

Rhetoric and Composition
English 15, paired with Economics 104
Syllabus

Section 252
Summer 2018
MTWRF 2:20-3:35PM
Room 217 Thomas

Instructor: Phillip Zapkin
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Office Hours: MTWR 12:30-1:30PM

Course Description

Rhetoric is one of the oldest intellectual disciplines in the world, having been written about and studied as far back as ancient Mesopotamia, over 4,000 years ago. Described by Aristotle as “The faculty of observing, in any given situation, the available means of persuasion,” rhetoric is an important field of study because it helps us develop the tools to convince others to consider our opinions, perspectives, and ideas. This is a crucial skill set in a meaningful democracy, as well as in academia—both of which demand we be able to effectively persuade others, as well as to listen/read critically and discern when an argument is reliable and well-reasoned.

This course is paired with Economics 104: Macroeconomics. The first half of our semester focuses principally on rhetoric itself, learning the foundations of addressing an audience and thinking rhetorically. Then in the second half of our course we will apply that rhetorical knowledge to economic questions—working on accurately representing macroeconomic arguments and persuading others to consider our positions on economic issues.

Required Textbooks

- Ruskiewicz, J. & Dolmage J. (2015). *How to write anything: A guide and reference, with readings* (3rd ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s. ISBN: 978-1-319-08572-8.
- Kulchar, D. (Ed.). (2018). *Penn statements: Student compositions from the program in writing and rhetoric* (Vol. 37). Pennsylvania State University.

*Please Note: *Penn Statements* can only be purchased at the Penn State Bookstore.

*Please also Note: You must have in class access to daily readings posted to Canvas, either electronically (on a laptop or tablet, preferably not a phone) or printed.

* Please Note Three: You are required to know the material in *all* assigned readings, even if we don’t discuss that section in class. Please read carefully.

Assignments and Grading

Graded Assignment	Percentage
Personal Narrative Project	10%
Rhetorical Evaluation Project	15%
Research Report Project	20%
Position Argument Video Project	15%
Exploratory Writings	15%
Peer Reviews	15%
Participation	10%

Assignment Information and Requirements

- To pass this course you *must* submit all projects. Failure to submit any project will result in an automatic failing grade for the course.
- Each assignment must be submitted in the format listed in the Canvas assignment slot.
- For every project you *must* get a proposal approved *and* have the draft *peer reviewed* by a classmate in this course section. Failure to do one or both before the project deadline will result in a loss of one full letter grade for each requirement not met. See syllabus pp. 7 and 9 for more information.
- Submitting a project after the specified deadline will result in the loss of one full letter grade per late day.
- Unless otherwise noted, every assignment is due on Canvas before the beginning of class on the date listed. Peer reviews are one exception. See syllabus p. 8 for more information.

Participation

Participation is crucial to our classroom community—this is an interactive class where, in large part, what you get out of the course depends on what you put in. The participation grade is a holistic and comprehensive grade evaluating your contributions over the semester to full class discussions, group work/discussions, writing conferences, and attendance.

- ❖ Writing Conferences: You are *required* to attend two writing conferences with me during office hours this semester. One conference *must* occur before the end of the third project (i.e., by Fri. 27 July). Come to each writing conference prepared to discuss or ask questions about your in-progress work.
- ❖ Missing writing conferences will cost $\frac{1}{2}$ letter grade from your participation score for each missed conference. However, each writing conference you attend beyond the required two will add $\frac{1}{3}$ letter grade to your participation score.

Attendance

- You are allowed to miss two classes with *no penalty* to your grade. *Each class missed beyond those two will cost $\frac{1}{3}$ of your overall course grade.*
- Excused absences do not count against your grade. In order for an absence to be excused you must discuss it with me as early as possible beforehand (at least 24 hours). Reasons for excused absences may include: religious holidays, military service, university required activities (i.e., participation in a university sports team), or severe illness or injury.
- If you miss class, *it is your responsibility to make up the missed material.* You should ask a classmate to take notes for you, come to office hours, and/or email me as soon as possible, preferably before the missed class period.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a shared commitment to reject unethical intellectual practices like plagiarism and cheating. This is a foundation of academic work. The guidelines for US academic integrity standards are laid out in the University's Code of Conduct (see our Canvas page).

