



SYLLABUS

ENGLISH 15: RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

Sections 047, 056, 066, 108

Online—Remote Asynchronous

Instructor: Phillip Zapkin

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Zoom Office Hours: M 1-3, TH 1-3

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will learn about rhetoric. Rhetoric is the art and science of persuading people to listen to and accept, or at least consider, your ideas. A key part of rhetoric is how we shape our writing, speaking, creating, etc. *for* other people. A big part of our focus this semester will be how we engage with others: writing about others, responding to what they've written/said, and using their work to support our own rhetoric.

Our other big consideration will be making rhetorical choices. In any rhetorical situation and for any audience, we have a ton of possible strategies and options to persuade readers, and part of developing rhetorical awareness is getting a feel for which strategies will work best.

COVID-19 AND REMOTE ASYNCHRONOUS COURSE FORMAT

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this normally in-residence course has been converted to an online class. We are using a version of the course content Penn State's English Department has prepared for online English 15 courses. This course has been designed specifically for online delivery and the needs of online learners.

This course runs asynchronously, meaning you can work largely at your own pace each week. This should afford you greater flexibility during these difficult times. Though we will never meet in a physical classroom, I will ask you to attend a few synchronous meetings via Zoom. Please remember, this is still a cohort-based course and not an independent study.

This class is paced, meaning that there is an established start and end date and you will have weekly deadlines throughout the term. In most weeks of the course, you will be asked to participate in two primary activities: 1) a discussion forum post and response about a core aspect of the course and 2) a writing workshop and response related to a formal writing assignment. Like taking a course on campus, you will be required to participate in class discussions and workshops that have specific time frames and deadlines associated with them.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND SOFTWARE

- *The New Harbrace Guide to Writing: Genres for Composing*, 3rd edition by Cheryl Glenn. Cengage Learning, 2018. ISBN: 978-1305956780
- *Penn Statements*, Volume 39, Spring 2020. A compilation of essays written in ENGL 15 at Penn State.

These textbooks can be purchased from the [Penn State Bookstore](#).

This course requires you to use Microsoft Word for your formal assignments. Unless otherwise specified, files should be submitted using either the .doc or .docx file types.

If you do not have Microsoft Word, you should know that Penn State makes the full Microsoft Office suite, which includes Word, available to Penn State students for free. To acquire this free version of Microsoft Office, simply login to <https://office365.psu.edu/> using your Penn State credentials.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Graded Assignment	Percentage
Profile Project	15%
Rhetorical Evaluation Project	15%
Productive Counterargument Project	15%
Researched Argument Project	20%
Workshops	10%
Peer Reviews	15%
Class Discussions	10%

ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

There will be assignment sheets on Canvas for each project, as well as for the Workshops and Peer Reviews. These sheets will give you more specific details about what the assignments require. We will also have synchronous Zoom meetings to go over each project assignment sheet. If you're unsure about what an assignment requires/allows, please ask me in the Zoom meeting, in office hours, or over email.

To pass this course you *must* submit all projects. Failure to submit a project will result in an automatic failing grade for the course.

All assignments must be submitted by 11:59PM EST on the date assigned. Submitting a project after the deadline will cost one full letter grade per late day.

CLASS DISCUSSIONS

Class discussions foster a sense of community in our class, help us to process course materials, and provide a space to think through your work on assignments. Discussion prompts may ask you to reflect on information covered in our reading or practice a composition strategy.

By Wednesday (11:59PM EST) of each week you will respond to a discussion prompt, and by Sunday (11:59PM EST) of each week you will reply to one or more of your classmates' posts. Think of these posts and responses as a conversation about the subjects we're learning.

While a free exchange of ideas and expressions is encouraged, please strive for civility and respect in all of your comments. Remember, the discussions and workshops are a space for us to work together and to grow as writers and thinkers.

GRADING SCALE

This class uses the LionPATH standard grading scale to determine final course grades:

Letter Grade	Point Range
A	94-100
A-	90-93.99
B+	87-89.99
B	84-86.99
B-	80-83.99
C+	77-79.99
C	70-76.99
D	60-69.99
F	0-59.99

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 Penn State's 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.

