotional Selection in Memes"
F 11 "Emotional Selection in Memes" cont.

Week 13: Topic: Applying Rhetorical Techniques
Issue: Urban Legends continued
M 14 *Bb* "Cultural Evolution and Memetics"
W 16 "Cultural Evolution and Memetics" cont.
F 18 Preparing for In-Class Essay #2

Week 14: Topic: Preparing for Oral Presentations & Essay Workshop
M 21 In-Class Essay #2
W 23 Preparing for Oral Presentations
F 25 Thanksgiving-No Class

Week 15: Topic: Oral Presentations
M 28 Oral Presentations
W 30 Oral Presentations
Dec F 2 Oral Presentations

Week 16: Topic: Oral Presentations
M 5 Oral Presentations / Essay Four Rough Draft Due
W 7 Oral Presentations / Essay Four Due

Final Exams
8:00-8:50: 12/12 7:30-10:00
9:00-9:50: 12/13 7:30-10:00
10:00-10:50: 12/14 7:30-10:00
11:00-11:50: 12/12 1:30-4:00

Reading Journal (Daily Freewriting Exercise)

“The main thing about freewriting is that it is *nonediting*. It is an exercise in bringing together the process of producing words and putting them down on the page. Practiced regularly, it undoes the ingrained habit of editing at the same time you are trying to produce. It will make writing less blocked because words will come more easily. You will use up more paper, but chew up fewer pencils.” Peter Elbow, “Freewriting.”

Reading Journal Stylistic Requirements

In the top left corner of the page, include the title of the reading to which you are responding, the date, and the start and stop time.

Reading Journal Content Requirements:

After you have read an assigned text from *Legends, Lore, and Lies* or a text posted on Blackboard, set a watch for ten minutes.

For ten minutes, write whatever comes to your mind about the reading. I don't care what comes to your mind—just write.

Do not edit. Do not cross things out. Keep writing no matter what, and make sure you write for ten minutes without stopping.

Once the ten minutes is up, mark your time, put your pen or pencil down, and then close the spiral notebook. Do not proofread. I'll repeat that: DO NOT PROOFREAD.

Thing to consider:

- I will only accept journal entries if you submit them at the beginning of the class for which the reading is assigned. If you miss the collection at the beginning of class, or whenever I collect them during that class period, I *will not* accept that journal entry. However, please feel free to submit journal entries early.
- I will not accept journal entries that are not in your single-subject spiral notebook, nor will I accept entries that do not conform to the stylistic requirements.
- You need to have *twenty* journal entries by the end of the semester. Each entry is worth five points. The Reading Journal counts for 5% of your final grade in the course, which is half a letter grade.
- You only write journal entries over readings from *Legends, Lore, and Lies* or texts posted on Blackboard. You do not write journal entries over readings from *Writing Arguments*.