- Consistent with this expectation, the Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through their efforts.
- Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation, or deception.

Standards of Classroom Behavior

Classroom behavior should always reflect the essential Penn State values of civility, integrity, and respect for the dignity and rights of others. As such, the classroom space should be safe, orderly, and positive—free from disruptions, disorderly conduct, and harassment as defined in the University Code of Conduct, Section IV, B.

- As instructor, I have the authority to request that any disruptive student(s) leave class for the class period. If disruptive behavior continues in subsequent class periods, a complaint may be filed with the Office of Student Conduct, which may result in the student being dismissed from class until University procedures have been completed.
- Any student with concerns or questions as to this policy should contact Cheryl Glenn, the Director of the Program in Writing and Rhetoric.

Accessibility: Disability Accommodation

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, contact the appropriate disability services office on campus, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation (equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/applying-for-services). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, the disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with me as early as possible so we can discuss accommodations.

- The Student Disability Resources Web site provides contact information for every Penn State campus (equity.psu.edu/student-disability-resources/disability-coordinator). For further information, please visit the Student Disability Resources website at equity.psu.edu/sdr.

Education Equity: Bias Reporting

Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the Report Bias webpage (equity.psu.edu/reportbias/).

Counseling and Psychological Services

Penn State offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 814-863-0395, studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/
- Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400
- Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

Schedule

This schedule is subject to change by me. I will notify you ahead of time in class and/or by email of any changes.

Readings Key: *HWA*=*How To Write Anything*, *PS*=*Penn Statements*, *CA*=*Canvas*, *SY*=*Syllabus*

Week 1

- ❖ Wed. 27 June—Introduce the Class; Get to Know One Another; Discuss Syllabus; Composition and Macroeconomics

HW: Read: *SY* (pp. 1-3, Personal Narrative Assignment Sheet, p. 9); *HWA* (Narratives, pp. 4-14); *CA* (“WPA Outcomes Statement”)

- ❖ Thurs. 28 June—Introduce Personal Narrative; Elements and Structures of Narrative

HW: Exploratory Writing 1: Creating a Scene; Read: *HWA* (Narratives, pp. 15-20; Use Description to Set A Scene, pp. 367-368; “Check. Mate?” pp. 21-27)

- ❖ Fri. 29 June—Introduce Exploratory Writing 1 and Grading for Exploratory Writings; Brainstorm Personal Narrative Topics and Audiences

HW: Personal Narrative Proposal; Read: *HWA* (Smart Reading, pp. 340-342; Organization, pp. 374-376); *PS* (PWR Grading Standards, pp. 7-8; Narrative Essays and Rhetorical/Literary Narrative, pp. 61-68); *CA* (“The Shapes of Stories”)

Due: Exploratory Writing 1

Week 2

- ❖ Mon. 2 July—Analyze Sample Narratives in *PS*; Discuss Grading Standards; Grade Norming

HW: Read: *HWA* (*Mint Snowball*, pp. 621-623; *Persepolis*, pp. 28-34; High, Middle, and Low Style, pp. 400-408)

Personal Narrative Proposal

- ❖ Tues. 3 July—Shaping Narratives for Specific Audiences; Peer Review Pre-Discussion

HW: Draft of Personal Narrative in class; Read *HWA* (Peer Editing 428-433; *Chop Suey*, pp. 624-627)

- ❖ Thurs. 5 July—Personal Narrative Peer Review

HW: Read: *HWA* (Revising Your Own Work, pp. 422-427; Titles, pp. 395-397; Vigorous, Clear, Economical Style, pp. 412-419); *CA* (Revision Strategies)

Due: Draft of Personal Narrative in class; Peer Review due by 11:59PM

- ❖ Fri. 6 July—Polishing a Narrative; Revision Activities 1

HW: *Personal Narrative*; Read *SY* (Rhetorical Evaluation Assignment Sheet, p. 10), *HWA* (Rhetorical Analyses, pp. 218-226; Evaluations, pp. 100-108)

Week 3

- ❖ Mon. 9 July—Introduce Rhetorical Evaluation; Basics of Analysis and Evaluation

HW: Read *HWA* (Rhetorical Analyses, pp. 227-231; Evaluations, pp. 109-117) *CA* (From Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*; “Ain’t I A Woman?”)