ACCESSIBILITY: DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must 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 (<http://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, <https://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

COURSE SCHEDULE

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

Readings Key: *NHG*=*New Harbrace Guide*, *PS*=*Penn Statements*, *CA*=*Canvas*, *SY*=*Syllabus*

WEEK 1: 24 AUG.-30 AUG.—INTRODUCING THE CLASS

⇒ Thursday: Synchronous Zoom Meeting to Discuss Profile Project; Time TBD

- Read:
 - *CA*: Syllabus, “A Special Message About this Online Course,” “How This Class Works,” “Zoom at Penn State,” and Profile Assignment Sheet
 - *PS*: “Program Outcomes” p. 10
 - *NHG*: “Understanding the Rhetorical Situation” pp. 3-14
- Watch:
 - “Introductory Video,” “The Syllabus,” “Navigating Canvas,” and “Workshops and Discussion Forums”
- ❖ Submit by Wednesday:
 - Discussion post: Introducing Myself
- ❖ Submit by Sunday:
 - Discussion post response

WEEK 2: 31 AUG.-6 SEPT.—APPROACHING PROFILES

- Read:
 - *NHG*: “Profiles” pp. 92-106
 - *CA*: “John Lewis, US Civil Rights Champion,” “Coronavirus Heroes,” and “The Myth of the Kindly General Lee”
- Watch:
 - “Profile”
- ❖ Submit by Wednesday:
 - *Profile Planning Workshop*
 - Discussion post: Which Profile is Best?
- ❖ Submit by Sunday:
 - *Profile Plan Feedback*
 - Discussion post response

WEEK 3: 7 SEPT.-13 SEPT.—THESIS STATEMENTS AND SAMPLE PROFILES

- Read:
 - *PS*: “PWR Grading Standards” pp. 8-9 and “Introduction and Common Issues” pp. 97-99
 - *NHG*: “Making Claims” pp. 20-21 and “Revision and Peer Review” p. 107
 - *CA*: “Thesis Statements”
- Watch:
 - *PS*: “The Limits of a Handicapped American” p. 118, “War of the Worlds” p. 120, and “Misconception about Wrestling” p. 121
 - “Thesis Statements,” “Peer Reviewing,” and “Grading and Standards”
- ❖ Submit by Wednesday:
 - *Profile Peer Review Draft*
 - Discussion post: Grade Norming *PS* Sample Profiles

- ❖ Submit by Sunday:
 - *Profile Peer Review Feedback*
 - Discussion post response

WEEK 4: 14 SEPT.-20 SEPT.—FINALIZING THE PROFILE PROJECT

- Read:
 - *NHG*: “From Tentative Idea to Finished Project” pp. 250-253
 - *CA*: “Revision Strategies” and “Essay Formatting”
- Watch:
 - “Claim, Evidence, Interpretation,” “Three Tiers of Revision,” and “The Adorable Bear that Served in WWII”
- ❖ Submit by Wednesday:
 - *Revision Workshop*
 - Discussion post: Challenges and Success in the Profile Project
- ❖ Submit by Sunday:
 - **Profile**
 - Discussion post response

WEEK 5: 21 SEPT.-27 SEPT.—BASICS OF RHETORIC AND ANALYSIS

⇒ Monday: Synchronous Zoom Meeting to Discuss Rhetorical Evaluation Project; Time TBD

- Read:
 - *CA*: Rhetorical Evaluation Assignment Sheet and “From Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*”
 - *NHG*: “The Available Means Include the Rhetorical Elements of the Message Itself” pp. 23-24, “Writing a Persuasive Critical Analysis: A Guide” pp. 207-210, and “A Tale of Two Profiles” pp. 454-457
- Watch:
 - “Rhetorical Appeals,” “Political, Forensic, and Ceremonial Rhetoric,” “Analysis,” “PA Lottery Hibachi 2020,” “CDC: Tips From Former Smokers—Michael P’s ‘COPD and Smoking’ Tips Commercial,” and “Coca-Cola Australia: Thanks for Recycling”
- ❖ Submit by Wednesday:
 - *Rhetorical Evaluation Planning Workshop*
 - Discussion post: Analyzing a Rhetorical Appeal in an Ad
- ❖ Submit by Sunday:
 - *Rhetorical Evaluation Plan Feedback*
 - Discussion post response