Due: *Personal Narrative*

- ❖ Tues. 10 July—Rhetorical Appeals; Resources and Constraints in “Ain’t I A Woman?”

HW: Rhetorical Evaluation Proposal; Read *HWA* (Thesis, pp. 362-366; “The Other Car,” pp. 921-924); *CA* (“Thesis Statements”; “How to Say Nothing in 500 Words”)

- ❖ Wed. 11 July—Thesis and Topic Sentences; Analyze “The Other Car”

HW: Read *CA* (Rhetorical Methods of Development; “NuWave Pro Commercial”)

Due: Rhetorical Evaluation Proposal

- ❖ Thurs. 12 July—Rhetorical Methods of Development; Analyze “NuWave Pro Commercial”

HW: Exploratory Writing 2: Outlines; Read *HWA* (Outlines, pp. 377-382); *PS* (Analysis Essays, pp. 12-21); *CA* (Traditional Outline Template)

- ❖ Fri. 13 July—Analyze Sample Narratives in *PS*; Grade Norming

HW: Draft of Rhetorical Evaluation in class

Due: Exploratory Writing 2

Week 4

- ❖ Mon. 16 July—Rhetorical Evaluation Peer Review

HW: Read *HWA* (Introductions and Conclusions, pp. 391-394); *CA* (Revision Strategies)

Due: Draft of Rhetorical Evaluation in class; Peer Review due by 11:59PM

- ❖ Tues. 17 July—Writing Introductions and Conclusions; Revision Activities 2

HW: *Rhetorical Evaluation*; Read *SY* (Research Report Assignment Sheet, p. 11); *HWA* (Finding Print and Online Sources, pp. 442-446)

- ❖ Wed. 18 July—MEET IN PATTEE W211A; University Level Library Research

HW: Read *HWA* (Reports, pp. 36-49; Annotating Sources, pp. 456-459; Summarizing Sources, pp. 460-462; “Neurodiversity Rewires Conventional Thinking about Brains,” pp. 659-661)

Due: *Rhetorical Evaluation*

- ❖ Thurs. 19 July—Introduce Research Report; Brainstorming Topics; Summarizing “Neurodiversity Rewires Conventional Thinking about Brains”

HW: Research Report Proposal; Read *HWA* (Synthesis Papers, pp. 272-275); *CA* (“Minimum Wage Laws” from *Principles of Macroeconomics*, “Opinion—The Case for a Higher Minimum Wage”)

- ❖ Fri. 20 July—Summarizing and Synthesizing Sources; Evaluating Researched Sources

HW: Read *HWA* (Reports, pp. 50-58; Documenting Sources, pp. 470-471; “The Cherokee Nation Decision,” pp. 675-683); Skim *HWA* (APA Documentation and Format, pp. 512-539)

Due: Research Report Proposal

Week 5

- ❖ Mon. 23 July—Citing Sources in APA Format

HW: Exploratory Writing 3: Annotated Bibliography; Bring Two of Your Researched Sources to Class; Read *HWA* (Annotated Bibliographies, pp. 266-271); *PS* (“Hydraulic Fracturing,” pp. 58-60)

- ❖ Tues. 24 July—Practice Summarizing and Synthesizing Your Sources

HW: Read *HWA* (Paragraphs, pp. 383-386; Transitions, pp. 387-390; “From Scroll to Screen,” pp. 59-62)

Due: Exploratory Writing 3; Two Researched Sources in Class

- ❖ Wed. 25 July—Paragraph Structure; Analyze Paragraphs and Transitions in “From Scroll to Screen”

HW: Draft of Research Report in class

- ❖ Thurs. 26 July— Research Report Peer Review

HW: Read *HWA* (Tables, Graphs, and Infographics, pp. 550-556; “Age of Internet Empires,” pp. 684-688); *CA* (“Trade Barriers: Tariffs, Export Subsidies, and Quotas” from *Principles of Macroeconomics*)

Due: Draft of Research Report in class; Peer Review due by 11:59PM

❖ Fri. 27 July—Visual Rhetoric and Infographics

HW: *Research Report*; Read *SY* (Position Argument Video Assignment Sheet, p. 12); Read *CA* (“13 Tips for Nailing a Skype Interview,” “How Economic Inequality Harms Society,” “Student Loan Debt Crushing Millennials, and the Economy,” “Reading Two Greek Refugee Plays in the Season of the Syrian Refugee Crisis”)

Week 6

❖ Mon. 30 July—Introduce Position Argument Video; Presenting Arguments Visually; Writing for Oral/Video Presentation

HW: Read *HWA* (Arguments, pp. 66-79; Oral Reports, pp. 322-328; Make Videos and Podcasts to Share Information, pp. 545-546); *CA* (iMovie Tutorial)

Due: *Research Report*

❖ Tues. 31 July—MEET IN PATTEE W140; Using iMovie to Edit Video

HW: Position Argument Video Proposal; Read *HWA* (Arguments, pp. 80-87; “The Sad Science of Hipsterism,” pp. 695-698); *PS* (Argument Essays, pp. 32-34); *CA* (“Toulmin Model of Argument”)

❖ Wed. 1 Aug.—Argument Structure; Supporting Claims; Toulmin Model

HW: Read *HWA* (Incorporating Sources into Your Work, pp. 466-469; “The Limits to Panic,” pp. 92-95); *PS* (“Massage Chairs at Penn State,” pp. 46-48; “Hydropower is Dam-Aging,” pp. 49-52)

Due: Position Argument Video Proposal

❖ Thurs. 2 Aug.—Incorporating Sources; Counterarguments and Rebuttals

HW: Exploratory Writing 4: Counterargument; Read *CA* (“UVa Library’s Plan to Cut Stacks by Half Sparks Faculty Concerns”)

❖ Fri. 3 Aug.—Public Debate: Books or Technology in University Libraries

HW: Draft of Position Argument Video in class and Headphones; Read *CA* (“The Believing Game—Methodological Believing”)

Due: Exploratory Writing 4

Week 7

❖ Mon. 6 Aug.—Position Argument Video Peer Review

Due: Draft of Position Argument Video in class and Headphones; Peer Review due by 11:59PM

❖ Tues. 7 Aug.—OPTIONAL In-Class Office Hours

HW: *Position Argument Video*

❖ Wed. 8 Aug.—Optional In-Class Presentations; Wrap up the Semester

Due: *Position Argument Video* due by 11:59PM

Exploratory Writings

Prompt: For each project you will do one short assignment to help practice the skills required, produce material to be incorporated into the project, or otherwise build your rhetorical ability. Each of the exploratory writings will be different—Creating a Scene, Outlines, an Annotated Bibliography, and a Counterargument. Assignment sheets with more specific details will be posted to Canvas for each exploratory writing.

Grading: Exploratory writings will be graded out of 5 points, and the letter grade for the section will be determined based on the cumulative grade for all four exploratory writings. To figure out the letter grade, add all four scores together and convert based on this chart:

Range	Letter
20-18	A
17-15	B
14-12	C
11-9	D
8 or less	F

Proposals

Prompt: The first stage in the *writing process* for this course will be to propose a topic for each major paper. Write a 1 page proposal *explaining the subject* you want to write about, *identifying the audience and purpose* for the project, and *setting the stakes* for why the topic matters. This allows you to develop your ideas, and it allows me to ensure your topic fits the assignment.

Each proposal will either be approved or rejected. If it is rejected, you need to email me a revised proposal as soon as possible. If the second proposal is rejected, you need to come see me for a writing conference to determine a feasible topic.