WEEK 6: 28 SEPT.-4 OCT.—EVALUATION AND RHETORICAL METHODS OF DEVELOPMENT

- Read:
 - *NHG*: “Rhetorical Methods of Development” pp. 262-278 and “Writing a Persuasive Evaluation: A Guide” pp. 187-189
 - *CA*: “Americans Are Drowning in Student Loan Debt. The US Should Forgive All of It” and “The US Student Loan Debt Crisis is Even Worse Than We Thought”
- Watch:
 - “Rhetorical Methods of Development” and “Evaluation”
- ❖ Submit by Wednesday:
 - Discussion post: Evaluating a Rhetorical Method of Development in an Article
- ❖ Submit by Sunday:

- Discussion post response

WEEK 7: 5 OCT.-11 OCT.—SAMPLE RHETORICAL EVALUATIONS AND CRITICAL READING

➤ Read:

- *PS*: “Introduction and Common Issues” pp. 12-15, “Ronald Reagan’s Historical Moment: How It Started with Disaster” pp. 16-18, “Prioritizing Justice for the Victims, Not the Offenders” pp. 19-20, and “Are Your Dreams Crazy Enough?” pp. 34-35
- *NHG*: “The Writer as Reader” pp. 35-41 and “Thinking Rhetorically About Multimedia Texts” pp. 51-53

➤ Watch:

- “Active Reading”

❖ Submit by Wednesday:

- *Rhetorical Evaluation Peer Review Draft*
- Discussion post: Grade Norming *PS* Sample Rhetorical Evaluations

❖ Submit by Sunday:

- *Rhetorical Evaluation Peer Review Feedback*
- Discussion post response

WEEK 8: 12 OCT.-18 OCT.—FINALIZING THE RHETORICAL EVALUATION AND INTRODUCTIONS

➤ Read:

- *CA*: “On Beginnings and Endings,” “Revision Strategies,” and “Essay Formatting”

➤ Watch:

- “Introductions”

❖ Submit by Wednesday:

- *Revision Workshop*
- Discussion post: Mid-Semester Check and Reflection

❖ Submit by Sunday:

- **Rhetorical Evaluation**
- Discussion post response

WEEK 9: 19 OCT.-25 OCT.—FINDING AND SUMMARIZING ARGUMENTS

⇒ Monday: Synchronous Zoom Meeting to Discuss Productive Counterargument Project; Time TBD

➤ Read:

- *NHG*: “The Writer as Reader” pp. 42-50
- *CA*: Productive Counterargument Assignment Sheet, “A Letter on Justice and Open Debate,” “Rowling, Rushdie, and Atwood Warn Against Intolerance in Open Letter,” and “‘Cancel Culture’ Doesn’t Stifle Debate, But It Does Challenge the Old Order”

➤ Watch:

- “Distinguishing Between Argumentative and Informational Texts,” “Summary,” and “Confirmation Bias”

❖ Submit by Wednesday:

- *Productive Counterargument Planning Workshop*
- Discussion post: Summarize an Article

❖ Submit by Sunday:

- *Productive Counterargument Plan Feedback*
- Discussion post response

WEEK 10: 26 OCT.-1 NOV.—RESPONDING TO AN ARGUMENT AND SAMPLE PRODUCTIVE COUNTERARGUMENTS

- Read:
 - *PS*: “Introduction and Common Issues” pp. 44-46, “Why Tiger Mothers Are Not Superior” pp. 59-61, “Of Boys and Men” pp. 63-65, and “Are Insecticides Really Worth It When Our Health is at Risk?” pp. 66-68
 - *CA*: “Evaluating Masculinity, Hidden Sexism, and Pumpkin Spice Lattes,” “Hating Pumpkin Spice Lattes is Sexist,” and “Enough with Pumpkin-Spiced Misogyny”
- Watch:
 - “Rebuttal” and “Rogerian Argument”
- ❖ Submit by Wednesday:
 - *Productive Counterargument Peer Review Draft*
 - Discussion post: Pumpkin Spice Rebuttal
- ❖ Submit by Sunday:
 - *Productive Counterargument Peer Review Feedback*
 - Discussion post response

WEEK 11: 2 NOV.-8 NOV.—FINALIZING THE PRODUCTIVE COUNTERARGUMENT AND INCORPORATING SOURCE MATERIAL

- Read:
 - *NHG*: “Synthesizing Sources: Summary, Paraphrase, and Quotation” pp. 322-337
 - *CA*: “Revision Strategies” and “Essay Formatting”
- Watch:
 - “Quotation, Paraphrase, and Summary”
- ❖ Submit by Wednesday:
 - *Revision Workshop*
 - Discussion post: Best Strategies for Persuading Others?
- ❖ Submit by Sunday:
 - **Productive Counterargument**
 - Discussion post response

WEEK 12: 9 NOV.-15 NOV.—INTRODUCTION TO SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

⇒ Monday: Synchronous Zoom Meeting to Discuss Researched Argument Project; Time TBD

- Read:
 - *CA*: Researched Argument Assignment Sheet and “English 015: Rhetoric and Composition Library Guide”
 - *NHG*: “Thinking Rhetorically About Research” pp. 279-291, “Identifying Sources” pp. 292-310, “Evaluating Sources” pp. 311-320, and “Writing a Persuasive Position Argument: A Guide” pp. 149-151
- Watch:
 - “Database Searching”
- ❖ Submit by Wednesday:
 - *Researched Argument Planning Workshop*
 - Discussion post: Summary of a Researched Source
- ❖ Submit by Sunday:
 - *Researched Argument Plan Feedback*
 - Discussion post response

WEEK 13: 16 NOV.-22 NOV.—CITING SOURCES

- Read:
 - *NHG*: “Position Arguments” pp. 132-138 and 142-148, “How Much Do Americans Know about Science?” pp. 469-475, “Why It’s Crucial to Get More Women into Science” pp. 482-492, and Skim “Acknowledging Sources in MLA Style” pp. 338-363
- Watch:
 - “8th Edition MLA Works Cited Pages” and “Citing and Attributing Quotes in MLA Format”
- ❖ Submit by Wednesday:
 - Discussion post: MLA Works Cited Entries Practice
- ❖ Submit by Sunday:
 - Discussion post response

23 NOV.-29 NOV.

- *Thanksgiving Recess: No Coursework*

WEEK 14: 30 NOV.-6 DEC.—SAMPLE RESEARCHED ARGUMENTS

- Read:
 - *PS*: “A Major League Wage Disparity” pp. 82-85, “Life Changing ACL Tears” pp. 47-50, and “Sustainable Forests Tax Incentive Proposal” pp. 51-54
 - *CA*: “The Believing Game—Methodological Believing”
- Watch:
 - “Varying Sentence Length and Complexity”
- ❖ Submit by Wednesday:
 - *Researched Argument Peer Review Draft*
 - Discussion post: Grade Norming *PS* Sample Researched Arguments
- ❖ Submit by Sunday:
 - *Researched Argument Peer Review Feedback*
 - Discussion post response

WEEK 15: 7 DEC.-13 DEC.—FINALIZING THE RESEARCHED ARGUMENT AND WRAPPING UP THE SEMESTER

- Read:
 - *CA*: “Revision Strategies” and “Essay Formatting”
- Watch:
 - “Why Filling Out the SRTes Matters” and “Goodbye”
- ❖ Submit by Wednesday:
 - *Revision Workshop*
 - Discussion post: Looking Forward
- ❖ Submit by Sunday:
 - **Researched Argument**