If you don't have a proposal approved by the time we get to peer review, you will not earn credit for peer review, though you will still be required to participate. If you do not have a proposal approved by the project deadline the project will lose one full letter grade.

Skills: *proposing a topic, summarizing the rhetorical situation, setting the stakes*

Grading Criteria: Your proposal should:

- I. summarize the subject/argument/research question you intend to write about,
- II. clearly identify your intended audience and purpose,
- III. and establish why the topic matters to you and the audience.

Peer Reviews

Prompt: Peer review is one of the most effective ways to ensure a project is clear, well-written, and effective for an actual reading audience. You will work with a partner (or small group, depending on the activity), read your partner's project, and *provide suggestions for revision* based on what works and doesn't work. I will give you a cover sheet for each peer review to guide your thinking. Take the feedback your partner gave and *use it to make final revisions*.

You will be expected to:

1. complete the questions on the cover sheet,
2. provide *thorough* and *substantive* suggestions on your partner's draft,
3. and provide suggestions throughout the draft.

Grading: Peer reviews will be graded out of 5 points, and the letter grade for the section will be determined based on the cumulative grade for all four exploratory writings. To figure out the letter grade, add all four scores together and convert based on this chart:

Range	Letter
20-18	A
17-15	B
14-12	C
11-9	D
8 or less	F

By 11:59PM the day we do peer review, you need to scan the completed cover sheet and draft with your partner's comments and upload it as a .pdf to the Canvas assignment slot.

- Your partner will be graded on the feedback they've given you, so you have a responsibility to your partner to upload the file on time.
- Failure to upload the scanned file before the project deadline will result in two penalties: 1) a full letter grade deduction from the project grade, and 2) your partner will get the points you otherwise would have earned for the peer review assignment.

Cover Letters

Prompt: For the last three projects you will compose a Cover Letter *explaining your rhetorical choices*. These letters will rely on the skill set you will develop in the Rhetorical Evaluation project, but they will help you *reflect* on your own writing. The letter should be 1 full page, consisting of three paragraphs. The paragraphs should:

1. *summarize the rhetorical situation*—identifying your purpose and intended audience,
2. *identify two rhetorical choices you made*—describe two appeals, techniques, strategies, etc. you used to achieve your purpose with your audience. Refer to specific places in the project as evidence,
3. *and evaluate the effectiveness of your rhetoric*—for your audience, how well did you shape your rhetoric to achieve your purpose?

The final paragraph may also explain any successes or difficulties you encountered if you want to draw my attention to them in the grading process. You may also raise questions or concerns about the class in this final paragraph.

Format the cover letter as a letter, with a salutation addressing me at the top (e.g., Dear Phillip) and a signature line at the bottom (e.g., Sincerely, Your Name).

Not including a cover letter will cost one full letter grade from the project.

Skills: *reflection, rhetorical analysis and evaluation*

Personal Narrative

Proposal Due: Mon. 2 July

Peer Review: Thurs. 5 July

Final Draft Due: Mon. 9 July

Prompt: Humans tell stories to achieve a wide variety of purposes. For this assignment, you will write a 2-3 page story about one of your experiences. The story should *reveal* something to the reader—a message, a life lesson, a moral. *Use narrative elements*—sensory details, characters, plot, conflict, setting—to *show* this message, rather than directly telling. The story should be *shaped for one specific audience*. The details, language choices, and style should all be chosen based on what will work for those readers.

In addition to the 2-3 full pages of the Narrative, you will write a Proposal. See the assignment sheet in syllabus p. 7 for more.

Skills: *shaping writing for an audience, using narrative elements to convey an argument*

Grading Criteria: Your essay should:

- I. use narrative elements to clearly convey your experience,
- II. appeal to a specific audience's rhetorical needs,
- III. and clearly make a point by *showing, not telling*

Rhetorical Evaluation

Proposal Due: Wed. 11 July

Peer Review: Mon. 16 July

Final Draft Due: Wed. 18 July

Prompt: Rhetoric is the art of convincing readers/listeners. Successful rhetoric is always shaped specifically for its intended audience—their needs, values, beliefs, interests, etc. In this 3-4 page Rhetorical Evaluation, you will *analyze* and *evaluate* a text that strikes you as rhetorically interesting or effective. *Consider the intended audience* to evaluate how likely this text is to convince them of its specific purpose. Develop a focused, coherent argument driven by a *thesis* and supported by *topic sentences*.

In addition to the 3-4 full pages of the Evaluation, you will write both a Proposal and a Cover Letter. See the respective assignment sheets in syllabus pp. 7 and 9 for more.

You will also create a References page in APA format (see *HWA* pp. 512-539). This References page must list the text your paper evaluates. Please note that, like Cover Letters, References pages do not count into the required page count.

Skills: *analysis, evaluation, awareness of rhetorical elements*

Grading Criteria: Your essay should:

- I. analyze the rhetorical elements in a specific text,
- II. evaluate how effectively this rhetoric is shaped for its intended audience,
- III. present a coherent, unified argument with a thesis and topic sentences,
- IV. and explain and defend your rhetorical choices in a Cover Letter.

Research Report

Proposal Due: Fri. 20 July
Peer Review: Thurs. 26 July
Final Draft Due: Mon. 30 July

Prompt: Begin by developing a research question about an issue in macroeconomics that interests you. That question will guide you as you *research* at least three scholarly sources. In a 4-5 page essay, you will *summarize* and *synthesize* the sources you find. You should not make an argument answering the research question (though you will in our next project), but you should focus on accurately presenting the arguments others have made and identifying connections and divergences between those arguments. As you're preparing your Report, consider what audience(s) would be interested in the answer to your research question.

In addition to the 4-5 full pages of the Report, you will write both a Proposal and a Cover Letter. See the respective assignment sheets in syllabus pp. 7 and 9 for more.

You will also create a References page in APA format (see *HWA* pp. 512-539). This References page must list the three or more scholarly sources cited in the Report. Please note that, like Cover Letters, References pages do not count into the required page count.

Skills: *scholarly research, summarizing information, synthesizing data from multiple sources*

Grading Criteria: Your essay should:

- I. clearly define a macroeconomics problem or issue,
- II. present accurate summaries of the arguments from at least five scholarly sources,
- III. identify connections and differences between the sources' arguments,
- IV. properly document your sources, both in-text and in a Reference list, using APA format,
- V. and explain and defend your rhetorical choices in a Cover Letter.

Position Argument Video

Proposal Due: 1 Aug.

Peer Review: Mon. 7 Aug.

Final Draft Due: Wed. 8 Aug. by 11:59PM

Prompt: Utilizing the knowledge you gained for the Research Report, you will now take a stance on the macroeconomics question that drove your research. In a video presentation, you will *argue* for a particular answer to the research question, supporting your claims with scholarly research. Make a central claim (i.e., a thesis), then *present and interpret evidence* for your claim. Utilize video's *available means of persuasion*—both visual and oral/aural—to persuade a specific audience that your answer to the research question is the correct one.

The length and mode of the video will be at your discretion based on your intended audience and rhetorical purpose. In addition to the Video, you will write both a Proposal and a Cover Letter. See the respective assignment sheets in syllabus pp. 7 and 9 for more.

You will also create and submit a References page in APA format (see *HWA* pp. 512-539). This References page must list the scholarly sources cited in the Video. Please note, these may be the same sources as those cited in the Research Report, but they do not need to be.

Extra Credit Opportunity: You will have the opportunity to present your research to your peers on our final day of class (8 Aug.). If you sign up and give a 5-7 minute presentation, you will earn 1/3 letter grade bonus for the Position Argument Video.

Skills: *argumentation, supporting claims with research, using visual and oral rhetoric*

Grading Criteria: Your essay should:

- I. answer the macroeconomics research question developed in the Research Report,
- II. support your argument with evidence from scholarly sources,
- III. effectively utilize the visual and oral available means of persuasion for a video,
- IV. properly document your sources in a Reference list using APA format,
- V. and explain and defend your rhetorical choices in a Cover Letter.